

**SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR
PUBLICISING AND DETERMINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

<u>Report of the:</u>	Head of Legal & Democratic Services
<u>Contact:</u>	Margaret Jones
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
<u>Annexes/Appendices</u> (attached):	<u>Annexe 1</u> : Report of the Scrutiny Review Task Group on the administrative arrangements for publicising and determining planning applications
<u>Other available papers</u> (not attached):	Records of the Information Gathering Meetings held on 17 November 2015; 24 November 2015; 12 January 2016.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report presents the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee with the Report of the Scrutiny Review Task Group on the Administrative Arrangements for Publicising and Determining Planning Applications

RECOMMENDATION (S)

Notes

- (1) That the Committee approve the Report of the Scrutiny Review Task Group attached at Annexe 1 together with the recommendations included therein.**

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 The Report of the Scrutiny Review Task Group contributes to the Council's Core Value of Continuous Improvement - 'We will monitor and evaluate our activities and strive for improvement in all that we do'.

2 Background

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 February 2015, the Committee agreed that it wished to undertake a review during 2015/16 of the administrative arrangements for publicising and determining planning applications.
- 2.2 The Committee agreed the scope of its review in April 2015. It agreed that the investigation should focus on planning administrative processes which supported the publication and determination of validated planning applications, particular reference to be paid to public holiday periods such as Easter and Christmas. Applications concerning telecommunications were included within the scope of the review. Actual planning decisions made or impending were excluded from the review.
- 2.3 In June 2015, the Committee appointed three members to a task group to undertake the investigation; Councillors Clive Smitheram, David Reeve and Humphrey Reynolds. Investigation work started in October 2015.
- 2.4 During the review the task group met with officers, a member of the public representing a group of local residents and the Epsom Civic Society to hear their views. The task group wrote to two planning consultants who had regular liaison with the Council's Planning Department, but did not receive any response.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee approve the Report of the Scrutiny Review Task Group on the Administrative Arrangements for Publicising and Determining Planning Applications, including the recommendations contained therein.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Task Group do have resource implications. In the main, these resource implications concern officer time as the majority of the Scrutiny Review Task Group recommendations suggest that different aspects of the planning administrative processes be reviewed.
- 4.2 Precise resource implications will need to be considered by the Head of Place Development and the Head of Legal & Democratic Services when considering and responding to the Task Group's recommendations.
- 4.3 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 5.1 During the review the task group received guidance on the legal requirements placed on the Council.

5.2 Should any changes be implemented following consideration of the recommendations, there will be a need to ensure that these changes are in accordance with planning law.

5.3 ***Monitoring Officer's comments:*** None for the purposes of this report.

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

7 Partnerships

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 The recommendations of the task group have been designed to provide for improved customer satisfaction with the Council's administrative processes which support the publication and determination of planning applications. Should the recommendations of the Task group not be approved there will be a risk that the Council will lose an opportunity to further develop its functions and seek continuous improvement in all that it does.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 The findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Task Group which looked at the Council's administrative arrangements for publicising and determining planning applications have been set out in the report attached at Annexe 1. The Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee is now asked to consider and approve the report and recommendations.

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All