Overview and Scrutiny Board
30th May 2012

Review of Overview and Scrutiny

Recommendations

1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Board considers whether there are any changes it wishes to see to the operation of overview and scrutiny beyond those supported by the Leaders Liaison Group and Council.

2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Board considers whether it wishes to make any recommendations to Cabinet.

1.0   Key Issues

1.1   A review of Democratic and Corporate Governance is currently under way and is being overseen by the Leaders Liaison Group. The first phase of the review (looking at key democratic bodies and public input) was considered by the Leaders Liaison Group on 19 April and reported to Council on 15 May. As Overview and Scrutiny is an integral part of the decision making process, the interim findings of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) were fed into that report.

1.2   The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board requested that the CfPS interim findings be circulated to <u>all</u> members so that they may put forward their views to the Board. (This was sent by e-mail to all members on 1 May but is attached to this report as **Appendix A** for ease of reference).

1.3   The outcome of the Leaders Liaison Group and the Council's consideration of the first phase of the Democratic and Governance Review (in so far as it related to Overview and Scrutiny) is set out below.

1.4   There is no intention at present to report further to Council on the Overview and Scrutiny review, unless the Board wish to make any changes that require Council approval. There may, however, be aspects that the Board wish to draw to the attention of Cabinet and/or get Cabinet's agreement to.

2.0   Outcome of Review of Democratic and Corporate Decision Making (Phase 1)

2.1   The CfPS report identified both strengths and weaknesses in our operation of overview and scrutiny (see enclosed) and made a number of recommendations that were accepted by Leaders Liaison Group:

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(1) Develop the task and finish group approach, which allows in-depth scrutiny and is more appropriate for engaging with the public and service users on a less formal basis.

(2) Develop external and joint scrutiny, particularly to tackle strategic issues, to build confidence in the contribution that scrutiny can make.

(3) Increase the external focus, making use of external witnesses to support member challenge.

(4) Develop other methods to keep members informed of key developments (such as making greater use of portfolio holder briefing sessions, seminars and briefings) so freeing up committee agendas to focus on O&S.

(5) O&S agendas should be more flexible and generally shorter. Some meetings could be of different type (e.g. Cabinet questioning sessions, business meetings, updates on task and finish group progress, single topic etc) and informal sessions could be held to plan lines of inquiry and questioning in advance in some instances.

(6) Engage earlier in the policy process and move from micro to macro-scrutiny focused on key strategic issues that really matter to Warwickshire.

(7) Develop a clear work programme for scrutiny so that member and officer time is used effectively, with an appropriate mix of challenge to Cabinet members and officers, and in-depth, forward looking policy reviews.

(8) The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Board as a coordinating body for the programme must be reinforced to ensure coordination and discipline.

2.2   Most of these recommendations [(1), (2),(3), (5),(7) and (8)] can just be taken forward and promoted by Overview and Scrutiny Board as they see fit. The others require other things to happen.

2.3   Recommendation (4) (*and to a large extent (5)*) requires using methods other than O&S meetings for keeping members informed. Committees already have the option (sometimes used) of having briefing papers circulated to committee members, rather than have them as items on agendas, on the understanding that members can always ask for an issue they see in a briefing paper to be raised at O&S meeting. This is something that can be promoted.

2.4   The use of Cabinet Portfolio Holder briefings was also applauded as a good way of Cabinet members keeping members briefed on key areas of activity in their portfolio and allowing discussion in a 'non-threatening' way. We have a number of sessions programmed but not for all Portfolio Holders at present. The Board may wish to recommend a programme be drawn up.

Equally, better understanding of the Cabinet's forward programme of work, objectives and direction would help Overview and Scrutiny develop a meaningful work programme that both they and the Executive find helpful in

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developing policy and improving outcomes for our residents. Discussion on work programmes and update on progress could be part of the senior member briefings (and would help to meet recommendation (6) above).

2.5   One of the key areas for improving communication with members is at full Council meetings and Council has agreed to provision for:

- Periodic 'State of Warwickshire' address from the Leader
- Periodic update reports from Cabinet Portfolio Holders (once a year, so there will be more than one report at each Council meeting).
- Member feedback from external bodies
- Addresses from external speakers (invitees not general public speaking).
- Leader reports on policy development areas for discussion.
- Questions without notice to portfolio holders as well as the Leader

This will help to keep all members up to date on issues, rather than relying on information updates at Overview and Scrutiny which by its nature only reach a proportion of the council membership.

2.6   There were some areas identified as possible areas for improvement that were not supported by Leaders Liaison Group:

- There was not support for the 'commissioning approach' to scrutiny and consequent reduction of Committees at this stage.
- The Group (and members at Council) were not convinced that local forums were the appropriate bodies for undertaking local scrutiny (an extension of 'layered' scrutiny). It was suggested, however, that forums may find holding public interest debates in local areas useful, and forums can also identify issues that may lend themselves to review by an O&S Committee.

The terms of reference and role of community forums is subject to review and will be considered at Council on 10 July 2012.

2.7   A further point to note on changes made at Council is the new petitions procedure that now allows for public petitions to be presented to Cabinet (if 300 or more signatures) and for debate at Cabinet (if there are 2000 signatures). Portfolio Holders may also be presented with petitions if 50 or more signatures are obtained.

3.0   Partner Engagement

3.1   The member survey has now been analysed and is attached at **Appendix B.**

3.2   The results reflect the views expressed by members in the review. It does, however, include an issue regarding engagement with district and borough councillors. One response from a district councillor included a comment that he/she did not feel he was considered an equal member with county

councillors. This could be due to topic selection being focussed on County Council responsibilities with little opportunity for (or focus on) the district/borough dimension. It may be that district/borough members on our committees either do not feel encouraged or do not consider themselves 'qualified' to offer themselves for a particular task and finish group.

3.3   Cabinet/Corporate Board had a discussion on 18 May about the role of overview and scrutiny in relation to that of the Health and Wellbeing Board (as referred to at item 7 on this agenda) and the need for constructive relationships with partners, including District and Boroughs who have a particular role to play in tackling health inequalities. In terms of the overview and scrutiny role, Cabinet wishes to see District and Borough Councils involvement with the County Council but concluded that it did not support the 'layered' approach to scrutiny as suggested by the CfPS as this could cause confusion and duplication. There is also a particular complication with Health Scrutiny, given that the Districts/Boroughs do not hold the statutory responsibility for Health Scrutiny and any recommendations in this regard have to be via the County Council's Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.4   Cabinet's conclusion is that there are already opportunities to involve Districts and Boroughs in overview and scrutiny that does not create further bureaucracy. There have been very effective joint scrutiny on specific topics of joint interest and Cabinet wish to see this taken forward, using the current Overview and Scrutiny bodies to do that, ensuring better engagement with current co-optees and encouraging further co-option of Borough and District councillors to specific reviews where appropriate.

4.0   Next steps

4.1   The final report from CfPS will be available in July but the key messages from this and the member survey are already clear. These centre on:

- ensuring a demonstrative commitment from both Cabinet and O&S to the value that Overview and Scrutiny can bring in ensuring robust and effective decision making
- timely communication to ensure meaningful prioritised programmes of work, avoidance of duplication of effort (for members, officers and partners) and conflicting or inconsistent outcomes.
- prioritised work programmes that focus on the issues most likely to bring forward useful outcomes, whilst allowing some flexibility for the unknowns/urgent issues that may arise in-year.
- greater use of task and finish groups and select committee modes, and more external focus.

Appendices

Appendix A – Centre for Public Scrutiny Interim Report
Appendix B – Member Survey

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Warwickshire Improving Scrutiny project – interim report March 2012

Introduction

CfPS were commissioned by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to carry out a project to help improve scrutiny in Warwickshire and provide some recommendations for changes in practice and approach as well as some practical support around raising awareness of new developments, skills and issues, including developing the work programme for next year. This is our interim report, designed to inform the wider governance review being carried out for reporting to the May AGM of the council. A final report will be provided incorporating comments and feedback on this one as well as final recommendations based on the work programming session to be held in April/May.

Approach

Our approach has included the following elements:
- Meetings with scrutiny committee chairs, scrutiny officers, the leader and cabinet and the chief executive
- Observation of a scrutiny committee in action
- Facilitating a member workshop on 14 March
- (Still to come) facilitating a session on scrutiny work programming.

