

ANNEX 11 - GUIDELINES FOR CABINET PANELS AND TOPIC GROUPS

A. CABINET PANELS

- (1) Cabinet Panels may be established by the Executive, or by the Chief Legal Officer after consultation with the relevant Executive Member.
- (2) Their members shall be appointed by the Executive, or by the Chief Legal Officer after consultation with the relevant Executive Member. The rules of political proportionality shall apply to the membership of each Cabinet Panel. Their membership shall be deemed to include any substitute Councillor serving on the Cabinet Panel made under the Substitution Scheme (Annex 28).
- (3) Church and Parent Governor representatives on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are available for co-option to relevant Cabinet Panels (as voting members)
- (4) Chairmen (and Vice-Chairmen if required) of Cabinet Panels shall be appointed either by the Cabinet Panel itself, the Executive, or by the Chief Legal Officer in consultation with the Executive Leader (“the Leader of the Council”).
- (5) The Chairman if present shall preside; if not present the Vice Chairman (if appointed) shall preside. If there is no Chairman or Vice-Chairman present the members present shall elect a person to preside.
- (6) The date and place of meetings shall be set by the Chairman as far ahead as possible and notified to members. Once a date is set it will not be changed without consulting the Political Group Spokesmen on the relevant Cabinet Panel.
- (7) All meetings will be open to the public, press and other councillors, unless the Cabinet Panel excludes the public and press during consideration of confidential or exempt information as defined in Part VA of and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
- (8) The quorum for a meeting is one quarter of the members, with a minimum of 3.
- (9) The Chairman and any Political Group Spokesman may require a briefing by Officers on the business of the meeting of a Cabinet Panel and any such briefing shall remain confidential unless the Councillor(s) briefed decide otherwise.
- (10) Councillors, and members of the press and public, shall ensure that their Mobile Devices are switched off or otherwise silenced during the meeting. A

person whose Mobile Device (to include a mobile phone, tablet, portable computer or other mobile electronic device) sounds during the meeting may be warned by the Chairman; if the person's Mobile Device sounds again during the meeting after such a warning has been given the Chairman may ask that person to leave the meeting.

- (11) An agenda and reports will be sent to Councillors who are members of the relevant Cabinet Panel at least 5 clear working days in advance of each meeting and service officers shall prepare reports on all items.
- (12) Minutes of each meeting will be produced and sent to every Councillor who is a member of the Cabinet Panel as soon as practicable after the meeting and in any event at least 3 clear working days before the next ordinary meeting of the Cabinet Panel.
- (13) If any papers or proceedings of the Cabinet Panel are declared to be confidential, members of the body shall honour that confidentiality unless they agree otherwise or the material becomes public in the ordinary course of business.
- (14) Cabinet Panels shall report to the Executive, and may refer matters to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment.
- (15) The Council's representative on the Police and Crime Panel ("the PCP") shall serve as one of his or her Political Group's members on the Cabinet Panel which has Community Safety within its remit and report to that Cabinet Panel on the business of the PCP and answer questions relating to that business for such maximum period of time as the Cabinet Panel Chairman may reasonably decide.

Petitions: General

- (16) Subject to complying with the provisions of the Council's Petitions Scheme (Annex 24), public petitions can be presented to a Cabinet Panel.
- (17) The terms 'Agenda Petition', 'Petition for Debate', 'Petition for Presentation' and 'Urgent Petition' used in the following paragraphs are defined in the Council's Petitions Scheme.

Agenda Petitions

- (18) If the petition is an Agenda Petition then the petition will be presented immediately prior to consideration of the relevant item.
- (19) The Petition Organiser for an Agenda Petition may address the Cabinet Panel for no more than 3 minutes on the subject of the petition and shall not have the right to speak further.

