

Committee Procedure Rules

These Committee rules will apply to all meetings of the Cabinet, Scrutiny, Regulatory Committees, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Corporate Parenting Board.

The ruling of the Chair at the meeting as to the construction or application of the rules that apply to that meeting shall not be challenged at the meeting.

4.1.60 Notice of meetings

The Chief Executive will, through publication on the Council's website, give five clear working days' notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting (or otherwise in cases of urgency as in accordance with the access to information rules (part 4).

4.1.61 Time of meetings

Meetings will be held in accordance with the programme of ordinary meetings agreed by the Council any change in start time must be agreed by the Chair in consultation with the Leader.

The Chair may also call additional meetings if they consider it necessary or appropriate. In so doing, the chair shall have regard to the advice of the Council's Monitoring Officer.

The meeting will continue for a maximum of three hours, excluding the period taken up by public question time.

At the expiry of three hours, excluding the period taken up by public questions, the Chair may determine:

- (a) that the meeting continue beyond three hours duration; or
 - (b) that the remaining business to be conducted at the meeting be:
 - (i) deferred to the next meeting; or
 - (ii) deferred to an extraordinary meeting called for the purpose of dealing with any remaining business; or
 - (iii) put to the vote immediately in the order that the business appears on the agenda or in any order determined by the Chair; or
 - (iv) some business be put to the vote immediately and other business deferred in accordance with rules (i) and (iii) above; or
- (4)** (c) the meeting be adjourned to resume later that day after a specified break provided that the remaining business can reasonably be expected to last no more than two additional hours and cannot be deferred until the next meeting.

The Chair has discretion to:

- order the adjournment of any meeting;
- following consultation with the Leader of the Council, alter the date or time of any meeting;
- cancel or postpone a meeting in the event of an emergency or where there is no business requiring approval

4.1.62 Conduct of the meeting

The Chair's powers and responsibilities in relation to the conduct of a meeting may be exercised by the person presiding at the meeting. A decision by the Chair on the meaning of the Constitution cannot be challenged at a meeting.

4.1.63 Appointment of Chair

If at any meeting the Chair appointed by the Council is absent, and if no Deputy has been appointed by the Council, the meeting shall appoint a Chair for that meeting only. The Monitoring Officer or his/her representative shall at the start of the meeting invite nominations for Chair and will take a vote on a show of hands for those members nominated for Chair.

4.1.64 Quorum

Subject to any specific statutory requirement, the quorum of a meeting will be three voting members, or for a sub committee two voting members.

A **quorum** of four will apply for meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board including at least one elected member from the Council or one representative of the Clinical Commissioning Group or a nominated substitute.

4.1.64.1 If a quorum is not reached within 15 minutes after the time appointed for the start of the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned without debate.

4.1.64.2 * During any meeting if the person chairing the meeting counts the number of members present and declares there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn immediately.

4.1.64.3 * Subject to 4.1.64.4 remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the person chairing the meeting. If they do not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

4.1.64.4 * The meeting will resume immediately if it becomes apparent to the person who was chairing it within 10 minutes of the adjournment that there are sufficient members present to constitute a quorum.

4.1.65 Variations in order of business

The Chair has discretion to vary the order of business.

4.1.66 Questions by the public

Questions may be asked by members of the public who live or work in Bury at the following public meetings of the Council:

- Cabinet
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Scrutiny committees
- Licensing and Safety Committee
- Strategic Commissioning Board

A period of up to 30 minutes, will be allocated for questions and supplementary questions. This period may be varied at the discretion of the Chair.

4.1.67 Notice of public questions

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing to the Monitoring Officer, Bury Council, Town Hall, Bury or by email (democratic.services@bury.gov.uk) no later than midday two days before the day of the meeting (e.g. midday on a Monday where the meeting is on a Wednesday).

Each question must give the name and address of the questioner (although only the name and town will be published) and identify who the question is addressed to. Copies of all accepted questions and answers shall be published on the Council website after the meeting and shall be made available to the public attending the meeting.

A questioner who is present at the meeting and who has submitted a written question may, at the discretion of the Chair, ask one supplementary question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. A question must relate to an item included on the agenda or referenced in the Minutes, or an area to which the committee has responsibility.

