



**Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham,
Deputy Chief Executive & Executive Director - Resources**

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	31 October 2023
Subject:	Potential Topics for Scrutiny Review by Scrutiny Panel A

Summary:

On 28 September 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board requested each overview and scrutiny committee to consider whether it has a topic that would benefit from an in-depth scrutiny review by Scrutiny Panel A. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is due to evaluate the suggestions at its meeting on 21 December 2023.

This Committee is requested to consider whether it would wish to make a suggestion for a potential scrutiny review topic to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Actions Required:

To consider the request from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for a suggestion for an in-depth scrutiny review by Scrutiny Panel A, bearing in mind the following criteria (as detailed in Appendix A):

- (a) Would the proposed review topic add value?
- (b) Is the proposed review topic of concern to local residents?
- (c) Is the proposed review topic a priority for the Council or partner agency?
- (d) Would the proposed review topic avoid duplication with any other reviews or actions?
- (e) Is the proposed review topic unlikely to be affected by new legislation or guidance in the coming year?
- (f) Is the review topic sufficiently focused to be completed within an appropriate timescale?

1. Scrutiny Panel A and Scrutiny Panel B

Scrutiny Panel A and Scrutiny Panel B have recently completed their respective reviews of Town Centre Improvements and Lincolnshire Agricultural Sector Support, which have each been presented to the Council's Executive. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, which is responsible for allocating topics, has already assigned the topic of Traffic Management in Lincolnshire to Scrutiny Panel B as its next review, and is seeking a topic for Scrutiny Panel A to undertake.

As has previously been reported, Scrutiny Panels conduct their reviews 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 Panels undertake their reviews in accordance with the terms of reference and timetable determined for each review by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

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. In accordance with the Council's constitution, this role is undertaken by the two scrutiny panels.

These two scrutiny panels provide an opportunity for scrutiny councillors to consider a particular topic in detail, for example by engaging with a range of individuals in less formal settings, which is not always possible in the formal setting of a committee meeting. Based on the evidence received, a report is compiled, with the panel making recommendations for possible improvement.

2. Identifying Potential Scrutiny Review Topics

A Scrutiny Panel should only be set up when a suitable topic for a scrutiny review is identified by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board using the Prioritisation Toolkit. 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 focused and not too broad, so that an in-depth review can be completed within a set timescale and will lead to achievable outcomes.

3. Role of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is responsible for making decisions about whether a scrutiny panel is merited, and in so doing the Board applies the guidance in the prioritisation toolkit attached at Appendix A.

Once a potential topic for a scrutiny review has been identified by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and assigned to a scrutiny panel, the terms of reference will be drafted by the Scrutiny Panel and submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, if they have not already been approved by the Board. This does not prevent the panel from undertaking initial work on its topic.

4. Composition of Scrutiny Panels

Each scrutiny panel may comprise up to eight members including its chairman and vice chairman appointed by the County Council. The remaining members of each panel are appointed for each particular review, and there is an aim to make the membership politically inclusive. All non-executive councillors are eligible, with nominations for membership being sought from the leader of each political group.

5. Role of Overview and Scrutiny Committees – Approval of Final Report

As stated above, when each scrutiny panel completes its review, its draft report is submitted to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee for consideration and approval. Following its approval, the final report, including any recommendations, is submitted to the relevant decision-making body, which in most instances would be the Executive for matters relating to the County Council's executive functions. The relevant scrutiny committee is responsible for receiving the response to the review and for any future monitoring of recommendations.

6. Commentary from the Executive Director / Lead Officers

The Assistant Director – Public Protection has suggested the following topic for consideration by the Committee:

- Vapes

We would like to invite scrutiny to review Lincolnshire County Council's response to the current vapes issues with non-compliant vapes usage and the use of vapes by children whilst supporting a public health message to reduce the numbers of cigarette smokers. We would ask scrutiny to pay particular attention to activity undertaken by Trading Standards, Education, Children's Services and Public Health to ensure consistent and coherent messaging and activities across all departments.

7. Conclusion

Following the decision by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 28 September 2023, this Committee is being asked to consider whether it wishes to suggest a scrutiny review topic, for the Board to assign to Scrutiny Panel A in December. In responding to the Board, the Committee may wish to be mindful of the criteria set out in Appendix A to this report.

