

Status of Task Groups in Other Authorities

Appendix 3

Results of Survey

| | Do you use task/topic groups for scrutiny work or is everything carried out by committees? | If you do use task/topic groups, are these subject to the same legal constraints as committees, ie, required to publish agendas and minutes according to statutory deadlines? |
|--------------|--|--|
| Stevenage | Review work carried out in Informal Working Groups. | Informal Working Groups commissioned by the 7 Development and Scrutiny Committees. The agendas and minutes are not published on the Council's website. |
| County | Yes | Yes |
| Hertsmere | Yes | Not bound by the same rules as Committees. Part of the formal decision-making process when the final conclusions are reported to the 'parent' scrutiny committee for approval. |
| Barnet | Barnet use Task and Finish Groups, as well as undertaking committee work. | No, Task and Finish Groups are not public meetings, unless the members decide that it would be appropriate. This makes the process more effective as it takes a lot of the politics out of the reviews. |
| South Cambs | We have one committee that carries out anything that can be done in one meeting. Then we have at least 2 t&f groups (currently 3) looking at wider issues such as a poorly performing service area or development of a new policy for example. | No, the t&f groups have no legal constraints such as proportionality, publishing deadlines or minuting. Our brief meeting notes are "available on request" but final reports and recommendations are published at the end. |
| Three Rivers | Yes | No |

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|--------------|---|--|
| Bedford | Potential to use task and finish groups | The Task and Finish groups are set up as sub-committees and therefore have to meet the same rules as for committees. |
| Broxbourne | Yes | Publish reports, agendas and minutes after the Panel has met. They report to the full committee for any action. |
| Dacorum | Yes – but not used often | Not subject to the same legal constraints. Membership, terms of reference and duration agreed by 'gateway' group. |
| East Herts | Yes | Notes available on request. Report back to 'parent' scrutiny committee – the interim and final reports are put in the public domain, including the evidence as background papers. |
| Central Beds | Yes | Not subject to the same legal constraints as Committees. |
| St Albans | Yes | Informal meetings. First public hearing of the group's findings is at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The meeting notes are not placed in the public domain. |