

SCRUTINY:

A GUIDE FOR RESIDENTS



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

What is scrutiny?

Scrutiny is a councillor-led function of the Council. Its job is to hold the Leadership Team (which takes decisions) to account on behalf of borough residents and to help develop policies and initiatives that make the borough a better place to live and work.

The day-to-day running of the Council is managed by those nine councillors who are members of the Leadership Team (also known as 'the Executive'): they take most of the biggest financial, policy and service decisions.

Scrutiny is formed by members from all parties, reflecting the party-political balance in the Council. Scrutiny members are required to have an independent mindset and to not act in a party-political way.

Scrutiny acts as a 'critical friend' to the Leadership Team. By law, scrutiny committees can:

- hold inquiries (that can take different forms) and produce reports making recommendations for the Leadership Team to act on, on any issue affecting the borough and its residents.
- require Lead Members and officers to appear before them. People from outside the Council can be invited, but not compelled, to attend.
- receive a response to their recommendations from the Leadership Team within two months.
- call in 'Key Decisions' made by the Leader and her Team to review them and possibly ask them to reconsider it.
- scrutinise health bodies and providers in the borough.

Scrutiny committees provide a way to look at the detail of issues and how these affect local people's lives. They can spend weeks or months examining a topic in depth, taking evidence widely and producing recommendations.

Scrutiny makes recommendations to the Leadership Team and Council partners for them to act. The decision of whether to act on these recommendations falls on the Leadership Team and/or other bodies (NHS, police, etc).

Effective scrutiny requires the Committee to 'ask difficult questions'. It also requires the Leadership Team to listen and respond, considering what they've heard when developing future policies and improving current services.

How is scrutiny carried out?

Scrutiny aims to involve and respond to local people and to make a direct difference to their lives. It is now led by one overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee and four thematic Select Committees. These five committees each have the powers

mentioned above and carry out their work in a mix of formal meetings and working groups.

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee is made up of seven members and one co-opted non-voting member:

Councillor Marwan Elnaghi (Chair), Councillor Sarah Addenbrooke (Vice-Chair), Councillor Robert Atkinson, Councillor Laura Round, Councillor Malcolm Spalding, Councillor Charles Williams, Councillor Maxwell Woodger and Co-opted non-voting member Christine Vigars of Healthwatch Central West London.

This Select Committee examines topics related to all adult social care services; partnerships associated with adult social care; the provision of the public health service and local health bodies including those established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Who's who here today?

Attendance depends on the business dealt with on each occasion, even though Committee members will likely be present.

The Chair will make sure the committee hears those who wish to speak on the topic under scrutiny and that members can ask detailed questions to attendees. A member of the Council's Governance team is present to take notes of the discussion to write the minutes of the meeting. Senior Council officers and Lead members may be asked by the Committee to attend to provide information, answer questions and explain their actions.

How can I get involved?

You can propose a topic for review.

You can propose a topic to be examined in the future. If there is an issue that you would like scrutiny to look at, please contact the Scrutiny Team, or speak to your [ward councillor](#).

You can respond to a 'Call for Evidence'

Scrutiny councillors need to find out what things are like for local people and organisations affected by, or with a stake in, the topic being explored. Select Committees issue calls for evidence to hear from residents, experts and organisations.

This is an opportunity for you to share your views and experiences, putting forward the issues that you would like the Overview and Scrutiny or Select Committees to become aware of, that perhaps they had not really thought about before. You can present evidence in writing if you do not want (or cannot) attend in person. In addition, you can invite scrutiny councillors to community meetings, so they can hear views relevant to the review.

You can attend a meeting

You are also welcome to attend scrutiny sessions simply to listen and be informed of topics that you care about. Select Committees gather in formally constituted meetings

four times a year, but a lot of their review work happens in working groups – which are informal meetings that may take place in community venues throughout the borough. Whether formal or informal, scrutiny meetings and inquiries are routinely held in public. Up to date information about them appears in the calendar of meetings: www.rbkc.gov.uk/committees/meetings.aspx

If you have a concern about an individual case or personal circumstances, please speak to an officer attending the meeting rather than raising the subject in the meeting.

You can become a member of a scrutiny review

If you, or the organisation of which you are part, have expertise on a topic being reviewed, you can ask the Select Committee to appoint you as co-optee to the panel conducting the review (you would not have voting rights but you would be able to suggest how the review should gather evidence, to question those giving it, and to contribute to discussions about the review's findings).

Any comments and suggestions?

Please email the Scrutiny Team (scrutiny@rbkc.gov.uk) for information about how to be part of a scrutiny review, suggest topics or help us improve what we do.