



**PLANNING, MONITORING, PERFORMANCE AND ACTION  
RECORDING IN LOCALITY MEETINGS**

We support the processes of delivery and Transparency, and allow Planning, Monitoring and Action Records to be developed at our meetings that are open to the public. The most basic records to have recordings of meetings for our own purposes. The procedure applies to both meetings.

Let us look at a general starting point that also allows us to record a meeting. Please email the Chairman or you yourself at [locality@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:locality@derbyshire.gov.uk)

If a meeting is to be recorded the Chairman will discuss the terms of the meeting before the start of the public part. It is the right to record from their participation in a meeting from the recording. Please make your own record to the Chairman.

The Chairman has absolute authority to terminate or suspend recording of the meeting if it becomes abusive, intimidating or so as to obstruct the running of the meeting. It is the duty of the public to ensure no recording.

# Understanding Scrutiny

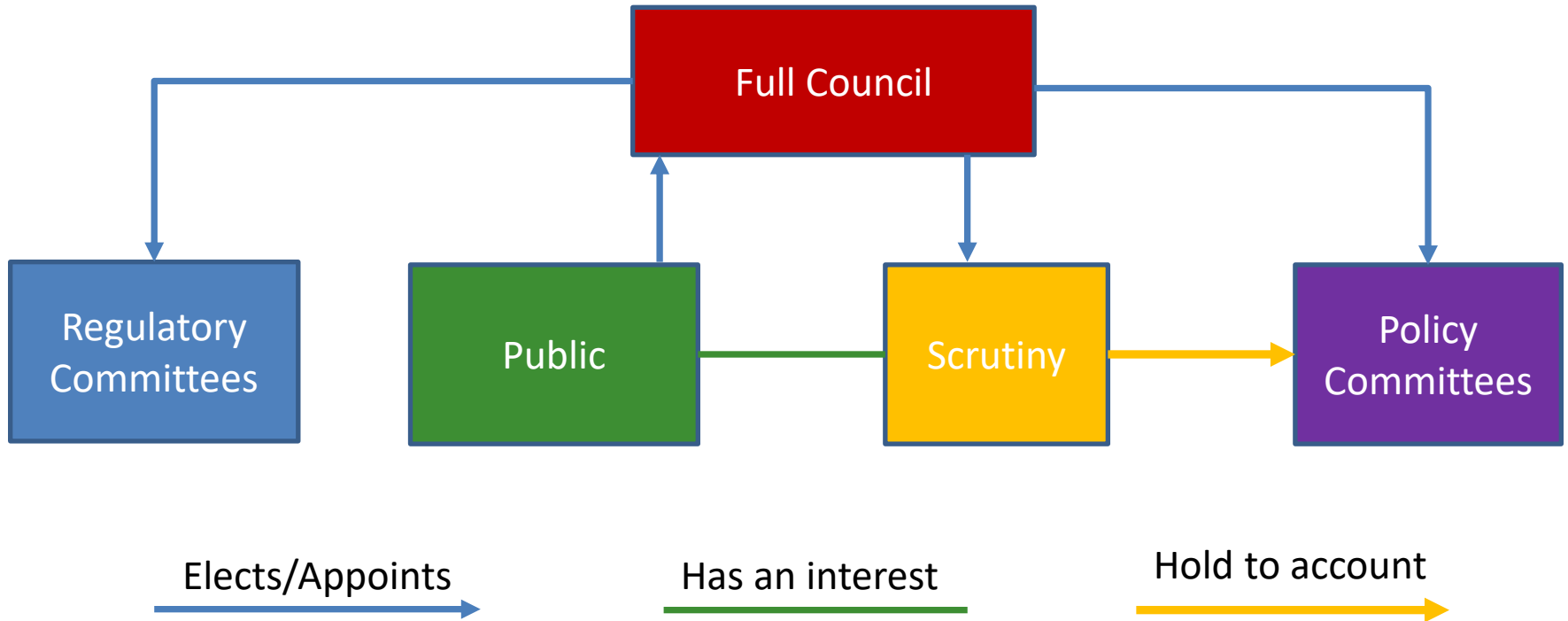


# What we will cover today

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- Council Governance
- Basic Principles
- Scrutiny's power and authority
- Role and responsibilities of scrutiny
- Scrutiny culture
- Scrutiny work programme
- Building blocks of effective scrutiny
- Good preparation
- Objective and key lines of enquiry
- Approaches to questioning
- Key components of effective questioning
- Types of questions

# Council Governance and Decision Making



# Key Documents for scrutiny

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## **Council Constitution** = rulebook

