



SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL ON SHIRE COMMUNITY AND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT GRANTS

CONDUCT OF SCRUTINY REVIEW PANELS

BRIEFING PAPER OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose

1. To outline the procedures for conducting Scrutiny Review Panel meetings, predominantly in public session.
2. To address whether meetings should be held in person or whether Teams or hybrid meetings can be considered.

Background

3. Scrutiny Review Panels are not formal meetings and therefore not governed by legislative requirements to be held in person, although meetings were always held in person prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.
4. Until 2009, Scrutiny Review Panels met in private though their final report was publicly available. The Scrutiny Commission at its meeting held on 1 September 2009 reviewed this practice and considered the possibility of holding panel meetings in public.
5. The Commission noted that meetings in private allowed for witnesses to be more forthcoming in their responses and allowed members to explore options which may be 'unthinkable' in the public domain. The Commission also recognised the need for greater openness and transparency in the review process. To that end the Commission has sought to balance these competing demands and has approved a move towards holding panel meetings in public but allowing Panels the option of moving into private session where this is appropriate.
6. Scrutiny Review Panel meetings are not webcast, even when they are held in public.

Conduct of meetings

7. Appendix A sets out in brief the different stages in the review process and the specific stages when a Panel may wish to consider meeting in private. The process will be kept under review by the Scrutiny Commissioners and amended in the light of experience.
8. Members are reminded that, given that a Scrutiny Review Panel allows members to 'think the unthinkable', there is the potential for confidential information to be disclosed. This will be made clear to members when the

agenda is circulated. The Members' Code of Conduct requires member to respect confidentiality and not to disclose information that has been provided in confidence.

Officer to Contact:

Damien Buckley
Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 0116 305 0183
Email damien.buckley@leics.gov.uk