

The Greenwich Scrutiny Guidance Manual - 'Making a Difference'

The Council's scrutiny manual, *Making a Difference*, provides guidance on the scrutiny function together with information on good practice for conducting scrutiny work.

The foreword to the manual says, *'The world of scrutiny continues to change and move forward and it requires us to keep abreast of those changes... Our new manual provides an up to date outline of the scrutiny arrangements and procedures that currently operate in Greenwich and offers a range of good practice advice drawn from experience both in Greenwich and elsewhere.'*

The manual comprises a number of sections which can be read as stand alone guidance as outlined here:

Section A – introduction

This describes the legal background to scrutiny in local government and the way scrutiny works in Greenwich. It covers the basic activities (performance management; monitoring the budget and policy framework; policy review; holding the executive to account; and calling in executive decisions) and points to more detailed guidance later in the manual.

Section B – detailed guidance on aspects of the scrutiny function

Performance management: this explains the Council's performance management framework and suggests ways to challenge performance and thereby drive improvement. A checklist pulls together the advice into one accessible tool.

The budget and policy framework: scrutiny's role under the Constitution is to examine and comment upon the budget proposals and key policy documents prior to decision by Cabinet and/or full Council. This guidance includes an examination of scrutinising value for money in services.

Policy review: scrutiny reviews look in detail at aspects of Council policy, service delivery and other issues affecting the quality of life of residents in the borough, including the activity of other agencies working locally. Here we set out basic principles for undertaking a review and provide guidance on planning for and conducting one, including questioning techniques and, for officers and for local people and organisations, how to submit evidence to a review.

Call-in: all decisions, except those classified as 'urgent', which are taken by Cabinet - or individual Cabinet portfolio holders - and key decisions taken by officers can be called in for re-examination by scrutiny and this section describes the powers and procedures available.

Councillor Call for Action: this legal duty requires councils to have arrangements to enable councillors to ask for a particular matter to be discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or one of its panels. This section describes the procedures for a councillor to trigger this.

Section C – scrutinising partners – health and crime and disorder

Scrutinising partner organisations is a growing element of our work. The specific legal powers and responsibilities which relate to scrutinising health and scrutinising crime and disorder matters are explained in this section.

Section D – setting the scrutiny work programme

This documents the procedures operated for establishing the annual scrutiny work programme and includes a proposal form for suggesting an item for scrutiny.

Section E – stakeholder engagement toolkit

This section explains why we should engage with local people and organisations; who should be engaged; and the mechanisms available to use. Again there is a handy checklist.

Section F – scrutiny roles and relationships

This section provides information on the rights and responsibilities of councillors and officers involved in scrutiny.

If you would like a copy of any section of the manual, as summarised above, please contact the Council's scrutiny support function: scrutiny@greenwich.gov.uk