

**WORK PROGRAMME
(Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Each year the Overview and Scrutiny Panels review their programmes of studies and plan their work for the forthcoming year. This report provides the Panel with an opportunity to complete this task and establish their work priorities for 2013/14.

2. EFFECTIVENESS

- 2.1 The Panels have completed a review of their effectiveness. A summary of the findings appears in Appendix A.

3. WORK PROGRAMME

- 3.1 Members are requested to consider whether any studies or investigations of single issues within their remit might usefully be undertaken. This might be through internal scrutiny of Council functions. The Panels' remits appear in Appendix B. The Corporate Governance Panel is responsible for governance, risk management, internal and external audit, the accounts, complaints / feedback and fraud and corruption. The Employment Panel provides a strategic overview of the people management and workforce decisions and issues within the Council and conducts research on employment practice within the Council and best practice.
- 3.2 The Panels monitor the Council's performance. The development of the Delivery Plan and monitoring arrangements is being overseen by the Corporate Plan Working Group in conjunction with Executive Councillors.
- 3.3 The Panels are also able to conduct external studies. They have a wide remit to examine any issues that affect the economic, social and environmental well-being of the District.

Working Groups

- 3.4 A number of working groups already exist to undertake studies. These are listed below together with the Membership:

Working Group	Current Membership	Type
Corporate Plan	Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the three Panels	On-going
Customer Services	Councillors R B Howe and T V Rogers and Mr R Eacott	Task and Finish

Support Services	Councillors G J Bull, Greenall, R B Howe, A J MacKender-Lawrence, T V Rogers and A H Williams	Task and Finish
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- 3.5 Membership of the Panel has changed for 2013/14. Where a study is nearing its conclusion it has previously been the practice that Membership of the working group continues to its completion. The Panel is invited to review the composition of its Working Groups.

4. SCRUTINISING PARTNERSHIP WORKING / JOINT WORKING

- 4.1 The Panel's remit includes reference to the Local Enterprise Partnership It had previously been suggested that scrutiny of the Partnership should be undertaken on a co-ordinated area basis so that its representatives did not have to attend meetings of all the councils in the area. There has not been much enthusiasm for this amongst other authorities. The Panel might, therefore, devise its own work as necessary.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is

RECOMMENDED to

- a) note the contents of the report;
- b) consider the addition of new subject areas to the programme of studies;
- c) review the composition of the Working Groups / external representation and appoint Members as necessary, and
- d) endorse the Overview and Scrutiny Protocol.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels /Working Groups.
Council Constitution

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The outcome of that process will be reported to the Corporate Governance Panel in June. Some of the general findings about the way the Council operates, such as the reporting style will be taken up by the Corporate Governance Panel. Another aspect, engaging with the public and other stakeholders, will be the subject of an internal audit review into the Council's use of social media. The review will consider how the Council might promote public engagement. In the Meantime press releases and social media messages will be regularly released advising members of the public of the opportunity they have to attend meetings and of subjects under discussion.

Several of the findings relate to the way Overview and Scrutiny operates. With regard to asking questions, Members are reminded that submitting questions to the appropriate Officer or Executive Member in advance of the meeting if they require specific information relating to a report, will obviate the need to circulate the information at a later date and mean that it can be discussed at the meeting. The Working Group that carried out the review also stressed the importance of all Panels considering financial/economic aspects of the issues under discussion. Questions about policy should be directed to Executive Councillors.

It has generally been agreed that, rather than be presented with what are substantially finalised documents, scrutiny of policy proposals should take place early in the policy development process. The Panel Chairmen have met the Executive Leader and he has welcomed early engagement from the Panels. This will allow a Champion be appointed at this early stage to lead on a matter on behalf of the Panel. The appointment of Member Champions is something that is to be encouraged. Formal appointment of Champions will be recorded in a list established for this purpose.

Once a Panel has made recommendations to the Cabinet, the Cabinet has been asked produce a formal response to those recommendations. Further down the line update reports will be provided on service developments and agreed actions arising from Overview and Scrutiny reviews. To keep track of minor actions that arise during meetings, action logs will be introduced for the three Panels.

The final matter that arose from the review is the introduction of open public forums at each meeting. The constitutional changes required are being looked into.

