

Successful Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Awards 2014



accountability, transparency, involvement



atebolrwydd, tryloywder, cyfranoglad



Contents

Introduction 3

Overall Impact Award 4

WINNER Cheshire West and Chester Council

Economic Resilience Award 6

WINNER Braintree District Council

SHORTLISTED Knowsley MBC

SHORTLISTED City of Lincoln Council

SHORTLISTED Southampton City Council

Improving Transparency Award 10

WINNER Cambridge County Council

SHORTLISTED Buckinghamshire County Council

SHORTLISTED London Borough of Harrow

SHORTLISTED Telford and Wrekin Council

Influence Beyond Boundaries Award 13

WINNER Cambridge County Council

SHORTLISTED Lancashire County Council

SHORTLISTED City of Lincoln Council

SHORTLISTED Bracknell Forest Council

Innovation Award 15

WINNER Cheshire West and Chester

SHORTLISTED Cambridge County Council

SHORTLISTED Telford and Wrekin Council

Involvement, Insight and Impact Award 16

JOINT WINNER Brighton and Hove City Council

JOINT WINNER London Borough of Harrow

SHORTLISTED Cardiff City Council

SHORTLISTED London Borough of Newham

Scrutineers' Choice Award 19

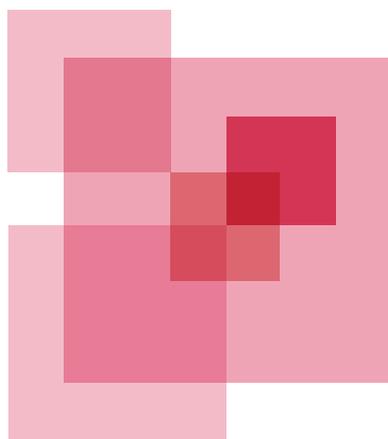
WINNER London Borough of Newham

About the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)

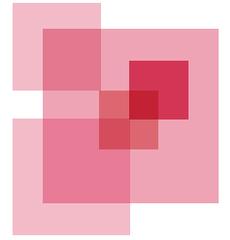
The Centre for Public Scrutiny is an independent charity, focused on ideas, thinking and the application and development of policy and practice for accountable public services. CfPS believes that accountability, transparency and involvement are strong principles that protect the public interest. We publish research and practical guides, provide training and leadership development, support on-line and off-line networks, and facilitate shared learning and innovation.



ABOVE: Good Scrutiny Awards 2014 were sponsored by Marston Group.



Introduction



As always I am pleased to introduce this edition of Successful Scrutiny. Taking part in the judging day for the Good Scrutiny Awards is one of the highlights of my year at work, as each time we are all struck by the quiet determination of scrutiny committees up and down the country to get to the bottom of intractable problems, listen to the people whose concerns decision-makers have not heard, and make practical recommendations for improvements. This year was no exception.

The standard of entries was extremely high and although we had no pre-set categories this year, it was notable how a number of common themes emerged, whether tackling widespread issues such as economic resilience of communities, involving and engaging communities and groups of disadvantaged people, or seeking to open-up service commissioning, design and delivery to improve transparency. I believe that this demonstrates that the best overview and scrutiny functions in local government are well attuned to the big, shared, issues facing the country and that the process of scrutiny review and challenge is an effective one for tackling those issues in an open, inclusive and democratic way.

I would like to congratulate the winners whose stories are told in this publication and to thank them for their work and success on behalf of their communities. I would also like to thank our team of judges who put a great deal of work into whittling down these entries from the many other worthy contenders. I hope that some of those who did not win this year will continue to track the impact of their work as we saw a number of excellent and promising reviews put forward for which it was still too early to identify clear impacts and outcomes. I look forward to seeing them again next year with an even stronger story to tell about what their work has achieved.

I hope that others will find these examples of successful scrutiny useful and inspiring and will use them to inform and improve their own practice. In an age of austerity it is only through demonstrating the value and impact that effective scrutiny can have in supporting councils and other organisations to deliver better, more cost-effective services, that scrutiny will itself survive as a valued element of local democracy. Reading these examples of what can be achieved, I feel sure that it will.