4.1.68 Order and number of public questions

Questions will be answered in the order in which they are received. If time permits, further questions may be invited from members of the public present.

A member of the public may submit only one question at any meeting of the Council.

4.1.69 Scope of public questions

The Monitoring Officer is authorised to reject a question in accordance with the following criteria:

- (a) it is in multiple parts;
- (b) it is not about a matter for which the council has a responsibility or which affects Bury

- (c) it is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- (d) it is substantially the same as or similar to a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council, in the past six months;
- (e) it requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information or relates to an identifiable individual;
- (g) it is from a Council employee and the question is connected to their employment; or
- (h) it relates to a planning application or licensing application.

If a question is rejected, the person who submitted it will be notified in writing before the meeting and given the reasons for the rejection.

Where a question is accepted but it is directed at the incorrect meeting The Monitoring Officer is authorised to direct the question to the correct meeting.

4.1.70. Answers to public questions

Answers to accepted questions will be published after the meeting. An answer to a supplementary question will be provided by the member to whom the question was put or his/ her nominee.

The answer may be either a direct oral answer, a referral to an existing publication, or if the question requests service information a referral to an officer to respond in writing. If the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, if the member to whom the question is put is absent, or the time allowed for public questions has expired, a written answer will normally be provided within ten working days of the meeting.

A record of all questions and answers provided whether orally or in writing will be published on the website as an appendix to the minutes of the meeting.

4.1.71 Member Question Time – Meetings of Cabinet and Scrutiny

A period of up to 15 minutes will be allocated for questions and supplementary questions from members of the Council who are not members of the committee. This period may be varied at the discretion of the chair.

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing to the Monitoring Officer, Bury Council, Town Hall, Bury or by email (democratic.services@bury.gov.uk) no later than midday three days before the day of the meeting (e.g. midday on a Friday where the meeting is on a Wednesday).

A member who has submitted a written question may, at the discretion of the chair, ask also one supplementary question without notice. The same procedure for public questions will be followed.

Members may submit no more than one written question (and no more than 5 per group) at any one meeting and must relate to an item included on the agenda or referenced in the Minutes. Questions will rotate between the political groups and will be ordered politically proportionally.

4.1.72 Point of order

A member may raise a point of order at any time and the Chair will hear it immediately. A point of order may only relate to the alleged breach of these Council rules or the law. The member must indicate the section and the way in which they consider it has been broken. The ruling of the Chair on the matter will be final and there will be no debate on the matter.

4.1.73 Conduct of the debate

A Member may indicate their wish to speak and shall wait to be called by the Chair. If more than one member so indicates the Chair shall call on them individually and in turn to speak.

4.1.74 Motion to rescind a previous decision

Committee or Sub-committee of the Council acting under delegated powers may rescind a resolution adopted under delegated powers within a period of six months provided the Summons to attend the meeting of the Committee or Sub-committee contains a notice that the matter is to be reconsidered

4.1.75 Voting majority

Unless this constitution (or the law) provides otherwise any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those present and voting in the room at the time the question was put.

4.1.76 Chair's casting vote

If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Chair chooses to exercise a casting vote.

4.1.77 Right to require individual vote to be recorded

* Where any member requests it immediately after the vote is taken, their vote will be so recorded in the minutes to show whether they voted for or against the motion or abstained from voting.

4.1.78 Voting on appointments

* Where there is not a clear majority of votes in favour of one person, then the name of the person with the least number of votes will be taken off the list and a new vote taken. The process will continue until there is a majority of votes for one person.

4.1.79 Keeping and Signing the minutes

Minutes of the proceedings of each meeting will be prepared and will be published on the Council's website.

The Chair will sign the minutes at the next available meeting. The Chair will move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record. There will be no debate or questioning on matters arising from the minutes; only matters of accuracy may be determined.

4.1.80 Record of Attendance

The Chief Executive will record the names of all members present during the whole or part of a meeting.

4.1.81 Exclusion of the public

The public and press may only be excluded either in accordance with the access to information rules (part 4) or in the case of disturbance by the public in accordance with these council rules.

