

# April 2005

## scrutiny champions' network

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## April 2005

The Government's recent local:vision document "Vibrant Local Leadership" poses several questions regarding the effectiveness and future of overview and scrutiny, in particular whether:

- there should be a more formal requirement for executives to act on scrutiny findings;
- the scrutiny function can oversee the effective implementation of triggers for improvement to services at neighbourhood level;
- 'call-in' provides effective accountability or is misused, misunderstood and lacking in teeth
- there is a case for extension of the formal scrutiny remit (as currently in relation to health) to reinforce further some important aspects of the community leadership role;
- political parties need to look at how, formally or informally, party discipline impacts upon the effectiveness of scrutiny on behalf of local people

The paper also considers whether, "in the wider context of greater specialisation in councillor roles, there may be scope to look at redirecting resources to more effective support for scrutiny. The Government would be interested in views on what more could be done to ensure that the opportunity that scrutiny by local councillors can offer is grasped more firmly, as well as on how scrutiny is developed as part of the advocacy and leadership roles played by local councillors."

We have opened a discussion topic regarding these issues in our online forums and would be very interested to hear your thoughts. Visit us at [www.cfps.org.uk/champions](http://www.cfps.org.uk/champions)

### CfPS, April 2005

The scrutiny champions network aims to develop a powerful and persuasive voice on behalf of scrutiny practitioners throughout the country.

If you would like to contribute an article, or have an idea for inclusion in a future edition of this bulletin, please forward to: [info@cfps.org.uk](mailto:info@cfps.org.uk)

## News in brief

### Overview and Scrutiny in the South West

Swindon Borough Council and the South West Regional Assembly are leading the creation of a South West Overview and Scrutiny Network.

As with other regional networks, the aim is to provide Local Authorities with an opportunity to exchange information and best practice, identify and discuss key issues, hold regional training events and provide organisations with an opportunity of reaching scrutineers in the South West.

An initial meeting is planned for 16th May. If you would like to take part please contact Jodie Townsend on 01793 463109 or via [jtownsend@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jtownsend@swindon.gov.uk), or Claire Yeates on 01793463412 or via [cyeates@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:cyeates@swindon.gov.uk).

### Taking a Closer Look at Alcohol

To help Overview and Scrutiny Committees examine the impact of alcohol misuse locally, Alcohol Concern has developed a new toolkit. This provides facts, figures and analysis on key issues, as well as lists of suggested witnesses and useful questions to ask.

For further information about the toolkit, please contact Geethika Jayatilaka via [jcox@alcoholconcern.org.uk](mailto:jcox@alcoholconcern.org.uk)

### Community Cohesion

A new publication focusing on cohesion issues, aimed at overview and scrutiny, has been published by the Local Government Information Unit. It will show you:

- why it is important and useful to use scrutiny to investigate cohesion issues;
- points to bear in mind when deciding on a topic and planning an inquiry;
- good practice in conducting cohesion scrutiny;
- how to follow up the inquiry.

For further details, including instructions on how to order, please visit: [www.lgiu.gov.uk](http://www.lgiu.gov.uk)

## CfPS: getting the measure of overview and scrutiny

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has launched a new self-evaluation framework for overview and scrutiny in local government.

Described by practitioners as “a very useful health check tool and a means of looking critically at one’s own performance”, the framework provides, for the first time, a mechanism for all local authorities to demonstrate the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny and identify areas and identify areas for improvement.

It does not presuppose any current level of achievement and can be applied to any type of local authority operating under the four options for political management as set out in the Local Government Act 2000.

Building on the success of CfPS’ Good Scrutiny Guide, the framework poses a series questions based on the four principles of good scrutiny:

1. Providing “critical friend” challenge
2. Reflecting the public voice
3. Leading and owning the process
4. Making an impact on the delivery of services

Under each principle the “evaluator” is asked to:

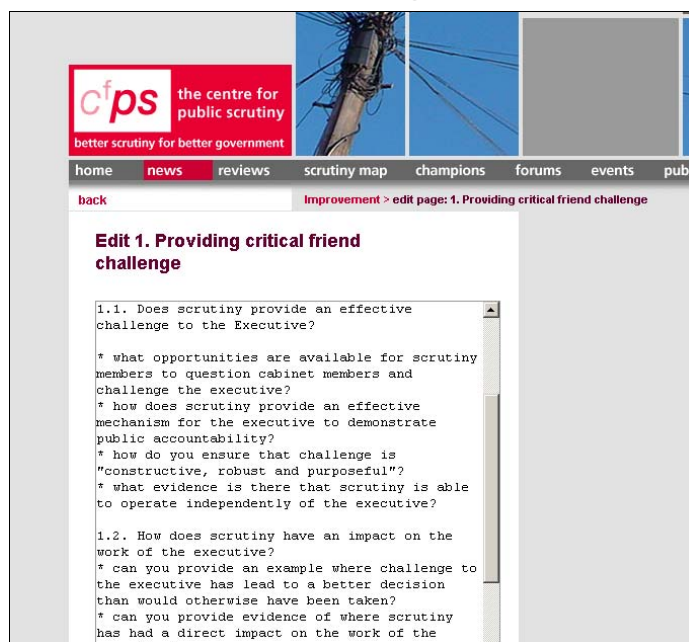
- demonstrate evidence of achievement
- identify areas for improvement
- highlight potential barriers to improvement

Once completed, the framework will provide a clear picture of how overview and scrutiny operates in an authority and lends itself to an explicit set of priorities for improvement planning.

