

Article 6: Scrutiny and Overview

6.01 Composition

The Council will appoint scrutiny and overview committees to discharge the functions conferred by section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and regulations under section 32 of that Act.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council may be members of such committees. Membership shall have regard to the principles of proportionality set out in Part 5 (Codes and Protocols).

No member of the Executive shall be a member of any scrutiny committee.

6.02 Mission Statement, Principal and Supporting Objectives

Scrutiny and Overview Mission Statement

To support the work of the Council in achieving its corporate objectives and annual priorities through constructive challenge and the promotion of best practice, innovation and democratic accountability.

The Committee will add value to the work of the Council by -

- Challenging policies, performance and decisions in a constructive way
- Making recommendations for improvement, based on best practice
- Looking for new ways of doing things
- Making sure that the Council remains responsible to local people.

Principal Objectives

The principal objectives of scrutiny and overview at South Cambridgeshire District Council shall be as follows:

- (1) To improve the delivery of policies and services by:
 - Holding the Cabinet to account for its policies and actions;
 - Assessing the performance of the Cabinet in achieving the Council's corporate objectives and annual priorities;
 - Ensuring the rigour and objectivity of performance management and service reviews.
- (2) To enhance the quality of life in South Cambridgeshire through the investigation and recommendation of actions to address issues of concern to the district's residents.
- (3) To assist the Executive and the Council in establishing a comprehensive evidence-based policy framework to guide the Council in the achievement of its objectives and addressing the future challenges facing the district.
- (4) To give guidance to ensure that Council policies are action-orientated, based on consultation, realistic within the resources available to the Council, and consistent with national and regional priorities and with other plans of the Council and its partners.

Supporting Objectives

Supporting objectives, within the four principal objectives above, shall be as follows:

- (1) To review and scrutinise the decisions made, or about to be made by and performance of the Cabinet and / or committees and council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time;

- (2) To review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and / or particular service areas;
- (3) To question members of the Cabinet and / or committees and senior management 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;
- (4) To review and scrutinise the performance of other bodies having public functions in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address committee meetings and local people about their activities and performance; and question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent);
- (5) To inform future decisions of the Council on matters identified in previously-agreed work programmes
- (6) To assist the Council and Cabinet in the development of its Budget and Policy Framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
- (7) To make recommendations to the Cabinet and / or appropriate committee and / or Council arising from the outcome of the policy development process including the need for, or changes to, relevant policies.

6.03 Terms of Reference

The Council's scrutiny and overview function will consist of two scrutiny and overview committees: the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and the Partnerships Review Committee.

In order to meet the principal and supporting objectives set out in Article 6.02 above, both scrutiny and overview committees shall:

- Agree, and keep under regular review, annual work programmes;
- Establish task and finish groups to take forward specific topics for investigation;
- Conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- Seek to ensure that the expertise of all non-executive members is fully utilised in the development of Council policy;
- Liaise with the Cabinet to ensure that the advice of the committee is timely and useful;
- Consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
- Question members of the Cabinet and senior management about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area;
- Make annual reports to Council on their activities, identifying where they have been able to influence decisions, safeguard the public interest and enhance Council performance;
- Exercise overall responsibility for the finances made available to them;
- ~~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;~~

- ~~Make annual reports to Council on their activities, identifying where they have been able to influence decisions, safeguard the public interest and enhance Council performance;~~

~~Exercise overall responsibility for the finances made available to them;~~

- ~~The Scrutiny and Overview Committee will scrutinise, challenge and hold decision takers to account on those issued considered as the Council's internal business and shall:~~

- ~~Appoint monitors to each Cabinet Portfolio to act as a bridge to the executive, promoting constructive dialogue and supporting effective scrutiny that adds value to the work of the Cabinet and its Portfolio Holders;~~
- ~~Consider any Call Ins that are submitted ;~~
- ~~Consider any Councillor Call for Actions that are submitted.-~~

~~The Partnerships Review Committee will scrutinise, challenge and hold decision takers to account on those issues considered as external, which may or may not involve formal partnerships, and shall:~~

- ~~Liaise with external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;~~
- ~~Promote well-being through partnership working;~~
- ~~Be designated as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee.~~

~~When an item of business cannot be naturally allocated to a specific overview and scrutiny committee, the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and the Chairman of the Partnerships Review Committee will agree upon the most appropriate body for the consideration of that item. If there is no Chairman of either Committee, or if he or she is unable to act, then the decision will be made by the Chairman of the Council, or in his / her absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council will suffice.~~

6.04 Proceedings of scrutiny and overview committees

The scrutiny and overview committees will conduct their proceedings in accordance with the Scrutiny and Overview ~~Committee~~ Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.