

Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

3 January 2017

A summary of my attendance at the Centre for Public Scrutiny Conference held in the Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury, London on Friday the 1st of December 2016.

Paul Kelly and I attended this conference. The highlight of the conference, for me, was the interesting and informative speeches from highly experienced speakers.

Lord Bob Kerslake, Chair of CfPS and Jacqui McKinlay introduced the conference and identified the main challenges that face local government. These included Government changes to health, concerns relating to future funding of adult social care and how devolution is being implemented.

Several speakers from Local Government and parliament described their experience of scrutiny and its importance to democracy and decision making. I felt that recent events including the US presidential election and EU referendum is influencing our understanding of "truth". It was clear that the role of scrutiny needs to be embedded in decision making to enhance public confidence in our political system.

I attended the workshop on the "21st Century Councillor" This workshop explored the role of councillors and the diverse demands of the role. We all expressed our frustrations but there was a consensus that being an elected representative was very rewarding despite the challenges. Our comments and observations will be fed back to policy makers in government.

Scrutiny at Wiltshire council is evolving and making a difference. I also had the opportunity to share some of our successes. It is really important for those involved with local government scrutiny to meet, discuss and share experience relating to their contribution to decision making. This conference gave me the chance to meet councillors, MP's and officers who are making a positive contribution through their work as scrutineers and champions of scrutiny.

Simon Killane

Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

10/12/16