

Non-Chair Members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Update

The Non-Chair members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel have now met on two occasions. Discussions have focused on the role of scrutiny within the authority, in particular on how effectively the scrutiny function is holding the executive to account.

Members of the group have also discussed how best to improve the running of scrutiny meetings highlighting presentations along with officer and portfolio holder attendance as key issues.

The group wish to make the following recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board –

1. Where reports containing numerical data are presented to scrutiny panels both whole numbers and percentages are provided. Where reports contain consultation data, information on samples used along with total numbers should also be provided.
2. Feedback on recommendations forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Cabinet is provided to panels with emphasis on why recommendations have been rejected or approved.
3. When officers attend a Scrutiny Panel they should make the assumption that papers have been read. There should be no more than 5 minutes of presentation or verbal update before then moving to questions and debate by panel members.
4. Where invited, officers and portfolio holders should prioritise their attendance at Scrutiny Panels or Task and Finish groups.
5. Chairs of scrutiny panels should allow for extended debate and ensure flexibility when using meeting timetables.
6. Chairs should invite email feedback from members of their panel following meetings in order to assess how the meeting ran and identify what value had been added to the work of the Executive and the council in general.
7. A member should be nominated from each panel to attend the relevant partnership and theme group meetings as observers.
8. A work programme request should be made to begin a cross panel single session Task and Finish group, led by Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel, in order to investigate how the scrutiny function can better engage with the media. Witnesses should include reporters and editors from media outlets within the city. (PID attached to the agenda)