

Scrutiny

Scrutiny Guide

A practical guide to Scrutiny at North Kesteven District Council



UPDATED JUNE 2023

North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Alternative Formats:

This document is available in large print, braille, audio tape, electronic formats such as CD, or in a different language. Our website has screen reader functionality. For a copy please contact Corporate Information at the Council using the following options:

Phone: 01529 414155 (main switchboard) or

Web: www.n-kesteven.gov.uk

Email: equality@n-kesteven.gov.uk

Corporate Information Team
North Kesteven District Council
Kesteven Street
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 7EF

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Introduction

Scrutiny plays an important role at NKDC and gives Councillors (Members) who serve on the Scrutiny Committees the opportunity to express their views on local authority work and the community in which we reside.

This guide is intended to provide an easy to use and practical reference for all those involved in the scrutiny process at NK.

Scrutiny is a process led by Members. We therefore encourage all Councillors to read this document and retain it for their reference. Those who may find the Scrutiny Guide purposeful includes:

- Members of the Scrutiny Committees;
- Members who are not on the Scrutiny Committees;
- Executive Members of the Council;
- Officers;
- Witnesses in Scrutiny reviews;
- Members of the public.

The aim is to provide an overall framework within which Scrutiny at North Kesteven can develop and help the Council achieve its vision, aims and priorities.

To do this, Scrutiny needs to fully focus on the things that make a real difference to the local community. The function of Scrutiny is to make recommendations, as it is the function of the Executive Board to make the majority of decisions at NKDC.

In this guide, the term 'Scrutiny' is used to describe the entire Overview and Scrutiny function, as set out in the Local Government Act 2000 and associated guidance, including the Governments latest Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities, May 2019.

The Scrutiny Guide is a working document that will require reviewing and adapting from time to time, to reflect changes within the Council and National changes in guidance.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 as part of the modernisation agenda for local government. It replaces what is often referred to as the “traditional committee system” and all Councils must have at least one Overview and Scrutiny committee separate to the Executive Board, which is the main decision-making committee of the council. At North Kesteven District Council, the process is carried out by two Scrutiny Panels.

The national body, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) outlines four principles of good public scrutiny:

1. To provide a “critical friend” to the Executive Board;
2. Reflecting the voice and concerns of the public;
3. Taking the lead and owning the scrutiny process;
4. Making an impact on the delivery of public services.

All Members and officers should recognise and appreciate the importance and legitimacy the scrutiny function is afforded by the law. It was created to act as a check and balance on the executive and is a statutory requirement for all authorities operating executive arrangements and for combined authorities. Councillors have a unique legitimacy derived from their being democratically elected. The insights that they can bring by having this close connection to local people are part of what gives scrutiny its value.

What is Scrutiny?

The Scrutiny process can influence decisions, but does not make them. Its success depends on how well skills are developed and how they can be used to challenge in a constructive manner. The three key legislative roles are:

- Policy review and development: Checking on whether existing policies are effective and challenging, and assisting the Executive Board to shape new ones;
- Act as an alternative source of information/advice to the Executive Board and Council as appropriate: Contributing towards the continuous improvement of Council services;
- External Scrutiny: Reviewing or investigating matters of particular concern either within the Council or within the community.

The scrutiny role also provides opportunities for public involvement and debate. This supports a focus on localism and the Members’ role in this.

To work effectively, Scrutiny must be Member-led. This means that Members must be pro-active in selecting items they want to review or challenge. A key success-factor is that of evidence. All recommendations coming from Scrutiny should be supported with reasons based on wide-ranging evidence.

Scrutiny Committees have a role in monitoring the performance of the Council and the Executive

Board by challenging performance indicators and reviewing how policies contribute to the Council's priorities. In this way, the Committees can help the Executive be more effective. By identifying areas of concern or good practice elsewhere, Members can start a Scrutiny Review to investigate potential improvements to policy and service delivery.

The Scrutiny process is the opportunity for Members to examine the various functions of the Council, consider decisions, ask questions on how decisions have been made, investigate whether service improvements could be made, and make appropriate recommendations, with the aim to helping the Authority be more effective.

Scrutiny Members can influence the development of new policies or review current ones to help bring them up to date. This policy-development role might be carried out at the invitation of the Executive Board, by the Committee's choice, in response to public concern, or as a result of call-in (call-in is explained later in the Guide).

Developing Scrutiny

Scrutiny can operate in a number of different ways and has a variety of responsibilities. A key part of the Scrutiny role is a commitment to ensure that Council responsibilities are addressed, performance is well managed and that partners are engaged in influencing the Council's decisions, working in an open, transparent, inclusive and accountable manner. The effectiveness of Scrutiny will depend in part on:

- Members and officers developing a common understanding of the principles and process of Scrutiny;
- Willingness to appraise performance honestly and embrace continuous improvement;
- The ability to be open-minded and confident about challenging the status quo;
- A commitment to looking forward to improved performance rather than dwelling on poor performance;
- An impartial approach to considering and evaluating the actions of the Executive Board both before and after decisions are taken;
- Reviewing and monitoring performance and operational effectiveness in service areas or themes.
- Seeking information pro-actively about and being aware of all Council activities, including existing and new policies, procedures and key issues, including:
 - The setting of and management of the Council's budget;
 - National developments and best practice relating to Scrutiny;
 - Considering and investigating broad policy issues and making recommendations to the Executive Board and/or Council as appropriate.

Objectives of Scrutiny

Members understand that the objectives of Scrutiny are to:

- Support the Council in achieving its vision for the District and its strategic aims and priorities;
- Promote open and transparent decision-making, democratic accountability and to consider the decisions taken by the Executive Board;
- Promote continuous improvement, best practice and innovation within the services, functions and policies which the Council has responsibility for or influence over.

Members understand that the purpose of Scrutiny is not to:

- Decide Council policy;
- Further personal agendas, rivalries or differences;
- Examine minor matters, individual complaints, internal disciplinary matters or other matters prejudicial to the Council's interests.

Scrutiny does not get involved in:

- Minor matters or individual concerns which are not of wider community significance. These need to be pursued through the appropriate service unit or the Ward Councillor;
- Individual complaints. These are addressed through the Council's complaints procedure and not through the scrutiny process;
- Legal proceedings, planning and licensing decisions.

Scrutiny in action at North Kesteven

North Kesteven District Council has two Scrutiny Committees:

- Flourishing Communities Scrutiny Committee; and
- Resources Scrutiny Committee.

The powers for both Committees come from the Local Government Act 2000 and are set out in the Council's Constitution. The specific areas of responsibility (remits) for each Committee are set out in Article 6, of the Council's Constitution, and the Responsibilities and Functions of the Scrutiny Committees in Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.

