

Purpose and Protocol / working practices for the Overview and Scrutiny committee

From November 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee sits as 10 members, who are not serving on either the Performance, Governance and Audit or Strategy and Resources Committees.

The committee Terms of Reference can be found at:

<https://democracy.maldon.gov.uk/documents/s19942/Terms%20of%20Reference%20-%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf>.

The Working Group established and reporting to this committee will include Four members and:

- Review items of scrutiny suggested by members according to specific criteria and outcomes.
- Identify the details of scrutiny items e.g. specific outcomes, timescales and lead officers.
- Recommend a workplan for approval of the Committee.

The committee:

Will –

- Seek to confine its meetings to the carrying out of actual scrutiny work.
- Arrange for the review of Member suggestions for items and review validity of items based on set criteria, prior to inclusion in its Workplan.
- Be positive and forward looking including providing ‘critical friend’ challenge.
- Identify future improvements that will help the way the Council runs its business and provides public services.
- Seek to demonstrate added value from the scrutiny process.
- Review readiness for emerging strategy and future planning.
- Help Council and other Committees do their work better.
- Produce defined outcomes associated with each scrutiny item.
- Manage ‘watching brief’ items for areas of concern where the need for or the precise area of scrutiny has not been identified - to be picked up by the Working Group (e.g. lessons learned from Project Management Office).
- Refer potential scrutiny items to the working group for thorough review, and receive reports on items to be added to the workplan.
- Receive finalised Scrutiny reports and recommendations for review.
- Make recommendations to Council and other Committees on conclusions arising from scrutiny.

Won't –

- Develop a workplan based on 'pet projects' of individual Members or matters that should be properly dealt with elsewhere, e.g. via another Committee's remit.
- Duplicate review work being undertaken elsewhere, e.g. by another Committee.
- Look backwards or be focussed on blame, rather than come from a place of 'lessons learned'.
- Use Committee Meetings as a forum for receiving information, discussing/ planning the detail and validity of suggested scrutiny items.
- Accept items where Officers have not yet been approached and asked for response/ further detail on a matter.
- Accept items where they fall in the remit of another committee, and that committee hasn't made the referral, or first reviewed it within their Committee.
- Have a standing item for 'any other items of scrutiny members wish to consider' as under the proposed new process is designed to accommodate this.

**Terms of Reference
Working group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The working group will be made up of four Overview and Scrutiny committee members, and meet in the daytime in advance of the Committee meetings to consider, review and recommend to the Committee on:

1. Review new scrutiny item requests in accordance with the process and criteria established by the Committee and report to the Committee on valid and identifiable scrutiny items for inclusion in the Committee's Workplan.
2. Keep under review any other matters where the Committee has identified a need to seek information or to maintain a 'watching brief' pending the identification of a scrutiny item.
3. Support the Committee as directed in the planning of scrutiny work, including proposing timetables and expected Scrutiny Outcomes.

The Working Group meetings will include relevant officers where more detailed discussion can help inform these decisions.

N.B. in the March meeting, the agreed Members for this group were Councillors R H Siddall, V J Bell, M W Helm, and M S Heard.