

DRAFT PROTOCOL
ATTENDANCE OF NON-WORKING GROUP MEMBERS
AT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORKING GROUPS

1. The Council's Constitution states that Overview & Scrutiny Committees "may appoint task groups." These are known within the Council as "Working Groups" and are established to review a specific issue under the remit of the lead Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
2. Meetings of Working Groups are "private" meetings, in the sense that they are not formal Committee meetings and are, therefore, not subject to the 1985 Access to Information Act
3. All meetings of Working Groups are included on the list of meetings to be held the following week, unless the Working Group is organised after the weekly sheet is produced. This list is circulated to all Members, for information.
4. It is recognised that, from time to time, Members who are not part of a Working Group may wish to attend meetings of Working Groups, for their own information.
5. Any Member, including Cabinet Members, wishing to attend a Working Group shall contact the appropriate Overview & Scrutiny Officer to indicate their request, in advance of the meeting.
6. The Overview & Scrutiny Officer shall contact the Lead Member of the Working Group with details of the request.
7. The Lead Member of the Working Group shall determine whether it would be appropriate for the Member to attend the meeting concerned.
8. Other Working Group Members will be advised of the decision of the Lead Member.
9. Non-Working Group Members attending a meeting shall be treated with courtesy, dignity & respect by Working Group Members.
10. Non-Working Group Members shall be requested not to take notes for the duration of the meeting.
11. Working Group Members shall adopt a non-partisan and non-confrontational approach towards non-Working Group Members and in Working Group reviews generally.
12. In the event that Cabinet Members attend a Working Group meeting, Lead Members shall exercise caution to ensure that the Cabinet Member does not influence any Working Group outcomes.
13. Cabinet Members should be aware that ultimately, it is likely to be the Cabinet which approves any recommendations made by the Working Group. Cabinet Members should be mindful of any potential clash of roles which their attendance at a Working Group may present.

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14. To avoid a potential clash of roles, it is preferable for a Cabinet Member to adopt an observational role during a Working Group meeting, rather than seeking to influence the Working Group.
15. Working Groups Members may choose to interview appropriate Cabinet Members as part of the review undertaken. In such instances, this protocol will apply.
16. On completion of Working Group reviews, appropriate Cabinet Members shall be invited to meet informally with the Lead Member of the Working Group, in order for the findings and recommendations of the review to be discussed, prior to submission of the Working Group Final Report to the Cabinet for approval.
17. A Scrutiny Support Officer shall be present at the informal meeting between the Lead Member and the Cabinet Member.
18. The appropriate Service / Strategic Director shall be invited to attend this meeting.
19. The discussion between the Lead Member of the Working Group and the appropriate Cabinet Member shall be with the intention of briefing the Cabinet Member, not for the Cabinet Member to alter any of the Working Group recommendations.