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<b>Report Track:</b>	<b>Customers &amp; Corporate Scrutiny Committee Only</b>

## **CUSTOMERS & CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**29 JUNE 2017**

### **WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017-18**

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To set out the draft work programme for the Customers & Corporate Scrutiny Committee for 2017-18.

#### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Committee review the draft work programme for 2017-18 and advise on what they wish to include for the forthcoming year (see Appendix 2).

#### **3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The scrutiny structure has been designed to ensure effective accountability for the delivery against the Council's key outcomes set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-18.
- 3.2 The Customers & Corporate Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the priority for Customers.
- 3.3 The Customers & Corporate Scrutiny Committee is encouraged to identify issues that relate to this priority and/or are a priority for local people and communities. If a matter is a recurring issue for the people you, as Councillors, represent, the likelihood is that it is something that the Committee should consider. The more relevant the issue is to local communities then the greater the likelihood of engaging those communities in the scrutiny process and of producing outcomes that will be visible to those communities you represent. Guidance on selecting reviews is included in the Scrutiny Toolkit attached at Appendix 1.

- 3.4 Members are invited to comment on the draft Work Programme attached at Appendix 2. Members are also encouraged to propose issues that could be included for consideration in the work programme. The work programme may be revised during the year as necessary.

#### **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The remit of the Customers & Corporate Scrutiny Committee is linked to the Council's corporate priority for Customers.

#### **5 Report Detail**

##### **Background**

- 5.1 The Customers & Corporate Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the priority for Customers.
- 5.2 The Council has identified 2 strategic objectives for this priority. The Committee has responsibility for holding the relevant Cabinet Member to account in regard to delivering the following strategic objectives:
- Delivering Council services that are customer centred and accessible; and
  - Making the best use of limited resources.

##### **Developing the Work Programme**

- 5.3 To support Members in their Scrutiny role and in particular in developing a work programme a Scrutiny Toolkit has been produced; a copy is attached at Appendix 1.
- 5.4 In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:
- Is the matter a concern to local people? (You may wish to reflect on topics raised with you when canvassing).
  - Is the issue an identified priority for the Council or partners?
  - Does the issue relate to an area of service with a trend in weak performance?
  - What difference could scrutiny make?
  - What would happen if you did not look at this issue?
- 5.5 To further assist Members in developing the work programme:
- A copy of the PDP for Customers is attached at Appendix 3; and
  - details of the services that fall within the remit of the Committee, together with key projects and topical issues, are given in Appendix 4.

- 5.6 The Work Programme can be revised during the year to reflect emerging priorities, but it is important to plan ahead and allow time for reports to be prepared and invitations to be sent to relevant parties.
- 5.7 Whilst it is for the Committee to determine what they want to include in the Work Programme, a draft Work Programme is attached at Appendix 2 to this report which includes some standing items (eg PDP updates) and some suggestions as to potential reviews.

### **Undertaking the Scrutiny reviews**

- 5.8 Once Members have identified the matters they wish to scrutinise, consideration should be given to scoping the subject in more detail including the timing and method of scrutiny to be used. Support in this process will be given by the Lead Officer for the Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.9 Members may wish to:
- Allocate the work to a small working group of Members to investigate the issue over a period of 2-3 months (this may involve visits to see how services are working in practice);
  - Invite expert witnesses to give their views;
  - Seeking the views of service users and/or the general public.
- 5.10 Members should also consider what they can do to support the review eg:
- Undertaking research eg via the internet;
  - Seeking the views of ward members or specific interest groups

### **Reporting on Scrutiny Reviews**

- 5.11 In addition to reporting to the Committee on the outcome of any reviews, the Committee may wish to make recommendations to Cabinet or another Committee.
- 5.12 At the year end, the Chair of the Committee will prepare a report for Council on the outcome of the Committee's Work Programme.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

Any costs to be incurred in undertaking any review will need to be contained within existing budgets.