8. Appendices

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

9. 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 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?

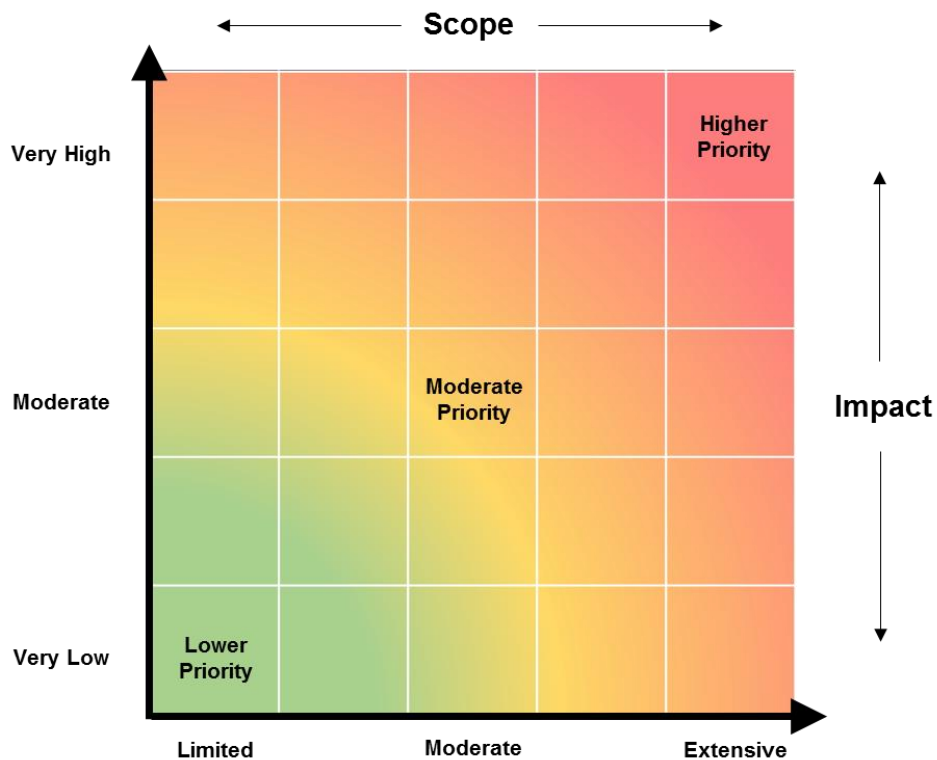
- Central government priority area.
- New government guidance or legislation.
- Issues raised by an internal or external audit or from formal inspections, etc.
- Key reports or new evidence provided by external organisations.

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.

