

# Overview and Scrutiny



## Task and Finish Group Proforma

This proforma has been designed to capture the information that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will need in order to decide which task and finish groups to establish.

This proforma can be completed by individual councillors on their own or by colleagues working together and support is available. If you would like support in completing this proforma, you can approach the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, one of the Select Committee Chairs or any member of the Scrutiny team.

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| <p><b>Proposed title</b><br/> <i>This should be written as a question. What is the main question that you are looking to answer? Ideally use "how" i.e. "How can we improve.....XXX?"</i></p> | <p><b>How can we improve scrutiny at Lewisham: Participation, Performance and Outcomes</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Overview</b><br/> <i>Provide 2-3 sentences explaining the proposed investigation in more detail including the key areas that you are proposing to look at.</i></p>                      | <p>Building on the 2019 Democracy Review and findings of the 2022 LGA Peer Review, examine current approaches to scrutiny at LBL with a view to improving participation in, performance of and outcomes from scrutiny.</p> <p>Examining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'Scrutiny culture' – what relationship should scrutiny have with the executive/the organisation; what are each not getting from the other to achieve that relationship; what outcomes scrutiny is seeking to achieve.</li> <li>- 'Participation':             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o For scrutiny Councillors – support from the organisation to conduct effective scrutiny; empowering Cllrs to make use of/develop their skills; barriers to participation.</li> <li>o For residents – improving resident engagement with scrutiny; support for resident-led reviews/similar approaches; co-optees; learning from e.g. Lewisham DBC.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- 'Performance' – how scrutiny can be more effective in shaping policy; balance of pre-decision vs. post-decision scrutiny; approaches to scrutiny e.g. in-depth review, public scrutiny, TFG.</li> <li>- 'Outcomes' – how to ensure scrutiny recommendations are effective; extent to which scrutiny recommendations are taken up by executive/the organisation; monitoring and evaluation of scrutiny outcomes.</li> </ul> <p>Proposed outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recommendations to the executive/organisation on supporting scrutiny from councillors/the public</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recommendations to Overview &amp; Scrutiny on effective scrutiny – including potential revisions to the Scrutiny Protocol</li> <li>- Potential recommendations on constitutional changes to support the above</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Reason for proposal</b><br/> <i>Why do you think that a task and finish group is the most appropriate way to address this issue / answer this question? Where has the suggestion come from? (I.e. through resident engagement, casework, external inspection, performance information.)</i></p>  | <p>These issues are cross-cutting and do not sit within the remit of any single scrutiny committee – the proposal is to examine and scrutinise <u>how</u> we do things, not <u>what</u> the Council is doing in any one policy area.</p> <p>Suggestion has come via feedback from councillors on challenges with current arrangements, as well as some findings from the Council’s recent LGA Peer Challenge.</p>   |
| <p><b>Policy Context</b><br/> <i>How does the proposal support delivery of the Lewisham Corporate Strategy; national/regional policies, initiatives; legislation etc.</i></p>  | <p>The investigation will support LBL to deliver its Corporate Strategy, in particular the objectives to ensure “Strong and effective governance” and to ensure the organisation “stays on track and measures success” against internal and external priorities, through offering proposed improvements to scrutiny of governance and performance.</p>  |
| <p><b>Criteria for the investigation</b><br/> <i>(Essential)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is the proposed investigation timely? Why?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is it a strategic and significant issue? How?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is it of concern to one or more sections of the population? Who?</i></li> </ul> <p><i>(Desirable)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is the issue of concern to partners or stakeholders? How?</i></li> <li>• <i>Will the investigation add value in terms of improving the council’s or partner’s performance or service delivery? How?</i></li> <li>• <i>Will the investigation be duplicating any other work? What?</i></li> <li>• <i>What control or influence does the Council have in this area?</i></li> </ul> | <p>The proposed investigation is timely as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Builds on the 2019 Democracy Review as well as findings from LBL’s recent LGA Peer Challenge, which <i>inter alia</i> identified “confusion about the role of different levels of scrutiny and relationships with officers” and a need to do more to “embed the principle and practice of a member-led Council.”</li> <li>- Recent proposals to reform the shape of scrutiny at LBL were not passed, in large part as many Cllrs did not feel sufficient time had been taken to develop these proposals. In the last administration, only a minority (plurality) of then-elected members voted for the current mixture of scrutiny committees.</li> <li>- In recent years and particularly at the last election, the Council has experienced significant turnover, with 38% (21/54) of Cllrs being newly elected and 44% (24/54) Cllrs having been in post for less than a full term. It would be timely to revisit support for scrutiny Cllrs given this.</li> </ul> <p>The proposal addresses significant and strategic issues, and is of concern to the whole population of the Borough, as improving participation in, and the standard of, political decision-making and scrutiny of decisions will enable LBL to better deliver on its objectives and Corporate Strategy, and to improve outcomes for residents.</p> <p>Examining how to improve and deepen participation by councillors, and to improve both decision-making and scrutiny will aid in improving LBL’s performance in delivering its objectives and the ability of political leadership to improve service delivery.</p> <p>The proposal does not intend to duplicate any of the work of scrutiny panels or the Overview &amp; Scrutiny committee.</p> |

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| <p><b>Sources of evidence</b><br/> <i>Do you have any thoughts/ideas on where you might gather evidence from? e.g. research or site visits. (Officers will be able to recommend suggestions and help with this.)</i></p> | <p>Evidence can be gathered from examining best practice from and benchmarking against other similar local authorities (both Mayoral and non-Mayoral), conducting interviews/hearings, research, engagement with external partners, monitoring and evaluating past scrutiny recommendations, and other methods.</p>                             |
| <p><b>Co-optees / Technical advisors?</b><br/> <i>Would the task and finish group benefit from having expert input such as an academic or local expert?</i></p>  | <p>The group would benefit from input and insight from the Head of Scrutiny and other scrutiny officers. The group would also benefit from having external input from, for instance, the Centre for Governance &amp; Scrutiny or Local Government Association.</p>  |
| <p><b>Suggested timeframe</b><br/> <i>Do you estimate / suggest that the investigation take 3, 6, 9 or 12 months? Outline your suggested timetable for evidence gathering.</i></p>                                       | <p>Propose that the investigation takes 5 months. This would allow for detailed investigation into the issues while also allowing for findings to be acted upon rapidly where identified and within the gift of OSC; and for other recommendations to be proposed to Mayor &amp; Cabinet to be acted upon in time for the next Council AGM.</p> |
| <p><b>Equalities Impact</b><br/> <i>Identify any equalities issues that might be applicable.</i></p>   | <p>Improving participation in scrutiny will support efforts to make LBL's decisions more representative and reflective of the Borough, through widening public participation in decision-making and supporting efforts to remove barriers to participation.</p>   |
| <p><b>Councillor(s) submitting the proposal</b><br/> <i>Please list the names of the submitting councillor(s)</i></p>  | <p>Cllr Mark Jackson, Cllr Rudi Schmidt, Cllr Oana Olaru, Cllr Mark Ingleby, Cllr Sian Eiles</p>  |