### **6.2 Legal**

None

**6.3 Human Resources**

None

**6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)**

None

**6.5 Human Rights Act**

None

**6.6 Data Protection**

None

**6.7 Risk Management**

The key aspects of risk management in regard to scrutiny work programmes are:

- ensuring that there are clear outcomes from the scrutiny process that impact positively upon the services users/communities within the District and link to corporate priorities; and
- that there is adequate capacity for the committee to complete the work that has been agreed.

**6.8 Equality & Diversity**

The Council has a responsibility to undertake adequate Equality Impact Assessments to ensure services do not have a negative impact on any one section of the community and the scrutiny committees have a role in ensuring that this responsibility is fulfilled, particularly in regard to health impact. Scrutiny as a function must also comply with the relevant legislation. When considering work programme items, especially when undertaking reviews of policy, the scrutiny committees must always consider whether their recommendations may impact differently on various individuals/sections of the community.

**6.9 Best Value**

Work programmes which are effectively prioritised will ensure that scrutiny activity is focused where it can be of greatest benefit.

**7 Appendices to the Report**

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Toolkit

Appendix 2: Draft Work Programme

Appendix 3: PDP for Customers for 2017-18

Appendix 4: Overview of services and issues falling with the Committee's remit

**Previous Consideration**

None

**Background Papers**

None

Appendix 1

**Overview and Scrutiny  
Toolkit**

# Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This toolkit aims to help Members of the Scrutiny Committees to understand their role and the work of the Scrutiny Committees. It provides guidance on how to undertake reviews.

The toolkit should be read in conjunction with the Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committees which can be found in Part 3, Section 16 of the Constitution

## **WHAT IS SCRUTINY?**

Overview and scrutiny is one of the most important mechanisms by which councillors can improve the lives of local people through good governance. Overview and scrutiny places members at the heart of policy-making and holding the Cabinet to account.

But, however good an authority is in terms of its processes, 'successful' overview and scrutiny has to involve tangible and substantive outcomes. This means that Scrutiny Committees must be able to demonstrate that they have:

- Held the decision-makers to account;
- Supported the development of effective policies and initiatives, which have a beneficial impact on the community;
- Contributed significantly to continuous improvement in services;
- Positively impacted on the work and outcomes of partners;
- Had an effect on local people's lives.

## **UNDERSTANDING SCRUTINY**

Overview and scrutiny was established in the Local Government Act 2000, which was amended variously in 2003, 2007, 2009 and 2011. The Act gives significant flexibility to local areas as to how they carry out scrutiny, but all councils operating under the leader-cabinet system (of which Cannock Chase is one) must have at least one overview and scrutiny committee.

Overview and scrutiny committees have, in law, power to require cabinet members and council officers to attend, to require that information be provided in a format which the committee can specify, and to require that cabinet makes a response to any recommendations which the committee might make.

Other Acts of Parliament give additional powers to scrutiny to hold other partner organisations to account – in particular, local NHS bodies and organisations who sit on local Community Safety Partnerships. Overall, a good rule of thumb is to note that scrutiny, further to changes made by the Localism Act 2011, may look at anything which "affects the authority's area or the area's inhabitants".



It is likely that, irrespective of scrutiny's legal powers, negotiation and discussion will be a precursor to the invitation of any non-council partner to a scrutiny meeting.

Scrutiny helps the Council review decisions and policies and question whether they are right for the Cannock Chase District. It monitors the Council's own achievements against its planned targets. It enables reviews to be carried out in relation to services provided by partners on issues of public concern.

In undertaking these roles, Scrutiny aims to engage service users and the wider public.

The scrutiny process provides the opportunity for members of the Council to examine services provided, to ask questions on how decisions have been made, to consider whether service improvements can be put in place and to make recommendations.

Scrutiny members assist in developing the Council's objectives through their work programmes.

Scrutiny members will conduct time-limited reviews in order to make recommendations for the Cabinet or Council to consider. Committee Chairmen, will, where appropriate, run meetings as informally as possible by promoting discussions between members and invited guests who may be service users or external experts who can offer advice to the review.

