

Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

25 June 2013

Report of Centre for Public Scrutiny 10th Annual Conference

Introduction

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee authorised the Chair and Vice Chair of the Management Committee, along with one of the Scrutiny Officers, to attend the Centre for Public Scrutiny 10th Annual Conference at the Local Government House, Westminster, London on the 11th and 12th June 2013.

The Management Committee received a copy of the intended programme for the conference at its last meeting.

Cllrs Simon Killane attended both days of the conference. He was accompanied by Teresa Goddard, Scrutiny Officer on the 11th, and Cllr Roy While attended the 12th to represent Wiltshire Council.

Headline messages

Day One

Delegates had the opportunity to attend two workshops out of six (Crime and Policing, Welfare Reforms, Jobs and Prosperity, Approaches to Scrutiny, Improving Schools, and Health Inequalities).

Opening keynote speech from Dr Evan Harris, Associate Director, Hacked Off. "Who guards the guardians – who decides?" talked about the need for tighter regulation of press, Hacked Off is a campaign for a free and accountable press. He spoke of the Leveson Royal Charter that was agreed by Parliament in March, in favour of regulation with statutory independent oversight.

Plenary from Robert Francis QC, Mid Staffordshire Trust Inquiry/Tim Kelsey, National Director of Patients & Information, NHS England. "The power of individual and collective voices" spoke of not ignoring the individual within scrutiny, and that specific examples can and should instigate wider investigation into the Health arena.

Mark Burns-Williamson, Police & Crime Commissioner, West Yorkshire/Cllr Trevor Egleton, Chair, Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel/Stephen Lovelock, former Detective Chief Superintendent, Metropolitan Police spoke of the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner adding a new layer of accountability and scrutiny, and highlighted the difficulties the PCC

may face – from the 15% election turnout to the allocation of finite resources. A workshop was undertaken in the afternoon on the role of the PCC in delivering accountability in policing.

Closing keynote speech from Sharon Shoesmith, PhD student, university of London, Former Director of Children’s Services, Haringey, and former HMI spoke of her experiences in being held publicly accountable, and the opportunities and pitfalls it offered.

Day Two – Members Scrutiny Leadership Academy

Delegates were able to choose from three skills streams to improve and understand the key skills required for effective scrutiny (Leadership in Scrutiny, Being an effective critical friend – questioning skills, and Practical skills for using social media and digital tools to open up scrutiny). They were also offered the space to discuss the pressing issues facing them, and get help and ideas from others, including having CfPS experts on hand to assist.

There were three talks throughout the day;

- “Influencing for Impact: using stakeholder mapping to maximise the impact of your scrutiny review”,
- “Getting re-energised – creative approaches and networked councillors”
- The Challenge and opportunity of delivering social impact through scrutiny and accountability”.

The Chair and Vice-Chair will speak further about their personal experiences and any information they wish to share at the meeting.

Good Scrutiny Awards

This year the Overall Impact Award was given to **Boston Borough Council** -tThis council used scrutiny to give everyone an opportunity to talk about the impact on communities caused by a sudden and dramatic influx of migrant workers, especially in rural areas with a long history of population stability. There was growing tension and concern from more long-standing residents about employment, wages, doctors’ waiting lists, school places, housing provision, and law and order.

Video can be seen here: <http://cfps.org.uk/Raising+the+Profile>

The categories in 2013 were:

- Innovation
- Involving communities
- Raising the profile
- Transforming services
- Working together

Wiltshire Council did enter for the awards with its work on Safeguarding, but was not shortlisted.

Future Events

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will be advised of a number of national events and activities, which take place as a consequence, as these are arranged and published.

The committee is asked to note the report.

Cllr Simon Killane – Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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