

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee has established a Purpose, Guiding Principles and a supporting Modus Operandi to help ensure it maintains an appropriate approach and focus on its key role and responsibilities.

Purpose and Primary Outcome:

“To provide objective and timely scrutiny to support the successful implementation of the new Dorset Council.”

Guiding Principles:

- Maintaining a proactive and constructive approach
- Focused scrutiny activity to support good outcomes
- All activity is proportionate to the risk
- A relentless focus on ‘Safe & Legal’ from Day 1
- Delivering clear and timely advice and outcomes for the Shadow Executive / Council

Modus Operandi / Principles of Effective Scrutiny:

The Committee has established some ‘Core Principles’ through which it intends to carry out and discharge its Overview and Scrutiny responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner:

As the committee has no decision taking powers it is necessary that the way it does business commands confidence - *therefore:*

- ✓ Views must be formed after listening to officers, members and visitors in the room considering an issue, not before.....*in particular, 'Whips' are undesirable and have to be declared.*
- ✓ Small group working is to be preferred as if the full committee is required there will be:
 - a) *too many people to properly investigate.*
 - b) *the risk of different people attending to matters on different occasions.*
 - c) *difficulties in arranging enough meetings to cover the many issues which may require scrutiny.*
- ✓ The committee needs to see itself as a ‘critical friend’ aiming to improve progress to a successful vesting day - *not a prosecutor!*
- ✓ It needs to observe the member/officer protocol at all times.

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- ✓ It needs to take advice and ask 'open questions' to probe and challenge not 'closed ones' which constrain.
- ✓ Co-operation and consensus needs to be recognised as more productive than an adversarial approach.
- ✓ Suggestions of topics for scrutiny should be welcomed both from members and officers, inside and outside the committee.
- ✓ Decisions on matters requiring attention should be taken by the committee (Chair and Vice ?) bearing in mind the need to concentrate on business continuity and legal and budgetary compliance.
- ✓ The Committee will actively seek to encourage wide engagement from across the whole Shadow Council membership through its work on Task & Finish Groups.
- ✓ 'Call-In' or 'Call to Account' initiatives should only be invoked if a majority of the committee agree.