

Part One: Chapter 7 - Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.1 Under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council must establish at least one Overview and Scrutiny committee. The Council has decided to appoint six Scrutiny Panels to undertake the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Act. Representation on the Scrutiny Panels will be in the same proportion as the political composition of the whole Council, in accordance with the proportionality rules contained within the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Members of the Executive will not be eligible for appointment as a Member of any Scrutiny Panel.

Membership

- 7.2 The Council will appoint the Scrutiny Panels at its Annual Meeting. The Scrutiny Panels will consist of seven councillors, provided that the Council may at any time amend the number, terms of reference and membership of the Scrutiny Panels, subject to such changes ensuring that the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 will be undertaken.

Functions

- 7.3 The functions of the Scrutiny Panels will be:
- a) To assist the Council and the Executive in policy scrutiny and in particular, the preparation, review and amendment of the Council's policy framework, budget, key strategies or similar documents as the Executive may recommend to the Council for adoption; and
 - b) To formulate new policy proposals for consideration by the Executive.
- 7.4 The Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Panels will be in accordance with the provisions in Part Two of this Constitution.

Chairmen

- 7.5 The roles of the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Panels will be as described in Appendix 6 to this part of the Constitution.

Co-opted members

- 7.6 Where the Council, at its discretion, considers that co-opted members with particular skills and expertise will enhance the work of a Scrutiny Panel, it may appoint non-Councillors without voting rights to all or any such Scrutiny Panel. The Scrutiny Panels may also co-opt non-councillors as they deem appropriate, subject to such co-opted members having no voting rights.

Work programmes

- 7.7 The Scrutiny Panels will prepare and submit to the Council, an annual programme of work to be undertaken during the forthcoming year. This programme will provide for

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the Scrutiny Panels to scrutinise the performance of the Executive and, where appropriate, the Council's ordinary committees against the Council's approved policies and budgets and for each Scrutiny Panel to carry out reviews of Council policies. The Council, Executive and ordinary committees may, at any time, request the Scrutiny Panels to undertake additional policy or performance reviews. The Scrutiny Panels will have the powers described in Part 3 of this Constitution to assist them in their work.

Meetings

- 7.8 Meetings of the Scrutiny Panels will be held in public except where confidential or exempt information is being discussed, when the provisions of Section 100A to 100K and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 will apply. The proceedings of meetings of the Scrutiny Panels will take place in accordance with the Standing Orders with respect to Meetings set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

Access to Information

- 7.9 For the purposes of undertaking the roles specified above, the members of the Scrutiny Panels will have the right of access to all papers, reports, minutes and records submitted to and produced by the Executive, Executive Members, ordinary committees and Officers of the Council, in accordance with the arrangements in Part Three of this Constitution.
- 7.10 A Member of any Scrutiny Panel must not be involved in scrutinising a decision in which he/she has been directly involved.

Relationships

- 7.11 The arrangements set out in Part Three of this Constitution describe the relationships that will apply between the Scrutiny Panels and the Executive and other committees. These arrangements will also apply to relationships between Members of the Scrutiny Panels and the Council's Officers.

'Whipping'

- 7.12 In the interests of openness and accountability, Members will be expected to disclose, at the commencement of all Scrutiny Panel meetings, any advice or directions received from their Group Leader or their Political Group, on the views to be expressed on a particular issue or on the way that they should vote. The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for ensuring that the minutes of the meetings record all such disclosures.