

**Economy, Transport & Environment  
Select Committee  
30 June 2017**

**Page 1** **Role of Scrutiny at the County  
Council**

Agenda Item 6

# Background to Scrutiny

- Formal scrutiny introduced as part of the move to Executive Arrangements following the Local Government Act 2000
- Authorities operating Executive Arrangements must have at least one Scrutiny Committee

# Role and purpose of Scrutiny

- To assist the Executive and the County Council in the development of the Budget and Policy Framework
- To conduct research and analysis of policy issues and possible options
- To hold the Executive and the Council to account
- To make recommendations to the Executive or to the County Council arising from the scrutiny process

Page 3



# Policy Development

Key work stream is to review and make recommendations either to the Executive or to the Full Council to assist in the development of future policies and strategies

# Policy Review/Development

## Policy Development

- Contribute to development of new or improved council policies and strategies (possibly using in-depth reviews)
- Proactive where there may be gaps

## Policy/Strategy Review

- Reviewing existing policy, to consider:
  - Do we have a clear and up to date approach?
  - Is it the right approach?
  - Are policies coherent and joined up?
  - Are the policies effective when put into action - is it working? Are they delivering what was intended?

# Holding the Executive and the Council to Account

- Scrutinising decisions which the Executive is planning to take (Pre-scrutiny)
- Scrutinising Executive decisions that have been taken before they are implemented (Call-in)
- Scrutinising Executive decisions after they have been implemented, whether shortly afterwards or as part of a wider review of policy to measure their effect

# Scrutiny of Decisions

- Issues to consider when scrutinising decisions:
  - Are decisions evidence based?
  - Has appropriate consultation been undertaken?
  - Do decisions reflect the County Council's priorities?
  - Have alternative options been considered?

# Call-in

- Only applies where a decision has been made but not yet implemented
- Can only be done within 5 working days of the date members have been notified of the decision
- A quorum of members can call a meeting of a select committee to consider an executive decision. The Committee must meet within 14 days of the of meeting being called



# Call in options

The Committee must decide whether or not to recommend

Page 9

- That the decision be reconsidered by the relevant decision maker
- Where the decision is not in line with the Policy or Budget Framework that the County Council should take that decision



# Effect of call-in

- Any decision which is not in line with the Policy or Budget Framework cannot be implemented until the call in has been disposed of
- Urgent Key Decisions cannot be called in although they can still be scrutinised by the committee

# Items for the Agenda

- Any member of the Committee can put an item on the agenda of the next meeting of the committee
- Any member of the County Council can refer a matter to a committee provided it is relevant to the function of that committee
- The Executive or the County Council may request that a committee considers a matter referred by them

# Topic Suggestions

- Suggestions welcome at any time to the Chairman or Scrutiny Officer
- Make clear the reason for the request – is there evidence this is an area of concern? (e.g. performance data, frequently raised by constituents) – is it a County wide rather than local issue?
- Note: Member Briefing Programme takes place monthly – for information items

# Working Groups/Task & Finish

- Focuses on a topic where the Committee feels there is benefit to a more detailed review
- Group of Members identified to meet outside of the formal committee meetings
- Aims and timescale scoped, meetings held with relevant officers to discuss, evidence can be sought, culminates in summary of findings and recommendations where relevant

# Terms of Reference

## Economy, Transport & Environment Select Committee

- Key Executive Member – Executive Member for Environment and Transport  
(also covers Executive Member for Economic Development)
- Key Department – Economy Transport and Environment  
- however remit is not limited to these
- Includes: Passenger transport, transport policy, road infrastructure, access, protection of the environment, flood and coastal erosion risk management, economic development, sustainable development, climate change, land management, waste management

# What will success look like?

- Scrutiny function is Member led
- Work programme is realistic, flexible and focused
- Topics are prioritised appropriately
- Reviews well scoped and project managed to ensure they are timely and improvement focused
- Time and resources directed where it can add most value
- Constructive and evidence based

# Conclusion

- Role of scrutiny is wider than simply holding the Executive to account
- There needs to be an effective dialogue between scrutiny committees and the Executive to ensure that the work of committees has maximum impact on policy



# Role of Scrutiny

Any Questions?

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