Flourishing Communities Scrutiny Committee areas for priority and remit	Resources Scrutiny Committee areas for priority and remit
<p>Council Priorities: Our Environment, Our Communities, Our Economy & Our Homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outward facing and complementing work to strengthen and support local communities. • Responsible for overseeing and scrutinising the whole range of the Council's functions and responsibilities. • Responsible for scrutinising other public service providers' work and its impact on the local community. • To act as the forum to scrutinise crime and disorder matters (as per the Crime and Disorder Act 2006) or when considering Councillor Calls for Action (CCfA). <p>General Areas remit include looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships • Building Control • Climate Change • Communications • Community Safety • Customer Services • Development Management • Economic Development • Emergency Planning • Enforcement • Environmental Services & Public Protection • Housing, (Private Sector, Housing Tenants & Landlord Services) • Local Plan • Open Spaces & Trees 	<p>Council Priority: Our Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inward facing and complementing the work of the Audit Committee*, to strengthen and support the Council and focusing on the scrutiny of budget and policy frameworks. • To consider data and investigate areas of underperformance. • Responsible for scrutinising performance of the organisation, for example, service plans, performance targets, Our Council projects. • Responsible for scrutinising data in relation to benchmarking, where this information is available. <p>*Scrutiny is concerned with the review of policy, its formulation and implementation; distinct from the Audit Committee which operates to ensure that the governance and risk environment within the council is effective and that financial management is fit for purpose.</p> <p>General Areas remit include looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Information • Democratic Services & Member Development • Efficiency & Value for Money • ExCITe*¹ • Financial Services including Annual Target Budget • Health & Safety • Human Resources & Corporate Training • ICT • Insurance • Lafford Homes • Payroll & Exchequer • Performance*² • Procurement • Revenues & Benefits Client • Risk & Governance

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Services • Strategic Leisure Services • Strategic Partnerships • Street Scene • Utilities - Broadband/connectivity, etc. • Waste Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy & Business Transformation*¹ <p>¹ The projects within these may be looked at by the Flourishing Communities Committee</p> <p>² The Resources Committee may request any of the members of CMT, Directors or Assistant Directors to Committee to discuss their department's performance.</p>
Flourishing Communities Scrutiny Committee Executive Board Members and Senior Officers	Resources Scrutiny Committee Executive Board Members and Senior Officers
<p>Executive Board Members*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Member with Special Interest in Development, Economy and Culture • Executive Member with Special Interest in Housing • Executive Member with Special Interest in Environment Waste • Executive Member with Special Interest in Corporate and Community Services <p>*There may be some crossover of Executive Board Members between the Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>CMT/Directors/Assistant Directors:*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive • Deputy Chief Executive • Director of Economy & Place • Assistant Director of Housing & Property Services • Assistant Director of Corporate & Community Services • Assistant Director of Environment & Public Protection <p>*There may be some crossover of Executive Board Members between the Scrutiny Committees.</p>	<p>Executive Board Members*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Member with Special Interest in Finance, Governance and Democracy • Executive Member with Special Interest in Corporate and Community Services <p>*There may be some crossover of Executive Board Members between the Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>CMT/Directors/Assistant Directors:*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive • Deputy Chief Executive • Director of Resources • Assistant Director of Finance • Assistant Director of Corporate & Community Services • Assistant Director of Democratic Services <p>*There may be some crossover of Senior Officers between the Scrutiny Committees.</p>

Scrutiny Terms of Reference

Each Committee can:

- Review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- Make reports and recommendations with regard to the discharge of any of those functions, to the full Council, its Committees or Sub-committees, the Executive or any Council Officers;
- Consider any matter affecting the District or its residents;
- Exercise the right to call in decisions made by the Executive Board but which have not been implemented;
- Assist the Council and/or the Executive Board with the development of future policies and strategies;
- Invite the Executive Board Member/s when/if required for a Scrutiny meeting;
- Invite senior officers of the authority to attend its meetings to answer questions;
- Invite other persons from outside the Council to attend meetings;
- Appoint Review Groups to carry out specified tasks;
- Co-opt people who are not elected Members.

Membership

The Scrutiny Committees at NKDC are each made up of a Chair and a Vice-Chair, plus a further 11 non-Executive Members. The Scrutiny Committees are appointed annually by the full Council and the Committees are politically balanced.

Any non-Executive Member of the Council who is not appointed to a Scrutiny Committee is still able to take part in the Scrutiny process at NKDC. These Members can:

- Attend a Scrutiny meeting as a substitute for another Member of their party if an agenda item is of particular interest to them or their Ward;
- Put forward topics for the Work Programme to the Chairs of the Committees;
- The Chair may invite them to speak at a meeting, but not vote at a Committee meeting;
- Attend the Committee meetings as a Member of the public.

Members invariably have different skill-sets. When forming a Scrutiny Committee, the Council should consider that, as a group, it possesses the requisite expertise, commitment and ability to act impartially to fulfil its functions.

Executive Board Members at Scrutiny Committee meetings is dealt with in the Role of Executive

Board Members on page 16 of this document.

A Scrutiny Committee may also co-opt up to two non-Council members onto its' Committee. These members may be appointed for a specific project or for a whole municipal year. They do not have voting rights but they can bring valuable external insights and/or specialist knowledge.

The Scrutiny Committees may set-up Review Groups to undertake specific projects. A Scrutiny Committee will ask for volunteers from the Members to the Review Group, and outline objectives and timescales for the review. This is called the Scope (**a copy of the scope template can be found on page 39**). Review Groups are not politically balanced and may include any Members with keen interest in or knowledge of the area for review. Executive Members are not allowed to be a Member of the Review Group, but may be invited to attend one or more of the meetings to provide their views if it is for their area of special interest.

Scrutiny Meetings

Scrutiny Committees hold regular public meetings. Members of the public and other external organisations can be invited to speak and give evidence. Likely meeting times and dates will be agreed at Full Council, although the Chair can call further meetings if necessary. Some information must be withheld from the press and the public on the basis that it is confidential and/or exempt information. When this information is being discussed, the meeting excludes the press and the public.

One of the main advantages of the Scrutiny process is that it can be less formal than other Council meetings. Meetings are focused on gathering evidence and forming recommendations and will usually involve much discussion between Officers and Members. Within the general rules of the Constitution, the Chair can decide rules of conduct for meetings.

It is considered best practice for Scrutiny Committee Members to meet up 20 to 30 minutes before the Committee meeting to discuss any tactics in questioning. This provides a good opportunity for Members to work together and ask more probing questions. The decision to do this lies with the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees.

Quorum for a Scrutiny Committee

The quorum for a Scrutiny Committee is **five** Members of the Committee with voting rights.

Access to Documents

Scrutiny Committees, (including Review Groups), are entitled to copies of any document which is in the possession or control of the Executive or its Committees, and which contains material relating to any business transacted at a public or private meeting of the Executive or its Committees; or any decision that has been made by an officer of the authority in accordance with executive arrangements.

Exceptions are:

- Any document that is in draft form;
- Advice of a Political Adviser;
- Any part of a document that contains exempt or confidential information unless that information is relevant to an action or decisions they are reviewing or scrutinising or intend to scrutinise. However, regulations introduced in 2012 stipulate that a decision by the Executive to withhold parts of information as requested by a councillor must include a written statement explaining their reasons for this.

Public Participation

Public involvement can play an important part of the Scrutiny process. This can happen in a number of ways, such as: suggesting topics for scrutiny, attending meetings as observers, providing written or verbal evidence relevant to a particular scrutiny review when invited to do so.

Requests should be sent in the first instance to:

scrutiny@n-kesteven.gov.uk

All requests will be considered by the Chair or the whole Committee and the person making the request will be kept informed of progress. If numbers of public participants wanting to attend the meeting look to be high, a ticketing system will be implemented.

Engaging Scrutiny

It is important to ensure that the work of scrutiny is well co-ordinated and uses a partnership approach with the Executive Board to add value to our services. There are two sets of meetings with this role:

Executive and Scrutiny Liaison

This comprises the Executive Board and the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each of the two Scrutiny Committees. This informal meeting is led by the Leader of the Council. It meets approximately four times a year, and on an ad hoc basis when necessary. Its general purpose is to facilitate a mutual exchange of information and a meaningful dialogue between Scrutiny and Executive Board Members. It also:

- Discusses matters of mutual interest in relation to the effectiveness of the scrutiny function;
- Liaises on the work programme and forward plan in consideration of potential items for scrutiny;
- Discusses progress with Review Groups.

