

2019

Driving improvement and change Boosting scrutiny value and performance

- **Scrutiny improvement specialists**
- **Developing scrutiny in critical areas**
- **Building councillor skills and effectiveness**

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) is the UK's only organisation dedicated to governance, overview and scrutiny.

With 17 years expert knowledge and experience our consultancy team includes experienced practitioners, subject experts, senior council officers and politicians who offer supportive and objective advice designed to drive improvement and innovation.

Contacts

To discuss how we can help you, please contact:

Ian Parry - Development Manager - 07831 510381 - ian.parry@cfps.org.uk

Fiona Corcoran - Delivery Manager - 020 3866 5105 – fiona.corcoran@cfps.org.uk

Find the product or support you need

Section 1	Page
Essential member training	3-4
Advanced level member training	4-5
Specialised training	5-6
Health, Adults and Children’s Services Scrutiny	7
Scrutiny training for council officers	8
Section 2	
Scrutiny improvement support services	9
Supporting scrutiny through change	10-12
Scrutiny Work Planning Support for Scrutiny Officers	13

Can’t see what you need ?

Contact CfPS for bespoke training and support packages

Check cfps.org.uk for information on our seminars, courses and conderences

SECTION 1: Training and Development

Overview and scrutiny have essential roles in policy shaping, improving performance, checking weakness, aiding change, providing reassurance, holding the executive to account and reviewing issues of importance to local communities.

To do this effectively, officers and members need to develop a shared understanding about the role, purpose and objectives of overview and scrutiny. Scrutiny must be a whole council responsibility and not left to a few members in scheduled meetings

Courses available

Essential Modules

T.01 Scrutiny Essentials

This module is ideal for new members of scrutiny or as a refresh for experienced councillors or officers who want to gain the essential knowledge and understanding of the role and value of scrutiny to their council.

T.02 Chairing Skills and Scrutiny Leadership

Chairing a scrutiny committee is much more than leading the meeting through its agenda. It requires a set of skills, knowledge and understanding to get scrutiny working effectively. This module is will help both new and experienced chairs and vice-chairs to learn the essential skills to support them in their crucial tasks. Can be provided as part of a wider package including coaching and mentoring support. Covers team-building, understanding the role and purpose of scrutiny, focusing on outcomes, time management and elements of questioning skills.

T.03 Financial Scrutiny

This module aims to help members understand that financial scrutiny is as much about the aims and priorities of the council and how it delivers on its corporate plan within figures and finance. This module will provide members with a useful scrutiny process and ideas on how to avoid getting stuck on too much detail. It provides an overview of the basics behind council finances and budgeting. Designed either as a standalone course or as an introduction to our more detailed consultancy offer on finance and budgets.

T.04 Scrutiny of Commercial Councils

As councils look for innovative ways to reduce costs and tackle deficits, new structures of commercial ventures and outsourcing partnership models are emerging. But this can lead to an intricate governance framework that makes scrutiny more complex. This model helps councils and members to get to grips with this new and challenging area of scrutiny.

T.05 Effective Questioning Skills

Good scrutiny depends on asking the right questions. But often this can be random and unfocused. This module will help members to improve and increase their impact. They will understand how to plan and prepare, un-pack the issues and select the right questioning techniques. It covers setting objectives, doing research and preparation, developing and deploying “lines” of questioning, the full range of questioning styles and techniques, converting answers into findings and recommendations.

Advanced Level Modules

AT01 Advanced Leading and Chairing Scrutiny

This focuses on developing the leadership, influencing and managing skills that effective scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs need to make the committee or task group effective. There is an element of practical case study tasks and understanding behaviours and culture.

AT02 Advanced Financial Scrutiny

Based on a ‘live’ case study, this involves a series of tasks and challenges that supports scrutiny to take a more strategic and systematic approach to the budget and MTFP process. It helps to explain how members can and should be involved in designing scrutiny around the budget process and its link to the council’s strategic plan.

AT03 Advanced Scrutiny of Investments and Commercial Activities

As councils find ways to develop new income streams and focus on even greater value on commercial contracts, the role of overview and scrutiny becomes increasingly complex. This module takes a case study approach to effective scrutiny of commercial structures and council investments.