Jessica Crowe

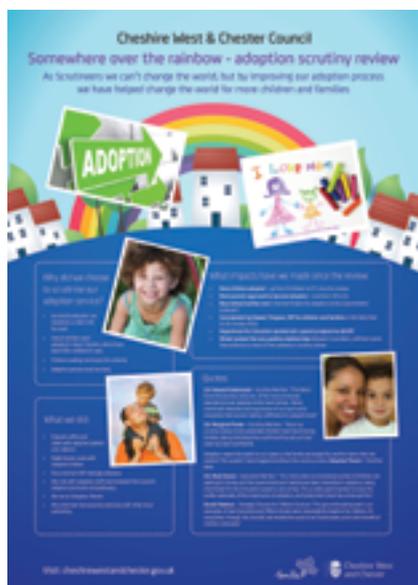
Executive Director, Centre for Public Scrutiny
June 2014



RIGHT: Delegates gather to hear the Awards results

Overall Impact Award

☆ Winner:



Cheshire West and Chester Council **Somewhere over the rainbow: scrutiny review** **for improving the council's adoption process**

Our top winner shows scrutiny making a real difference: a difference to people's lives and a difference to how a council service is run. Through effective scrutiny by two members and their officers Cheshire West and Chester have transformed how they manage their adoption processes, delivering better results for children and families.

This review was conducted in response to local concerns about bottlenecks in the parental approval and child placement processes at the council and within a broader political context seeking to improve adoption policy and practice nationally. Following its recommendations the council now arranges more adoptions, quicker than any other authority in the North West. Children are on average placed within 20 months of entering the system, nearly four months quicker than the national average.

It was selected by the judges as both the Innovation theme winner and the Overall Impact Winner because it demonstrated:

- clear outcomes that benefitted the local community;
- a sensitivity to the issues it was investigating;
- a clear, focused and service user centred review;
- how scrutiny could raise the profile of adoption within the council, with its partners, the broader community and nationally.

Some of the innovative methodology adopted by the committee included:

- conducting mystery shopping of the adoption process to assess whether potential adopters were being put off;
- user centered engagement – parents and children at a coffee morning, older children at a youth disco and potential adoptive parents at a council run training course;
- consulting staff involved in the adoption process, observing the adoption panel and trying to understand the 'nuts and bolts' of how adoption worked in the local area.

Recommendations from committee's final report were all accepted unanimously as having identified clear workable solutions for the council. Whilst the topline outcomes relate to improvements in the council's adoption service – placing more children and approving more parents – the committee's recommendations had a number of wider impacts including:

- a campaign launched to widen the engagement of potential adopters across the community – using more imaginative outreach and engaging new stakeholders in the search for carers such as: local schools, libraries, children's centres and faith groups;
- a new partnership with a local voluntary agency to provide post adoption placement support – improving the council's ability to attract potential adoptive parents;

-
- winning a Department for Education bid to deliver the new ADOPT parenting programme, a 16 week course designed to support adoptive families
 - the Cheshire West and Chester entry embodied many of the core principles the Centre for Public Scrutiny promotes and very successfully showed how good scrutiny can lead directly to better services.

“ I look forward to seeing councils rise to the challenge of improving adoption processes and eradicating delays; we must continue to do all we can to reform services so that children in need of adoption are found a permanent and loving home as quickly as possible. Building on your success and significant achievements this year I would like to encourage you to maintain this progress and share learning with other authorities wherever possible. ”

Edward Timpson MP, Minister for Children and Families

“ This is one of those entries that you have to read several times to fully recognise and respect this piece of scrutiny work. This has been an exemplary piece of scrutiny that has not just increased the number of approved adoptions but has thoroughly looked at the whole process and been recognised regionally and nationally as a model of good practice that will further improve the lives of children and young people within Cheshire and beyond. ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge



ABOVE: L to R: Melba Wilson, CfPS Trustee, the Cheshire West and Chester team, Elizabeth Filkin, Chair of Marston Independent Advisory Board

Economic Resilience Award

☆ Winner:



Braintree District Council **Review of enabling young people who are not in education, employment or training to participate in education, employment or training.**

A review in response to some of the serious problems facing Braintree with the area having a rising number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Young people who are NEET face a number of often long-lasting problems which their peers do not, such as:

- lower skills and consequently lower earnings;
- a greater likelihood of long term unemployment;
- poor health.

