

Improvement and Scrutiny

Derbyshire County Council

A Brief Background

- Formally created by the **Local Government Act 2000**
- Part of wider changes in how Local Government decisions are made (**shift from Committee system to Cabinet/Leader**)
- Local Authorities were given Overview and Scrutiny functions to **balance** these new arrangements
- Scrutiny Committees made up of other **Elected Members who are not in the Cabinet**
- Composed to reflect the political proportions of the Council as a whole

The Role of Scrutiny

Holds the Executive to account by:

- Review County Council decisions (Call-in)
- Review existing policies/services
- Help develop new policies
- Review County Council performance
- Review County Council budgets

NB: Scrutiny has no executive powers – it can only make recommendations

In Derbyshire.....

4 “Improvement and Scrutiny” Committees

- I & S Committee – Places
- I & S Committee – People
- I & S Committee – Resources
- I & S Committee – Health

The Improvement and Scrutiny Management Committee oversees the work of Scrutiny in general

How does Improvement & Scrutiny work?

The 6 “stages” of Scrutiny

- ❖ Work Programmes/Scoping Reports
- ❖ Review Working Groups
- ❖ Evidence gathering
- ❖ Reports including recommendations
- ❖ Cabinet considers recommendations
- ❖ Scrutiny monitors implementation

What Scrutiny is NOT about.....

- Audit
- Individual complaints (although it may look at areas where there are persistent complaints)
- Confrontation
- Blame
- Always saving money

CALL-IN

Decisions taken by the Executive can be reviewed:

- Publication of decision digest – dated
- 5 clear working days from publication date until decision can be implemented
- A minimum of 4 Members, from at least 2 political parties, to activate Call-in
- Must demonstrate that at least 1 or more of the principles of decision making has been breached
- Scrutiny examines the decision (and reasons for Call-in) and makes recommendations
- Waiving of Call-in can apply if agreed by appropriate Scrutiny Committee

CALL-IN

Principles of decision making:

- proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome)
- due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers
- respect for human rights
- a presumption in favour of openness
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes

Key Decisions

- A Key decision is one made by the Executive which is likely;
- to result in the Authority incurring expenditure which is, or making savings which are, *significant* (£500,000 in Derbyshire) having regard to the Authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates
- to be *significant* in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising 2 or more electoral divisions in Derbyshire

Developing a Work Programme

- Chair and Vice Chair meeting officers/Cabinet Members to discuss potential work areas
- Members (and officers) invited to submit suggestions for future reviews (via Review Proposal form) – *remember what Scrutiny is NOT about!*
- Receive progress on implementation on completed reviews
- Consider receiving performance and budget reports periodically from Adult care and Children and Younger Adults departments

Any Questions?....