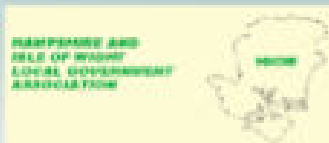


# Why scrutiny matters

## Effective Overview and Scrutiny



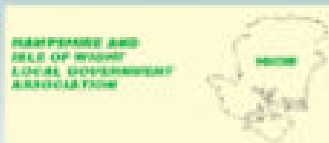
# Introduction

## Background:

- Local Government Act 2000: Introduced Executive / Scrutiny arrangements.
- Overview and Scrutiny - Statutory role
- Non-Executive Members

## Presentation:

- Aims of of Overview and Scrutiny
- Principles of Overview and Scrutiny
- Scrutiny at Redditch Borough Council
- Group activities and DVD



# Learning outcomes

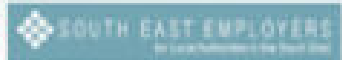
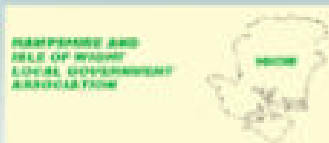
- Understand the main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government, and the types of activity these roles encompass
- Identify potential outcomes from effective scrutiny
- Have a basic introduction to the legal framework
- Identify the working approaches which support effective scrutiny and to review our council's current practice



# What scrutiny is and what scrutiny does

## Group Exercise 1: What is Scrutiny?

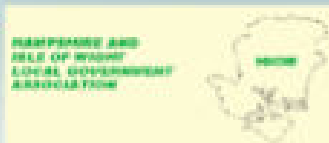
- What is Scrutiny in your opinion?
- What activities do you think Scrutiny should involve?
- What might Scrutiny achieve?
- Are there any examples of Scrutiny outside local government?



# What Should be the Guiding Principles of Scrutiny?

- Challenge: To provide critical friend challenge to executives, external authorities and agencies
- Engagement: To reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- Leadership: To support community leadership and effective representation
- Performance improvement: To make an impact on the delivery of public services

Centre for Public Scrutiny: Four principles



# Legal powers

- Local Government Act 2000: introduced executive/scrutiny arrangements
- Health and Social Care Act 2001 introduced health scrutiny power
- Local Government Act 2003: some provisions to enable voting for co-optees

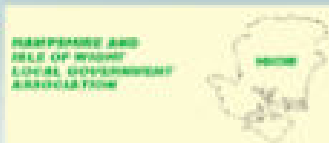
INFORMATION SHEET: The legal framework for scrutiny



# Roles of overview and scrutiny

- Holding to account
- Performance management
- Policy Review
- Policy development
- External scrutiny

INFORMATION SHEET: The Roles of Overview and Scrutiny



# Putting these roles into practice: 1

## Holding to Account:

- review of executive decisions, pre-scrutiny from forward plan
- Use of Call-in powers (to be used exceptionally)
- Scrutiny of past performance or events

## Performance Management:

- Keep under review implementation of council plans and strategies
- Contribute to improvement of performance





# Putting these roles into practice: 2

## Policy Review:

- Keep council policies and strategies under review, including in-depth reviews of particular topics

## Policy Development:

- Contribute to development of new council policies and strategies (including budget),
- Carry out in-depth reviews to contribute to this

## External Scrutiny:

- Statutory role in relation to health
- Issues of concern to local people
- Partnership working

INFORMATION SHEET: The roles of overview and scrutiny



# Why scrutiny matters

## Benefits from outcomes:

Better decision-making, better service performance, better policy making, improvements from consultation and input of independent expertise

## Benefits from processes:

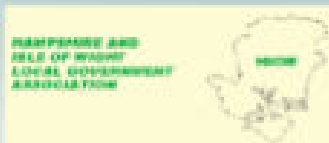
Enhanced democracy, inclusiveness, community leadership and engagement



