

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 4 April 2013

ANGUS MODEL FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

This report proposes a framework for conducting scrutiny reviews and presents a Scrutiny Review Handbook which provides a guide and templates for conducting the reviews

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Scrutiny & Audit Committee:-

- a) agree the Angus Model for conducting scrutiny reviews
- b) agree the broad timetable for review stages
- c) agree the handbook and contents
- d) note that, as part of the management restructure, a senior officer will be identified to support the Convenor in his coordinating role and to initiate the first canvassing exercise
- e) note that the leadership development process will be the medium by which lead officers are identified to support the individual scrutiny panels
- f) note the canvassing exercise for the first tranche of reviews will commence in April

2. INTRODUCTION

The remit of the Scrutiny and Audit Committee includes the requirement “*to commission an annual programme of reviews of service performance and/or the implications of policy decisions subject to the latter not being undertaken until at least six months after implementation*”

At the Scrutiny and Audit development day (report 125/13 to this committee refers) a proposed Angus Model for the commissioning and conduct of reviews was discussed and Officers were remitted to work up the model, prepare a handbook of guidance and bring both to this Committee for consideration and agreement.

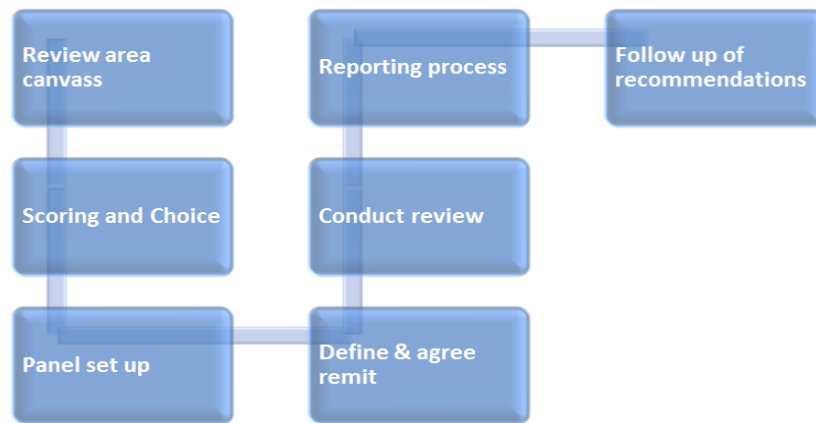
3. THE PROPOSED ANGUS MODEL

The objectives of the model are to ensure:

- a) there is a robust process in place for determining the topics of reviews
- b) topics chosen for review are linked to the corporate priorities and objectives and are sustainable over time
- c) reviews improve council performance and service delivery

The proposed model will incorporate a canvassing exercise to identify 3-4 topics per annum to form a programme which will be discharged through the medium of scrutiny panels akin to the member officer group process. Reviews reports with recommendations will be placed before full council or the appropriate committee after both officer and Scrutiny and Audit committee considerations. The Scrutiny and Audit committee will follow up the discharge of recommendations.

The model proposed follows the steps below:-



More detail on the stages of the model and the Officer support to be provided is shown at Appendix I and within the scrutiny handbook at [Appendix 2](#).

4. REVIEW TIMETABLE

It is proposed that reviews will be conducted in the August to June period as follows:

Canvass for Topics	April/May
Scoring by Committee	June
Review Period	within the August to June period

The length and time commitment of each review will be determined by the scope and remit.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This is a fundamental step forward in the scrutiny arrangements of the council, going beyond the statutory scrutiny requirements. It is accepted that this is a new role for the Committee and, as the process beds in, changes may need to be made. Committee members are fully committed to bringing their own skills and abilities to the process to move forward the transformation agenda and better serve the people of Angus.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications arising directly from this report. The current expectation is that support for scrutiny reviews will be managed from within existing resources, albeit it will consume staff time which will not be available for other purposes. There may be a cost in securing external input to reviews where required but the expectation is that this would be rare and would be funded from within existing budgets. In the event that resource issues arise these can be considered as part of the budget process for future years alongside the potential financial benefits which would be hoped to arise from review activity.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising directly from this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues contained in the report fall within an approved category that has been confirmed as exempt from an equalities perspective.

9. CONSULTATION

The Director of Corporate Services, Head of Law and Administration and Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

RICHARD STIFF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Sections 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

JW
5 March 2013

Proposed Angus Model for Scrutiny Reviews

- a. There will be an annual canvass of members and senior officers to identify potential areas for review.
- b. There will be an initial filtering exercise which will exclude topics which are:
 - already being examined by an Officer group
 - being examined by another internal group or body
 - being addressed as a BV or efficiency review in the next year or so
 - subject to new or revised regulation, legislation or guidance in the next year or so
- c. The remaining topics will be scored against a number of criteria which are detailed in the scrutiny handbook at appendix 2. The top 3 or 4 topics will be recommended to the committee to form the review programme for the year.
- d. Briefing notes/reports on areas which are not chosen for review by the Committee may be requested of Directors/Head of Service or may be referred to Internal Audit for consideration within the audit plan.
- e. Each review will have its own scrutiny panel set up which will include an appropriate mix of:
 - Members of the Scrutiny and Audit Committee (excluding the Chair who will act in a coordinating role and any Convener or Vice Convener of another council committee if the review is considering matters significant to the remit of that committee)
 - A nominated lead officer
 - Council Officers
 - An external expert
 - A partnership representative
- f. Each scrutiny panel will, for their review, define and agree a remit for the review.
- g. The panels will be able to call witnesses to provide evidence for the review and will consider and analyse this evidence to formulate conclusions and review recommendations.
- h. Each panel will prepare a draft report for the review which will be passed to the Officers through the Executive Management Team who will consider the factual accuracy of the report, their response and complete the action plan. The report will then revert to the Scrutiny and Audit Committee for their approval prior to being placed before full council or the appropriate committee for implementation.
- i. The Scrutiny and Audit Committee will follow up the action plan within a 12 month period
- j. The Scrutiny and Audit Committee will provide an annual report on their activities to full council.
- k. The Chair of the Scrutiny and Audit Committee will act in a coordinating and oversight role and will be supported in this by a nominated Senior Officer. This Officer will be identified within the current management restructuring process and will support the initial canvassing and scoring exercise.
- l. A Lead Officer will be identified for each panel who will support the panel in the conduct of their reviews. Lead Officers will be identified through the Officer Leadership Programme and will support the panel in stages e) to h) above. Administrative support will also be provided through the Executive Support Function.