

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview & Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 5th February 2009
CONTACT OFFICER: Kevin Barrett, Democratic Services Manager
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875014
WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR CONSIDERATION**

ESTABLISHMENT OF SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUPS (T&FGs)

1 Purpose of Report

To seek the approval of the Committee to the establishment of two Scrutiny T&FGs to carry out detailed scrutiny of two areas identified by the Health and Community, Leisure and Environment Scrutiny Panels respectively.

2 Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee approve the establishment of T&FGs on the following issues:-

(a) Health Scrutiny Panel – review of wider well-being issues impacting on health of communities, groups or sections of the communities in Slough.

(b) Community, Leisure and Environment Panel – a review of the future vision for Slough’s library services.

2.2 That the terms of reference and the membership of the T&FGs be as set out in the text of this report.

3 Community Strategy and other Priorities

None arising from this purely administrative report.

4 Supporting Information

4.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee may appoint time limited “Task and Finish Groups” the purpose of which is to undertake –

(i) More detailed policy development and review.

(ii) Carry out detailed scrutiny of areas of work arising from the Overview & Scrutiny work programme.

4.2 The Terms of Reference and scope of the T&FGs must be agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee which is responsible for their establishment and reviewing their progress. The membership of the T&FGs will be drawn from Overview & Scrutiny members and, if possible, will reflect the composition of the Council. T&FGs are required to report periodically to the sponsoring Scrutiny

Panel and to present their final report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to reporting on to Cabinet or Council as appropriate.

- 4.3 Requests have been received from two of the Scrutiny Panels to establish T&FGs, details of which are given below.

Health Scrutiny Panel - Review of Wider Well-Being Issues Impacting the Health of Communities, Groups or Sections of Communities in Slough.

- 4.4 The Council was invited to submit a funding bid to the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) to conduct a scrutiny review on wider well-being issues. Whilst the initial bid from Slough was unsuccessful, the CfPS was sufficiently impressed with the bid that they were able to identify alternative funding to support it. The Health Scrutiny Panel has proposed the establishment of a T&FG to undertake this work, the scope of which is as follows:-

“The scope will concentrate on the time-line from 0 to 4 years of a child and collect evidence of all the initiatives currently in place; it will look at issues such as breastfeeding, information and support through to pre-school; and it will consult Home start and Early year schools. The objectives would also include a base-line of data in three key wards: Britwell, Chalvey and Baylis & Stoke. Public engagement will also include parents and teachers, sports facilities, support groups, food standards and both small, medium and some large food outlets within the three wards. Other experts will be called, where required.”

- 4.5 Membership of the Task and Finish Group is currently being considered and it is suggested that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Health Panel be authorised to finalise the Task and Finish Group membership to avoid any delay. The timescale for this review is the end of June, 2009.

Community, Leisure and Environment Panel - The Vision for Slough's Library Service.

- 4.6 The Community, Leisure and Environment Panel on 28th January, 2009 considered a report on the Borough's library service including work being undertaken to transform and upgrade the libraries as opportunities arise. The Heart of Slough Regeneration Project will provide a new central library for Slough and, as the central library provides essential support to the community libraries, attracts more than 65% of all visits and handles more than 65% of all issues, it is vital for the future direction and success of the library service across Slough. A new central library will inform and direct the range and quality of services and facilities on offer to the public, widening access and participation. The future vision of the new library, which will act as a hub supporting the community libraries, will be based on the importance of books, reading, learning and literacy, ensuring people have access to a wide range of accurate and reliable information and resources.
- 4.7 Given the recent improvements at Langley library, together with the proposed development opportunities at Cippenham library as well as the proposals for a new central library, now is the appropriate time to undertake a thorough strategic review of the library service in Slough. This will enable the Council to critically examine the current service, explore innovative approaches to service provision from elsewhere to feed into the planning for the new central library, to evaluate performance, undertake comparative benchmarking and to consult

widely with stakeholders, current users and the wider community to inform future provisions.

- 4.8 The Scrutiny Panel has recommended that a T&FG be established to undertake this strategic review along with Officers including looking at issues such as the provision of more community library provision and how this could be achieved and financed; the identification and extension of partnerships in the field of library provision; the mobile library service; and parking/access issues at the central library. Councillors Davis, Long and Walsh indicated that they would be prepared to serve on such a Task and Finish Group.
- 4.8 It was agreed that this Task and Finish Group should report back by June, 2009 with an interim report to a special meeting of the Panel in April.

5.0 **Conclusion**

The Committee is recommended to approve the establishment of the two T&FGs referred to above with the terms of reference and membership as indicated.