# Redditch Borough Council Scrutiny Arrangements

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

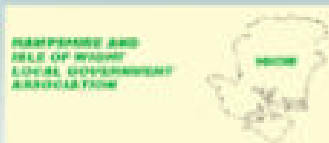
- Commissioning role, steering body
- Political proportionality – 8 Members
- Meetings within call-in period
- Performance, budget and service plan reviews
- Considers final Task and Finish Reports and refers recommendations to the Executive
- Conducts own short reviews
- Considers Portfolio Holder annual reports



# Redditch Borough Council Scrutiny Arrangements

## Task and Finish Groups:

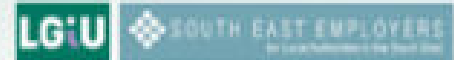
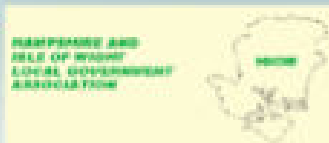
- Five Members – all Non-Executive
- Chair
- Scoping scrutiny exercises
- Reviews various subjects – policy review and development
- Informal / ad-hoc arrangements
- Past reviews: Communications, District Centres and Fees and Charges.



# Redditch Borough Council Scrutiny Arrangements

## Call-in:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any 3 Members
- Within 5 working days of Decision Notice
- Any key decision outside policy or budgetary framework
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee must call a meeting to consider the decision being called-in
- Overview and Scrutiny can put forward recommendations for Executive to consider

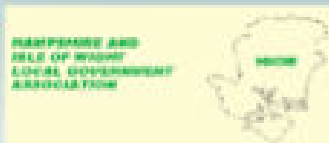


# Redditch Borough Council Scrutiny Arrangements

## Overview and Scrutiny Support Officers:

- Facilitators
- Assistance with research and project management
- Administrative support for the function
- Support both Committee and Task and Finish Groups
- Liaise between Members and Officers

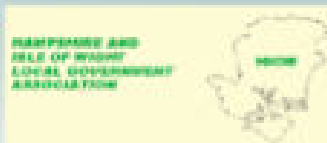
**Please note Overview and Scrutiny is a Member-led process— we support you we do not lead and control the process!**



# What has scrutiny ever done for us?

## Group Exercise 2

- What effective or positive approaches to scrutiny appear in the DVD?



# Conclusion: Councillor King's advice

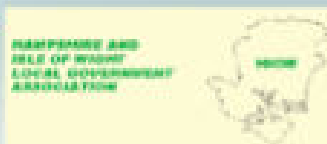
- Always try to attend
- Regard officers and councillors alike and as partners of your team. Members are team members whatever political group they represent.
- Never be frightened to ask questions and for clarification of things you do not understand.
- Be prepared to give things more time to achieve the right result.





# Conclusion: Councillor King's advice

- If you are thinking something, say it. Even though you are not an experienced councillor you have skills gained by time. The best ideas are usually the obvious ones seen by fresh eyes and thought out in open minds.
- Though the work we do is serious, enjoy it and try to add a little humour to the work you do.



# Understanding Overview and Scrutiny Processes and Outcomes

## Group Exercise 3

Quick quiz – true and false exercise  
(This is meant to be a bit of fun!)

INFORMATION SHEET: Effective Outcomes from Scrutiny



# Conclusion: What kills scrutiny?

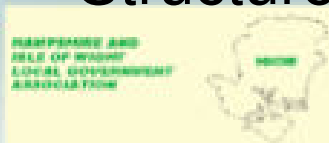
- Keeping Members busy with too much committee work
- Keeping Committees busy with unmanageable work programmes
- Officers submitting reports to scrutiny committees as an afterthought
- Starving scrutiny of resources
- Implement strong party group discipline on scrutiny
- Lacking direct officer support
- No monitoring of scrutiny activities

INFORMATION SHEET: How to kill Overview and Scrutiny



# Conclusion: What supports effective scrutiny?

- Executive receptiveness
- Officer receptiveness
- Allow time for the structure to mature and culture to change
- Scrutiny Members ask 'why? And dig beneath the surface
- Appropriate political behaviour
- Dedicated support
- Structures and processes which are fit for purpose



# Review and evaluation

- New Members to be invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Complete the evaluation form and return it to the facilitator

