

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 28 August 2008

Subject: Pre-meeting Preparation

Officer contact for further information: A Hendry, ext. 4246

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry, Ext.4246



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- 1. That the Committee agree to publicise all future presentations to all members in order to obtain questions for the speaker;**
- 2. That the Committee pre plan the scope of any presentation at the meeting before the presentation;**
- 3. That the Committee meet before any meeting with a presentation to discuss the line to take for that presentation; and**
- 4. That the Committee address the questions raised in paragraph three of this report and direct officers accordingly.**

Introduction:

1. The Committee requested at its July meeting, for a short paper to be prepared on how the Committee could hold preparatory meetings for upcoming presentations. This report sets out a possible way that this Committee could prepare for future presentations.

Report:

2. Once a presentation has been calendared into the work programme, all members could be advised via the Council Bulletin, about a month in advance of the topic and the date of the presentation. They could be asked to submit advance questions to Democratic Services who will collate and forward them on to the speaker in good time for detailed answers to be prepared. Of course, it would be impossible to think of every question beforehand, as members will inevitably think of supplementary questions during the presentation. This is already done for selected scheduled presentations, but not all. It could be extended to cover all presentations given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the future. This would ensure that all members of the Council, not just committee members, who had an interest in the topic under discussion, would have the chance to attend the meeting and question the speaker.

3. The Committee should also give some consideration as how widely they would like each presentation publicised. Should a wider publication of the speakers and their topics be made so that the meetings could attract a wider public audience? And if a wider audience were attracted, would the committee welcome questions and comments from members of the public?

4. For each speaker, the Committee should draw up an 'issue plan', to let them know what specific topics the Committee wished covered. This would be made available to the speaker prior to their attendance at a meeting so that they can come along fully prepared for the meeting. This would help prevent people 'going off track' and talking about issues that are outside the scope of what the committee wanted to review. This plan should be worked out at the meeting before the presentation was due, and it would be important to list all the

key areas the Committee wanted covered.

5. On the night of the meeting, the Committee could come in a half hour early for an informal meeting to discuss the forthcoming presentation and how they would like to deal with the topic being discussed. This pre meeting would be added on to the front of the Agenda. A committee room could be booked so that it is held in a more informal setting. The Committee would have a copy of any questions sent in before the meeting by members, which will give an idea of what topics are uppermost in the minds of members. Supplementary lines of questions could be identified in advance at this meeting.

6. Attached to this report is a paper on questioning techniques which members might find useful in using to question visitors to the committee.