The detailed objectives for the session on the 14 March were:
- To provide initial feedback and facilitate discussion on strengths and weaknesses of O&S in Warwickshire
- To provide an update on recent and planned legislation (Localism Act, Police and Social Responsibility Act, Health & Social Care Bill) and implications for scrutiny
- To provide an update on latest good practice, identify key skills required by O&S members in Warwickshire and start to identify the key issues for scrutiny to investigate in 2012-13

Findings

In this section we highlight the views reported by participants in the discussions and workshop session and summarise our conclusions based on these and other observations.

Strengths
- Spokespersons meetings whilst not held regularly across all policy or committee areas were seen as useful
- Task and Finish groups (as opposed to whole Committee activity) felt to have achieved most change and been valued eg PRUs, Rugby WRRd, LAC
- External scrutiny particularly of the Health Service eg CAMHS, and HS2 – this was acknowledged as valuable across the board including by cabinet.
- Joint scrutiny has also worked well via OSB eg flooding in Bedworth which involved DC members as well as County
- Involving external witnesses acknowledged to have added great value when used – eg parents, carers etc
- Dedicated officer resource was highly valued

- It is seen as the key way for backbenchers and DC/BC members to get involved and have the opportunity to ask the key questions and influence decisions – when it is carried out at the right time in the decision/policy-making process ie early enough.

Weaknesses
- Not valued by cabinet or senior officers – scrutiny members have a clear wish across parties to make a more valued (and valuable) contribution that is of benefit to the people of Warwickshire
- Some members were felt to self-censor and not challenge enough, while others were felt to use scrutiny only as a stick with which to beat the administration and seek to unpick decisions
- Scrutiny is used primarily as an information-sharing and gathering tool, rather than a mechanism to provide challenge and review. There are too many reports 'for information', a lack of clear recommendations arising from scrutiny meetings and reviews and insufficient follow-up of outcomes (linked to the lack of clear recommendations)
- The public are not involved enough
- Involvement of Assistant Cabinet Members is perceived as blurring clear accountability lines and the independence of scrutiny
- Scrutiny does not always look at issues at the right point in the process and often not early enough to have an impact – it receives copies of cabinet report 'on their way' to cabinet for decision when the opportunity to shape or change policy is limited
- There was a feeling that scrutiny took place too much in the 'Shire Hall bunker' and needed to get out more
- Insufficient use and coordination of T&F Groups, with some committees not carrying out any in-depth reviews but operating solely as a whole committee
- Lack of clarity between the twin roles of 'overview' and 'scrutiny'
- Lengthy agendas that don't give time for in-depth investigation and follow-up of issues – some of this is outwith scrutiny's control eg the heavy burden of work that comes through for health scrutiny from the NHS.
- Not enough pre-budget scrutiny

Opportunities
- There are opportunities to use the new Community Forums to carry out some local scrutiny of services and share information about issues that are of interest to members in their patch
- The HOSC is considering a 'layered' scrutiny approach (See diagram at **Appendix 1**) which supports the above and has applied to be one of the DH/CfPS health reforms development areas, which may help tackle the workload
- Better planning, use of briefing notes instead of reports to committee
- More structured and coordinated use of T&F groups – could review an earlier proposal to develop a more 'commissioning' approach to scrutiny
- Spokespersons meetings could be better used to share information, with more clarity about roles
- Portfolio-holders meetings which some cabinet members hold could be used more comprehensively as a way of sharing information and enabling members to ask one-off questions and seek clarification
- Engage earlier in policy process and move from micro to macro-scrutiny ie focused on the

key strategic issues that really matter to Warwickshire
- More 'scrutiny' activity out of Shire Hall – in local forums, more use of visits, external witnesses and experts to improve / expand quality and nature of information available to scrutiny
- Common desire to improve scrutiny and create more value from its work provides opportunity to improve relationships and move forward

Threats
- Members could disengage and become demoralised – meaning Warwickshire County Council is not using all the resources and skills at its disposal across all the political groups
- Council's reputation suffers if public meetings of scrutiny are seen to be ineffective and also if opportunities to improve services are missed
- If scrutiny is not fit for purpose at present, it will miss out on opportunities to influence the council's future direction (eg becoming a Commissioning Council)
- A silo mentality could develop between administration and opposition, officers and members and between different service areas
- Warwickshire could become an officer-led council

Conclusions and recommendations

In summary we would suggest that the key strengths that Warwickshire could focus on to improve its current overview and scrutiny function are:
- Develop the task and finish group approach
- Develop acknowledged strengths in external and joint scrutiny, particularly to tackle strategic issues, to build confidence in the contribution that scrutiny can make
- More external focus, including getting out of Shire Hall and making more use of external witnesses to support member challenge

To meet all members' wish for scrutiny to play a more valued and valuable role, we feel that the key areas for development are:
- Develop other ways to keep all members informed of key developments, such as the existing channels of spokespersons' briefings and portfolio-holders' meetings, which are not consistently used across all areas
- Develop a clear work programme for scrutiny so that members' time and officer resources are used effectively, with an appropriate mix of challenge to cabinet members and officers and in-depth, forward-looking policy review. **Appendix 2** provides a diagram of the different kinds of scrutiny that can take place throughout the decision-making cycle that a council broadly follows. The work programming session planned as part of this project could help start this process off and should involve all members, chief officers and partners in a discussion about priorities for 2012-13.
- OSB's role as a coordinating body for the scrutiny work programme must be accepted and reinforced by all chairs of committees and T&F Groups to ensure coordination and discipline about what scrutiny is doing
- Committee agendas should be more flexible and generally shorter. There might be different sorts of meeting, or different parts to each meeting to provide greater clarity, for example: Cabinet members questioning sessions; business meetings / updates on T&F

Group progress; single topic agendas where the whole committee is carrying out a review and hearing from a series of witnesses on the topic under review; private committee only sessions before public meetings to plan lines of inquiry and questioning in advance

- The position of Assistant Cabinet Members should be reviewed. As they are not formally members of the executive there is nothing legally barring them from taking part in scrutiny, but to avoid the perception of these members being involved in scrutinising decisions that they were at least party to if not formally responsible for, we think it would be sensible if they did not sit on scrutiny committees covering the same area for which they are Assistant Cabinet Member.

There are some new areas for consideration which could provide opportunities for scrutiny in Warwickshire to develop and grow in exciting ways to be at the forefront of the new local government landscape:

- Develop the 'layered' scrutiny model set out in **Appendix 1** which, if expanded from its initial health scrutiny perspective to incorporate the new Community Forums, could offer a way for members to develop a distinction between macro (county-wide, strategic, major policy issues, 'big picture' outcomes for Warwickshire) and micro (issues specific to one locality, more focused on public experience and service quality, including across all public services) scrutiny
- Develop the task and finish group approach more fully into a commissioning model for scrutiny. This would require a much stronger coordinating role from OSB than it currently plays and a willingness from all members to live with the greater flexibility and uncertainty that this model provides. A half-way house would be to retain one corporate performance scrutiny committee (and also the health scrutiny committee given the volume of work in health) as well as the coordinating body and commission T&F reviews across all other areas. This could be combined with the 'layered' scrutiny model above to provide even greater focus to scrutiny members' work. **Appendix 3** illustrates a possible approach incorporating these recommendations for Warwickshire to consider, but should only be treated as a 'starter for 10' as it is important that the final approach to scrutiny is owned and taken forward by Warwickshire members.

