

Procedure Rules for Working Groups and Task and Finish Groups

General

1. Committees may establish Working Groups and Task and Finish Groups, as appropriate and considered necessary, having taken into account the availability of resources and the advice of the relevant Group Head.
2. The role of such Groups is to examine in detail specific issues or aspects of policy, procedure or service according to their remit.
3. These Groups do not take any decisions but inform the deliberations of the committees.
4. Their membership shall be open to all councillors and include members from at least two political groups. They may include non-councillors by invitation and other persons with relevant expertise or knowledge.
5. Political balance requirements will not apply to Working Groups or Task and Finish Groups.
6. Each committee is usually limited to establishing no more than two Working and/or Task and Finish Groups, at any one time. i.e. if a Working Group has been appointed on an annual basis the same committee may only appoint one Task and Finish Group to run at the same time.
7. Only one Working Group or Task and Finish Group looking at a particular service function or policy area may be established at any one time.
8. A Working Group or Task and Finish Group may not be established to look at any area which has been the subject of an investigation or review by one or other Group in the past year.
9. Subsequent changes to membership of an established Working Group or Task and Finish Group shall be delegated to the relevant Group Head in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the appointing Committee.

Working Groups

10. Committees may set up Working Groups from time to time to develop recommendations on a long-term issue or ongoing subject area.
11. They shall be appointed for a specific purpose relating to policy development or a service function.
12. Working Groups may be appointed on an annual basis, if required.

13. They will only be established when the matter cannot be undertaken by a relevant Committee.

Appointment and Membership

14. The relevant Committee will specify the terms of reference and purpose of the Working Group.
15. The relevant Committee will appoint the members of the Working Group on the following basis:
 - Shall include at least two councillors from the appointing Committee
 - Shall include representation by at least two political Groups on the Council
 - May include other councillors with relevant expertise or knowledge, who are not members of the appointing Committee, to be agreed in consultation with Group Leaders
 - May include other invited persons with relevant expertise or knowledge

Meetings of Working Groups

16. Meetings of Working Groups will, as far as possible, be Member led and will receive support from officers in an advisory capacity only.
17. At its first meeting the Working Group will appoint one councillor, who shall be a member of the appointing Committee, to act as Chair.
18. A councillor shall not be entitled to attend meetings of Working Groups unless appointed as a member or substitute or with the agreement of the Chair of the Working Group.
19. The public may not attend meetings of Working Groups.

Substitutions

20. Unless otherwise decided by the appointing Committee, substitutes are permitted to serve as members of Working Groups at any meeting at which another member of the same political group is absent for the entire meeting.

Proceedings to remain Confidential

21. The proceedings of meetings of Working Groups, including any written material circulated to or considered by a Group, will remain confidential until they have been made public with the authority of the appointing Committee.

Reporting back to the appointing body

22. A Working Group shall, periodically, report back on their work, including recommendations where appropriate, to the appointing committee.

Task and Finish Groups

23. Committees may set up time-limited Task and Finish Groups for a specific task, to report back to the appointing Committee.
24. Task and Finish Groups will be charged with carrying out an in-depth investigation into a specific service area, or policy, or any issue of genuine importance to the borough.
25. Task and Finish Groups will only be established when the matter cannot be undertaken by a relevant Committee.

Appointment and Membership of Group

26. The relevant Committee will:
 - specify the terms of reference and purpose for the group's exercise;
 - specify the time for which the Task and Finish Group is expected to operate
 - appoint Councillors to the task-and-finish group on the following basis:
 - ❖ the group to be small, and focused on outcomes
 - ❖ shall include at least two members of the appointing Committee
 - ❖ shall include representation by at least two political Groups on the Council
 - ❖ may include other councillors who are not members of the Committee, to be agreed in consultation with Group Leaders
 - ❖ may include other invited persons with relevant expertise or knowledge

Meetings of Task and Finish Groups

27. Meetings of Task and Finish Groups will, as far as possible, be Member led and will not require advice or support from officers unless specifically requested.
28. At its first meeting the Task and Finish Group will appoint one councillor, who shall be a member of the appointing Committee, to act as Chair.
29. A councillor shall not be entitled to attend meetings of Task and Finish Groups unless appointed as a member or substitute or with the agreement of the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group.
30. The public may not attend meetings of Task and Finish Groups.

Substitutions

31. Unless otherwise decided by the appointing Committee, substitutes are permitted to serve as members of Task and Finish Groups at any meeting at which another member of the same political group is absent for the entire meeting.

Proceedings to remain Confidential

32. The proceedings of meetings of Task and Finish Groups, including any written material circulated to or considered by a Group, will remain

confidential until they have been made public with the authority of the appointing Committee.

Reporting back to the appointing body

33. A Task and Finish Group shall, periodically, report back on their work, including recommendations where appropriate, to the appointing committee.