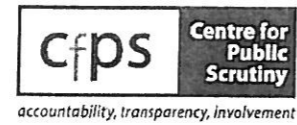


The national perspective

Ed Hammond

Research and Information Manager, CfPS

Centre for Public Scrutiny



What is the Centre for Public Scrutiny?

Four principles of effective scrutiny:


Provides critical friend challenge

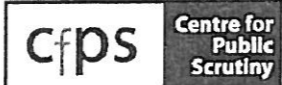
Reflects the voice and concerns of the public

Owned and led by members

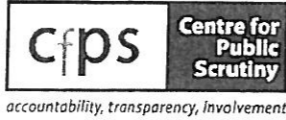
Drives improvement in public services

Scrutiny is a member-led function working with local people to improve services.

Big themes	 <small>accountability, transparency, involvement</small>
Structural reform	
Localism Bill	
Health and Social Care Bill	
Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill	
Cultural reform	
The Big Society	
Transparency	
Finances	
What this means for local government and regional working	

Structural reform Localism Bill	 <small>accountability, transparency, involvement</small>
The "community right to challenge"	
Amendments to planning law – far greater powers for local people	
Scrutiny – no major changes but more freedom over executive arrangements – right to return to the committee system	
Mayoral arrangements – in a state of flux	

**Structural reform
Health and Social Care Bill**



accountability, transparency, involvement

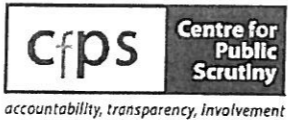
Currently in a "pause"

Significant doubt whether its provisions will now come to pass

Main things: GP consortia, creation of Local HealthWatch, creation of new regulation and monitoring regime for healthcare markets

Local authorities will get public health powers back

**Structural reform
Police Reform Bill**



accountability, transparency, involvement

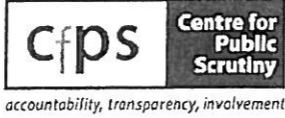
Will introduce directly-elected Police and Crime Commissioners, held to account by a Police and Crime Panel

The Lords have overturned the PCC provision but this will be reinstated by the Commons

Question mark over the interaction between PCPs and crime and disorder O&S

PCPs will be "scrutiny bodies" but may have executive membership!

Cultural reform
The Big Society



accountability, transparency, involvement

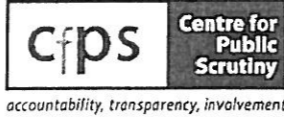
Idea about devolving power down to individuals and communities

Government has found it very difficult to gain traction and to explain fundamentally what it means

A top-down approach is being taken to engineering a bottom-up solution – vanguard areas, Community Organisers

It is about councils gaining a **cultural understanding** that they may have to cede control in many areas

Cultural reform
Transparency



accountability, transparency, involvement

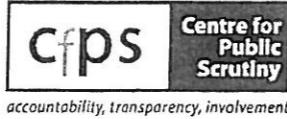
Government departments are publishing expenditure data above £25,000 – councils over £500

But there is no evidence that this data can be, or is being, used effectively by local people

There is a need for councils to think **culturally** about the openness with which they make decisions and publish data in order to make real use of information

Scrutiny could play a part through investigations into performance, finance and risk issues

**Cultural reform
Finances**



accountability, transparency, involvement

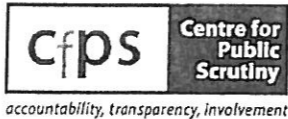
Councils facing on average a 23% cut in the RSG over 2011/12, and further cuts in 12/13 and 13/14.

Huge focus on saving money and finding efficiencies through:

Commissioning, shared services, more robust prioritisation, more robust assessment of VfM

Again, a role for scrutiny in assessing assumptions, making judgments on transformation and change and trying to bring in public discourse

What this means for scrutiny



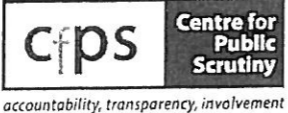
accountability, transparency, involvement

Potentially huge opportunities for scrutiny to:

- Mediate between competing interests
- Act as a champion for local people
- Promote a culture of transparency
- Make the council and its partners more able to cope with transformation and change

But equally, pressures on scrutiny budgets and a perception that scrutiny does not need much resourcing – cutbacks in dedicated officer support

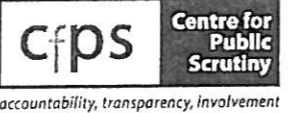
Regional networking



In this context regional networks help to:

- Share experiences of where things have gone well
- Talk about areas of mutual interest
- Plan out mutual work
- Provide training and development for officers and members
- Speak up on behalf of the function and influence policy-makers

Further information



<http://www.cfps.org.uk>
<http://www.lgiu.gov.uk>
<http://www.local.gov.uk>

CfPS regularly publishes Policy Briefings on interesting issues and is about to publish a series of four Skills Briefings for elected members

We are also thinking about the way that we support regional networks on an ongoing basis