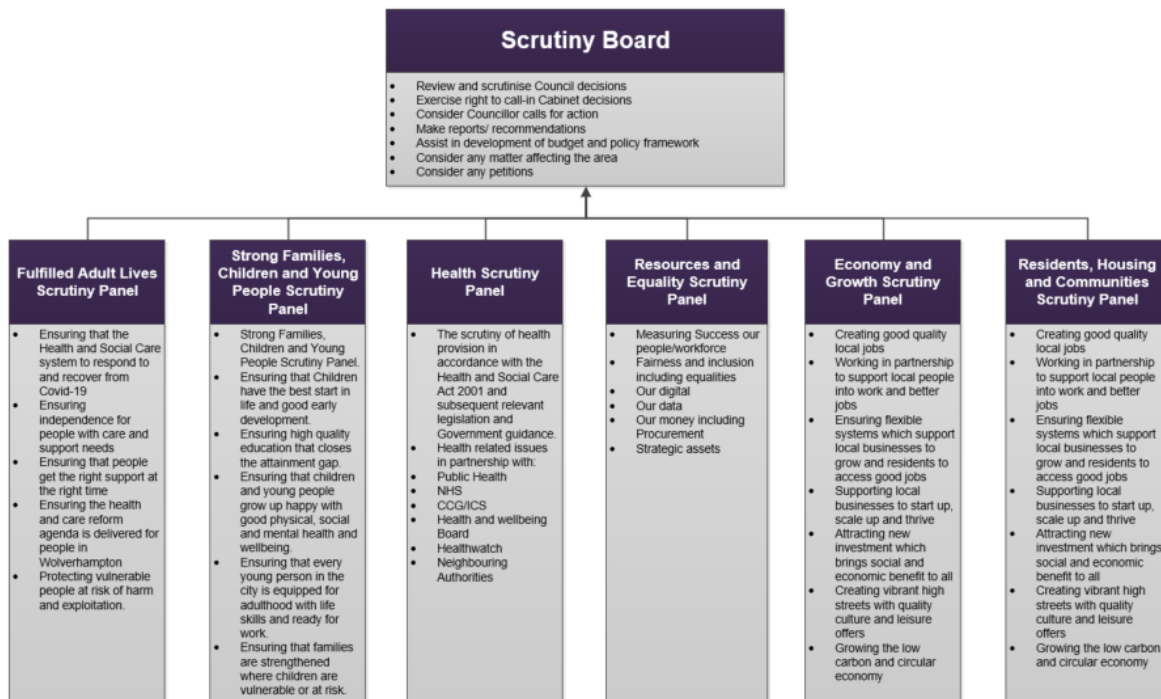


Article 7 – Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements



7.1 Purpose

1. The Council is required by Law to discharge certain overview and scrutiny functions. These functions are an essential component of local democracy. Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be powerful committees that can contribute to the development of Council policies and also hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions. Another key part of the overview and scrutiny role is to review existing policies, consider proposals for new policies and suggest new policies.
2. Overview and scrutiny should be carried out in a constructive way and should aim to contribute to the delivery of efficient and effective services that meet the needs and aspirations of local inhabitants. Overview and Scrutiny Committees should not shy away from the need to challenge and question decisions and make constructive criticism.

7.2 Scrutiny Board

In order to achieve this, the Council have appointed a Scrutiny Board and a number of Scrutiny Panels which between them will: -

- a. review or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions whether by the Cabinet or another part of the Council or any of its Committees;

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- b. make reports or recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- c. consider any matter which affects the Council's area or its inhabitants; and
- d. exercise the right to call in for reconsideration decisions made but not yet implemented by the Cabinet and Officers.

The Council or the Leader or the Cabinet or the Scrutiny Board may from time to time establish such other committees or sub-committees as it sees fit.

