

Overview and Scrutiny Chair Role Description

1. Accountabilities

- Full Council
- The Public
- The Committee

2. Role purpose & activity

- **Providing leadership and direction**
 - To provide confident and effective management of the committee
 - To promote the role of overview and scrutiny within the council, liaising effectively with officers, executive members and colleague chairs
 - To promote the integral role and contribution of scrutiny within the authority's wider improvement planning and reporting arrangements
 - To lead joint scrutiny activities with other authorities or organisations when required
 - To champion and promote the role of Overview and Scrutiny to the public, helping the public better understand and, crucially, contribute to and engage with the scrutiny process.
 - To promote the role of Overview and Scrutiny to partner bodies, helping them to understand and engage with the Scrutiny function.
 - To demonstrate an objective and evidence based approach to overview and scrutiny ensuring that scrutiny inquiries are methodologically sound and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives
 - To follow-up scrutiny recommendations, evaluate the impact and added value of overview and scrutiny activity and identify areas for improvement
 - Work closely with scrutiny support staff to drive continual improvements in scrutiny
 - Assist in publicising the work of the scrutiny committee
- **Managing the work programme**
 - To develop a balanced work programme for the committee which includes pre decision scrutiny, policy development and review, investigative scrutiny, holding the executive to account, and performance monitoring
 - To ensure the programme takes account of relevant factors such as: the work programmes of the executive and other committees, strategic priorities and risks, audit and regulatory reports and recommendations, single-integrated plan and partners strategic priorities and relevant community issues
 - To ensure that the public are engaged in scrutiny activities by informing them about the work programme and encouraging participation
 - To ensure that the work programme is delivered

- To report on progress against the work programme to Council, and others as appropriate
 - To ensure that the work programme is manageable and the workload delegated and prioritised to focus on the areas of most benefit or greatest risk to the organisation.
 - To ensure that task and finish/working/sub groups have clear terms of reference and deliver the required outcomes.
- **Leading Joint Scrutiny**
 - To apply the appropriate tests and criteria when deciding whether or not to undertake joint scrutiny
 - To ensure that regional bodies and partnerships are held to account and that their plans are subject to scrutiny
 - To develop protocols and terms of reference for joint working
 - To ensure public engagement in joint scrutiny activities
 - To enable the pooling of scrutiny resources for effective working and outcomes
 - To ensure the equal participation and contribution from all partners as appropriate
- **Effective meeting management**
 - To plan and set agendas containing clear objectives and outcomes for the meeting
 - To ensure that necessary preparation is done beforehand, if necessary, through pre-meetings, including agreeing appropriate lines of questioning
 - To ensure that the approach to overview and scrutiny is impartial and that the committee meeting is conducted without political whipping (as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011)
 - To manage the progress of business at meetings, ensuring that meeting objectives are met, and the code of conduct, standing orders and other constitutional requirements are adhered to
 - To ensure that all participants have an opportunity to make an appropriate contribution
 - To ensure that members of the public are able to contribute to meetings and understand the protocols for public speaking.
- **Involvement and development of committee members**
 - To encourage effective contributions from all committee members in both committee and task and finish groups
 - To assess individual and collective performance within the committee and work to improve scrutiny outcomes
 - To ensure that committee members have the appropriate knowledge and skills to undertake their roles and work with lead members and officers to secure appropriate development.

3. Values

To be committed to the values of the Council and the following values in public office:

- Openness and transparency
- Honesty and integrity
- Tolerance and respect
- Equality and fairness
- Appreciation of cultural difference
- Sustainability

Overview and Scrutiny Chair Person Specification

To fulfil his or her role laid out in the role description an effective Scrutiny Chair requires:

Providing leadership and direction

- Ability to see the 'big picture'
- Understanding of the role and functions of the council
- Understanding of the key strategies, priorities and direction of travel of the Council
- Understanding of the purpose of the scrutiny function and its role in the council's wider improvement planning and reporting arrangements
- Ability to promote an approach to scrutiny which is (a) member led, (b) seeks to provide an evidence based challenge of decision makers and service providers and (c) is an important mechanism for community engagement and service improvements
- Understanding of the legal requirements around scrutiny, including prohibition of political whipping and taking the views of the public into account
- Understanding of the purposes and processes associated with the Councillor Call for Action and the Call In procedure
- Understanding of the terms of reference for the committee and the role of the chair
- Understanding of member support functions
- Understanding of council service, improvement and financial priorities and risks
- Ability to develop work programmes
- Understanding of community issues
- Objectivity and understanding of equalities and diversity
- Negotiation and consensus building
- Ability to build constructive and 'critical friend' relationships with the Executive
- A commitment to personal development in the role
- Commitment to develop other members by mentoring and guidance
- Working closely with scrutiny support officers to ensure the continual development of scrutiny
- Making sure that scrutiny is making a difference

Managing the work programme

- Ability to manage projects and resources
- Ability to manage people
- Ability to prioritise
- Ability to report progress to different groups in different styles – verbally and in writing
- Ability to monitor and constantly review work programmes

Leading Joint Scrutiny

- An ability to create an effective, supportive and welcoming environment for scrutiny members and partner representatives from different organizations

- An ability to see the big picture at the regional level
- A clear understanding of the role and functions of the partnership/regional organization
- An understanding of the key strategies, priorities and direction of travel of the partnership/regional organization
- A commitment to enabling an approach to joint scrutiny which is member-led, provides an evidence-based challenge and is an important mechanism for community engagement and service improvement
- An ability to work constructively with partnerships/regional organisations under scrutiny
- A commitment to develop and embed an apolitical, objective, collective and inclusive scrutiny process
- A commitment to offer guidance and mentorship to scrutiny members
- A willingness to ensure that joint scrutiny makes a difference
- An ability to negotiate and build consensus
- An ability to manage people, projects and resources
- A commitment to raising the profile of joint scrutiny and an ability to champion it within the authority and beyond

Effective meeting management

- Understanding and application of meeting protocols, code of conduct, standing orders and other constitutional requirements including protocols for public speaking and webcasting
- Ability to chair meetings effectively, managing members contributions and the agenda and progressing business to achieve the desired outcomes
- Ability to facilitate effective discussions focussing on the agreed questioning strategy.
- Ability to listen and question effectively
- Ability to prepare and introduce speakers and make them feel at ease when presenting to the committee
- Ability to be impartial and ensure that the committee is acting in a non-political way

Community engagement

- Understanding of the role of scrutiny in enabling local people and communities to contribute to the decision and policy making process
- Knowledge of local issues and expectations
- Ability to work effectively with all members of the community and to build an understanding of the role of scrutiny with the public and stakeholders
- ability to engage with individuals and organisations in the community especially those traditionally excluded
- To promote an understanding that scrutiny is a last resort for matters such as CCfA
- Ability to manage expectations of the public in asking scrutiny to consider issues

Involving and developing of committee members

- Understanding of the role and skills of the scrutiny committee and its individuals
- Ability to support members and the committee in assessing their performance
- Ability to identify any training and development needs and Champion and participate in appropriate learning and development
- Provide mentoring, guidance and support to members in their roles such as members leading task and finish groups