

Overview and Scrutiny

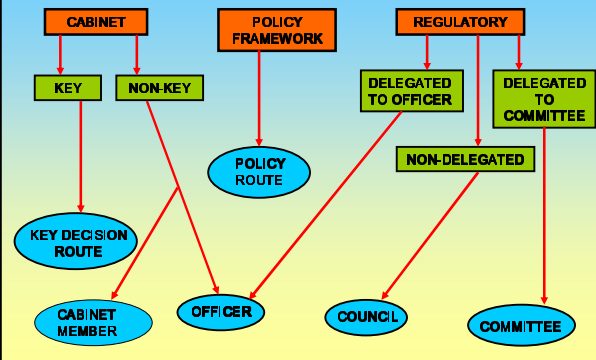
The Basics

The five segments

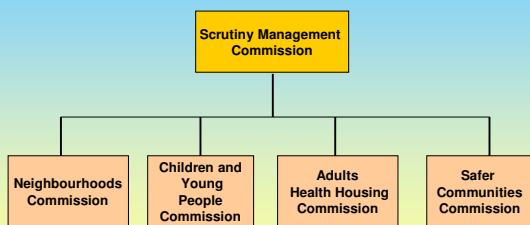
1. The processes of decision making and role of scrutiny
2. Scrutiny process
3. Conducting reviews
4. Agreeing recommendations and the final report
5. Monitoring outcomes of the recommendations

The processes of decision making and role of scrutiny

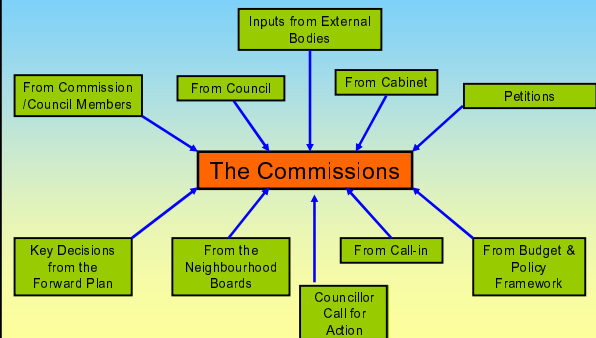
How Decisions Get Made



The Overview and Scrutiny Commissions



Inputs to Overview and Scrutiny



The Forward Plan

It's your **early warning system**.

It gives you the **opportunity to anticipate** and plan the work of your Commissions.

It's a **key planning tool**, it tells you what is going to happen. Without it Overview and Scrutiny could not work effectively.

Key Decisions

- 'Any decision that is likely to have a significant impact on two or more wards within the Council'
- A decision involving 'significant' spending/saving [in Derby = £250,000 or over]
- Grants or loans to a voluntary body of £25,000 or more

Call-in

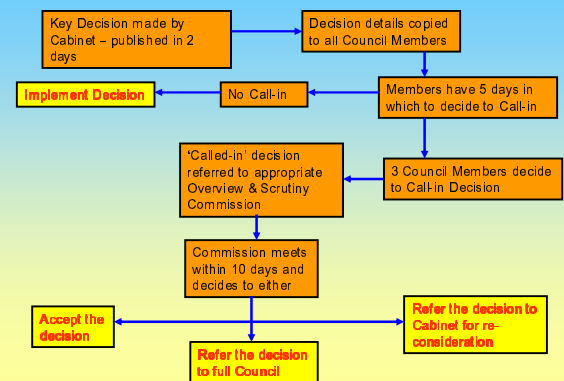
Call-in should only be used in **exceptional circumstances** where members are of the opinion that Cabinet did not make a Key Decision in accordance with the principles of decision making set out in **Article 13** of the Constitution.

These Principles are:

- Proportionality
- Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers.
- Respect for human rights.
- A presumption in favour of openness.
- Clarity of aims and desired outcomes.
- A record of the options considered and reason for the decision.