Scrutiny Forum

The Scrutiny Forum comprises the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each of the two Scrutiny Committees. These informal/non-public meetings are chaired on a rotation basis between the two Chairs. They meet approximately four times a year, and on an ad hoc basis when required. The general purpose of the meetings is to monitor progress and performance of the Scrutiny function. It also:

- Considers areas for policy development and, in areas that are cross-cutting, determines which Committee undertakes the review, in light of workloads and interest;
- Monitors progress with the Review Groups;
- Monitors the workload of each Scrutiny Committee and makes recommendations to Council, where necessary, to address any imbalances;
- Resolves any issues relating to the terms of reference of the Scrutiny Committees;
- Considers the impact of any changes to legislation or guidance relating to the Scrutiny function.
- It is considered good practice to invite the Audit Committee Chair and Vice-Chair to at least two of these meetings each year to make sure there is no crossover of areas of interest.

The Role of Members

Scrutiny Committee Members (or any non-Executive Member attending a Scrutiny Committee meeting)

Scrutiny Members can expect to receive a considerable amount of paperwork to read and will attend quite a few activities in relation to a specific review. The Committees will prioritise the work that needs to be undertaken by keeping up with new legislation, public opinion, the Council's performance and priorities, and good practice.

Witnesses or advisers appearing before a Scrutiny Committee should be made to feel welcome, in an atmosphere of co-operation and transparency. An interrogative or confrontation approach is clearly not conducive to information gathering.

However, Members are expected to ask probing questions in order to gain the information they need. All Members involved in the process are required to follow the Council's Scrutiny Members' Conduct Protocol and Witness Charter, **on pages 14 and 16 respectively**.

Training is provided on Scrutiny throughout each four-year term. Further specific training for Chair and Vice-Chairs is also provided.

Scrutiny Members are expected to set aside party politics and concentrate on securing sufficient information in order to report fair and unbiased findings and recommendations.

Members will decide what to investigate, and how Scrutiny Reviews will be undertaken. This includes who to invite as witnesses and what questions will be asked. Having heard all the evidence, the

Committee will consider its conclusions and make recommendations within a report. It may then, depending on the nature of the report, forward the report to the Executive Board and/or Council as appropriate. As the Executive and Scrutiny have regular engagement, most recommendations and findings are expected to be directed to the Executive Board for consideration, but there may be matters that Scrutiny consider which should be a matter for Council.

Scrutiny Members' Conduct Protocol

This protocol sets out the standards of behaviour and responsibilities expected of all Members of the Council involved in the scrutiny process. There are additional responsibilities and powers pertaining to Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees included in this protocol.

The proper and effective Scrutiny of the Council's decision making, policies and delivery of services is a crucial responsibility of democratically elected members, and this protocol aims to provide guidance to Members in the exercise of this function.

Adherence to these standards is required of all Scrutiny Members and breach of the standards will be referred to the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

1. The Scrutiny Committees shall conduct their business in a friendly and orderly fashion, in such a way as to maximise participation from all Members and to facilitate debate. Attendance by all Members is important to ensure all points of view are heard and a full discussion is possible.
2. The Council requires Members to uphold the highest standards of probity and integrity and they shall be guided in those standards by the Members' Code of Conduct set out in Appendix 14 of the Council's Constitution. The onus of responsibility for upholding those standards rests with the individual councillor.
3. Members have a responsibility to take up such opportunities of training and development that are provided by the Council, in order to carry out their Scrutiny activities effectively. Members can view the Council's Member Development Strategy, which sets out the framework to provide development support.

Behaviour of Scrutiny Members

All Scrutiny Members shall:

- Refrain from personal criticism of other Members and officers, whatever their position in the Council:
- Carry out debate in a polite and respectful manner and consider the implications of such discussions and any consequent press coverage on the public perception of scrutiny:
- Use their powers of scrutiny properly and behave in a manner worthy of the trust placed in them by the local people who have elected them:
- Not permit personal agendas, rivalries and differences to deflect them from properly fulfilling their duties as scrutiny members. Declare any interest in the matters under scrutiny:
- Uphold the Scrutiny Witness Charter (**see page 16**).

Scrutiny Members must be free to carry out their work with the maximum independence and freedom to challenge and monitor Executive Board decisions, Council policies and service delivery, they shall not be subject to pressure from Executive Members on the nature or tendency of their reviews, monitoring and other duties.

Duty and Responsibilities of the Scrutiny Chairs

The Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees:

Chairs should pay special attention to the need to guard the Committee's independence. Importantly, however, they should take care to avoid the Committee being, and being viewed as, a de facto opposition to the Executive. Chairs should:

- Provide strong and fair leadership and clear guidance to Members, Executive Members, non-NKDC witnesses and officers involved in the scrutiny function and meetings;
- Ensure that their place as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee is maintained during each meeting;
- Should determine the nature and extent of an Executive Member's participation in a scrutiny committee meeting, and in any informal Scrutiny Review Group meeting.
- Develop a clear understanding of the terms of reference of the Scrutiny Committees and the scope and range of the scrutiny functions for which they are responsible;
- Ensure the Committees and their work are effective in undertaking their functions and contribute to the achievement of the Council's Strategic Aims and Priorities, the delivery of best value, the continuous improvement in services and implementation of best practice;
- Agree all agendas for the Committee's meetings and take a lead in developing a forward Work Programme for the whole scrutiny function and ensuring it is adhered to within budget provision;
- Not be contentious or politically sensitive;
- Be aware of implications for other areas of Council responsibility or relationships with external partners or bodies;
- Seek to involve all Non-Executive Members in the work of the Committee;
- Invite the Executive Board Member/s when/if required for a Scrutiny meeting, at the earliest opportunity;
- Have responsibility for liaison with Chief Officers responsible for services that fall under the Committee's scrutiny remit or terms of reference;
- Decide, in consultation with officers, whether witnesses will be allowed the opportunity to make an opening statement to the Committee;

- Ensure that they introduce themselves to any non-NKDC witnesses prior to the Scrutiny meeting.

Scrutiny Witness Charter

Attending the Scrutiny Committee meeting as a witness is often a new experience for people. The Council recognises the need to support witnesses. We will keep witnesses informed during the scrutiny process to try and ensure that the experience is as stress-free as possible.

The Council will:

1. Inform the witness of the time, date and place of the Scrutiny Committee meeting at which their evidence is to be taken;
2. Inform the witness of the matters about which the scrutiny body wish to ask them. Inform the witness of any documents that the Scrutiny Committee wish to have produced for them;
3. Provide reasonable notice of all of the requirements of the scrutiny body to enable the witness to respond in full at the earliest opportunity;
4. Provide copies of all relevant reports, papers and background information;
5. Arrange for the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee meeting to introduce himself/herself to the witness prior to the proceedings, and where possible, ensures the witness/es are given an early position on the agenda;
6. Ensure that all witnesses are treated with courtesy and respect and that all questions to witnesses are made in an orderly manner as directed by the Chair of the meeting;
7. Ensure where appropriate that the witness is provided with information about claiming witness expenses;
8. Following the proceedings, write to the witness and where appropriate, inform them of the outcome;
9. The Council's protocol on Officer/Member Relations will apply to all internal witnesses.

The Role of Executive Board Members

Best practice shows that Executive Board Members should be invited to attend meetings as they are the decision makers. Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees should extend invite to the Executive Board Member/s with the special area of responsibility for the area/s to be discussed on the agenda. Diary dates should be placed in the diaries of Members of the Executive Board via Democratic Services for the Scrutiny Committee meeting/s required.

Member Scrutiny Training

Scrutiny training shall periodically be offered to Members throughout their tenure as Councillors at NKDC. Development is provided after elections and by-elections for Members, as set out in the Member Development Strategy.

The Role of Officers

Scrutiny should be seen by all officers as an excellent opportunity to work closely with Members to review and improve services. Members must appreciate that notice should be given to officers to prepare information and reports. Officers have two main roles to play:

- Firstly - in supporting Committee Members throughout the Scrutiny process. This will include giving guidance and advice on the process and activities, providing background information, research, professional and technical information.
- Secondly - in giving 'evidence' to the Panel and to answer questions. The information officers give should, as far as possible, be confined to factual statements and explanations relating to policies and decisions as appropriate. Officers should avoid being drawn into discussions on the merits of alternative policies where this is politically contentious.
- Officers should give a brief introduction to their reports, lasting no longer than 5 minutes.
- The Scrutiny Officer is the lead officer for Scrutiny.