Whilst this award was given for the way in which scrutiny improved the economic resilience of the area, helping people during difficult times, the judges were also very impressed with the way councillors engaged with young people and local employers. The scrutiny committee recognised from the outset that expecting these groups to come to committee meetings and present evidence was both unrealistic and unlikely to yield the best available information. Supported by officers, committee members undertook the following engagement:

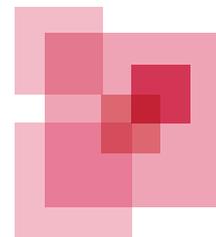
- talked to young people at a local hostel over pizza – which resulted in a representative group of young people attending the final committee meeting;
- local employers were met by councillors in their place of work;
- a broad range of public services were engaged - Essex County Council, Jobcentre Plus, National Apprenticeship Service, The College at Braintree, schools, and youth support workers.

Recognising that the issue can be highly charged and emotive the committee adopted an open tone, avoiding committee jargon and attempting to help all stakeholders to feel at ease.

The judges were also impressed that the committee sought to seize opportunities to push for change as they arose rather than just wait for the final report and recommendations to be published. These immediate impacts included amending Jobcentre Plus working practices and forging links between the local authority and new organisations such as Academy Schools where previously no relationship had existed.

Impact

- a 26% reduction in young people who are NEET in the District;
- delivered a coherent and coordinated approach to addressing needs for NEETs;
- establishment of a Braintree District Employment and Skills Group with an employment and skills focus bringing together key stakeholders in enabling NEETs to participate in education, employment or training;
- transforming the approach of Jobcentre Plus staff to NEETs and local employers;
- raising awareness amongst local GPs of the mental health impact that being unemployed can have on young people.



“ DWP have been actively involved in Braintree District Council’s Scrutiny Committee, looking to tackle issues around youth unemployment in the Braintree area. We embraced the process, and were happy to receive feedback from Councillors, Council Officers and (most importantly) young people themselves on the services we provide, and how we are perceived. Feedback generally involves some criticism, and this feedback was no exception, but on a constructive ‘critical friend’ basis.

The process has helped us to tailor some of our service delivery to young people better, focusing more on what young people want us to focus on. ”

Dave Cope, Manager, Jobcentre Plus, Braintree and Witham

“ Innovative and focused approaches to understanding and tackling issue of young people who are NEET; active engagement of stakeholders - especially young people; good use of social and other media; welcome focus on mental health and well being. ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge.

Shortlisted:

Knowsley MBC **Partnership working in personal debt support**

This review examined the impact that the current economic climate was having on the residents of Knowsley and specifically investigated what support existed around debt issues.

Impact

- around £80,000 of interest payments saved by residents after the council provided some capital for a local credit unions to develop its services in the area;
- a pledge that every resident should have access to free money and debt advice;
- the council’s Financial Inclusion Strategy was refreshed to reflect the committees findings;
- development of loan shark awareness campaigns.

“ I believe this entry has addressed one of the key issues that is currently affecting large numbers of people within lots of authorities throughout the country. They have tackled it in such a way that their recommendations will have far reaching effects for not just people in their own area, but right across the country. An excellent example of good practice. ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge

Shortlisted:

City of Lincoln Council Poverty in Lincoln

Lincoln as a post-industrial city faces a number of economic challenges: high unemployment, lower than average wages and areas of acute deprivation. The combination of significant changes to benefits and the ongoing recession led the City of Lincoln scrutiny committee to review what the council was doing to tackle poverty. Evidence was gathered using statistical data, a comprehensive literature review and evidence from experts, voluntary groups and residents.

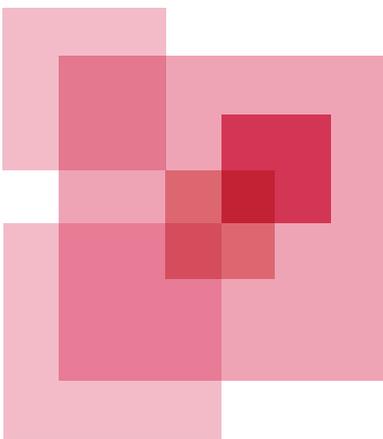
Impact

- the Lincoln Poverty Conference bringing together 110 partners from more than 50 organisations;
- led to the creation of Lincoln Anti-Poverty Strategy;
- issues of poverty gained significant media exposure and its profile has been raised locally and within the council;
- a number of specific initiatives aimed at relieving poverty: full council tax discounts retained; bulk energy purchase scheme launched; Credit Union account for council tenants and year 7 students with a £10 deposit from council; new furniture recycling scheme with voluntary sector partner.