## **THE SCRUTINY ROLE**

Scrutiny does not have just one role, but many; examples are given below:

- Holding the executive to account
- Policy review
- Policy development
- External scrutiny of partners
- Improvement, performance management and review
- Ensuring corporate priorities are met
- Engaging partner organisations
- Engaging the public
- Providing satisfying and meaningful roles for non-executive councillors

This handbook examines how to undertake the four key roles for overview and scrutiny at Cannock Chase Council:

- Policy development and review;
- Holding the executive to account;
- Performance management and review;
- External scrutiny of Partners.

## **1. Policy Development and Review**

### What is Policy Development and Review?

Policy development involves shaping the formulation of key plans and policies, through examining alternatives against needs, resources and other issues. It involves a committee or group of members looking at an issue long enough before a decision is made to allow scrutiny's work to influence what that decision ultimately looks like.

Policy reviews can take a number of different forms: 'big picture' reviews, for example, reviewing the impact of housing policy within an authority; or more focused reviews, for example, reviewing the decoration allowances schemes. Usually, the focus is on examining whether the intended policy outcomes have been achieved, but committees could explore other issues such as take-up of services, awareness, the processes involved and so on.

This role can be interpreted as the "overview" side of overview and scrutiny. It is about adding value by influencing policy, and decisions, well before it is implemented.

## **2. Holding the executive to account**

### What is holding the executive to account?

This comprises two principal aspects:

- Scrutinising decisions before they are implemented – known as the Call-in Procedures.
- Scrutinising decisions taken after they have been implemented.

The role can be interpreted as the 'scrutiny' side of the overview and scrutiny role; examining executive agendas, minutes, forward plans in detail and using call-in or other mechanisms to comment or intervene in the decision-making process.

### Call-in Procedures

A key function of a Scrutiny Committee is to hold the Executive to account for the discharge of its functions including scrutinising Executive decisions before they are implemented – known as "Call-in".

The full call-in procedure is set out in the Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained in Part 4, Section 31, of the Council's Constitution.

Call-in can be used whenever an Executive decision, which is not made under Special Urgency Rule 15 of Section 28 of the Constitution (Access to Information Procedure Rules), is not yet implemented. The effect is to prevent implementation until the relevant Scrutiny Committee has examined the decision and made no referral and recommendation to either Cabinet or Council, or the referral has been decided by Cabinet or Council in favour of the decision.

Legally, councillors may cite any reason for a call-in. However, in the interests of good governance and ensuring that members can consider the proposal meaningfully, there must be a sound reason to do so; for example:

- (a) Members have evidence which suggests that the Executive did not take the decision in accordance with the principles set out in Section 10 of the Constitution (Decision Making);
- (b) Proportionality (action was not appropriate to the outcome);
- (c) The decision has detrimental financial or social effects;
- (d) Professional advice had not been followed;
- (e) The decision has not been made in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework. (In these circumstances the Members of a Scrutiny Committee may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer).

Following a debate on the Call-in, the Scrutiny Committee may:

- (a) reject the motion;
- (b) refer the decision back to the Cabinet for reconsideration with a Recommendation; or
- (c) refer the matter to full Council with a recommendation for a decision

Any Member proposing that a matter be called-in should first discuss this with the appropriate Portfolio Leader or in his/her absence the Council Leader or Deputy Leader. This provides opportunity for detailed explanation of the decision and further information. While it is not legally required that Members proposing the a matter be called in should do this, it is strongly recommended given that this may either result in a mutual agreement that a call-in is not necessary and the issue resolved through other means, and/or it may help the Member to propose the call-in in a way that makes productive dialogue on the issue more likely at committee. It will also help the Portfolio Holder to be able to engage constructively with the call-in proposal as it progresses – for example by providing evidence to the committee.

### **3. Performance Management and Review**

Scrutiny Members have a key role to play in helping to improve the performance of the authority. They do this by assessing performance data against performance indicators and also scrutinising external performance and inspection reports.

The Council's performance management framework provides a regular cycle of reporting of performance information to Scrutiny via the respective Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) for each Committee.

