

Trafford Pandemic Scrutiny Committee

Terms of reference

During the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic a dedicated Scrutiny Committee has been set up to ensure democratic accountability and good governance around Council decision making is maintained during this period.

1. Title

The Committee to be named the Trafford Pandemic Scrutiny Committee (TPSC).

2. Operation

The TPSC will stand in place of Trafford Council's normal scrutiny function until 30th September 2020 and the arrangement will be subject to review after 3 months. There will be one meeting each month. All meetings will take place in working hours, virtually, with a meeting scheduled to take place 7 working days after any meeting of the Executive principally to provide both pre and post decision scrutiny in relation to decisions. The other scheduled meetings will focus principally on topics proposed in agenda setting meetings to be held as set out below.

3. Scope and function

The Committee will be appointed to discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000. The principal functions of the Committee will be to act as a critical friend to the Executive through the scrutiny of decisions taken during the period that the Council is obliged to operate under restricted measures and to add value through the pre-decision scrutiny of key decisions.

Within its scope and function the Scrutiny Committee will:

- A. Review and/or scrutinise policies; proposals; and decisions made or to be taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions.
- B. Make reports and/or recommendations to the Executive and/or Council where appropriate in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;

- C. Add value to the Council through pre-decision scrutiny of key decisions through using the 28-day notice.
- D. Consider any urgent matter in relation to Covid-19 affecting the area or its inhabitants.
- E. Provide for appropriate scrutiny of issues of concern arising during the course of the ongoing pandemic
- F. Promote collaborative working with the Executive.
- G. Consider items that would normally have been considered by the substantive Committees where there is a legal requirement that such matters are reviewed/considered during the period of this emergency

4. Work Programme

- The core function of the TPSC will be to review and add value to the Council's decision making during a time of national emergency; to consider urgent Covid related matters; and to provide appropriate scrutiny in relation to issues of concern arising during the ongoing pandemic. The relevant Portfolio holder/Chief Officer will provide Members with a verbal report in respect of any decision which is being reviewed, or which is proposed to be made at the following Executive meeting, or in relation to any issue/matter subject to review.

The Work of the TPSC will focus on;

- **Public Questions** - relating only to items on the Agenda
- **Post Decision Scrutiny** - Members will receive an overview of recent key, delegated and urgent decisions that have been taken since the last meeting of the Executive and will have the opportunity to review such decisions.
- **Pre – decision Scrutiny** - Members will be given an overview of key decisions that are expected to be taken over the following month and will have the opportunity to feed back any comments or concerns in relation to such proposed decisions to the Executive through the relevant Portfolio holder/Chief Officer.
- **Focussed Scrutiny** – Members will be given an overview of agenda items which relate to urgent matters relating to the Covid pandemic or issues of concern arising during the ongoing pandemic

5. Agenda Setting

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, together with the Chairs of the suspended Children's and Health Scrutiny Committees will meet regularly with the Statutory Scrutiny Officer in order to agree the agendas for the meetings taking place during the operation of the TPSC

6. Task Groups

As the TPSC has been constituted to perform specific functions around decision making and will meet frequently for that purpose during the pandemic, it will not undertake Task and Finish work.

7. Membership

The TPSC will have a membership of 17 Councillors who are not members of the Executive, appointed on a Proportional Representation basis by Council. Currently 8 Labour, 5 Conservatives, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Green, to be nominated by group leaders. In addition the Chairs of the suspended Children's Scrutiny Committee and Health Scrutiny Committees will be members of the Committee with full voting rights

Co-optees

The Committee will have no co-optees, but at the discretion of the Chair can invite co-optees of the suspended Children's and Health Scrutiny Committees if a relevant item is to be considered by the TPSC.

8. Substitutes

There will be no substitutes allowed in order to aid the efficient short-term operation of the Committee.

9. Chair and Vice Chair

The Committee will be chaired by the current chair of the main Scrutiny Committee and the Vice Chair will be the current vice chair of that committee.

10. Quorum

The quorum shall be a third of Members of the Committee.

Where a meeting is inquorate those Members in attendance may meet informally but any decisions shall require appropriate ratification at the next quorate meeting of the TPSC.

11. Public speaking

If a Member of the public wishes to ask a question on any item on the Agenda, they are required to indicate they wish to speak by 12 noon the day before the meeting, this is to allow Governance Services the necessary time to enable them to join a meeting and facilitate when they can speak. They can submit a written question that the Chair will ask instead, as long as it is received by Governance Services by 12 noon the day before the meeting.