This report will be finalised and updated following the work programming session and consultation with members and officers in Warwickshire. Our thanks go to all members and officers who have contributed their views and experiences frankly and openly and have demonstrated that there is a clear common wish to move overview and scrutiny in Warwickshire forward for the benefit of the council and the community it serves.
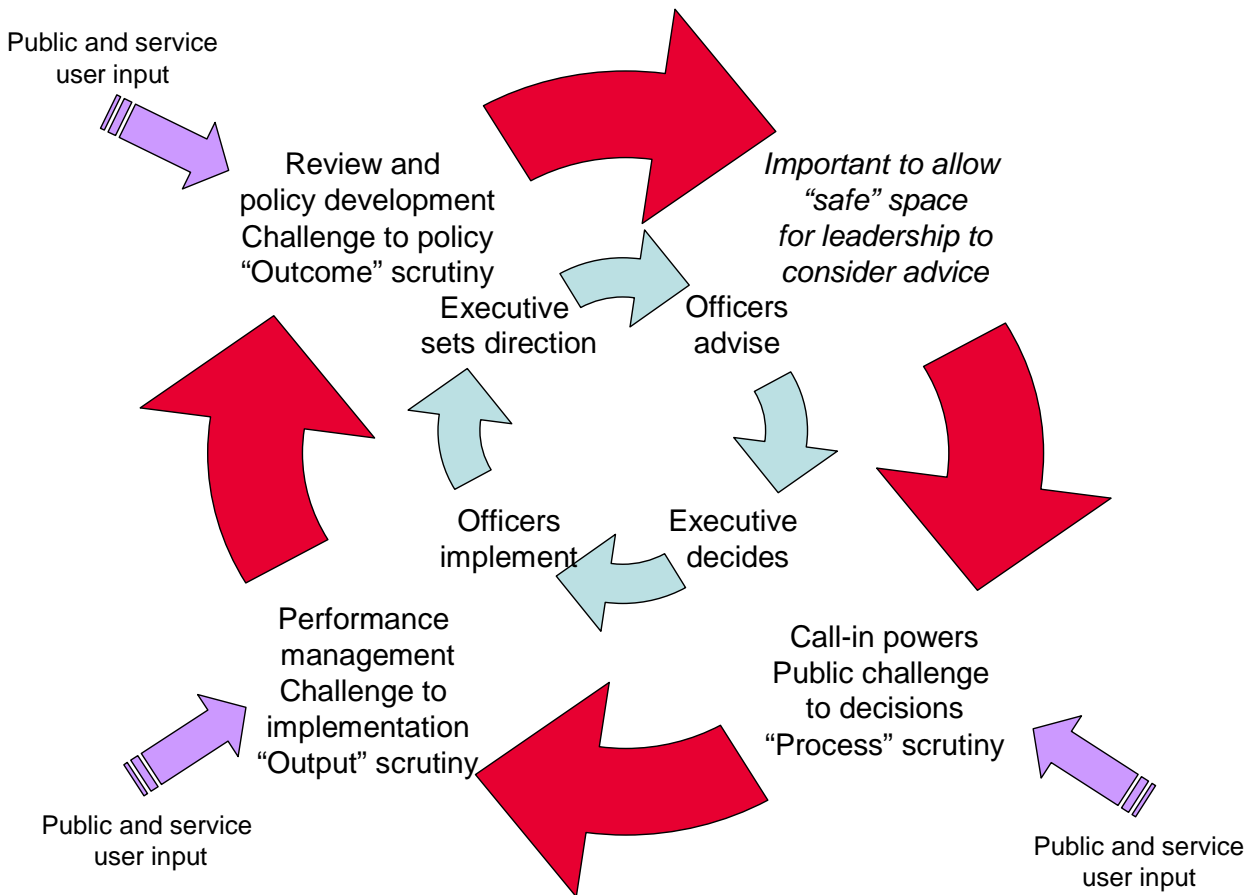
CfPS
March 2012

Appendix 1

The diagram below shows CfPS's 'layered' scrutiny model for health scrutiny with different but complementary roles for county councils and district / borough councils. This approach could be adapted for other topics subject to scrutiny at both strategic / macro and local / micro levels, including developing 'hyper-local' scrutiny at Community Forum level.
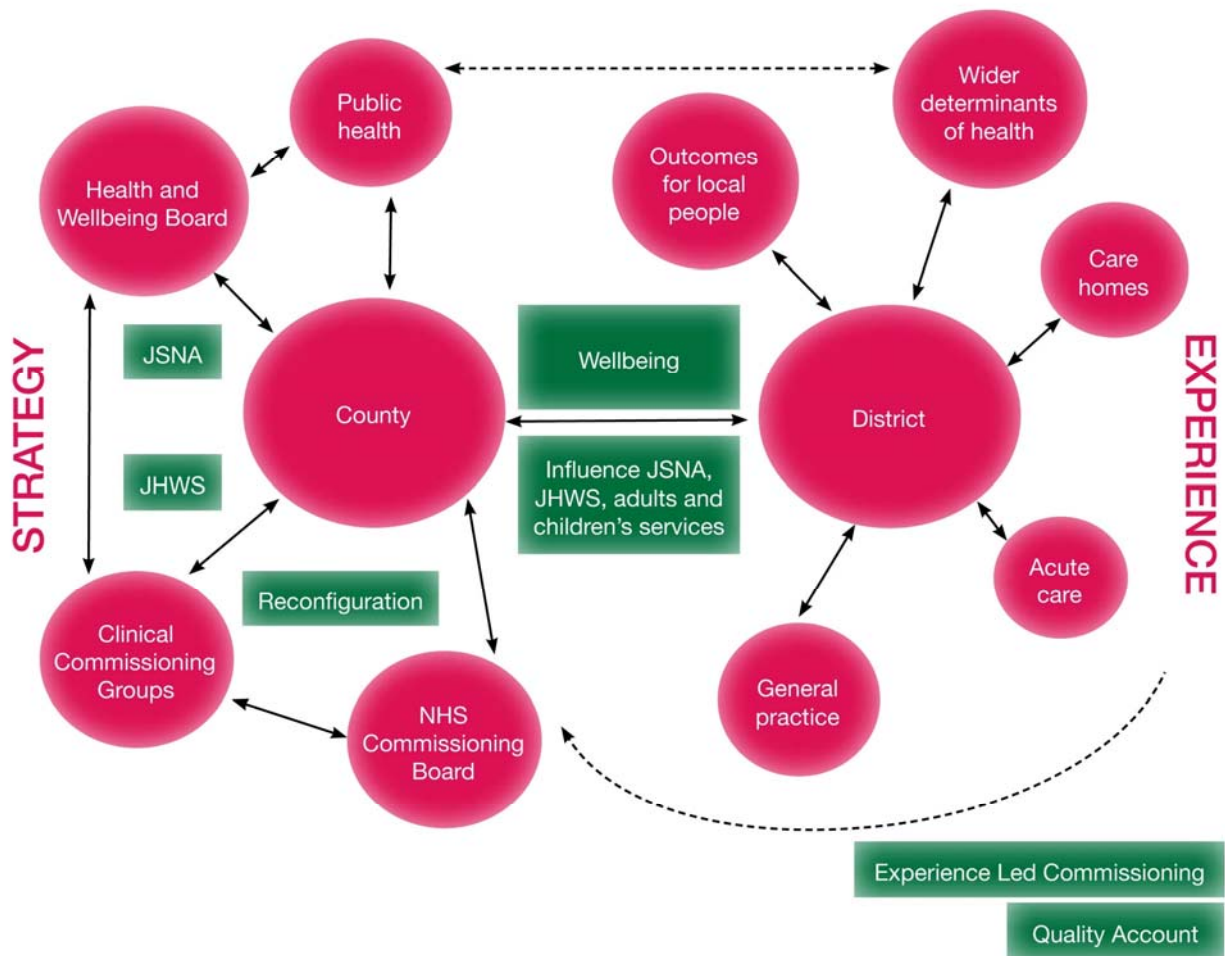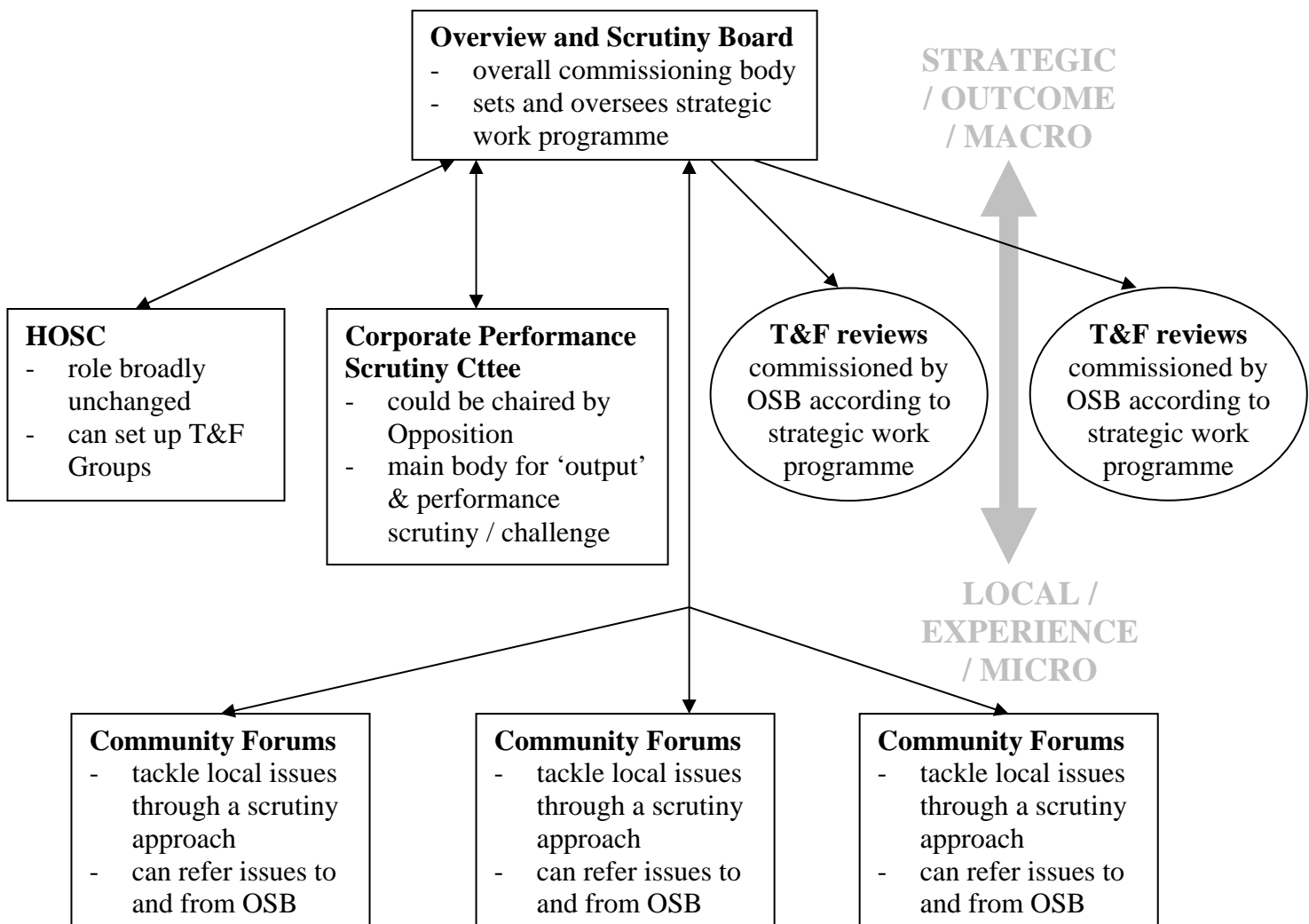
Appendix 2

