

# Overview and Scrutiny

## Task and Finish Group Protocol

### Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Committees can establish member Task and Finish Groups.

These Groups are especially useful in allowing Councillors to look at an issue in which they have a particular interest, in more detail. They can take a variety of forms, from a detailed review to a short, sharp concentrated focus on a high profile issue. They offer the opportunity to use a variety of more diverse working methods (working flexibly to adapt to the needs of different reviews), including making visits, and use of interviews and publicity events to encourage community participation and public engagement in overview and scrutiny.

This protocol provides information relating to the commencement and completion of work by Task and Finish Groups. In doing so, it defines the key role that the Strategic Directors have in helping to manage the process.

### Overview of Procedure

**Diagram 1 – Overview of Process**

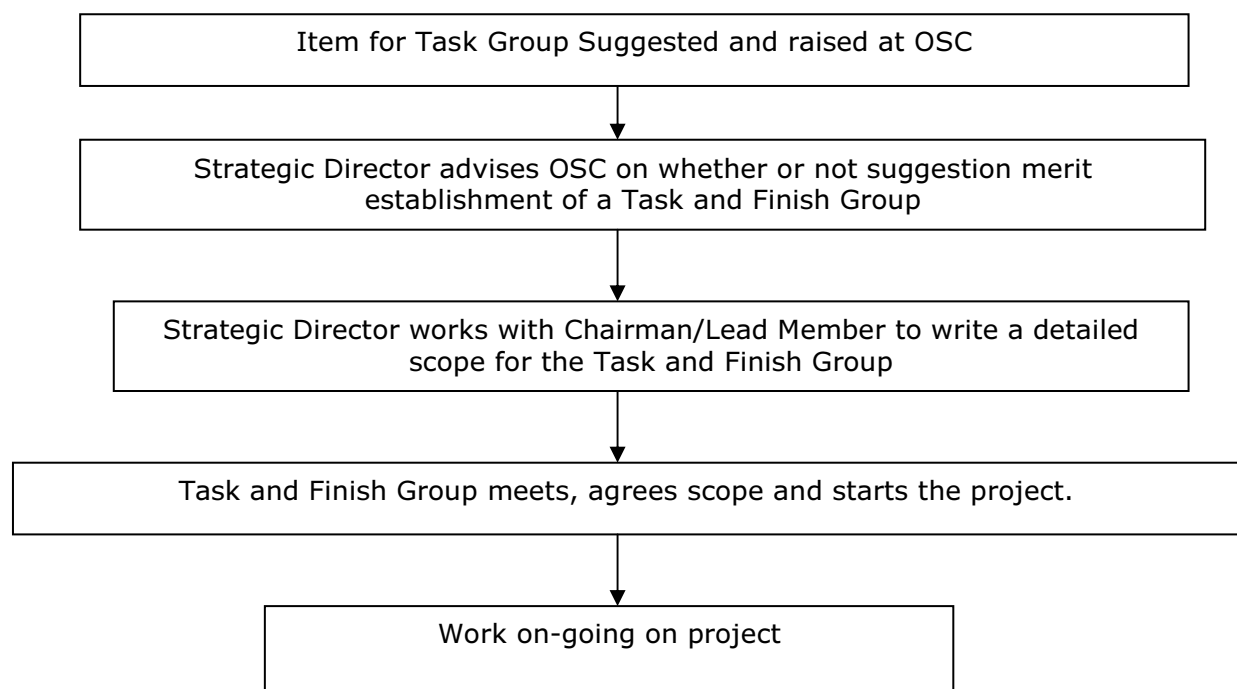


Diagram 1 illustrates the process from inception to completion for OSC Task and Finish Groups.

### Guidelines/Notes:

- Ideas for establishing task and finish groups will be raised at the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Consideration should be given to:
  - **external or national priorities;**

