

Member Feedback during Consultation Period

<p>Amount/ Structure of Committees</p>	<p>I like the proposed change to three Scrutiny Committees, Corporate, Health, Place and Environment and their remits.</p> <p>A Scrutiny Management Committee would enable the workplan and requests for scrutiny to be looked at outside of Scrutiny meetings, giving more time for actual Scrutiny, too much time at some Scrutiny Commission meetings has been taken up with looking at the work plan.</p> <p>Building relationships with partners will be vitally important, especially as part of Health Scrutiny. I am not sure I agree with CfGS that Crime and Disorder may be better suited sat outside Health Scrutiny, as it links in with Integrated Care</p>	<p>Cllr Wendy Brackenbury</p>
	<p>We should have more Scrutiny Committees and less EAPs</p>	<p>Cllr Valerie Anslow</p>
	<p>Concerns about there not being a separate Budget Scrutiny Committee but upon clarification confirmed “As long as the Corporate Committee have enough time to cover all the areas you identified then that is fine. If there are enough members, they could sub divide into task and finish groups to look at for example budget setting”.</p>	<p>Cllr Jean Addison</p>
<p>Frequency of meetings</p>	<p>CFGS are suggesting that 2 of the scrutiny committees meet quarterly. The thinking behind this seems to be that the majority of the work will be done in Task and Finish groups.</p> <p>I think that the original proposal for monthly meetings of each of the 3 scrutiny committees is the correct approach. All the committees have a wide remit and I am sure that they would be kept busy with monthly meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The bulk of scrutiny is done out of the public domain which is not good for democracy. b) Only a subset of the scrutiny committee members would get to see the detailed data. c) We have limited the number of Task and Finish groups, so that means only a few topics could be scrutinised at any one time. d) Not all topics need such in depth scrutiny as is done at a Task and Finish Group. d) It is downgrading the main scrutiny committee to just be a rubber stamping body for the task and finish reports. <p>We currently have a long list of topics on the work programme that we would like to scrutinise. We are not getting to look at most of these due to lack of capacity. As well as the topics we have on our list to scrutinise, we still need to have some reports that come to us regularly. So quarterly meetings would mean that there would be inadequate scrutiny of the topics that we wish to cover.</p>	<p>Cllr Gill Mercer</p>

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	I don't know if the suggestion by CfGS that meetings should be quarterly allows for adequate scrutiny, at NNC we went from bi- monthly to monthly meetings. I think either monthly or bi- monthly with Task and Finish groups taking place as well would work better. The frequency of meetings can be reviewed at a later date once any changes have been made.	Cllr Wendy Brackenbury
Call-in	I do not think that it is appropriate for call-ins to be dealt with by a single committee. The call-ins should, like other items, be allocated by the Scrutiny Management Board to the most appropriate committee.	Cllr Gill Mercer
Committee size		
Chair of Committees	I agree Chairs of committees should be independently minded, this does not mean they should be chaired by members of the opposition. As Chair of the Scrutiny Commission I believe I am independently minded, it is part of my make up and who I am both in and outside of politics. CfGS opinion 'Research is inconclusive when it comes to the point of whether opposition chairing leads to better scrutiny overall'.	Cllr Wendy Brackenbury
	All scrutiny should be chaired by opposition to achieve the best. Having a chair with a relationship to an executive member is wrong and does not give the proper independence as shown on past votes. Public health scrutiny is essential and should be chaired by opposition.	Cllr John McGhee
	Opposition should chair Scrutiny Committees.	Cllr Valerie Anslow
	Scrutiny Committees should have an Opposition Chair	Cllr Jean Addison
	There are far too many informal connections between the scrutiny Chair role and Members of the Executive which I feel causes a degree of advocacy towards protecting the Executive (and Administration Conservative Group) from free and uninhibited scrutiny. All scrutiny should be chaired by non-administration Councillors. This was an outcome from the County Council's system and was lost in the transition to NNC.	Cllr Jim Hakewill

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General on how Scrutiny operates	<p>Adequate resourcing is a must to support the Scrutiny function and allow for effective Task and Finish Groups. Further training for Members would be helpful. Scrutiny should not be a vehicle for political point scoring but Members should be confident in holding the Executive to account and adding value to the organisation.</p>	<p>Cllr Wendy Brackenbury</p>
	<p>Scrutiny of course can request executive members and officers to attend for questions and clarification on agenda items. Scrutiny should also scrutinise outside areas where there is a public interest.</p>	<p>Cllr John McGhee</p>
	<p>Where recommendations are accepted by the Executive, we need to ensure that Scrutiny follow outcomes achieved otherwise we can't measure the success of Scrutiny.</p>	<p>Cllr Valerie Anslow</p>
	<p>I am very much in favour of a new structure for Scrutiny that takes into full consideration the statutory guidance issued by the government on effective scrutiny, and a refocus on the remit and policy development of the EAPs, but I am also a big advocate of the need monitor, evaluate, review, and improve.</p> <p>Whilst it is understood that we are democratically elected members, its important that our scrutiny structure has the best fit to meet our needs, its also important that there is an open and honest process to get the outcomes that will enhance the work of the Council and build trust for our residents.</p> <p>There needs to be an executive-scrutiny protocol developed so that there is a clear division between the two functions, with firm emphasis on the Executive forward planning, and how call in will be handled.</p> <p>That there is officer support and resources for scrutiny, including impartial advice from officers and a good level of training to improve the effectiveness knowledge of members and officers so that scrutiny can be used as a source of good practice and improvement. The council should have a dedicated scrutiny officer to meet the needs of our scrutiny structure.</p> <p>Consideration must be given to the make up of our new committees and its relationship to the executive members as has been raised in the past year, the guidance makes clear that a great deal of thought should be given on structures that can give confidence to the public.</p> <p>Partnerships and how they are used is also important to scrutiny, and how you identify which partners are best placed in the community for each area to be scrutinised, how witnesses can feed into this work and evidence gathered.</p>	<p>Cllr Lynn Buckingham</p>

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	Scrutiny should be open and transparent and should be effective and not just a talking shop (make an actual difference to services, communities and the decisions that we make) We should co-opt independent members onto Scrutiny Committees	Cllr Jean Addison
	<p>The only Cabinet/Executive systems in the legacy councils were the County Council and Kettering Borough Council. Many members have not had experience of a formal scrutiny process and it has been a steep learning curve for them, which is on-going based on the level and quality of questioning in meetings.</p> <p>The review of scrutiny should be much more widespread in information gathering from other Councils who are recognised as doing it well along with an externally managed Peer Review to look at the last two years and create a more effective way of scrutiny management and delivery for the future. It is ironic that the current proposals have themselves not formally come before either of the existing scrutiny Committees for comment and suggestions.</p> <p>One factor that caused difficulties for the County Council and now with NNC is that there is too little outward looking analysis of how other Councils achieve results in areas where we struggle. Equally too little recognition of good practice at NNC being evangelised outside our borders.</p> <p>Classic scrutiny should, I feel have a main function with one forward looking scrutiny committee and one backward looking monitoring and effective task and finish groups picking up on key issues in both areas. This would negate the need for EAPs.</p> <p>NNC does not have a full complement of human resources as evidenced by the number of vacancies. Scrutiny needs dedicated support and a budget that enables visiting other places and member training.</p>	Cllr Jim Hakewill
Location	Scrutiny should also be seen to have meetings round North Northamptonshire and suitably to the agendas.	Cllr John McGhee