

Determining Topics for Scrutiny

The following criteria can be used to determine whether topics are appropriate topics for scrutiny and which committee would be best placed to scrutinise them. It is the decision of the Scrutiny Committee as to what topics they will include in their work programme. Members and officers in suggesting items for scrutiny should consider:

Is there a role for Scrutiny?

Is this a new policy being developed or are changes proposed to an existing service?

➡ Such topics should be considered by either of the policy scrutiny committees, who can assess the impact on the public, service users and relevant stakeholders.

Is this a review of a service's performance? Are there resource issues or risks to consider?

➡ Such topics should be considered by the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee with the relevant Cabinet/Executive Member invited when necessary to attend and answer questions.

Does the topic relate to a service that is provided in collaboration with others?

➡ These topics should be scrutinised by the Public Services Scrutiny Committee.

Are elected members needing to be informed or updated about this topic?

➡ These topics should be discussed with all members via a 'Member Seminar'.

Public Interest Test

- Is this a "high profile" topic?
- Is there significant public interest?
- Is this an area where a lot of complaints are received and/or bad press?
- How will the scrutiny activity provide opportunities for local people to have their say?
- Is survey / research work required?

Impact of Scrutiny

- Will this review have a significant impact on the "well-being" of people in Monmouthshire?
- Does a local community or interest group have much to gain or lose?
- To what extent can we effect change? Is this a national issue?
- Would this make a big difference to the way services are delivered?
- Would this make a big difference to the way resources are used?

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Performance issues

- Are the Council and other organisations under-performing in this area?
- Is performance poor compared to others and do we understand why this is the case?
- Are we performing well, but spending too much of our resources in this area?
- Are there local or national performance targets by which to measure our performance?

Influence of scrutiny

- Has this service been recently reviewed or inspected?
- Will this topic be part of an improvement review or external inspection in the next two years?
- If the service is to be reviewed or inspected soon, can a Scrutiny Committee make a positive contribution by focussing on specific aspects and making recommendations?
- Are there any current or future major changes forecasted which reduce the value of undertaking scrutiny?
- Are changes to this service planned and can Scrutiny positively influence change?

If scrutiny cannot add value by scrutinising a particular topic based on the above criteria, then the Scrutiny Committee should think carefully about whether to include it in their work programme. Requests from Members for updates on topics should be referred to a 'Member Seminar'. Similarly, requests from officers to brief Members on topics should be managed via 'Member Seminars'.