

Scrutiny

Better Scrutiny means better services for local people

This Council, like other councils up and down the country, must have a Scrutiny function. This is a way that backbench and Opposition councillors who are not part of the decision-making Leadership Team can hold those decision makers to account, identify service improvements and develop policy.

Scrutiny can be done in a wide variety of ways. It can happen at formal Scrutiny Committee meetings, in informal working groups, inquiry-type meetings or through information-gathering exercises such as residents panels or focus groups. A lot of the most effective Scrutiny work, especially when it comes to identifying service or policy improvements which benefit residents, happens in these less formal settings.

The Council is keen to strengthen scrutiny and give it a focus on where it can make a real difference, following-up on what matters most to local people.

Help us get our Scrutiny priorities right

An Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee will agree a prioritised work programme, informed by residents' suggestions, risk issues, complaints data, Council priorities outlined in the Council Plan, emerging policies and strategies, and ward councillor suggestions.

The O&S Committee will allocate out each priority topic to one of four Select Committees.

- Adult Social Care & Health Select Committee
- Environment Select Committee
- Housing and Communities Select Committee
- Family Services Select Committee

These Committees will undertake detailed reviews of the priority topics identified: thereafter a lot more work will be carried out in the community by working groups which gather evidence, hear from local people and other experts, and operate much less formally than has happened before.

Scrutiny of ongoing Grenfell Recovery issues

Grenfell Recovery remains the No.1 priority in the Council Plan. Scrutiny of the Grenfell recovery will take place through all four new Select Committees in line with their theme – for example housing issues will be considered by Housing & Communities Select Committee, and health and wellbeing issues by the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee.

Grenfell issues will therefore be looked at by four committees instead of one single committee, helping the Council to learn lessons from the tragedy and to allow a wider range of issues to be explored in greater depth.

In addition to the formal scrutiny of Grenfell issues outlined above, a new Grenfell Community Assembly will be launched and, from September 2019, meet every eight weeks in areas local to Grenfell. This Community Assembly will give local people the opportunity to ask questions and get the answers they need directly from the agencies involved in Grenfell recovery.

What will be different?

- At formal Scrutiny meetings there will be a wider range of people contributing - not just Lead Members and

senior officers, but also experts on relevant subjects. That way councillors can hear from many different voices and perspectives as they develop their recommendations about the things that matter to borough residents.

- Working groups will include a 'call for evidence' at the start. That way residents will have an opportunity to contribute ideas and suggestions at the start of each review and contribute at meetings. But it's not just about going to meetings – local people might prefer to send in written evidence or video clips. Some residents might even want to volunteer as co-opted members of working groups.
- Scrutiny reviews will be planned and publicised in advance so that local people have a better chance to contribute.
- There will be more meetings in the community – not formal 'committee style meetings but more informal meetings with more resident participation. Councillors may also attend meetings arranged by the community to observe and listen to residents. Information gathered will be brought back to the formal committee meetings.
- The outcomes from reviews and the difference they have made to policies and services will be well-publicised so residents know what difference their involvement has made.

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