

## DRAFT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP SCOPING DOCUMENT

Review Topic	
Transport Innovation	
Origins of Review Group	Review Group Membership
Established by Scrutiny Management Committee on 24 June to recognise the overall 2015-16 Scrutiny theme of Growth, with Transport as a sub-set.	2:2:2 as follows: Conservative: Councillors Buckley and Green Labour: Cllrs Coventry and R Gifford Liberal Democrat: Cllrs Eastman (Chair) and McPake
Overview & Scrutiny Officer	Initial Scoping of Review
Fran Bower	3 August 2015
1. Purpose	
<p><i>What is the purpose of the Review?</i> Understanding the applicability of transport innovation to support delivery of the Council's priorities in relation to growth and transport.</p>	
2. Rationale	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What does the Review hope to achieve</i> Focusing of policy and an acceleration of improvements to provision by looking at transport in a fresh way.</li> <li>- <i>Why is the Review taking place?</i> National Government is showing a clear focus on intelligent mobility, and its announcement of programmes such as Go Ultra Low make this research very timely.</li> <li>- <i>What is the community importance and benefit?</i> Greater mobility choice, potentially delivered in a more sustainable way.</li> <li>- <i>How does it fit in with the Council's corporate priorities / scrutiny priorities?</i> It will contribute to all the Council's five Themes, especially Visiting MK.</li> <li>- <i>What opportunities to make a distinctive impact?</i> Recognition of the importance of the programme of activity, prioritising actions and bringing the views of the community to the table.</li> <li>- <i>How will the review influence what the Council does?</i> It will present choices, benefits and opportunities clearly and enable linkages to be identified.</li> </ul>	
3. Proposed Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>What are the proposed outcomes of the review?</i> The clear exposition of issues will help to produce policy which is</li> </ul>	

value for money. If necessary, recommendations may be made to shape new policies.

#### 4. Background

- *Is the review looking at existing policy or a new policy?*  
Innovation is not explicit in current policies but can be related to them; developments subjected to the research may not be quite as envisaged in current policies but will not be contraindicated by them.
- *How does it relate to existing policy?*  
See above.
- *Has the need for the review come about from an issue arising from national or local events?*  
See under 2 above; there is a current Government emphasis on transport and business.
- *How does the issue relate to the Scrutiny Work Programme?*  
Transport is a sub-set of Growth, which is the main Scrutiny theme for 2015-16.
- *Are there any relevant community views to refer to? e.g. any previous consultation?*  
As well as previous transport consultations, the Central Milton Keynes Transport Strategy is to be launched at the end of August 2015, and early responses could inform this research.
- *What is the gap between provision and need?*  
There is a considerable gap; the demands and expectations of the travelling public are high.

## 5. Timetable

Establish a clear timetable:

- *How frequently will the Task and Finish Group need to meet?*  
Perhaps as frequently as once a fortnight.
- *What are the key deadlines?*  
It should finish by the end of the Council year.
- *Who needs to see the analysis and who needs to contribute to the report?*  
The Task and Finish Group Members, advised by Overview and Scrutiny and Transport officers.
- *When will the Task and Finish Group report back to the Committee / Cabinet / Council?*  
See below.
- *Proposed End date?*  
Depending on the type of recommendations, the Group should report to the last available Cabinet or Council meeting of the year, having been presented to the preceding Scrutiny Management Committee.

## 6. Methodology / Approach

*What method of enquiry will be most suitable for the review?*

Consider some of the following:

- *Desk-based review of papers.*
- *Site visits / observations.*
- *Comparisons with other authorities.*
- *Workshops / Focus Groups.*
- *Interview officers.*
- *Calling witnesses to give evidence.*

All of these would be appropriate, and site visits and observations would be of particular value for the insight and vision they can provide.

Workshops and focus groups with outside experts and with service users might be valuable.

## 7. Evidence Sources

*What types of evidence will be needed. Consider some of the following:*

- *Government guidance / legislation?*
- *Service plans?*
- *Performance Indicators?*
- *Evidence from other reviews?*
- *Independent research articles and papers?*

All could be useful; service plans and performance indicators should be provided just as background information. A meta-analysis of transport consultations in Milton Keynes could be compared with national transport surveys.

