

1) Why was the overview and scrutiny Committee not engaged in the development of this report?

The report addresses two aspects of improving the scrutiny function. The first identifies actions that fall to the CEO to make within the constitution to better improve the administration and support of the scrutiny function. These are actions that can clearly and usefully be taken now and that the CEO intends to bring forward and for transparency is being reported to Members.

The second aspect of the report are actions that Overview and Scrutiny will be invited to consider as part of a wider dialogue in respect of Overview and Scrutiny Improvement. This report makes that very clear.

Throughout, the report makes a clear distinction between those actions that are already happening – in which case they have already had the input of O+S, those things that fall within the remit of the CEO to undertake (specific to support arrangements, management and officer activity) and those things that will be taken forward in discussion with and at the direction of O+S.

This report seeks to ensure that improvements to the Council's scrutiny function that have already been achieved by the hard work of scrutiny members, continue to be built upon, that momentum and focus is maintained, that the profile of Overview and Scrutiny is enhanced and that the commitment of O+S councillors to improve the function of scrutiny and the wider commitment of the Council to support that improvement is properly recognised in the Best Value Report in a way that respects the autonomy of Overview and Scrutiny.

2) Why does the report not include the suggestions for improvements identified by the scrutiny Committee at its review session on 29th April 24?

The report clearly states 'Some suggested ways forward will need to be the subject of further discussion and approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. There will be full engagement with scrutiny members when developing the annual forward plan and the vehicle to do it.'

It is for Overview and Scrutiny to reflect upon their own suggestions for improvement along with the suggestions in this report and for Overview and Scrutiny to decide what will be included in their annual forward plan and supporting improvement programme. By identifying suggested actions additional to those emerging from the scrutiny committee review session on 29th April, it is hoped that this report will facilitate that process.