AT04 Advanced Health Scrutiny

This course helps members to understand the changing relationship between councils and the NHS, especially scrutiny of STPs and ICSs. This includes arrangements for joint scrutiny where two or more council areas are involved. It also helps help members to tackle scrutiny of proposals for substantial service reconfigurations, including scrutiny's contribution to service redesign.

Specialised Areas Training Modules

ST.01 Police and Crime Panels

Scrutinising Police and Crime Commissioners and community safety partnerships is the core function of local authority led Police and Crime Panels. But this can be a complex world of multiple agencies and policing strategies and community priorities. This course helps members and officers to navigate through this challenging new landscape.

ST.02 Performance management

Covers the principles of performance management – the use of scorecards, the use of other modern performance management systems (including the way that performance is understood and acted on under agile systems) and the way that scrutiny can effectively use performance information to influence its work.

ST.03 Building positive working relationships

Understanding motivations, direction of travel and the overall objectives of key players will help scrutiny to know when and how it should support, and challenge, the executive and others.

ST.04 Commercialisation and Commissioning

Help for officers to support their members. The support members need and expect is changing as councils are becoming more commercial. How can officers help members to understand – and constructively challenge – some of the big strategic risks and opportunities associated with these ventures? Ensuring transparency and accountability in council commercial ventures. How to advise members to avoid ineffective scrutiny mechanisms that attempt to micro-manage performance, instead keeping them focused on outcomes and benefits.

ST.05 Objective Setting

Scrutiny must set its mission, vision and objectives - what is it trying to achieve and how will it succeed? This module is the essential tool-kit to making scrutiny focused, strategic and effective. It helps scrutiny to prioritise, avoid drift and select the best methods for good scrutiny.

ST.06 Scrutinising Partner Organisations

For councils to be sustainable and effective so much depends on strong partnerships. But how these partnerships are publicly held to account and their effectiveness tested is a key challenge for scrutiny. It's a big new area and members need to understand the different elements of partnership arrangements and their role in scrutinising them. This module helps to build a scrutiny framework for council partnerships and understanding the partnership landscape. We can help councillors to understand the wider range of public, private and third sector partners with whom the council works, and how to work with those partners more effectively.

ST.07 Scrutiny Programme Planning

This module is designed to help members and officers to build a balanced scrutiny programme. It will help to provide objective support to 'declutter' work programmes to focus on real priorities. It will look at ways to build capacity and efficiency to segmenting and sharing scrutiny activity, use of task and finish teams or scrutiny sub-groups. Less is more! This course can be delivered in two ways – as a preparatory skills course for councillors to develop their work programme, or as a workshop to pull together and agree a work programme.

ST.08 Understanding and Using Evidence and Data

For scrutiny members learning how to build a picture from complicated data and piece together a narrative from the evidence is a crucial scrutiny skill. This module helps members to tackle data, research, evidence, witnesses and insight. Covers councillors' information access rights, the need to understand why and how information is needed, basic skills in evaluating and understanding evidence, and using evidence to underpin the work programme.

ST09 Introduction to risk

An introductory session about the basics of risk and risk management. Covers scrutiny of financial, operational and reputational risks and the importance of gathering insight from across the council and the community to avoid surprises. Using scrutiny to build resilience.

Health, Adult Social Care and Children's Services Scrutiny Training

HACT.01 Health Scrutiny

Funding for social care, pressures on the NHS, integration of health and care services and the impact of Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) and Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are all major issues for scrutiny. Not forgetting the wider determinants of health and public health actions, this module helps members to understand this complex and pressured environment and how they play a vital role in providing democratic challenge and accountability.

HACT.02 NHS Long Term Plan and integrated care

Designed for health scrutiny committees and others with an assurance role in local health and care systems, this session can be used to build relationships between NHS and local government colleagues, exploring the political and organisational dynamics of integrating care and how councillors, CCG lay members, provider non-executives and public governors can work effectively together.

HACT.03 Children's Safeguarding and Scrutiny

To support councillors and officers to explore the role and function of effective overview and scrutiny of children's safeguarding through:

- Underpinning knowledge of legislation, roles and functions
- Overview of recent reports and learning from scrutiny and inquiries
- Practical tools and approaches to support local scrutiny reviews of children's safeguarding

HACT.03 The Curious Corporate Parent

Provides an overview of the role and functions of the corporate parent for elected members. It will support members to develop a 'curious' approach to corporate parenting to enable them to champion the needs of looked-after children.

