

Overview and Scrutiny Member Role Description

1 Accountabilities

- Chair of the appropriate scrutiny committee
- Full Council
- The public

2 Role purpose & activity

- To participate fully in the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the development and delivery of its work programme and any associated task and finish groups
- **Scrutinising and developing policy**
 - To assist in the development of council policy through scrutinising of draft policies, and improvement and refinement of existing policy
 - To challenge policies on a sound basis of evidence for example against legislation or local political priority
 - To assess the impact of existing policy and identify areas for improvement
 - To identify where new policies might be required to address forthcoming legislation
- **Holding the Executive to account, monitoring performance and service delivery**
 - To monitor the performance of internal and external providers against standards and targets including questioning of executive and senior officers on the delivery of targets
 - To contribute to the identification and mitigation of risk
 - To investigate and make recommendations to address the causes of under performance or poor performance
 - To monitor action plans or recommendations following external audit, inspection or regulatory reports
 - To evaluate the validity of executive decisions and challenge decisions through call in where appropriate
 - To build trust with the executive so that appropriate matters could be sent to scrutiny for a pre-decision review prior to the executive taking a final decision
- **Promoting the work of Overview and Scrutiny**
 - To promote the role of overview and scrutiny within and outside the council, developing effective internal relationships with officers and other members and external relationships with community representatives.

- To demonstrate an objective non political and evidence based approach to overview and scrutiny, by utilising a wide range of research in any work undertaken including sources of information outside the Council
 - To add value to the decision making and service provision of the authority through effective scrutiny
 - To be able to demonstrate where scrutiny is making a difference by its involvement
- **Community engagement**
 - To use scrutiny as a means to address community issues and engage the public in forward work programmes
 - To encourage stakeholders to participate in the work of the authority
 - To assist in developing locally viable and acceptable policy solutions
 - To build a dialogue around priorities, objectives and performance, among communities and stakeholders
 - To take a county wide perspective in dealing with issues
- **Participating in joint scrutiny**
 - To work within the appropriate terms of reference and protocols governing joint working in scrutiny
 - To apply the appropriate tests and criteria when deciding whether or not to undertake joint scrutiny
 - To contribute to the scrutiny of regional bodies and partnerships
 - To encourage public engagement in joint scrutiny
 - To work effectively with partner scrutineers from other authorities and organisations.
- **Meeting participation**
 - To make adequate and appropriate preparation for meetings through research and briefings and planning meeting strategies
 - To participate in a proactive objective, informed and effective manner taking account of the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and other constitutional requirements
 - To demonstrate effective scrutiny inquiry skills in questioning, listening and information handling
 - To be non-political
 - To focus on outcomes / making a difference by participation

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 Member Person Specification

To fulfil his or her role as laid out in the role description, an effective scrutiny member requires:

- 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 and a commitment to the scrutiny function
- Full understanding of the scrutiny remit and role, to deliver 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 terms of reference for their own committee and how they relate to others.
- Ability to operate apolitically, objectively and with an understanding of equalities and diversity
- Understanding of member support functions
- Willingness to work within the guidance of the chair
- Willingness to undertake personal development as necessary and understand the skills they need to undertake the role
- Understanding of the legal requirement to take the views of the public into account
- Ability to negotiate and build consensus
- Understanding of the purposes and processes associated with the Councillor Call for Action and the Call In procedure
- Understanding of council service, improvement and financial priorities and risks
- Understanding of community issues
- Engage fully in scrutiny including asking questions

Scrutinising and developing policy

- Knowledge of and ability to evaluate existing policy
- Understanding of best practice
- Understanding of national and local legislative and policy context

Monitoring performance and service delivery and holding the executive to account

- Understanding of the councils improvement programme and associated risk assessment arrangements
- Understanding of the principles and practice of performance management
- Understanding of council's performance management arrangements
- Ability to analyse data and challenge performance
- Understanding of the arrangements for call in
- Ability to act as a critical friend and in a non political way
- Undertake an overview rather than detailed monitoring
- Ability to hold executive members / officers to account for the achievement of targets / objectives

- Monitoring action plans arising from internal or external regulator reviews

Participating in Joint Scrutiny

- A commitment to working jointly with scrutiny members of other authorities and representatives of partner organizations
- An 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 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 operate apolitically, objectively, collectively and inclusively
- Willingness to work within the guidance of the chair
- Willingness to undertake personal development as necessary and understand the skills they need to undertake the role
- An ability to negotiate and build consensus
- Full engagement in scrutiny, including asking questions

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

Meeting participation

- Ability to interpret information and data from a range of sources
- Understanding and application of meeting protocols, code of conduct, standing orders and other constitutional requirements
- Ability to participate in meetings including effective listening, questioning and speaking
- Preparation work including considering lines of questioning
- Ability to present information to the committee