



Joint Overview and Scrutiny Network Meeting

Held on Tuesday 30 March at Old Sessions House, Clerkenwell Green, London

Notes of the Meeting

Present

Cllr Rod Hotton	Adur District Council
Elizabeth Hale	Audit Commission
Tom Hook	Brighton and Hove City Council
Ed Hammond	Centre for Public Scrutiny
Chris Pedlow	Crawley Borough Council
Louise Cooke	Dover District Council
Rebecca Brough	Dover District Council
Gillian Mauger	East Sussex County Council
Katie Mills	Elmbridge Borough Council
Katie Benton	Hampshire County Council
Marian Jones	Isle of Wight Council
Andy Rogers	New Forest District Council
Cllr John Ward	New Forest District Council
James Harris	Portsmouth City Council
Cllr Brian Stead	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Chris Phelan	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Helen Looker	SEE
Mark Palmer	SEE
Sian Campbell	SEE
Susie Bonfield	SEE
Andrew Crawford	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Christine Hastings	Test Valley Borough Council
Cllr Brian Bedwell	West Berkshire Council
David Lowe	West Berkshire Council
Cllr Bob Smytherman	Worthing Borough Council
Mark Lowe	Worthing Borough Council
Kevin Jacob	Wokingham Borough Council
Ted Piker	Wycombe District Council

Apologies

Richard Beaumont	Bracknell Forest Council
Bambi Benson	Chichester District Council
Katie Armstrong	Eastbourne Borough Council
Susan Coulter	Fareham Borough Council
Rt Hon Nick Raynsford	Greenwich and Woolwich
Julie Keith	Medway Council
Norman Miles	Milton Keynes Council
David Welch	Rushmoor Borough Council
Sunita Sharma	Slough Borough Council
Kat Hicks	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Simon Wright	West Oxfordshire District Council
Becky Ramsey	Woking Borough Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

All those present were welcomed to the meeting. The notes of the previous meeting had been circulated prior to the network, and it was agreed these were an accurate record.

Notes from the latest National Overview and Scrutiny Forum were circulated and Total Place pilots were discussed briefly. There was a request to email [Mark Palmer](#) if any authority, especially two-tiered councils, is involved in piloting Total Place and scrutinising partnerships and spending.

2. Update from SEE

It was noted that:

- The annual [Enhancing Local Democracy Conference](#) will be held on Friday 16 July 2010 at Local Government House, London. There is an 'early bird' discount if you book a place before 30 April.
- SEE have recently disseminated their Councillor Induction and Development Pack. This includes a [CD Guide](#) providing information for newly elected councillors and prompts for local details to be inserted by the local authority. Additionally, the 2010/2011 [Councillor Development Brochure](#) is available.
- There will be two Induction events, one held on 20 September 2010 in Buckinghamshire and one held on 28 September 2010 in Kent.

The network received a presentation from Sian Campbell, SEE, regarding the importance of a [Member Mentoring Programme](#).

3. Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)

Councillor Brian Bedwell and David Lowe, West Berkshire Council, presented a case study exploring the effectiveness of the [Councillor Call for Action](#).

It was requested that if an authority was involved with a CCfA, please send SEE a summary, so this can be shared with others.

4. CAA and the Role of Scrutiny

Elizabeth Hale, Audit Commission and CAA Lead for Berkshire, explored how scrutiny can play an important role with Comprehensive Area Agreements. Presentation available on the [SEE website](#). Attention was drawn to an excellent website with a range of useful resources: www.direct.gov.uk/oneplace.

5. Network Update

It was noted that:

- New Forest District Council – are currently reviewing the structure of their O and S arrangements, assisted by SEE.
- Reigate & Banstead – have recently completed a budget scrutiny review. They have a scrutiny review team to explore alternative service delivery. Review of local community action plan. Members of the scrutiny committee make up the audit committee. Also participating in county-wide scrutiny arrangements across Surrey, taking part in strategic reviews.
- West Berkshire Council – have a separate governance and audit committee. West Berkshire are looking into the organisation of scrutiny for the future. Currently half way through a review regarding the impact of the recent severe weather on the local economy. The PCT are under pressure to 'tick boxes' and are expecting a greater level of scrutiny.

- Wycombe District Council – have a separate governance and audit committee but the Chairs meet quarterly to discuss responsibilities and areas of focus.
- Wokingham Borough Council – also have a separate governance and audit committee, they have a protocol of regular meetings though. Wokingham are trying to concentrate more on external scrutiny, with child safeguarding being a recent focus.
- Surrey Heath Borough Council – have four scrutiny committees, they tend to focus on post-decision scrutiny and tend to be more effective at external scrutiny.
- Isle of Wight Council – are struggling a little with member involvement and have had no reviews as yet. Trying to increase the pre-scrutiny of decisions.
- Adur and Worthing District Council – have a joint scrutiny committee, there is a Partnership Scrutiny Working Group to aid with this. The focus at the moment is on disabled access within the districts.
- East Sussex County Council – is a two-tiered authority. Effectively uses a complimentary approach to scrutiny rather than joint scrutiny.
- West Sussex County Council – are aiming for complimentary scrutiny rather than joint scrutiny.
- Elmbridge Borough Council – are in the process of reducing three overview and scrutiny committees to just one. This was member driven but is causing a little controversy.
- Dover District Council – is a two-tiered authority, and part of the East Kent Shared Services Partnership. Recently looked at building a new district hospital, scrutiny has been used effectively with the LA and the PCT to gain a site that meets all needs. This is a good example of working across the authority and across partnerships.

6. Private Members Scrutiny Bill

Nick Raynsford was due to speak but was absent on the day due to sickness. Ed Hammond, Research and Information Manager at the Centre for Public Scrutiny, presented information surrounding the Overview and Scrutiny Bill and why the Bill has been dropped. Additionally, Ed informed the network that the CfPS was gaining charity status from 1 April.

6. CPD Session

The session, led by Sian Campbell, explored the roles of both scrutiny Members and Officers. The points raised in this interactive session will be published in a brief paper available shortly.