

**REPORT TO:** Scrutiny and Overview Committee 16 July 2019  
**LEAD MEMBER:** Scrutiny and Overview Committee Chairman

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## **Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government and Combined Authorities**

### **Executive Summary**

1. In May 2019 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government published statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in Local Government and Combined Authorities. The guidance was produced following a commitment made by Government in 2018 following the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into overview and scrutiny. Councils must 'have regard' to this guidance.

### **Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that that the committee notes this guidance.

### **Details**

3. The guidance does not prescribe how the technical aspects of scrutiny should be carried out; it offers ideas within which scrutiny needs to find its own solutions.
4. The key components of the guidance are summarised as follows:
  - The most important component is organisational culture towards scrutiny. This is about the whole council, not just scrutiny councillors and officers. A commitment to scrutiny begins with the Chief Executive and political leadership. Scrutiny's part of this is that it must recognise that its work must be designed to have impact.
  - Scrutiny's role has to be focused and the work programme must be prioritised.
  - The guidance highlights the importance of the selection of committee members and outlines the personal attributes required to ensure the right people are selected to be on the committee.
  - The guidance emphasises the rights that members have to access information, stating councillors should have regular access to key sources of information which will give them a sense of management of the authority; with a focus on performance, finance and risk.
  - The guidance emphasises the role of the committee's chairman in managing the gathering of evidence and the work of members in forming focused and achievable recommendations.

5. The guidance can be viewed via this link <https://bit.ly/2W5zwSP> (hard copies can be printed on request). A summary of the guidance and performance of this authority in relation to it, is attached at **Appendix A**.

### **Implications**

6. There are no significant implications.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: Summary of Statutory Scrutiny Guidance

### **Background papers**

Statutory Scrutiny Guidance: <https://bit.ly/2W5zwSP>

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