



meeting **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

date **2 November 2005**

agenda item number

Report of the Head of Scrutiny

1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval for:

- The County Council's Scrutiny Team organising a scrutiny away day for Chairs of Select Committees. The County Council's Select Committee Chairs' Forum meeting on 15 September 2005 suggested this development event.

2. Information and Advice

Under the Travel and Accommodation Policy and other arrangements approved by the full Council on 7 October 2004, this Committee is the appropriate body for considering/approving attendance at a range of events and the travel and accommodation requirements arising therefrom. This report describes a proposal which is within the Committee's decision-making powers and Members are asked to consider whether attendance at the event should be approved. The information included within the following sections of the report should ensure compliance with normal decision-making rules. If attendance is approved, the details referred to below will be used to compile the public Register, which is available on the Council's website.

3. Reasons for Event

- 3.1 The County Council's Scrutiny Team has been requested by the Chairs Forum to prepare and organise a scrutiny development event for Chairs of Select Committees; the location of the event would at a suitable venue within the County (or City). There may be a room available within County Hall, however it was considered that an environment external to the County Council may be more suitable and of greater benefit to the day. The date would be arranged in consultation with Members and the Head of Members' Services, anticipated to be Monday 5 December 2005.

- 3.2 The day would form part of a process to improve and develop scrutiny at the County Council and will allow the Chairs to explore and develop ideas and approaches that could then contribute to a wider Member debate on scrutiny, as identified by the Leader of the County Council at the County Council meeting on 21 July 2005. This may include some of the following issues:
- How do we do Scrutiny
 - How is Scrutiny done elsewhere
 - How could we do Scrutiny
 - Scrutiny/Chairs relationship with the Cabinet
 - Scrutiny in the context of Council's which have political groups
 - Relationship between Chairs/Vice Chairs
 - Scrutiny/Chairs relationship with Officers and Support Structures
- 3.3 It is estimated that the day would cost approximately £300. The Chairs Forum suggested that an independent facilitator be used at the event. A representative from the Centre for Public Scrutiny is expected to cost approximately £150, if available.
- 3.4 This event is separate from the proposed training for chairs and vice chairs of Select Committees that was previously agreed by the Administration Committee. This training will be provided when a suitable date has been identified.

4. Statutory and Policy Implications

This report is necessary to ensure compliance with the Council's Travel and Accommodation policy and current arrangements for approving attendance at conferences, seminars and Member Training events. The needs of individual travellers would need to be considered once attendance at the events had been confirmed.

5 Recommendations

That Committee approve

- The County Council's Scrutiny Team organising an internal scrutiny away day specifically for Chairs of Select Committees. The costs would be contained with the Scrutiny Team's budget.

Lynn Senior
Head of Scrutiny

Legal Services comments

It is within the delegation to this Committee to approve expenditure to be incurred for Member attendance at conferences and seminars plus expenditure on accommodation and associated costs to be incurred and required by Members for the purposes of conducting County Council business or in connection with attendance at conferences, seminars or training courses;

Director of Resources' financial comments (MB)

The cost can be contained within the 2005/06 budget for Scrutiny.

Background papers available for inspection

Nil

Electoral Divisions affected

Nil