

# Scrutiny Public Engagement Strategy

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This Public Engagement Strategy was approved and adopted by the Scrutiny Improvement Group on 7 July 2015.

## **Aim**

The aim of this strategy is to provide constructive methods to maximise public engagement within the Scrutiny process, to fulfil the role of Scrutiny to communicate and engage with the public and enable the voice and concerns of the public to be fed back.

As part of this strategy, we will look at:

- Generally raising the awareness of the Scrutiny process, including how and when members of the public can get involved.
- Specifically during the scrutiny review process, how we can ensure that we seek the views of the public as a matter of course.
- How the views of the public can help to inform the Scrutiny Committees forward work programme and topic selection.
- Ensuring that Scrutiny Committee meetings are accessible to the public and look at ways we can increase public understanding and awareness of the Committee process, including when and how they can have their say.

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## Raising the overall awareness of Scrutiny

This section outlines what we will do to generally raise the profile of Scrutiny and make meetings more accessible to the public, with the aim that if more people know what Scrutiny does, then more people will have the opportunity to get involved.

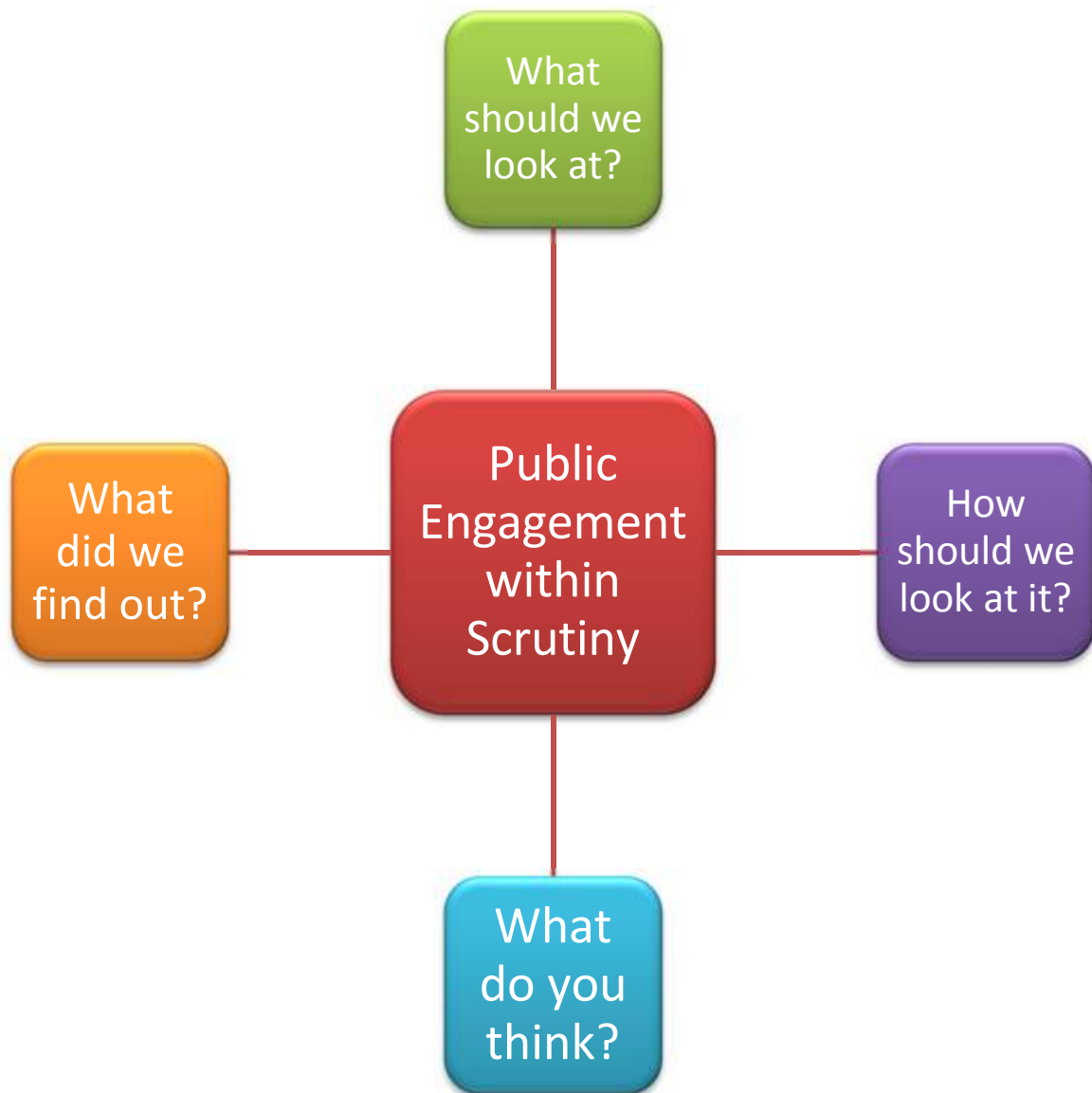
We will:

