

Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham, Executive Director - Resources

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Date:	28 September 2023
Subject:	Proposals for Scrutiny Reviews

Summary:

This item invites the Board to determine the next steps to identify and agree a potential topic for an in-depth scrutiny review to be undertaken by Scrutiny Panel A.

Actions Required:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is requested to:-

1. invite each scrutiny committee to identify any potential topics for a future scrutiny review to be undertaken by Scrutiny Panel A at their next meeting in October/November 2023, taking into account current service area priorities.
2. receive a further report at its meeting on 21 December 2023 setting out any potential topics identified by the scrutiny committees with an evaluation against the Prioritisation Toolkit, to determine the topic to be allocated to Scrutiny Panel A.

1. Background

One of the essential roles of overview and scrutiny is to carry out in-depth reviews where the outcomes can clearly influence and improve policy and service delivery for the people of Lincolnshire. This is carried out by the two Scrutiny Panels, Scrutiny Panel A and Scrutiny Panel B.

Scrutiny Panels represent an opportunity for scrutiny councillors to delve deeper into a particular subject or issue to find out more, speak to the individuals responsible and recommend any ways in which things might be improved at a level of scrutiny not always possible within the time limits and formal setting associated with Committee meetings.

Guidance regarding the operation and establishment of the scrutiny panels is set out in Appendix A.

Identifying Potential Scrutiny Review Topics

A Scrutiny Panel should be set up when a suitable topic for a scrutiny review is identified by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board using the Prioritisation Toolkit attached at Appendix B.

Suggestions for scrutiny reviews may come from a variety of sources such as the scrutiny committees, other non-Executive Councillors, Executive Councillors, and senior officers.

When considering a potential topic for a scrutiny review, it is important that the Board ensures that the potential scrutiny review will not be duplicating any review work that is being undertaken by officers or external partners.

The remit for the potential scrutiny review should be focussed and not too broad, so that an in-depth review can be completed within a set timescale and will lead to achievable outcomes.

Once assigned to a Scrutiny Panel, the terms of reference will be finalised by the Scrutiny Panel.

Potential Topics for Scrutiny Reviews

Following consultation with each scrutiny committee in July 2021, potential topics for scrutiny reviews by Scrutiny Panel A and Scrutiny Panel B were identified for the Board's consideration.

In September 2021, the Board agreed to allocate Town Centre Improvements to Scrutiny Panel A and Lincolnshire Agricultural Sector Support to Scrutiny Panel B in accordance with the Prioritisation Toolkit as the two topics with the highest priority rating.

Following the completion of the Lincolnshire Agricultural Sector Support review by Scrutiny Panel B in May 2023, the Board agreed at its meeting on 24 August 2023 that Scrutiny Panel B should undertake a review of Traffic Management in Lincolnshire. This was in response to a request received from the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee which had established a working group in May 2022 to review the existing Traffic Management Policy and to propose recommendations for the focus of an in-depth review. This scrutiny review will be commencing shortly.

The scrutiny review on Town Centre Improvements by Scrutiny Panel A is coming to a close and the final report from the Panel is due to be considered by the Executive on 3 October 2023. Therefore, Scrutiny Panel A should also soon become available to undertake a new review.

Since the identification and prioritisation of the remaining topics considered in September 2021, no further evaluation has been undertaken as to whether these potential topics are still relevant, or if there are any new topics which should be prioritised for an in-depth review.

It is therefore proposed that the Board invites each scrutiny committee to identify any potential topics for a scrutiny review at their next meeting in October/November 2023, taking into account current service area priorities. This would involve a report being taken to the following meetings for each scrutiny committee: -

- 18 October 2023 – Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
- 20 October 2023 – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
- 24 October 2023 – Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee
- 30 October 2023 – Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee
- 31 October 2023 – Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
- 08 November 2023 – Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire

Any topics proposed by the scrutiny committees would be subject to an assessment against the Prioritisation Toolkit to identify which topics are of the highest priority. These proposals would then be considered by the Board at its meeting on 21 December 2023 to determine which topic should be allocated to Scrutiny Panel A.

