

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

**8TH JANUARY 2008**

**JOINT SCRUTINY ON FLOODING IN WORCESTERSHIRE**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

**1. SUMMARY**

1.1 Members are asked to consider the recommendations relating to a joint scrutiny on flooding issues in Worcestershire.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 Members of the Board are requested to:

- (a) agree to take part in the joint countywide scrutiny on flooding in Worcestershire;
- (b) agree the suggested arrangements paper attached as Appendix 1;
- (c) nominate a Member to serve on a joint scrutiny group; and
- (d) agree on whether or not the nominated Member should put themselves forward to chair the scrutiny investigation (this is entirely optional and would be dependent on whether the nominated Member wishes to take on this responsibility);

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 At the Scrutiny Steering Board Meeting held on 31st July 2007, Councillor Duddy reported back to Members what had been discussed at the Worcestershire Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Meeting held on 19th July 2007.

3.2 As the name suggests, the Worcestershire Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Network is made up of Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen from the six District Councils in Worcestershire, together with Worcestershire County Council.

3.3 At this first meeting, Members discussed the possibility of joint countywide scrutiny working between Districts and County. Some of the benefits of joint working mentioned included:

- It would avoid duplication of work;
- There would be an opportunity to develop partnerships and open up communication; and

- The impact of scrutiny could be strengthened by working together.
- 3.4 At that meeting on the 19th July 2007, it was agreed that each authority would consider its own priorities and decide if there were any common to all authorities, or any that would be done better on a countywide basis.
- 3.5 The Scrutiny Steering Board discussed potential joint scrutiny work further at its meeting on 4th September 2007. At the meeting on 2nd October 2007 a letter from Councillor Buckley, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Steering Committee at Worcestershire County Council, received on the day of the meeting, was circulated to Members under urgent business. The letter related to the recent flooding and suggested that flooding would be appropriate for Members to consider as the first joint investigation. This led to the meeting on 26th November 2007 which Councillor McDonald attended. The Board will remember that Councillor McDonald gave a verbal update at the last Scrutiny Steering Board meeting in December.
- 3.6 Another joint countywide meeting is due to take place sometime in January (possibly February) once all Overview and Scrutiny Committees across the County have had the opportunity to meet and discuss the outcome of the meeting held on 26th November 2007. The Board now needs to consider the recommendations under 2.1 of this report, including agreeing the suggested arrangements paper attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.7 With regard to 2.1(c), Councillor Lewis has previously expressed an interest in being the scrutiny representative for this Council.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications directly related to this report.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications directly related to this report.

#### **6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 This report does not directly link to the Council objectives, however, it could be said that the joint scrutiny working links to the Council Objective Improvement and it certainly links to the Council Value of Partnerships.

#### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There is a risk that by not participating in joint scrutiny work there will be duplication of work and that one local authority in isolation would not be able to properly scrutinise strategic countywide issues. Joint working is also seen as good practice.

## **8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no customer implications directly relating to this report, however, it could be said that scrutiny work could be strengthened by working together. This would mean that it is more likely that scrutiny would have an impact which in turn would affect customers.

## **9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no implications directly relating to this report for the Council's Equalities and Diversity Policies.

## **10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues – None
Personnel Implications – There would be an impact on officer resource as there would need to be a nominated officer from each District to act as a liaison point from whom advice and information could be sought during the scrutiny.
Governance/Performance Management – None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – None.
Policy – None
Environmental – None

## **10. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	N/A
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Suggested Arrangements for a Joint Scrutiny

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Information received from the Overview and Scrutiny Manager at Worcestershire County Council relating to the Joint Scrutiny Chairmen's Network Meeting on 26th November 2007.

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