

# Scrutiny Topic Referral Form and Guidance

## Guidance Notes

Scrutiny Committees set their work programme once a year, usually between June and July. Once this work programme is set, any topic that an Officer / Member thinks should be added to the work programme has to be approved by the full Committee prior to adding it onto the work programme.

This is usually done at a Committee meeting, where the Committee receives a brief overview of what it being proposed, and they then decide if they would like to add it to the Annual work programme. Scrutiny Committees have limited time and resources and therefore work plans need to be manageable.

It is not possible to include every topic suggested by Members, Heads of Service or the Public in the Work Plan. Successful scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members will need to be selective whilst also being able to demonstrate clear arguments in favour of including or excluding topics.

Scrutiny work programmes should be focused on what outcomes we can achieve within the resources available and adding value to the process. If you have a topic that you think should be added to the work programme, please fill in the attached form with details of what the Committee is being asked to do. You will then need to send this form to [scrutiny@newport.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@newport.gov.uk), where the Scrutiny Advisors will determine which scrutiny Committee it should go to, and provide comment on how the referral fits into the work programme and how it could be undertaken.

For every item on the work programme / new referral, it should be clear:

- What is the issue / activity / project under consideration?
  - *A brief outline of the matter being referred / the question being asked*
- What is Scrutiny being asked to do?
  - *e.g. undertake a full review of the subject? Investigate / interrogate different policy options? Be consulted on final proposals before decision making? Monitor outcomes / implementation?*
- What are the reasons for / expected benefits of involving Scrutiny in this matter?
- Is there a specific deadline for this piece of work?

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## The Referral Process

- All referrals to the Scrutiny Work Programme are considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in the first instance.
- Once you email this form to the scrutiny mailbox ([scrutiny@newport.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@newport.gov.uk)), the Scrutiny Advisors will schedule your referral on the agenda for the next meeting of that Committee.
- You will receive an email back confirming receipt of the referral, and the date of the Committee meeting.
- The form is then sent to the appropriate Heads of Services so that they can comment on the relevance of the suggested topic, and highlight any factors that need to be taken into consideration when deciding whether to conduct a review of the topic.
- The Scrutiny Advisors will also provide comment on the referral in terms of how it fits in with the Scrutiny work programme, which Committee it would best fit with, the priorities set by the Committee and whether the Committee has the necessary resources.
- The Scrutiny Advisors meet with the Chair prior to the agenda being published, and will be in contact with you if the chair has any queries about the referral, or if they have asked for any additional information.
- The final agenda is published 1 week before the meeting. You should receive the agenda from Modern.gov. If you do not, please email [scrutiny@newport.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@newport.gov.uk).
- You will be invited to attend the meeting, to discuss the referral and answer any questions the Committee may have.
- The Committee will weigh up whether the topic meets their agreed selection criteria, whether it fits with the priorities within its work programme, and also how this piece of work should be undertaken.
- After the Committee meeting, the Scrutiny Advisors will confirm with you what was agreed, and discuss with you the next steps if the referral is approved.

If you would like any help filling in this form, please contact:

- Neil Barnett  
[neil.barnett@newport.gov.uk](mailto:neil.barnett@newport.gov.uk)
- Samantha Schanzer  
[Sam.schanzer@newport.gov.uk](mailto:Sam.schanzer@newport.gov.uk)

We would be happy to discuss your suggestion with you and how the topic would fit within the Scrutiny Work Programme. If you wish we can fill the form in on your behalf and send it to you for verification before it is submitted to the Scrutiny Committee.

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<b>Title of topic:</b>	<i>Levelling up funding bids and why they keep failing</i>
<b>Brief description of the topic</b>	<i>Newport City Council have submitted several bids to the UK Government for funding and each one has been rejected .We need to know why and what actions can we take to improve our chances</i>
<b>Scrutiny's Role:</b>	<p><i>Please provide detail of what Scrutiny's role would be in the process: i.e.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>to undertake an investigation and make recommendations to Cabinet</i></li> <li>- <i>Being a consultee on proposals prior to a final decision by Cabinet;</i></li> <li>- <i>.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Lead Officers:</b>	<p><i>Who will be involved with this piece of work? :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Head of Service and Chief Executive</i></li> </ul>
<b>Has this matter been before Cabinet / Council?</b>	<i>Cabinet have approved the bids, but nobody has investigated why they have failed</i>
<b>Who will make a final decision on this matter?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Cabinet</i></li> </ul>
<b>When will a decision on this matter be taken?</b>	<i>Not applicable ongoing until bids stop</i>
<b>What are the timeframes for this piece of work?</b>	<p><i>Please include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>When does scrutiny's involvement need to be completed by? N/A</i></li> <li>• <i>How many meetings do you think you will need to complete the amount of work required for this topic?2-3</i></li> <li>• <i>When would you be ready to start / hold the first meeting? ASAP</i></li> </ul>
<b>Please provide detail of how this work would contribute towards Corporate Priorities and Objectives.</b>	<p><i>Does this piece of work relate to of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> <li>- <i>Wellbeing Plan 2018-2023</i></li> <li>- <i>Corporate Plan 2022-2027</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Successful bids will improve the lives of Newport residents and provide valuable jobs</i></p>
<b>Does this involve any partner agencies?</b>	<i>No, but individuals or organisations could be asked if it was felt to be beneficial</i>

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Please email this form to [scrutiny@newport.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@newport.gov.uk).

To be completed by the Scrutiny Team:

<p><b>Comments</b> <b>Head of Service</b></p>	<p>This is not a relevant topic for presentation to Scrutiny. The bids submitted to UK Government are part of a competitive process. Local Authorities are not guaranteed to receive funding and neither has there been a commitment from UK Government to ensure that all Local Authorities receive such funding – such is the nature of a competitive process. Newport is no different to a number of other UK and Welsh authorities who have been unsuccessful in securing this particular funding. Proposed bids are reported to Cabinet for endorsement and are therefore in the public domain. There is also a significant amount of commercially sensitive content which forms part of the bid which is not appropriate for open discussion or publication.</p> <p>Bids are based on projects or topics which are already identified in the Service Plan which has already been through the Scrutiny process.</p>
<p><b>Comments</b> <b>Democratic and Electoral Services Manager</b></p>	<p>The process of bidding is not within the remit of any Newport City Council committee, as this sits with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The grant funding process is very competitive; In round 1 only 36% of bids were successful, and in round 2 only 21% were successful. Recommendations from a committee would not have any impact on the bidding and selection process within DLUHC.</p> <p>Due to the limited amount of scope for scrutiny to influence the process, this referral does not align with the purpose of scrutiny: a cross-party committee coming together to make a difference to the outcome through acting as a 'critical friend'.</p> <p>The topic does not fit under any Terms of Reference based on the referral request outlined above.</p> <p>The priority of OSMC is to focus on policies that impact all Council areas, and plans and strategies that impact the whole Council; Performance Scrutiny is focussed on the achievement of outcomes and actions within service plans, and progress in improvements. The referral does not fit either of these criteria.</p> <p>With these factors in mind, it is not recommended that this is taken forward as a scrutiny topic, as scrutiny involvement will have limited / no impact on outcomes.</p> <p>This topic could potentially be considered for an information only report that could be shared with committee to provide an update on any known feedback from bids (if there is any) and any additional</p>

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	<p>information that is known to contextualise the overall outcomes of the scheme in general. If an information only report is taken forward it should not contain any commercially sensitive information.</p>
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