

# Introduction to scrutiny

Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
June 2021

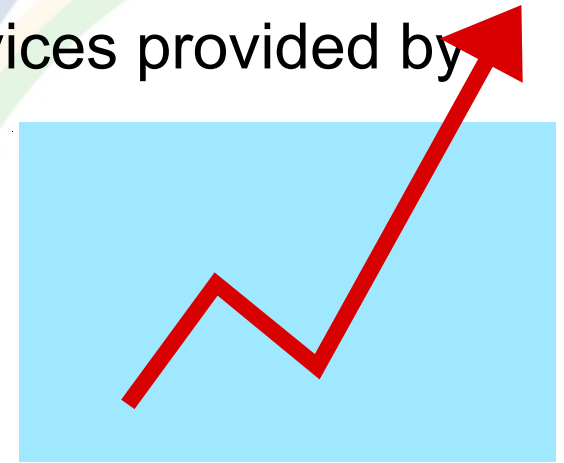
# Background

- Executive and scrutiny governance model introduced by Local Government Act 2000 (as amended)/Localism Act 2011
- Under this model, Council must have Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Committee is also the Council's designated
  - Crime & Disorder Committee
  - It is not a decision-making Committee but can make recommendations to Executive
  - Good scrutiny = Good governance



# Purpose of scrutiny

- Assist the work of the Leader/Executive and the Council as a whole in order to improve the services provided by the Council or other external providers:
  - Monitor Budget
  - Influence Policy development
  - Monitoring performance of Council services
- Review and scrutinise decisions and performance of the Leader, Executive, and Committees
- Reflecting the public's views



# Reigate & Banstead - Our approach

- Balanced approach
  - Focus on adding value to Council activities
  - Acting as critical friend to the Executive
- Scrutiny Panels to undertake detailed work on:
  - the Budget
  - the Local Plan
- Opportunities to scrutinise external matters – i.e. annual review of the Community Safety Partnership.
- Member Working Groups, Briefings etc

# Work programme

- Council agrees the Overview & Scrutiny work programme each year, following consultation with Executive. 2021/22 programme includes:
  - Leader and Executive Member presentations
  - Budget Scrutiny
  - Local Plan Scrutiny
  - Annual Crime & Disorder meeting
  - Service and financial performance
  - Raven Housing Trust

Any Committee member can refer a relevant matter to the committee



# Other work

- Call-in
  - Request to review an Executive decision
  - 5 Councillors
  - Must state reasons – not just that decision is disliked
- Councillor call for action
  - Request to consider a Ward matter (local government issues only)
  - Last resort – all other channels must be exhausted
- Other requests should be made to the Chair

# The Library

- Lots of information in the Library
  - Performance information/
  - dashboard
- Advance questions to support scrutiny
  - Information considered in advance of meetings
  - Questions received
  - Written responses can be provided

The screenshot shows the 'Document Library' page of the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council website. The header includes the council's name and a search bar. The main content area is titled 'Library' and features a search bar with the text 'Library home' and a navigation menu with 'Icons', 'List', and 'Classic' options. Below this, there is a grid of folder icons representing various categories: Committees, Companies, Constitution, Councillor Candidate Folder, Councillor Information Pack, Finance, Guidance, Members, Policy and Strategy, and Property. On the right side, there is a 'Related items' section with a list of links including Calendar, Committees, Committee Deadlines, Consultations, Councillors, Council Questions, Decisions, Election results, ePetitions, Forthcoming Decisions, Forward plans, Library, Meetings, MEPs, MPs, Officer Decisions, Parish Councils, Register of interests, Search documents, Statistics, Subscribe to updates, The Executive, Webcasting, What's New, Work to do, and Logoff.

# Committee Members

- Committee Members are expected to contribute to discussion and debate, including:
  - Following Executive business / decisions
  - Reading reports in advance of meetings
  - Using support resources – i.e. the Library
  - Submitting advance questions where relevant
- The scrutiny process should be positive and non-political - party whip should not apply



# Making a difference

Curious minds

Develop solid lines of enquiry

Focus on outcomes – what difference will the change make to the resident?

Focus on value – are the plans economic, efficient and effective?

Focus on risk and ensuring that there is resilience – are you assured?

Good scrutiny characteristics Your key skills as scrutiny members

Focus on the system and the organisational development – what needs to change to make this work?

Focus on the performance and quality – how will you know its working?



# Things to avoid

Stay out	Stay out of the weeds – keep high level
Stay on	Stay on task in hand
Avoid	Avoid clutter and repetition
Leave out	Leave out party politics
Prepare	Always prepare
Ask	Ask if unsure – seek advice
Enjoy	Enjoy making a difference

# Conclusions

- Overview & Scrutiny Committee is an important part of the Council's decision making structure
- Wide ranging remit and workload
- Opportunity to make recommendations and support improvements to public services – Council and external



**Questions?**

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