Petitions for Debate, Urgent Petitions and Petitions for Presentation

(20) Petitions for Debate, Urgent Petitions and Petitions for Presentation will be presented following confirmation of the minutes of the meeting in the following order:

1: each Petition for Presentation

2: any Urgent Petition followed by a discussion on that Urgent Petition subject to a maximum period of 20 minutes in total for presentation of the Urgent Petition by the Petition Organiser and consideration of the Urgent Petition provided that, at the discretion of the Chairman of the Cabinet Panel, this period of time can be varied;

3: each Petition for Debate followed by a discussion on that Petition for Debate subject to a maximum period of 20 minutes in total for presentation and consideration of each Petition for Debate provided that, at the discretion of the Chairman of the Cabinet Panel, this period of time can be varied.

(21) The Petition Organiser for a Petition for Debate or an Urgent Petition may address the Cabinet Panel for no more than 3 minutes on the subject of the petition and shall not have the right to speak further. The Petition Organiser for a Petition for Presentation will inform members of the text of the petition and the number of signatures but will not otherwise speak.

(22) Following consideration of a Petition for Debate or an Urgent Petition the Cabinet Panel can make a recommendation as follows:

- refer the matter to Cabinet
- make a recommendation to officers as to how to respond to the petition
- request officers undertake further work and either liaise with the Local Member and relevant Executive Member before responding to the petition or bring the matter back to the Cabinet Panel
- acknowledge the petition but recommend that no further action is taken

(23) Following presentation of a Petition for Presentation there will be no discussion on the petition and the petition will be referred (at the discretion of the Chairman) to the next appropriate meeting of the Cabinet Panel, or to officers for consideration and report to the local member and Political Group Spokesmen.

B. TOPIC GROUPS

- (1) Topic Groups will be established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (“the OSC”) or the Health Scrutiny Committee (the HSC”) or by the Chief Legal Officer after consultation with the Chairman.
- (2) Their members shall be appointed by the OSC or the HSC, as the case may be, or by the Chief Legal Officer after consultation with the Chairman. They shall not include members of the Executive or Deputy Executive Members.
- (3) Topic Groups established by the OSC will:
 - have a Chairman (appointed either by the Topic Group, the OSC or by the Chief Legal Officer, after consulting the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the OSC) who will work together between meetings and deal with issues by consensus wherever possible.
 - have scoping documents drafted by officers and approved by the Topic Group Chairman or the Chairman/Vice Chairmen of the OSC.
 - have membership drawn from all members of the Council (except for members of the Executive and Deputy Executive Members); and from the church and parent governor representatives where Education items are being dealt with.
 - work on time limited, task and finish basis.
 - report with recommendations direct to the appropriate decision maker (Executive or Chief Officer). Such reports with recommendations shall be the formal record of the Topic Group’s proceedings and shall be published on the Council’s website. On receipt of a report with recommendations the person or body concerned shall respond within 2 months and the response shall be published on the Council’s website.
- (4) The Chairman of the OSC will report to the full Council at each meeting on scrutiny activity, inviting Topic Group Chairmen to contribute where appropriate.
- (5) Church and Parent Governor representatives on the OSC are available for co-option to relevant Topic Groups as voting members.
- (6) Topic Groups established by the HSC will:
 - have a Chairman (appointed either by the HSC, the Topic Group itself, or by the Chief Legal Officer, after consulting the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the HSC).

- have scoping documents drafted by officers and approved by the Topic Group Chairman or the HSC Chairman/Vice Chairman.
 - have membership drawn from all members of the Council (except for members of the Executive and Deputy Executive Members) and from the District Council members of the main committee.
 - work on a time limited, task and finish basis.
 - report with recommendations to the HSC. Such reports with recommendations shall be the formal record of the Topic Group's proceedings and shall be published on the Council's website.
- (7) The Chairman of the HSC will report to the full Council at each meeting on Health Scrutiny activity, inviting Topic Group Chairmen to contribute where appropriate.
- (8) The quorum for a meeting of a Topic Group is one quarter of the members, with a minimum of 3.
- (9) The Chairman and any Political Group Spokesman may require a briefing by Officers on the business of the meeting of a Topic Group and any such briefing shall remain confidential unless the Councillor(s) briefed decide otherwise