Officer support for Scrutiny: Who does what?

Role	Responsibility
Senior Officers (Directors/Assistant Directors & Managers)	Duties include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide Committees (including Review Groups) with professional and technical information, and advice relevant to the issue under scrutiny.• This may mean that they are asked to provide written and/or verbal reports, policy documents or other appropriate information or evidence.
Scrutiny Officer	Duties include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support and advice to Scrutiny Members and Chairs;• Co-ordinate Work Programme and agenda items;• Manage Review Groups;• Oversee processes and communication;• Promote Scrutiny;• Conduct or commission research for Members;• Plan Member Scrutiny training and development events.
Democratic Services Officers	Duties include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Democratic Services Officer assigned to each Scrutiny Committee;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They assist the Scrutiny Officer in providing liaison between the Executive Board, Scrutiny Chairs and the Committees; • They co-ordinate Committee and Review Group agendas, • Write the minutes/notes for each Committee/RG. • They assist the Chairs in issuing invitations for witnesses and other administration.
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The Work Programme

It is the Scrutiny Committees' responsibility to select scrutiny topics and develop and set an annual Work Programme for itself by considering the following:

1. Choice of topic/Issue;
2. Balanced workload;
3. Capacity;
4. Timetable for the work;
5. Reviewing and updating the Programme.

The Work Programme should be mapped out at the first meeting of each Committee held after the Council's Annual Meeting. The Work Programme should include topics for each meeting throughout the year. However, it is vital that Scrutiny Committees retain the flexibility to respond to issues of concern as they arise and to scrutinise issues arising from the Executive Board's Forward Plan. The Work Programme can be added to throughout the year.

The Work Programme and The Council's Forward Plan are standing items on each Scrutiny Committee meeting agendas and should be discussed at every meeting.

1. Choosing a Topic/Issue

Scrutiny has a wide scope and can scrutinise those policies or issues they feel appropriate. The selection of relevant topics or issues for Scrutiny is a critical step in the entire scrutiny process to ensure the objectives the Council has set for it are achieved. In setting the Work Programme each Committee needs to consider the following issues and subject matters:

- All Members of the Council have the opportunity to put forward items for Work Programmes of both of the Scrutiny Committees, whether they are on a Scrutiny Committee or not. This is especially important if the item is pertinent to their own Ward or the District as a whole. For Members wishing to do this, it is recommended that they discuss their item with the Committee Chair in the first instance and the Scrutiny Officer;
- Forward Plan – This is the most important document for all members. The forward plan is a list of all key decisions to be made by the Executive Board.

- Executive Board minutes; Communications Plan and the Council's SWOT Analysis;
- Policy development and review: any perceived gaps in policy, or areas that do not seem to be working well;
- New or pending legislation/input on major consultation documents;
- Consider issues for potential in-depth review. For instance, these might be significant community concerns, major problem areas, or substantial over/under spending;
- Consider areas for external scrutiny where significant community concerns exist such as multi-agency plans, Public sector partners (like the NHS and community safety partners, over which scrutiny has specific legal powers); Voluntary sector partners; Contractors and commissioning partners (including partners in joint ventures and authority-owned companies); In parished areas, town, community and parish councils; Cross-authority bodies and organisations, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships¹⁷; and others with a stake and interest in the local area – large local employers, for example;
- Invite contributions to the Work Programme from Members of the Committees, Full Council, Executive Board, officers and the public;
- When choosing a new Work Programme item, it is considered best practise for Members to use a simple scoping exercise. This provides a basic framework, which focusses on the aims, objectives, and value that the considered item would bring to the Scrutiny Committee. If wishing to add an issue to the Work Programme, it may be worth checking with the relevant NKDC officer as to whether that issue is able to be resolved quickly without the need to go to Committee.
- It also good practice to remember the SMART acronym for setting the Work Programme. Would looking at a prospective item be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely.
- **Please see Appendix 1 on Page 34-35 for the Work Programme Scoping Template.**

2. Balanced Workload

Due consideration must be given to undertaking each element of scrutiny:

- Policy review and development;
- Consider decisions made by the Executive;
- Legislative or other national policy changes;
- Consider the resources needed such as Members/officers time, capacity and budget requirements.

3. Ensuring capacity

In putting the Work Programme together, the Committee needs to consider Members' capacity to deliver the programme and officers' capacity to support them in that task.

The Scrutiny Officer, mindful of service delivery or significant corporate requirements, will advise on the capacity to support the Work Programme and help in trying to accommodate Members' requests. This also includes capacity for Review Groups.

1. Process for Members to add an item for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee:

A) Ward/District concern identified by Member.

B) Member raises the concern with the relevant NKDC Officer.

C) If the concern is unresolved then the Member can request that Scrutiny consider the issue by raising it with the relevant Chair/Scrutiny Officer.

D) A Scrutiny Work Programme Scoping form will be forwarded to the concerned Member. This will provide the Chair/Scrutiny Officer with general information/aim/objectives. The Scrutiny Officer will help the Member complete this form.

E) On return of the Scrutiny Work Programming form, a discussion will take place between the relevant Chair/Vice-Chair, Scrutiny Officer and any other relevant officer, and a decision will be made regarding whether to:

Place the concern on the next agenda as a fully-fledged agenda item.

Place the concern as an item (including the Scrutiny Work Programme form) for the Committee. Members to decide if it should be added to the Work Programme for future meeting.

To hold a special meeting if the item is deemed urgent. Urgent Item protocol?

F) The concerned Member to be kept up to date with information at all times and to be invited to the Committee meeting out of courtesy.

Review Groups

A Review Group may be set up to carry out a review of a specific topic or issue. Review Groups should work to a clear remit, with agreed timescales, and report their findings directly to the parent Scrutiny Committee. Review Group meetings are not public meetings and no formal agenda is produced.

A Review Group is formed by a Scrutiny Committee to look at an area of concern on behalf of the whole of the Scrutiny Committee. It is Member led and Members will be expected to carry out their

own research and commit to writing the report and initial recommendations.

Review Groups carry out in-depth investigations into a specific area or policy. Review Groups are appointed by Scrutiny Committees and shall consist of a minimum of three Members. There is no maximum membership of Members on a Review Group, but as many as it is considered appropriate to enable sufficient ownership of the task and enable the group to proceed efficiently. Membership is approved by the relevant Committee and is determined by Members' availability and the level of interest including ward, geographical, subject matter, and expertise. Any non-executive Member can be appointed to a Review Group, even if they are not a Member of the parent, or any Scrutiny Panel. Where possible, an invite to all non-Executive Members inviting expressions of interest in joining a Review Group, with Members being given 7 working days to reply. Each Group is entitled to co-opt up to two non-elected Members who may speak, but not vote. A Lead Member shall be appointed either at the founding Scrutiny Committee meeting or by the Review Group Members at their first meeting. The Lead Member must be drawn from the Scrutiny Committee's membership and cannot be a Co-optee. Where a joint Review Group is formed between the two Committees, it is suggested that membership be limited to a maximum of seven Members.

Reviews Groups should work to a guideline timetable of 12 weeks, as detailed in Article 6 of the Constitution: "a review should be completed within a 12 week timeframe except in extenuating circumstances or where a particularly complex piece of work is being undertaken". The Work programme should be reviewed regularly, adjusting and updating as necessary as new topics and suggestions are received and prioritised. Review Groups should not become on-going groups or sub-committees.