The leadership and co-ordination of the Council's scrutiny function will be the responsibility of the Scrutiny Board. The Board's terms of reference will be:

7.3 Terms of reference

- a. When scrutinising the work of the Cabinet the Board will have the same terms of reference as the six Panels set out below.
- b. To arrange for the consideration of forthcoming Executive Decisions published in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules with a view to identifying issues for early discussion with the Cabinet and/or scrutiny prior to decisions being made.
- c. The Board will oversee the operation of the call-in mechanisms with the Panels being responsible for hearing those call-ins related to their terms of reference. When the call-in relates to an overarching policy framework / budget issue or a matter that falls within the remit of more than one scrutiny panel it will default to the Scrutiny Board. Further, if the issue is considered to be of particular significance, either the Chair or Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Board can ask for it to come to the Board.
- d. The Board will oversee the work programmes of Scrutiny Panels to avoid duplication of work and to ensure coherence of approach to cross-cutting policy themes. The Board may determine that one named Panel shall take lead responsibility for a cross-cutting policy theme or may determine that the work be shared between one or more named Panels.
- e. The Board will ensure coherence between the policy development work of the named Panels and their role in the consideration of reports received from external auditors and external regulatory Inspectors.
- f. The Board will make recommendations to the Cabinet on the allocation of budgetary and employee resources held centrally for the purpose of supporting scrutiny work.
- g. The Board will ensure that good practices and methods of working are shared between Panels and in particular will seek to optimise the inclusion of citizens, partners and stakeholders in the work of Scrutiny.

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- h. The Board will review or scrutinise non-Cabinet business and may make reports or recommendations to the Council. The Board will consider policy and due process and will not scrutinise individual decisions made by Regulatory or other Committees particularly those quasi-judicial decisions relating to development control, licensing etc. which have been delegated by the Council. The Board will not act as an appeal body in respect of non-Cabinet functions.
- i. The Board will oversee the work of any Councillors appointed to act as lead members or ‘champions’ in respect of any specific priority tasks or areas of policy development identified by the Council.
- j. The Board or another relevant scrutiny panel will consider any petition that contains 2,500-4,999 signatures with a view to making recommendations for action by employees or review by the Executive as appropriate.
- k. The Board will undertake the tracking and monitoring of scrutiny review recommendations.
- l. The Board will oversee the coordination of the budget scrutiny process.

7.4 Specific responsibilities

The Board will have responsibility for scrutiny functions as they relate to:

- West Midlands Combined Authority interface
- MTFs (overall oversight on Revenue/Capital/Assets)
- Overall performance (including Our City: Our Plan)
- Levelling Up
- Pre Decision
- Call in
- Petitions
- Wolverhampton Pound
- Oversight of Select Committee work – reporting on outcomes

a. Resources and Equality Scrutiny Panel

Scope

The scrutiny of organisation and performance of the human, financial, technical and material resources to support the delivery of Council services.

General responsibilities

As detailed in the Overview and Scrutiny procedural Rules.

Specific responsibilities

The Panel will have responsibility for scrutiny functions as they relate to:

- Measuring success
- our people/workforce

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- fairness and inclusion including equalities
- our digital
- our data
- our money including procurement
- strategic assets

b. Fulfilled Adult Lives Scrutiny Panel

Scope

The scrutiny of:

- Services for older and vulnerable adults
- Local safeguarding arrangements for adults

General responsibilities

As detailed in the Overview and Scrutiny procedural Rules.

Specific responsibilities

The Panel will have responsibility for scrutiny functions as they relate to:

- Ensuring that the Health and Social Care system to respond to and recover from Covid-19
- Ensuring independence for people with care and support needs
- Ensuring that people get the right support at the right time
- Ensuring the health and care reform agenda is delivered for people in Wolverhampton
- Protecting vulnerable people at risk of harm and exploitation

c. Strong Families, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

Scope

The scrutiny of:

- Provision of all local authority services for children and young people including education, early intervention and prevention, social care, special needs and commissioned services.
- Children's safeguarding including child exploitation.

General responsibilities

As detailed in the Overview and Scrutiny procedural Rules.

Specific responsibilities

The Panel will have responsibility for scrutiny functions as they relate to:

- Ensuring that Children have the best start in life and good early development
- Ensuring high quality education that closes the attainment gap

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- Ensuring that children and young people grow up happy with good physical, social and mental health and wellbeing
- Ensuring that every young person in the city is equipped for adulthood with life skills and ready for work
- Ensuring that families are strengthened where children are vulnerable or at risk.

d. Health Scrutiny Panel

Scope

The scrutiny of health provision in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and subsequent relevant legislation and Government guidance.

