

Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel

Task & Finish Groups Guidance – August 2020

Task & Finish groups within the Scrutiny Panel are cross-county member led review groups that are commissioned by the Panel to undertake a review of a specific topic. This is a detailed but informal type of scrutiny and consist of a maximum of six members chosen by the Panel. The work carried out will be focussed, time bound and involve evidence gathering. Officers from the Growth Board and the wider Growth Deal teams will support councillors to help inform their work where time and resources permit and taking account of other ongoing work. The conclusion derived from the work will be first presented to Scrutiny Panel in the form recommendations for endorsement and subsequently to the Growth Board for decision.

Task & Finish group meetings will be led by a Lead/Chair; the member who suggested the topic. The Scrutiny Officer will schedule meetings, produce agendas, minutes and reports.

Topic Selection

Through a topic suggestion form, members can submit ideas for Task and Finish reviews to the Scrutiny Panel. In considering which issues to review, members should consider:

- To what extent an issue is within the Growth Boards remit and influence
- To what extent there is public interest in the issue
- To what extent an issue is relevant to the whole of Oxfordshire
- Does the work duplicate any other ongoing reviews or pieces of work?
- What member and officer resources are available to support task and finish work?
(this will need to be discussed with the officers affected before work starts)

Stages of a Task and Finish Review

1. Scoping

Scoping of a chosen topic is fundamental to the effectiveness of a Task & Finish group. This meeting would enable the group to identify the output and objectives of the review. It would also consider what evidence is needed and the timeframe. The scoping emphasises the need for Task & Finish group to have a clear purpose, rationale and focus for their work. The scoping document will be produced by the Scrutiny Officer in consultation with the Lead/Chair.

2. Evidence Gathering

Prior to the evidence gathering meeting the Scrutiny Officer will advise the group on the Growth Board's approach and involvement with a given topic. They will also identify key officers who can attend the meeting to present and offer their perspectives on areas for improvement. Other sources including results from consultations and desktop research can also be used to gather information, for example.

3. Developing Recommendations

The evidence gathered needs to be reviewed and discussed to draw reasonable conclusions and recommendations. The Scrutiny officer will facilitate the formulation of recommendations based on discussions and views expressed during course of this review. The recommendations should be developed under the SMART criteria.

- Specific** - Clarify any ambiguity in recommendations made during the meeting.
- Measurable** - Ensure the recommendations can be monitored and evaluated.
- Achievable** - Recommendations are within the scope and remit of the Growth Board.
- Realistic** - Recommendations take account of the financial / technical realities.
- Time-bound** - Milestones are set within the recommendation as to when action should be taken.

Once approved, and following endorsement by the Scrutiny Panel, the report and recommendations will be put to the Growth Board and any other relevant parties for a written response. The Task & Finish group is formally disbanded at this stage of the process.