

HARINGEY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

PROTOCOL COVERING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (OSC)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A key objective of Haringey's Governance Review 2010/11 was to ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny function can help the Council to make key decisions and develop policy in a useful and effective manner.
- 1.2 The Terms of Reference for the OSC is stated in the Council's Constitution (Part 3 Section C). The purpose of this protocol is to set out in detail the process by which the OSC will function.
- 1.3 This document will be subject to regular review along with other governance arrangements, to ensure that it remains updated in the light of experience.

2 AIMS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 2.1 To provide a framework within which the work of the Council can be scrutinised in a constructive way that adds value to the Council's performance.
- 2.2 To help the Council to achieve its objectives by identifying areas for achieving excellence, and to carry out a scrutiny which identifies what needs to be done to improve the situation.
- 2.3 Not to duplicate work carried out by the Council, but provide an objective view of what needs to be done to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of services provided to local people.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The OSC can scrutinise any matter which affects the authority's area or its residents' wellbeing.
- 3.2 The Local Government Act 2000, the Health and Social Care Act 2001, the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, and the Police and Justice Act 2006 give the OSC the power to:
 - (i) Review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the functions of the Executive or Full Council;
 - (ii) Review and scrutinise local NHS-funded services, and to make recommendations to reduce health inequalities in the local community;
 - (iii) Review and scrutinise Crime Reduction Partnerships;¹
 - (iv) Make reports and recommendations on any issue affecting the authority's area, to the Full Council, its Committees or Sub-Committees, the Executive, or other appropriate external body;
 - (v) "Call In" for reconsideration a decision made by the Executive;
 - (vi) Require information from relevant partner authorities;²

¹ Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006

² Section 121 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

- (vii) Give notice to a relevant partner authority that they must have regard to scrutiny reports and recommendations on any local improvement targets.³
- 3.3 Scrutiny recommendations shall be responded to by the appropriate body within 2 months of receiving the recommendations.⁴ Where a response is requested from NHS-funded bodies, the response shall be made within 28 days.⁵
- 3.4 The OSC shall be responsible for scrutinising the draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) annually before its adoption by full Council, in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part 4 Section I).
- 3.5 The OSC shall respond to a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) referral, which will be handled in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part 4 Section G).

Scrutiny Review Panels

- 3.6 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall establish 4 standing Scrutiny Review Panels, to examine designated public services.
- 3.7 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall determine the terms of reference of each Scrutiny Review Panel. If there is any overlap between the business of the Panels, it is the responsibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to resolve this issue.
- 3.8 Areas which are not covered by the 4 standing Scrutiny Review Panels shall be the responsibility of the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4 MEMBERSHIP AND CHAIR

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall comprise 5 members, and be politically proportionate as far as possible. The Committee shall also comprise statutory education representatives, who shall have voting rights solely on education matters. The membership shall be agreed by the Group Leaders, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, and ratified each year at the Annual Council Meeting.
- 4.2 The chair of the OSC shall be a member of the majority group. The vice-chair shall be a member of the largest minority group. These appointments shall be ratified each year at the Annual Council Meeting.

Scrutiny Review Panels

- 4.3 The chair of each Scrutiny Review Panel shall be a member of the OSC, and shall be determined by the OSC at their first meeting.
- 4.4 It is intended that each Scrutiny Review Panel shall be comprised of between 3 and 7 members, and be politically proportionate as far as possible. It is intended that other than the chair, the other members are non-executive members who do not sit on the OSC.

³ Section 122(21C) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act

⁴ Ibid section 122 (21B)

⁵ Regulation 3 of Local Authority (Overview and Scrutiny Committees Health Scrutiny Functions) Regulations 2002

- 4.5 Each Scrutiny Review Panel shall be entitled to appoint up to three non-voting co-optees.
- 4.6 If there is a Children and Young People's Scrutiny Review Panel, the membership shall include the statutory education representatives of OSC. It is intended that the education representatives would also attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings where reports from a relevant Scrutiny Review Panel are considered.

5 MEETING FREQUENCY AND FORMAT

- 5.1 The intention is that OSC shall hold 6 scheduled meetings each year. One meeting, at the start of the civic year, shall agree the annual work programme of the OSC. One meeting, in January, shall consider the budget scrutiny reports from each Scrutiny Review Panel. The remaining meetings shall undertake the work programme and consider the reports from the Scrutiny Review Panels.
- 5.2 An extraordinary meeting of the OSC may be called in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part 4 Section G).
- 5.3 The agenda and papers for OSC shall be circulated to all members and relevant partners at least 5 clear days before the meeting.
- 5.4 There shall be a standing item on OSC meeting agendas to receive feedback from Area Committees. Area Committee Chairs shall be able to attend OSC meetings, and ask questions.
- 5.5 Members of the Council may Call In a decision of the Executive, or any Key Decision made under delegated powers, within 5 working days of the decision being made. The full procedure is given in the Council's Constitution (Part 4 Section H).
- 5.6 Pre-decision scrutiny on forthcoming Cabinet decisions shall only be undertaken at scheduled OSC meetings, in adherence with the Council's Forward Plan.