- How the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures to follow
- Sets out Terms of Reference, responsibilities and authority – read parts on scrutiny

## What scrutiny should be aware of ...

- Corporate Plan
- Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan
- Forthcoming Decisions – Forward Plan of Decisions



# Scrutiny Powers

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Local Government Act 2000

- Power to look at anything which affects **“the area or the area’s inhabitants”**
- Power to **access information**
- Power to **require attendance of Chairs of Policy Committees and senior officers** to be held to account or give evidence
- Power to require **response to recommendations**
- Power to **call-in** decisions of Policy Committees, subject to criteria



# Basic Principles of Scrutiny

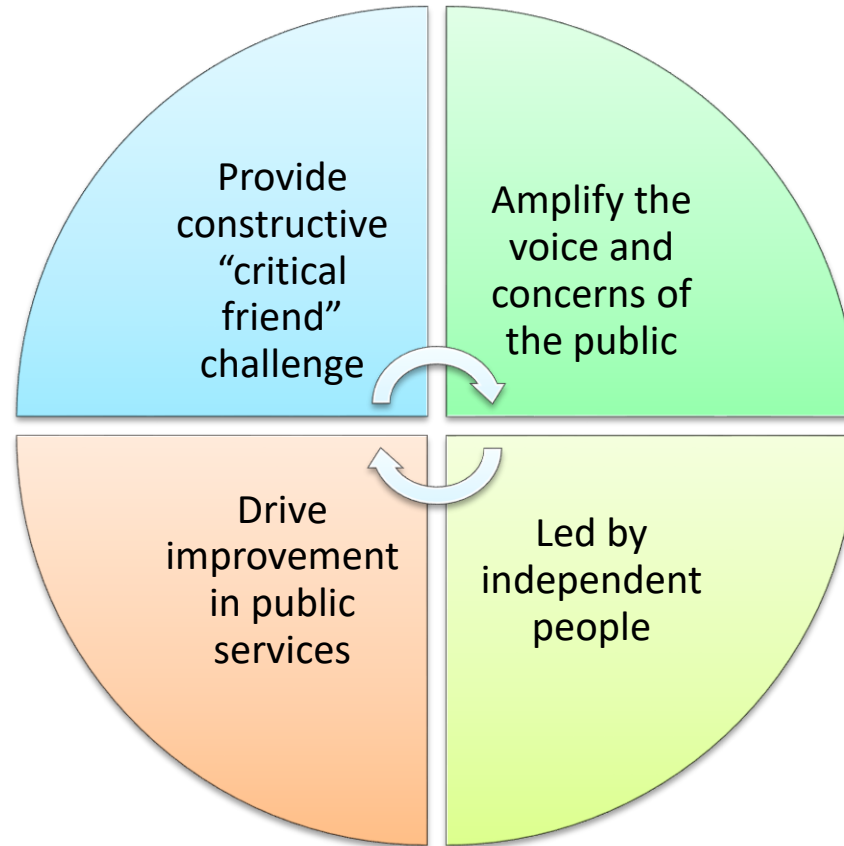
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**scrutiny** *n.* close examination, careful inspection. 1415 *scrutinie* the taking of a formal vote to choose someone or decide some question; borrowed from Latin *scrūtini-um* a search, inquiry, from Latin *scrūtārī* to examine, investigate, search, rummage (as through trash), from *scrūta*, pl., trash, old things, rags, of uncertain origin. The meaning of close examination, careful inspection, is first recorded in 1604. —**scrutinize** *v.* subject to scrutiny. 1671, formed from English *scrutin(y)* + *-ize*.

# Basic Principles of Scrutiny

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Scrutiny should ...



# Role of Scrutiny

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- Test assumptions
- Explore alternatives
- Support policy development
- Hold to account
- Develop substantive recommendations



“If scrutiny members are not fully prepared and able to ask relevant questions, the committee will not be able to fully interrogate an issue and committee meetings can become little more than educational sessions for councillors to learn about a service, rather than scrutinise it”

**House of Commons CLG Select Committee report, December 2017**



# Expectations of the role

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1. Who is scrutiny for?
  2. What skills are needed?
- Play to your strengths
  - Do the background research
  - Invest in building relationships
  - Make best use of resources available
  - Be committed = have an influence



# Scrutiny culture

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Scrutiny will be most effective with the following elements underpinning its culture

- Clarity of purpose
- Cross-party
- Inclusive
- Collaborative
- Shared expectations
- Robust challenge, but not adversarial
- Objective
- Constructive



# Scrutiny in practice

- Is the rationale for scrutiny clear?
- Is the topic a high Council priority and of significant public concern?
- Is the topic best scrutinised as an agenda item? Task and finish group? Longer review?
- Are there sufficient resources for this scrutiny activity?
- Are there likely to be effective recommendations or better outcomes through scrutiny?