- Ensure that the meeting room for Committee meetings are set out in way that makes it accessible to any public attending, for example:
  - Nameplates for all Members and officers;
  - Set areas for the Chair, Committee members and Officers to sit around the table, to give clear indication to members of the public of roles and responsibilities of those around the table;
  - Designated area for the public, which is clearly identifiable;
  - Spare agendas and papers for the meeting clearly available in the public gallery;
  - 'Procedure cards' located in the public gallery to let any public attending what the process is;
  - Better 'signposting' to the Committee room, with a copy of the agenda front sheet on the door.
- Provide regular updates on the current, planned and completed work of the Scrutiny Committees on social networking sites, the website and Newport Matters.
- Commit to holding meetings in local venues, where appropriate and linked to topics of specific interest to local areas.
- Ensure that feedback forms are placed in the public gallery at Committee meetings to seek the views of any public attending the meeting.
- Seek the feedback of any external invitees attending Scrutiny Meetings.
- Establish and maintain a database of stakeholders who get involved with reviews to be able to contact them for future relevant work that might be of interest to them.
- Consider using the on live-streaming facility to broadcast the meetings live and provide an on-line archive record.
- Consider how meetings are publicised meetings in advance, and look at ways in which details of topics that will be discussed in these meetings can be publicised.

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## Ways of Engaging with the Public



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What Should we Look at?

Informing the Choice of Scrutiny Topics

This section outlines the ways that we will improve how the public can get involved with what topics the Scrutiny Committees choose to include on the work programme, and/or undertake a review on.

To enhance public involvement in informing the choice of topics for Scrutiny, we will:

- Circulate a request for suggested topics to selected stakeholders annually, to inform the development of the annual work programme, and feedback the outcome of any suggestions back to the stakeholders.
- Invite ideas for topics using Newport Matters, website, citizens' panel and social networking sites. This will include an interactive web form and leaflet to allow requests for topics throughout the year and include a paper version of this form in Newport Matters.
- Where appropriate, commit to developing a forward work programme that identifies suitable scrutiny topics that are also of public interest and / or find a public interest 'angle' for topics to increase the likelihood of engagement.
- Develop a mechanism for members of the public to suggest areas for scrutiny and be able to address the Committee if considered appropriate by the Committee.

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How should we look at it?

Informing the scoping of Scrutiny Topics

This section outlines how we will increase the opportunity for public involvement at the scoping stage of a review, and when developing the project plan to make sure that the Committee is looking at the 'right' areas of that topic.

To improve public involvement in informing the scoping of topics for Scrutiny:

- For each review undertaken, we will produce a summarised project plan that concisely outlines the subject of the review, the intended outcome of the review and the approach the review will take. This will be then shared publically, and specifically with identified stakeholders, to encourage input into the review.
- Within the project plan, we will identify any stakeholder groups and make contact with these groups or representatives to seek their views on the scope of the investigation, and to establish any other relevant research that may be required.
- We will include a public engagement section as standard within each review as part of the scoping stage, including undertaking a stakeholder analysis to inform the individuals/groups that the review will seek to engage with and identifying the most appropriate methods to use. This will be undertaken for each individual topic, and the stakeholders will be specific to the project.
- Publish the project plan on the Newport City Council website and seek views on the proposed scope and approach.
- Promote the review or topic through Social Media, citizens' panel, Keep Me Posted and/or press release if appropriate.
- Look at establishing a enhancing the scrutiny section on the website

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What do you think?

Contributing evidence as part of a scrutiny review

This section looks at how we can obtain information from the public as part of the evidence gathering stage of an investigation / review. To do this we will:

- Seek written submissions as a matter of course for all scrutiny investigations using a combination of generic calls-for evidence and/or targeting specific stakeholders.
- Consider 'launching' a review to try and attract media coverage and raise the profile of individual reviews – the timing of 'launches' could also be considered to maximise the likelihood of media coverage.
- Place a short summary of each review (once underway) on the website and social media explaining the purpose of the review and how the public can provide evidence/views as part of the review process.
- Consider using different methods to gather evidence from the public, such as the citizens' panel and Keep Me Posted, depending on the review and what type of information we are trying to obtain.

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what did we find out?

Informing about the outcomes of reviews and decisions taken

This section considers how we will keep the public informed of the outcomes of a review once the investigation has been completed. By this stage we should have encouraged participation throughout each stage of the review, therefore this section is more about informing those who did get involved and the wider public about what the conclusions or outcomes were.

To do this we will:

- Send finalised review reports to stakeholders for comment prior to the full Committee consideration.
- ‘Publish’ final reports along with a stakeholder event, where appropriate.
- Issue a press release to accompany the publication of a report.
- Summarise the findings of each review in Newport Matters and on the scrutiny webpages.
- Publish a link to the finalised review on social media and issue through Keep Me Posted.
- Seek feedback from those involved in reviews on the scrutiny process, how easy it was for them to engage in the process / access information about scrutiny.