General responsibilities

As detailed in the Overview and Scrutiny procedural Rules.

Specific responsibilities

The Panel will have responsibility for scrutiny functions as they relate to:

- The scrutiny of health provision in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and subsequent relevant legislation and Government guidance.
- Health related issues in partnership with:
 - Public Health
 - NHS
 - CCG/ICS
 - Health and wellbeing Board
 - Healthwatch
 - Neighbouring Authorities

e. Economy and Growth Scrutiny Panel

Scope

The scrutiny of policies to attract and retain new businesses and employment in the context of sustainable economic and environmental regeneration.

General responsibilities

As detailed in the Overview and Scrutiny procedural Rules.

Specific responsibilities

The Panel will have responsibility for scrutiny functions as they relate to:

- Creating good quality local jobs
- Working in partnership to support local people into work and better jobs

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- Ensuring flexible systems which support local businesses to grow and residents to access good jobs
- Supporting local businesses to start up, scale up and thrive
- Attracting new investment which brings social and economic benefit to all
- Creating vibrant high streets with quality culture and leisure offers
- Growing the low carbon and circular economy

f. Residents, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel

Scope

The scrutiny of:

- Vibrant sustainable communities where people feel proud to live
- Keeping neighbourhoods, city infrastructure and the environment clean
- Improving city housing
- Cultural and leisure services

General responsibilities

As detailed in the Overview and Scrutiny procedural Rules.

Specific responsibilities

The Panel will have responsibility for scrutiny functions as they relate to:

- Community safety
- Closing the gap on healthy life expectancy
- Ensuring people live happier more active lives
- Ensuring inclusive, welcoming communities where people feel safe and look out for each other
- Delivering more new homes
- Ensuring safe and healthy homes for all
- Ensuring access to a secure home
- Ensuring clean, green neighbourhoods and public space
- Well-connected businesses and residents

The Scrutiny Board will comprise 13 members are appointed at full council, plus any additional members as the Council may see fit to appoint. Neither the Mayor of the Council nor any members of the Cabinet may be members of the Scrutiny Board and its Sub-Committees.

7.5 Specific Functions

Policy Development and Review

The Scrutiny Board and its Panels may:-

- a. assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in depth analysis of policy issues;

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- b. conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- c. question members of the Cabinet and/or Committees and Chief Officers from the Council about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area;
- d. liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interest of local people are enhanced by collaborative working; and
- e. consider the impact of policies to assess if they have made a difference.

Scrutiny. The Scrutiny Board and its Panels may:-

- a. review and scrutinise the decisions by and performance of the Cabinet and/or Committees and Council Officers in relation to individual decisions and over time;
- b. review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- c. question members of the Cabinet and/or Committees and Chief Officers from the Council 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 project;
- d. make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or appropriate Committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- e. review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Scrutiny Board or its Panels and local people about their activities and performance; and
- f. question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).

7.6 Proceedings of the Scrutiny Board and Scrutiny Panels

The Scrutiny Board and Scrutiny Panels will conduct their proceedings in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in Part 4.

7.7 Annual Report

- a. The Scrutiny Board will present an annual report to the Council.
- b. The Annual Report will contain information on the work done by the Board or panels over the past year and recommendations for work to be done in the year to come.

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7.8 Designation of Scrutiny Officer

The Scrutiny and Systems Manager is designated as the Council's Statutory Scrutiny Officer whose function is:

- a. to promote the role of the authority's Scrutiny Board and panels;
- b. to provide support to the authority's Scrutiny Board or panels and the members of that committee or those committees;
- c. to provide support and guidance to—
 - members of the authority,
 - members of the executive of the authority, and
 - employees of the authority,

in relation to the functions of the authority's Scrutiny Board or Panels.

7.9 Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the Scrutiny Board shall be one quarter of the number of voting members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The quorum for a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel's shall be one quarter of the number of voting members of the relevant Panel/ Select Committee.

7.10 Substitutes

The leaders of the political groups may notify the Monitoring Officer of substitutes, of Councillors from their party, to attend Scrutiny Board/Scrutiny Panel/Select Committee in place of members of their party where the relevant member is unable to attend.