At the last meeting of the Working Group that undertook the review, Members endorsed a protocol designed to put the Panels' operating practices on a more formal footing. The protocol appears below.

Overview and Scrutiny Protocol

This protocol provides a framework for the conduct of Overview and Scrutiny and is intended to assist Members, Officers, expert witnesses and members of the public with understanding the functions of scrutiny and overview bodies, including task groups, and the various processes governing these.

GENERAL

The brief of Overview and Scrutiny can be summarised as follows: -

- holding the Cabinet to account;
- scrutinising decisions, both prior to and after they are made;
- developing and reviewing policies;
- having the power to 'call in' decisions of the Cabinet;
- monitoring performance and on-going studies, and
- investigating any matter affecting the social, economic or environmental well-being of the District.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels will abide by the Principles of Good scrutiny. These are that Scrutiny:

- provides "critical friend" challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers;
- enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities to be heard;
- is carried out by "independent minded governors" who lead and own the scrutiny process, and
- drives improvement in public services.

The Cabinet and, where appropriate, the Council should take into account any views expressed by Overview and Scrutiny Panels when making decisions.

All Non-Executive Members shall have the right to request that items are included on Overview and Scrutiny Agenda, subject to the agreement of the relevant Scrutiny and Overview Chairman and Vice-Chairman and the relevance of the item to the Remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

CO-ORDINATION OF WORK PROGRAMMES AND BUSINESS

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels' work programmes will be co-ordinated and monitored by the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Panels in order to avoid duplication and assist in managing cross-cutting work. The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen will determine any cases of doubt or dispute.

Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairmen shall maintain regular contact with the Chief Officers Management Team. In consultation with Chairmen and Vice Chairmen, it shall be the responsibility of the Scrutiny and Review Manager and Democratic Services Officers to ensure that those who need to know of matters being considered, or for possible future consideration, are so informed.

The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen will ensure the Panels adhere to the Study Methodology, which has previously been adopted – see Annex.

The relevant Executive Councillor and Chief Officers Management Team will be given an opportunity to discuss the remit of studies when they commence. They will also be provided with draft interim reports and draft final study reports before they are published.

The Cabinet may consult and involve the relevant Panel in developing draft policies.

Overview and Scrutiny Panels will receive feedback from the Cabinet on items recommendations made by them.

Members' enquiries about overview and scrutiny functions and business will normally be directed to the appropriate Scrutiny and Overview Chairman or Vice-Chairman or the Scrutiny and Review Manager.

ATTENDANCE AT SCRUTINY MEETINGS BY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND COUNCIL OFFICERS

Overview and Scrutiny Panels or their Chairmen may require Executive Members to attend their meetings to answer questions and offer advice.

Executive Members and Council Officers required to attend Overview and Scrutiny Panel meetings to answer questions and will be given at least five working days' notice, together with an indication of the issues being raised and the likely line of questioning. Where possible, Members are asked to pre-notify the Democratic Services Section of any specific factual information required in advance of the meeting.

NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS, OUTSIDE BODIES AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE INVITED TO GIVE ORAL OR WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

From time to time, outside bodies and individuals will be invited to provide information, evidence, views or advice to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

In such circumstances outside bodies or individuals will:

- receive adequate notice of the invitation to attend and this will not normally be less than 1 week
- be provided with an adequate brief of the process being undertaken and the nature of the information, evidence or advice being sought
- be advised whether oral or written submissions are desired and of the likelihood of supplementary questions being asked
- be entitled to receive a compensatory payment in recognition of the expenses or income loss they may have incurred while assisting in a review
- be invited to comment on a draft summary note of the evidence, information or advice given and/or be provided with a copy of the final report presented to the Cabinet and/or to Council

WORKING / ADVISORY GROUPS

- A Panel may set up a Working / Advisory Group to carry out a specific piece of work
- Membership of Working / Advisory Groups will be politically balanced unless political group leaders agree otherwise, and shall comprise non-Executive Members

- Task Groups will present interim and final reports to Panels
- When any Overview and Scrutiny body is considering the performance or proposals of a person, or of a body which includes any of its Members, such person or Members shall not take part in that consideration in the capacity of Members of the scrutiny body.

