

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/139/2006-7.
Date of meeting: 16 April 2007.



Portfolio: The Leader of the Council.

Subject: Review of Financial Regulations.

Officer contact for further information: Bob Palmer (01992 – 564279).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note that the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel is submitting revised Financial Regulations to the Council for approval at its meeting scheduled for 24 April 2007; and**
- (2) To agree any comments for submission to the Council by the Leader of the Council.**

Report:

1. The Audit Commission recommends, as best practice, that local authorities should review their Contract Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Delegations to Officers on an annual basis. This Council has not reviewed its financial regulations since 2000 but Contract Standing Orders have been reviewed at various times over the lifetime of the Council. In relation to officer delegation, from time to time Committees and the Cabinet make changes to officer delegation arrangements and these are routinely incorporated in the Constitution and ratified at the Annual Council meeting each year.
2. A Working Party of officers has been established comprising representatives of Internal Audit, Legal Services, Finance Services and Housing Services to review each of these three documents so as to comply with Audit Commission advice. Results of the review of Contract Standing Orders and Officer Delegation were submitted to the Council held on 20 February 2007.
3. The Officer Working Party has now completed its review of Financial Regulations, which was submitted to the meeting of the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel scheduled for 2 April 2007. The Head of Finance will report orally any changes to the revised Financial Regulations agreed by the Scrutiny Panel.
4. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had previously agreed that the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel could report directly to the Executive in respect of this matter. As this review involves a change in the Council's policy framework, approval of the revised Financial Regulations is reserved for the Council only. The Cabinet is requested to consider the revised Financial Regulations, and agree any comments for submission to the Council on 24 April 2007 by the Leader of the Council.
5. The revised Financial Regulations have already been distributed to all members of the Cabinet, and are also available via the Committee Management System from the agenda for the meeting of the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel, scheduled for Monday 2 April 2007. Further copies can be obtained from Democratic Services.

Statement in support of recommended action:

6. Financial Regulations are in need of review and the Audit Commission recommends it should now be carried out on an annual basis.

Options for action:

7. There are no other options for consideration, as the Financial Regulations must be updated.

Consultation undertaken:

8. The Officer Working Party consulted widely with Heads of Service and the Joint Chief Executives.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: None.

Personnel: None.

Land: None.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: None.

Relevant statutory powers: The Local Government Act 1972.

Background papers: Minutes of the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: None.

Key Decision reference (if required): Will advise when key decisions have ref nos.