A draft performance management framework for local government scrutiny

Outcome What does good scrutiny seek to achieve?	Characteristics What would it look like? How could we recognise it?	Indicators What would indicate effective arrangements?
1. Democratic accountability drives improvement in public services.	Impact i) Overview and scrutiny regularly engages in evidence based challenge of decision makers and service providers to identify solutions to areas of poor performance and/or issues of public concern. ii) Scrutiny actively monitors the implementation of recommendations for improvement and re-addresses issues where expectations have not been met. Environment iii) Scrutiny has a clearly defined and valued role in the council's improvement arrangements and applies pressure for positive change through a variety of methods. iv) Scrutiny has the dedicated officer support it need from officers who are able to commission and undertake independent research effectively, and provide Scrutiny members with high-quality analysis, advice and training. Practice v) Forward work programmes are informed by councillor's representative roles and strike an effective balance between prioritising community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance.	Impact • Forward work programmes are linked to the Council's strategic and corporate objectives and are informed by audit, inspection and regulatory reports as well as the Council's corporate risk register. • There are regular meetings between the Executive, Scrutiny Chairs, Senior Officers and Scrutiny Officers to co-ordinate forward work programmes and discuss the timing, focus and methodology of scrutiny inquiries. • Decision makers and service providers give attention and positively respond to scrutiny's requests for information, attendance and subsequent findings, analysis and recommendations. • Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs regularly meet to co-ordinate forward work programmes and maximise the function's effectiveness. • Scrutiny Committees make effective use of pre-meetings to develop lines of enquiry and focussed questioning strategies. • Scrutiny Councillors are able to understand, interpret and utilise performance and financial data. • Scrutiny Committees are provided with extensive briefings on the major priorities and challenges associated within service

	vi) Overview and Scrutiny inquiries are non-political, methodologically sound and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives.	areas. • Scrutiny Councillors are able to adopt different styles of information gathering according to the different status of interviewees. • Scrutiny makes good use of co-optees and 'expert' witnesses in their inquiries. • Scrutiny recommendations are credible, evidence based and realistic. • Forward work programmes are flexible to respond to changing local need and regularly follow up on previous recommendations. • The Constitution specifies a mutually agreed period of time in which Cabinet formally responds to scrutiny recommendations. • All Non-Executive Members regularly participate in the scrutiny process. • There is consistency of working and performance across all Scrutiny Committees within a Council. • Scrutiny Chairs are equipped with the training and support to effectively manage scrutiny meetings. • There are effective two way communication mechanisms between Overview & Scrutiny and external/internal auditors, regulators and inspectors. Environment • The Cabinet regularly publishes a Forward Work Programme and is pro-active in ensuring this is considered by Non-Executive Members. • Scrutiny has a clear role in the Council's self-evaluation, performance management and improvement arrangements. • The Council regards the effectiveness of its scrutiny

		arrangements as reflective of the organisations corporate, political and democratic health.
		• Scrutiny is regarded by the Executive and senior management as being robust, constructive and politically mature.
		• The scrutiny support role is defined and well-understood within the Council. The independence of scrutiny officers is respected and they are regarded as making a significant contribution to the organisation's improvement arrangements.
		• Scrutiny Committees commission their own reports from service areas.
		• There are dedicated resources to support the training and development of Member and Officer scrutiny practitioners.
		Practice
		• Overview & Scrutiny members 'own' the scrutiny agenda both literally and figuratively and decide what topics are to be included on the agenda and how they will be scrutinised.
		• Forward work programmes are regularly reviewed by scrutiny committees in order that committee aspirations are proportionate to the resources available to it.
		• There is no evidence of whipping or other political influence within scrutiny committees when politically sensitive and / or controversial issues are being considered by Members.
		• Forward work programme (FWP) items are outcome based and there are clear links evident between FWP objectives and individual agenda items.
		• Scrutiny Chairs and / or Scrutiny Committee members present findings, reports and recommendations to the Council's Executive.
		• Scrutiny Committees make best use of the time available to them and do not receive unnecessary presentations,

		information reports and / or reports for noting during meetings.
		• Scrutiny Members appreciate the different investigative tools available to them in carrying out their scrutiny role – e.g. task and finish groups, Member rapporteurs, public meetings.
		• Scrutiny Members have an appreciation of different scrutiny 'styles' and understand how these might relate to different scenarios – e.g. multi-agency partnership scrutiny, 'Call-In's', collaborative scrutiny.
		• The statutorily required annual report is used to track the number of recommendations adopted by the Executive and how they have been implemented.
2. Democratic decision making is accountable, inclusive and robust.	Impact i) Non-executive Members provide an evidence based check and balance to Executive decision making. ii) Decision makers give public account for themselves in the development and delivery of plans, policies and budgets. Environment iii) Scrutiny councillors have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively. iv) The process receives effective support from the Councils Corporate Management Team who ensures that information provided to scrutiny is of high quality and is provided in a timely and consistent manner. Practice v) Stakeholders have the ability to contribute to the development and delivery of scrutiny forward work programmes. vi) Overview and scrutiny meetings and activities are well-planned, chaired effectively and make best use of the	Impact • Overview and Scrutiny has clear governance arrangements that are understood and applied effectively via the constitution and scrutiny practice protocols. • Scrutiny Chairs and Committee Members are regularly sent copies of the Cabinet's decision record and records of delegated decisions by Cabinet Members. • The Constitution contains clear guidance for the Call-in procedure which includes public speaking rights for stakeholders which are corporately agreed, understood and applied. • Scrutiny contributes to a culture of continuous improvement in public services where retrospective accountability practices positively influences the development of new policies. • Executive Members, Senior Officers and others giving account to Scrutiny Committees are clear about why they are attending, what the likely areas of inquiry are going to be and what the Committee procedures are in order to maximise the use of participant's time.