INFORMAL WORKING GROUPS

A Panel may appoint an informal Member led Working Group from within its own Membership to carry out a piece of work e.g. in preparing a report on a specific issue for the Panel.

WORKING WITH OFFICERS

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels or their Chairmen acting on their behalf, may require Officers to attend Scrutiny and Overview meetings to answer questions. Junior Officers would not normally be expected to give evidence.

All requests for Officer attendance at meetings should be made to Chief Officers / Heads of Service in the first instance

When making requests for reports or for Officer attendance, Overview and Scrutiny Members shall have regard to the work programme and workload of Officers

It is recognised that Officers appearing before a Scrutiny and Overview body may often be those who have advised the Cabinet, or another part of the Council, on the matter under investigation.

In giving evidence, Officers must not be asked to give party political views.

Officers should respect Members in the way in which they respond to questions. There is an expectation that Officers will be well briefed, able to answer questions and, if unable to provide information at any meeting, if requested, will respond with such information to Panel Members within a reasonable time.

Officers should be questioned in a courteous and professional manner.

Questions should not be asked about matters of an employment or disciplinary nature, unless that is the matter under consideration.

Overview and Scrutiny proceedings must not be used to question the capability or competence of Officers. Chairmen and Members need to make a distinction between reviewing the policies and performance of the Council and its services, and appraising the personal performance of staff, which is not a Scrutiny and Overview function.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY STUDY TEMPLATE

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	
Appointing Panel	
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	
Executive Councillor	
Possible Co-Options to the Group	
Interests Declared	
Rapporteur	
Senior Management Representative	
Other Officer Support	
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	
Terms of Reference	
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	

Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	
External/Specialist Support	
Existing Documentation	
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	
Reference Sites	
Investigations	
Witnesses	
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	
Meetings of the Working Group	
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY PANELS**

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL	SCOPE
SOCIAL WELL BEING	<p>Private sector housing</p> <p>Caravan sites Community Safety Community initiatives Leisure Development Air quality/noise/pollution Animal welfare/pest control Commercial: health and safety promotion/food safety Infectious diseases Smoke free initiatives Corporate Health and Safety</p> <p>CCTV</p> <p>Housing strategy / policies Housing providers / associations</p> <p>Housing register / nominations Homelessness Housing grants Disabled facilities grants Home Improvement Agency Private Sector Housing</p> <p>Huntingdon / St Neots / St Ives Ramsey /Sawtry</p> <p>Democratic Services Elections / Electoral Registration Member Support</p> <p>Licensing</p> <p>Safeguarding Diversity and Equalities</p>

**ENVIRONMENTAL WELL
BEING**

Streetscene
Car Park management
Grounds maintenance / grass cutting
Parks and Countryside
Emergency Planning
Waste stream policy
Refuse collection
Recycling
Vehicle fleet management
Abandoned vehicles
Cleaving

Environmental Strategy
Home energy conservation
Business energy conservation
Water strategy
Renewable energy
Building Control / Dangerous Structures /
Access for disabled people
Residual Highways responsibilities / public
utilities
Street naming and numbering
Land drainage

Planning Policy / Development Plans
Planning studies / monitoring
Site and area planning briefs / Masterplans
Neighbourhood Plans
Development Management / Planning
Enforcement
Conservation / Listed Buildings
Trees and footpaths
Transportation

ECONOMIC WELL BEING

Website / intranet
Freedom of Information
ICT Network & Systems
Local Land & Property Gazetteer
Business Analysis / Improvement

Financial forecasting
Budget preparation and monitoring
Final Accounts Financial advice
Payment of creditors
Audit
Risk management
Procurement
Treasury Management (borrowing and investments)
Debt Recovery

Call Centre
Customer Service Centre
Information Centres
Local Taxation
Revenue collection
Benefits assessments / payments / fraud
National Non Domestic Rates

Land Charges
Legal advice
Conveyancing
Prosecutions and litigation
Planning advocacy
Data protection / Regulation of Investigatory Powers
Contracts
Document Centre

Communication & marketing
Corporate policy / research
Corporate performance management
Localism
Economic Development
Investment Estate

Facilities Management
Operational Estate
Project / Contractual management
Engineering and architectural design