It is advised that when a Scrutiny Committee agrees to the setting up of a Review Group, they explicitly minute the topic of investigation, the investigations name the overall aim of the investigation. Research can then be carried out before the Review Group first meet to aid them with Scope setting for the investigation. Please note, this may however provide information or evidence to show that the investigation is not worth undertaking.

It is recommended that all non-Executive Members are emailed with a short precise for any future Review Group before the relevant Committee meeting. This will allow Members time to put themselves forward for the Review Group, and agree attendance at the meeting, to offer their opinions on the subject.

Review Groups can:

- Scrutinise and review the performance of a particular service or activity. This can be measured against agreed policy objectives, past performance, accepted standards, national performance targets and expectations of users;
- Provide an in-depth review of the implementation of a particular policy and its subsequent effectiveness;
- Assist the Executive Board in the development of new policies and strategies through the detailed analysis of policy issues, research and consultation;
- Preparation of a timed project plan, appropriate meeting dates and milestones, in addition to the regular Committee agenda item, should help manage this process and keep clear focus, as with the Scrutiny Review process outlined above. The meetings are facilitated by the Scrutiny Officer;

- The performance of Review Groups will be reviewed at the Scrutiny Forum and Executive and Scrutiny Liaison meetings to ensure they are achieving their objectives. Any recommendations for procedural changes to Review Groups will be put before Council.

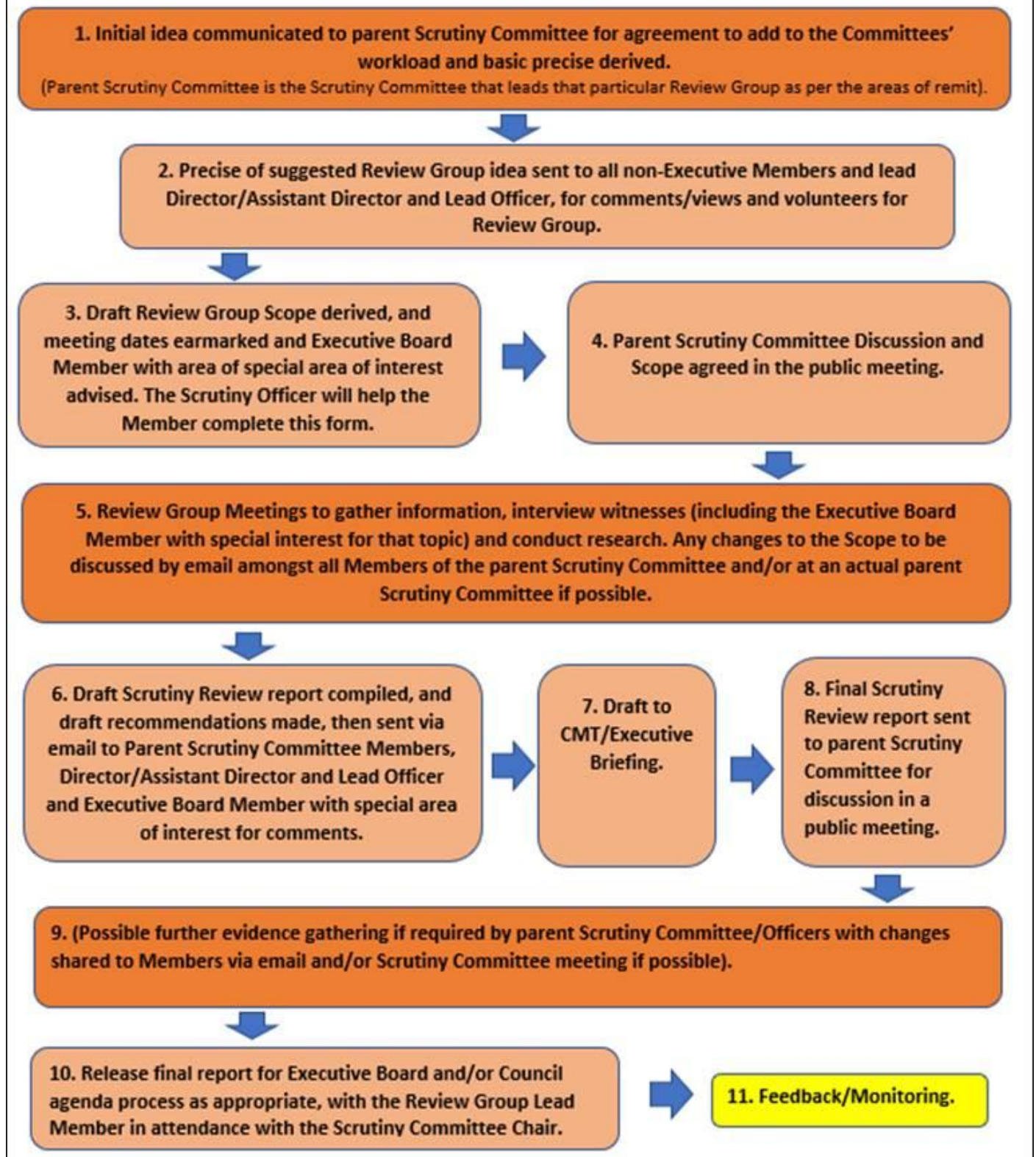
Operation

Review Group meetings are not public meetings and a formal agenda is not necessary. Ideally, information shall be provided to the Group five working days before they meet and there should be a minimum of ten working days between each meeting to allow adequate time for information to be collected. There is no allocated time for the duration of a review as each will depend on the nature of the review. As a guide, some may take 12 weeks whereas others, such as in-depth scrutiny reviews, could be longer.

If time is short, then a Review Group could potentially meet all the witnesses over the course of one day, with perhaps one follow-up session with officers if required. Plenty of planning would have to go into this, with officers having sufficient preparation time.

Review Groups report their findings directly to the 'parent' Scrutiny Committee. All Members of the Council will be advised that a Review Group has been appointed to undertake a specific review and Members will usually be given an opportunity to take part in the review by offering to submit evidence to the Group. Any non-executive Member can volunteer to be appointed to a Review Group, even if they are not a Member of the parent Scrutiny Committee.

2. The Review Group Process:



Stage 1 – Review Group Scoping

A Review Group Scoping template (**please see Appendix 4 on page 39 for example**), help to clearly set out the following:

- Aim and Objectives: Why are we doing this?
- What are the key issues and areas of focus?
- What are the timescales?
- What research is required?
- How and where the evidence should be taken and by whom?
- Any risks or financial implications involved in undertaking the review (and how they can be minimised)?

It also good practice to remember the SMART acronym for setting the Work Programme. Would looking at a prospective item be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely.

For the duration of a Review Group there should be an agenda item of 'Review Group Update' at each relevant Scrutiny Committee agenda. A summary report should be presented by the Lead Member of the Review Group and the Scrutiny Officer at each relevant Committee meeting, so that the Members are kept informed of progress through the process. If there are no meetings, then this can happen via a briefing email to relevant Members.

Stage 2 – Evidence

The next step is to identify the sources of information needed and the specific methods for collecting it. Sourcing methods to obtain information could include relevant Council or Government Policy, desk top based research, recent related reports, best practice examples, and interviews. Scrutiny has the opportunity to be innovative. It can gather evidence in a number of different ways such as going on site visits, holding focus groups, workshops, or carrying out surveys.

Scrutiny Committees and Review Groups may want to investigate:

- Are service users' expectations/needs being met?
- Is the service achieving what the policy intended?
- Does the service meet any/all statutory obligations or national standards and targets?
- Are there any unintended outcomes of the policy?
- Is there honesty and openness about its current performance and the reasons behind it?
- How has performance been assessed?

- How does performance compare with that of others?
- Is the service capable of meeting planned targets/standards?

