

Chapter 7 – Scrutiny Committees

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Effective overview and scrutiny is essential to enhance the accountability and transparency of the decision-making process. The Council has appointed an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discharge the functions conferred by section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 and any regulations. This scrutiny committee will discuss issues in public and take a cross-cutting approach to their work. In accordance with section 9FA of the above Act it may appoint one or more sub-committees to carry out any of their functions. They will seek to improve the delivery of policies and services by:

- (i) holding the Executive to account for its actions;
- (ii) advising on the development and implementation of new policy and corporate projects;
- (iii) testing whether existing policies and practices are effective and efficient and suggesting how they might be improved; and
- (iv) ensuring the rigour and objectivity of performance management and service reviews.

7.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

7.2.1 The Council will appoint an Overview and Scrutiny Committee of up to 14 members, or as many as Council determines from time to time, and it will normally be politically balanced. No member of the Executive may be a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.2.2 The primary purpose of the committee is to improve the delivery of policies and services.

Terms of reference

Its terms of reference are the performance of all overview and scrutiny functions on behalf of the Council and as set out in section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000, summarised below, to:

- (i) review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- (ii) agree reports and make recommendations to the Council and the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- (iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants;
- (iv) question members of the Executive and officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area;
- (v) liaise with external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;
- (vi) exercise the right to 'call in' for reconsideration of decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive, in accordance with the rules set out in this Constitution;
- (vii) consider any matter which has been placed on the agenda of the committee by any member of the committee in accordance with the rules of procedure in this Constitution;
- (viii) act as the Crime and Disorder Committee for the purposes of section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006;
- (ix) undertake consideration of such matters that will be key decisions where the Executive requests the Committee to scrutinise the matter in advance of an the decision being taken. This relates to matters that are of particular interest to the committee, for example, decisions to be made on significant place making projects;
- (x) review current service delivery models (the council's own and those of the council's partners) with a view to identifying gaps, exploring innovative solutions to delivery issues;
- (xi) review draft strategies; and
- (xii) consider issues or functions in which Members feel they could shape future policy.

