

## **6. ARTICLE 6 – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The overview and scrutiny function is central to the Council's constitutions. Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- meet in public to discuss and make recommendations on the development of policy;
- hold the Leader and Cabinet to account for their actions;
- have a key role in considering matters of local concern;
- undertake best value reviews.

### **6.2 There will be four Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

Within their terms of reference, Overview and Scrutiny Committees will:

- review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- make reports and/or recommendations to the Full Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint Committee in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants;
- exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Cabinet and/or any joint Committees;
- establish ad hoc short life panels to undertake specific tasks;
- consider local government and crime and disorder matters raised under Councillor Call for Action procedures.

### **6.3 Joint NHS Scrutiny Committee**

There will be one Joint NHS Scrutiny Committee with Kent County Council. Its terms of reference are set out in chapter 4, part 5 - Overview and Scrutiny Rules.

### **6.4 Specific functions**

#### **(a) Policy development and review**

Within allocated budgets Overview and Scrutiny Committees may:

- assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of the budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;

- conduct research, community consultation and other consultation;
- consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy;
- question members of the Cabinet and/or Committees and employees about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area;
- liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;
- require the Chief Executive of the health authority and local health trusts to attend the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss policy issues relating to health in Medway.

(b) **Scrutiny**

Within allocated budgets Overview and Scrutiny Committees may:

- review and scrutinise the decisions, initiatives and projects and performance of the Cabinet and/or Committees and Council employees in relation to individual decisions, initiatives and projects;
- review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- question members of the Cabinet and/or Committees and employees about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
- make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or appropriate Committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting (and in the case of the health service requiring them) to address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance;
- question and gather evidence from any person with their consent.

(c) **Finance**

Overview and Scrutiny Committees may exercise overall responsibility for the finances made available to them.

(d) **Annual report**

Overview and Scrutiny Committees must report annually to Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

(e) **Employees**

Overview and Scrutiny Committees may exercise overall responsibility for the work programme of the employees employed to support their work.

6.4 **Proceedings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

Overview and Scrutiny Committees will conduct their proceedings in accordance with the overview and scrutiny rules set out in part 5 of chapter 4 of this constitution.

