

# REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF: SCRUTINY OFFICER

REPORT NO. DLS 54

DATE: 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2006

<b>TITLE:</b>	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL
<b>FORWARD PLAN ITEM:</b>	N/a
<b>DATE WHEN FIRST APPEARED IN FORWARD PLAN:</b>	N/a
<b>KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:</b>	N/a

<b>COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:</b>	COUNCILLOR FRANCES CARTWRIGHT ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY:</b>	Access
<b>CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:</b>	None
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:</b>	This report and its attachments are publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website <a href="http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk">www.southkesteven.gov.uk</a>
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	Agendas, minutes and notes of the DSPs 2004/5

## 1. **FOREWORD**

- 1.1 The articles of the Council's Constitution require the Development and Scrutiny Panels to report to Full Council on their work and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate (para 6.5 (d) refers, page 18).
- 1.2 This is the first annual report of South Kesteven District Council's Development and Scrutiny Panels (DSPs). The report describes the work that has been carried out by the DSPs during the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2005, but also includes the two call in meetings that took place at the end of June 2004. Future reports will encompass a full Municipal Year. The report lists the year's achievements and any areas of concern.
- 1.3 The DSPs wish to thank the officers at all levels in the Council who have supported them by providing information, guidance and advice both at meetings and outside. The DSPs would also like to thank the Cabinet members, all of whom have co-operated with the scrutiny function, attended DSP meetings and contributed where necessary. This spirit of co-operation has continued into 2005/06 and it is hoped that it will remain the norm at South Kesteven District Council.
- 1.4 During the year in question, it was demonstrated that the public are prepared to engage in scrutiny in areas where they have a particular interest. It could be that one of the barriers to increase public involvement in scrutiny is a lack of appreciation of what it is that scrutiny does and can do. This is an area that should be addressed in the future. It should be an aim of the Council to promote the concept of scrutiny to the wider public and, through this, to further involve members of the public in the scrutiny process.
- 1.5 The Council introduced five Development and Scrutiny Panels (DSPs) in July 2004, replacing the former Policy Development Committees (PDCs). The DSPs have two distinct functions in relation to
- Policy development and review;
- And
- Scrutiny.
- 1.6 The Council's Constitution sets out these functions as follows:-
- “ a) Policy development and review.
- DSPs may:
- i) Assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
  - ii) Conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;

- iii) Consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
- iv) Question members of the Cabinet and/or committees and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area;
- v) Liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.

b) Scrutiny

DSPs may:

- i) Review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Cabinet and/or committees and Council officers, both in relation to individual decisions and over time;
- ii) Review and scrutinise performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- iii) Question members of the Cabinet and/or committees and appropriate officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
- iv) Make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or appropriate committees and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- v) Review and scrutinise the performance of other public service bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address a DSP and local people about their activities and performance;
- vi) Question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent)."

1.7 Paragraph 15 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules states that "A DSP or constituted working group may invite people other than those people referred to in Rule 14 above (ie members and officers) discuss issues of local concern and/or answer questions. It may for example wish to hear from residents, stakeholders and members and officers in other parts of the public sector and shall invite such people to attend" This is an aspect that was taken up in 2004/5 (see appendix) and this has continued into 2005/6.

1.8 DSPs also have the power to call-in executive decisions. There were eight call-ins during the year in question and these are detailed in the report. It will be noted that, during the year in question, no forward plan items or key decisions were called in for re-consideration.

1.9 The work of the DSPs is co-ordinated by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Group which has met on a regular basis. There are also regular meetings with the Cabinet via the Cabinet and Scrutiny Liaison Group.

1.10 The work of each of the DSPs during 2004/5 is detailed in the attached appendix.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

The Council is asked to note the report.

Paul Morrison  
Scrutiny Officer