

# **Working Style of the Scrutiny Committee and a protocol for those attending**

## **Independence**

Members of the Scrutiny Committee will not be subject to whipping arrangements by party groups.

## **Member leadership**

Members of the Committee will take the lead in selecting topics for and in questioning witnesses. The Committee will expect members of Cabinet, rather than officers, to take the main responsibility for answering the Committee's questions about topics, which relate mainly to the Council's activities.

## **A constructive atmosphere**

Meetings of the Committee will be constructive, and not judgmental, accepting that effective overview and scrutiny is best achieved through challenging and constructive enquiry. People giving evidence at the Committee should not feel under attack.

## **Respect and trust**

Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust.

## **Openness and transparency**

The Committee's business will be open and transparent, except where there are sound reasons for protecting confidentiality. In particular, the minutes of the Committee's meetings will explain the discussion and debate, so that it could be understood by those who were not present.

## **Consensus**

Members of the Committee will work together and, while recognising political allegiances, will attempt to achieve consensus and agreed recommendations.

## **Impartial and independent officer advice**

Officers who advise and support the Committee will give impartial and independent advice, recognising the importance of the Scrutiny Committee in the Council's arrangements for governance, as set out in the Constitution.

## **Regular review**

There will be regular reviews of how the overview and scrutiny process is working, and a willingness to change if it is not working well.

## **Programming and planning**

The Scrutiny Committee will have a programme of work. Members will agree the topics to be included in the work programme, the extent of the investigation to be undertaken in relation to resources, and the witnesses to be invited to give evidence.

## **Managing time**

The Committee will attempt to conclude the business of each meeting in reasonable time. The order of business will be arranged as far as possible to minimise the demands on the time of witnesses.