
Overview

The scrutiny function provides the opportunity for greater transparency in decision making, policy review and development. Scrutiny may involve services provided by the local authority and/or those provided by external organisations. For scrutiny to be effective, all key stakeholders – for example elected members, external partners and other departments – should be actively involved in scoping and developing plans for the scrutiny activity. These plans should have clear objectives and outcomes which are of benefit to the decision making process, be cost- and time-effective and have a realistic prospect of achieving the desired outcomes. The term 'stakeholders' in this unit refers primarily to elected members but may also include for example other council departments, members of the community and external partner bodies.

Target Group

This unit is appropriate for officers working on scrutiny activities in local government.

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Scope and plan a scrutiny activity

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 obtain agreement with key stakeholders on:
 - P1.1 the scope of the scrutiny
 - P1.2 its expected benefits and outcomes
 - P1.3 its feasibility in terms of stakeholder commitment, risk assessments and available resources
 - P1.4 how the scrutiny relates to organisational goals
- P2 develop a scrutiny plan that includes:
 - P2.1 aims, objectives and expected outcomes
 - P2.2 methodology and schedule
 - P2.3 budget and other resources
 - P2.4 communications
 - P2.5 accountability and control
 - P2.6 links and dependencies
 - P2.7 risks associated with the scrutiny and methods of managing these
 - P2.8 reporting methods
 - P2.9 monitoring and evaluation processes
- P3 ensure the plan is realistic in terms of time and resources and takes any links with related activities into account
- P4 ensure the plan integrates any new approaches with tried and tested methods
- P5 ensure the plan engages the interest, involvement and commitment of key stakeholders
- P6 ensure the schedule integrates with your organisation's decision making processes
- P7 provide all those involved in the project with an adequate briefing on the scope and plans for the scrutiny

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Scope and plan a scrutiny activity

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 the role of scrutiny in the democratic process and how it relates to other parts of the organisation and/or organisations
- K2 relevant decision making structures and processes inside and outside your organisation
- K3 legislation, regulations, guidelines and codes of practice relevant to the scrutiny process
- K4 best practice planning and managing scrutiny processes
- K5 the importance of facilitation in your role
- K6 the importance of building relationships with key stakeholders, building trust and involvement and 'leading upwards'
- K7 how to enable constructive challenge
- K8 the different roles and responsibilities of the relevant people involved in planning and preparing a scrutiny activity
- K9 principles, processes, tools and techniques for scoping and planning scrutiny processes
- K10 the types of issues and developments you should take into account when scoping a scrutiny activity
- K11 how to assess and manage risk
- K12 risks and contingencies common to scrutiny activities
- K13 key stakeholders – the individuals or groups who have an interest in the success of the scrutiny activity, including external stakeholders
- K14 general organisational policies, practices and activities that may affect the scrutiny activity
- K15 the overall vision, objectives and plans of the organisation and any other relevant programmes of work or processes being undertaken

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Scope and plan a scrutiny activity

Additional Information

This unit covers the following types of scrutiny activities:

**Scope/range
related to
performance
criteria**

- 1 review
- 2 budget scrutiny
- 3 performance management
- 4 specialist areas (for example, diversity)
- 5 external scrutiny
- 6 call-in
- 7 pre-decision scrutiny
- 8 where others have the duty to consult

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Scope and plan a scrutiny activity

Behaviours

You must show that you work in the following way

- 1 you show sensitivity to internal and external politics that impact on your area of work
- 2 you identify clearly the value and benefits to people of a proposed course of action
- 3 you show sensitivity to stakeholders' needs and interests and manage these effectively
- 4 you constructively challenge the status quo and seek better alternatives
- 5 you display a curiosity to learn and try out new things
- 6 you keep people informed of plans and developments
- 7 you present information clearly, concisely, accurately and in ways that promote understanding
- 8 you balance risks against the benefits of taking risks
- 9 you focus personal attention on specific details that are critical to achieving successful results
- 10 you take personal responsibility for making things happen

Links to other NOS

- 1 A51 Take effective decisions
- 2 C11 Manage your own resources and professional development
- 3 C22 Maintain and develop effective working relationships in local government
- 4 C32 Facilitate the implementation of local government legislation, regulations and procedures

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Scope and plan a scrutiny activity

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