*Are there any stakeholders or interest groups the Task and Finish Group wants to hear from in addition to inviting them to the meeting?*

- *Consultation*
- *Focus group*
- *Questionnaire*

A web-based survey could ask for demographic details, what type of transport was used and what would be their 'top three asks' of transport.

*Ensure there is a balance in the evidence collected e.g. views of activist groups weighed in consideration of an independent audit report.*

## **8. Witnesses**

*Who would the Group wish to invite to its meetings?*

*A potential witness list might include:*

- *Service users.*
- *Stakeholders / Interest Groups.*
- *Cabinet Members.*
- *Frontline staff.*
- *External partners.*
- *Professional experts.*

All of the above plus industry experts.

## **9. Site Visits / Observations**

*Is there scope for potential site visits / observations?*

See above. These are recommended.

## **10. Public Meetings**

*Should the meetings be held in public / private / mixture of both?*

Evidence taking should be in public if possible, although it may be preferable to hold report writing meetings in private.

## **11. Officer Support**

*Identify Scrutiny Officer and any other officers that will be influential in the review process.*

One Scrutiny Officer and the Head of Transport Innovation, with support from Planning and Transport Departments (particularly for collating information).

## **12. Resource Requirements**

Estimate the amount of 'person' time required and the potential costs involved.

## **13. Risk Assessment**

*Identify potential obstacles to an effective review, including:*

- *Is it over-ambitious in scope?*
- *Can it keep to the projected timetable?*
- *Resources?*

It will be important to focus research on items that can be influenced by the Council and those that are likely to be of relevance in the near future.

#### **14. Proposed Terms of Reference**

1. To research the applicability of transport innovations to the delivery of the Council's Priorities.
2. To present choices, benefits and opportunities clearly and enable linkages to be identified.
3. To scrutinise the Council's current approach to landscaping and landscape maintenance.
4. To consult with stakeholders on their experience of and aspirations for transport innovation in Milton Keynes.
5. To gather the views of experts on the applicability of transport innovations to the needs of Milton Keynes.
6. To make recommendations that will help to focus policy and accelerate improvements to transport in Milton Keynes.

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# TASK AND FINISH PROTOCOL / OPERATING GUIDELINES

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Task and Finish Groups are set up to undertake an in-depth investigation or review of an issue and operate on a relatively informal basis. Most detailed investigative scrutiny work takes place in this type of working environment. Review Groups are a forum for information gathering and discussion between the Group and officers rather than a formal, decision making body and have no delegated powers.
- 1.2 This document sets out Milton Keynes Council's Operating Protocol for Task and Finish Groups.

## 2. Membership

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Management Committee will appoint a Chair to each Task and Finish Group, normally on a politically proportional basis, in consultation with Group Leaders taking account of the skills and experience required.
- 2.2 The Membership of each Task and Finish Group is politically balanced and numbers usually vary between a minimum of 3 to 6 elected Members.
- 2.3 All non-Executive Members of the Council are eligible to participate in Task and Finish Groups.
- 2.4 Nominations to the task and finish review groups for confirmation by the Management Committee, will be made by the Chair of the Task and Finish Review Group. The Chair will consult individual Political Group Leaders before nominating any councillors from the Group Leader's Group. Where appropriate, the membership of Task and Finish Groups can co-opt non-Members with a particular expertise / experience / interest to participate in the review being undertaken, eg, the Older Persons' Champion.
- 2.5 The Management Committee will appoint one of its members to act as a sponsor / mentor to each of the task and finish groups.

## 3. The Review Process

- 3.1 An initial planning meeting will be held involving the Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the review, the elected councillors nominated to sit on the Task and Finish Group, and where appropriate, other Council officers and representatives of Partners or other outside organisations who may be expected to make a significant contribution to the work of the Task and Finish Group, in order to scope the review and agree a plan for the task.
- 3.2 The scoping document / plan should set out:
  - (a) A clear statement of the scrutiny topic;
  - (b) Proposed outcomes of the review;

- (c) The aim (or purpose) of the review;
- (d) The scope of the review – what will be included and excluded;
- (e) Agreed Terms of Reference;
- (f) Any specific outcomes to be achieved;
- (g) Specific concerns or issues, which should be addressed;
- (h) How the review will contribute to achieving Corporate Priorities;
- (i) An initial list of key stakeholders, partners or other agencies to be involved;
- (j) An initial list of witnesses;
- (k) How evidence will be gathered;
- (l) Any risks which may delay progress;
- (m) A timescale for completion of the task;
- (n) A suggested mechanism for following up / monitoring progress of recommendations which may be made in the final report.

