

## **PROTOCOL FOR THE INCLUSION OF NON-EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS IN THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCESS**

1.1 The new political structures adopted in September 2005 provided for one Overview Scrutiny Committee comprising 14 councillors whose job it is to:

- Receive Call-ins of Cabinet decisions
- Establish a yearly Scrutiny Work Programme
- Set up Task and Finish Groups to scrutinise policy development and service delivery
- Monitor the outcomes of scrutiny reviews

1.2 Task and Finish Groups play a critical role in informing future policy development in the council as well as scrutinising current policies and services both inside and outside the council.

1.3 It is important therefore that all non-executive councillors have the opportunity to be involved in the work of the Task and Finish Groups as it will:

- Give a wider democratic representation to inform the groups work
- Widen the knowledge and skills resource base of councillors involved in scrutiny.
- Give them a 'hands-on' opportunity to make a difference in areas of work that they have a specific interest in

1.4 It is hoped that non-executive councillors will elect to work on at least one Task and Finish Group a year. The following will be put into place to help councillors to be involved:

- The draft Scrutiny Work Programme will be circulated to all non-executive councillors in May at the Annual Council meeting, asking if they have a specific interest in any of the investigations scheduled in the forthcoming year.
- Task and Finish Groups will comprise a minimum of one Overview and Scrutiny Councillor and one non-executive Councillor. It is envisaged that an Overview and Scrutiny Councillor would chair the Task and Finish Group.

- 1.5 In this Protocol the term "non-executive Councillor" refers to all Councillors other than the Leader and members of the Cabinet. However those members of the Improvement Board who are not on the Cabinet, although not prohibited from taking part in the Overview and Scutiny process, will not be expected to serve on Task and Finish Groups.