4.1.82 Members' conduct

If a member is guilty of misconduct by persistently disregarding the ruling of the Chair, or by behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively, or by deliberately obstructing business, any Member may move that that Member is not further heard. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

If the member continues to behave improperly after such a motion is carried, any Member may move either that the Member leave the meeting or that the meeting be adjourned for a specified period. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

If there is a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the Chair may adjourn the meeting for as long as they think necessary.

The decision as to whether misconduct is taking place shall rest with the Chair who will have due regard to the councillor code of conduct.

4.1.83 Disturbance by the public

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chair will warn the person concerned and, if the interruption continues, will order the person's removal from the meeting room.

If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public the Chair shall order that part to be cleared and the Chair may for that purpose adjourn the meeting for as long as is needed, and may resume the meeting with or without members of the public being admitted and/or at another location deemed appropriate

4.1.84 Suspension and amendment of Committee rules

* Any of the Committee rules may be suspended for all or part of the business of a meeting at which suspension is moved by a motion, for ease of reference the rules which cannot be suspended are identified by the symbol *

* Such a motion cannot be moved without notice unless at least two thirds of the whole number of members of the Committee is present. Suspension shall be limited to the duration of the meeting or the determination of a particular item of business if appropriate and as specified in the motion.

4.1.85 Recording, filming and reporting of meetings

Where meetings of Full Council are open to the public, any person attending may record, film or report meetings, provided that in doing so there is no disturbance to the meeting.

4.1.86 Interests under the Councillors' Code of Conduct

* Members must abide by the Councillors' Code of Conduct (part 5) adopted by the Council and declare all schedule 1, schedule 2 and other interests in accordance with the code. Where a member has identified and declared a schedule 1 interest, that member shall immediately vacate the room or chamber where the meeting is taking place (including any public area) unless a dispensation has been granted.

4.1.87 Confidentiality

All reports and other documents marked "confidential" or "exempt from publication" shall be so treated unless they become public in the ordinary course of the Council's business.

Such determination shall ordinarily be made by the Monitoring Officer having regard to the access to information rules. Further, all members must comply with the obligations as to confidentiality set out in the Councillors' Code of Conduct (part 5). Any alleged breaches shall be referred by the Chair of the to the Monitoring Officer for consideration and report if not previously referred by some other person. The Chair may require the surrender of such material at the end of discussion of the relevant item.

4.1.88 Substitution

The Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Chief Executive may receive notice from a group leader or authorised nominee on behalf of that group that a different member of their group shall be substituted at a meeting for the member previously allocated to a place on a committee, sub-committee or other body to which the proportionality rules apply for the duration of that meeting. The giving of notice by email no later than 12 noon on the day of the meeting is encouraged.

The Monitoring Officer (in consultation with the ungrouped member(s) concerned) may substitute another ungrouped member for an ungrouped member who has

notified the Monitoring Officer in writing that they are unable to attend a meeting for the duration of that meeting. Such notification must be given no later than 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

Other members may be invited to attend and speak at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.

4.1.89 Programme of work

Each Committee will be responsible for setting their own work programmes. In setting their work programme each committee shall have regard to the resources (including officer time) available. Officer support will be provided to each Committee, the level of which will be dependent on the matter being considered. Lead Officer will be identified for each Committee.

A Committee may appoint a task and finish group for any activity within the committee's agreed work programme.

4.1.90 Withdrawal of an agenda item

Following publication of the agenda, the Chair, in consultation with the Council's Monitoring Officer may agree that an item may be removed from the agenda.

4.1.91 Urgent Business

Following publication of the agenda the Chair, in consultation with the Council's Monitoring Officer, can agree the consideration of any other business which by reason of special circumstances may be considered as a matter of urgency.

Additional rules for Cabinet

The Leader and the Cabinet comprise the Executive of the Council. The Leader is also the chair of Cabinet meetings. In his or her absence, the Deputy Leader chairs meetings of the Cabinet.

4.1.92 Who may attend and speak at Cabinet?

1. Members of the public and elected members who have submitted a question for Cabinet
2. Where relevant to the agenda, the chairs of the scrutiny committees have the right to attend Cabinet meetings for the purpose of presenting any recommendations from their committee
3. Group leaders have the right to attend Cabinet meetings (as non voting Members) for the purpose of reporting the views of their group and they may ask questions of any Cabinet member and/or the Leader on any matter under consideration at the meeting
4. Ward member(s) have the right to attend and speak at a Cabinet meeting where an item relating to an individual ward or a specified group of wards is included in the agenda

5. Other members may be invited to attend and speak at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.

Reports shall be presented by the relevant lead Cabinet member.