3.3 As well as receiving evidence from witnesses and scrutinising printed matter, consideration should be given to use of site visits, workshops and other activities in order to gain first hand knowledge of the topic under review.

#### 4. Witnesses

- 4.1 A Council's Overview and Scrutiny function has the power under Section 21(13) of the Local Government Act 2000 to require the attendance of members of the Executive and Council officers at Scrutiny meetings.
- 4.2 There is a statutory duty (Section 21(14) of the same Act for any member of the Executive or Council officer invited to attend a Scrutiny meeting to comply with the request.
- 4.3 Other witnesses from external organisations may also be invited to give evidence to Review Groups.
- 4.4 The Task and Finish Group should identify:
  - (a) the persons to be invited;
  - (b) the issue in respect of which the person's attendance is requested;
  - (c) the reason why the attendance of the person would assist the Task and Finish Group in its task.
- 4.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the review will endeavour to give both internal and external witnesses as much notice as is practicable of the Task and Finish Group's request to attend a meeting.

4.6 The invitation will give details of the review being undertaken, including any supporting documents which may be relevant, state why the witness has been invited to attend and whether or not the Review Group requires written reports in support of the witness's evidence.

5. Conduct of Meetings

5.1 Meetings of the Task and Finish Group shall be scheduled to enable the Group to complete its task within the timeframe identified in the scoping exercise. However, it is recognised that on occasion additional time may be needed to complete a task, but the agreement of the Scrutiny Management Committee should be sought for this.

5.2 Task and Finish Groups should aim, where possible, to hold the necessary meetings within as short a timeframe as possible so that findings do not become out of date before completion of the task.

5.3 Unless the evidence given to a Task and Finish Group is likely to be confidential or exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, all Task and Finish Group meetings will be treated as public meetings and arrangements made to accommodate any members of the public who might attend.

5.4 No witness giving evidence to a Task and Finish Group will be under any obligation to disclose publicly personal information about an employee, a looked after child, or any supplier or recipient of council services.

5.5 All Review Group meetings will be Chaired in a manner which ensures mutual respect between all those participating.

5.6 The Chair will ensure that questions put by members of the Task and Finish Group relate solely to the issue in respect of which the person's attendance has been requested.

5.7 Questioning should be aimed at trying to understand and explore issues rather than at catching witnesses out.

5.8 Members of the Task and Finish Group should avoid making statements rather than asking questions.

5.9 Witnesses, including Executive Members, are not members of the Review Group and should confine themselves to answering questions put to them by the Task and Finish Group or supplying evidence requested by the Task and Finish Group.

5.10 Members of the Task and Finish Group should operate within the agreed plan for the task and should not disclose or use any information/knowledge obtained through involvement in the group for any other purpose.

5.11 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the Task and Finish Group will take notes to record the evidence given at meetings and at site visits which will be used to form the basis of the final report.

6. Reports, Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Final reports need to be written in clear English which can be easily understood by the lay reader. Over use of jargon and acronyms should be avoided and, if necessary, a glossary should be included as part of the report.

6.2 Final reports should be based on facts collected, give a full picture of the issues scrutinised and contain both conclusions and clear recommendations.

6.3 Reports should be an expression of the views of the Task and Finish Group on the basis of the evidence received and it is therefore important that members of the Task and Finish Group express their views at the drafting stage.

6.4 When reaching conclusions and making recommendations, the members of the Task and Finish Group should endeavour to reach agreement by consensus. However, if agreement cannot be reached, a minority view on a particular issue may be included in the final report, or as part of minority report.

6.5 Depending on the topic scrutinised by the Task and Finish Group and the recommendations made, the final report will be presented to the Management Committee, Cabinet, Council, an Scrutiny Committee or even an outside organisation for consideration and action.