

HOUSING AND HOMES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities relating to housing, homes, social cohesion and community safety.

This Committee shall be the Crime and Disorder Committee (Police and Justice Act 2006).

All Councillors, except Cabinet Members (and the Lord Mayor) can be members of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Chairs of these committees are appointed by the Full Council and Deputy Chairs are elected by each committee at its first meeting, for the purpose of substitution for the Chair if absent.

Good Overview and Scrutiny adds value to councils in many ways, for example it:

- Provides “critical friend” challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers;
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities to be heard;
- Is carried out by ‘independent minded members’ who lead and own the scrutiny process;
- Drives improvement in public services.

7.1 General role

Overview and Scrutiny Committees will:

- (a) make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council, the Executive and/or other organisations in connection with the discharge of the functions specified in their terms of reference;
- (b) consider any matter covered in their terms of reference that may affect or be likely to have an effect on the citizens of Birmingham; and
 - i. is relevant to the Council’s strategic objectives; and/or
 - ii. is relevant to major issues faced by officers in managing a function of the Council; and
 - iii. is likely to make a contribution to moving the Council forward and achieving key performance targets.
- (c) exercise the “request for call-in” and “call-in” any Executive decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive.

Overview and Scrutiny Chairs should maintain regular engagement with Cabinet Members to enable flexibility to be built into the Overview and Scrutiny work programme, so as to respond to the council’s policy priorities in a timely way.

7.2 Specific functions

(a) Policy development and review

Overview and Scrutiny Committees may:

- (i) assist the Council and/or the Executive in the development of its budget and Policy Framework by appropriate analysis of policy and budget issues;
- (ii) conduct appropriate research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy and budget issues and possible options;

- (iii) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
- (iv) question Members of the Executive and/or Chief Officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting their areas of responsibility; and
- (v) liaise with other external organisations operating in the city, whether national, regional or local to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.

(b) Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Committees may:

- (i) review and scrutinise the Executive decisions made by and performance of the Executive and/or Chief Officers in relation to decisions taken by them or in relation to their areas of responsibility/department;
- (ii) review and scrutinise the performance of the council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas – including the areas of responsibility of the Regulatory and Non-Executive Committees, but not the actual decisions of the Regulatory and Non-Executive Committees;
- (iii) make recommendations to the Executive, Chairmen of Committees, Chief Officers and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- (iv) review and scrutinise the performance of other relevant public bodies in Birmingham (including Health Authorities) and to invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance;
- (v) question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent);
- (vi) establish short life working groups to carry out specific time limited enquiries as agreed with the five Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs and subject to available resources.