

## **PART 4 – RULES OF PROCEDURE**

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### **SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES**

#### **1 Scrutiny Committees**

The Council will have the five Scrutiny Committees set out in Article 6 and will appoint to them as it considers appropriate from time to time. Scrutiny Committees will have a membership of nine elected Members unless otherwise determined by Council.

Scrutiny Committees may appoint "Task and Finish" Sub Committees comprised of up to nine elected Members, for a fixed period, on the expiry of which they shall cease to exist. These will not exercise the formal powers associated with scrutiny (which are the preserve of Committees), but can contribute to, or inform, the scrutiny process. A Scrutiny Committee may agree to invite one or more advisors with relevant expertise to participate in a Task and Finish group inquiry

#### **2 Members of Scrutiny Committees**

All councillors, except members of the Cabinet, may be members of a Scrutiny Committee or a Task and Finish Sub Committee. However, no member may be involved in scrutinising a decision which he/she has been directly involved in taking.

#### **3 Co-opted Members**

The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee shall include in its membership the following voting representatives:

- (a) 1 Church in Wales diocese representative;
- (b) 1 Roman Catholic diocese representative; and
- (c) 2 parent governor representatives.

When matters unrelated to education functions, which are the responsibility of the executive, fall to be considered by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, these representatives shall not vote on those other matters, though they may stay in the meeting and speak.

#### **3A Substitute Members**

Substitute members may be appointed, in accordance with the Appointment of Substitute Members Procedure Rule, to take the place of a Committee Member who is unable to attend the meeting. A substitute member must speak and vote in his or her own capacity, and is under the same obligations

as any other Member in respect of declaring personal interests and complying with the Members' Code of Conduct and all relevant procedure rules.

#### **4 Meetings of the Scrutiny Committees**

Scrutiny Committees shall generally meet on a monthly basis. In addition, extraordinary meetings may be called from time to time as and when appropriate. A Scrutiny committee meeting may be called by the Chairperson of the relevant Scrutiny Committee if he/she considers it necessary or appropriate.

Scrutiny Committee meetings will generally be held in public in accordance with the provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

#### **5 Quorum**

The quorum of a meeting will be one quarter of the whole number of members of that Scrutiny Committee/Sub Committee. During any meeting, if the Chairperson declares that there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chairperson. If he/she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee/Sub Committee.

#### **6 Chairperson**

Scrutiny Chairpersons will be appointed on a politically proportionate basis in accordance with the provisions of sections 66 – 75 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

#### **7 Scrutiny Role and Conduct of Business**

Within their terms of reference, Scrutiny Committees:-

- (a) Will set their own work programmes and submit Annual Reports for consideration by the Council. Such reports will outline previous, and ongoing, investigations, and set out any known future work programme.
- (b) May make proposals to the Cabinet regarding policy and service development and scrutinise and review decisions made, or actions, taken in connection with the discharge of any Council functions.
- (c) May use the budgets allocated to them, relevant Council employees, advisers and assessors to assist them in fulfilling their role. They may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations. They may ask witnesses to attend to address them on any matter under consideration and may pay to any advisers, assessors and witnesses a reasonable fee and/or expenses for doing so.

They must comply with the Council's procedures and keep within the budgets allocated to them in so doing.

- (d) As far as possible, will ensure that the objectives of any proposed business are set out in its programme.

## **8 Agenda items**

- (a) Any member of a Scrutiny Committee may give notice to the Head of Democratic Services that he/she wishes an item relevant to the functions of that committee to be included on the agenda for a future meeting. On receipt of such a request, the Chairperson will ensure that it is included as an item on the next suitable agenda.
- (b) Scrutiny Committees shall respond, as soon as their work programme permits, to requests from the Council or the Cabinet, to review particular areas of Council activity. Where they do so, the Scrutiny Committee shall report their findings, and any recommendations, back to the Cabinet and/or Council, as appropriate.

