

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?

No – but O&S received a report on the new guidance shortly after it was published. The guidance was also raised at operational leadership meeting.

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

n/a

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

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (x9 meetings per year)
Finance Scrutiny Committee (x5 meetings per year)
Task and finish groups (x3 TGs per year)

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

O&S by majority group (opposition Vice Chair – chairs any call-in meetings)
Opposition chair for Finance Scrutiny Committee
TG chairs vary depending on interest

5. What do you consider is the current strength of O&S in your authority?

Clear structure and remit
Supported by mayor, cabinet and members
Compulsory training for members – biennial

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

Some lack of understanding about the role of scrutiny.
Some members still use it as a vehicle to discuss casework.

7. How is scrutiny perceived in your authority by:

- The Leadership Team – with some uncertainty of its role and what it can do to support services e.g., with policy development
- The Executive Members – good support. Regular attendance at scrutiny meetings.
- Scrutiny Members – they believe they do a good job.
- Officers that are involved in reviews – warily

8. How do you agree work programmes?

In conjunction with officers, the Chair and O&S members (it is a standing item on all committee agendas).

9. What do you include in a scope?

Reasons a topic is put forward
 Potential outcomes the proposer would like to see
 Which of our corporate priorities a scrutiny proposal supports.

10. How are recommendations made?

Task group members review their findings with the scrutiny officer and draw up recommendations – these are included in their final report to O&S.

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

Through O&S.

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

Annual report to Council.

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

Large majority group
 Backbenchers not challenging executive decisions
 Weak and stretched opposition