

EXTRACT OF ITEMS FROM THE CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN THAT RELATE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Key
Open Actions
Complete Actions

	Recommendation	Action	Led By	Timescale	Update
1	Define what you want your scrutiny panels to achieve.	To be discussed with the scrutiny committee but approach based on the 4 principles of good scrutiny would make sense: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Provides critical friend challenge to policymakers and decision makers · Enables the voice and concerns to the public · Is carried out by independent-minded people who lead and own the scrutiny role · Drives improvement in public services 	Scrutiny Committee	Sep-24	A Scrutiny Charter has been produced and will be presented to the O&S committee for consideration on 3 rd September 2024.
2	Put into place scrutiny training for the whole council (members and officers) and experiment with how training could be more effective for the 2024 new intake. Ensure all members understand the benefits and role of scrutiny.	Will be incorporated within the Member training programme being developed. Group Leaders need to <u>reinforce the importance</u> of attending training with their groups.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development	On going	Training was provided in May 2024 and is available on GrowZone. Further training development is ongoing and will next be rolled out in the 25/26 Civic year.
3	Consider how the provision of training can be improved to increase knowledge transfer and support members with ongoing training needs e.g., use of one-to-one coaching the provisional feedback from live meetings, further training to fill any gaps in knowledge and skills.	Will be incorporated within the Member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development	On going	Officers from Hertfordshire County Council have confirmed that there is an opportunity to conduct peer-to-peer chair/ vice chair training and will respond with possible dates.
5	Members to actively review the Forward Plan and invitation of cabinet members to attend O&S. This could	This is already on every agenda and is done every meeting it will be for members to take forward with the Scrutiny Officer.	Scrutiny Committee/ Scrutiny Officer	Sep-24	The forward plan will be on the O&S agenda on 3 rd September 2024 and all future meetings.

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	be overcome with a dedicated scrutiny officer in place.				
8	Officers to always facilitate the bringing forward of future agenda items requested by O&S in a timely manner	This is accepted but felt to have been a one-off example. It would be for the Scrutiny Officer to ensure this happens.	Scrutiny Officer	On going	The Officer engagement proposal was agreed and will now be taken forward with Officers and Executives.
11	Scrutiny needs to actively seek to implement the use of Task and Finish Groups.	This is for the Chair and Committee to consider with the support of the Scrutiny Officer.	Chair of Scrutiny / Scrutiny Committee / Scrutiny Officer	Sep-24	The Chair has produced a list of possible Task and Finish Groups - these will be discussed at the next O&S on 3rd September 2024
13	Establish proactive annual programme of work and agenda setting.	This is for the Chair and Committee to consider, with the support of Scrutiny Officer.	Chair of Scrutiny / Scrutiny Committee / Scrutiny Officer	Sep-24	The Chair will encourage Councillors to identify items for the work programme at the next meeting on 3rd September 2024 and all future meetings.
16	Ensure the scrutiny committee actively follow up on all recommendations.	This is already on every agenda. For Scrutiny Officer to work with the Chair and Committee to ensure it is actively looked at.	Chair of Scrutiny / Scrutiny Committee / Scrutiny Officer	Sep-24	Recommendations and referrals will be monitored going forward. These will be reviewed, and target dates set at the monthly meeting between the Chair, Vice-chair and Scrutiny Officer.
7	Establish clear meeting protocols and associated processes for questioning cabinet members.	For Scrutiny Officer to work through with the Chair	Chair of Scrutiny / Scrutiny Officer	Completed	It was agreed that the O&S work programme will be shared as part of the resolutions to Cabinet so that members have a view and can note the planned work for O&S.
4	Urgently fund and recruit a dedicated scrutiny officer.	Budget has been identified for a part-time Scrutiny Officer subject to successful recruitment.	Democratic Services Manager/Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager	Completed	The Scrutiny Officer was appointed and start on 26 March 2024.
6	Proper and effective reporting onwards to council and cabinet by O&S as required.	Chair and Scrutiny Officer will need to take this forward and consider the best way to report O&S discussion to cabinet and council. This can be done verbally. A report from a Task & Finish Group would be a written report.	Scrutiny Committee/ Scrutiny Officer	Completed	It was agreed that the Chair and Vice chair will attend Cabinet meetings together where possible, to report on O&S discussions. A written referral will also be provided to Cabinet.

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9	Training in scrutiny questioning skills (KLOE).	Has been and will continue to be incorporated within the Member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development	Completed	Covered under action point 2 and therefore this action point is closed.
10	Specific O&S training for the opposition to encourage effective opposition role. There is specific scrutiny training for groups in opposition to assist with scrutiny work and assist them in being more effective throughout the council.	Will be incorporated within the Member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development	Completed	Covered under action point 2 and therefore this action point is closed.
12	It was observed by some members that the preparation for the special scrutiny meeting on the 'call to account' was beneficial and lessons learnt on how this preparation helped scrutiny should be considered in taking forward scrutiny in the future.	For Scrutiny Officer to work through with the Chair.	Chair of Scrutiny / Scrutiny Officer	Completed	Briefings will become standard before 'call to account' to best prepare Members for the item.
14	Provide O&S training in Chairing Skills.	Will be incorporated within the Member training programme being developed.	Democratic Services Member Champions Learning + Development	Completed	Covered under action point 3 and therefore this action point is closed.
17	Consideration should be given by the cabinet and portfolio holders on how they can carry out their role in a way that supports scrutiny being able to act as effectively as possible.	This links to the vision for scrutiny in recommendation one this should be a two-way critical friend relationship to be included as part of training and potentially part of work planning. Cabinet to consider how to better engage with Scrutiny.	Cabinet / Scrutiny Committee / Chair of Scrutiny	Completed	Similar to action points 6&19 and therefore closed.
18	Ensure minutes reflect the decisions of the meeting – e.g., requests for agenda items to be recorded in the minutes and added to the forward plan.	Committee Services and the Scrutiny Officer will make sure everything is accurately captured.	Scrutiny Officer	Completed	Resolutions report captures specific requests, supported by minutes produced and access to the YouTube recording of the meeting.

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19	Cabinet members should consistently and without exception be expected to attend O&S committee meetings where decisions from their area of responsibilities are being scrutinised.	Agreed. This is the current approach unless there is an emergency. Cabinet to consider as part of how to better engage with scrutiny.	Cabinet	Completed	It was agreed that the Chair and Vice chair will build out working relationships with the Cabinet to encourage them to attend O&S meetings as appropriate. Remains 'In Progress' until process embedded.
20	The scrutiny chair or their representative should attend all cabinet meetings to present scrutiny findings particularly to enable the thinking and debate around the recommendations to be clearly communicated with the cabinet to maximise the impact scrutiny can have on decisions.	Agreed.	Chair of Scrutiny	Completed	Similar to action point 6. It was agreed that the Chair and Vice chair will attend Cabinet meetings together where possible, to report on O&S discussions. A written referral will also be provided to Cabinet.
21	Where Cabinet do not accept an O&S recommendation, reasons should be given.	Agreed. Cabinet to consider as part of how to better engage with scrutiny	Cabinet	Completed	Reasons for a recommendation not being accepted by Cabinet will be included in the Committee's Resolutions report.