“ *The scrutiny process was thorough and the councillors and officers were keen to listen to the views of a range of partners. The conference was a huge success and it has provided a real impetus for organisations to work together to address the causes and consequences of poverty.*

The council provided a strong lead with senior staff and councillor involvement but there was a real sense of listening, involvement and engagement of the variety of organisations involved. ”

Alex Ray, from Longhurst & Havelok Homes, and Chair of Lincolnshire Credit Union.



Shortlisted:

Southampton City Council **Increasing the number and quality of apprenticeships in Southampton**

Despite a growth in apprenticeships within the City, this growth was below the national and regional averages, and was accompanied with a drop in the number of young people taking up apprenticeships. The Southampton City Scrutiny Committee was asked to assess how the council could better promote and develop apprenticeships, assess their importance to the city's economy and look at ways to increase apprenticeships.

Impact

- a city wide campaign raising awareness of apprenticeships;
- apprentice recruitment up 3.6%;
- local education providers and businesses establishing a new Business/Education Apprenticeship Partnership;
- new requirement for apprenticeships within council planning.

“ *This entry has looked at an important issue which affects thousands of young people across the UK and has found some unique ways of making sure that more young people are given the opportunity to have high quality apprenticeships. I am sure other local authorities and other bodies will look at this entry as a helpful way of promoting apprenticeships within their own areas.* ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge

Improving Transparency Award

☆ Winner:



Cambridgeshire County Council **Improving transparency and accountability in the context of the new NHS commissioning environment**

The 2012 Health and Social Care Act has had a significant impact on the way NHS services are commissioned. GP-led clinical tendering is new to local authorities and new to scrutiny committees. This, coupled with the national and local profile of a contract for older people's health and social care worth £800m over five years which would partially be rewarded on the outcomes it delivered, led the Cambridge County Council Adults, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to do an in depth scrutiny of this contract and the commissioning process.

Its significant scale, in terms of both finances and population coverage (over 820,000 people), and the fact that there was vocal local opposition to the contract led the committee to focus particularly on improving the transparency of the tendering process. Much opposition had centred on the issue of key documents not being made public due to 'commercial confidentiality'.

The committee recognised it had to approach the review in a novel way as the commissioning process itself was innovative and extremely complex. The committee had to work hard, from the outset, to reassure the clinical commissioning group (CCG) that it was not seeking to make a commissioning decision but seeking to improve transparency and help ensure that the final service was successful. By working actively on the relationship with the CCG, acknowledging the difficulties they faced in commissioning such a complex service, greater trust was established and the process became collaborative – leading to the committee being granted access to the tenders that were submitted to the CCG.

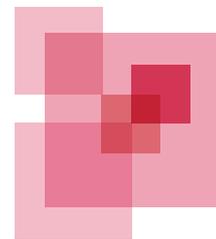
Through taking this collaborative approach the committee was able to champion the concerns of local people. Parallel to the commissioning process public scrutiny meetings were held which campaigners and service users were invited to attend and express their concerns. This formal engagement coupled with less formal meetings such as attending patient group sessions to discuss the contract's outcomes framework helped inform committee members of a wide range of views which they could feed into the CCG.

The judges of the award thought this was an excellent example of how scrutiny can be a consensual process, but without becoming simply an aid to improved performance for the executive body. Scrutiny held fast to its representative role and drew on local concerns to challenge and improve the commissioning process.

As well as demonstrating how scrutiny can make a process more transparent the judges also felt this example could have significant ramifications for all public service commissioning which is why it won the 'Influence Beyond Boundaries' award as well. It has shown how some of the legal difficulties which have existed around making procurement more transparent can be overcome, and by doing so help any organisation to commission and deliver better services.

