

# Evaluation and Learning from Overview and Scrutiny Reviews

1. Overview and Scrutiny reviews have, quite rightly, scope for flexibility in their approach and methodology. Project plans for pieces of work, such as time limited ad hoc reviews, should contain proposals on how their objectives will be achieved e.g. the number and type of meetings, their format and other proposed activities. These proposals are determined by consideration of what appears likely to be appropriate and effective, taking into account factors such as the nature of the topic, the stakeholders in question and the needs and nature of service users. The aim of this is to help maximise outcomes.
2. The sharing of lessons learnt from reviews is a useful means of developing further best practice. The intention of this is not to develop a set way of undertaking pieces of work but to assist in developing future project plans by building up a base of knowledge and experience from past work on the sort of activities most likely to yield results. By the same token, it should enable lessons to be learnt from when things do not go to plan.
3. It is therefore proposed that each separate scrutiny review should contain an evaluation and learning element. One option would be to merely hand out evaluation forms at the end of the project to all Members. However, past experience has been that these often do not yield much meaningful feedback. It is therefore proposed that evaluation is undertaken through facilitated discussions with the Scrutiny Support Officer acting as facilitator. Evaluations should take place at the final meeting of each scrutiny review.
4. A specific item should be placed on the appropriate agenda. The discussion will be based around the following key themes:
  - Achievement of objectives
  - What works/has worked?
  - What has been enjoyable?
  - What could have worked better/was less enjoyable?
  - What, if anything, would help/would have helped the project to be more successful in meeting its objectives?
5. In order to ensure that this does not become merely a bureaucratic exercise, Support Officers should aim to be proactive in encouraging Members and other participants to deliver meaningful feedback through, if necessary, prompting and asking appropriate follow up questions. The response should be recorded succinctly in the notes of the meeting in question.
6. At the end of each Municipal Year, all the responses will be collated into a report outlining any trends or conclusions that can be drawn. It is proposed that this be considered, in the first instance, at a meeting of scrutiny team members. Information will also be shared with Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any conclusions or lessons from the responses will be incorporated into the forthcoming years work plan as well as individual project plans for future pieces of work.