In addition, such officers as are required to assist in presenting reports or provide support, advice or information required by the Cabinet will attend.

4.1.93. Decision taking

Where the Leader, any member of the Cabinet, or an officer taking an executive decision has a conflict of interest (whether a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest) such interest will be disclosed and recorded and the individual making the disclosure will take no further part in the decision-making relating to that item.

Where an individual is unable to take a decision because of a conflict of interest the decision will be taken by the leader, or if the Leader has a conflict of interest, the Cabinet. If the Cabinet is inquorate because of a conflict of interest then the Monitoring Officer will be instructed to seek an appropriate dispensation.

The Leader, the Cabinet and individual Cabinet members may meet informally with officers to receive information and briefings but no Cabinet decisions will be taken at any such informal meeting.

Reports to the Cabinet will normally appear in the name of the Cabinet member and incorporate relevant advice from appropriate officers. Exceptions shall include a report from a statutory officer. The author of a report will ensure that draft reports are the subject of consultation with the relevant director, any relevant ward Members or other consultees, and in all cases the s151 finance officer and the Monitoring Officer or their authorised nominee.

4.1.94. Form of business

In addition to the standard agenda items, the Cabinet will conduct the following business at its meetings:

1. Consideration of matters referred to the cabinet or reports from a scrutiny committee or the Council
2. Consideration of reports from the statutory officers
3. Any other matters set out in the agenda for the meeting

4.1.95. Leader's report

The Leader will submit a report from the Cabinet to each ordinary meeting of council (other than the budget meeting) on which they may be questioned and if so, answer. This will report the work of the Cabinet since the last report and will include:

1. A summary of those executive decisions taken by the Cabinet, individual Cabinet members, and Joint Executive Committees and other activities of the Cabinet since the previous Council meeting;
2. Any recommendations of the Cabinet in respect of the budget and policy framework;
3. Any report to the Council required by a scrutiny committee; and
4. A summary and particulars of any urgent decision made under paragraphs (urgent decisions).

4.1.96. Decisions subject to call in by scrutiny committees

Other than decisions taken under the urgency provisions of the access to information rules (part 4) and recommendations made to the Council on budget and policy framework items, Cabinet Key decisions made but not implemented may be called-in in accordance with the scrutiny rules.

4.1.97. Individual Cabinet Member or Officer Decisions

Where individual Cabinet Members or Officers make decisions on any matter which is an executive function they must comply with the provisions in the access to information rules (part 4).

4.1.98. Urgent decisions

There may be an urgent need to take a key decision where 28 days' notice of it is impracticable in the circumstances. In that event the key decision may only be made in accordance with the general exception or special urgency provisions in the access to information rules (part 4).

Additional rules for Overview and Scrutiny

The Council has decided that it will have three overview and scrutiny committees (an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a Health Scrutiny Committee and a Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee) which will have responsibility for all the overview and scrutiny functions on behalf of the Council as set out in part 3.

4.1.99 Who may sit on an overview and scrutiny committee?

All Councillors except Cabinet members may be Members of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. No member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which they have been directly involved, or for a decision in the Cabinet portfolio they provide support to as a Deputy Cabinet Member.

4.1.100 Co-option

An overview and scrutiny committee may co-opt a maximum of two non-voting people as and when required, for example for a particular meeting or to join a task and finish group. Any such co-optees will be agreed by the committee having reference to the agreed work plan and/or task and finish group membership.

The Committee with responsibility for education shall include the following co-opted education representatives, as appointed by the Council: - one representative as nominated by the diocese of Bury – one representative as nominated by the archdiocese of Bury – one parent governor as elected from the primary school sector- one parent governor as elected by the secondary school sector – one parent governor as elected by the special school sector These education co-optees may vote on items relating to education; on other items on the committee agenda they may speak but not vote.

4.1.101 Task and Finish Groups

An Overview and Scrutiny Committee may appoint a task and finish group for any scrutiny activity within the committee's agreed work programme. The relevant overview and scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken, the membership, chair, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. It will be a matter for the task and finish group to determine lines of questioning, witnesses (from the council or wider community) and evidence requirements.