## **4. External Scrutiny of Partners**

### What is external scrutiny?

The primary purpose of external scrutiny is to scrutinise the work and impact of external agencies (partners) on a council's community. These may be other public agencies such as health service organisations or voluntary and private sector organisations. It is worth noting that the division between "internal" and "external" scrutiny is increasingly blurred, as councils deliver more and more services in partnership with a range of other bodies. However, for scrutiny, the relationship with partners is managed under different legislation, which may require that a different approach is taken.

The Council has established a Health Scrutiny Committee under the provisions of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012) to act as a lever to improve the health of local people.

The Health Scrutiny Committee encourages participation from the Clinical Commissioning Group and looks at ways to address health inequalities within the District. The Committee also scrutinises the work of NHS bodies.

## **WHO DOES WHAT?**

Cannock Chase Council now has 4 Scrutiny Committees based on the Council's Corporate Plan and strategic objectives:

- Customers and Corporate
- Economic Development and Town Centres
- Health, Culture and Environment
- Housing, Crime and Partnerships

## What are the responsibilities of the Scrutiny Committees?

The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committees are laid out in Part 3, Section 16, of the Council's Constitution and are summarised below:

Scrutiny Committee	Terms of Reference
Customers and Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Customers &amp; Corporate PDP</i></li> <li>• Corporate Issues</li> <li>• Budget Consultation</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Civic Support</li> <li>• Corporate &amp; Support Services – i.e. HR, Governance, Legal, Technology, Communications, Customer Services (inc. Social Alarms)</li> </ul>
Economic Development and Town Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Economic Development and Town Centres PDP</i> (including Education)</li> <li>• Economic Development and Planning</li> <li>• Building Control</li> <li>• Markets</li> <li>• Land and Property Holdings (excluding HRA property)</li> <li>• Town Centre Regeneration</li> <li>• Performance Management of the Locality Partnership Plan for “Increased Economic Prosperity”</li> </ul>
Health, Culture and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Health, Culture and Environment PDP</i></li> <li>• The Statutory Functions of the Council's Health Scrutiny Committee under <u>the Health and Social Care Act, 2001 and Regulations made under that Act</u></li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>• Environmental Health and Licensing</li> <li>• Local Taxation and Benefits</li> <li>• Culture and Sport (including Parks and Open Spaces)</li> <li>• Bereavement Services</li> <li>• Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance</li> <li>• Waste &amp; Engineering Services</li> <li>• Countryside Service, Trees, and Allotments</li> <li>• Environmental Protection and Private Sector Housing</li> <li>• Performance Management of the Local Partnership Plan for “Improved Health and Wellbeing”</li> </ul>
Housing, Crime and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Housing, Crime and Partnerships PDP</i></li> <li>• The Housing Service</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> <li>• CCTV Partnerships</li> <li>• Performance Management of the Locality Partnership Plan for “Increased Community Safety”</li> </ul>

## **DEVELOPING THE WORK PROGRAMME**

Members have a key role to play in developing the work programme for the Scrutiny Committees and it is important that manageable programmes are developed. The Scrutiny Committees will need to filter potential items of work; to be selective and to prioritise.

Given the limited resources available, in particular the constraints on member and officer time, it is unrealistic to select more than a few items for intensive review. Realistically, a single committee cannot undertake more than two in-depth reviews per year.

In developing the work programme Members are encouraged to consider the following questions:

**Public interest** – the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen. Things to think about include:

- Any issues raised with you when canvassing;
- Have any surveys or research undertaken by the Council identified any concerns
- is the issue an identified priority for the Council or partners

**Ability to change** - priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence. Think about what difference Scrutiny could make and what would happen if you did not look at this issue.

**Performance:** priority should be given to areas in which the Council and Partners are not performing well. You should consider, the scale of the underperformance, whether it is a one off or whether there is an ongoing issue. Has the service been flagged up in an external inspection report for poor performance?

