Overview and Scrutiny Witness Guidance
London Borough of Merton
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Witness Guidance
London Borough Merton

Scrutiny Team
Chief Executive’s Office
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX

Tel: 020 8545 3390
Email: scrutiny@merton.gov.uk
Overview and Scrutiny supports the work of the Cabinet and the Council, and its partners, and enables local people to have a greater say by investigating matters of local concern and interest.

Overview and Scrutiny has the following key purposes:

- Hold the Cabinet to account, in public, for the decisions it makes;
- Investigating issues of local concern and importance; and
- Improving policies and performance

Overview and Scrutiny Panels undertake reviews of particular services and into locally important issues on a short or long term basis.

Overview and Scrutiny also has a role to play in ensuring that partner organisations, such as the Police and the Primary Care Trust, are addressing the needs of local people. Overview and Scrutiny has the power to scrutinise partners engaged in Merton’s Local Area Agreement and Health partners.

Overview and Scrutiny Panels can call council officers, Cabinet Members and other witnesses to answer questions and provide evidence about the issue being scrutinised. All witnesses are given formal advance notice if they are asked to give evidence to an Overview and Scrutiny Panel/Commission. It is otherwise at the discretion of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel/Commission to determine if he/she feels it appropriate for an external organisation, residents or stakeholders to speak/contribute.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel will gather as much evidence as possible surrounding the issue/service under review within the time available.

**What does Overview and Scrutiny not do?**

Overview and Scrutiny Panels are unable to consider individual service complaints or matters that are dealt with by the Council’s quasi-judicial committee (for example, planning or licensing), unless the issue deals with procedure.

With this in mind, issues considered by Overview and Scrutiny should:

- Affect people living within the Merton area
- Relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake or over which the Council has an influence.
What happens at an Overview and Scrutiny meeting?

When you arrive at the Civic Centre please report to Reception and inform them of the meeting you are attending. You will be met by a member of the Scrutiny Team who will advise you on the format of the meeting, when you will be invited to speak and provide your evidence and answer any queries you may have.

Please make the Scrutiny Team aware of any access requirements, for example, lifts, hearing loops etc.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will introduce themselves to you ahead of the meeting.

The meeting will be Chaired by an Elected Member according to an Agenda which you will receive a copy of ahead of the meeting. The Chair will invite you to contribute your views to the issue being discussed and provide you with an opportunity to ask any questions of other Members or the officers in attendance, providing that they relate to the issue being reviewed.

There will also be a Scrutiny Officer at the meeting to support the Panel or the Task Group and they can advise you on appropriate questions ahead of the meeting.

Who will be at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting?

Overview and Scrutiny Panels consist of Non Executive Elected Members. There are no more than 10 Members on each Overview and Scrutiny Panel. A number of co-opted members may also be in attendance at the meeting.

Overview and Scrutiny meetings are open to the public to encourage community engagement. Members of the public are welcome to attend Overview and Scrutiny meetings and sit in the public gallery to hear the discussion during the meeting.

In addition there will be a Scrutiny Officer to support the meeting and a Democratic Services Officer who will minute the meeting. Council officers and the Cabinet Member who has responsibility for the issue being reviewed will attend the meeting to answer Member questions.

Providing Evidence

You may be asked to provide oral or written evidence to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, however, the Scrutiny Team will advise you and support you in the production of any reports or presentations.
**Witness Expenses**

If you incur a cost in attending an Overview and Scrutiny meeting you may be entitled to claim ‘out of pocket’ expenses.

Please ask the Scrutiny Team for the relevant forms to claim your expenses and ensure, where possible, that you have receipts.

**What will happen after the meeting?**

Once the Overview and Scrutiny Panel has heard all of the evidence for their review Members will produce a Final Report that will outline their recommendations that will be forwarded to the Authority’s Cabinet, and in some instances its partners, for consideration.

Overview and Scrutiny is only able to make recommendations to Cabinet, it is not a decision making body. Overview and Scrutiny will therefore receive a response to their recommendations from Cabinet, and where appropriate partners, outlining the decision taken and if the recommendations made will be implemented.

If Cabinet agrees to the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny then an Action Plan is drawn up which the Panel will monitor to ensure that their recommendations are delivered as agreed.

We will ensure that you receive a copy of the Final Report for your information. You can also access Overview and Scrutiny Final Reports on our website at the following address: [http://www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny/scrutinypublications](http://www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny/scrutinypublications)

The meetings of Cabinet are held in public, unless otherwise stated, and you can attend to hear the discussion on the Final Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. You can access an Agenda for the Cabinet meeting on our website at the following link: [http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/committee.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/committee.htm)

In order to ensure that all witnesses attending Overview and Scrutiny meetings are given the right support, a feedback questionnaire and letter of thanks is sent to each witness shortly after their attendance at a meeting. We would be most grateful if you would complete the questionnaire and return as soon as is possible to the Scrutiny Team in the freepost envelope provided.
If you would like more information in your own language, please contact us at the address shown in the box below.

Nese deshironi me shume informacion ne gjuhen tuaj, ju lutemi te na kontaktoni ne adresen e dhene ne kutine me poshte.

إذا أردت معلومات إضافية بلغتك الأصلية الرجاء الاتصال بنا في العنوان المدون ضمن الإطار أدناه.

হিদি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় লেখা আরও তথ্য চান তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন, তালিক করুন সে আমাদের ঢিকানা রয়েছে।

如果你需要用中文印成的资料，请按低端方格内提供的地址与我們联系。

اگر میل به اطلاعات بیشتر به زبان خود هستید، لطفاً با ما از طریق آدرس زیر همکاری بگیرید.

Pour tout renseignement complémentaire dans votre propre langue, veuillez nous contacter à l'adresse figurant dans l'encadré du bas.

Jeśli życzy sobie Pan/i więcej informacji w swoim języku, proszę się z nami skontaktować pod adresem podanym w dolnej ramce.

ネパール メーディー ハングラ フィッシュ デナ マカバー ファミリー キャンプ や ウォン リッパ バブレー バッド ベド ファンシ リッパ パデ ユ マード ラック マンガ ラブ バド

Hadii aad u baahan tahay faahfaahin intaa kabadan oo ku soo baskan afkaaka hooyo ama Af Somali fadlan lana soo xiira cinwaanka hoos ku qoran.

Si usted desea más información en su propia lengua, por favor contáctenos en la dirección al pie del formato.

ஆகர் குசு நில மிந்து ரைனான் மல் கேம்கேர் கேயல் காராகியை முடிய கேம்கேர் கேயல் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் காராகியை கேம்கேர் கார

You can also get this information in large print, in Braille and on audiotape.