

6. ARTICLE 6 – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

6.1 Introduction

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

- meet in public to discuss and make recommendations on the development of policy;
- provide effective challenge by holding the Leader and Cabinet to account for their actions and decisions;
- provide community focus in considering matters of local concern.

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 any decision that has been made, but not implemented, by the Leader and Cabinet, an individual Member of the Cabinet or a Committee of the Cabinet or a key decision made by an officer but not yet implemented;
- establish short life Task Groups to undertake specific in-depth reviews.

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

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;
- 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 any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in Medway;
- review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies and relevant partners in the area and invite reports from them by requesting (and in the case of the Community Safety Partnership and relevant NHS bodies and relevant health service providers 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.

Finance

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

Reporting

Overview and Scrutiny Committees will report to each ordinary Council meeting on their working.

6.5 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.