**Extent:** priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or a large part of the District

**Replication:** work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication or wasted effort

Work programmes should be determined at the start of each municipal year and reviewed and revised regularly. Any reviews not started or completed by the year end can be referred for consideration as part of the following year's work programme. The best advice is to start small, learn what works well and what does not and then be more ambitious. It is far easier to add items to the workload than to remove them.

Different items may require different approaches. For example, the Scrutiny Committees can examine the Forward Plan, but may only choose to examine one or two items in any depth. Similarly, if the Scrutiny Committee is asked their views by the Cabinet on key policies and plans, such consultation does not have to involve in-depth investigation.

Similarly with reviews, a more selective approach should be taken, examining more problematic areas in greater depth and others with a lighter touch may prove to be more beneficial.

Members will also need to think about how to manage the workload, whether issues are considered by the whole committee, whether a task and finish group is set up or whether 'paired members' or individual 'lead' members are used.



## UNDERTAKING A REVIEW

Scrutiny reviews need to be carefully planned and managed through their various stages. It is suggested that the following approach be adopted for all scrutiny reviews.

Stage 1	<u>Agree the issue</u>
Stage 2	<u>Determine the nature of member involvement</u>  The Scrutiny Committee will agree how the issue is to be investigated and will agree the membership of any working group.
Stage 3	<u>Scoping exercise</u>  At the first meeting, the committee/work group should identify the overarching question for the review (what are they trying to achieve), the information required and the organisations that need to be involved. The timetable of meetings of estimated completion date should also be agreed. Agree the work to be done and who by.
Stage 4	<u>Engage Public and Partners</u>
Stage 5	<u>Gather the evidence</u>  Oral and written evidence
Stage 6	<u>Formulating recommendations and reporting</u>  The data and evidence gathered will need to be reviewed in order to form conclusions and recommendations. The final report will then be presented to the full Committee and Cabinet and/or Council.
Stage 7	<u>Follow-up</u>  Members will need to consider how the review will be followed up or evaluated. It may be helpful to have an action plan or some performance measures to form the basis of any monitoring.

## **Stage 1: Agree the Issue**

The first step is for scrutiny members to be sure that the subject to be reviewed is significant. Undertaking in-depth reviews is resource-intensive – of member and officer resources. Investing such a high level of resources should only be undertaken for **high priority issues**.

The following are criteria which, alongside the PAPER issues from page 9, could be used to ‘check’ a topic against, to ensure that it would make a worthwhile review:

- Issue identified by members as key issue (through members’ surgeries and other constituency activities);
- Performance issues within a service (e.g. significant under or overachievement of targets);
- Service considered to be important by the community (through market research, citizens’ panels and so on);
- High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service;
- Public interest issue highlighted in local media;
- High level of budgetary commitment to policy/service area;
- Persistent financial issues e.g. significant under or overspends.
- Council corporate priority area;
- Central government priority area;
- Issue raised in Inspection Reports
- Issue referred by the Cabinet or the Audit & Governance Committee
- New government guidance or legislation.

## **Stage 2: Determine the nature of member involvement**

The committee will need to decide how members will drive the review. There are three possible approaches to member involvement:

- The whole committee investigates the issue;
- A task and finish working group is established to drive the investigation;
- Individual or paired members drive the review.

For the majority of reviews the first two are likely to predominate, although individual or paired members may be used to review particular aspects of the subject area. Whichever approach is adopted, all activities should be conducted in the same spirit with the same willingness to experiment, challenge and explore different ways of doing things. Members are encouraged to take an active role in reviews, eg undertaking their own research on the internet, through visits, etc.

Vital to the whole review activity is that members take full control of which policy problems and solutions are explored and how that exploration takes place. Members need to take responsibility for, and ownership of, the outputs and outcomes of reviews.

## Stage 3: Scoping Exercise

Any resource-intensive review requires careful project planning and the better the planning *beforehand* the more successful the review will be in the longer term. There are 4 key issues to consider when scoping the review:

- What are the core questions the review is seeking to answer? (no more than 3)
- What is the purpose of the Review? (in one sentence)
- What will not be included?
- What is the timescale?