Or where relevant issues do not appear to have been taken into consideration

The Call-in Process



Councillor Call for Action

- Process to assist ward members to lead and represent their communities
- Formalises longstanding practices...
- ...with 'longstop' recourse to O&S
- Two kinds -
 - a) local government: to relevant commission
 - b) community safety: to Safer Communities Commission

Role of Overview & Scrutiny

- **Hold decision makers to account** – this promotes transparency and accountability
- **Contribute to policy review and development** – allowing a wider range of ideas and opinions to feed into new policy and testing the effectiveness of existing policies
- **Monitor performance and effective service delivery** – ensuring robust performance management is taking place top drive up standards of service delivery
- **Undertake External Scrutiny** – review and consider issues that are not Council functions but do have a major impact on residents of Derby

Choosing what to scrutinise or review

Significant subjects are topics and issues that are:

- of **importance** and/or **interest** to the Council or to Derby people, and
- the Commission will **add value** or **benefit** by doing the review

Sources for Ideas

- Matters referred by Cabinet, Council etc
- Constituents: surgeries, feedback forms
- Pointer Panel
- Party meetings
- Derby Evening Telegraph
- Journals like the MJ and LGC
- Forward Plan, Performance Eye, "retro-scrutiny"
- Neighbourhood Boards
- Cabinet papers
- Complaints: poor services
- Users dissatisfied
- New ways to improve
- V-F-M checks
- Public concern issues
- Community leadership
- Cross-cutting
- Links to DCC priorities
- Community groups
- **Your ideas**

Work Programme

- From the various ideas the need is to assess which to include (and which not) in a Commission work programme
- The goal is to get a balanced and achievable work programme for the year
- ...while still leaving space for the 'unexpected'

Conducting Reviews

Range of activity

Business meetings

Focussed scrutiny

Topic reviews

<20 mins 2hrs One day 6 months>

How and Where

What is the best **Timing / Location / Publicity / Method** for the witnesses, the members, the public and media who may wish to be involved?

Location: being central, the Council House often makes sense. Options include:

'**Piggy backing**' it can ensure an audience of residents or service users: lunch clubs, youth clubs, residents' groups, pressure groups, Neighbourhood Forum(s).

Stand alone events: Public/invitee meeting(s), focus groups, site/fact finding visits – in Derby or elsewhere

Paper exercises: Surveys (post/street) & cut out questionnaires can be good measures of public opinion

Asking 'challenging' questions

- **Be open** so both you and the witness are clear about why it is necessary to ask the question.
- **Lead into the topic** with open questions and encourage the witness to give his or her views on it. Any key points that they make can be explored later.
- **Follow up** by homing in on key words and phrases the witness has used. Ask the witness to expand upon them and explain why they consider them to be important
- **Further clarify** the witness' response by pressing them to provide definitions and examples.
- Be **Polite but Persistent**

Prepare for Best Results

- Remember to set clear objectives and terms of reference.
- Be selective in your choice of witnesses
- Decide the form of the investigation – but leave some flexibility for the unexpected.
- Have a timetable – but consider member and witness availability.
- Choose the methodology that will maximise the output of your review

Agreeing recommendations and the final report

Making Recommendations

To achieve the goal of being value-adding, good recommendations will:

- Specify exactly what is being proposed
- Be realistic and, if implemented, have a significant, positive impact on the issue
- Be supported by well argued reasons justified by the evidence
- Be SMART

Assessing the Evidence

The Commission needs to assess the evidence collected to then develop recommendations to address any issues identified.

For larger reviews the evidence may include:

- Records of interviews with witnesses
- The outcome of fact finding and site visits
- Views expressed at public meetings
- The results of any research
- The results of questionnaire surveys

The Report

A finalised, detailed report may comprise:

- A Summary
- Recommendations – with clear reasons
- Introduction
- Methodology
- The results of any research
- Key Points
- Conclusions
- Appropriate supporting information
- The evidence

....Alternatively

- The report itself may be a slim document.....
- but with the evidence and other supporting material available in an appendix

Monitoring outcomes of the Recommendations

- Report goes to Cabinet and/or other bodies...
- ...duty to respond but no duty to accept
- Often a response will be agreed by Cabinet then reported to O&S
- Require update report every 6/12 months
- ...ask Cabinet Member/Director to attend