Gathering Evidence

Scrutiny Committees are independent. They can ask anyone to meet with them, to join them on the Committee or to provide professional support. For example:

- **Witnesses or Advisers** – Scrutiny Committees can invite people from inside and outside the Council to meet the Panel, or Review Groups, to answer questions and give expert opinions. A Councillor or officer may be called as an expert witness. Committees may invite advisers from outside the Council to make submissions to them or to attend meetings. The Review Group must provide reasonable notice of all of the requirements of the scrutiny body, to enable the witness to respond with all the requisite information, at the earliest opportunity. For full details, please see the witness charter, on page 16.
- **Co-opting** – local people or business or professional representatives can be included as non-voting members of a Scrutiny Committee or Review Group. The Panel may also invite non-voting co-optees onto the Committee.
- **Independent Professional Support** – Committees may seek professional support and expertise, or facilitators.
- **Professional support from Officers** – Scrutiny Committees may commission reports from and or specific information from officers. In particular, the Committees will have access to the advice of the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer. Officer teams will also be formed to assist the Committees with scrutiny reviews.
- **Executive Board** – details of any review exercise being undertaken either by a Committee or Review Group will be notified to the appropriate Member with special interest on the Executive Board for the benefit of providing mutual exchange of information. It is likely that the Executive Board Member will be invited to a meeting to present their views on the issue and any relevant evidence. Executive Board Member to be notified of an impending Review Group and invited once to give evidence once the scope has been agreed.
- **External organisations** – these can be approached via the scrutiny process to obtain information relevant to their work in the district and in relation to our priorities. Such organisations could be health service providers, utilities, charities, residents groups, government agencies and businesses. We are able to request information or attendance at meetings to answer questions.

Stage 3 – Considering the Information

Discussion and analysis of information can be undertaken on an ongoing basis at Review Group meetings. Once all the evidence/information has been collected, and discussed, the Review Group will need to decide on its recommendations, and which evidence it wishes to use in support. Support officers will help collate the evidence received and support Members in putting together their findings and recommendations.

Stage 4 – Recommendations, Reaching a Conclusion and Report

Recommendations should be evidence-based and SMART, i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed. Where appropriate, committees may wish to consider sharing them in draft with interested parties.

It is important that both the findings and recommendations of the final report are derived from clear evidence, demonstrated in the report. The aim is to achieve a consensus on the report's recommendations and the Lead Member needs to ensure that all Members have had an opportunity to contribute their views. A draft Member report will be prepared, and circulated to all those who provided evidence for the review. This is to ensure that the report reflects accurately their submission.

- Review Groups are Member led and the final report should be written by the Review Group Members, with the aid of the lead officer and Scrutiny Officer.
- At the relevant Scrutiny Committee/Lead Committee meeting, the final report should be introduced by the Scrutiny Officer. The final report will then be presented by the Lead Member of the Review Group for comment and any necessary amendments. After the Lead Member has presented the report, the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee/Lead Committee may make a statement/comments. The Chair will then invite Committee Members to vote first on whether they wish to submit the report to Executive Board. If the report contains multiple recommendations, they will be asked to vote on which recommendations they wish to endorse as part of the report. Members of the other relevant Committee(s) may be invited to attend this meeting, but only Members of the Lead Committee will have voting rights. The Lead Committee shall consult with the other Committee(s) whose comments shall be incorporated in the final report before submitting its final findings to the Executive Board.
- If it is recommended, a final review report containing the findings will be forwarded to the next available Executive Board and/or Council agenda as appropriate, and the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee and Review Group Lead Member shall present the report. There is an option to take Review Group reports to Council however the preferred option is for them to go to Executive Board, so that they can be considered in line with strategic policy and processes.

Stage 5 – Feedback/Action and Monitoring

Following the report stage, it is important that feedback is given to the review's contributors and the stakeholders concerned about the outcomes of the review. Members will need to consider and decide the most appropriate method, such as meetings, email or letter. The feedback should make it clear what actions are proposed as a result of the review. The responsibility for ensuring these actions are carried out lies with the Executive Board.

Enough time needs to be built into the annual Work Programme in order to make sure that the Scrutiny Review Group function is effective. Time needs to be allocated to monitor the implementation of recommendations. Sharing draft recommendations with Executive Members should not provide an opportunity for them to revise or block recommendations before they are made. It should, however, provide an opportunity for errors to be identified and corrected, and for a more general sense check.

Review Group Terms of Reference

A Review Group is formed by a Scrutiny Committee to look at an area of concern on behalf of the whole of the Scrutiny Committee. It is Member led and Members will be expected to carry out their own research and commit to writing the report and initial recommendations.

Each Review Group can:

- Review and scrutinise areas within the Scope agreed by the parent Scrutiny Committee. Changes to the Scope must be agreed with by the parent Scrutiny Committee, if possible in a public meeting, but email communication between all involved will surface.
- Invite the Executive Board Member/s to give their views/evidence on the subject being investigated;
- Invite the necessary senior officers of the authority to give their views/evidence on the subject being investigated;
- Invite other persons from outside the Council to attend if necessary to give their views/evidence on the subject being investigated;
- Research information if required. If officer support is required for this, time must be factored into the timeframe;
- Co-opt people who are not elected Members, but who may be able to offer areas of expertise to the review;
- Be involved in briefing the parent Scrutiny Committee on the work being done;
- Be involved in writing the report of any findings and initial recommendation ideas for the parent Scrutiny Committee to discuss and agree, before forwarding to Executive Board for consideration;
- For the Lead Member of the Review Group to attend Executive Board/Council with the Chair of the parent Scrutiny Committee to present the report and answer questions if asked.

Cross Committee Review Group

If a review may affect more than one aspect of a service, it may be considered appropriate to undertake a Cross Committee Review. For Cross Committee reviews, there shall be a Lead Committee responsible for the review, which will be the Committee that has the remit responsibility for the topic or issue. In the case of Cross Committee Review Groups, the scope of the review will be discussed by the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the relevant Committees, and final scoping shall be agreed and monitored by the Lead Committee before evidence gathering commences. This ensures that any deviation from the agreed remit can be reported to the Committees involved and dealt with accordingly. An interim update report will be submitted to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Lead Committee, for verification, if there is a long gap between Scrutiny Committee meetings. This can be via email. The same processes for Review Groups are also used by Cross Committee Review Groups.

Call-in

The CfGS are working on this process which may be complete later in the autumn. Although it won't at that point be a statutory requirement, there is an expectation that Council's would have regard and so the Guide may need to be reviewed.

What is Call-In?

A decision that has been made, but not yet implemented, can be referred to the Scrutiny Committee. This called-in decision cannot be implemented until it has been considered by the Scrutiny Committee, which can examine the issue and question the decision taken.

A copy of the Call-in procedure form can be found on Appendix 5, Pages 40 to 41 of this document.

What can be called-in?

Call-in powers relate to a decision made by the Executive Board or Officer Decision Panel, other than a recommendation to the Full Council or a decision being taken under the Urgent Action Procedures, as set out in Appendix 4a of the Constitution.

Call-In Procedure

The decisions must be called-in within five working days of the date of the 'decision notice' being published, which is circulated to all Members of the Council. The decision on the proposal takes effect at the end of that period if the decision has not been 'called-in'.

Step by step guidance and Call-In Protocol is below.

Decisions can be called in either by the Chair or by three Members of a Scrutiny Committee. At any time during the five-day call-in period, any Member can ask to see reports or any papers in respect of the issue being discussed, and can take preliminary advice from officers about its implications.

All 'call-in' requests must be made in writing, individually by a Member, to the Chief Executive, giving details of the decision that is being called-in, and the reasons for the request.