Careful project management involves drawing up a project plan for the review. Time spent planning is time well spent, and if a review scope is robust it makes it less likely that there will be pressure to modify if once work is under way.

Such a plan should cover:

- A fixed period for the activity
- The creation by members of a 'terms of reference' for the review
- Calling of independent and expert witnesses
- Hearing of evidence from stakeholders, communities and citizens, led by members
- Member visits, information and data collection: qualitative and quantitative
- A series of events at which members sift, discuss and assess evidence gathered
- Checking of member responses to evidence and data with stakeholders, communities, citizens and experts
- Final report to Council and/or Cabinet Decision by Council and/or Cabinet reported to the committee
- Review and up-date of the implementation or development of the policy – with targets and criteria for assessment

## Stage 4: Engage Public and Partners

If Scrutiny Committees are going to realise their potential in terms of contributing to the community leadership work of their authorities, then they have to engage the public and partners. Developing such an outward focus is challenging for overview and scrutiny. Before starting the review, Members should consider *whether* and *how* to best engage the public and / or partners.

Consideration could be given to the following:

- Can the public/partners/ be involved as participants in the review?;
- Can the public/partners serve as co-opted members?;
- Can the public/partners be invited as observers/spectators?;
- Can the public/partners be invited as witnesses to give evidence?

## Stage 5: Gather the evidence – written and oral evidence

Careful consideration will need to be given to the timescale for gathering, analysing and presenting evidence. A balance will also need to be struck between written and oral evidence.

### Written and Secondary Evidence

This stage of the review involves the following:

- Calling for written evidence from a range of internal and external individuals and organisations. This very much follows the parliamentary select committee approach. It is likely to be ineffective in and of itself, unless the subject under study is one of considerable public interest;
- Reviewing existing internal council plans, policies, strategies, and reports which are relevant to the subject area;
- Reviewing relevant Government guidance, legislation and documentation;
- Reviewing relevant guidance, good practice guides from national and regional bodies (such as LGA, Centre for Public Scrutiny);
- Reviewing good and innovative reports and plans from other authorities.

It is likely that a significant amount of evidence will have been gathered to contribute to the scoping of the report (see above). Members will then need to return to the same documents to review them in light of the focus that has been agreed for the review.

### Oral Evidence

If the authority has gathered written evidence from a range of organisations, then it can use this evidence as a guide for inviting a selected number of organisations to provide oral evidence to the committee or panel.

Generally, internal witnesses would include:

- Relevant cabinet member(s);
- Relevant senior officers;

External witnesses can be drawn from a wide range of individuals and organisations. Scrutiny has the power to invite anyone, but not many people can be compelled to attend, so care and delicacy is usually required when approaching people – particularly those who are likely to be unfamiliar with local government and the scrutiny process.

Potential invitees might include:

- Members and officers from other local authorities;
- Senior officers from external local public agencies e.g., health authorities, Learning and Skills Councils and so on;
- Senior officers from external regional public agencies e.g., Government Officers, Local Enterprise Partnerships ;
- Representatives from local voluntary sector organisations, regional organisations and national organisations;
- Representatives from professional associations;
- Representatives from trade unions;
- Representatives from the private sector (chamber of commerce and so on);
- Representatives of user groups (local, regional, national);
- Community representatives;
- Recognised experts in the subject area (academics, public or private sector managers).

A successful witness package needs to consider:

- Who are the key stakeholders whose views should be represented?
- How do we ensure a good balance between different views?
- Who will make good witnesses (in a public setting)?
- Who is likely to be intimidated by a formal setting?
- Would a more informal/localised setting be more beneficial?

When inviting witnesses to a meeting, there are a number of issues which should be considered:

Determining the right location

Many oral hearings are best undertaken in committee rooms which can be properly equipped for such work. However, some meetings which intend to gather oral evidence are better undertaken outside of the civic suite, for example in schools, community centres, leisure venues and so on. Such meetings can have very specific advantages:

- They can increase partner and public turnout and engagement in the process;
- More local, less formal, surroundings can put witnesses more at their ease.

