

Informal Working Group Protocol

Overview and Scrutiny Committees may appoint smaller informal working groups where they feel a smaller group of members is better suited to carry out a particular task.

Meetings

All meetings will be held in open session with the press and public able to attend, except for the consideration of exempt or confidential information. The Council will make copies of the **agenda** and reports open to the public available for inspection at the Council Offices, at least five clear working days before the meeting, and also on the Waverley website.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Sub-Committees will be serviced by the **Democratic Services Team** and supported by the Scrutiny Officer. **Minutes** will be taken by the Democratic Services Officer present at each meeting of the Committee or Sub-Committee, and published.

Membership of the Informal Working Group

The membership of an Informal Working Group will be selected from the members and substitute members of the main Committee, selecting those with the best skills and knowledge of the subject matter to contribute. Other members are able to attend meetings as an observer, or to speak if notice has been given by 12 noon on the day of the meeting (or 5pm on the day before in the event of a morning meeting). There is no provision for substitutes of Informal Working Groups.

The **Chairman** will be appointed at the first meeting from amongst the membership of the Informal Working Group.

External Representatives may be **co-opted** by the Council as non-voting members onto O and S Committees and invited to attend Informal Working Groups.

Business of the Meeting

Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or Informal Working Group) conducts investigations in Select Committee mode (eg with a view to policy development), the Committee may also ask people to attend to give evidence at Committee meetings which are to be conducted in accordance with the following principles:-

- i. that the investigation be conducted fairly and all members of the committee be given the opportunity to ask questions of attendees, and to contribute and speak;
- ii. that those assisting the committee by giving evidence be treated with respect and courtesy; and
- iii. that the investigation be conducted so as to maximise the efficiency of the investigation or analysis.

Outcome of Review

Following any investigation or review, the Committee shall prepare a report, for submission to the Executive and shall make its report and findings public. This report will be drafted by the impartial Democratic Services/Scrutiny Officer who has been supporting the review. The Chairman of the Informal Working Group will be invited to prepare a foreword which will preface the final concluding report of the work of the Committee.

Can Informal Working Groups meet flexibly?

Within the overall framework of Waverley's Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations, Informal Working Groups will be able to develop flexible working arrangements best suited to their task. This may mean that published agendas are not required. Such meetings will be supported by a Democratic Services/Scrutiny Officer along with key relevant Officers, and will report back on a regular basis into the formal Sub-Committee process.