HACT.04 Scrutiny of Adult Social Care

The cost and demography issues remain a constant pressure and of the highest order of risk for councils. Working closely with health providers and partners in the care and voluntary sector is of paramount importance. And as care provision itself is regularly under spotlight as standards and market provision is often volatile the role of scrutiny in this critical and complex field is vital. This module is essential training for all councillors involved in adult social care.

Training Modules for council officers

OT.01 The Council Officers' Guide to Scrutiny

A course specifically for officers, through a series of workshops designed to help middle and senior managers to understand the dynamics of council scrutiny and crucially how to satisfy the competing demands of cabinet and scrutiny.

OT.02 Political Skills for Officers

An introduction to political systems and structures in a typical council. This will introduce not only the formal legal structures that underpin politically-led decision-making in the authority, but some of the less tangible factors relating to political and organisational culture, behaviours, attitudes and values. An understanding of these cultural factors is vital to being able to operate successfully in a political environment as an officer.

SECTION 2: Consultancy and Improvement Services

Governance and Scrutiny Design

Effective scrutiny involves good design of the governance and scrutiny framework. CfPS works alongside councils to advice and create the essential governance infrastructure. This is particularly useful as councils move into new operating models involving single or multiple commercial structures and commissioning or procuring arrangements. Building in solid scrutiny foundations from an early stage may avoid dissatisfaction or weaker scrutiny arrangements over time.

Governance and Scrutiny Reviews

CfPS consultancy support provides a flexible and versatile resource for councils who seek authoritative and external input to review effectiveness, to support improvement or to help the scrutiny function to engage in change. Increasingly changes to local government structures, through unitarization, combined authorities, city regions and executive mayors, bring fresh challenges to public scrutiny and accountability. CfPS can offer significant experience and insight.

Scrutiny Health Check

With an unrivalled track record in supporting councils to improve their scrutiny arrangements based on 15 years of research and practice, our health check involves a review of documentation, surveys and interviews with key individuals and on-site observation of scrutiny meetings. It is the only way to give yourself independent, external assurance and confidence that your approach to scrutiny overall is as focused on outcomes as it ought to be.

The Scrutiny Health Check is based on a proven evaluation model that works with your council to identify both structural and cultural pressures that can affect scrutiny performance. The Scrutiny Health Check is:

- A short, focused and inclusive process.
- Results driven to ensure sustained improvement.
- External and authoritative gaining internal buy-in.
- Supported delivery. Not just analysis and diagnostics.
- A planned and structured way to improve.
- Member led and CfPS supported.

The Scrutiny Health Check is structured around your council's needs and designed to bring sustained improvement in the effectiveness of scrutiny.

Supporting scrutiny through change

&

Buildings specialist scrutiny capacity

Financial management

A strong and effective process for member scrutiny of the budget is the best way to provide the assurance that councils need about their financial health – vital in these challenging times. Our support focuses on in-year scrutiny of the 2019/20 budget and the design and support for the budget development process for 2020/21. Our partnership with CIPFA gives us both the expertise and credibility to provide support on these issues:

- Support for in year scrutiny of the 2019/20 budget will provide the tools and mechanisms, from April onwards, for councillors to proportionately and effectively oversee the council's finances;
- Design and support for 2020/21 budget development given that budget development will begin in April.

Commercialisation

If you are thinking of new ways to plan, develop and deliver services – and better ways to meet the council's needs and the needs of local people. You know that you are satisfying your requirements on both commercial and local government law, but could you be doing more to engage councillors? Support on commercialisation focuses on helping councils to build strong governance systems which take account of members' need to have assurance as councils become more entrepreneurial.

Economic development

Local growth will inevitably be a focus for you – as will managing the potential impacts of Brexit. But as the LEP Review concludes, you will need to understand what your relationship is going to be with your partners in the future – will the structure change, and will your priorities need to change as a result? CfPS is working with the LEP Network and with individual LEPs to strengthen governance in light of the new iteration of the NAF, making us the ideal partners for councils wishing to engage with this issue:

- Support on the scrutiny of the LEP. Councils within a LEP area have a particular responsibility for holding the LEP to account. As Government seeks to develop and tighten LEPs' governance arrangements this recognised role is likely to become more important.
- Support on the relationship between the council and the LEP. This will include discussing the alignment of priorities, the visibility of the LEP's work to the council and its partners and discussion of LEP scrutiny work.

