

## **ROLE PROFILE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

*This role profile identifies responsibilities specific to the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Chairman and should be read in conjunction with the role profile for a Ward Councillor*

### **Purpose**

- To ensure that the Council's Executive and officers, also the Council's statutory partners, are properly held to account, in accordance with legislation.
- To ensure that Overview and Scrutiny makes a positive contribution to the development of policy and the continuous improvement of the Council's operations.
- To lead the overview and scrutiny function and chair meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission holding specific responsibility for the programming and direction of reviews, accessing professional advice, where appropriate, and the assembly and presentation of reports to Council (including minority reports, where necessary).
- To provide strong and fair leadership and clear guidance to Members and officers in respect of the overview and scrutiny function.
- To lead and promote the reviews undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels.
- To liaise with the Leader and Chief Executive on issues of proposed policy or strategic issues affecting the Council.

### **Key Duties and Responsibilities**

1. To chair the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission ensuring effective contributions from each Commission Member and to preside over the quarterly agenda setting process and review meetings with the Executive Members, senior officers and Head of Overview and Scrutiny.
2. To propose an annual overview and scrutiny work programme, drawn up after consultation with the Executive and CMT.
3. To lead the investigation of policy proposals referred to the Commission by the Executive, in particular by leading the Commission in determining a timetable for investigation and obtaining preliminary background information, selecting witnesses and determining whether evidence is to be given orally or in writing.
4. To take a lead role in scrutinising policy decisions taken by the Executive or Executive Member and monitoring/using the Call-in Procedure as appropriate.
5. To encourage scrutiny of the Council's partners and engage on a regular basis with the Council's senior partners (including the Police Authority, Fire and Rescue Service, and Primary Care Trust )

6. To take a lead role in scrutinising the decisions of officers, following a similar approach to above.
7. To invite relevant Executive members to attend Commission meetings, coordinating the questions to be asked, submitting in advance a list of the issues to be discussed or requests for detailed information.
8. To liaise with the Leader of the Council , the Chief Executive, the Statutory Scrutiny Officer (Director of Corporate Services) and Head of Overview and Scrutiny to ensure that overview and scrutiny contributes to effective decision-making.
9. To liaise with relevant officers responsible for services that fall under the Commission's terms of reference.
10. To represent overview and scrutiny in Council and be accountable to Council for the actions of overview and scrutiny.
11. To represent the Council at regional and national forums concerned with overview and scrutiny.
12. To ensure that overview and scrutiny is publicised and communicated to build understanding of its role both within and outside the Council.
13. To oversee publication of reports, including the annual report to Council on Overview and Scrutiny, plans and statements to Council and elsewhere.
14. To be responsible for the constitutional arrangements relating to the taking of decisions on the grounds of urgency if they are not on the forward plan or are outside the budget and policy framework.
15. To ensure that the work of the Commission and its Panels contributes to the delivery of continuous improvement in services and the implementation of best practice.
16. To maintain an overview of the work of all the panels in order to ensure effective co-ordination and progress of all work.
17. To support and advise the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.
18. To maintain an overview of the overview and scrutiny function and to learn from practice elsewhere, ensuring the continuing development of overview and scrutiny through improving both practice and how it is organised.
19. To encourage the involvement of all interested parties and stakeholders, individuals, voluntary and community groups in overview and scrutiny matters.
20. To work closely with the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Officer Team.

### **Key Skills and Knowledge**

1. Advanced leadership skills.

2. Ability to represent the Council and champion the overview and scrutiny function in a variety of settings both inside and outside the Council.
3. Ability to communicate effectively and to work constructively with officers, councillors, partners, members of the public, the media and other organisations.
3. The ability to build effective relationships within and outside the Council.
4. Advanced listening skills and questioning skills.
5. High standard of communication skills with officers, Councillors, co-optees, partners, external bodies and members of the public.
6. Advanced presentation and public speaking skills.
7. Ability to deal with complex strategic issues and problems on behalf of the Commission and the overview and scrutiny function as a whole.
8. Ability to obtain and weigh up evidence and make decisions and recommendations based on that evidence.
9. A detailed understanding of the legal and constitutional arrangements relating to the overview and scrutiny function and particularly those of the Commission Chairman.
10. A detailed understanding of the Council's approach to overview and scrutiny and its relationship with the other parts of the Council's decision-making structures.
11. Detailed knowledge of the challenges facing the overview and scrutiny function and the role of the Chairman in addressing them.
12. A detailed awareness of the strategic importance of the overview and scrutiny function within the Council.