Call-in Protocol

The call-in mechanism is designed to test the merits of any proposal and to ensure that Members have the opportunity to recommend options. In calling in a decision of the Executive Board or Officer Decision Panel, the Chair and/or Members of the Scrutiny Committee must consider the following matters:

- Scrutiny Committee Members should pay close attention to the Council's Forward Plans. This will usually enable Members to be in a position to partake of timely debate on forthcoming decisions to

Scrutiny Committees before final decisions are made. This will prevent excessive use of call-in and promote open discussion of forthcoming issues of significance to the Council.

- Is the issue one that has not been considered in open forum or has otherwise been a subject of prior consultation before the decision was taken?
- Is it an issue, where other significant representations from Members, residents or other relevant bodies have been made, but not considered, before a decision was taken?
- Is the decision likely to cause significant concern or distress to the local community or be prejudicial to individuals within it?
- Is any delay in making the decision, likely as a result of calling it in, reasonable?

Role of Call-In

The role of the Scrutiny Committees in calling-in any proposal before it is finalised, is as follows:

- To test the merits of the proposal;
- To consider the process by which proposals have been formulated;
- To ask the Executive Board or Officer Decision Panel to reconsider the proposal in light of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee;
- To suggest that further steps be taken before a decision is made, although any decision on whether to accept those other steps are matters for the Executive Board to decide;
- In respect of the Executive Board decision, to recommend to the Executive Board that the matter is dealt with by the Council, to refer the matter to the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer to determine whether or not the decision is beyond the scope of the Executive Board being outside the Council's policy framework and budget;
- To come to a view in a relatively short space of time so as not to cause unreasonable delay to the efficiency of the decision-making process.

Call-In is not a process that should be abused, as it will lose its effectiveness.

What cannot be Called-In?

In particular, it should be noted that the Scrutiny Committee cannot:

- Scrutinise individual decisions made by, or on behalf of, the Regulatory Committees of the Council e.g. decisions relating to development control, licensing, registration, consents and other permissions, or
- Scrutinise decisions relating to individual members of staff taken by the Appointments Panel and Appeals Panel.

Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)

Councillor Call for Action is about helping members to resolve issues on behalf of their residents. Councillors have the ability to call for debate and discussion at committee on a topic of neighbourhood concern, under Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. These powers are known as the "Councillor Call for Action" (CCfA for short).

A different Act of Parliament, the Police and Justice Act 2006, sets out a CCfA for crime and disorder and community safety issues. It makes provision for the establishment of a designated Panel to deal with crime and disorder scrutiny. At NKDC this falls under the remit of the Flourishing Communities Scrutiny Committee.

How Does a CCfA Work?

CCfA is an opportunity for the whole Council, and is a way for members to try to bring about specific solutions for local problems. It is designed to sit alongside existing mechanisms already at councillors' disposal to resolve local issues.

The power to refer a matter is available only where the matter is of direct concern to the ward which the councillor represents. If there is more than one ward member representing an area, there is no requirement for all councillors to agree. However, as a matter of courtesy a letter will be sent informing the other ward members of the CCfA. A District Councillor cannot raise a CCfA at a County Council Overview and Scrutiny Panel and vice versa.

What is a 'Local Government Matter'?

The CCfA may cover any local government matter relating to any function of the council and any local services provided by external service providers/partners, which affect the councillor's ward or constituents. A local government matter is defined as a matter which:

- Relates to the discharge of any function of the Council;
- Affects all or part of the electoral area for which the member is elected or any person who lives or works in that area;
- Is not an excluded matter (please see below).

The following matters are excluded from the CCfA:

- Any matters that are vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable;
- Any matter relating to a planning decision;
- Any matter relating to a licensing decision;
- Any matter relating to a complaint;
- Any matter relating to an appeal.

What is a CCfA for Crime and Disorder?

If the CCfA is regarding a crime and disorder matter, the same process applies but can be raised at the Flourishing Communities Committee only. If you believe that a CCfA on an issue should be considered, please approach the Scrutiny Officer who will decide if a CCfA is appropriate, based on the Council's policy and rules on exclusions. If agreed, the issue will be placed on the agenda for a subsequent meeting.

Outside Bodies

Outside Bodies Reports

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Part 4, Members who have been assigned as the Council's representative to an Outside Body must:

- Each representative should report to the relevant Scrutiny Committee, at least on an annual basis or as appropriate. **Please see Appendix 2 on Pages 36-37 for the current Outside Bodies list.**
- Members must report back on any issue that may significantly affect the Council or the District as soon as possible, via a report to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- It is anticipated that a report to the relevant Scrutiny Committee should normally contain details of the accounts, activities and outputs of the outside body during the year on a general basis, whilst being mindful of any confidential information, and the applicability of the Council's role in relation to that outside body. It could consist of the minutes of meetings attended or any other relevant documentation.

A copy of the Outside Bodies reporting template can be found on Appendix 3, Pages 38.

Contacts

For further information, to offer feedback or to request an item for scrutiny, please contact:

Chris Fox Scrutiny Officer

Scrutiny Officer
North Kesteven District Council
Kesteven Street
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 7EF

Telephone: 01529 308063

Email: scrutiny@n-kesteven.gov.uk

Other useful contacts are:

Esther Watt, Corporate Information Manager

Telephone: 01529 308237

Email: esther_watt@n-kesteven.gov.uk

Marcella Heath, Assistant Director of Democratic Services

Telephone: 01529 308291

Email: marcella_heath@n-kesteven.gov.uk

List of Appendices

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Scrutiny Work Programme Prioritisation Template

Scrutiny Committee:	Flourishing Communities / Resources						
Chairman: Vice-Chairman	Councillor Councillor						
Title of Item:							
Lead Officer: Assistant Director:	▪ ▪						
Reason for Scrutiny: Scrutiny Committee request: Member: Exec Board/CMT Rec: Officer Rec: Review: Standing Item:	•						
Aim:	•						
Objectives:	1. 2. 3.						
TOPIC section to be completed by the Scrutiny Committee/Chairs							
Issue	T	O	P	I	C	Sum	Approach
e.g. Pot Holes	2	0	2	0	0	4	e.g. Flourishing Communities Letter to LCC Highways Scrutiny Panel
Committee Meeting Date/s:	▪						
Start Date: Completion Date: Review date:	▪ ▪ ▪						
Report: Verbal Report/Presentation: Briefing Note:	▪ ▪ ▪						
Reason/s for not adding to the Work Programme:	▪						
Executive Board Member	Councillor...						
Other:	▪						

‘TOPIC’ Work Plan Scoring Criteria

In preparing this report, the Scrutiny Officer has developed the ‘TOPIC’ scoring criteria as a guide for prioritising scrutiny issues. This broadly reflects the approach advocated for by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, and other leading scrutiny authorities. The scoring system is nuanced and aspires to be objective, but the Committee should use its best judgement in agreeing which items to take forward. The Scrutiny Officer has carried out an initial assessment to score each of the items, and has reviewed the scoring together with the Chair and Vice-Chair before publication. It is recommended that items scoring 9 or higher should be included in the Work Plan. Items scoring lower than 9 would be placed on a reserve list.

T for Timely - Priorities should take account of work in other areas. Is another review happening? Is the service due for inspection? Are legislative changes afoot? Members are advised to wait for the outcome of similar work before conducting their own work. Poorly performing and ‘red’ rated services should also be prioritised for review.

Score	Measure
0	Work is underway elsewhere
1	No other work identified
2	Priority need to review / poor council performance

O for Organisational Priority – The Committee should take account of the Council’s overall vision for the area. Where possible, the Committee should ensure that its work relates to the corporate plan and council priorities.

Score	Measure
0	Not in the Corporate Plan
1	Links to the Corporate Plan
2	In the Corporate Plan
3	Corporate priority

P for Public Interest: Members’ representative roles are an essential feature of Scrutiny. They are the eyes and ears of the public, ensuring that services are meeting local needs. The interests of local people should therefore influence the issues chosen for scrutiny.

