

## VALUE FOR MONEY SCRUTINY MONITORING GROUP

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The group will be made up of up to 8 Scrutiny Assembly members. The sub-group will be able to invite other people to take part in their meetings, but not to vote.
2. The group is a sub-group of the Scrutiny Leadership Board. ~~Where possible each scrutiny commission will be represented on the Value for Money Scrutiny group.~~
3. The appropriate Lead Scrutiny Member will generally be expected to chair the group, unless they are from the group that forms the administration. ~~although any other members~~ of the group may chair the group. The Chairman will be appointed by the members of the group and will serve for the municipal year. If the Chairman is unable to attend a meeting the Members present will elect a Chairman for the meeting.
4. The group will fulfil two tasks:
  - a. be the main mechanism by which the Cabinet will formally consult scrutiny on the consideration of their budget proposals and allow non-executive members full access to all Council financial data;
  - b. monitor the service and financial performance of Council services through regular review of performance monitoring reports and such other information as members consider necessary. (Any performance issues relating to ~~the~~ Corporate Parenting should be referred to the Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Monitoring Group which is responsible for monitoring this aspect of Council services. Any performance issue relating to adult social care should be referred to the Scrutiny health Monitoring group which is responsible for monitoring this aspect of Council services).
5. The Leader and Cabinet ~~M~~member for Resources, other Cabinet members and officers will be invited to attend and contribute to the meetings at the discretion of the Chairman.
6. Advice will be provided to group members by officers from the Council's finance service and Policy, Performance and Partnership unit. Members will also have access to training and consultancy support subject to the cost being agreed by the Head of Audit & Democracy after consultation with the Chairman of the Scrutiny Leadership Board.

7. The meetings will follow the principles of scrutiny i.e. no party whip will be applied and a constructive, evidence based approach will be used.
8. The meetings will be administered by Democratic Services. Meetings will be held regularly and dates will be agreed by the members of the group at the start of each municipal year. Members of the group may call additional meetings as required to follow up concerns identified in their scheduled meetings or sub-sets of members may form working groups that meet outside the scheduled meetings to investigate specific issues.
9. Information obtained as a result of membership of the group is sensitive and should be treated as being confidential by members.
10. A short report will be provided to the Scrutiny Leadership Board as appropriate in order to inform Lead Scrutiny Members of performance and budget issues relating to the Community Priorities. This may include poor performing services or services with financial issues (e.g. a history of overspending or comparative high spend) which may be potential issues for more detailed scrutiny work
11. The Chairman of the group, or his/her representative, will attend Cabinet when necessary to feed back views of group members on performance and budget issues that have been reported to the Scrutiny Leadership Board. If the appropriate Lead Scrutiny Member is not the Chairman of the group, they may accompany the Chairman to the Cabinet meeting.
12. The group will set its own work programme. The following issues may form part of the work programme each year:-
  - Detailed consideration of revenue and capital budget proposals made by the Cabinet particularly including proposals for development items, allowances for demographic growth, efficiency and savings proposals, use of one-off resources and levels of council tax increase recommended by the Cabinet.
  - Consideration of the assumptions made in the Council's medium term financial strategy.
  - Receive regular monitoring reports of Key Performance Indicators and other performance information. This information will be circulated in advance of the meetings to allow members time to review the data and consider which areas they wish to probe at the meeting.
  - Consider any areas of key strategic importance for the Council that they wish to monitor on a regular basis, regardless of their performance, along with information on action being taken towards improvement. Examples could include progress in achieving Local Area Agreement / Public Service Agreement targets, reports from external inspectors or areas of particular importance to the Council even if performance indicators show a high level of achievement.

- Regular consideration of budget and service and financial performance monitoring reports to identify areas where additional information on plans for remedial action is required.
- Overview of data quality issues regarding performance information that is published and available to the public
- Undertaking a rolling review of areas of the budget to scrutinise the value of service outcomes for the community compared to the costs involved. Group members will particularly seek to identify areas of comparative low priority spending which could be channelled into higher priorities.
- Consideration of issues referred to the group by the Scrutiny Leadership Board, by the Cabinet or by officers, subject to sufficient time being available.
- Consideration of the financial implications of major policy/service changes proposed by the Cabinet.
- Consideration of unit cost performance indicators and financial benchmark data.
- Consideration of financial reports and performance documents produced by the Council with a view to improving their usefulness to members of the council and members of the public.