Impact

- facilitating the publication of anonymised bid summaries for public consultation – this was a key innovation in addressing the commonly cited barrier of 'commercial confidentiality';
- amending the tender invitation and the evaluation criteria used to assess submissions;



- instigating public consultation during the tendering process (it was originally planned only for after the contract had been awarded);
- through consultations helped the CCG to take on board public concerns about the commissioning and design of the service contract;
- Cambridgeshire are now seeking to influence national guidelines on commissioning following the success of this scrutiny – to demonstrate that positive impacts and transparency can be achieved despite the strictures of procurement law such as commercial confidentiality.

“ Their [the scrutiny committee’s] close interest in the programme has encouraged us to work with bidders to provide public summaries of bids, which is unusual in such a process but has helped us answer many of the transparency questions we have been faced with. Regular contact and good relationships with the Scrutiny officer and Chair have enabled us to engage openly and be honest about the challenges we faced in the process, so that we could address them and adjust engagement plans together. ”

Jessica Bawden, Director of Corporate Affairs
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group

Highly commended:

Buckinghamshire County Council Budget scrutiny

A new Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee (Buckinghamshire having recently established a select committee model for scrutiny) scrutinised the council’s budget for 2014/15-2017/18. The review was conducted over four days and aimed to help the council to produce a balanced budget in support of its strategic priorities.

Impact

- 15 recommendations which covered issues such as the need to lobby government for timely financial settlements, continuing to move towards self-sufficiency, increasing budget devolution and improving budget transparency;
- the committee identified nine specific cuts which it thought would have an impact on the council’s strategic priorities. These cuts were reversed or mitigated;
- better communication about council budget setting and the role of scrutiny through pro-active promotion of the committee’s work which got coverage on the BBC South Today programme and in the local press.

“ Budget scrutiny is such an important job for scrutiny committees and it is very hard to do. This review was impressive in the thoroughness of its approach, the fact that its method is replicable in other authorities and the measurable impact it made. ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge

Shortlisted:

London Borough of Harrow
Accessible transport in the Borough

(see page 16 on Involvement, Insight and Impact Award)

Shortlisted:

Telford and Wrekin Council
Scrutiny of the children in care placement strategy

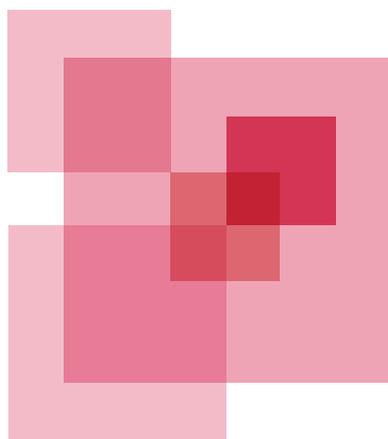
The Telford and Wrekin Scrutiny Committee undertook a review between August 2012 and October 2013 to assess whether the council's policies and processes around placing and supporting children in care. It primarily wanted to investigate whether these processes were as robust and effective as possible in terms of safety and that they were delivering value for money for the council.

Impact

- Piloting a new system to record visits as this was highlighted as an area of concern;
- A new system to provide greater challenge to the Independent Reviewing Officers;
- A new system to ensure local police know about out of borough placements;
- Overhaul of the care placement budget;
- A doubling of the leaving care grant from £1,000 to £2,000;
- Weekly care costs reduced in four council residential units where the committee had concerns about their value for money, saving £77,000.

“ I would like to strongly support the recommendation of this award for Telford and Wrekin's Children & Young Persons Scrutiny Committee. As the former lead for missing persons and children in the West Mercia Police Area I have worked closely with the committee to examine and improve the arrangements for the safeguarding of children who go missing in the County. Their drive and commitment in seeking to improve accountability and services for this vulnerable group of children is to be highly commended. ”

Inspector Philip Shakesheff QPM, Force Lead Missing Children, West Mercia Police



Influence Beyond Boundaries Award

☆ Winner:

Cambridgeshire County Council **Improving transparency and accountability in the context of the new NHS commissioning environment**

(see page 10 on Improving Transparency Award)

Highly commended:

Lancashire County Council **Towards a stronger sense of place**

A review which was initially motivated by the impact of the 39% reduction in Arts Council England funding but quickly found there were significant deeper problems within the sub regions arts scene, to which the task group sought to find solutions. The majority of evidence was collected 'on the road': visiting arts venues, engaging with performers and assessing other areas which had been more successful in attracting Arts Council funding. The review brought a plurality of arts organisations together to form a coherent and shared vision.

