

Title of Report:	Scrutiny topic acceptance criteria
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	30 October 2012

Purpose of Report: To obtain agreement of the criteria against which suggested topics will be measured for acceptance for review by Overview and Scrutiny

Recommended Action: That the amendments to the scrutiny acceptance criteria are adopted.

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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 18 September 2012, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission resolved that the criteria against which suggested topics for scrutiny review are assessed should be updated. This report reminds Members of the existing criteria and sets out suggested changes.

2. Background

- 2.1 The existing criteria were established to provide transparency, through guidance, to those who might have suggestions of topics for examination by overview and scrutiny. They also provided an agreed mechanism through which those engaged in scrutiny could assess the suitability for review of topics coming forward from the public or other Members of the Council.
- 2.2 As most of the scrutiny workload is internally generated, reference to the criteria is not frequently made but their objective nature allows them to still serve a useful purpose in ensuring that scrutiny work remains focussed on appropriate matters over which it has the ability to exercise influence.

3. The acceptance criteria

- 3.1 The criteria in operation currently are a product of their time and some may have lost their currency. The table below sets out the existing criteria, along with recommendations for retention, amendment or deletion.

Item	Criterion	Recommendation
01	The issue is an area of key public concern (e.g. as identified through Members surgeries, constituents' concerns, the Annual Satisfaction Survey, raised in the local media, etc).	Retain but remove reference to the defunct Annual Satisfaction Survey
02	There is evidence of poor performance within this Service area (i.e. through performance indicator data, experience of Members, etc).	Retain
03	It is a budgetary area in need of examination to ensure value for money is being obtained.	Retain
04	There has been a pattern of budgetary overspends within this area.	Retain
05	It is a key area as identified through Local Area Agreement (LAA) priorities and targets.	Delete as the LAA is no longer extant
06	It is a corporate priority for the Council as published within the Council Plan.	Retain

07	It has an external focus (e.g. scrutiny of the Council partners, Government Agencies, utility providers, private sector companies, etc).	Retain
08	It is a Central Government priority area.	Retain
09	It is an area where the Council is weak (e.g. as measured against CPA criteria, identified by the Audit Commission, etc.)	Delete
10	It is an area of new Government legislation that has significant implications for the Council.	Retain

3.2 It has been the practice that the acceptance guidance has been accompanied by rejection criteria. The table below sets out the existing criteria along and it is recommended that these are retained in their entirety.

Item	Potential Criteria for Rejecting Topics
01	The issue is being (or due to be) examined by the Executive, an Executive Task Group, a Policy Development Commission or other internal body.
02	New legislation or guidance is expected within the next year.
03	There is restricted scope to influence or change the current practices (e.g. budgetary constraints, control over external agencies, etc).

4. Recommendation

4.1 It is recommended that the amendments to the scrutiny acceptance criteria are adopted.

Appendices

There no appendices to this report.