# Scrutiny work programme

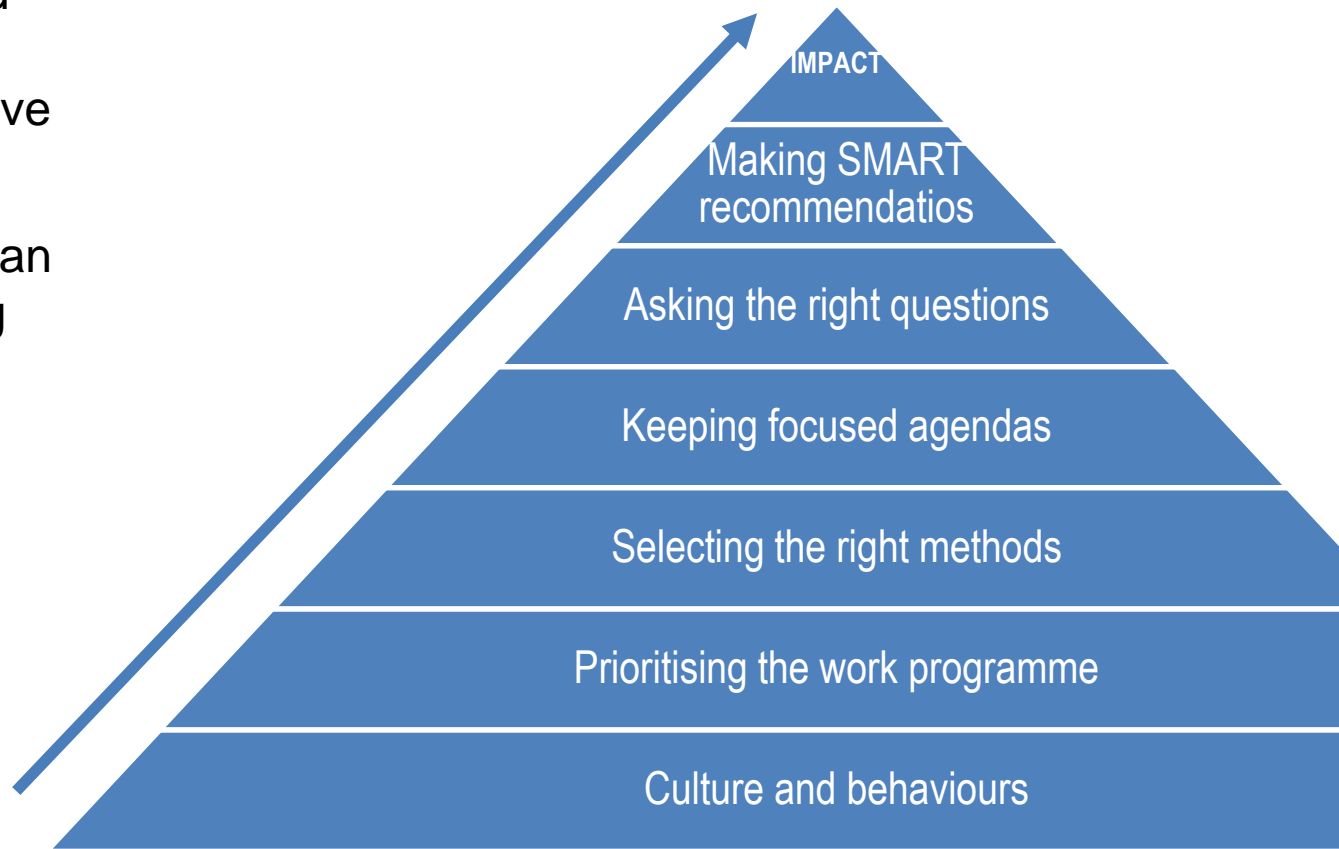
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- Member led
- Clear process and methodology
- Criteria for topic selection
- Align with Council's strategic priorities
- Reflect community interests
- Look into significant risks/ opportunities
- Will it result in outcomes?



# Building effective scrutiny

- The right culture and behaviours are the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function.
- If you want to make an impact each building block needs to be in place.



