

Mid Devon District Council Scrutiny Proposal Form

This form should be completed by Member(s), Officers or members of the public when proposing an item for Scrutiny.

Note: The Scrutiny Committee reserves the right to reject suggestions for scrutiny that fall outside the District Council's remit.

Proposer's name and title	Cllr Barry Warren	Date of referral	10 August 2020
Proposed topic title and brief description of the issue	Quality and quantity of Council reports: To review the quality of reports, the number of reports being prepared for Committees and the recommended actions.		
Link to national, regional and local priorities(Corporate Plan) and targets	This links to the 'Values and Priorities' section of the Corporate Plan. Notably around the performance of the Council, and in the outcomes that are generated.		
Background to the issue	<p>Some members have expressed concern at the number of reports prepared for Committees and PDGs, notably that reports are duplicated amongst a number of Committees.</p> <p>Some reports go before Cabinet (and actions agreed) before going to Committees/Groups.</p> <p>Additionally, the quality of content, duplication and typos/errors within some reports has been a concern.</p> <p>A number of reports discussed by the Committee are 'to note'. Consideration should be given as to whether this information could be disseminated in another way without taking Committee time.</p>		
<p>Please address as many of the following shortlisting considerations as possible:</p> <p>Why is this issue of concern to merit review?</p> <p>What is the impact on the community/area/Council?</p> <p>Are there performance or risk concerns?</p> <p>What is the urgency?</p> <p>Is there any supporting evidence to justify the</p>	<p>A number of reports have come to the Committee over the last 12 months that have had to be re-written in order for the Committee to take an informed decision.</p> <p>Committee, Member and Officer time has been taken up ensuring reports are up to standard.</p> <p>This review would help improve the quality of the Council reports by ensuring they are concise and focussed on key areas whilst providing significant information to allow decisions to be made.</p> <p>The review would seek to achieve:-</p> <p>a) Shorter, clearer and more informative reports;</p> <p>b) An emphasis on costs and the implications of a course of action – financial, social and political - and clear timetables for taking the policy or operation forward;</p> <p>c) Better informed readers;</p>		

<p>issue?</p> <p>What would be the outcome of this work?</p>	<p>d) Less work for drafting officers; e) Better briefing and information outside the reports process.</p> <p>A review could consider/recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Team to review how to improve quality of reports; • Improved training on ‘how to write reports and briefings’ for Officers; • A style guide for reports and briefings, including the information required and how to ensure the balance of conciseness with an informed reader. • A review of the current report template; • Clarity on the role of Cabinet Member’s in report finalisation; • Any reports ‘to note’ must clearly set out key discussion points and highlight issues for further consideration. Alternatively, a written briefing could be provided to Members rather than discussion at Committee.
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For Members of the Scrutiny Committee

<p>Is there sufficient information available to take a decision, or is there a need for further research investigation?</p>	
<p>Will a review of the issue add value?</p>	
<p>Is this a matter for the Scrutiny Committee or another Committee/PDG?</p>	
<p>Decision taken: should this be added to the Work Programme, if so when should work start?</p>	