

# Strategic Scrutiny in Practice Network

Wednesday 12 July 2023



14 Participants

## Welcome

Sharon Senior, Executive Director at North West Employers welcomed everyone to the network on behalf of Cllr Emma Ellison, Chair of the network.

## Purpose of the Network

Sharon shared the purpose of the network with the group (see image to left).

### Want to join the Steering group?

If you are interested in joining the steering group, meeting three times a year to help shape the agenda for the network, email [maxwellf@nwemployers.org.uk](mailto:maxwellf@nwemployers.org.uk)

## Terms of Reference

### 1. Purpose

The Strategic Scrutiny Network is part of our core membership offer and is designed to support councils in the development of their scrutiny function and role, share good practice and highlight local and national drivers.



## Appointment to Chair and Vice

### Chair

As the Chair and Vice Chair of the network have been in place for 4 years, Chair, Cllr Emma Ellison, formerly Wyre Council and Vice Chair, Cllr Howard Ballard, Wyre Council welcome the opportunity to propose nominations for councillors to take on these roles.

There were no nominations from those attending.

### Interested in becoming Chair/ Vice Chair of the Network?

If you are a councillor and would be interested in finding out more information about the positions or would like to put yourself forward for the Chair or Vice Chair position, please get in touch with Sharon at : [Sharons@nwemployers.org.uk](mailto:Sharons@nwemployers.org.uk) .



## Sharing your Scrutiny Experience



There have been a number of recent changes to officers and scrutiny members. To help develop networks and share experiences, we had some smaller breakout conversations about experiences within Scrutiny.

Here were topics that were discussed by the group:

- Speaking with members with varying levels of experience within the network was helpful and refreshing.
- Blend of both councillors and officers was useful and provided perspective
- Priority is to get immersed in scrutiny and gain valuable experience in this area.
- Looking at having cross-cutting themes for scrutiny focus ie alcohol
- Exploring what the measurable outcomes and added value of scrutiny are
- Use of Scrutiny in a day approach to focus in on a particular topic

### Share Ideas and stay connected

we have an online platform – Basecamp. If you'd like to be added to the Strategic Scrutiny Basecamp group, Contact [maxwellf@nwemployers.org.uk](mailto:maxwellf@nwemployers.org.uk) with your Name, Email, Organisation and Job title.

## CfGS

Sharon welcomed Annette Aitken to the Network. The CfGS have worked closely with NWemployers throughout the year and have recently delivered some taster sessions.



Annette spoke about the Annual CfGS conference, taking place on the 14 June 2023, thanking any member of the network that attended the event.

Karl Allender, St Helens, provided feedback from the event:

"it was really good speaking to others and the network... Really Enjoyed it"

Feedback on the day highlighted the importance of networks and the provision of great insight and solutions to Scrutiny issues.

### Give Feedback on the CfGS conference

If you have any more feedback on the CfGS conference, please email Annette's colleague, Megan at: [megan.ingle@cfgs.org.uk](mailto:megan.ingle@cfgs.org.uk)

### Executives

CfGS has welcomed a new CEO, Mel Stevens, in May this year who wants to ensure that CfGS provides an impartial, impactful and independent contribution to democracy and scrutiny.

Deputy CEO, Ed Hammond, is currently on a sabbatical over the summer period and will return mid-September. Any queries or support in relation to this, please email Mel at [mel.stevens@cfgs.org.uk](mailto:mel.stevens@cfgs.org.uk)



### Guest bloggers and Case studies wanted

CfGS is looking for guest bloggers or case studies for submission to add to their website. We would like to see a larger North West presence in Scrutiny through these. Please contact Annette at: [Annette.aiken@cfgs.org.uk](mailto:Annette.aiken@cfgs.org.uk) if you are interested in becoming a guest blogger or just have a good case study to share.



Based on the discussion, Annette provided the following useful links to resources and publications.

### Related Links

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/local-government/regional-networks/>

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/adso-cfgs-llg-the-good-governance-hub-blogs/>

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/cfgs-annual-conference-updated-agenda-and-speaker-workshop-profiles/>

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ADSO-Blog-Remote-Meetings.pdf>

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/cfps-news-alerts/>

<https://lgaevents.local.gov.uk/lga/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=540419&eventID=1563&traceRedir=2>

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/?publication=keynote-speech-by-ed-hammond-cfgs-annual-conference-2023>

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/adso-cfgs-llg-the-good-governance-hub-blogs/>

### North West Field Work - Councillor and Care Research Project



Sharon is working closely with the Institute of Local Government on resources around Adult Social Care and the wider role of councillors in this area.

This is now at pilot session stage and dates have been released for September and October for councillors in the North West. This is exciting and once the materials are tested and evaluated, they will be released nationwide to support Adult Social Care.

### Encourage your councillors to attend, book below

Please can you circulate the link to councillors in your organisation to encourage participation and feedback <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/adult-social-care-sessions-for-councillors-2189199>

## Open Forum

This open forum provides network members with the opportunity to put questions to the wider group and share ideas.

There was a discussion about the culture of scrutiny and the role of opposition members. CfGS training was attended by members which was really positive and this should support changing the dynamic of the committees.

This opens up questions around fundamentals of scrutiny and is interesting to see.

Good practice and networks are key for this, making sure that outside perspectives can be received and good practice prevails.

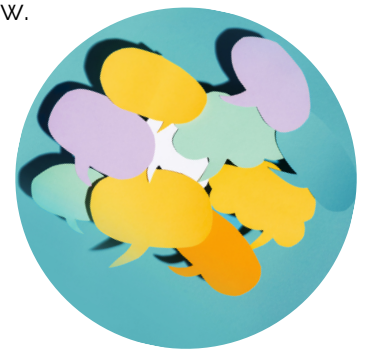
Another council is exploring moving to a committee system. Any colleagues that have experience of doing this and can share their experiences are invited to let us know.

### Useful links

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/culture-governance-and-collaboration/>

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/blog-political-culture-managing-party-politics/>


<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/blog-political-culture-the-central-role-of-the-executive-by-cfps-director-of-research-and-campaigns-ed-hammond/>



## Future Events


### Scrutiny Network :Financial Scrutiny

Thursday 28 September 12:00 – 01:00pm

 MS Teams - [Book Here](#)

### Councillor Development Network

Tuesday 12 September 02:00 – 03:30pm

 Zoom - [Book Here](#)

## Next Meeting

The Next Strategic Scrutiny Network meeting is **to be confirmed**.

### Suggestions for next meetings agenda

OFLOG was mentioned within the meeting but not decided on yet for next meeting.

If you have anything you would like adding to the next sessions agenda, email [maxwellf@nwemployers.org.uk](mailto:maxwellf@nwemployers.org.uk).

## Watch this Meeting



## Our Links

