

Draft Statement of Principles

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Overview

The committee has a number of functions set out in the constitution and legislation but the way in which the committee undertakes those functions is largely at the discretion of the committee.

The committee wants to be effective and add value to the workings of the council.

In all cases the committee will discharge its functions in accordance with the following principles:

- Independent – setting its own agenda free from party politics
- Advocacy – concern for issues that affect the people of Tunbridge Wells over things which may be convenient for the Council
- Constructive – looking to improve things for the future rather than criticising the past
- Focused – detailed reviews of specific topics over broad oversight of themes
- Cooperative – working with the executive and officers to achieve the best outcomes

Principles In Practice

The committee will undertake the majority of its work through a programme of reviews of specific topics. The format of the review may vary depending on the nature of the topic, however the committee will identify the parameters and the objectives of the review in advance. The committee will work collaboratively with officers at an early stage to define the scope and plan the timing of the review to ensure the work programme is as effective and productive as possible.

The committee will hold regular programme meetings to review the work programme and discuss upcoming topics.

Portfolio Holders will be automatically invited to attend every meeting where the subjects discussed fall within their portfolio. The committee will work collaboratively with the Portfolio Holders to ensure their attendance.

The committee is keen to hear from all levels of seniority within the council and recognises the particular insights of those working on the front line. From time to time, junior officers may be invited to give evidence as part of a review which may include workshops held in private. However, the committee will seek the views of the relevant Head of Service first and junior officers are entitled to decline the offer. The committee will always respect the wishes of the individual and the Head of Service.

The committee reserves the right to exercise the Call-In procedure (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 12) to scrutinise specific decisions of the executive as necessary.