# Group Discussion

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1. What is the purpose of questioning i scrutiny?
2. Who should scrutiny hold to account through questioning?
3. How would you frame questions to different people? –  
e.g. Committee Chairs, Outside Bodies, Service Users, Experts



# Good preparation

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1

- A pre meeting gives space to plan and co ordinate questioning as a team

2

- the whole committee should be clear on the overall purpose and specific objectives of each topic on the agenda

3

- developing key lines of enquiry within a questioning strategy for relevant and constructive questions with follow ups

# Objectives & key lines of enquiry

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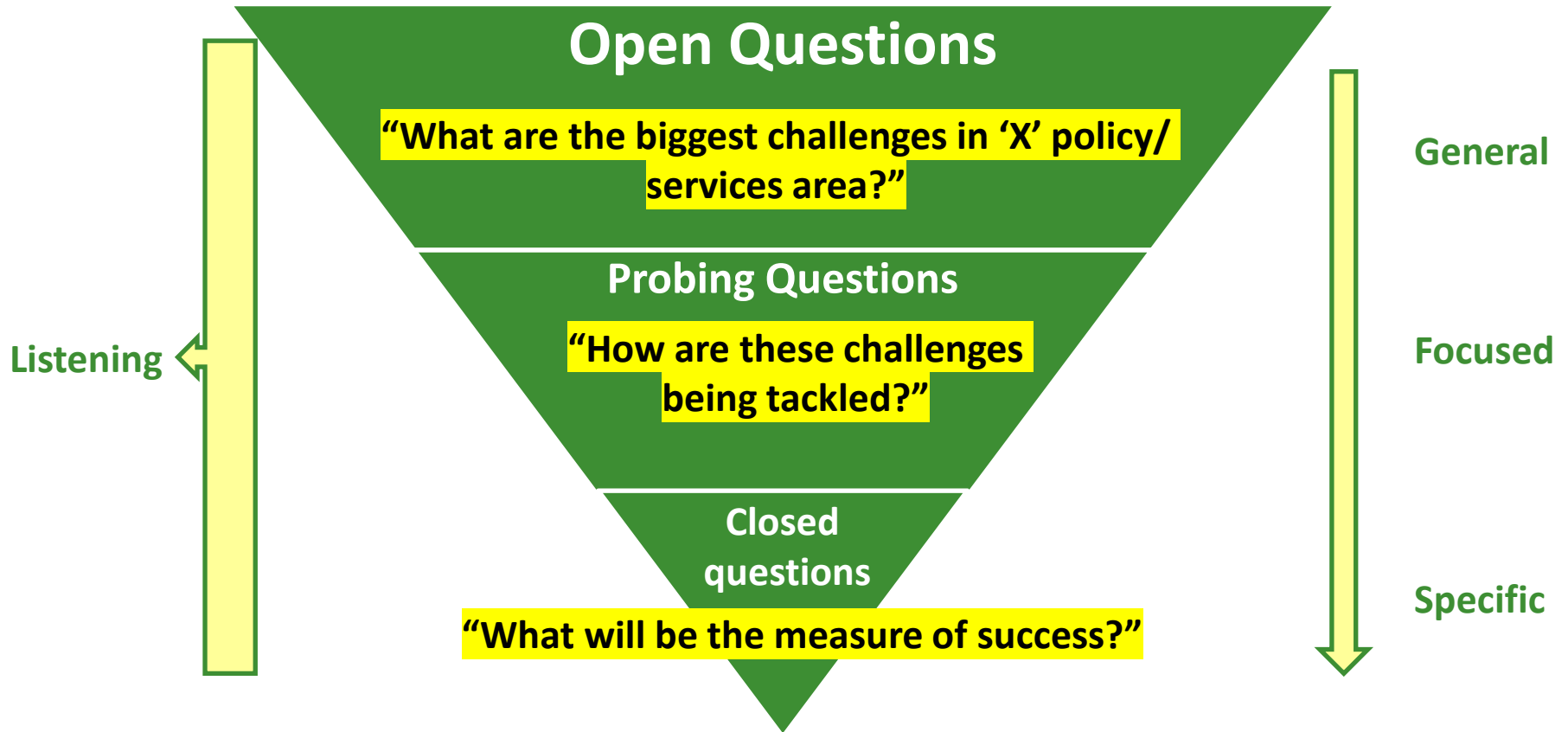
- Build questions around themes to focus and explore the subject key lines of enquiry (KLOE)
- Link objectives to KLOEs per your questioning strategy
- Questions are the roadmap
- Requires a good prep and a degree of 'stage-managemer



# Key lines of enquiry






1. Is there the <b>leadership capacity and capability</b> to deliver high quality services?	2. Is there a clear <b>vision</b> and credible <b>strategy</b> to deliver high quality services and robust plans to deliver?	3. Is there a <b>culture</b> focused on high quality and sustainable services?
4. Are there clear responsibilities, <b>roles</b> and systems of accountability to support good governance and management?	<b>Are services well led?</b>	5. Are there clear and effective processes for managing <b>risks</b> , issues and <b>performance</b> ?
6. Is appropriate and accurate <b>information</b> being effectively processed, challenged and acted on?	7. Are the <b>people</b> who use services, the public, <b>staff</b> and <b>external partners engaged</b> and involved to support high quality sustainable services?	8. Are there robust systems and processes for <b>learning</b> , continuous <b>improvement</b> and <b>innovation</b> ?