CfPS's decision-making cycle shows the importance of understanding the different roles scrutiny can play at different points in the decision-making cycle and of being clear about what scrutiny is seeking to achieve at these different points. A fundamental challenge to policy direction, for example, is unlikely to have impact if made at or just before the point at which the executive is making its decision. If based on learning from implementation of previous decisions and focused on outcomes and policy development and fed in while the executive is still considering the direction and advice from a range of sources, scrutiny's views are more likely to have an influence and be welcomed.

Public and service user input

Review and policy development
Challenge to policy
"Outcome" scrutiny

Executive sets direction

Officers advise

Important to allow "safe" space for leadership to consider advice

Officers implement

Executive decides

Performance management
Challenge to implementation
"Output" scrutiny

Public and service user input

Call-in powers
Public challenge to decisions
"Process" scrutiny

Public and service user input

Appendix 3

This diagram sets out a possible approach to overview and scrutiny in Warwickshire for discussion and debate. Rectangles indicate permanent bodies, ovals are temporary, commissioned to carry out particular reviews and then disbanded. Chairs of such T&F Groups could attract an allowance, depending on the scope of the review, as they could require considerable time and input to steer and lead. The text in grey indicates the focus and remit of the different types of scrutiny at the different layers, although there should be no hard and fast distinction and the two should inform each other. Partners, including Districts and Boroughs, can and should be included in all layers and work where relevant.

Overview and Scrutiny Board
- overall commissioning body
- sets and oversees strategic work programme

STRATEGIC / OUTCOME / MACRO

HOSC
- role broadly unchanged
- can set up T&F Groups

Corporate Performance Scrutiny Cttee
- could be chaired by Opposition
- main body for 'output' & performance scrutiny / challenge

T&F reviews commissioned by OSB according to strategic work programme

T&F reviews commissioned by OSB according to strategic work programme

LOCAL / EXPERIENCE / MICRO

Community Forums
- tackle local issues through a scrutiny approach
- can refer issues to and from OSB

Community Forums
- tackle local issues through a scrutiny approach
- can refer issues to and from OSB

Community Forums
- tackle local issues through a scrutiny approach
- can refer issues to and from OSB

Overview and Scrutiny Member Survey – May 2012

1.0   Purpose

1.1   As part of Democratic Service's objective to improve the Overview and
        Scrutiny function, a Member Survey was designed to capture members' views
        and experiences regarding the effectiveness of the function at Warwickshire
        County Council. It was anticipated that the data would offer a valuable insight
        into the perception of scrutiny, and ascertain members' views regarding best
        practice examples, areas for improvement and key components of the
        existing arrangements that either help or hinder their role.

1.2   It is essential that Democratic Services delivers an enhanced scrutiny function
        by building on recent scrutiny achievements and having a clear, member-led
        vision about where scrutiny needs to be as the organisation continues to
        transform. It is also important that the service provides members with the
        necessary information and key skills to enable them to effectively carry out
        their role.

1.3   Further details regarding the rationale behind each question is detailed in the
        main body of the report.

2.0   Methodology

2.1   Data collection methods

2.1.1   All 46 members who currently sit on Overview and Scrutiny Committees
        (including District / Borough representatives) were asked to complete an
        online questionnaire via Survey Monkey. The design of the questionnaire was
        essential and needed to be relatively concise and uncomplicated to reduce
        the risk of respondent confusion or fatigue. The design was also of an
        analytical and relational format to specifically identify connections between
        particular variables, with questions structured to extract data relating to the
        following areas: *Experience; Perception of Scrutiny; Scrutiny in Practice; The
        Influence of Scrutiny; Scrutiny Member Engagement; Scrutiny and the Public;
        Support for Members;* and *Training.*

2.1.2   Members were initially provided two weeks to complete the questionnaire;
        however, due to an initial poor response, the survey completion date was
        extended by a further three weeks until 15th April 2012. All members were
        contacted by email, with included a link to the online survey. The importance
        of the survey was stressed to members. Following this, all non-respondents
        were contacted by telephone in the week commencing 15th April 2012 to
        encourage further responses.

2.2   Data analysis methods

2.2.1   In respect of the quantitative data analysis (Questions 2-3 and 6-9), each
        question within the self-administered questionnaire was classified as a

variable, against which a code was determined for each answer given. The results were collated using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to cross-reference and compare variables, in order to identify a framework of themes.

2.2.2   With regard to the analysis of the qualitative data analysis (Questions 4-5 and 10 and the 'reasons for answer' for Questions 2-3 and 6 -9) a simple method of identifying key similarities between statements was used, in order to determine thematic messages. Key words within the data were highlighted to identify any repetition of concepts, which were subsequently analysed to identify themes.

3.0   Participation

3.1   The survey achieved a response rate of 58.7 per cent. Standard research practice stipulates that a response rate of 50-60 per cent is the minimum requirement for the results to be considered as representative of the sample group. As the Member Survey has achieved this requirement, the data should be regarded as a useful insight into members' perception of scrutiny, from which useful conclusions and recommendations can be drawn.

4.0   Analysis of Responses

4.1   This section provides a summary of the responses provided for each question, using headline data to identify key trends and themes, with a number of recommendations to suggest how the data might be used to inform decisions about improvements to scrutiny practices and support. The full data set is provided at Appendix A.

4.2   Question 1 – Name

4.2.1   It was not necessary to provide a name, as it was considered favourable to give members the opportunity to complete the survey anonymously, thereby encouraging more honest replies. All members were notified in advance that published responses would be anonymised.

4.3   Question 2 – Experience

4.3.1   The purpose of this question was to a) map the level of experience of the respondents and b) establish any correlation between number of years experience as an Elected Member and/or experience as a Cabinet member with an overall perception of scrutiny. Trends in the data can provide an insight into where scrutiny training and/or promotion should be targeted. For example, if the data suggests that the most experienced participants have the poorest view of scrutiny (as recorded at Question 3), Democratic Services will tailor training for those respondents to understand their experiences and try to engage them more in scrutiny.