The task and finish groups will be composed of at least two members of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee, other Councillors, and may also include, as appropriate, co-opted people with specialist knowledge and or expertise to support the task. No co-opted members of task and finish groups will have voting powers (unless they are the education co-optees). Matters put to the vote will be determined on a simple majority with the task and finish group chair having a casting vote.

Task and finish groups, as working groups of the committee, are not subject to the requirements of political proportionality.

As working groups of the committee, the task and finish groups will not be making decisions, and have the discretion to meet either in public or in private. Where meeting in private there is no right of attendance by any member who is not a member of a task and finish group.

If a task and finish group chooses to meet formally in public it may need to exclude the press and public including other members in attendance from part of any such meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules (Part 4).

Task and finish groups will report their findings/outcomes/recommendations to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee who will decide if the findings/outcomes/recommendations should be reported to the cabinet or elsewhere.

Any changes proposed by the task and finish group to the scope, timeframe or outcomes stipulated by the committee must be approved by the statutory scrutiny officer following consultation with the chair of the relevant overview and overview and scrutiny committee and will be reported to the relevant overview and overview and scrutiny committee.

In the event of a task and finish group being unable to agree recommendations or findings on a particular matter, a report will be made to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee for its consideration.

4.1.102. Overview and scrutiny committee agendas

In addition to the standard agenda items, At each of its ordinary meetings an overview and scrutiny committee shall consider the following business, where appropriate:

- (1) any matter called-in
- (2) a review of its work programme, including requests received for inclusion of items from members of the public, ward members, the Cabinet or the Council
- (3) consideration of any budget and policy framework items
- (4) any response to reports of the overview and scrutiny committee
- (5) any item requested to be placed on the agenda by a member of the committee
- (6) any Councillor call for action
- (7) any report from a task and finish group;
- (8) any business otherwise set out on the agenda for the meeting including items as identified in the work programme.

Any member may give notice to the Statutory Scrutiny Officer that they wish an item relevant to the functions of a committee and not excluded by law to be included in the agenda and discussed at a meeting of that committee.

An overview and scrutiny committee shall also respond, as soon as its work programme permits, to requests from the Council and from the Cabinet to review particular areas of Council performance or policy. An overview and scrutiny committee shall conduct the review as requested and report its findings and any recommendations back to the Cabinet and/or the Council.

4.1.103. Councillor Call for action

Any member of the Council shall be entitled to give notice to the Statutory Scrutiny Officer if they wish an item relating to a Councillor call for action to be included on the agenda discussion at the next available meeting of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee. (subject to it falling within the statutory definition) (Further guidance in respect of the Councillor call for action is contained in Part 5).

4.1.104. Policy review and development

The role of a scrutiny committee in relation to the development of the Council's budget and policy framework is found in the rules (part 4). In relation to the development of the Council's approach to other matters not forming part of its budget and policy framework, an overview and scrutiny committee may make proposals to the Cabinet for developments in so far as they relate to matters within its terms of reference.

An overview and scrutiny committee may hold or commission inquiries and investigate the available options for future direction in policy development and may appoint advisers to assist it in this process. A committee may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that it reasonably considers necessary to inform its deliberations. It may ask witnesses to attend in order to address it on any matter under consideration and may pay to advisers, assessors and witnesses a reasonable fee and expenses for doing so, having regard to the resources (including officer time) available. In determining how to conduct such activities the chair of a committee should consult with the Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

4.1.105. Reports from the overview and scrutiny committees

Following any investigation or review, the committee or task and finish group shall prepare a report. Any report from a task and finish group will first be considered by the relevant overview and scrutiny committee and if adopted will be dealt with in accordance with the following rules. If any review is in response to a request from Council, the overview and scrutiny committee shall report its findings to the Council.

In all other cases the report will be submitted to the Chief Executive for consideration by the Executive or other body as appropriate. If the recommendations are such that a decision can be taken by an individual Cabinet member acting within his/her

portfolio in accordance with the functions scheme (Part 3), the Chief Executive shall arrange for that Cabinet member to consider the report.