# Questioning and listening process



# Active listening

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	Uses body language
	Builds trust
	Broadens your perspective
	Increases understanding
	Helps form recommendations

# Types of questions: Open and Closed

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**Open Questions** – allow the respondent to share all the information they have. Helps set the scene and ascertains their perspective on matters

*“What are your thoughts regarding the provision of X service?”*

**Closed Questions** – Where a simple yes or no answer is needed, such as when checking a fact. Closed questions are harder to avoid and easier to challenge. Needs to guard the committee’s “independence”

*“Did you ...?”*

*“Can you ...?”*

*“Will you ...?”*

*“Have you ...?”*





# Types of questions: Probing

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**Reflecting Questions** – These are used to clarify something which has been said, and to get the respondent to speak about a subject in more depth.

*“You said that ...”*

*“Talk me through ...”*

*“Explain to me ...”*

**Extending Questions** – Extending questions invite the respondent to offer more information, and to elaborate on what they have already said.

*“How else could ...?”*

*“Give me an example ...?”*

*“Could you tell me more about ...?”*



# Types of questions: Probing

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**Linking Questions** – Linking up the respondent’s comments with information that the scrutineer requires is an effective way to politely guide and control the exchange.

*“You mentioned earlier that ... how would you...?”*

*“Can I pick up on the question that one of my fellow councillors asked a moment ago and ask ...?”*

**Hypothetical Questions** – The use of hypothetical frameworks allows the witness to answer a question from a safer theoretical position and may encourage them to explore issues more in-depth.

*“If we were to try ... what might happen?”*

*“How might residents be affected if ...?”*



# Types of questions: Probing

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**Comparative Questions** – These can be used when the scrutineer wants to compare situations, approaches or to benchmark..

*“What has it been like since ...?”*

*“What difference has ... made?”*

*“How do other authorities test for the same problems?”*

**Challenging Questions** – This method allows the scrutineer to ‘dig deeper’ into an issue and discover how decisions are formed..

*“How is that measured and who made that judgement?”*

*“Can you give me an example of why you think project was successful?”*



# Group discussion

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- Scrutiny is **not** ...?

For you to reflect on after this session:

***What can you do an individual member, and as a committee, to use your influence and ensure impact?***

# Work Programming

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# What makes a good work programme

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- Member-led
- Clear process and methodology – use criteria and selection tools
- Design with the end in mind: objective, outcome, opportunity
- Understand context: people, priorities, politics
- Plan what is achievable: capability, competence, capacity
- Draw on Members' skill and knowledge
- Use your resources: officers, partners, experts (inc. residents)
- Reflect community interests and council priorities
- Be flexible – work planning is an ongoing process
- Aim for impact!



# Designing the work programme

## Mapping Concerns

- Discovery phase of designing the work plan
- Ideas formation & longlisting
- '4 conversations': public, members, officers and partner
- 'Mini scopes'

## Prioritising concerns

- The next step is to identify the most significant issues
- This should be an inclusive activity
- Devise a criteria to prioritise (importance & impact)
- Agree priorities and set objectives

## Selecting scrutiny methods

- The final challenge is to shape topics into practical activities
- Consider, for example, which issues of concern will be best addressed by:
  - In depth inquiry
  - Task and finish
  - Standing panel

# Information, advisors, witnesses

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- Corporate Plan
- Other strategic documents / delivery plans
- Forward Plan of Decisions
- Monitoring information: performance data, risk registers, complaints data
- Evidence from external sources: peer reviews, LGO
- Officer recommendations
- Partner organisations
- Community groups
- Town and parish Councils

- What information is needed?
- What advice is also essential?
- Who can assist in the process?
- Who is being scrutinised?

# Scrutiny Committee Chair

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Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny provides the following definition

- Responsible for scrutiny's profile, influence and ways of working
- Needs an ability to lead and build a sense of teamwork and consensus
- Needs to guard the committee's "independence"

# Ensuring impact

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How have your efforts ...

- made a difference?
- Initiated change?
- Improved performance?
- Affected outcomes for residents and communities?
- Impacted on policy and services?

# Questions

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