

## POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Corporate Performance Panel		
DATE:	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2026		
TITLE:	Report of the Constitution – Scrutiny Guidance and Information		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Informal Working Group Report		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Leader – Councillor Beales		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Rebecca Parker – Democratic Services Manager		
OPEN/EXEMPT	OPEN	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	NO

### **REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:**

In October 2025 the Joint Panel considered a review of Scrutiny Governance Arrangements with the outcome that further work to improve the Scrutiny function was carried out including improving work programming and training.

In January 2026 the Constitution Informal Working Group met to consider and review the following Scrutiny Guidance documents and present these to the Corporate Performance Panel for endorsement:

- Scrutiny and Executive Protocol
- Scrutiny Guide
- How to Select Scrutiny Work Topics and Work Programming
- Terms of Reference for Sifting Meetings
- Role Profile – Scrutiny Chair
- Summary of Call-in procedure.

Draft documents are attached for the Corporate Performance Panel to consider and comment on.

#### **KEY ISSUES:**

The guidance documents mentioned above have been created or updated to ensure that Councillors have a variety of information to refer to, to assist them with carrying out Scrutiny and Policy Development.

The Scrutiny and Executive Guide sets out the expectations of both parties during Scrutiny and Policy Development, ensuring that Panel Members have the opportunity to hold the Executive to account and effectively question them.

The documents presented for consideration were in need of an update, with additional documents produced by Democratic Services to assist Councillors in their roles.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Corporate Performance Panel are asked to comment on and endorse the following documents (attached to this report):

- Scrutiny and Executive Protocol
- Scrutiny Guide
- How to Select Scrutiny Work Topics and Work Programming

- |                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Terms of Reference for Sifting Meetings</li><li>- Role Profile – Scrutiny Chair</li><li>- Summary of Call-in procedure.</li></ul> |
| <b>REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>                                                                                                                                       |
| To strengthen the support available to Members in their roles relating to Scrutiny and Policy Development.                                                                |

## **1. Introduction**

This report presents a raft of documents designed to strengthen the information available to Councillors in their roles.

The documents include existing documents which have been reviewed and presents some new guidance and information to help support Members.

Once agreed the documents will be launched to Members via the new Intranet system and kept under review.

The updates take into consideration comments made by Members throughout the Scrutiny Governance Review process.

## **2. Documents for consideration**

### **2.1 Scrutiny and the Executive Protocol**

This document sets out the relationship between the Panels and the Cabinet in terms of scrutinising decisions, developing policy, dealing with call-ins and work programming.

The document highlights the importance of Portfolio Holders attending meetings where a decision falling within their remit is to be scrutinised and that they should be prepared to be questioned and held accountable for their decisions.

It also sets out how Portfolio Holders should be prepared to present their reports to the Panels.

The document also encourages the Chairs, or a representative from the Panels to attend the Cabinet meeting where recommendations from the Panels are being considered, which is especially important if the Panels have made counter recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

To formalise the protocol and ensure that all parties are aware, it has been suggested that once agreed it should be signed off by the Leader and the Chairs of Panels on an annual basis to reinforce the relationship.

### **2.2 Scrutiny Guide**

This guide was last updated in 2018 and required a refresh.

Provides information on the scrutiny functions at the Council to Members, officers and the public.

### **2.3. How to select Scrutiny Work Topics and Work Programming**

This is a new information guide which has been produced.

It encourages Councillors to think about what items they are putting forward and encouraging them to consider items where scrutiny can make an impact.

In terms of Work Programming, training sessions have been arranged for Councillors ahead of the new Municipal Year.

#### **2.4. Terms of Reference for Sifting Meetings**

This is a new guidance document and sets out the expectations of all parties involved in sifting meetings.

#### **2.5. Role Profile Scrutiny Chair**

This document, which was previously included in the Councillors Induction Folder has been updated and will be added to the Scrutiny resources to be made available on the Intranet.

#### **2.6. Summary of the Call-in Procedure**

This is a new guidance note which has been produced to assist officers and Members in navigating the call-in process.

### **3. Next steps**

Once finalised, the documents will be uploaded to the Councillors Section of the new Intranet so that all guidance and information relating to the Scrutiny and Policy Development function is in one place and available to all Councillors to support them in their role.

