



---

**Report to**

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

1<sup>st</sup> June, 2005

**Report of**

Director of Legal and Democratic Services

**Title**

Scrutiny Budget 2004/2005 and 2005/6

---

### 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the 2004/2005 forecast outturn and the budget available for 2005/2006; and to propose how the budget should be allocated. It also sets out a proposed process for approving scrutiny reviews.

### 2 Recommendations

You are recommended to:-

- (a) Note the forecast outturn for 2004/2005 (as shown in the Appendix to this report) and the details of the budget for 2005/2006 outlined in paragraph 3.
- (b) Agree the proposed notional budget allocations set out in paragraph 4, and the process for agreeing and allocating funds to a scrutiny review work plan for civic year 2005-06.
- (c) Request that Scrutiny Boards provide Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee with outline information for their proposed reviews for 2005-06, as recommended in 4.3.

### 3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The forecast outturn for 2004/2005 is attached as the appendix to this report. The budget was £34,500, which was notionally allocated as follows:

- Scrutiny Boards 1, 2, 3 and 4           £3,000 each
- Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee   £22,500

- 3.2 The budget for 2005/2006 is £35,190. The budget holder is the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, who will inform your Committee quarterly of the spending position.

- 3.3 Examples of what the budget could be used for are as follows:-

- a) Commissioning public consultation (including the use of the Citizen's Panel (or its successor), focus groups and other consultation techniques)

- b) Commissioning external consultants from the academic, public and private sectors
- c) Visits to other authorities/venues outside the Council House
- d) Publications and subscriptions to outside organisations
- e) Paying the expenses of witnesses, including childcare, loss of earnings, travel, hospitality
- f) Organising and hosting conferences and other events
- g) Conference attendance and other travel expenses
- h) Scrutiny specific member training
- i) Advertising scrutiny
- j) Other scrutiny related expenditure

3.4 Expenditure on these items is dependent on the work plans the Boards agree, and the methodologies used for review and other work.

This year, work has mainly involved the Council's own officers or officers from other public bodies and there has been little call on the budget. The exception was Scrutiny Board 4 (Health) which, in addition to small items of expenditure on room hire, refreshments and conference costs, has subscribed to the Democratic Health Network and spent £2,080 on academic support for its review of the distribution of GP services.

Following a successful bid to the Centre for Public Scrutiny, Scrutiny Board 4 (Health) also secured access to an additional £19,700 for a review of increasing the initiation and duration of breastfeeding in Coventry and Warwickshire. This funding is separate and in addition to the City Council's scrutiny budget. The current status of this budget is also listed in the appendix. Expenditure in 2004-05 on the breastfeeding review was £7076.51.

#### **4 Proposal to be considered**

4.1 While it is strictly the case that the scrutiny budget is the responsibility of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, one of the primary roles for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is to work with the Scrutiny Board Chairs to agree a scrutiny review work plan for the civic year ahead. There is scope for the further development of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee's role in this regard. Better use of the funds available to Scrutiny offers the potential to increase productivity, improve quality and more greatly involve the public in scrutiny work. When working with scrutiny board chairs to agree review work plans, the opportunity therefore exists for Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to attach notional budgets to the reviews that have been agreed as representing the highest priorities. It is therefore proposed that in 2005/2006 the budget should again be allocated between the Boards and the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, but with a more explicit distinction between funds that are to cover the running costs of the Boards, and the central fund that is available for supporting larger reviews.

4.2 The recommended allocation is as follows:-

Allocate each of four Boards	-	£3,000	(total £12,000)
Allocate Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee	-	£23,190	

- 4.3 It is recommended that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee request, in time for meetings early in the new civic year, that each Scrutiny Board bring forward proposals for the major review(s) the Board proposes to complete in the current year, to include preliminary scoping, methodological and budgetary information. Then, in close collaboration with Scrutiny Chairs, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee would be well placed to agree an overarching scrutiny review work plan, complete with notional budgets for the reviews. Responsibility for the expenditure associated with the review work plan would remain with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, but Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee would have fulfilled its co-ordination role, and would also be able to assess the performance of scrutiny overall. Members will be able to determine whether a review has followed the methodology set out in the agreed scope (notably whether the funds allocated to support the review have been spent), and compare outputs with the objectives agreed at the start of the process.
- 4.4 It should be noted that some scrutiny expenditure has already taken place from the proposed notional Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee allocation of £23,190, to pay for advertising (£2,000) and refreshments (£22.16). Your officers recommend that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee earmark up to 75% of the original allocation to proposed reviews early in the civic year (equal to approximately £17,400), leaving a significant contingency (£3,767.84) for additional review work, cost overruns or expenditure related to the corporate support of the scrutiny process.
- 4.5 It is not the purpose of this report to recommend that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee impinge on the discretion of Scrutiny Board Chairs to set agendas and priorities for the Boards they lead. As its title suggests, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee should seek to “co-ordinate”, not control. Instead, this report aims to set out a process that gives all members greater clarity about the aims and objectives of scrutiny, and the mechanisms for assessing whether the hoped for outputs and outcomes from scrutiny are achieved.
- 4.6 As a consequence, when deciding and planning reviews, Scrutiny Boards will need to assess more rigorously the methods they might use to do the work and the level of resources required. Similarly, there will be much greater transparency concerning whether reviews are meeting the expectations of those involved.
- 4.7 Judicious use of the budget should help to produce more effective review work, leading to recommendations that are well resourced, researched and supported. High quality recommendations are more likely to be adopted and acted on by the executive.

List of background papers	
Proper officer:	Chris Hinde, Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Author:	Corinne Steele, Scrutiny Co-ordinator, Legal and Democratic Services Directorate
Telephone	(024) 7683 1145
(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)	
Other contributors:	Jonathan Jardine, Scrutiny Co-ordinator (Health), Legal and Democratic Services Directorate (024 7683 1122)
Papers open to Public Inspection	
<b>Description of paper</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	

## Appendix

### SUMMARY OF FORECAST OUTTURN

<u>2004 / 2005</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>COMMITTED</u>	<u>FORECAST OUTTURN</u>
	£	£	£
Scrutiny Board (1)	117.60	166.50	284.10
Scrutiny Board (2)	646.00	0.00	646.00
Scrutiny Board (3)	420.38	0.00	420.38
Scrutiny Board (4)	8064.62	125.00	8189.62
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee	589.72	986.39	1576.11
Total:	9,838.32	1,277.89	11,116.21