

# Scrutiny Committee – Terms of Reference.

## 1. Membership and Meeting Arrangements

1.1 The Scrutiny Committee will comprise of 15 Councillors appointed by the Council and will normally meet on a monthly basis.

1.2 Members of the Executive will not be eligible to sit on the Scrutiny Committee(s).

1.3 The Committee may invite persons to be co-opted non-voting members.

## 2. Terms of Reference

2.1 The Council will appoint a Scrutiny Committee to discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 and 21A of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under Section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000.

2.2 This Committee is also the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

2.3 The Council seeks to ensure a robust scrutiny process. The Scrutiny Committee is not a decision-making body, but it should:

- a) be the 'critical friend' of the Executive but not subservient to the Executive;
- b) enable the voice and concerns of the public;
- c) be carried out by independently minded Councillors;
- d) drive improvement.

2.4 The general terms of reference of the Scrutiny Committee are set out below:

to perform all Scrutiny functions on behalf of the Council;

- a) to appoint such informal task and finish groups as it considers appropriate to fulfil those Scrutiny functions;
- b) to approve the overview and work scrutiny programme so as to ensure that the Committee's time is effectively and efficiently used;
- c) to undertake investigations into such matters relating to the Council's functions and powers as:
  - i. may be referred by the Leader/Executive; or,
  - ii. the Committee may consider appropriate; or,
  - iii. have been referred to the Committee pursuant to the "call-in" procedure set out in the Scrutiny Procedure Rules;

- d) to review and advise on existing policies of the Council, including making recommendations for future options to the Leader/Executive;
- e) to review arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the Council's functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- f) to monitor and review the Council's performance against relevant national and local performance indicators and adopted plans and strategies;
- g) to consider any matter affecting the Council area or its inhabitants;
- h) to discuss initiatives put forward for consideration by individual members of the Committee;
- i) to review or scrutinise decisions made or other actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's crime and disorder functions and to make such reports or recommendations as deemed appropriate.

### **3. Specific Functions**

#### **A. Policy Development and Review**

##### **3.1 The Scrutiny Committee may:**

- a) assist the Council and the Leader/Executive in the development of the budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues, and the Scrutiny Committee may obtain evidence from members of the public or expert witnesses to inform its response;
- b) conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- c) question the Leader of the Council, Members of the Executive and Chief Officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area;
- d) liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national or local, to ensure that the interests of the inhabitants of the area are enhanced by collaborative working; and,
- e) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options.

## **B. Scrutiny**

3.2 The Scrutiny Committee may:

- a) review and scrutinise and ask questions of the Leader, lead Councillors, the Executive and Council officers in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects, whether generally or in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to the portfolios of the Leader or of Lead Councillors. As part of this process, the Committee may facilitate the asking of questions submitted in advance by members of the public;
- b) review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- c) make recommendations as appropriate to the Leader/Executive and/or the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- d) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Committee and local people about their activities and performance;
- e) question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent) and require information from partner organisations; and
- f) use innovative ways to scrutinise matters of concern such as select committees, public hearings, spotlight reviews, mystery shopping and workshops. The issue being investigated should be matched to the most appropriate process.

## **C. Finance**

3.3 The Scrutiny Committee may:

- a) scrutinise the overall Council Budget as part of its preparation;
- b) exercise overall responsibility for the finances made available to them;
- c) request that a budget be made available to it for the purposes of research, the costs of expert witnesses, site visits, non-meeting based activities and matters similar thereto.

## **D. Annual Report**

3.4 The Scrutiny Committee must report annually to the Full Council on its work undertaken during the year, its future work programme and amended working methods if appropriate.