## **9 Reports from Scrutiny Committees**

- (a) Once it has formed recommendations following the conclusion, or part conclusion, of its deliberations on a particular topic, a Scrutiny Committee will prepare a formal report and submit it for consideration by the Cabinet (if the report relates to a Executive Decision or proposal) or to the Council (if the recommendation would require a departure from, or a change, to the agreed budget and policy framework).
- (b) If a Scrutiny Committee cannot reach unanimous agreement on the content of a report to the Council or Cabinet as appropriate, then any member of the committee may request that the points of difference between their view and that of the majority and the reasons for the difference in view be recorded in the Scrutiny Committee report and submitted for consideration by the Council or Cabinet as appropriate. Where a minority report is requested, it must be requested before the Committee's report on the topic under scrutiny is determined.
- (c) The Council or Cabinet shall give consideration to a formal report of a Scrutiny Committee and any minority report at an appropriate meeting. Where appropriate, the Scrutiny Committee shall receive a written response from the Cabinet to its formal report and any minority report, as soon as is practicable following the consideration of the report by the Cabinet. The appropriate Cabinet Member will also attend a future meeting of the scrutiny committee to present any response.
- (d) Where a scrutiny committee prepares a report for consideration by the Cabinet in relation to a matter where the decision making power has been delegated to an individual member of the Cabinet, then the Scrutiny Committee will submit a copy of their report to him/her for consideration.

The member with delegated decision-making power must consider the report and respond in writing to the Scrutiny Committee. The member will also attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to present their response.

## 10 **Rights of Scrutiny Committee members to documents**

Members of Scrutiny Committees have the additional right to documents, and to notice of meetings as set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

## 11 **Hearing evidence and receiving information**

- (a) Scrutiny Committees may receive written submissions or call witnesses to assist them in their examination of topics.
- (b) They may require any Cabinet Member and/or Council officer to attend to explain, in relation to matters within their remit:-
  - (i) any decision or series of decisions;
  - (ii) the extent to which actions taken implement Council policy; and/or
  - (iii) the performance of any Council service within their portfolio or management responsibility
  - (iv) and it is the duty of those persons to attend if so required.
- (c) Where any member or officer is required to attend a Scrutiny Committee under this provision, the Chairperson of that Committee, or an officer acting at their behest, will inform the member or officer in writing, giving at least ten calendar days notice of the meeting at which he/she is required to attend, except in cases of urgent necessity, when at least 48 hours notice will be given. The notice will state the nature of the item on which he/she is required to attend to give account and whether any papers are required to be produced for the Committee. Where the account to be given to the Committee will require the production of a report, then the member or officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to allow for preparation of that documentation.
- (d) Where, in exceptional circumstances, the member or officer is unable to attend on the required date, then the scrutiny committee shall, in consultation with the member or officer, arrange an alternative date for attendance, or may seek a written submission.
- (e) A Scrutiny Committee may invite anyone whom it believes can make a useful contribution to address it, discuss issues of local concern and/or answer questions. It may, for example, wish to hear from residents, stakeholders and members and officers in other parts of the public sector and can invite such people to attend.

- (f) Scrutiny Committees will programme their agendas as effectively as possible and will in particular give any witness called to appear before them a time by which they can expect their contribution to be completed. At the expiry of that time period, the witness can leave unless he/she agrees to remain longer.

## 12 Call-in Procedure

- (a) When an Executive Decision is made by the Cabinet, a Committee of the Cabinet, the Leader, a Cabinet Member, the Chief Executive, a Corporate Director or a Director exercising a Corporate Director or a Director delegation, the decision shall be published on the Council's Intranet Site, and shall be available at the main offices of the Council, normally within two working days of being made. Members of those Committees who request it (in respect of decisions falling within their Committee's terms of reference) and Chairpersons of all Scrutiny Committees will also be sent copies of the records of all such decisions within the same timescale by the proper officer.
- (b) The notice will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision will be implemented on the expiry of seven clear working days after the publication of the decision ("the call-in period"), unless the decision is called in as set out below.
- (c) Any non Cabinet member of the Council (or a co-opted member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, in the case of a decision relating to an education matter) may call-in a decision of which notice has been given as set out above, by giving notice in writing to the Head of Democratic Services within the call-in period. The Head of Democratic Services shall then notify the Cabinet Office of the call-in. He/she shall call a meeting of the relevant committee on such date as he/she may determine, where possible after consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee, and in any case within five clear working days of the decision to call-in ("the scrutiny period"). At its meeting, the Scrutiny Committee may consider the called-in decision itself or decide to refer the issue to the Council for scrutiny, if the matter is of general significance and importance to the Council as a whole. A Council meeting to consider this issue must take place within ten clear working days of this referral ("the Council scrutiny period") unless otherwise agreed between the Leader and the Chairperson of the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- (d) Having considered the decision, the Scrutiny Committee or the Council (if the decision has been referred to Council) may refer it back to the Cabinet or the decision maker for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns. The Cabinet or decision maker shall then reconsider the matter before adopting a final decision, arranging for the decision to be changed to reflect points made by the Scrutiny Committee, or formally deferring the matter for further consideration. The relevant Scrutiny

Committee or Council as appropriate will be advised of the outcome at its next meeting.

