

Scrutiny Scoping Template

Scrutiny Title	Debt Collection and the Use of Enforcement Agents	Reference Number:
Type of Scrutiny	The Sub-Committee was appointed by ROSC at its meeting on 21 September 2015	
Scrutiny Sub Committee Members	Nick Pace George Michaelides	Steve Roberts Alan Chesterman
Officer Support	Bob Baldock Suzanne Hulks	Portfolio holder:
Key Stakeholders	Residents Steria	
Summary of Enquiry	Members were concerned that the use of Enforcement Agents for debt collection might not be effective and that the costs incurred outweighed the benefits. There was also concern that the additional costs to the debtor might exacerbate an already difficult situation and make the debt even more unmanageable.	
Scrutiny Aims and Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider the process used for collection of debt • To determine whether the use of Enforcement Agents improves the levels of debt collected and provides Value for Money • To discuss whether other methods of debt collection could be used which would provide a better service and/or be more cost-effective. • 	
Link with Corporate Priorities:	Our Council – continue to provide efficiency and value for money Manage the efficient collection of all debts, business rates and council tax charges from residents and businesses	
Indicators of Success:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in debt collection rates • Improvement in processes for debt collection • Reduction in costs to collect debt • To work in the interests of both customers and the Council 	
Methodology / Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By asking questions of Officers/ Executive Members • Receiving a briefing note • Holding one or more public hearings which are specially designed to enable members of the public, interest groups etc. to give their views. 	

Witnesses / Experts	<p>An important part of the scoping process includes deciding who should be asked for interview. Cabinet members and officers are required by the Constitution to attend to explain decisions, the extent which actions taken complement council policy and their performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison Officer • Steria • Enforcement Agents • Portfolio Holder • Residents
Evidence Sources for Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer reports • Comparison with other authorities
Review implications / impacts / risks <i>Consider financial, social, economic, legal, equality.</i>	<p>If the evidence indicates that the use of Enforcement Agents is excessive and causes distress to residents there is a reputational risk</p> <p>If debt is not collected to the greatest level possible, the authority may not be able to meet its commitments.</p> <p>If a robust system is not in place for debt collection, other residents may default.</p> <p>If debt is not collected, it might be necessary to raise Council Tax to make up the shortfall.</p>
Timescales	<p>Set the timescale for:</p> <p>Projected start date: _____</p> <p>Meeting frequency: _____</p> <p>Draft report deadline: _____</p> <p>Projected completion date: _____</p>