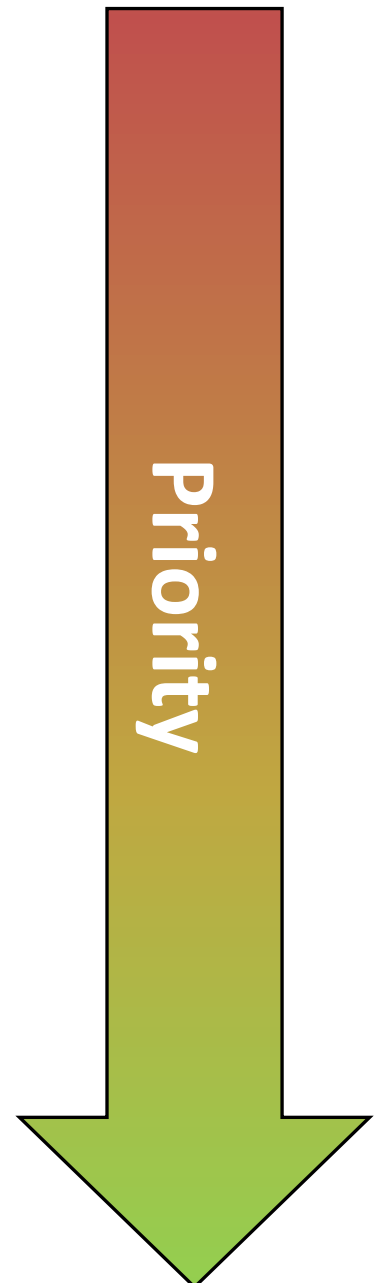
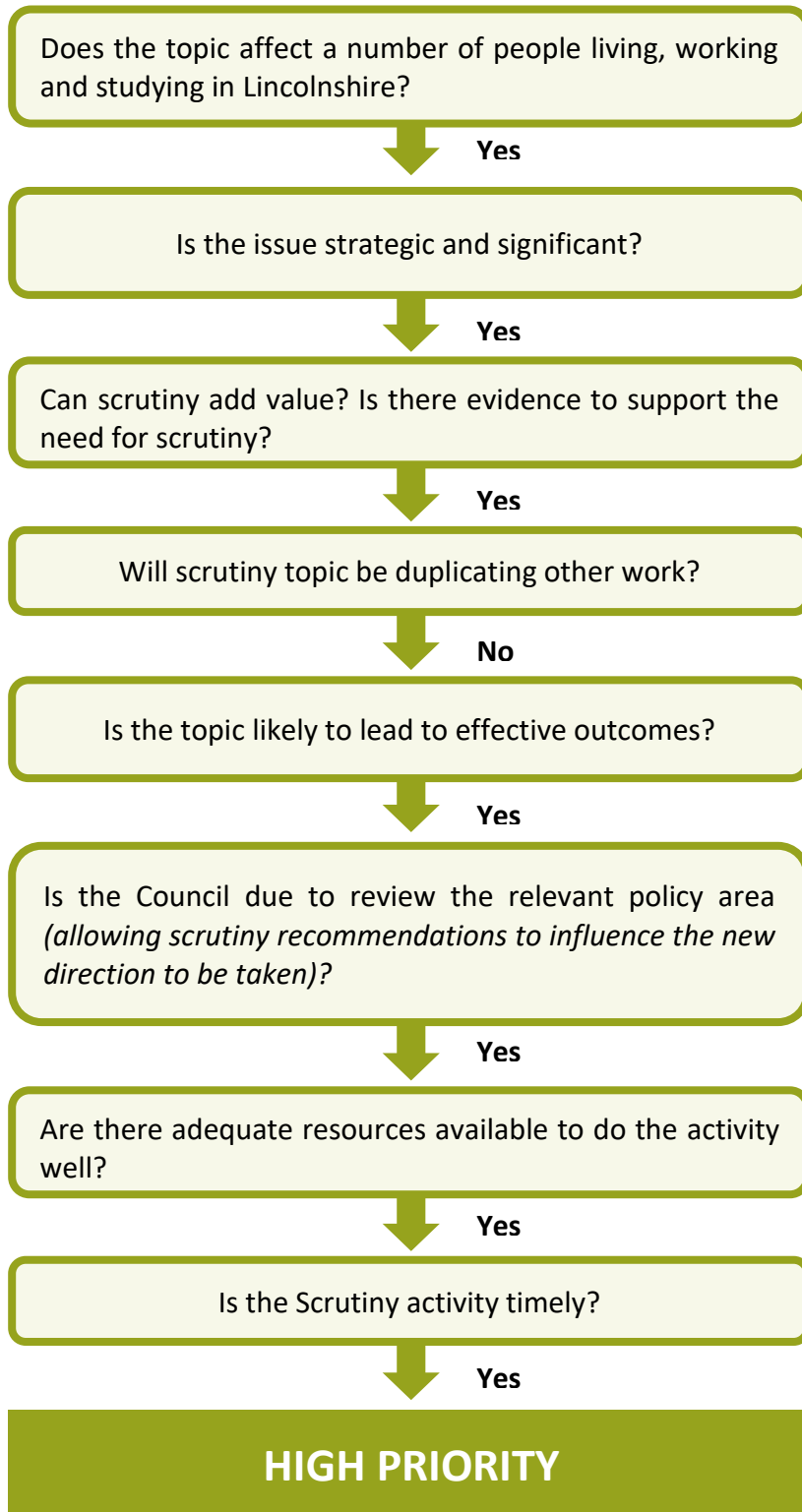


When considering the scope and impact of a Scrutiny item it is important to consider the following areas:

- 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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