

## Appendix 1 - County

### **Short survey for Herts Scrutiny Network re Statutory Scrutiny Guidance**

1. Has your authority begun to review its Overview and Scrutiny current procedures and practise, or is it planning to in the light of the Guidance?

Yes – we are currently conducting a scrutiny self-evaluation. Action plan due to be finalised in January 2020

2. If it is planning to do this has the format to do this been agreed? Self-evaluation, peer review, CfPS/LGA funded review?

Self-evaluation using themes from the government guidance and cfps good scrutiny guide as background. Officer led using a tailored version of the CfPS self-evaluation framework and a consultation exercise. No funding, it is using existing officer resource.

3. What is your current structure? One or more scrutiny committee? Task and finish panels?

2 main committees: Overview and Scrutiny and Health Scrutiny  
1 committee that monitors and approves implementation of recommendations – Impact of Scrutiny Advisory Committee (ISAC)  
Topic Groups – topic groups are conducted over one or two full days

4. Are your Scrutiny committees Chaired by Majority Group or opposition Members?

Chaired by majority group members with opposition VCs

5. What do you consider is the current strength of O&S in your authority?  
Collaborative cross party working; engagement and holding to account of partners, particularly the NHS; in depth investigation and focus in topic group work; site visits, particularly for Health Scrutiny committee are highly valued by members. Thorough approach to annual budget scrutiny; robust monitoring of implementation/impact of scrutiny

6. What do you consider is any areas of weakness that needs addressing?

Public engagement; members feeling confident on when and how to input to the work programme and engaging more with prioritisation of topics; understanding

of the role and purpose of scrutiny throughout the organisation; showing impact of scrutiny in terms of impact on the lives of citizens rather than impact on council services.

7. How is scrutiny perceived in your authority by:

- The Leadership Team – well managed, a solid scrutiny function
- The Executive Members – focused and provides challenge on the areas it considers
- Scrutiny Members – strong on oversight, has a clear impact on council services, well supported by members
- Officers that are involved in reviews – a thorough process that can provide valuable member feedback

8. How do you agree work programmes?

At the OSC meeting in April after the annual budget scrutiny, the committee discuss all the topics for scrutiny arising from the budget scrutiny and identify which ones should be added to the work programme and best methods to address them. Scrutiny officers, chairs and VCs liaise with officers to arrange dates, unless specified by committee.

9. What do you include in a scope?

After a topic has been added to the work programme Scrutiny officers work with lead officers to draft a scope, all draft scopes are considered by the committee before being approved.

10. How are recommendations made?

The scrutiny officer summarises main themes and suggests areas for recommendations at the end of a topic group when all topic group members and lead officer present so they can input. The scrutiny officer takes on board comments and pulls together the recommendations. Once agreed by the topic group, the scrutiny officer may sometimes finesse the wording outside the meeting.

11. How do you monitor outcomes/agreed recommendations and actions from a review?

6 months after each topic group report is published, the item is considered by the Impact of Scrutiny Committee (ISAC) which considers each of the recommendations one by one and decides if they can be marked as

completed or if officers need to come back to the next ISAC meeting to provided evidence for any of them.

12. Celebrating success / Proving your worth – how do you promote your successes and prove your worth?

In the past we have submitted items that have been published in CfPS publications and our Head of Scrutiny has spoken at the annual CfPS conference.

Internally we provide reports for full council and group reports for the committee chairs and VCs to circulate to their groups. We also provide an update report to circulate with districts and boroughs.

13. What are the barriers to effective scrutiny in your authority?

Limited resource in terms of officer support means the amount of scrutiny activity we can conduct in a year is restricted so sometimes items stay on work programme for extended periods of time. We are planning on having a limit on the number of topic groups per year, which will mean that members will need to prioritise carefully in their work programme planning.