2. Conclusion

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is asked to request that each scrutiny committee identifies any potential topics for a future scrutiny review by Scrutiny Panel A at their next meeting in October/November 2023.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

These are covered in the report.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Scrutiny Panel Guidance
Appendix B	Prioritisation Toolkit

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Nigel West, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer, who can be contacted on 01522 552840 or by e-mail at

nigel.west@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Scrutiny Panel Guidance

Scrutiny Panel A and Scrutiny Panel B will conduct each review in accordance with the following principles:

- Scrutiny Panels should aim to collect a broad range of evidence on the particular review, interviewing interested parties, and engaging local communities, where this is feasible.
- Scrutiny Panels should focus on developing realistic recommendations for improvement in relation to the topic under review.
- Scrutiny Panels will submit their draft reports to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration, approval and onward referral as appropriate.

Scrutiny Panel A and Scrutiny Panel B will undertake in-depth scrutiny reviews in accordance with the terms of reference and timetable determined for each review by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Establishment of a Scrutiny Panel

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will decide when a Scrutiny Panel is needed by determining whether a scrutiny review will proceed using the Prioritisation Toolkit attached at Appendix B.

Each Scrutiny Panel will have up to eight members including the Chairman and Vice Chairman. The membership should be politically inclusive and all non-executive councillors (and added members for education reviews) are eligible.

Nominations for membership of the Scrutiny Panels will be sought from the leader of each political group.

Scrutiny prioritisation

Prioritisation is a key tool for successful scrutiny. Selecting the right topics where scrutiny can add value is essential for scrutiny to be a positive influence on the work of the Council. Scrutiny committees must be selective about what they look at and need to work effectively with limited resources. Scrutiny activity should be targeted, focused and timely and include issues of corporate and local importance, where scrutiny activity can influence and add value.

The questions below are a guide to help members and officers consider and identify key areas of scrutiny activity for consideration.

Will Scrutiny input add value?

- Is there a clear objective for scrutinising the topic?
- What are the identifiable benefits to residents and the council?
- Is there evidence to support the need for scrutiny?
- What is the likelihood of achieving a desired outcome?
- Is the topic strategic and significant rather than relating to an individual complaint?
- Are there adequate resources to ensure scrutiny activity is done well?

Is the topic a concern to local residents?

- Does the topic have a potential impact for one or more section(s) of the local population?
- Has the issue been identified by Members through surgeries and other contact with constituents?
- Is there user dissatisfaction with service (e.g., increased level of complaints)?
- Has the topic been covered in the local media or social media?

Is it a Council or partner priority area?

- Does the topic relate to council corporate priority areas?
- Is there a high level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area?
- Is it a poor performing service (evidence from performance indicators /benchmarking)?

Are there relevant external factors relating to the issue?

