Approaches to Scrutiny/Process models

Approach 1 - Select Committee style

This is the most in-depth and resource intensive method of scrutiny and could be used where one or more of the following criteria are satisfied:

- High potential for service improvement - Substantial evidence of an issue
- Controversial/political
- Formal (parliamentary) approach to gathering evidence
- Need for high degree of transparency

This approach should adopt established project management techniques. Each stage will provide the information required for the next stage. In brief those stages are as follows:

- **Stage one -Plan and Prepare**
- **Stage two -Scrutiny investigation** – Identifying the issues
- **Stage three - Options** - determining what needs to change in the future
- **Stage four-Proposals and Recommendations** - report to Cabinet on findings of scrutiny
- **Stage five -Implementation -** Following Cabinet's endorsement, production of the final report and outline improvement plan. The Portfolio Holder and service department will need to develop the detailed Improvement Plan, which should include targets, resources (financial costs/savings), responsibilities and timescales, to be approved by the OSC.
- **Stage six-Monitor and Review -** Improvement progress will be reported to the appropriate OSC by the responsible service Department(s). The timings would be in keeping with the Corporate Performance Management Framework.

It is important to emphasise that this is an indicative model to use in planning a select committee style scrutiny project. It is not intended as a rigid blue print.

Approach 2 – 'Task and finish' sub-group

This would involve delegating responsibility for investigating a specific area/issue to a sub-group of an OSC. This method could also usefully facilitate a crosscutting issue spanning one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees. This method could be used where one or more of the following criteria are satisfied:

- The need for a sensitive and safe environment (e.g. witnesses)
- To allow in-depth, off-line investigation and gathering of evidence
- To ensure a representative but focused approach
- To allow the space for off-site visits

Warwickshire
County Council

The task and finish sub-group would undertake the scrutiny project 'off-line' and report back to the committee on completion.

Approach 3 – 'PerceptionTest' Scrutiny

On occasion, there is the need for a quick, uncomplicated scrutiny exercise. On the back of an issue being identified, Members may wish to call in members of the community, service users, partners or others for sounding-out, to test perceptions and share early views. Feedback from such sessions would then allow a decision to be made as to whether there is the need for a more in-depth scrutiny.

Approach 4 – Question Time.

These managed sessions would be held as part of the OSC meeting, allowing members to ask questions relating to a specific service area or subject e.g. question time with Portfolio Holder or 'call in' of a Cabinet item. This method could be used where one or more of the following criteria are satisfied:

- To test the potential for Service Improvement

- To pursue individual Member interest

- For informal/ad-hoc questions

- Where there is limited evidence only of an issue

- To ensure high transparency

- To allow all the Committee to participate

This approach would need to follow constitutional protocol for submission of questions, and the process would need to be enhanced to ensure that a 'line of questioning' can be followed rather than a series of set, stand-alone speeches.

Warwickshire
County Council