- priorities identified within the **Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Strategy** (consideration should be given to which priorities may benefit from the intervention of scrutiny, for example, **overview of progress against milestones or specific policy development in a priority area**);
  - the Council's **Forward Plan** and the key decisions to be taken;
  - evidence from recent **public consultation** or a trend emerging from Councillors case work which may be the subject of scrutiny.
- The Member or Officer proposing the item for scrutiny should outline the proposed scope of the project and the desired outcomes. This discussion will be led by the Strategic Director who will advise on the suitability/unsuitability of the project. For example, if the proposal is too operational then the Strategic Director may suggest the project should not progress.
- If the Strategic Director and Members of the Committee agree there is merit within the item, a Task and Finish Group can be created.
- A lead member must be proposed (who may or may not chair the group) to work on the initial scoping.
- The Committee will decide if they wish to open up membership of the Task and finish Group to Councillors who are not on the Committee – it is good practice to make use of Councillor interest, experience or specialist knowledge.
- The Committee may also wish to make the Task and Finish Group joint with the Council's other Overview and Scrutiny Committee or with a partner organisation.
  - It is recommended that Councillors sit on no more than two Task and Finish Groups at any point in time.
  - Non-Councillors may be co-opted to be members of Task and Finish Group.
  - Cabinet members may be invited to the Group to give evidence.
- The lead member will meet with the Strategic Director and a member of Democratic Services to discuss the detailed scoping of Task and Finish Group (see scoping document Appendix 1). This will then be agreed at the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group. The Strategic Director should attend this meeting to answer any other questions members of the Group may have.
- Meetings will take place as often as needed until the task is complete. Following the planning meeting, the Group should aim to hold the necessary meetings within as short a timeframe as possible so that findings are timely.
- Strategic Directors need not attend all meetings but they will be kept informed of progress from Democratic Services Officers. Notes of each meeting will be produced and comprise a record of the main facts gathered and points of discussion.
- As the Task and Finish Group is completing its work, the Strategic Director will review the Group's draft report and attends their final meeting to provide feedback. The Strategic Director will advise if the report needs to be sent to Management Team for further consideration.
- When the Task and Finish Group has finished and agreed their report, the members of that Group will present their work to their relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As part of this process, the group will explain the work they have done and ask the Committee to note and/or support their recommendations. The Committee could also comment on the report or ask for further work to be done.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will then refer the report to the Cabinet for consideration if necessary.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - TASK AND FINISH GROUP**  
**SCOPING DOCUMENT**

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>Task and Finish Group Title:</b>                                     |                                 |
| <b>Membership of Working Group:</b>                                     |                                 |
| <b>Area for Investigation:</b><br><b>(Directorate and Service Area)</b> |                                 |
| <b>Key Officer Contacts:</b><br><i>[Lead and support]</i>               |                                 |
| <b>Scoping form completed by:</b>                                       |                                 |
| <b>Scrutiny requested by:</b>   |                                 |
| <b>Criteria for inclusion in work programme:</b>                        | (If yes please provide details) |
| <b>Customer Feedback:</b>   |                                 |
| <b>Council priority:</b>  |                                 |
| <b>Importance to local people:</b>                                      |                                 |
| <b>Value for Money Concerns:</b>  |                                 |
| <b>Contributes to tackling inequalities:</b>                            |                                 |
| <b>Improving partnership working:</b>                                   |                                 |

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| <b>Tackling underperformance in services:</b>  |  |
| <b>Cross-cutting issue:</b>  |  |
| <b>Contributing to meeting Government targets:</b>   |  |
| <b>Importance/interest to Members:</b>   |  |
| <b>Summary of overall anticipated benefits and intended outcomes:</b><br><br><i>[Give a brief description of what we hope undertaking the review will achieve e.g. Improved performance, amended policy, efficiencies or increased footfall]</i> |  |
| <b>Indicators of success</b><br><br><i>[Include details of desired indicators of success and how these can be measured]</i>  |  |
| <b>Scope</b>   |  |
| <b>In Scope:</b><br><br><i>[Define what the scope of review is]</i>  |  |
| <b>Excluded from Scope:</b><br><br><i>[Define the exclusions from the scope of the review]</i>   |  |

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| <b>Council and Partner Involvement</b>   |  |
| <b>Who would need to be involved from the Council?</b>   |  |
| <b>Which of our partners, stakeholders and Members of the community should we discuss this with?</b> |  |
| <b>Review Resources</b>  |  |
| <b>Evidence:</b><br><br><i>[Background Information and documents to look at]</i>                     |  |
| <b>Witnesses:</b><br><br><i>[Who to see and when]</i>  |  |
| <b>Site visits:</b><br><br><i>[Details of site visits and when they will be held if appropriate]</i> |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Consultation:</b></p> <p><i>[Is there any consultation which needs to be undertaken to feed into the review?]</i></p> <p><i>[Consult with MT on draft outcomes for any issues they may have]</i></p> <p><i>[Do findings need to be published for consultation before making final recommendations?]</i></p> |  |
| <p><b>Expert Advice:</b></p> <p><i>[Do the Task &amp; Finish Group require expert advice support due to the nature of the review. Note: if a cost is involved the senior officer will need to agree payment]</i></p>  |  |
| <b>Dangers/ Barriers/Risks</b>  |  |
| <b>What are the risks to the review?</b>  |  |
| <b>Timescales</b>   |  |
| <b>Anticipated Review Start Date:</b>   |  |
| <b>Anticipated Reporting Date:</b>  |  |
| <b>Frequency of Meetings:</b>   |  |
| <p><b>Date to evaluate impact:</b></p> <p><i>[A review in six to twelve months (dependent on outcomes) at this point deciding to either re scrutinise this matter, with a different task and finish group, or sign it off as the indicators of success have been achieved]</i></p>                                |  |