

BRIEFING PAPER NO. 4 – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TOOLKIT

Executive Summary

This Briefing paper sets out the scrutiny guidelines for Members of the Council to use when scrutinising topics selected by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and forms part of the Council's support for Member Learning and Development. The Toolkit includes elements of topic selection and what Scrutiny is and is not, whilst providing an insight into the background, process and role of the Committee. The Toolkit explains that Overview and Scrutiny requires specific ways of working and different skills for all concerned.

Scrutiny is a core function of the Members of the Committee and it is intended to review the Toolkit annually, to be brought to the Committee at its June meeting at the beginning of each Municipal Year. This will enable new Members of the Committee to raise any questions over the processes and will ensure that the Committee's approach to scrutiny remains relevant.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the briefing paper be noted; and
- (ii) subject to any final formatting alterations or changes agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit as set out in the appendix to this report be published.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.

Background Papers: None.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Briefing Paper has been drawn up to inform the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Members on the Council as a whole, how to utilise the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Toolkit which includes details of the Council's procedures.

2.0 What is the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit?

- 2.1 This Toolkit provides information, practical guidance and clarity to everyone involved in the overview and scrutiny process at Woking Borough Council. It has been drawn from a variety of sources and includes many best practice points selected from leading authorities in the field.
- 2.2 The Toolkit enables Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure that they concentrate on topics that matter to the residents of Woking, and this in turn will assist in shaping the future direction of the Borough. The Toolkit includes:
- An introduction to Overview and Scrutiny
 - Information on Topic Selection and the Annual Work Programme
 - The Overview and Scrutiny Process
 - The Call-In Procedure
 - Councillor Call for Action
 - Public Participation
 - Supporting Documents
- 2.3 The Toolkit will be reviewed annually, to be brought to the Committee at its June meeting at the beginning of each Municipal Year. This will enable new Members of the Committee to raise any questions over the processes and will ensure that the Committee's approach to scrutiny remains relevant.

3.0 Task Groups

- 3.1 Within the document there is information on the Task Groups created by the Committee, which can be set up to carry out an in depth piece of work on behalf of the Committee. The topic to be reviewed is chosen by the Committee, and the Task Group chooses how best to carry out the review. Members are appointed to Task Groups by the Committee.
- 3.2 There are two types of Task Groups:
- Standing Task Group – which is ongoing and provides an overview of the services of the Council, reporting directly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 - Ad Hoc Review Task Group – which can be established by the Committee to review particular issues that cannot be considered within a normal meeting.

4.0 Work Programme

- 4.1 The Work Programme is a live document and subject to regular review. It has the capacity to consider matters referred to the Committee by the Executive and also deal with any Call-Ins. Overview and Scrutiny is a Member led process and when Members lead on developing the Annual Work Programme the benefits to the community are maximised.
- 4.2 Topics can be suggested by Councillors, Officers and members of the public, and topics can be referred from the Executive or Council. Before a subject is chosen for review, at least

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one of the following criteria should be met to establish whether the proposed topic should be selected:

- The Scrutiny Review is likely to result in improvements for local people.
- The topic falls within a Community or Corporate priority area, such as the Community Strategy and the Council's priorities.
- The topic represents a key issue for the public.
- The service proposed for Scrutiny Review is performing poorly. A Review may pick up on areas of weakness identified through the Council's Audit reports or the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information published by the Council.
- There is a high level of dissatisfaction with the service.

5.0 Implications

Financial

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Human Resource/Training and Development

5.2 There are no human resource implications arising from this report, which forms part of the Councils overarching approach to Member learning and development.

Community Safety

5.3 There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

5.4 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

Sustainability

5.5 There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Equalities

5.6 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Safeguarding

5.7 There are no safeguarding implications arising from this report.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This Briefing Paper sets out the Council's provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit and forms part of the Council's programme for elected Member learning and development. It is intended to keep the Toolkit under review, with a report to be brought to the Committee at its June meeting at the beginning of each Municipal Year. This approach will enable new Members of the Committee to raise any questions over the processes and will ensure that the Committee's approach to scrutiny remains relevant.

REPORT ENDS