4.3.2   In summary:

- As anticipated, there was a mixed range of experience. The majority of respondents (46.2%) had 1-5 years experience.

- 54.2 per cent had 1-5 years experience as a member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 73.4 per cent of respondents had no prior experience as a Cabinet Member.
- There was no strong correlation between the level of experience and the perception of scrutiny.

4.4 Question 3 – Perception of Scrutiny

4.4.1 Members were asked to consider each of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's four key principles of effective scrutiny and rate the extent which they felt the principles were currently being achieved by Warwickshire County Council. The scoring scale was: S*trongly Agree; Agree; Slightly Agree; Slightly Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree;* and *Unsure / Don't Know.* The question was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data by using the scoring scale and then requesting reasons for scores, to gain a further insight.

4.4.2 The purpose of this question was to identify respondents' perception regarding the reality of scrutiny in WCC against the four key theoretical principles of effective scrutiny, as promoted by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. The data will identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses of scrutiny, to determine areas where improvement work and support should be focused.

4.4.3 In summary (quantitative data):

- There was a mixed response in terms of perception across each of the four principles, with responses in each of the scoring levels, apart from *'strongly disagree'*.
- The overall response to the question demonstrates a lean towards 'positive' responses (63.8% '*strongly agree'*, '*agree*' or '*slightly agree'*) than 'negative' responses and all four statements had more positive responses than negative.
- The statements which had the strongest incline towards positive results were: Scrutiny "*provides critical friend challenge to executives as well as external authorities and agencies*" (41.7% '*agree*') and Scrutiny "*makes an impact on the delivery of public services*" (31.9% '*agree*').
- The statement which generated the most negative result was: Scrutiny members "*take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of members of the public*" (29.2% '*disagree*'). There are two components to this statement that should be assessed: "*take the lead and own the scrutiny process*" and "*members of the public*". Is it the 'leading and owning' part which respondents feel is failing, or members' role as representing the public? The survey was designed to probe these issues further, so there are specific questions regarding influence (Question 6) and public engagement (Question 8) which should achieve a more useful insight into these key areas of activity.

4.4.4 In summary (qualitative data):

- There is strong repetition in the data regarding the role of scrutiny and how it is perceived by Cabinet. Almost half (47%) of the responses refer to Cabinet or 'the ruling group' as either a negative influence on

scrutiny or a key factor that undervalues the role of scrutiny. *"The Executive don't seem to regard scrutiny as necessary, let along a useful, adjunct to their role. It is therefore weak in terms of involvement with and impact on the decision-making process."*

- There was repetition regarding the progression of recommendations that emerge from the work achieved by scrutiny: *"Scrutiny looks closely at various topics, but recommendations agreed at the time of the report are very slow to be introduced and issues are not reported back to the Committee."* And *"My experience is that Scrutiny recommendations are overlooked."*

4.4.5   Democratic Services has recently introduced a procedure to ensure that recommendations are tracked via a Scrutiny Action Plan, to ensure members are regularly updated with regard to progress; however, support at an operational level can only achieve limited results and the data suggests that there is a gap in the recognition of the importance scrutiny outcomes and recommendations within the organisation. This resonates with the previous issue raised above regarding the perceived view of Cabinet in terms of the scrutiny role, indicating that the issues relating to the Cabinet's perception of scrutiny and the gravity of scrutiny recommendations in the wider decision-making processes are interlinked. There is indeed a role for scrutiny to promote and evidence its value more effectively, and equally there is a role for Cabinet to acknowledge and support the advantages scrutiny can add to the organisation.

4.4.6   Recommendations:

1) That further development work focus on the two 'weaker' areas which relate to the relationship between scrutiny and the public. The data indicates that members would benefit from increased support focusing on their community advocate roles, in order to align scrutiny closer to public concerns and needs.

2) That improvement to the Cabinet – Scrutiny relationship is regarded as a high priority, with clarity around the role of scrutiny, wider promotion of the positive work that scrutiny has achieved and a clear vision regarding the advantages it can bring to the Council, which is acknowledged and supported by Cabinet.

4.5   Question 4 – Scrutiny in Practice (Positive)

4.5.1   This question is purely qualitative and was designed to attain insight into respondents' experiences of scrutiny operating at its most effective. An awareness and understanding of these areas will enable Democratic Services to develop and promote them as positive examples as part of wider member engagement and as evidence of best practice.

4.5.2   In an attempt to achieve a balanced view, the question specifically asked members to consider scrutiny over the past year, with a view to considering a range of activity rather than focusing on just one example.

4.5.3   Participants were asked: *Using examples where possible, please explain which aspects of scrutiny you feel have worked well over the past year.*

4.5.4   In summary:

- A total 50 per cent of respondents referred to positive scrutiny work being undertaken via Task and Finish Groups.
- Other examples of best practice specifically referred to single item scrutiny issues, such as the Library Service, PRUs, Sixth Form provision – many of which were undertaken via Task and Finish group reviews, or Select-Committee style meetings.

4.5.5   The examples demonstrate that scrutiny is perceived to be at its most effective when focused on single item issues and has dedicated time and resources to investigate that one item (i.e. via a Task and Finish Group), rather than as one of many items on a Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda. In addition, scrutiny reviews provide members with a more 'hands-on' role by offering them dedicated time, support and resources to get to grips with an issue, ask investigative questions, undertake the necessary research and identify potential recommendations for improvement or solutions. Scrutiny reviews also have a positive success rate, with the majority of recommendations approved by Cabinet (81% in 2011/12).

4.5.6   Recommendations:

1)   That the positive work achieved via scrutiny reviews is widely promoted to act as a valuable reminder of the beneficial work that scrutiny does achieve, particularly in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

2)   That members are encouraged to use Task and Finish Groups more frequently to conduct both short- and long-term scrutiny reviews of single issue topics (resources permitting).

3)   That all non-Cabinet members are encouraged to participate in Task and Finish Groups, to ensure that a wide range of members are involved. In 2011/12, just over half (55.8%) of all non-Cabinet members participated in Task and Finish Groups.

4.6   <u>Question 5 – Scrutiny in Practice (Negative)</u>

4.6.1   As above with Question 5, this was a qualitative question aimed at identifying examples of poor scrutiny performance, limitations or setbacks. Again, the intention is to develop an awareness of scrutiny practice from a member perspective to enable Democratic Services a greater understanding of the key areas for improvement. In an attempt to achieve a balanced view, the question specifically asked members to consider scrutiny over the past year.

4.6.2   Participants were asked: *Using examples where possible, please explain which aspects of scrutiny you feel have NOT worked well over the past year.*

4.6.3   In summary:

- Unlike the responses provided to Question 4, there was no strong single theme. There was a diverse range of issues raised, which can be grouped into the following areas:

- issues with scrutiny recommendations – *"The fairly recent Task and Finish Group on financial accountability – its recommendations were simply "noted" until there was some lobbying behind the scenes";*
- lack of scrutiny member consultation;
- political influence – *"Scrutiny can be used a political football"*;
- lack of independence from the ruling group – *"A real concern is that scrutiny is not allowed independence from the controlling group. Limited officer resource – we simply do not have enough time to consider issues. This is not about taking on too much, but about the very limited number of meetings considering we have so few scrutiny panels and so many Cabinet Members. The critical friend/holding to account role is very hard to achieve across WCC";*
- difficulties in the management of OSC meetings, including the integration of Adult Social Care and Health; and
- lack of public/partner engagement and time management – *"Length of time spent on issues is disproportionate, i.e. items on the latter part of the agenda may not have sufficient time to address."*

4.6.4   It is important to note that these issues are not surprising; the issues have been raised previously by members, documented in the Scrutiny Improvement Plan, included in the findings of the recent Centre for Public Scrutiny review or highlighted as other parts of this survey.

There is nothing additional to recommend, as the issues have already been raised in the Centre for Public Scrutiny's review and Democratic Services' Review of Governance report as key areas for consideration.

4.7   Question 6 – The Influence of Scrutiny

4.7.1   The purpose of this question was to identify the extent of influence that respondents feel they have in respect of the Council's policy decisions and priorities. Practical examples of this may include the opportunity to voice suggestions which are actively acknowledged, the opportunity to shape the development of policy and/or decisions, and the opportunity to submit recommendations, which are responded to appropriately.

