# Request by Member for Scrutiny Review

Please complete the form below to request consideration of your issue by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

| Proposers Name: | Date of Request |
|---|---|
| S. Tautz Performance Improvement Manager | 14 March 2007 |

**Supporting Councillors (if any):**

Councillors D. Jacobs, J. Hart, J. M. Whitehouse

**Summary of Issue you wish to be scrutinised:**

Councillors D. Jacobs, J. Hart and J. M. Whitehouse comprise a Sub-Group of the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel and, in that role, have considered the Council's Value For Money Analysis for 2005/06 with the support of the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Human Resources and Performance Management.

Following this process Councillors Jacobs, Hart and Whitehouse wish to propose the establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel during 2007/08, to consider in detail the provision of Value For Money within the Development Control (Planning Services) function, focusing specifically on:

(a) The success of the 'hit squad' established to focus on the backlog of planning applications;
(b) How and to what extent performance in relation to the determination of planning applications has improved as a result of the 'hit squad' and other additional resources such as the new integrated computer system, the restructure of Planning Services and the application of Planning Delivery Grant; and
(c) How unit cost and other benchmarking information in relation to the Development Control function can be obtained to increase the effectiveness of the Value For Money Analysis for 2006/07 and future years.

| NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION |
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**Public Interest Justification:**

Development Control performance has been identified as a priority for which several Key performance Indicators have been adopted. Significant additional resources have been directed towards improving performance in this area. The Council is keen to demonstrate the provision of Value For Money across all service areas as part of the ongoing Use Of Resources assessment by the Audit Commission.

**Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:**

The Development Control function controls, protects and regulates the use of land and development through the processing of planning applications, to ensure that the district is developed in a sustainable manner and in a way that promotes the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. The demonstration of Value For Money is essential to the Council's operations.

**Council Performance in this area (if known: Red, Amber, Green):**

Development Control performance is measured by Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) 109a, 109b, 109c (planning applications) and 204 (planning appeals). Government targets for BVPI 109 are:

BVPI 109a (Major Applications) - 60% within 13 weeks;
BVPI 109b (Minor Applications) - 65% within 8 weeks; and
BVPI 109c (Other Applications) - 80% within 8 weeks.

Performance for 2006/07 against BVPI 109 to 31 December 2006 was 64%, 73.4% and 90.8% respectively (i.e. all well above the Government targets.

Performance against BVPI 204 has been volatile, particularly when the numbers of appeals in a quarter are lower than normal, and that performance has to take into account appeals allowed against a member decision to refuse an application.

The Council has set its own 'upper quartile' targets for these indicators for 2006/07. Current performance (to 31 December 2006) against the majority of the BVPIs is below target (i.e. 'Red'), with uncertain prospects for the achievement of the target by the year-end.

**Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?)**

It is not believed that other reviews taking place in this area, although the impact of the 'hit squad' was reported to the Cabinet at its meeting on 10 July 2006. The Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel reviews and monitors performance against the Development Control BVPIs on a quarterly basis.

| Office Use: | |
|---|---|
| **Pick score:** | **Considered By OSCC:** |