If the recommendations in an overview and scrutiny committee report are contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget and policy framework, the Cabinet shall consider the overview and scrutiny recommendations and report the matter with its response to the overview and scrutiny recommendations to the Council.

If the recommendations in the overview and scrutiny report are in line with the budget and policy framework, the Cabinet or the Cabinet member shall consider the overview and scrutiny recommendations and report their decision to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee.

4.1.106. Making sure that overview and scrutiny reports are considered by the Executive

On receipt of a report from an overview and scrutiny committee (other than on budget and policy framework items) the Chief Executive will arrange for the report to be considered either by Cabinet or an individual Cabinet member as appropriate.

If any individual Cabinet member is minded to reject all of the recommendations in a report from an overview and scrutiny committee, then the matter must be referred to the next meeting of the Cabinet to decide its response.

The Chief Executive will notify the relevant overview and scrutiny committee of the response of the Executive within two months of receipt of the overview and scrutiny report, with the exception of matters relating to statutory health overview and scrutiny and issues relating to crime and disorder overview and scrutiny which require a response from the relevant body within 28 days.

If the Cabinet or Cabinet member wishes to extend the deadline a report will be made to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee explaining why this is considered necessary. Decisions of the Executive or the Council on any overview and scrutiny recommendations will be recorded in the usual way.

4.1.107. Rights and powers of overview and scrutiny committee members

Where an overview and scrutiny committee or task and finish group conducts investigations or reviews and people attend to give evidence or otherwise assist the committee the following principles will apply:

- (a) that the investigation be conducted fairly and all members of the committee or group be given the opportunity to ask questions of attendees, and to contribute and speak
- (b) that those assisting the committee by giving evidence be treated with respect and courtesy
- (c) that the investigation be conducted so as to maximise the efficiency and value of the investigation or analysis.

4.1.108. Members and officers giving account

An overview and scrutiny committee may scrutinise and review decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any Executive functions, or as provided by statute certain other bodies. The Scrutiny Committee can also help develop the Councils policies, review the effectiveness of current policies and scrutinise the work of the Executive and its decision making. As well as reviewing documentation, in fulfilling the overview and scrutiny role, it may require any member of the Cabinet, the Chief Executive, Committee Chair, and/or senior officers carrying out functions on the Chief Executive's behalf to attend before it to explain in relation to matters within its remit regarding:

- (a) any particular decision or series of decisions
- (b) the extent to which the actions taken implement council policy; and/or
- (c) their performance.

It is the duty of those persons to attend if so required:

Where any member or officer is required to attend an overview and scrutiny committee under this provision, the chair of the committee will inform the Statutory Scrutiny officer. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer shall inform the member or officer in writing normally giving at least ten working days' notice of the meeting at which they are required to attend. The notice will state the nature of the item on which they are required to attend to give account and whether any papers are required to be produced for the committee. Where the account to be given to the committee will require the production of a report, then the member or officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to allow for preparation of that report.

Where, in exceptional circumstances, the member or officer is unable to attend on the required date, then an overview and scrutiny committee shall in consultation with the member or officer arrange an alternative date for attendance and/or a substitute as appropriate.

Unless in exceptional circumstances, any witnesses required to attend any meetings will be restricted to:-

- (a) any Cabinet member involved in the decision the subject of the call in
- (b) any officer who in the view of the chair of the meeting would be able to supply evidence materially able to assist at the meeting.

The Council has designated the Head of Democratic Services as the statutory scrutiny officer who is required to discharge the following functions:

- (a) to promote the role of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees
- (b) to provide support to the Council's overview and scrutiny committee and the members of the committees

(c) to provide support and guidance to:

(i) members of the Council,

(ii) members of the executive of the Council, and

(iii) officers of the Council – in relation to the functions of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees

4.1.109. Call in

“Call in” is a statutory right for members of the Council to call in a key decision of Cabinet, an individual Cabinet member, an officer with delegated authority or under joint arrangements after it is made but before it is implemented subject to the following provisions.

Call in does not apply to Cabinet decisions that make recommendations to the Council because those decisions will not be implemented in any event until the matter has been considered and agreed by the Council. These are decisions such as setting the council tax and agreeing the annual revenue and capital budgets.

