



South Tyneside Council

Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating and Call-in Committee Minutes

3 June 2026

Present: Councillors Ford (Chair), Barclay, Oliver, Oughton, Rice, Taylor, Tooley, Turnbull.

In attendance: John Runmeny (Head of Legal and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Jonathan Lunness (Scrutiny and Democracy Support Officer), Emma Purvis (Senior Democracy Support Officer).

Apologies: Councillor Cain, Diamond, Perry.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2026

Agreed: That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a true record.

3. Scrutiny Framework in South Tyneside

Jonathan Lunness, Scrutiny and Democracy Support Officer, gave a presentation outlining good scrutiny practices, the scrutiny framework in South Tyneside and the terms of reference for the scrutiny committees.

It was explained that overview and scrutiny committees were established under the Local Government Act 2000 as a counterbalance to executive arrangements, with current legislative provisions contained within the Localism Act 2011.

Members were advised that the purpose of scrutiny was to:

- Hold the Executive to account;
- Review, shape and develop Council policy and strategy;

- Ensure best value and effective performance management;
- Scrutinise external partners.

It was noted that scrutiny committees could scrutinise:

- The Executive (Cabinet)
- Council and commissioned services
- Jointly commissioned organisations
- Health bodies and authorities
- Crime and disorder matters

Members were informed that scrutiny functions included reviewing and challenging decisions, conducting investigations, involving communities where appropriate, and contributing to policy development. Scrutiny should act as a “critical friend”, represent the voice of the public and drive service improvement, whilst remaining non-political and not focused on ward-level matters.

The responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were outlined as including:

- Approving the annual scrutiny work programme aligned to Council priorities;
- Considering performance reports against Council ambitions;
- Scrutinising cross-cutting issues;
- Allocating items between scrutiny committees and resolving overlaps;
- Operating as the call-in committee;
- Reviewing value for money and service improvement;
- Receiving reports on motions submitted and agreed by Council;
- Scrutinising corporate issues including policy, performance, finance, equality, organisational change and ICT.

The remits of the other scrutiny committees were also presented for information.

A Member asked which scrutiny committee would focus on planning and it was clarified that planning issues were only considered at the Planning Committee which had a statutory duty to discharge this function. The work of this committee would be monitored by the Planning Inspectorate and the courts.

It was also queried whether some scrutiny committees were more heavily regulated than others, such as Education and Skills, given the amount of statutory regulation in this area. It was advised that the Local Authority had the power to determine how services were being delivered, within the statutory requirements. Scrutiny committees did not have decision making powers, but they could look at how

services were being implemented and make recommendations based on this.

A Member queried why some of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating and Call-in meetings were listed 'as required' on the Council Diary. It was advised that these meetings were allocated to be used in the event of any decisions being called in to the Committee. They coincided with the dates of Cabinet meetings as a decision was only eligible for call-in within five days of the Cabinet minutes being published.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

4. Report Regarding Motions Received by Borough Council during 2025/2026

Members received a report from the Director of Legal and Governance outlining all Motions submitted to Borough Council during the 2025/2026 municipal year and the progress against agreed resolutions.

The Committee was advised that this report was presented annually in line with the Committee's terms of reference, enabling scrutiny of actions arising from Motions. It was noted that Motions were formal proposals submitted by Members to request action or debate on issues affecting the borough. A Motion must be proposed, seconded and supported by at least five Members to be considered at Borough Council.

Members were informed that during 2025/2026 a range of Motions were submitted and considered across three Council meetings (July 2025, October 2025 and January 2026). These covered key themes including:

- Workers' rights and WASPI women
- Social housing provision
- Environmental sustainability (COP15 alignment)
- Reopening of South Shields Driving Test Centre
- Transition to recycled paper (Paper Smart initiative)
- Higher education funding pressures
- Youth employment
- Men's health outcomes

It was reported that all Motions carried by Council resulted in agreed actions, primarily involving correspondence from the Leader or Chief Executive to Government Ministers or relevant bodies. Some responses had been received, while in other cases responses remained outstanding. Members noted that where specific actions

were required, these had been completed, and updates were included within the report. Some Motions had also contributed to policy or procedural changes within the Council.

The Committee was advised that there were no direct financial, legal, equality or environmental implications arising from the report itself, given that it was for information. However, individual Motions may have had resource implications and were assessed at the point of consideration.

It was further noted that Motions remained an important mechanism within the Council's democratic processes, enabling Members to raise and debate significant issues and shape Council action.

A Member queried whether there was any ongoing action or discussion around the letter that had been sent to the DVLA regarding the South Shields driving test centre. The Officer did not think that there had been any further action around this but added that if an issue was ongoing another motion could be brought to Council after 12 months. The Chair also added that the Leader, or any Member, could write a follow up letter at any time without the requirement of a motion.

A Member asked if these updates could be provided to all Councillors following any actions related to a motion. It was clarified that all updates were added to the Motions Book which was available to all in the Members Room.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

5. Work Programme 2026/27

Jonathan Lunness, Scrutiny and Democracy Support Officer, outlined the work programme for the committee, as well as the work programmes for all the Council's scrutiny committees. This was to give the Overview and Scrutiny Committee oversight of the scrutiny process, as per its terms of reference. It was noted that some Committees had not had their first meeting of the municipal year, so the work programmes were yet to be set.

The papers also included a copy of the Council's Forward Plan of key decisions, which was regularly updated on the Council website. This would keep Members updated on upcoming decisions to help inform the work programme.

It was suggested that an item on the updates to the South Tyneside Pledge could be brought to the next Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

It was also suggested that the upcoming Council Budget could be scrutinised by the Committee later in the year.

A Member asked if scrutiny could look at the new Local Plan.

It was also suggested that the Our Place Committee could look at parking charges.

A Member also suggested that the Children's Safeguarding and Education and Skills Scrutiny Committees could jointly look at the issue of violence in schools.

Agreed: That the work programme be agreed as presented.

6. Chair's Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.