4.7.2   The perception of influence is important because, in order to undertake their scrutiny role effectively, members need to feel empowered and a valued part of the organisation. Without that, members can become disengaged, reluctant to participate in scrutiny and fail to effectively get to grips with their role as a community champion. In addition, the influence of scrutiny is important for encouraging participative, informed and transparent decision-making.

4.7.3   Participants were asked: *As a scrutiny member, how much influence do you feel you have over the Council's decisions and priorities?* The scoring scale was: *Significant Influence, Slight Influence, No influence at all;* and *Unsure / Don't Know.* The question was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data by using the scoring scale and then requesting reasons for scores, to gain a further insight.

4.7.4   In summary:

- The majority of respondents (54.5%) felt that they had a '*slight influence*' and 31.8% felt that they had '*no influence at all*'. The remaining responses were '*unsure/don't know*'. It is a significant concern that a third of respondents feel that they have '*no influence at all*' within the organisation for which they are a democratically elected representative.
- Almost 50 per cent of the reasons given referred to the existing decision-making process, with a feeling that scrutiny is not regarded as a useful part of the Council's decision-making and/or consultation process. There is a sense that decisions are progressed to an extent of completion before scrutiny members are notified and therefore there is little scope to influence or change the decision – *"Most of the decisions seem to have already been taken by the Portfolio Holders and Directors.*
- On respondent stated: *"As a Borough Council rep on the O&S Board, I feel that I am not considered an equal member with the County Councillors."* It is essential that all members have a sense of ownership of the Board / Committee, with the ability to suggest items and contribute to the debate. The possible reason for this disengagement may be due to topic selection; for example, the Board's agendas are heavily dominated by internal topics, rather then outward-facing and partnership topics (which would engage the district / borough representatives more effectively).

4.7.5   Again, the respondents have indicated an inconsistent sense of commitment from the Council and Cabinet with regard to the role of Overview and Scrutiny. There is clearly a need for consistent and shared understanding of the value of scrutiny within an organisation and clarity on members' roles.

4.7.6   Recommendations:

1) Based on the outcome of the responses, and a clear message about what is wanted – "*Would like all Portfolio Holders to keep O&S Members up to speed with their particular area of work*" – there is scope to improve communication between Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.

2) That possible methods are identified to improve engagement with the District/Borough representatives with a separate survey undertaken with those representatives to gauge their views.

4.8   Question 7 – Scrutiny Member Engagement

4.8.1   The purpose to the question was to identify the extent that respondents feel engaged and/or consulted in the Council's policy development and decision-making process. Practical examples of this may include the consultation of scrutiny members as part of the policy development process, regular communication with members with regard to Council priorities and sharing information at an early stage regarding emerging policies and decisions.

4.8.2 It is important to ask this question because *all* members of the Council (Cabinet, Scrutiny and other backbenchers), need to be regularly engaged and informed about the direction that the organisation is moving in, in order to achieve a healthy, transparent and participative Council. In addition, as representatives of their communities, it is important that they understand the Council's vision and their role within that vision.

4.8.3 Participants were asked: *As a scrutiny member, to what extent do you feel engaged / consulted in the Council's decision making process and policy development?* The scoring scale was: *Significantly engaged; Slightly engaged; Not engaged at all;* and *Unsure / Don't Know.* The question was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data by using the scoring scale and then requesting reasons for scores, to gain a further insight.

4.8.4 In summary:

- The majority of respondents (72.7%) felt that they were '*slightly engaged*'. This was a better response then the previous question, which demonstrates that overall respondents feel that they are engaged more than they have the ability to influence, i.e. they do tend to receive the information and are notified about reports/topics, but do not really have much scope to change the course of the decision. This is reflected in some of the comments raised by respondents in the previous question, as outlined at 4.7.4.
- An analysis of the variables in Questions 6 and 7 was undertaken to identify if there was any correlation between respondents' perception of influence and engagement. There was a strong correlation between the variables – 32.1 per cent of respondents both had '*slight influence*' and were '*slightly engaged*'.
- Almost half (45.5%) of the reasons given refer to Cabinet's lack of consistent engagement with Overview and Scrutiny – "*Scrutiny is not sufficiently involved in the development of policy options*".
- A number of positive reasons refer to the opportunity for members to find out about issues that affect their constituents and the opportunity for co-opted District/Borough members to vote on Health matters.

4.8.5 An analysis of the data suggests that at present a level of member engagement and consultation undertaken; however, it is relatively inconsistent and infrequent. A symptom of inconsistent engagement is members' regular requests for reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the purpose of finding out what the Council is doing, rather than for the purpose of scrutiny challenge or review. Frequently, members hear about the development of a new policy, or decision, and subsequently perceive scrutiny as the channel by which to receive that information. This detracts from the true purpose of scrutiny, which is to challenge and monitor, and long meetings are spent considering items 'for information'. Democratic Services has offered support and guidance to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to try to prevent this from happening, but ultimately until all members are engaged on a more consistent and systematic basis, requests for report 'for information' will continue.

4.8.6   Recommendations:

1)   That methods be identified to engage more consistently and frequently with all members of the Council, such as the use of Council meetings, as referred to in Democratic Services' Review of Governance report.

2)   That Cabinet engage more consistently with scrutiny members and share its future programme of decisions to enable scrutiny members to have a greater and timelier awareness of new policies and decisions which they may wish to consider, and engage with members to identify areas where scrutiny can add value.

3)   That all Portfolio Holders are encouraged to provide regular briefing sessions which are open to all members, which focus on specific topics and decisions.

4.9   Question 8 – Scrutiny and the Public

4.9.1   A key issue that has been identified by Democratic Services is the need for scrutiny to become more 'outward-facing'. Public engagement in scrutiny is an area that many authorities have struggled to achieve positive results, predominantly due to extenuating reasons such as apathy and lack of awareness. The team will continue to attempt to deliver outward-facing scrutiny and arrangements that actively encourage public and partner participation. The purpose of the question was to identify baseline data with regard to the present situation (from a member perspective) and ascertain key areas that the Democratic Services could offer increased support to members, to improve public engagement.

4.9.2   Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statement: "*Scrutiny at Warwickshire effectively listens to and represents the views and concerns of the local community.*" The scoring scale was: *Strongly Agree; Agree; Slightly Agree; Slightly Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree;* and *Unsure / Don't Know.* The question was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data by using the scoring scale and then requesting reasons for scores, to gain a further insight.

4.9.3   In summary:

- There was a mixed response to the question, with responses in each of the seven scales. A total 50 per cent indicated that they '*slightly agree*' with the statement.
- The overall response to the question demonstrates a lean towards 'positive' responses (68.9% '*strongly agree'*, '*agree*' or '*slightly agree'*) than 'negative' responses; however, despite this the majority of reasons given referred to what scrutiny fails to do at present in respect of public engagement.
- With regard to the reasons stated, there was no strong single theme. There was a diverse range of issues raised, which can be grouped into the following areas:

- inconsistent engagement and anecdotal evidence – "*I'm not aware of systematic consultation with representative sample of the public*";
- Community Forums not being used properly – *"Local meetings are so poorly attended that views expressed cannot be regarded as representing the local community. Locality meetings are dominated by issues and representatives of neighbouring division"*; and
- lack of meetings based within the community – *"Less time at Shire Hall and more meetings at local level"*.

4.9.4 These issues were identified previously by Democratic Services and work has already commenced to deliver a more consistent approach to public engagement. For example, press releases are now issued on a regular basis, and the WarksDemocracy blog and Twitter feed are both regularly updated with topics that are of interest to the public. In addition, the public was invited to submit ideas for the annual work programme event.

4.9.5 Recommendations:

1) That Democratic Services continues to support members in improving communication with the public, via the methods as outlined at 4.9.4 and identify other positive methods.

2) That members are encouraged to identify issues that arise at local level that may be appropriate for scrutiny and the use of public interest debates at a local level.

3) That information which is readily available (i.e. from Warwickshire Observatory and feedback from Community Forums) is used proactively and consistently to highlight issues of local concern to scrutiny members.

4.10 Question 9 – Support to Scrutiny Members

4.10.1 The purpose of the question was to identify the effectiveness of the Democratic Services team in supporting members in their scrutiny roles and whether there are any gaps in the support provided to members. In order to deliver an effective scrutiny function, it is essential that members feel supported and have access to the appropriate advice, guidance and resources. Support from the team would include administrative, legislative / Constitutional advice, guidance on appropriate scrutiny procedures, building networks, acquiring information, research and analysis of information.

