

Improving Scrutiny - feedback and actions

Huw Rees

03 June 2024

Recommended Actions (1)

1. Draft and agree a protocol for effective scrutiny
2. Document and schedule a revised FWP process
3. Ensure more timely use of pre-decision scrutiny
4. Establish purpose, scope and focus for each scrutiny item
 - Set out in covering reports
 - Use pre-meets to reinforce

Recommended Actions (2)

5. Develop evaluation mechanisms

- Survey Members once a protocol is established (gap analysis)
- Introduce post-scrutiny reflection on practise
- Renew recommendation monitoring and impact evaluation

6. Ensure training and development programmes cover:

- Induction and CPD on effective scrutiny
- Critical analysis, questioning and chairing
- Appropriate use of social media

A word cloud featuring various positive adjectives. The words are arranged in a dense, overlapping manner. The colors used are purple, green, blue, yellow, and orange. The sizes of the words vary, with 'Impartial' and 'Respectful' being the largest. The words are: Impartial, Collaborative, Supportive, Owned, Positive, Engaging, Constructive, Objective, Respectful, Challenging, Open, Purposeful, Trusting, Cooperative, Focused, Inclusive, Professional, and Transparent.

Impartial

Collaborative

Supportive

Owned

Positive

Engaging

Constructive

Objective

Respectful

Challenging

Open

Purposeful

Trusting

Cooperative

Focused

Inclusive

Professional

Transparent

Protocol - coverage

1. Definition of scrutiny

2. Behaviours and values

e.g. Respectful, constructive etc.

3. Principles

e.g. Aligned, Strategic, Improvement focussed,
Clear purpose, Timely, Objective, non-political
etc.

Protocol - coverage

4. Engagement

e.g. with FWP process, with scrutiny team, regular scheduled briefings, attendance expectations etc.

5. Information sharing (incl. reports)

e.g. Access, Quality, Timeliness, Confidentiality

6. Meeting conduct

e.g. Impartiality, timekeeping, maintaining focus, personal and collective responsibility etc.

Protocol - coverage

7. Recommendations

e.g. Clear purpose and focus, Responses, Timeliness, Monitoring etc

8. Dispute resolution

e.g. adjudication, mediation, roles

Others...?

Effective budget scrutiny = Good governance

- Whole council responsibility - fiduciary duty
- Cabinet – design and deliver a balanced budget (transparently)
- Scrutiny – mechanism for non-executive oversight of budget matters (constructively)

Budget scrutiny – a process not an event

CfPS – “much budget scrutiny focuses on review, in committee, of a draft budget a matter of weeks before it is submitted to full council for approval – this is not an effective way to conduct oversight.”

- An incremental process, and a continuing duty
- Means of building knowledge and understanding with which to scrutinise
- Opportunity to question assumptions, scenarios and options
- Scrutiny cannot fulfil its role if it's not engaged throughout – limits ability to influence changes