

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Chief Executive

REPORT NO.: CEX373

DATE: 19th April 2007

TITLE:	Committee Arrangements	
COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Councillor Linda Neal, Leader of the Council	
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	All	
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	N/A	
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	This report is publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Carried out and appended to report? No	Full impact assessment required? No
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Report CB01	

Background

- On the 26th March 2007 the Constitution and Accounts Committee considered report number CB01 which detailed proposed changes to the structure for Policy Development and Scrutiny within the Council. The minute from this meeting was as follows:

“(1) That the Constitution and Accounts Committee agrees to the proposals outlined in report CB01 and the consequent changes to the Constitution necessary to implement them.

- (2) That this decision is reported to the Council on 19th April to approve on the basis that:
- The size of the new scrutiny committee to consist of 9 members
 - The size of the three policy development groups is to be 7 members with remit prepared by the Chief Executive
 - These changes to come into effect from the Council's annual meeting when a report is made on the consequential changes to the Constitution
- (3) That membership of the Development Control Committee be reduced from 17 to 15 members."

Remit

2. It is recommended the three new Policy Development groups be entitled Resources, Engagement, and Community, each of which would have the following remit:
- a) Resources. This policy development group would be co-terminous with the remit of the Cabinet Portfolio responsibilities for Resources and Assets and Organisational Development as set out in the current Council's Constitution.
 - b) Engagement. The remit would be co-terminous with the Cabinet portfolio responsibilities for Access and Engagement and Strategic Partnerships
 - c) Communities. This remit would be co-terminous with the portfolio responsibilities for Economic Development and Healthy Environment.

Scrutiny Committee

3. The remit of the Scrutiny Committee would include the scrutiny and call in functions currently vested in DSPs along with any new scrutiny or call-in functions given to the local authority as a consequence of the local government white paper or any other new legislation.

Development Control

4. The Constitution and Accounts Committee recommended that the membership of this Committee would be reduced from 17 to 15 members with the remit unaltered.

Implementation

5. Because of the impact of the changes on the Council's Constitution, the most effective way of implementing these proposals would be to time the arrangements to take effect from the Council's annual meeting on the 17th May. This could be achieved by approving the key principles now and then at the 17th May dealing with the minor consequential amendments to the Constitution which will be needed to formally separate the roles of Policy Development (which should be undertaken by the policy development group) from Scrutiny.

These changes will seek to minimise the number of changes made to current arrangements and it is proposed that in this light, the current arrangements for triggering call-in i.e. at the chairman's request or as a result of a subscription from 5 members of the Council be maintained although in future, the chairman would be the chairman of the new Scrutiny Committee. Other existing provisions of the

Constitution, such as the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee would continue as a policy development coordinating committee, again comprising of chairman of the three policy development groups along with the chairman of the scrutiny committee.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

6. The proposals are compliant with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000. The rules relating to political balance will apply to the policy development groups and the scrutiny committee proposed.

Comments of the S151 Officer

7. It is important to ensure budget scrutiny responsibility is appropriately allocated to the new structure in order to provide sound budget management.

The Welland Remuneration Panel will also need to consider whether the new allowances that they recently recommended for DSP Chairs are equally applicable to the Chairs of the new Policy Development Groups and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations

8. That the Council approve that, with effect from the 17th May 2007, the new structure for scrutiny and policy development shall come into effect comprising:
 - 1) Three 7 member Policy Development Groups with remits as follows:
 - a) Resources. This policy development group would be co-terminus with the remit of the Cabinet Portfolio responsibilities for Resources and Assets and Organisational Development as set out in the current Council's Constitution.
 - b) Engagement. The remit would be co-terminus with the Cabinet portfolio responsibilities for Access and Engagement and Strategic Partnerships
 - c) Communities. This remit would be co-terminus with the portfolio responsibilities for Economic Development and Healthy Environment.
 - 2) 9 Member Scrutiny Committee with powers to exercise call-in over both executive matters and all other call in functions granted to the Council over third parties
 - 3) That the size of the Development Control Committee is reduced from 17 members to 15 members
 - 4) That the Chief Executive be instructed to prepare a new Constitution for formal adoption on the 17th May which details all consequential amendments needed to implement this decision.

Duncan Kerr
Chief Executive