- When a call in has been triggered, the call in process will be managed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the chair of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee and the members who have triggered the call in. The chair of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee will maintain responsibility for the conduct of any meeting at which the decision called in is considered.
- Call in is not intended to be a mechanism for voicing objection to or dislike of any particular decision. It should only be used in exceptional circumstances and where there is evidence to show that one of the following may apply:

(a) that there has been inadequate consultation with stakeholders prior to the decision being made;

(b) that there was inadequate evidence or information on which to base a decision and that not all relevant matters were fully taken into account;

(c) that the decision materially departs from the budget and policy framework;

(d) that the decision is disproportionate to the desired outcome;

(e) that the decision has failed to take into account the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and or the public sector equality duty;

(f) that the decision-maker has failed to consult with and take professional advice from all relevant officers including the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer, as appropriate, or has failed to have sufficient regard to that advice;

g) that the decision exceeds the powers or terms of reference of the decision maker responsible for the decision; or

(h) that the access to information rules have not been adhered to.

4.1.110. Advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer on these matters

When a decision is made by the Cabinet or an individual Cabinet member that decision will be published widely by electronic means. This includes:

(a) displaying it on the Council website

(b) sending a copy of the decision electronically to all members of the Council identifying which overview and scrutiny committee's remit the decision falls within

The decision will be in the form of a notice and bear the date upon which it is published and will specify that the decision will come into force, and may be subsequently implemented, at the expiry of five working days after the date of publication, unless it is called in under these call in rules.

To call the decision in a call in notice must be received by 5.00pm and must:

(a) clearly states the decision(s) which is/are being called in by reference to the decisions as set out on the decision notice

(b) clearly states the grounds for the call in as laid out above as applied to each decision being called-in and the evidence on which the grounds are based

(c) is signed by the Chair of the Committee or any two or more members of the Committee or any eight member of the Council (not including cooptees). If electronic notification is being used an email in accordance with the requirements of this paragraph must be submitted by each member supporting the call in.

4.1.111 Limitations of call in

The call in procedure is restricted to decisions made by Cabinet or individual Cabinet members, decisions made by joint committees of the Executive and decisions made by officers under delegation from the Executive.

Where a decision has been taken in circumstances where the special urgency provisions apply, as set out in the access to information rules (Part 4), that decision will not be subject to call in.

The call in procedure will also not apply where the decision taken needs to be implemented urgently. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public interest.

In this case the record of the decision, and notice by which is it made public shall state whether in the opinion of the decision making person or body, the decision is one that requires urgent implementation and the reasons why, and the Monitoring Officer should confirm that as such it is not subject to call in.

The chair of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee must agree both that the decision taken was reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency.

The consent to the decision being taken as a matter of urgency will be recorded on the published notice of the decision and must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

4.1.112. Post call in

The Monitoring Officer will determine the validity of the call in as soon as possible. The Monitoring Officer may, if appropriate, reject a request for call in if, in their opinion, it fails to meet any of the grounds listed in 4.5.65 above, or if they consider it is in any way vexatious, frivolous or otherwise inappropriate.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- (a) the cited grounds bear no relevance to the decision that is identified for call-in;
- (b) the requisition cites grounds for which no relevant evidence is produced in support;
- (c) those requisitioning the call-in signed the requisition before it was complete (e.g. signed a blank form in advance or emailed consent without detailing the grounds and evidence);
- (d) the call-in includes material which could be defamatory;
- (e) the requisition is being used for improper purposes (e.g. to admonish an officer); or
- (f) the decision is in accordance with the advice or recommendations provided to the decision maker by the overview and scrutiny committee.

If the call in is determined not to be valid, the Monitoring Officer will inform those members submitting the notice of the call in of the reasons for that determination.

If accepted as valid, the Monitoring Officer will then advise the original decision maker of the call in.

- The Monitoring Officer shall then call a meeting of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee on such a day as they shall determine in consultation with the relevant chair and in any event within five working days of the Monitoring Officer accepting the validity of the call in notice.

