

A councillor guide to scrutiny

How can I get involved?

The proper and effective scrutiny of the Council's policies and delivery of services is a crucial responsibility of democratically elected members and this guide aims to advise councillors in the exercise of this function.

Attending meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S)

Members of O&S must be free to carry out their work with the maximum independence and freedom to challenge and monitor Council policies and service delivery, they should not be subject to pressure from Cabinet Members on the nature or outcomes of their reviews, monitoring and other duties. However they must be aware of resource and budgetary constraints when determining their work plan and regular dialogue between members of O&S and Cabinet Members is important for effective working.

Non-members of O&S - meetings of O&S are open to all councillors and non-members are welcome to attend, though non-member participation at these meetings is at the discretion of the Chair.

Cabinet Members – are free to attend meetings of O&S and may from time to time request or be asked to provide an update on a particular topic or issue. They may be invited to attend meetings of a scrutiny task-group on a regular or ad-hoc basis.

Member of a scrutiny task group

All non-executive members (non-Cabinet Members) will be invited, by email or discussions within political groups, to form part of any task-groups which are established and these groups need not be politically proportionate. Members are encouraged to put themselves forward for topics in which they have a particular interest. Members of scrutiny task groups will be expected to take an active role in the work of these groups. More information about scrutiny tasks-groups is set out in the scrutiny task group guide (Appendix 4).

Proposing a topic for scrutiny

Any member can nominate a topic for scrutiny. Issues can also be referred to O&S from Council and Cabinet or other bodies within the council. They may ask the O&S to undertake a review of a particular policy area as part of the Council's overall work plan. You may be approached by a member of the public regarding particular topics which you can put forward on their behalf for consideration for inclusion in the work plan. If a member wishes to nominate a topic for inclusion on the O&S workplan they must complete the scrutiny topic registration form.