

Part 2 - Articles of the Constitution

Article 6: Scrutiny and Policy Development Groups

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The Scrutiny function is central to new constitutions. Scrutiny should be a powerful body or bodies which meet in public to discuss and make recommendations on the development of policies and hold the Executive to account for their actions. They will also have a key role in considering other matters of local concern. The only other specific function they may be empowered to undertake is the conduct of best value reviews.

Scrutiny Procedure Rules appear later in Part 4 of this Constitution.

6.1 Terms of reference

The Council will appoint Scrutiny and Policy Development Groups with the following functions:

6.2 Scrutiny: General role

Scrutiny will:

- (a) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- (b) make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Executive and/or any policy, joint or other bodies of the Council in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- (c) make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council on any matters of broad local concern or importance not otherwise specified within the remit of the Policy Development Groups; and
- (d) exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive or key decisions made but not yet implemented by officers; and
- (e) **Best Value:** Scrutiny will co-ordinate the programme of Best Value Reviews, receive and assess the rigour of the reports, pass on recommendations to Council, the Executive, Policy Development Groups and other bodies as appropriate and monitor progress of Action Plans.

6.3 **Scrutiny: Specific Functions**

Scrutiny may:

- (a) review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Executive and/or council officers both in relation to individual decisions and decisions made over time and may question members of the executive and/or officers whether generally or in relation to specific decisions, initiatives or projects;
- (b) review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- (c) make recommendations to the Executive and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- (d) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address Scrutiny and local people about their activities and performance; and
- (e) question and gather evidence from any person with a relevant knowledge, expertise or responsibility (with their consent).
- (f) consider leisure contract monitoring reports and undertake an annual review in line with the Financial Management Agreement.

6.4 **Officers.** Scrutiny will have continuity of administrative support and be able to call on other relevant officer support and external expertise where necessary.

6.5 **Policy Development Groups: General Role:**

Within their terms of reference, Policy Development Groups may:

- (a) make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Executive and/or any other bodies of the Council in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- (b) make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council on any matters of broad local concern or importance within their remit; and
- (c) undertake the functions below within the thematic areas set out in the table below. These thematic areas will of necessity be broadly defined. Any potential confusion or duplication between the thematic areas of these bodies which may result in duplication of effort or omission will be resolved by the Programming Panel. The Programming Panel will also have discretion in ensuring that there is a reasonable division of issues for consideration between each of the Policy Development Groups.

Group	Thematic area
Prosperity	Enhancing the prosperity of businesses, communities and individuals
Community	Securing safe, clean and healthy communities
Environment	Maintaining and enhancing the quality of the environment

6.6 **Policy Development Groups - specific functions:**

Policy Development Groups may:

- (a) assist the Council and the Executive in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of current provision, performance and policy issues;
- (b) instigate research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues, possible options and the development of policy;
- (c) regularly involve Members of the Executive and occasionally Members of other bodies of the Council and officers to find out their views on issues, proposals and policy affecting the area;
- (d) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address Scrutiny and local people about their activities and performance;
- (e) question and gather evidence from any person with a relevant knowledge, expertise or responsibility (with their consent);
- (f) consider reports from any individual Member on matters relevant to the terms of reference of the Group to enable the views of constituents and other organisations to be taken into account; and
- (g) liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.

6.7 **Annual Report**

Scrutiny and Policy Development Groups must report annually to full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

6.8 Proceedings of Scrutiny and Policy Development Groups

Scrutiny and Policy Development Groups will conduct their proceedings in accordance with the Scrutiny and Policy Development Group Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.