Social care

The market environment is exceptionally challenging. As the amount councils are prepared to pay for care reduces and as councils revisit their criteria for funding care for individuals, some providers are finding it uneconomic to stay in the market. You need the confidence that oversight of the market is happening – as well as effective oversight of the way that local provision is designed and delivered. You need the support of oversight of large-scale transformation plans – particularly where you propose to establish new commissioning frameworks for the provision of adult social care. We have experience of supporting councils to design and deliver scrutiny of social care transformation, have a close relationship with the Care Quality Commission as it supports and advises councils, and a deep understanding of the sector and its challenges:

- Social care is a challenging topic for councillors to scrutinise effectively. We can work with members to understand how they can best engage in the social care market landscape – and to consider what their unique role might be.
- CfPS can provide assistance to review and revise commissioning frameworks to ensure and assure effective member-level oversight and governance.

Library services

Councils are feeling the financial pressure to rationalise their estate and their services. These are moves that inevitably produce strong local reactions. Added to local opposition comes the complexity of withdrawal of a statutory service. You need to be able to demonstrate that plans have been subject to vigorous and robust public scrutiny. We have expertise in dealing with and understanding the political, organisational and scrutiny consequences of transformation and major change – including the public fallout of contentious decisions and designing governance systems to take account of the need to vigorous public debate. We can provide two forms of independent assurance on library proposals:

- Desk-based assurance on library reorganisation plans, which take account of the effectiveness of consultation and engagement of partners in the development of those plans;

- Assistance as scrutiny reviews and takes a part in development of reorganisation plans. Given the likely high profile of library change plans we can provide ideas and support for the involvement and engagement of scrutiny as those plans are under development – reducing both the risk of ‘call in’ and the risk of subsequent challenge.

Reorganisation - LGR

You may not be actively pursuing plans, but it’s something you know you need to be thinking and talking about, even if only informally. We have provided assistance on the redesign of governance and scrutiny arrangements in several councils subject to reorganisation:

- We can work with scrutiny committees of all affected councils to lead them through the reorganisation process –
 - Firstly, by assisting with constructive member review of formal proposals, as they come to be submitted to Government;
 - Secondly, by establishing how scrutiny will operate during the transition period
 - Thirdly, we can assist in the establishment of a new formal role for scrutiny as the shadow authority transitions into the new council.
- We can support the development of plans for reorganisation themselves. Before submission of formal plans, we can review and provide independent assurance on governance plans – strengthening them and making Government approval easier.

Support for Scrutiny Work Planning for Scrutiny Officers

Expert Advice, Support and Resources

An effective work programme is central to effective scrutiny. But it's no simple task. Consultation, prioritisation, challenging conversations, seeking agreement and then piecing it all together. And then there's the amount of resource available to support both the design and delivery of the work streams and making sure members are prepared and engaged. Help and expertise from the UK's leading authority on Overview and Scrutiny. CfPS offers support to officers and members on work programme design and development.

Training and Development

A key skills course for officers and members to work through the tools and techniques to research, set goals and prioritise programme options, and ways to make the process member led. This intensive workshop provides a useful primer for both members and officers as they launch the planning process.

Practical Hands-on Experienced Support

- CfPS provides practical help to support the work programming process itself. A task and finish resource.
- We can facilitate, advise and do the leg-work on the programming process, working with officers and members.
- We can manage the process and method for selecting topics, helping members to balance competing objectives; convening workshops and assisting in the design of the final work programme.

Extra expertise and capacity

- Help to manage peak periods and set-up scrutiny for a productive and successful year.
- Initial planning meeting with officers / chair of committee(s) – to set out first principles, assemble longlist and discuss planning assumptions and constraints.
 - Collate evidence supporting each proposed item.
 - Work programming seminars with scrutiny councillors to agree criteria to prioritise, discuss and agree subjects) and schedule in scrutiny work.

Contacts

Ian Parry - Development Manager - 07831 510381 – ian.parry@cfps.org.uk
Fiona Corcoran - Delivery Manager - 020 3866 5105 – fiona.corcoran@cfps.org.uk

Centre for Public Scrutiny Ltd
77 Mansell Street | London | E1 8AN
Tel: 020 3866 5105
<http://www.cfps.org.uk>