

SCRUTINY – IDENTIFICATION OF A TOPIC 2023-24

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The objective of the report is to provide the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) with an option for a planned approach for the progress and completion of a scrutiny review in the context of the Scrutiny Manual and Framework as part of the Committee's scrutiny role for 2023-24.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
- 2.1.2 Consider and approve the planned proposal for work in 2023/24 in relation to the outstanding scrutiny topic, specifically 'fly-tipping' which has been identified in accordance with the agreed process of assessment which is detailed in the Scrutiny Framework and Manual.
- 2.1.3 Approve the one topic, specifically 'Fly-Tipping' having been previously identified and partly completed due to data sets being unavailable and to progress this scrutiny review until it is completed allowing maximum benefit across the authority by adding value and supporting continuous improvement.

3 DETAIL

- 3.1 The development of the scrutiny function has progressed successfully and in 2021/22 two scrutiny reviews were undertaken and reported, specifically 'fly tipping' and 'community asset transfer'. However, during the 'fly tipping' review, data which would have been helpful to the review was not available in which to provide a more accurate assessment. It was agreed that such data should be captured by the Council and once this information was available for the Scrutiny Panel to revisit, the information would allow a more complete picture based on new data.
- 3.2 There are no minimum or maximum number of scrutiny reviews that require to be undertaken but such reviews should flow from identifiable 'issues' and where there is a remit taking cognisance of the limitations. A significant amount of resource was used in 2022/23 in the review of the non-statutory public consultations work, which whilst necessary and worthwhile needs to be balanced with available staff resources. In terms of balance in 2023/24 it would be helpful for the Committee to consider that the ongoing work in relation to 'fly-tipping' be concluded and this forms the planned work in relation to Scrutiny for the year, allowing staff resources to be balanced between this type of work, internal audit work and planned training which commences this year for a member of staff normally involved in scrutiny work.
- 3.3 In 2023/24 the Chief Internal Auditor (CIA) plans to engage with the

Committee in identifying scrutiny work for 2024/25 and which can be agreed by the Committee before the start of the next financial year. This process will give the opportunity for all outstanding work to be completed in relation to scrutiny and an advanced plan of areas the Committee may wish to look at as part of the 2024/25 scrutiny year.

Approach to Scrutiny previously agreed by the Committee– Context and Background

3.4 In order to provide newer Members of the Committee more context to the development of ‘scrutiny reviews’; a Development Session was held in April 2021 to establish the process to be adopted by the Committee to identify and prioritise potential scrutiny topics and of the overall approach adopted to scrutiny topics which has been a combination of panel reviews and ‘scrutiny lite’ where relevant officers have been asked to present at Committee or at Development Sessions on topics of interest to the Committee.

3.5 In particular the CIA asked the Committee to consider some key questions. These, and the Committee responses, are summarised in the table below.

3.6

Question	Committee Response
Should Scrutiny topics originate from all members and senior officers or from Committee members?	There needs to be a degree of flexibility to change topics and to be able to react quickly to an ever changing environment. It is for the Committee to determine scrutiny topics.
If topics originate from the committee should this be via discussions at Committee or development sessions?	We may need to meet as a Committee more often however these could be less formal meetings and held virtually. Further thought can be given to this as to some extent it will depend on the number of emerging topics to be considered for scrutiny.
Do we still need an annual scrutiny plan or should topics for scrutiny ‘emerge’ as the year goes by?	We don’t need a plan we should allow items to emerge.
Do we still need the detailed prioritisation process?	The prioritisation process is there as a tool if we need it but we don’t need to use to assess every scrutiny topic.
Do we have the right balance between ‘full blown’ panel approach vs Scrutiny Lite?	There has been value in having the full panels but these are resource intensive and we should look to make use of a scrutiny lite approach where appropriate. Once a topic is decided then the Committee can decide what the best Scrutiny approach to adopt is.

3.7 The CIA has reviewed and updated, where identified, the Scrutiny Framework and Manual in 2022/23 and will do so on an annual basis in order that the

approach to scrutiny work is both focused, appropriate and reflects the best approach taking cognisance of the Committee's views.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The scrutiny process continues to evolve as each review is progressed. Members and officers continue to identify areas for improvement and these will be addressed as they are raised. It is planned that one scrutiny topic will be taken forward for inclusion in the scrutiny work plan for 2023-24, specifically, completion of the outstanding work on 'fly tipping'.

5 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 **Policy - None**
- 5.2 Financial -None
- 5.3 Legal -None
- 5.4 HR - None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty - None
- 5.5.1 Equalities – None
- 5.5.2 Socio-Economic Duty – None
- 5.5.3 Islands Duty - None
- 5.6 Risk – None
- 5.7 Customer Service - None

Paul Macaskill
Chief Internal Auditor
20 June 2023

For further information contact:

Paul Macaskill, Chief Internal Auditor (01546 604108)