

Part 2 - Responsibility for functions

e. overview & scrutiny

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The overview & scrutiny function is made up of the Scrutiny Commission and Finance & Performance Scrutiny.

The Scrutiny Commission will consist of 11 members of Council and Finance & Performance Scrutiny of nine members of the council, and both will be politically proportionate. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and members of the Executive may not be a member of the Scrutiny Commission or Finance & Performance Scrutiny. The chairmanship of the Scrutiny Commission will be allocated to a councillor who is not from the majority group, by decision of Council. Two vice-chairmen from the other two political groups will be appointed to the Scrutiny Commission, and one of these (who is not from the majority group) will be appointed chairman of Finance & Performance Scrutiny.

Non-council members may be co-opted to overview & scrutiny bodies in a non-voting capacity for specific areas of investigation, by agreement of the Scrutiny Commission.

Joint meetings may be held from time to time. The chairman of the Scrutiny Commission will chair any joint meetings of overview and scrutiny bodies. All other procedure rules will be observed.

1. General role

1.1 Within their terms of reference and with the aim of improving services to the public and on their behalf, the Scrutiny Commission and Finance & Performance Scrutiny will:

- Review and/or scrutinise decision made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the council's functions, as an internal 'critical friend'
- Make reports and/or recommendations to Council and/or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions
- Consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants or the activity of other public bodies operating within the borough
- Exercise the right to call-in for decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive, or executive decisions delegated to individual Executive members or officers
- Approve an annual work programme
- Put in place a system to ensure that referrals to the Executive, either by way of report or for reconsideration, are managed efficiently within the terms of the constitution
- Appoint, where appropriate, a group to review a specific topic on a task and finish basis

2. Specific functions

2.1 The specific responsibilities of the Scrutiny Commission and Finance & Performance Scrutiny are:

- Assisting Council and the Executive in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues
- Conducting research and consultation on analysis of policy issues and possible options
- Considering and implementing mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options
- Questioning members of the Executive, committees and the senior leadership team about their views and professional opinions on issues and proposals affecting the area
- Reviewing and scrutinising the decisions made by and the performance of the Executive and officers both in relation to individual decisions and over a period of time
- Reviewing and scrutinising the performance of the council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas and monitoring the eventual effectiveness of decisions taken and comparing to original forecasts
- Ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies
- Ensuring effective scrutiny of the risk management processes of the council including corporate and service risks
- Making recommendations to Council, the Executive or appropriate committee as an outcome of the scrutiny process
- Liaising with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working
- Reviewing and scrutinising the performance of other public bodies operating in the area and inviting reports from them
- Questioning and gathering evidence from any person, with their consent
- Co-opting non-council members to assist in the scrutiny of specific issues on which they might have expert knowledge
- Consider “Councillor Calls for Action” and petitions as referred under the petitions scheme.
- Prepare and present an annual report to Council.