- Having considered the decision in light of the grounds and evidence for the call in, the options available to the Scrutiny Committee are as follows:
 1. The Scrutiny Committee decides not to offer any comments on the Notice. In this situation the decision of the Cabinet will stand.
 2. The Scrutiny Committee decides to offer comments or objections, which will be referred back to the next Cabinet meeting.
 3. The Scrutiny Committee may refer the Notice, without comment, to the Council. The matter will then be considered by the Council (a standard item appears on all Council summons to consider referrals from Scrutiny Committees). Any comments or objections from Council will be referred back to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity. (Call in protocol is detailed below).

The Cabinet will be required to consider any objections and comments but will not be bound by them unless it is contrary to the Policy Framework or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the Budget.

- The decision maker shall reconsider any decision referred to them following call-in, take into account any views expressed by the relevant overview and scrutiny committee and may either amend or confirm the original decision or require further specified work to be undertaken before making a final determination.
- Having been referred to the next Council meeting the Council has two options: (i) amend the policy / budget framework to accommodate the called-in decision, in which case the decision is implemented immediately; or (ii) require the decision maker to reconsider the decision again and refer it to a meeting of the Cabinet to be held within five working days of the Council meeting. The Cabinet may choose to amend or confirm the decision and there will be no further right of call in.

If an overview and scrutiny committee or the Council does not meet within the time permitted by these rules or such extended time as may be agreed or if it does but does not refer the decision back to the decision making body or person, the decision will become effective on the date of the meeting or expiry of the period in which the meeting should have been held, whichever is the earlier.

4.1.113. Extension of time limit

In exceptional circumstances the time limit of ten working days for convening a meeting of an overview and scrutiny committee to consider the called in decision may be extended as agreed by the original decision maker and/or the Leader where practical considerations or any unforeseen factor make such an extension appropriate.

4.1.114. Pre decision call in and the forward plan

The overview and scrutiny committees should consider the forward plan as the chief source of information regarding forthcoming key decisions and in doing so, may

identify a forthcoming decision on the forward plan relevant to the remit of the committee and examine the issues around it.

In order not to obstruct the council in its business, the overview and scrutiny committee may call in an executive decision in advance of its actually being taken. In such a situation all the time-limits apply as above, except that a key decision cannot actually be implemented any sooner than it would have been had the overview and scrutiny committee not called it in.

Where the overview and scrutiny committee has called-in a key decision from the forward plan before its due date, the decision cannot be called-in again after the final decision has been taken.

4.1.114. Party whip

Government guidance views party or group “whipping” as incompatible with overview and scrutiny functions. Whipping arrangements should not be applied to overview and scrutiny committees and members should be free to comment and vote on matters under consideration.

Call in Procedure:

Date: Meeting to be 'called 'within 5 working days of the receipt of Call-in Notice. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer to consult with Chair and Cabinet Member (and Leader).

Agenda:

Will include:

- Original decision report and all paperwork considered by the Cabinet / Call in Notice / Cabinet Minute.
- PQT item will refer only to "questions in relation to the called in item."
- No minutes of the last meeting to be included.
- Wording to be set out under the main agenda item as follows:

"Following the receipt of a Notice of Call-in within the required deadline, from Councillors XXXXXXXXX calling in the decision of the Cabinet set out in Minute CA.XXX of the meeting held on XXX, a meeting of the Committee has been convened in order to consider the matter in accordance with the reasons set out on the Notice of Call-In.

In considering the matter, the options available to the Scrutiny Committee are as follows:

1. The Scrutiny Committee decides not to offer any comments on the Notice. In this situation the decision of the Cabinet will stand.
2. The Scrutiny Committee decides to offer comments or objections, which will be referred back to the Cabinet at the meeting arranged for XXX.
3. The Scrutiny Committee may refer the Notice, without comment, to the Council. The matter will then be considered by the Council on XXX (a standard item appears on all Council summons to consider referrals from Scrutiny Committees). Any comments or objections from Council will be referred back to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with the Council Constitution.

The Cabinet will be required to consider any objections and comments but will not be bound by them unless..."it is contrary to the Policy Framework or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the Budget"

Procedure at meeting:

- Public Questions (limited to 30 minutes)
- Call-in Members to present their reasons for the Call-in of the decision.
- Cabinet Member to respond to the issues raised
- Further questions/comments from Committee Members
- Summary by the Chair and move to consideration of the options available to the Committee (as listed on the agenda).
- Vote if necessary