4.10.2 Participants were asked: *When in your role as a scrutiny member, to what extent do you feel supported by the Council's Democratic Services team?* The scoring scale was: *Very Supported; Slightly Supported; Not Supported; and Unsure / Don't Know.* The question was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data by using the scoring scale and then requesting reasons for scores, to gain a further insight.

4.10.3 In summary:

- The majority of respondents (69.6%) felt that they were '*very supported*' and there were no responses for '*not supported*'.
- The key areas of support indicated included:
  - timely information;
  - timely, helpful and courteous responses; and
  - staff dedication to member support.
- A couple of areas for improvement included:
  - the need for more face-to-face discussion; and
  - clarity of meetings.

4.10.4 One response provided indicated confusion over the role of Democratic Services ("Unless you are asking about the delivery of paperwork and accommodation, I have no idea"). It would therefore be beneficial for greater clarity regarding the team; in particular the role of Democratic Services Officers, whose support to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees goes beyond just administrative support.

4.10.5 Recommendation:

1) That the Democratic Services team effectively promotes and clarifies the supporting role that it offers to members, particularly that of the Democratic Support Officers who have a direct role in supporting and advising the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. This could be done through a simple leaflet or briefing.

4.11 <u>Question 10 – Scrutiny Training, Guidance and Support</u>

4.11.1 The purpose of this question was to identify any key areas that members required training, guidance and/or support, to ensure that Democratic Services continues to provide a bespoke service that is tailored to members' needs.

4.11.2 Participants were asked: *What specific training, guidance and/or support would enable you to undertake your role as a scrutiny member more effectively?*

4.11.3 In summary:

- As anticipated, there was a diverse range of suggestions, focusing on the following themes:
  - increased support from officers and Portfolio Holders;
  - visits to other local authorities to learn about best practice; and
  - increased guidance and information regarding legislative changes.

4.11.4 A number of the areas identified will be picked up as part of the recommendations arising from other parts of the Member Survey, particularly regarding senior officers and Cabinet.

4.11.5 Recommendation:

1) That the suggestions be considered as part of the Member Development Programme.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Overall, the Member Survey was a positive exercise as it had a relatively valid response rate and those that did respond offered constructive comments, views and suggestions regarding the existing scrutiny practice within the Council. Both the quantitative and qualitative data findings have supported existing assumptions and considerations regarding scrutiny and therefore reaffirm the findings of the Centre for Public Scrutiny review and the issues raised previously by both the Democratic Services team and Elected Members.

5.2 The issues raised in the Member Survey can be categorised into four key areas:

1) The perception of Scrutiny within the organisation;
2) The relationship between Scrutiny and Cabinet;
3) The engagement of all members; and
4) The role of scrutiny representing the views of the public.

5.3 As outlined in the report, the Democratic Services has already undertaken positive work to improve the operational aspect of scrutiny to ensure that processes are consistent, that advice and guidance is appropriate and that support is valuable. However, further work is required to improve the perception of scrutiny is required at the governance level of the authority, and within the culture itself, which are indicated in the recommendations included in the report.

Full Survey Results

Q1. Name
Members were advised that their responses would be anonymised.

Q2. Please indicate the level of your experience	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	20+ years	N/A	Response Count
Number of years as an Elected Member	**46.2% (12)**	19.2% (5)	23.1% (6)	11.5% (3)	0	26
Number of years as a member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee	**54.2% (13)**	33.3% (8)	8.3% (2)	0	4.2% (1)	24
Number of previous years as a Cabinet Member (if applicable)	13.3% (2)	13.3% (2)	0	0	**73.4% (11)**	15

Q3. The following statements below are the Centre for Public Scrutiny's four principles of effective scrutiny. Please indicate to what extent you agree, or disagree, that those principles are effectively undertaken at Warwickshire County Council.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unsure / Don't Know	Response Count
Scrutiny "provides critical friend challenge to executives as well as external authorities and agencies".	12.5% (3)	**41.7% (10)**	16.6% (4)	4.2% (1)	25% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	24
Scrutiny "reflects the voice and concerns of the public and its communities".	12.5% (3)	**25% (6)**	20.8% (5)	16.7% (4)	**25% (6)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	24
Scrutiny members "take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public".	8.3% (2)	25% (6)	25% (6)	12.5% (3)	**29.2% (7)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	24
Scrutiny "makes an impact on the delivery of public services".	13.6% (3)	**31.9% (7)**	22.7% (5)	4.5% (1)	27.3% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	22
						Please give reasons for your answers		19

- This is a pointless box. 1) I slightly agree, it could be more efficient and streamlined it can be tedious and time wasting. 2) That depends on the topic and how many members of the public actually turn up and voice their concerns. How often are members really contacted by the public? In my experience, never. 3) As above, isn't that why we are elected by the public? 4) Depends on the budget really.
- The role of overview and scrutiny is not valued, and possibly not understood, by the Executive (cabinet). Consequently, it plays little part in the decision making process.
- Scrutiny looks closely at various topics but recommendations agreed at the time of the report are very slow to be introduced and issues are not reported back to the Committee.
- Inevitably the political complexion of the membership ensures that the ruling group and Cabinet decisions are not obstructed.
- The Executive don't seem to regard scrutiny as a necessary, let alone useful, adjunct to their role. It is therefore weak in terms of involvement with and impact on the decision making process.
- O&S looks at issues and rarely challenges. When there is a potential challenge, it is generally overruled by the O&S members from the ruling party.
- Some members, particularly opposition members, tend to use the process as a means of delaying policy deliberately.

- If scrutiny is working well it should provide information to the Cabinet - sometimes members of O&S do not feel that they have been consulted in a timely manner.
- This reflects an idealised view. Reality intervenes at a different - patchy – level.
- Members need to exert more of their authority to set agendas.
- I find the sessions politically charged and therefore unproductive.
- I do not believe that the views of a large number of members of the public are represented through Scrutiny for various reasons. As such, the process is not democratic.
- It is imperative that members are held to account for their decisions.
- Scrutiny allows public representation at its meetings, unlike Cabinet who make decisions. My experience is that Scrutiny recommendations are overlooked. There has also been a blurring of the Executive/Scrutiny split as support Portfolio Holders have been sitting on Scrutiny (effectively scrutinising their own performance/ideas).
- We should be operating to make a difference and challenge the decision-making process.
- Not enough public access to scrutiny.
- Not sure it should be about simply 'representing' the public.

Q4. Using examples where possible, please explain which aspects of scrutiny you feel have worked well over the past year.

- Making sure that the business cases of the library service are viable and will work long-term.
- Without a list of completed scrutinies, it is difficult to recall exercises that have been successful or otherwise.
- Task and Finish Group review of Hospital Discharge, Reablement and Prevention
- In matters affecting Mental Health and Social Care, the opportunity to visit locations has been helpful and effective.
- CYPF O&S looked seriously at the future of the PRU including visits and a select committee. Many officer-hours were used and many visitors gave up time to help. The closure of the |PRU was not mentioned. The final report which went to cabinet did not mention any possible closure of the PRU. Yet closure was suddenly imposed from above. The influence of O&S on the final decision was negligible. The Portfolio Holder attempted to claim that closure was implicit in the recommendations in the O&S report, but I disagree.
- More in-depth analysis from Task and Finish Groups on their reports back to scrutiny, which works.
- Task and Finish Groups have had their reports taken on board by Cabinet.
- Issues at GEH have shown a useful view on tracking issues and offer continuing valuable insights into action on behalf of service users.
- None.
- Task and Finish Groups.
- Scrutiny does focus the need for Cabinet to make decisions which are acceptable to the public in general from their viewpoint.
- Public involvement and partner involvement, i.e. PRU, Sixth Form provision.
- Involvement of district / boroughs – but this could be extended. Support from officers is well received.
- ASC&H OSC – worked well together, but the two areas should be separate.
- Management of the Task and Finish Groups.
- The in-depth look at the issues at the PRU that was possible when the committee was in 'select' committee mode with relevant 'stakeholders ' available for questioning – good example of how scrutiny should be working.

Q5. Using examples where possible, please explain which aspects of scrutiny you feel have NOT worked well over the past year.

