

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE



DATE	14 th October 2008
PORTFOLIO	Leader
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Local Accountability Consultation

PURPOSE

1. To agree the draft response to the Department of Communities and Local Government's consultation document 'Communities in control: Real people, real power' for submission by the deadline of 30th October 2008.

RECOMMENDATION

2. (1) That the draft response to the DCLG's consultation document 'Communities in control; Real people, real power' as set out in [appendix 2](#) of this report be approved;
- (2) That the views of the Scrutiny Committees Coordinating Panel be sought on Chapters 2 and 3 which relate specifically to scrutiny; and
- (3) That the Head of the Chief Executive's Office be authorised to finalise the response taking into account the comments of the Scrutiny Committees Coordinating Panel.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. This consultation gives the opportunity to influence future guidance and legislation. The Government will take account of the responses received before introducing primary and secondary legislation on the topics discussed in the consultation document.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

4. Following on from the publication of the White Paper the Government has issued the first in a series of consultation papers 'Communities in Control: Real people, real power.
5. This first consultation document seeks views on
 - developing and strengthening the role of overview and scrutiny
 - new powers to hold local officers to account
 - facilitating the work of councillors
6. Chapter One explains that this is a public consultation on a set of questions about

local accountability (list of questions and suggested responses is detailed at appendix 2). Responses are being sought from local authorities, overview and scrutiny members and officers, national representative bodies, trade unions and local government partners.

7. Chapter Two is about developing and strengthening the role of overview and scrutiny and emphasises the role of scrutiny as a tool whereby communities can, through its elected members address issues relating to the well being of that community and influence decisions.

It sets out the Government's proposals to implement the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to enhance scrutiny powers in the context of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) by requiring organisations to provide information to enable scrutiny to examine progress on LAA targets.

It proposes that in two tier areas, the lead council and other partners should make information available to district scrutiny committees where it is relevant to a target connected to that area.

8. Chapter Three is about increasing the visibility and accountability of local public officers so that they are open to public scrutiny and questioning from the local community.
9. Chapter Four is about facilitating the work of Councillors by modernising the way they do business, in particular the use of Information Technology to participate in meetings and vote remotely.
10. A more detailed summary of Chapters Two to Four is provided at [Appendix 1](#).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

11. None

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

12. None at this stage. Some of the provisions in the White Paper, if implemented, have implications that are likely to require constitutional changes

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

13. Management Team

BACKGROUND PAPERS

14. None

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT:

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ALSO:

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