

Overview & Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny is an important part of how the County Council makes its decisions. It is the process by which the County Council's Executive (Cabinet and Chief Officers) is held to public account. It acts as a check and balance on the Executive's plans and activities.

It does this by:

Initiating public inquiries into matters of local concern. These lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

Monitoring the decisions of Cabinet. It can 'call-in' a decision that has been made by Cabinet but not yet implemented. This enables it to consider whether the decision is appropriate. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees may recommend that Cabinet reconsider the decision.

Being consulted by the Cabinet or the Council on forthcoming decisions and the development of policy.

The full detail of its responsibilities is set out in the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure rules in the Council's Constitution.

Overview & Scrutiny has limited resources at its disposal and therefore has to focus its efforts in specific areas. Its current priorities include monitoring the performance of its major contractors who provide various services on the Council's behalf, monitoring the Council's own performance against the targets set by central government and those in its corporate plan, monitoring the effective use of the Council's budget and contributing to the development and review of policy and service delivery.

In order to make maximum impact, overview and scrutiny has organised itself as follows including specific committees for childrens services and health: