

Overview and Scrutiny: Member Training needs at Redditch Borough Council

The Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Redditch Borough Council have identified a need for focused member development and training. In particular, Members are keen to ensure that this training enhances their ability to contribute to the Overview and Scrutiny process at the Council. The following points provide an explanation about the training requirements identified by Councillors Thomas, Banks, Brunner and Fry.

Overview and Scrutiny Member training and development needs

1. **Chairing an Overview and Scrutiny Committee:** Members were keen to receive training to ensure that they developed the skills and competencies necessary to Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.
2. **Chairing Task and Finish Groups:** This year Overview and Scrutiny arrangements at Redditch Borough Council have been revised. As part of the new arrangements Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are required to Chair Task and Finish Group meetings. Members are keen to ensure that they develop the skills and competencies required to Chair these Groups.
3. **Listening and Questioning Skills:** Members emphasised a need to develop the tools and skills necessary to conduct effective scrutiny exercises.
4. **Facilitation and Research Support:** The majority of scrutiny activities organised this year will be conducted as Task and Finish Group exercises. Members are therefore keen to ensure that they develop the appropriate skills to ensure that scrutiny and review work is conducted effectively within these Groups.
5. **Engaging with the Community:** Members also identified a need to develop the ability of Overview and Scrutiny to engage with the local community and other relevant stakeholders.
6. **Community Calls for Action and Local Area Agreements:** Members are aware that these forthcoming arrangements will involve the scrutiny process. In addition, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has called for some form of expertise to be developed across the Council in response to these issues. However, Members are uncertain about the role of both Councillors and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to these arrangements and feel that urgent training is necessary prior to the introduction of these measures.
7. **'Updating' Skills:** Members discussed the rate of developments since the introduction of the Overview and Scrutiny process. It was considered important to receive training on how to maintain detailed awareness and understanding of these developments as they emerge.
8. **Relations with the Executive Committee:** Members suggested that they needed to receive training on how to develop and maintain a healthy interrelationship with the Executive Committee.