Impact

- Establishment of Arts Lancashire, a new organisation to help bring together arts organisations, co-ordinate the regions approach to arts and funding and develop a clear business plan and strategy for the arts;
- Targets for 2012/13 exceeded across the board in areas such as: artists employed; new works commissioned and audience numbers;
- Increased inward investment to £4.5m against a target of £4m;
- Arts and culture recognised by Cabinet as important part of the area's identity with a new lead member for the arts established.

“ *An excellent piece of scrutiny which was extremely relevant and important to the area. It entailed excellent research, had effectively involved a lot of different organisations, established a new organisation and pivotally had increased inward investment.* ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge

Shortlisted:

City of Lincoln Council **Poverty in Lincoln**

(See page 6 on Economic Resilience)

Shortlisted:

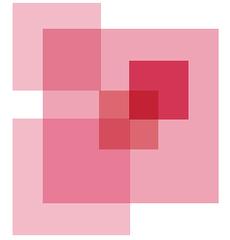
Bracknell Forest Council **Transforming the effectiveness of health scrutiny by applying the lessons of the Francis Report**

In response to the Francis Report, which was highly critical of Staffordshire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Bracknell Forest Council sought to review its own NHS trust and to ensure it was scrutinising services effectively. The committee rigorously assessed what steps were being taken to implement lessons from the Francis report and improvements the council needed to make to health overview and scrutiny practices. The review led to an overhaul of the overview and scrutiny process with more clearly defined roles for members, better monitoring of Care Quality Commission reports by officers, regular reviews of GP patient surveys and establishing a voluntary panel of clinical experts to assist with health scrutiny.

Impact

- better communication to NHS patients about how to make complaints or compliments;
- detailed publication of complaints;
- greater priority and focus on Health Overview and Scrutiny work.

Innovation Award



☆ Winner:

Cheshire West and Chester

(see page 4 on Overall Impact Award)

Shortlisted:

Cambridgeshire County Council **Improving transparency and accountability in the context of the new NHS commissioning environment**

(see page 10 on Improving Transparency Award)

Shortlisted:

Telford and Wrekin Council **Review of the management of community centres**

Following a lack of direction in the way in which local community centres were managed and funded, the council's scrutiny committee looked at what use council-run centres should have (community facility or income generation) and identified models of best practice for their future management. The committee visited all the community centres which the council ran and also visited all non-council run centres and other key stakeholders to understand how better to manage the council's centres in future.

Impact

- the council retained management of five out of six centres as key community assets;
- the one not retained was not serving a deprived community or functioning as a community centre and has now been commercially let, allowing the council to focus resources on those centres serving a community purpose;
- remaining community centres were updated and improved to better serve local people;
- improved access at centres;
- all improvements achieved within existing budgets.

“ Since the beginning of this year we have a community development worker and things are starting to improve. We now have more people coming into the centre as there are new activities available such as a film club, gardening clubs and a Saturday Mix Club for young people. With the new up to date kitchen we now want to start a luncheon club for the older people. In my opinion the improvements which have been made in recent months have started to help the area and have encouraged more people to use the centre. ”

Rob Maddox, Arlestone Residents Association

Involvement, Insight and Impact Award

☆ Joint Winner:



Brighton and Hove City Council Trans equalities

Brighton and Hove is renowned for its LGBT community and this forms an important part of the city's cultural and economic identity. However trans people both within the LGBT community and in wider society face significant discrimination and their specific needs are often not considered. The leader of the council had been asked to look in to the issues faced by trans people and a Scrutiny review was requested to examine the problems further.

Trans people are a hard to engage group, they have often had poor experience of public services. Partly because of this trans people are also some of the most disadvantaged people in Brighton and Hove, suffering from poor health, deprivation and often abuse. In recognition of this the scrutiny team developed a strategy which put effective and sensitive engagement at the core of the review. The committee worked in partnership with a local charity which supported trans people, co-opting experts to help better inform the process, and directly engaging through community events and specially designed workshops. The process was also offered a great deal of time which was pivotal in helping build up trust.

