

APPENDIX 2

CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING TOPICS FOR REVIEW

| Criteria for Selecting Items |
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| ▪ Issue identified by members as key issue for public (through member surgeries, other contact with constituents or volume of complaints) |
| ▪ Poor performing service (evidence from performance indicators/benchmarking) |
| ▪ Service ranked as important by the community (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels) |
| ▪ High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels/complaints) |
| ▪ Public interest issue covered in local media |
| ▪ High level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area (as percentage of total expenditure) |
| ▪ Pattern of budgetary overspends |
| ▪ Council corporate priority area |
| ▪ Central government priority area |
| ▪ Issues raised by External Audit Management Letter/External audit reports |
| ▪ New government guidance or legislation |
| ▪ Reports or new evidence provided by external organisations on key issue |
| ▪ Others |

CRITERIA FOR REJECTION

| Potential Criteria for Rejecting Items |
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| ▪ Issue being examined by the Cabinet |
| ▪ Issue being examined by an Officer Group : changes imminent |
| ▪ Issue being examined by another internal body |
| ▪ Issue will be addressed as part of a Service Review within the next year |
| ▪ New legislation or guidance expected within the next year |
| ▪ Other reasons specific to the particular issues. |

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SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

| DO |
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| ◆ Remember that Scrutiny <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Is about learning and being a "critical friend"; it should be a positive process◆ Is not opposition |
| ◆ Remember that Scrutiny should result in improved value, enhanced performance or greater public satisfaction |
| ◆ Take an overview and keep an eye on the wider picture |
| ◆ Check performance against local standards and targets and national standards, and compare results with other authorities |
| ◆ Benchmark performance against local and national performance indicators, using the results to ask more informed questions |
| ◆ Use Working Groups to get underneath performance information |
| ◆ Take account of local needs, priorities and policies |
| ◆ Be persistent and inquisitive |
| ◆ Ask effective questions - be constructive not judgmental |
| ◆ Be open-minded and self aware - encourage openness and self criticism in services |
| ◆ Listen to users and the public, seek the voices that are often not heard, seek the views of others - and balance all of these |
| ◆ Praise good practice and best value - and seek to spread this throughout the authority |
| ◆ Provide feedback to those who have been involved in the review and to stakeholders |
| ◆ Anticipate difficulties in Members challenging colleagues from their own party |
| ◆ Take time to review your own performance |

| ◆ DON'T |
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| ◆ Witch-hunt or use performance review as punishment |
| ◆ Be party political/partisan |
| ◆ Blame valid risk taking or stifle initiative or creativity |
| ◆ Treat scrutiny as an add-on |
| ◆ Get bogged down in detail |
| ◆ Be frightened of asking basic questions |
| ◆ Undertake too many issues in insufficient depth |
| ◆ Start without a clear brief and remit |
| ◆ Underestimate the task |
| ◆ Lose track of the main purpose of scrutiny |
| ◆ Lack sensitivity to other stakeholders |
| ◆ Succumb to organisational inertia |
| ◆ Duck facing failure - learn from it and support change and development |
| ◆ Be driven by data or be paralysed by analysis - keep strategic overview, and expect officers to provide high level information and analysis to help. |

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KEY QUESTIONS

Overview and Scrutiny Committees should keep in mind some of the fundamental questions:-

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| Are we doing what users/non users/local residents want? |
| Are users' needs central to the service? |
| Why are we doing this? |
| What are we trying to achieve? |
| How well are we doing? |
| How do we compare with others? |
| Are we delivering value for money? |
| How do we know? |
| What can we improve? |

INVESTIGATIONS:-

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| To what extent are service users' expectations and needs being met? |
| To what extent is the service achieving what the policy intended? |
| To what extent is the service meeting any statutory obligations or national standards and targets? |
| Are there any unexpected results/side effects of the policy? |
| Is the performance improving, steady or deteriorating? |
| Is the service able to be honest and open about its current performance and the reasons behind it? |
| Are areas of achievement and weakness fairly and accurately identified? |
| How has performance been assessed? What is the evidence? |
| How does performance compare with that of others? Are there learning points from others' experiences? |
| Is the service capable of meeting planned targets/standards? What change to capability is needed. |
| Are local performance indicators relevant, helpful, meaningful to Members, staff and service users? |