- Within and group it is very difficult to scrutinise properly, with budget constraints it isn't easy to scrutinise if we have no option but to reduce it.
- Looking at the Quality Reports from the primary service providers – they did not follow the accepted approach and do not tell the whole picture.
- The fairly recent Task and Finish Group on financial accountability – its recommendations were simply "noted" until there was some lobbying behind the scenes.
- When O&S make recommendations to Cabinet the presumption should be that they will be accepted except in very exceptional circumstances.
- Performance Indicators need to be more legible, need to have a clearer idea on statistics to enable members to make clear decisions.
- Members of O&S sometimes feel that they are consulted or kept informed.
- Just feels like the Committee is not getting to grips, note this report, etc.
- Meals on Wheels – Cabinet seems to ride over any sensible decisions taken.
- I have yet to see any results.
- Without going into details, Scrutiny can be used as a political football.
- Where officers refuse to answer my question on "justifying social workers from Ipswich".
- As previously, stated a real concern is that scrutiny is not allowed independence from the controlling group. Limited officer resource – we simply do not have enough time to consider issues. This is not about taking on too much, but about the very limited number of meetings considering we have so few scrutiny panels and so many Cabinet Members. The critical friend/holding to account role is very hard to achieve across WCC.
- Length of time spent on issues is disproportionate, i.e. items on the latter part of the agenda may not have sufficient time to discuss.
- Public Health – guidance should be from experts for an efficient resource.
- Health – should be separate from the ASC OSC.
- Engagement with the public and external bodies.
- It would be worth re-visiting the combination of the ASC and Health OSC – case for them to be separate due to the level of work required under each one.
- I don't think I can give just one example but I do feel that there is sometimes an ultra defensiveness on the part of the Portfolio Holder, which maybe reflects a particular view of scrutiny within the 'party' system.

Q6. As a scrutiny member, how much influence do you feel you have over the Council's policy decisions and priorities?	Response Percentage	Response Count
Significant influence	4.6%	1
Slight influence	**54.5%**	12
No influence at all	31.8%	7
Unsure / Don't Know	9.1%	2
Please give reasons for your answer and any ideas you have to increase the influence scrutiny has over Council business.	15	

- Referral is often an afterthought. Officers, and especially senior members of the ruling group, tend to consider it's inclusion an unhelpful delay in reaching conclusions.
- I am in opposition and politics features far to heavily.
- Most of the decisions seem to have already been taken by the Portfolio Holder and Directors.
- As before, the political complexion of the membership ensures that no embarrassment is caused to the administration. I may be wrong, but I cannot recall any occasion when policy has been changed or modified as a direct result of an O&S review.
- I feel that more in-depth scrutiny of issues needs to happen to have an effective outcome on issues presented to scrutiny. Also, items presented late, leaving little time to do justice.
- Would like all Portfolio Holders to keep O&S members up to speed with their particular area of work.
- As a Borough Council rep on the O&S Board, I feel that I am not considered an equal member with the County Councillors.
- Concerns are raised by both the public and Members and do not appear to be considered fully by Cabinet. Cabinet decision-making is unclear as to why a particular decision is taken. This makes feedback to the public very difficult.
- Working together to achieve improvements for Warwickshire residents.
- Scrutiny is not sufficiently involved in the development of policy options.

Q7. As a scrutiny member, to what extent do you feel engaged / consulted in the Council's decision making process and policy development?	Response Percentage	Response Count
Significantly engaged	13.6%	3
Slightly engaged	**72.7%**	16
Not engaged at all	13.6%	3
Unsure / Don't Know	0%	0
Please give reasons for your answer and any ideas you have to increase the engagement scrutiny has with Council business.	11	

- In how many cases of major policy making is there an audit trail back to a scrutiny report?
- I have the chance to voice my concerns at sub-meetings and at group.
- I feel that scrutiny is there for the Portfolio Holders benefit and backbenchers are kept in the dark over issues
- I am able to vote on Health issues.
- Better communications with the general public. There is too much reliance on IT for those communications especially by WCC the website.
- YES in all matters, as most decisions taken by the County affect my constituents.
- Better support required to Scrutiny, but mindful of budget requirements. If we want it to work we need to invest in it. Clear feedback from Cabinet to scrutiny required as to why recommendations from scrutiny are agreed or not.
- Realistic limitations to allot time to each process.
- Influence before Cabinet is used effectively.
- Scrutiny is not sufficiently involved in the development of policy options.
- Sometimes you can sow seeds about priorities-as in the emphasis put on LSU's re the replacement of the PRU. I don't think there can be a significant increase in influence until there is more openness and less suspicion on the part of power holders.

Q8. Scrutiny at Warwickshire effectively listens to and represents the views and concerns of the local community.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unsure / Don't Know	Response Count
To what extent to do agree with the above statement?	4.5% (1)	13.7% (3)	50% (11)	13.7% (3)	9.1% (2)	4.5% (1)	4.5% (1)	22
Please give reasons for your answer and any ideas you may have as to how scrutiny can improve engagement with the local community.								15

- What inclusion there is of the public's views is very much ad hoc and anecdotal from individual members. I'm not aware of systematic consultation with representative sample of public. (To be fair that is often difficult and depends what you mean by "representative").
- Politics comes in too heavily at scrutiny.
- Issues are not always talked about at Community Forums and consultations are not widely publicised.
- Local meetings are so poorly attended that views expressed cannot be regarded as representing the local community. Locality meetings are dominated by issues and representatives of neighbouring division.
- With possibly one or two exceptions, scrutiny does not consult or engage with the public. Some members may bring issues or views from their division or local Forum, but there is no consistent or established means of getting the overall view of wider public.
- More members of the public directly affected by potential decisions could be invited to speak to O&S.
- Councillors should have input into matters in their division and the wider scene.
- The agendas I have been involved with carries items of abiding concern in my community.
- Less time at Shire Hall and more meetings at local levels.
- As already mentioned in a section above, it is difficult to get the views of local communities with great statistical significance partly through the relatively poor communication to the general public and their general lack of involvement for various reasons.
- No good without decision-maker buy in.
- Only direct input for health is through LINks.
- Scrutiny protects the public and needs to be given more time.
- Scrutiny needs to engage with the public about areas it should look at, to get the public more involved. Need better communication with town and parish councils regarding issues for scrutiny.
- As I have indicated earlier, there needs to be an increase in select Committee type approaches to draw on evidence and expertise from outside the Council.

Q9. While in your role as a scrutiny member, to what extent do you feel supported by the Council's Democratic Services team?	Response Percentage	Response Count
Very supported		
Slightly supported		
Not supported		
Unsure / Don't Know		
Please give reasons for your answer		

- Timely reports / information. Ready response to comments and enquiries.
- Services do support scrutiny Committees but there is always too many briefing notes and not enough face to face discussion.
- Unless you are asking about the delivery of paper work and accommodation, I have no idea.
- Timely and effective response to all requests and queries.
- I have felt not supported and that officers are pushing policy for their benefit.
- Officers do their very best to keep me informed of extra meetings but sometimes not sure whether I am expected to attend.
- I have helpful and courteous responses and have seen my queries appear on tasks for witnesses
- Considering the changes made, they do an excellent job.
- In my limited experience so far, the involvement of the CDS team is excellent.
- Do receive a briefing note prior to meetings. However presentations are often over long and limit time for scrutiny.
- Always available for every question.
- Staff are dedicated to members and give support to perform role.
- That's not a problem – I have only praise for the officers involved.

Q10. What specific training, guidance and/or support would enable you to undertake your role as a scrutiny member more effectively?

- Possibly a better steer from (or co-ordinated by) officers and the policies and issues that need or would benefit from O&S.
- Attention to an improved sound system to accommodate the needs of older members and particularly those with hearing problems.
- Visit to (or from) authorities where good practice is in place and regular use.
- More support from officers and Portfolio Holders.
- Many Bills going through Central Government at the moment - such as Planning, Localism, Health and I would like to be kept up to date. We must have more involvement with District Councils.
- What are you offering?
- Training is usually a talking shop for councillors to self-promote.
- In the new area in which I am involved, I am happy that I can fill any knowledge gaps without formal training at this stage.
- I have already attended University Courses.
- Perhaps an annual scrutiny member meeting that brainstorms where scrutiny can add value as a whole and an end of year meeting that reviews whether these objectives have been met. I think the O&S Board is remote from many members.
- I undertake all training – very important to help understand my role. There would be a problem with re-training if replacements on OSCs.
- Members need more information on what is going on within the Council, i.e. policy options and strategic directions, to enable members' involvement at an earlier stage.
- Outside courses that look in some detail at specific issues e.g. the Looked After Children one that I recently attended.