

Appendix A

Summary of Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

Guidance	In place at SCDC?	Comment
Culture: A strong organisational culture supporting scrutiny needs to exist, starting with the Chief Executive and political leadership.		
Scrutiny should be member led.	√	
Prioritisation of scrutiny work programme is essential to ensure Scrutiny focusses on delivering work that is of value.	√	Monthly work planning meeting between Chairman/Vice Chairman/Scrutiny Adviser, filtering out items where it is not considered Scrutiny will add value.
Ensure engagement on the work programme between the political leadership and scrutiny whilst being mindful that the executive should not try to control the committee's work.	√	Annual meeting between Leader/ Chief Executive/ Scrutiny Chairman and Vice Chairman
Develop an 'executive-scrutiny protocol' to help define the relationship between Cabinet and Scrutiny and mitigate differences of opinion providing a framework for disagreement/debate and a way to manage this.	X	The council may wish to consider the development of such a protocol.
Support should be given by members and senior officers for scrutiny committees to access information held by the authority.	√	Members are supported to access information when requested.
Senior officers should ensure all officers are free to provide impartial advice to scrutiny.	√	
Ensure all members and officers are made aware of the role the scrutiny committee plays in the organisation, its value and the powers it has.	√	Established internal process to ensure pre-decision scrutiny which officers are aware of and actively engage with the Scrutiny and Governance Adviser.
Full Council should be informed of the work of the committee via reports/recommendations being submitted when appropriate to do so, rather than reporting solely to the executive.	√	Scrutiny presents recommendations to full Council as appropriate.
Ensure scrutiny has a profile in the wider community. Consider when to engage the authority's communications officers and other relevant channels to do this. Formal public consultation is not advised.	√	Information about scrutiny is provided on the Council's website. Scrutiny featured in South Cambs magazine.

Ensure scrutiny members are supported in having an independent mindset.	√	
Resourcing : Resource allocated to the scrutiny function is significant in determining how successful scrutiny is and how much value it can add to the authority.		
It is for each authority to decide on the resource provided.	√	Scrutiny and Governance Adviser appointed.
A statutory scrutiny officer must be appointed by all combined authorities/upper/single tier authorities.	√	
Selecting Scrutiny Committee Members : Selecting the right committee members is essential for the committee to function effectively.		
The committee must be politically proportional.	√	
Executive members cannot be scrutiny members.	√	
When selecting committee members, the following should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience, expertise and interests • Ability to act impartially • Ability to work as part of a group • Capacity to serve on the committee. 	√	
Selecting a Chairman: The Chairman plays a leadership role and is largely responsible for establishing scrutiny's profile, influence and ways of working.		
Attributes authorities should take into account when selecting committee members, also apply to selection of the Chair. The Chair should have the ability to lead and build teamwork and consensus among committee members.	√	
Chairman should protect the committee's independence.	√	
Training of committee members		
Induction training and ongoing training should be offered to committee members.	√	Introduction to Scrutiny training provided in June 2018. CfPS Questioning Skills training in April 2019 and ongoing training offered to Chairman and Vice Chairman in other areas.
Power to access information		
Key performance information particularly on the authority's performance management and risk, should be regularly available for scrutiny members to access.	√	The committee receives quarterly reports on finance, performance and risk.

Information should be shared on request with scrutiny committee members. Legitimate reasons must be given by the executive if information is withheld.	√	
Scrutiny committees have a legal power to require members of the executive and officers to attend committee meetings to answer questions; it is their duty to comply with such requests.	√	
Planning work		
The committee needs to plan its work programme in order to be effective. There should be a long term work programme which is flexible enough to accommodate any urgent issues that may arise.	√	Scrutiny work programme developed, monthly planning sessions between Chairman/ Vice Chairman/Scrutiny and Governance Adviser.
Scrutiny has the power to look at anything which affects the area or the residents of the area. Work should be prioritised as Scrutiny will not be able to look at everything.	√	Workload is prioritised by Chairman/Vice Chairman at monthly work planning sessions. Added value is considered. Scrutiny Prioritisation Tool is used.
Evidence needs to inform the work programming to ensure the right topics are looked at at the right time. To gather evidence, discussions should take place with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public: Individual scrutiny members should have discussions (including via online forums) with residents/groups in their local areas to gain insight. Formal consultation is not advised. • Partners • The executive, though the executive should not direct scrutiny's work. • Senior officers 	√	Scrutiny featured in the South Cambs residents magazine. Information on website. Chairman and Vice Chairman will meet annually with the Leader, Chief Exec and other senior officers to discuss the work programme.
Information sources to inform the work programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance information • Finance and risk information • Corporate complaints information and information from political groups about the subject matter collected from members' surgeries • Business cases/options appraisals Consider keeping this information under regular review outside committee meetings rather than bringing information to formal meetings 'to note'.	√	

The guidance provides advice on conducting evidence gathering sessions and developing recommendations, the main points of which are listed below:

Evidence sessions - These are key to informing scrutiny's work:

- May happen at formal committee, in less formal task and finish groups or at standalone sessions.
- Good preparation essential. Set overall objectives and consider what type of questions to ask. Consider in advance what scrutiny it is trying to get out of the session.
- The Chair plays a vital role and should draw together themes and highlight key findings at the end of a session.

Developing recommendations:

- Usually appropriate for this to be done by members only. Due regard should be given to advice received from officers. Recommendations should be evidence based and SMART.
- Reports are usually drafted by officers directed by members.
- Six to eight recommendations usually sufficient. Draft recommendations could be shared with executive members to provide an opportunity to identify any errors and for a general sense check; this is not an opportunity for recommendations to be revised or blocked.