

Westmorland and Furness Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Task & Finish Group – Potential topics for consideration

The Terms of Reference for the Committee outlines that the Committee may establish task and finish groups, appointing the Chair with such membership as it sees fit, to undertake overview and scrutiny on a task and finish basis.

Having decided that an issue or topic could benefit from greater examination, there are a number of options open to Members. They may decide to request a specific briefing session, undertake a one-off working group. They may also carry out an in-depth scrutiny review, with non-executive councillors invited to participate in a small task and finish group.

These task group reviews can be carried out in two distinct ways:

1. A group of councillors undertakes an in-depth review of an issue over a single day
2. A group of councillors undertakes an in-depth review of an issue over a two to three month period

Whichever method is adopted a similar process applies. The broad focus of the review is set by the Shadow Scrutiny Committee Board who then commission a Task Group to undertake a detailed review.

The Task Group take this initial broad focus, developing it into a more detailed project outline (scope) which identifies the parameters of the review work, how it supports the Shadow Authority's activities and who it will need to speak to in order to examine the topic properly. Once completed this draft scope is taken back to the Shadow Scrutiny Board for final agreement.

The potential topics for Scrutiny Review identified by the Members of the Shadow Scrutiny Board for consideration are listed below:

1. Contracts / Commissioning

This would look at how contracts and commissioned services are being managed through the LGR process, specifically the

communication and engagement being undertaken with the providers.

2. Models of Locality Working

To examine and provide recommendations on the potential model of Locality Working for Westmorland and Furness Council. This would build on the work undertaken previously by the Cumbria Scrutiny Management Board.

3. Future Scrutiny Arrangements

To review and provide a view on the potential structure for the Scrutiny function in Westmorland and Furness Council.

There may be further topics which Members of the Committee would like to be discussed.

Members are asked to consider when making their determination that there is limited capacity to support Task & Finish Group activity and any activity would need to happen sequentially not concurrently i.e. one topic at a time.

Once the first topic has been finalised, the Task Group then meet over a time-limited period to gather information to enable them to gain a thorough understanding of the issue, potential problems and solutions and what best practice shows nationally. This information gathering can take place in a number of ways including interviewing witnesses, considering relevant written information and research, and, where possible, undertaking site visits (within and outside Westmorland & Furness as appropriate), to give a '360 degree' view of the topic.

The Task Group then consider the evidence gathered and what conclusions they have drawn from this, enabling them to develop the recommendations and report that they wish to be put forward. A final report is produced outlining their findings and evidence-base, along with any specific recommendations they would like to make.

Once finalised the Task Group's final report is taken to the Shadow Scrutiny Committee for agreement. Once agreed this is then presented to Shadow Cabinet (or the appropriate decision making body) for its consideration.