Score	Measure
0	Minimal public interest
1	Low public interest
2	Medium public interest
3	High public interest

I for Influence: The Committee will have varying levels of influence, depending on the issue it is reviewing. The Committee is better placed to influence council services than external agencies, and should be looking to add value. Consideration should be given to the prospect and likelihood of having influence over a particular issue.

Score	Measure
0	low influence
1	Medium influence
2	High influence

C for Cost: Services or decisions which incur a high level of income, expenditure or savings should be considered a priority.

Score	Measure
0	Low financial impact
1	Medium financial impact
2	High financial impact

The Scrutiny Officer to advise on the completing of this form.

Flourishing Communities Scrutiny Committee Outside Bodies

NAME OF OUTSIDE BODY	TERM OF OFFICE	NO. OF REPS
Active Lincolnshire	2 years	1
Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board	2 years	1
Campaign for the Protection of Rural England - Lincolnshire (CPRE)	2 years	1
Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire	2 years	2
Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee	2 years	1 + reserve
Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLEP)	2 years	1
Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire	2 years	1
Hill Holt Wood Ltd	2 years	1
LEADER – Kesteven Local Action Group	2 years	1
Lincoln Area Dial-A-Ride Management Committee	2 years	1
Lincolnshire Supported Housing Commissioning Partnership	2 years	1
Lincs Waste Management Partnership	2 years	1
North Kesteven UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Partnership Group	2 years	2
ONE NK Stakeholder Panel	2 years	3
PATROL (Parking & Traffic Regulations outside London)	2 years	1
Sleaford Hospital Trustees Committee	4 years	1

Sleaford Regeneration Group	2 years	2
Sleaford United Charity	4 years	1
Sleaford Renewable Energy Plant Community Power Fund Panel	2 years	3
Tenant Liaison Panel	2 years	5
Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board	2 Years	1
Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board	2 years	4
Viking Link Community Liaison Group CGL – Group 4	4 years	2
Whisby Nature Park Steering Board	2 years	3
Witham First District Internal Drainage Board	2 years	5*
Witham/Slea Blue Green Corridor Project	2 years	1

Resources Scrutiny Committee Outside Bodies

NAME OF OUTSIDE BODY	TERM OF OFFICE	NO. OF REPS
SPARSE Rural: The Rural Services Network	2 years	1
East Midlands Councils	2 years	1 + reserve
LGA - General Assembly (National)	2 years	1

Outside Bodies Reporting Template

Scrutiny Committee: **(INSERT Scrutiny Committee NAME)**

Scrutiny Committee meeting date: **(INSERT Scrutiny Committee MEETING DATE)**

Outside Body: **(INSERT OUTSIDE BODY NAME)**

Meeting date: **(INSERT OUTSIDE BODY MEETING DATE)**

Outside Body information	
Does the Outside Body Report contain information which has been identified as confidential or exempt?	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>If yes, reason for exemption:</p>
Outside Body Member	INSERT YOUR NAME

A. Purpose of Report

To provide an update to the XXX Scrutiny Committee on the XXXX Outside Body.

B. Outside Body Update

Xxx

C. Relevant Key Outcomes/Decisions and impacts on the District:

Xxx

C. Document Information *(if appendix / appendices required)*

APPENDIX NO.	TITLE
	This could be the minutes/Annual Report (redact names), web links to minutes/Annual Report

The Scrutiny Officer to advise on the completing of this form.

REVIEW GROUP Scoping Template (for Scrutiny Members to complete with advice from the Scrutiny Officer)

Scrutiny Panel:	
Lead Member:	
Review Members:	
Executive Board Member:	
Aim: (to be set by the Scrutiny Committee)	•
Key Issues/Areas of Focus:	•
Objectives:	1. 2. 3.
Start Date:	▪
Potential Meeting Dates:	▪
Report Findings to Panel:	▪
Projected Completion Date:	▪
Potential Documents/Evidence:	▪
Potential Stakeholders/Witnesses:	▪
Relevant Officers:	▪
Consultation/Research:	▪
Officer Support:	▪ Chris Fox, Scrutiny Officer
Democratic Services Officer:	▪
Potential/Likely Budget Requirements:	▪
Potential Risks	▪
Other:	▪

When setting up a Review Group (formerly TFG), a Scrutiny Committee must agree the scope and remit for any review exercises and/or investigations undertaken by a Review Group, setting where this will improve performance or add value. It is essential that the Committee decide whether they themselves will scope the remit for the Review Group, or if they wish to delegate responsibility to the Review Group to undertake this at their initial meeting. If it is the latter, then this must be explicitly recorded in the Minutes, and the Review Group must report back to the Committee for formal approval of the remit. Any deviation from the agreed remit of a Review Group must be reported to the Committee for approval. As Reviews are only expected to take approximately 12 weeks, email communication between the Review Group and Committee is allowable for such changes.

NKDC Scrutiny Call-in form

The call-in mechanism is designed to test the merits of any proposal and to ensure that Members have opportunity to recommend alternatives. Whilst in any call-in process, all sides of the argument must be considered; it is not a judicial or quasi-judicial process or a public inquiry, or an extended examination of other areas that are only loosely connected to the proposal under consideration. For more information see Article 6 of the Constitution, or the Scrutiny Guide.

<p>Decision to be called in:</p> <p><i>Provide the title of the report, and minute number if relevant.</i></p> <p><i>Provide a brief description of the decision to be called in.</i></p> <p><i>It is important to be accurate and clear, to ensure there is no confusion about which decision you wish to call-in.</i></p>	
<p>Decision making body: <i>Delete as appropriate</i></p>	<p>Executive Board / Officer Decision Panel</p>
<p>Date decision was made:</p>	
<p>Name of the relevant Scrutiny Panel: <i>Delete as appropriate</i></p>	<p>Flourishing Communities Scrutiny Committee / Resources Scrutiny Committee</p>
<p>Reasons for the Call-In:</p> <p>For the call-in to be valid you must state a reason why it is being made, having regard to the Call-in Protocol set out in article 6.13 of the Constitution:</p> <p><i>In calling in a decision of the Executive Board or Officer Decision Panel, the Chair and/or Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel must consider the following protocol questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Scrutiny Committees should pay close attention to the Forward Plans and seek to bring debate on forthcoming decisions to the Scrutiny Committee before final decisions are made to prevent excessive use of call-in and</i> 	

<p><i>promote open discussion of forthcoming issues of significance to the Council.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Is the issue one that has not been considered in open forum or has otherwise been a subject of prior consultation before the decision was taken?</i> <i>Is it an issue, where other significant representations from Members, residents or other relevant bodies have been made, but not considered, before a decision was taken?</i> <i>Is the decision likely to cause significant concern or distress to the local community or be prejudice to individuals within it?</i> <i>Is any delay in making the decision, likely as a result of calling it in, reasonable?</i> 	
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Member(s) requesting call in:

Title	Name	Signature	Date
Chair			

Or:

Title	Name	Signature	Date
Member 1			
Member 2			
Member 3			

During the relevant call-in period, the **Chair of the relevant* Scrutiny Committee or any 3 Members of the relevant* Scrutiny Panel must individually notify the Chief Executive** and request they call a meeting of the relevant* Scrutiny Committee to review the decision, within 10 working days of publishing the decision.

Once the form is completed, electronically or by-hand, please submit to Democratic Services:

democratic_services@n-kesteven.gov.uk

by 5pm on the deadline date published on the decision notice, otherwise the call-in will not be valid.

Please see the **Scrutiny Guide, or ask **the Scrutiny Officer, Chris Fox**, if you are not sure:*

Tel: 01529 308063; or

Email: chris_fox@n-kesteven.gov.uk

For Democratic Services use only:

Received by	Signature	Date



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Council Offices, Kesteven Street, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 7EF
Telephone Number: (01529) 414155
180912-JA2