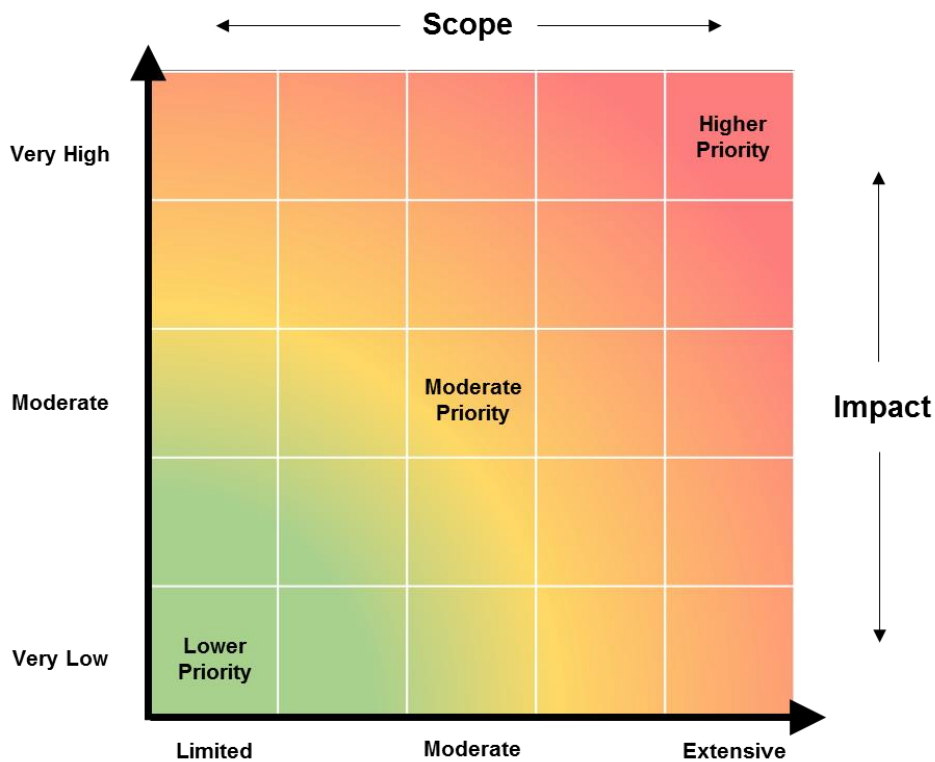
- Central government priority area.
- New government guidance or legislation.
- Issues raised by an internal or external audit or from formal inspections, etc.
- Key reports or new evidence provided by external organisations.

Criteria for not considering topics

- There is no scope for scrutiny to add value/make a difference or have a clear impact.
- New legislation or guidance is expected within the next year.
- The issue is being examined elsewhere - e.g., by the Executive, working group, officer group or other body.
- The objective of scrutiny involvement cannot be achieved in the specified timescale required.

Prioritisation Matrix

The prioritisation matrix shown below is a framework to aid in prioritising a number of scrutiny options or topics. Each topic should be assessed in terms of the impact it would have and the overall scope of the activity.

