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To: Scrutiny Board  
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Subject: Rapporteur Scheme: The Four Principles

Classification: Unrestricted

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## **1. Background**

(1) The Scrutiny Board has agreed that there should be guidelines produced for the operation of a Rapporteurs Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny Suite Committee Members.

## **2. Introduction.**

(1) A rapporteur is a person appointed to undertake a scrutiny activity on behalf of a deliberative body and report back. In the Kent County Council context, this means a Member taking responsibility for producing a report on a specified topic within a specified time and needs to be distinguished from the wider support Members can provide to ongoing scrutiny activities such as participating in formal and informal meetings within KCC and with external partners.

(2) The idea behind the Four Principles below is straightforward and sets out the minimum requirements for undertaking a successful rapporteur. The corollary is that all four Principles need to be met before a rapporteur can proceed. Whilst this may seem like a high bar is being set, it is important to maximise the chance of a value-added outcome to the rapporteur.

(3) Each Principle is underpinned by three questions. All need to be answered in the affirmative to demonstrate that the rapporteur is ready for commencement. Any negatives will indicate what may need to be done to improve readiness.

## **3. The Four Principles: Value, Legitimacy, Time and Resources.**

(1) Principle 1: Value – The essence of the rapporteur model is that it should supplement, not replace, established scrutiny activities.

- (a) Does the subject come under the remit of existing KCC responsibilities or scrutiny powers?
- (b) Is the subject one that is not able to be considered in a traditional committee setting?
- (c) Will the rapporteur be able to produce a report which adds to information already available?

(2) Principle 2: Legitimacy – A clear distinction needs to be made between the activities of a Member as rapporteur and those of a Member undertaking the regular activities of a locally elected representative. The appropriate elements need to be put in place to ensure that the rapporteur and anyone s/he interacts with are clear as to the nature and authority of the rapporteur undertaking.

- (a) Is an established Committee willing to take responsibility for approving the establishment of a rapporteur acting on behalf of the entire Committee?
- (b) Is the rapporteur content to work within the limits proscribed by a host committee's terms of reference and/or statutory powers?
- (c) Is an Officer available and able to work as a point of contact for issues concerning the status of the rapporteur?

(3) Principle 3: Time – Key to adding value is ensuring that the work is undertaken at the most appropriate time.

- (a) Is this the most appropriate time to conduct the rapporteur into the specified topic, given any work being undertaken within KCC or by other relevant organisations?
- (b) Can the work be completed by the time set?
- (c) Will the completed rapporteur project still be relevant by the date set for completion?

(4) Principle 4: Resources – The knowledge, skills and enthusiasm of the rapporteur are crucial to the success of any rapporteur, but it will also inevitably, and necessarily, involve Officer time and support.

- (a) Is there appropriate Officer time available to provide the necessary support for the rapporteur?
- (b) Is it clear that supporting the rapporteur will not mean a reduction in the Officer support available for ongoing established committee work?
- (c) Has approval been given by the appropriate Directorate for the resource commitment the rapporteur will involve?

#### **4. Way Forward**

(1) It is suggested that all proposals from Overview and Scrutiny Suite Committees to appoint a Rapporteur be submitted to the Scrutiny Board for approval prior to any work being undertaken by the proposed Rapporteur and that the Four Principles as set out in paragraph 3 above, along with detailed supporting information, form the basis upon which the Scrutiny Board will decide whether to approval the proposal.

**5. Recommendation:** That the Four Principles be approved as the basis for the appointment of Rapporteurs and all requests by Overview and Scrutiny suite Committees to appoint a Rapporteur be submitted to the Scrutiny Board for approval.

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#### Background documents

- (a) Options for a Rapporteur Scheme, available as Appendix A to the report Building capacity for Overview and Scrutiny, available at <http://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=9991>
- (b) Framework for a rapporteur scheme, available as Appendix 2 to the report Overview and Scrutiny – The Constructive Critical Friend, available at <http://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgConvert2Pdf.aspx?ID=4244&T=9>