

Briefing note

Single Day Inquiries / Single Issue Inquiries

What is a Scrutiny Inquiry Day: These are a mechanism for single topic scrutiny, for use where an O&S Committee would not be appropriate, or to review progress in an area which has already been the subject of scrutiny work.

Systems and approaches

- Usually informal meeting with attendees invited from all relevant organisations.
- Good lead in time needed approx 3 months recommended
- Preparation pack circulated prior to meeting as a good basic knowledge is assumed prior to the meeting.
- Days usually include: Presentation by key speaker, questions and answer session, break out groups discussing specific topics (sometimes note takers and facilitators required) followed by a plenary session.
- Anyone invited to attend are able to make proposals and amendments.

Purpose

- By drawing people from different organisations to discuss a single topic it helps focus minds, showing differing organisational objectives and how these can join up.
- To review and make recommendations in one day.
- No long drawn out process
- Economical approach

Involvement of other organisations

- Helps the working relationship between organisations, helping to understand the impact of your decisions on other organisations.
- The members were able to spend a whole day hearing all the points of view and listen to as many experts or organisations.

Pros/cons

- No long drawn out process, all wrapped up in one day
- Members found it a rewarding experience as they benefited from hearing the debate between experts as well as from information given.
- They felt that they were fully informed and so were able to make recommendations confidently.
- Networking lunch break.

Other

My research was based on speaking with Bristol City Council and Cornwall County Council who are both users of the Single Day Inquiry approach. Both Councils stressed how well received this approach is by the Members. These days are gaining the reputation throughout the Council for being a very productive and worthwhile exercise.