Centre for Public Scrutiny
Scrutiny Essentials and Questioning Skills
Wokingham Borough Council, 26th June 2019
7 pm to 9.30 pm

Aims

1. To explore key principles and powers that underpin effective overview and scrutiny in a borough council.

2. To explore ways to develop scrutiny questions that enable members to assess a range of different evidence and data

3. To identifying the key characteristics of effective scrutiny reviews and explore different approaches to impact

4. To consider a range of potential scrutiny challenges and develop confidence to overcome them

Overview

An interactive workshop combining an informal mix of presentations, training activities, small and large group discussions. Participants will be provided with a range of materials to support scrutiny and summarise the key points from the day. Additional case studies will be provided in electronic format to support learning and follow-up.

Learning Objectives

Learning objective	Learning outcome
To explore an overview of scrutiny legislation and powers	Participants will be able to identify and describe the key powers and policies that underpin scrutiny in the local authority.
To review the key principles of effective scrutiny.	Participants will be able to describe the key principles for best practice in local scrutiny. They will be able distinguish the different roles in the scrutiny process and how scrutiny supports the local democratic process.
To highlight a range of different approaches to designing effective questions	Participants will be able to list the different types of effective questions and will have opportunities to design and test various approaches. They will also be able to identify more ineffective questioning approaches and ways to avoid these.
To explore different approaches to evidence and data for scrutiny	Participants will be able to identify five different types of evidence and

	describe ways to combine these to build an accurate picture of local issues. Participants will take away a list of gateway questions that can assist them in designing key lines of enquiry when interrogating evidence.
To explore a summary of the CfPS approach to measuring impact in scrutiny reviews	Participants will be able to list some key principles to evidencing impact in scrutiny. They will be able to give examples of how these principles can be applied locally. They will be able to access a range of tools and activities to assist with impact approaches to capture and measure the potential benefits of good local scrutiny.
To consider several case studies of effective scrutiny from a range of different thematic areas in the CfPS network	Participants will be able to describe successful reviews in other local authorities and identify some of the key learning
To highlight challenges and explore ways to overcome barriers to build confidence	Participants will be able to describe a range of strategies to ensure that reviews are able to make a positive contribution for local people and systems

Timetable

Time	Session	Activities
7 pm	**Session 1: An overview of scrutiny** • **Welcome, introductions and aims** • **Overview of the scrutiny role** • **Key legislation and powers** • **The principles of effective scrutiny** • **Proactive reviews**	Presentation Small group discussions
7.45 pm	**Session 2: Designing effective questions and exploring evidence** • **Effective questioning approaches** • **Types of evidence and data** • **Gateway questions for data and insight**	Presentation Developing questions activity Assessing evidence activity
8.30 pm	Comfort break	

8.35 pm	**Session 3: Developing an effective review** • **Principles of effective reviews** • **Working well together as a committee** • **Exploring ways to approach impact** • **Developing recommendations** • **Case studies of effective reviews**	Presentation Exploring impact tools Case studies Effective scrutiny checklist
9 to 9.30 pm	**Session 4: Building confidence and overcoming barriers** • **Key barriers and challenges** • **Building confidence** • **Creating an effective committee** • **Working effectively with partners and stakeholders** • **Review and next steps**	Presentation Barriers and challenges scenario cards Small group discussion

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