Scrutiny Review Panels

- 5.7 It is intended that each Scrutiny Review Panel shall hold 4 scheduled meetings each year.
- 5.8 An extraordinary meeting of a Scrutiny Review Panel may be called in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part 4 Section G).
- 5.9 The agenda and papers for Scrutiny Review Panels shall be circulated to all members and relevant partners at least 5 clear days before the meeting.

6 PROCESS FOR CABINET INVOLVEMENT

- 6.1 The OSC shall develop recommendations for arrangements to focus its resources and time available on effective scrutiny of the Cabinet, within the guidance of this protocol. It is not intended that this will include submitting written questions to Cabinet members, in advance of an OSC meeting. The recommended arrangements shall be jointly discussed with the Cabinet prior to the first meeting of OSC.
- 6.2 The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive shall be invited to OSC once a year, at the meeting when the Committee's work programme is set. This shall be an opportunity to jointly discuss the Council's priorities for the next year.
- 6.3 The Leader/ Cabinet Member attending an OSC or Scrutiny Review Panel meeting may be accompanied and assisted by any service officers they consider necessary. The Member may invite an officer attending to answer a question on their behalf.

7 THE OSC WORK PROGRAMME

- 7.1 The Council's Policy, Intelligence and Partnerships Unit shall coordinate the work programme of the OSC at the beginning of each civic year.
- 7.2 Any partner, member or service user may suggest an item for scrutiny. The OSC shall have regard to all such suggestions when they decide their work programme.
- 7.3 The OSC and Scrutiny Review Panels are able to request reports from the following areas to enable its scrutiny role, which shall be identified in the OSC's work programme:
 - (i) **Performance Reports;**
 - (ii) **One off reports** on matters of national or local interest or concern;
 - (iii) Issues arising out of **internal and external assessment;**
 - (iv) Issues on which the Cabinet or officers would like **the Committee's views or support;**
 - (v) Reports on **strategies and policies** under development;
 - (vi) **Progress reports** on implementing previous scrutiny recommendations accepted by the Cabinet or appropriate Executive body.
- 7.4 In deciding their work programme for the year, the OSC and Scrutiny Review Panels shall determine how partnership bodies shall be scrutinised within the boundaries of scheduled meetings.

8 BUDGET SCRUTINY REVIEW

- 8.1 The budget shall be scrutinised by each Scrutiny Review Panel, in their respective areas. Their reports shall go to the OSC for approval. The areas of the budget which are not covered by the Scrutiny Review Panels shall be considered by the main OSC.

- 8.2 A lead OSC member from the largest opposition group shall be responsible for the co-ordination of the Budget Scrutiny process and recommendations made by respective Scrutiny Review Panels relating to the budget.
- 8.3 To allow the OSC to scrutinise the budget in advance of it formally being set and convey those recommendations to the Cabinet, the following timescale is suggested:
- **Scrutiny Review Panel Meetings: May to November**
Each Scrutiny Review Panel shall undertake budget scrutiny in their respective areas, to be overseen by the lead member referred to in paragraph 9.2. Between May and November, this shall involve scrutinising the 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan approved at the budget-setting full Council meeting in February.
 - **Cabinet report on the new 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan to members of the OSC: December**
The Cabinet shall release their report on the new 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan to members of the OSC, following their meeting to agree the proposals in December.
 - **Scrutiny Review Panel Meetings: January**
Overseen by the lead member referred to in paragraph 9.2, each Scrutiny Review Panel shall hold a meeting following the release of the December Cabinet report on the new 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan. Each Panel shall consider the proposals in this report, for their respective areas, in addition to their budget scrutiny already carried out. The Scrutiny Review Panels may request that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Sustainability and/or Senior Officers attend these meetings to answer questions.
 - **OSC Meeting: January**
Each Scrutiny Review Panel shall submit their final budget scrutiny report to the OSC meeting in January containing their recommendations/proposal in respect of the budget for ratification by the OSC.
 - **Cabinet Meeting: February**
The recommendations from the Budget Scrutiny process, ratified by the OSC, shall be fed back to Cabinet. As part of the budget setting process, the Cabinet will clearly set out its response to the recommendations/proposals made by the OSC in relation to the budget.