

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

8 July 2014

Update from the Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference 2014

- 1 On 10 June Cllrs Simon Killane and Gordon King attended the Annual Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Conference entitled "*You have reached your destination: scrutiny's role on the road to better places*" alongside Emma Dove, Scrutiny Officer. This was a valuable opportunity to network with and learn from scrutiny colleagues from across the country as well as evaluate the overall position of scrutiny nationally and how we can all help in driving the function forward in terms of impact and perceived value.
- 2 There was an opportunity to look at scrutiny projects from other authorities and vote on the project that we felt was worthy of the "*Scrutineers' Choice*" award to signify which piece of work was felt to be the best example of a scrutiny project by conference delegates. This was awarded to the London Borough of Newham for their piece entitled: "*Pathways to young people's mental health and well-being*".
- 3 A presentation was also given by last year's winner of the award, Boston Borough Council, to see where they were a year on to demonstrate the importance and long lasting effects a good piece of scrutiny can have.
- 4 Some key messages that came out of the conference were to be proactive in our approach to scrutiny and work towards instilling improved structures for accountability. Developing constructive working relationships with relevant partners and external bodies was also considered to be a powerful item in the scrutiny toolkit. This can also be extended to the wider scrutiny network in using each other's experiences to develop our own and drive the scrutiny function forward and demonstrate its impact and added value.
- 5 A series of workshops were provided to facilitate collaborative and useful discussion on important areas such as Health, Police and Crime Panels and Safeguarding. This involved a presentation from a field expert to contextualise and inform discussion on how the scrutiny of the topic may be improved and to share best practice.
- 6 The second day to the Conference was a Scrutiny Camp which Cllrs Gordon King and Alan Hill attended alongside Emma Dove, Scrutiny Officer. This involved a pitching session with all delegates to suggest topics for discussion based on what colleagues felt they would benefit from seeking the view of others and sharing ideas. In particular, Cllr Alan Hill lead a session on the scrutiny of Local Enterprise Partnerships, an exercise upon which we are just embarking, to seek the views and experiences of colleagues in doing the same as this area is relatively uncharted territory at present. The main focus of the discussion was the difficulty in establishing a good working relationship

with the LEP as a body whereby they have no obligation to be scrutinised by the authority, however it seems that in comparison we as a Council are making successful inroads on this and have prioritised this correctly. Other sessions of note include: the use of social media to promote the scrutiny function by individuals, the scrutiny team and as councillors; scrutiny of major contracts and the added value of this and the importance and methods of effective work programming.

- 7 Cllrs Gordon King, Simon Killane and Alan Hill will update further at the meeting.

**Emma Dove, Scrutiny Officer
Corporate Office**