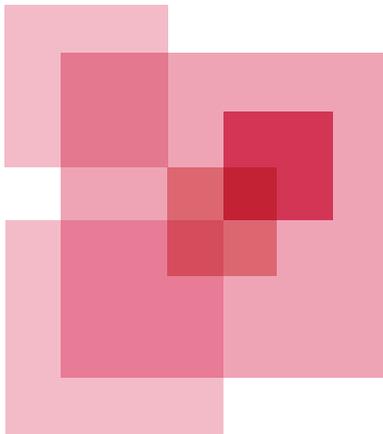
The judges thought this review was an excellent and worthy winner. It delivered significant, measurable outcomes for the people whose problems it was reviewing and through the process built trust with a hard to reach community and changed attitudes within the council.

The review uncovered a number of difficulties experienced by trans people and the committee set out in clear detail how the council and its partners could better meet their needs. This included significant changes to council policy such as the first trans needs assessment being conducted by the council, a change in corporate procurement policy so that needs of trans people have to be explicitly addressed and refreshing the council's corporate training to include trans awareness.

The review's final report was well received by the trans community, the council and its partners with all its recommendations being accepted. A number of the recommendations were implemented quickly and increasingly trans needs have been mainstreamed within the authority.

Impact

- trans awareness training delivered at local GPs;
- successful negotiation to deliver some gender reassignment services locally;
- elimination of need to state gender on GP forms, unless necessary;
- local police force has improved its recording of trans hate crime;
- local schools engaged with a new trans inclusion toolkit launched;
- trans swimming sessions, with gender neutral changing facilities, available at a local leisure centre;
- default for council run toilets to be gender neutral;
- council forms and letters amended so that gender is not required and enabling use of appropriate honorifics e.g. Mx;
- the council has appointed an internal Director level trans champion.



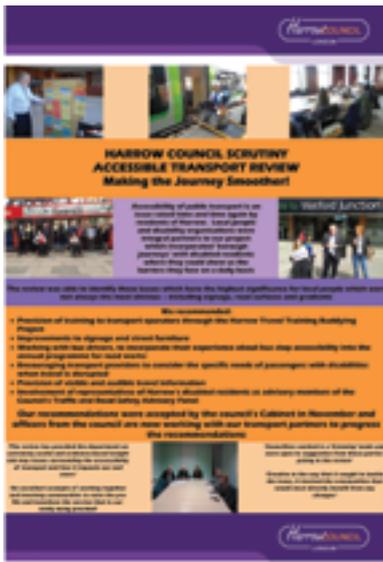
“ This review will have great long term impact, engaging with a part of a section of society which is marginalised, even within the LGBT community. This scrutiny will not win the councillors any votes but it was the right thing to do and for that the council should be applauded. ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge

“ The way in which the Scrutiny Panel, the council communities team and the trans community came together to work on this is a model of good practice in progressing the equality agenda for trans people. ”

Edward Whelan, of FTM Brighton (Local trans support group)

☆ Joint Winner:



London Borough of Harrow Accessible transport in the Borough

The judges selected the work by the London Borough of Harrow as a joint winner of the Involvement, Insight and Impact Award due to the innovative way it collected data and information about disabled passenger journeys and the positive impact on public transport the review delivered.

The Borough does not have an accessible train or underground station. However, the committee recognised that it would have limited impact on major infrastructure projects (although it has supported the case for accessible station renovations) but it might be able to help resolve other public transport issues faced by less able residents. The panel set about understanding the day to day barriers posed by poor transport infrastructure to the employment and social opportunities of disabled people. As with the Brighton and Hove review, the committee co-opted an expert to participate in the team, in the form of the chair of Harrow Public Transport Users Association. This helped provide insight, expertise and connections to the groups and individuals the councillors wanted to hear from. The committee was also advised by the Harrow Association of Disabled People on an engagement programme including residents' and public meetings and specially designed surveys.

The most innovative data gathering exercise was organising a number of 'borough journeys'. This entailed committee members accompanying less able residents on a typical journey through the borough using buses, trains and the underground. This was an invaluable source of information as it highlighted previously 'invisible' barriers of which they might not otherwise have become aware, for example the positioning of street furniture and signage.

