

Burnley Borough Council

First Scrutiny meetings 2013-14

Background

As part of the Agenda for the first meeting, Members will have been sent the Strategic Objectives relating to the remit of your Scrutiny Committee, which are now Directorate based.

Attached to this report are a suite of appendices to assist you

Appendix (a) what is scrutiny

Appendix (b) criteria for selecting items

Appendix (c) how to do an improvement project

Appendix (d) Strategic Plan by Directorate as it relates to the remit of the committee

Appendix (e) Strategic Plan 2013-14

In addition the end of year 2012-13 Performance Reports for Service Units reporting to the Committee have been prepared and will be available for your consideration at the first meetings.

Scrutiny members need to make sure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their role by attending meetings, engaging with service units, participating in any learning and development activities that support Members in their scrutiny role, and making sure that they can effectively contribute to the work of their committees.

A workshop for Members regarding managing meetings, including scrutiny, was held on 29th May 2013.

Scrutiny work needs to be undertaken in a way that leads to improvements in what the council does, improves the public's experience of council services and leads to better quality of life. Scrutiny committees must, if recommending changes in services, work with their Directors to make sure recommendations are financially robust.

Ultimately Scrutiny should make a difference, and its work should lead to meaningful outcomes.

Preparation for your first meeting

As a scrutiny member you need to make sure that you have prepared for your first meeting so that you can be an effective member and contribute to the work of the Committee.

Things you should do to prepare for your first meeting:

- Read the papers - This may sound obvious, but if you read the papers as soon as you receive them you can think about any issues you do not understand and speak to your Democracy Officer before the meeting so that you are better prepared.

Scrutiny can be a complicated process and your Democracy Officer will be able to give you background information and make sure that you understand the basic principles.

- Make sure that you understand which Service Units report to your Committee and what they do.
If you are unsure, either talk to the Service Manager or Democracy Officer.
- Read the relevant part of the Directorate based Strategic Plan so that you know what the Council's overall priorities in the area you are scrutinising, as these are the areas your work should concentrate on.
The relevant Director can help you understand these areas.
- Attend scrutiny events so that you have the current knowledge and understanding of Scrutiny related issues and the opportunity to share that knowledge with other scrutiny members.
- Reflect on what the priorities are for your ward and which issues have been raised with you by the public over the past weeks/months – do you feel that these issues could be helped by your scrutiny committee considering them?
- Undertake the steps outlined above even if you are an experienced Scrutiny member, as priorities and issues change and the beginning of the year is the best time to refresh your knowledge and think about what your committee should be doing over the next 12 months.
- Officers are there to help and support the work of the Committees.
The Members are involved in the work, with the support of Officers, and decide the work programme. You need to make sure you are prepared so that your Committee can make improvements to Council services

Directors/Democracy Officers

- The following Directors and Democracy Officers support the Committees and are there to help and support members in understanding their role:

Resources

Democracy Officer – Eric Dickinson Ext:7256

Director – Helen Seechurn Ext: 7171

Community Services

Democracy Officer – Saima Afzaal Ext:7255

Director – Mick Cartledge Ext: 7280

Economic Regeneration

Democracy Officer – Imelda Grady Ext: 7258

Director – Mike Cook Ext: 7244

Lead Officer for Scrutiny – Eric Dickinson Ext: 7256