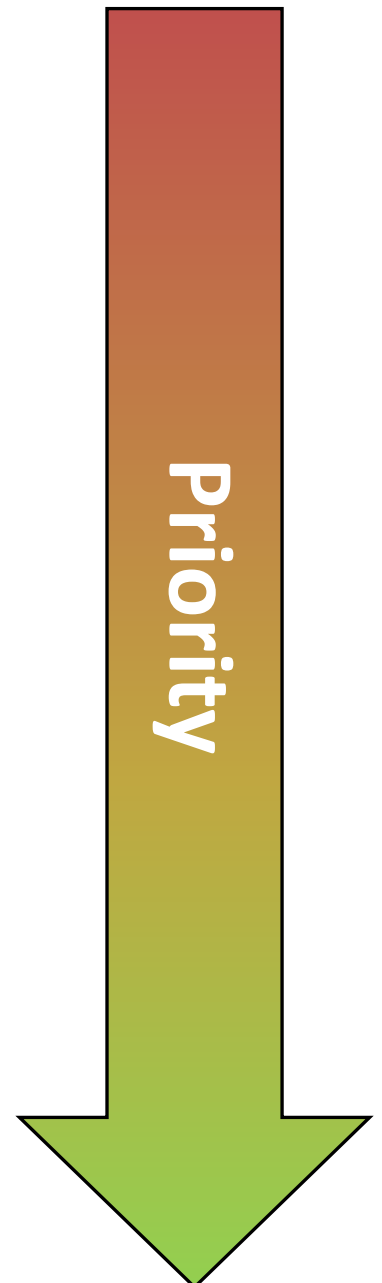
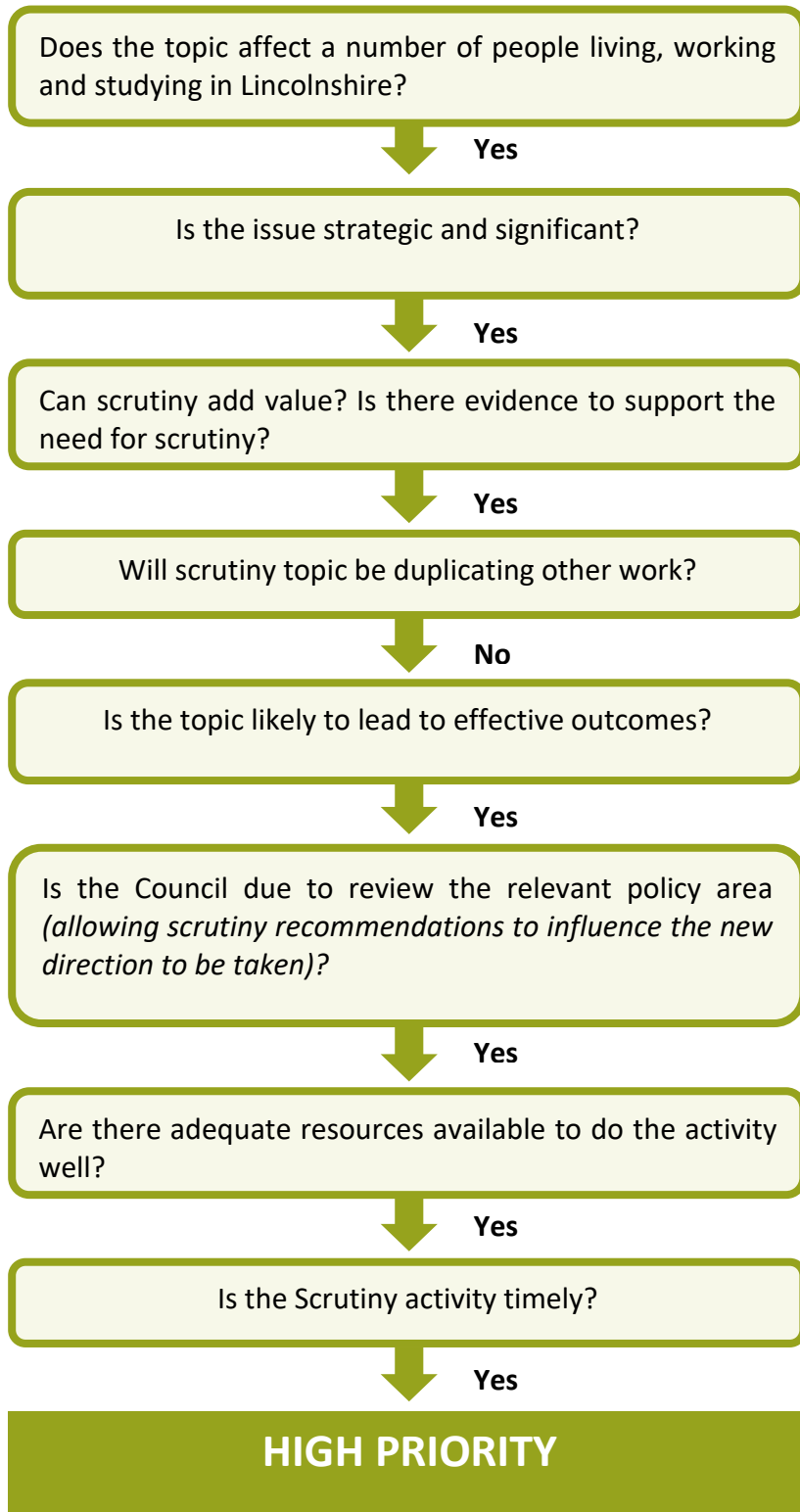


When considering the scope and impact of a Scrutiny item it is important to consider the following areas:

- People / Communities
- Assets / Property
- Financial
- Environmental
- Reputation
- Likelihood of Impact
- Resource Required
- Cost Effectiveness

Prioritisation tool

The prioritisation tool below can be used in deciding on whether an issue would warrant being considered by Scrutiny or the subject of a Scrutiny Review.



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