Getting the right layout

For a formal oral hearing, the parliamentary select committee's horseshoe table layout is particularly effective. This is likely to be most appropriate where a witness – a council officer or cabinet member – is being held to account.

Briefing witnesses beforehand

It is important that internal and external witnesses are given a clear briefing of what to expect beforehand.

Where possible, witnesses should be given a indication of the areas/themes to be covered at the meeting

At the meeting, the Chairman should explain the role of the working group, its terms of reference and the process to be followed at the meeting. The witness should be given the opportunity to ask questions in order to clarify their role.

Checking evidence with witnesses

It is always good practice to send written records of oral hearings to witnesses to ensure accuracy.

Other Methods

Gathering written and oral evidence are not the only methods available to Scrutiny Committees; other examples are listed in the table below. The skill is to match the review with the appropriate methods.

<b>Scrutiny Processes and Activities:</b>	
Internal Processes	Discussions within meetings
	Officer reports and presentations
	Interviewing officers
	Interviewing executive members
	Desk-based review of internal and external documentation, e.g. relevant strategies, policies and budgets, reviewing webcasts and other online media
	Site visits within the authority
External Processes – general	Interviewing expert witnesses
	Visit to other authorities and other organisations
External Processes – engaging partners	Co-option of representatives of partner organisations
	Joint working party with partner organisations
	Interviewing representatives of partner organisations
	Visits to view work of partners
	Workshops/discussions with partners
External processes – engaging the public and users of the service	Co-option of representatives of user groups
	Interviewing representatives of user groups
	Workshops with representatives of user groups
	Public meetings
	Press releases and media launches

There is no specific funding available to cover any costs associated with organising visits or other expenses. However, it will generally be possible to cover minimal costs from within existing service budgets. Where it is not possible to do this, the Scrutiny Committee would either need to consider alternative ways of gathering the information that they require or they will need to submit a request to establish a budget to the Cabinet in the first instance.

## **Stage 6: Formulating Recommendations and Reporting**

Members will need to review the data and evidence that has been collected to form their conclusions and recommendations and draft their report. Support will be available from officers to assist in drafting reports

Good reports:

- Are evidence-based, outlining the written, oral and other evidence presented to the committee;
- Are brief;
- Are user friendly, written in plain English;
- Use, where relevant, photographs, graphs, charts and other visual aids to engage the readers;
- Include a brief, concise summary;
- Include a small number of SMART (specific, measurable, accurate, realistic and timely) recommendations.

Sending draft reports to those individuals and organisations who provided evidence is also seen as good practice. Participants should also be given the opportunity to comment on any recommendations relating to their area of participation. This process also allows factual errors to be identified, and disagreements with conclusions noted – something which may affect how the final recommendations are drafted.

If a working group has been established, its report and recommendations must be presented to and approved by its “parent” Scrutiny Committee before referring it to Cabinet. Cabinet should then be given the opportunity to comment on reports and it should determine its response to reports and action any agreed recommendations. Legally, Cabinet is obliged to respond to scrutiny within 2 months of recommendations being submitted, and the scrutiny committee may specify what form this response should take.

Any decision of the Cabinet in respect of the report will be referred to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee together with its observations.

## **Stage 7: Follow-up**

Follow-up is key to successful reviews. Progress reports on actions taken from the review are valuable six months after the initial review has been completed. On completion of the review, Members should consider what follow-up action will be taken, and this should be taken account of in the way that recommendations are framed.

Sometimes issues may arise which do not merit a formal report but which a Scrutiny Committee or Chairman consider are worth raising with the Cabinet Member or Senior Officer. There is nothing to prevent this being done through informal dialogue but the Committee may wish to seek feedback on how the issue is to be taken forward.