	resources available to it.	• Regular feedback is sought from Executive Members, Senior Officers and others who give account to Scrutiny Committees to help ensure their experience of the scrutiny process is robust, honest and fair.

Environment

• Overview and Scrutiny Members have access to development and training opportunities focused on need as part of the council's wider commitment to member support and development. This would be evidenced through the annual Members Charter PDRs (member 'personal development reviews'). [If an authority has not got the Charter, then evidence through their member evaluation process].

• There is corporate commitment to ensuring the scrutiny process is provided with the information it needs to effectively discharge its accountability function.

• Scrutiny Officers and heads of service work closely together to ensure that Members receive the relevant detail in sufficient time to ensure Members are properly prepared to undertake their scrutiny role effectively. These meetings are linked to development and delivery of Committee's forward work programmes.

Practice

• Scrutiny Units link with Communication and Marketing teams to develop accessible multi-method communication and engagement strategies which differentiate between the 'general public' and those individuals or communities who are relevant to issues identified on a Committee's forward work programme.

• Forward work programmes, agendas, minutes and reports are routinely published on the council's website.

• Overview and Scrutiny meetings have clear objectives and are well managed. Inquiries have clear terms of reference and are effectively project planned.

			• Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs receive training on being elected to the role which includes how to manage in a political environment, how to manage meetings, how to engage the public within scrutiny activity, and how to demonstrate scrutiny leadership. • Scrutiny Committees prioritise detailed investigation of a small number of issues.
3. The public is engaged in democratic debate about the current and future delivery of public services.	Impact i) Overview and scrutiny enables the 'voice' of local people and communities across the area to be heard as part of decision and policy-making processes. Environment i) Scrutiny deals effectively with sensitive political issues, behaves with integrity, and helps resolves tension and conflict. ii) The Executive and Corporate Management team are open to peer dialogue with the public as part of the scrutiny process. Practice i) Scrutiny is characterised by effective communication both in its written and oral style and in utilising a variety of communication methods to raise awareness of, and encourage participation in democratic accountability. ii) Scrutiny builds trust and good relationships with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders.		Impact • Councils develop internal mechanisms to better enable members of the public to engage in scrutiny activity. Such mechanisms would include: i) Request that an item be placed on an agenda for consideration by an overview and scrutiny committee (providing this is of immediate relevance to a topic included on its FWP); ii) Submit evidence (oral or written) to a planned or ongoing scrutiny review or investigation; iii) Participate as a co-opted Member; iv) Submit evidence (oral or written) relating to a Call-In of an Executive decision. • Scrutiny Units send copies of Committee Forward Work Programmes to a range of local stakeholders such as County Voluntary Councils. • Scrutiny utilises co-option when considered appropriate as a means to develop partner relations and representative participation that may add significant value to the work of scrutiny committees. • Public engagement activities are cost-effective and add social value to the work of scrutiny committees. Environment • The Executive, Corporate Management Team and Scrutiny

		process consider 'public engagement' as a valuable method of social research.
		• The scrutiny process develops protocols to manage public expectations in terms of setting out how any information submitted to relevant overview and scrutiny committees will be used and detailing how and when feedback will be provided. Such protocols would cover;
		i) Public speaking arrangements at Scrutiny Committee / JOSC meetings (to include Call-In)
		ii) Public involvement in Sub-Committee and / or Task & Finish Group Meetings
		iii) Managing a request for scrutiny (including petitions)
		iv) Dealing with requests for public co-option
		• Safeguards are built into public engagement processes to protect against committees being lobbied in potentially vexatious ways.
		• On occasions where Overview and scrutiny committees refuse public requests to include particular items on their agendas, a clear rationale is provided to the originator of the request.
		Practice
		• Scrutiny Units link with Communication and Marketing teams to develop accessible multi-method communication and engagement strategies which differentiate between the 'general public' and those individuals or communities who are relevant to issues identified on a Committee's forward work programme.
		• Scrutiny minutes, agendas and reports communicate complex issues simply.
		• There are regular press releases detailing the work of scrutiny committees

		• Scrutiny Officers and Chairs meet regularly with voluntary sector representatives as a means to enable more specific representational input into the work of scrutiny committees. • Councils develop outline role descriptions for co-opted members which clarify the expectations of both committees and potential co-opted members. • Councils develop recruitment processes when recruiting for co-opted members on an individual or representational basis. These would include core competencies and criteria against which to evaluate the suitability of candidates. • There is close contact and regular communication between the council's scrutiny function and those organisations or agencies being scrutinised. This includes making effective use of memorandums of understanding and/or informal protocols to clarify working relationships.