- (e) If following a call-in, the matter is not referred back to the Cabinet or decision maker, the decision shall take effect on the date of the relevant Scrutiny Committee or Council meeting which considers the issue, or the expiry of the scrutiny period or the Council scrutiny period as appropriate, whichever is the later.
- (f) The role of Scrutiny Committees calling in a decision is:
  - (i) To test the merits of the decision
  - (ii) To consider the process by which the decision has been formulated.
  - (iii) To make recommendations (to support the decision, change aspects of the decision, or to invite the decision making body to reconsider).
  - (iv) To suggest further steps before a decision is made (but not to try to carry out those steps in place of the decision making body).
  - (v) To come to a view in a relatively short time scale, so as not to compromise the speed and efficiency of the decision-making process.
- (g) In calling in a decision it is not sufficient for the Member requesting the call in to state that they wish to test the merits of the decision. A member requesting a call in shall specify precisely which aspects of the decision they wish to question or challenge.
- (h) The Head of Democratic Services may, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, rule that a call in is not valid if:
  - (i) The call in request has not been made within the seven working days allowed for call in;
  - (ii) It is not clear which Executive Decision is being called in;
  - (iii) The decision is exempt from call in on account of urgency provisions;
  - (iv) The call in request provides too little information to enable Committee members or the decision taker to adequately prepare for the call in meeting.
  - (v) The decision being called in, or broadly the same decision, has been called in during the last six months; or
  - (vi) The matter has already been scrutinised by the relevant Scrutiny Committee and there is no significant new or additional information which has not been previously considered by that Committee.

### **13 Exceptions: Call-in and Urgency**

- (a) The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken is urgent. A decision will be urgent if either the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer or the S151 Officer certifies that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process could seriously prejudice the Council, or the public interest, and the Chair of the relevant scrutiny committee or, in his/her absence, the Chair of the Council, or in both their absences, the Vice-Chair of the Council, agrees that the matter is urgent. The record of the decision and notice by which it is made public shall state whether the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not be subject to call-in. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported for information to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.
- (b) The operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency shall be monitored annually, and a report submitted to Council with proposals for review if necessary.

### **14 Procedure at Scrutiny Committee meetings**

- (a) Scrutiny Committees shall consider the following business:
  - (i) minutes of the last meeting;
  - (ii) declarations of interest (to be made at the commencement of the agenda item in question);
  - (iii) consideration of any matter referred to the Committee for a decision in relation to call in of a decision;
  - (iv) responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Scrutiny Committee; and
  - (v) the business otherwise set out on the agenda for the meeting.
- (b) Where the Scrutiny Committee conducts investigations, the Committee may also invite people to attend to give evidence at committee meetings which are to be conducted in accordance with the following principles:
  - (i) that the investigation be conducted fairly and all members of the committee be given the opportunity to ask questions of those invited to give evidence, and to contribute and speak;
  - (ii) that those assisting the Committee by giving evidence be treated with respect and courtesy; and
  - (iii) that the investigation be conducted so as to maximise the efficiency of the investigation or analysis.

(iv) that members of the council acting in their constituency representative role be permitted to attend and give evidence in connection with ward specific matters provided they have first given notice to the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

(c) Following any investigation or review, the Committee shall prepare a report, for submission to the Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate, and shall make its report and findings public, except that reports containing confidential or exempt information need not be made public to the extent that such information would be disclosed.

## 15 **Matters within the remit of more than one Scrutiny Committee**

Where a Scrutiny Committee proposes to conduct a review, or scrutinise a matter, which also falls (whether in whole or in part) within the remit of another Scrutiny Committee, then the arrangements for the future scrutiny of this matter will be agreed by the relevant Scrutiny Chairpersons. This agreement will be reported to the next meeting of the appropriate Scrutiny Committees.