After collecting feedback from residents and experiencing journeys first hand the committee organised a round-table meeting between council transport planners and public transport providers. This inclusive approach was itself innovative – not just relying on the publication of a report to get things moving the scrutiny team sought to engage with providers directly to share their findings. There were some direct results from that meeting as well as further impacts delivered following the publication of its final report. From the meeting a new community bus stop in the centre of town was agreed, as was the installation of low level tracks at Harrow's main rail station and agreement that greater consideration would be given to mobility issues at the quarterly rail and bus liaison meetings.

The committee's report was accepted in full and a number of changes have already taken place with longer term recommendations agreed in council implementation plans. A new scheme has been launched which raises awareness amongst transport operators of the needs of less able passengers. Transport staff have gained a greater awareness of how travel disruptions might have a specific impact on disabled people.

Two significant and immediate changes have been recognised as major improvements for less able transport users. Problematic signage and street furniture have been eradicated and people no longer need to pre-book when making train journeys. This final point was considered a great step forward as it removed a specific discriminating barrier which more able people do not need to consider. As the council takes forward the suggestions presented by the committee it is hoped that the public transport experience will continue to improve for Harrow's less mobile citizens.

“ TfL has consistently been impressed with LB Harrow's commitment to improving the street environment. LB Harrow has invested significantly in bus stop accessibility ensuring that the Council is over 10% higher, in terms of the number of bus stops which are accessible, than the London wide average. The accessible transport scrutiny review has clearly helped both inform and drive the accessibility agenda, with good effect, in Harrow. ”

Transport for London

“ This entry has fully engaged people who have difficulties moving around in their local communities and has created a review that could be used as a model of good practice throughout the UK as improving mobility is an essential part of everyday life which enhances independent living. I am sure many people, where access to transport in their local area is an issue, will read this review with envy and hope their own local authority will undertake a review similar to this in their own communities. ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge

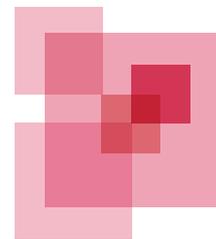
Highly commended:

Cardiff City Council **Give young people a voice! Engaging young people in Cardiff scrutiny**

This entry highlighted the ongoing work of the Cardiff Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee which has carried out a number of reviews, engaged directly with young people and sought to give them a voice in response to concerns that there was insufficient democratic participation amongst young people. The group has been very active in investigating issues of importance to young people, listening to young people's views and presenting findings to the council.

Impact

- young people's representation leading to a review of proposed £1.2m cut in Play budget and £1m to youth services budget;



- the committee outputs have had a direct impact on policy, with evidence collected being used to influence council decisions;
- greater awareness of young people's health, educational attainment and social care;
- increased confidence of the young people involved and direct exposure to local government and decision making processes.

“ We have been given the opportunity to contribute to Scrutiny on a number of occasions, including December 2013, where Youth Council members were invited to share our concerns around the effect of proposed cuts to youth and play services. After a lengthy campaign the proposed cuts to Youth and Play Services were drastically reduced - thanks perhaps in part to the actions of CYC and the scrutiny committee. ”

James Humphry and Bethan Domaille (Co Chairs of Cardiff Youth Council)

Shortlisted:

* Chosen by delegates at CfPS Conference on 10 June voting by secret ballot.

London Borough of Newham **A pathway to young people's mental health and wellbeing** **(also winner of Scrutineers' Choice Award*)**

The mental wellbeing of young people is one of Newham's four priorities in the council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. However, there were concerns about how services were working together and ensuring effective pathways at the more acute end of the spectrum. Newham's Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission found a number of problems including: variable understanding amongst GPs about young people's mental health, no defined Mental Health Strategy, young people not feeling they were listened to and a disconnect between commissioners and third sector mental health provision.

Impact

- a new Mental Health Strategy, currently going through the democratic process;
- establishment young people's mental health forum to aid transition from young-people's to adult services;
- active and ongoing engagement of young people in service design;
- new carers strategy creating more inclusive decision making;
- greater cooperation between voluntary sector and statutory health agencies.

“ I very much welcome the work of the Commission in exploring the transition of young people's mental health needs and it was enormously valuable to receive the evidence that they had gathered from the service users and our partners. I was pleased that the recommendations that the Commission offered were endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board and that the Commission has been able to bring a consensus on where improvement needs to be made. ”

Steve Gilvin, Chief Operating Officer, Newham Clinical Commissioning Group



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