

Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules – Annexe 3

Informal Working Group Protocol

Overview and Scrutiny Committees may appoint smaller Informal Working Groups (up to a maximum of 6 members) where they feel a smaller group of members is better suited to carry out a particular task, to assist with:

- a. policy development;
- b. examining specific service proposals in depth;
- c. progressing major projects.

1.1 Meetings

Informal Working Groups will meet in the absence of press and public. Reports to Informal Working Groups will not normally be published, and both reports and discussion at meetings will be treated as exempt.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and Informal Working Groups 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.

1.2 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. An Informal Working Group can consist of members from any of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Audit Committee when the subject matter would benefit from cross-Committee representation. Any other member may be invited by the Chairman to attend a meeting of the Informal Working Group and their level of involvement in the meeting will be agreed in advance. 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.

1.3 Business of the Meeting

Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or Informal Working Group) conducts investigations in Select Committee mode (e.g. 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.

1.4 Outcome of a 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.