**Appendix 2****Proposed Work Programme for 2017-18 for  
the Customers & Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>
29 June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• End of Year Outturn for Customers PDP for 2016-17</li><li>• Annual Report on Work of the Committee for 2016-17</li><li>• Work Programme for 2017-18</li></ul>
14 November 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customers PDP Progress Report April to September 2017</li><li>• Peer Review – Progress Update</li></ul>
12 March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customers PDP Progress Report October to December 2017</li></ul>

**Suggestions for Reviews:**

- Customer Access Strategy



**Customers & Corporate Priority Delivery Plan 2017-18**

	<b>Target 2017-18</b>
<b>Customers: Delivering Council services that are customer centred and accessible</b>	
Customer contact data	93% calls answered
Use of Online Forms	410
E – Payments Transactions – Payments made via the Council’s website	20,000 (5,000 per quarter)
Payments made via the Council’s automated telephone payment system	20,000 (5,000 per quarter)

<b>Strategic Objective</b>		
<b>Delivering Council services that are customer centred and accessible</b>		
<b>Action &amp; Progress Update</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>Develop and implement a Customer Interaction Strategy</b>	Customers have clarity as to the standards of service that they can expect to receive Increase the ways customers can interact with the Council via digital means	Draft Strategy to be completed by 31 January 2018 for consideration by Leadership Team.

<b>Strategic Objective</b>		
<b>Making the best use of limited resources</b>		
<b>Action &amp; Progress Update</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Development and delivery of an action plan to take forward the recommendations from the Peer Review	Improve the resilience and efficiency of the Council	A draft action plan will be completed by April 2017. This will set out the timetable for implementation of actions.
<b>Prepare outline business cases for sharing the following services:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Control, Planning Policy and Land Charges;</li> <li>• Environmental Health; and</li> <li>• Information Governance</li> </ul>	FRP option	Outline business case to be considered by Strategic Board April 2017 and then on to Cabinet June 2017. A timetable for implementation will be prepared if Cabinet approves the outline business case.
Develop proposals for delivery of savings of £94k from the Stafford led shared services, as part of the FRP process, for delivery in 2018/19	FRP option	September 2017
Review of call handling operation between the Contact Centre and the Social Alarm Service	FRP option	Work on this can only commence once the Social Alarms team have moved into the Civic Centre in October 2017. Greater integration between the teams should be completed by March 2018.
<b>Reduce the opening days/hours for the Revenues &amp; Benefits reception and enquiry service for 2017/18 as follows:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rugeley Area Office – to 2 days per week; and</li> <li>• Hednesford Library – to 1 day per week.</li> </ul> <p>Usage of the enquiry Services to be monitored from April 2017 and reported to members in Q3 enabling consideration of options re ongoing service provision.</p>	FRP option	<p>The revised service starts in April 2017.</p> <p>There will be a monitoring report to Members in Quarter 3.</p>

<b>Strategic Objective</b>		
<b>Improving skills and accessibility to local employment opportunities</b>		
<b>Action &amp; Progress Update</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
A strategy is to be developed regarding the Apprenticeship Levy		A draft strategy for 2018-19 will be submitted to Leadership Team in Quarter 3.

**Appendix 4****Services and Issues falling within the  
Customers & Corporate Scrutiny Committee's remit**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Sub-Areas</b>	<b>Key Projects and Issues</b>
Corporate Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget Consultation</li> </ul>	Monitoring delivery of the savings options arising from the Financial Recovery Plan process (these are included in the PDP)
Governance and Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Audit</li> <li>• Insurance, Risk Management and Health &amp; Safety</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Democratic &amp; Electoral Services</li> <li>• Emergency Planning and Business Continuity</li> <li>• Policy &amp; Performance (includes Equality &amp; Diversity and Consultation &amp; Engagement)</li> <li>• Public Relations</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Data Protection and Freedom of Information</li> <li>• Customer Services</li> <li>• Social Alarms</li> </ul>	<p>Equality &amp; Diversity Policy being reviewed</p> <p>Data Protection Policy being updated and Information Governance Policy being prepared</p> <p>Customer Access Strategy is being developed</p>
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Management</li> <li>• Treasury Management</li> <li>• Budget Management</li> <li>• Creditors and Debtors</li> </ul>	
Civic Support		
Stafford Led Shared Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Technology (including Reprographics)</li> <li>• Legal</li> </ul>	