This can then be used to:

- build confidence of those undertaking scrutiny activities
- demonstrate scrutiny’s value to auditors and inspectors
- encourage involvement in the process of those being scrutinised
- communicate the potential of scrutiny to local communities

The framework has been written in collaboration with a number of local authorities and CfPS is committed to working with scrutiny practitioners to amend and improve the framework over time.



Editing the self evaluation framework directly online

To this end we have developed an innovative online system that enables ongoing practitioner input through a simple web-editing facility. A version of the framework is available as a series of web pages on CfPS’ website that can be amended directly and easily by anyone with an idea on how to improve it.

The system also allows users to create their own pages to describe experiences of using the framework.

For a downloadable copy of the framework, and to find out more about the online version, please visit: [www.cfps.org.uk/improvement](http://www.cfps.org.uk/improvement)

If this online collaboration proves a popular way of developing practical solutions to help scrutineers, CfPS would welcome your suggestions on what other tools it could be used for, such as:

- Report writing
- Review plans or “scoping” documents
- Witness guidance

Let us know what you think on the forums at: [www.cfps.org.uk/champions](http://www.cfps.org.uk/champions)



## North East Derbyshire: scrutinising procurement

### Why should a council decide to review procurement?

Well, in North East Derbyshire Dales' case, the existing strategy was produced in 2001, and, as such, was considered out of date.

There had also been several developments since its development that the council needed to take into account. These included the National Procurement Strategy, E-Government initiative, extended trading powers, CPA, and the Efficiency Review. The Audit Commission had also recommended a timescale for a review of support arrangements and there was a member lead on the revision of the council's corporate objectives and priorities.

Against this background a decision was taken, agreed by the executive, that there should be a scrutiny inquiry of procurement at the council.

### What was the approach?

The committee adopted a two phased approach

1. firstly to set the guiding principles to enable the Procurement Working Party to produce a draft strategy
2. secondly to preview the draft strategy to ensure that those principles were followed.

The review process began with an initial meeting, which was held to plan the review. At first the committee, including the chair, were overawed by the complexity and scope of the subject and soon realised that they would need help before embarking on it.

This help took the form of capacity building through informal briefings with appropriate officers such as the scrutiny officers and the chair and vice chair. Full committee pre-meetings were scheduled and a variety of background reading material was examined such as:

- the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government (including milestones)
- the existing procurement strategy
- the IDeA Members' Guide to Procurement
- the Centre for Public Scrutiny Briefing Paper 'Scrutinising Strategic Procurement'

A group of members also attended a training seminar, entitled 'Realising the Potential of Scrutiny', organised by Sheffield City Council and CfPS. This included a session suggesting ways that scrutiny could contribute constructively to strategic procurement decision-making. The group then reported back to the whole committee on the key issues.

Other technical support was also made available to the committee however, despite all of the above, they still needed specialist advice on the more technical aspects of the review.

Their search for an appropriate external technical adviser led them to the co-opting of J. Leney, District of Bolsover, as a non-voting member of the committee.

The council had also, by this stage, appointed a procurement member champion and the committee invited him to attend future meetings, in an advisory capacity.

### What did they do?

The review method involved a number of internal investigations including interviews with the chief executive and the directors. A questionnaire was sent out to all procurement staff involved and there was a presentation on the VAT implications.

There were also external investigations involving an electronic survey of the council's neighbouring local authorities and audit family. The vice chair also made a site visit to the Derbyshire County Council Procurement Officer for further research.

The committee also considered the Southampton City Council Scrutiny Review of Procurement and the Vale Royal, Macclesfield and Warrington 'Enable' Project, together with the strategies of other councils.

When looking at 'doing business electronically' they considered the Office of Government Commerce e-Procurement Framework Project and the Derbyshire Partnership Forum 'A Shared e-Tendering Facility'. They then looked at some of the probable implications of the Gershon Review for their future strategy.

The committee concluded that they had a number



of different options:

- departments could continue to work in isolation but with an overarching corporate strategy and guidance;
- the council could establish a dedicated team staffed, following a skills audit, by either existing officers or by the recruitment of specialist staff if the required skills were not available within the authority;
- they could enter into a partnership arrangement with other councils; or
- they could target their local councils in Bolsover and Chesterfield for partnership working.

#### How did it go?

The committee originally aimed to complete phase one by the end of June 2004, however the complexity and fluidity of the subject resulted in this being delayed until mid-August, the review, therefore, took seven months and involved seven formal meetings.

In conducting phase one, it became apparent that fundamental changes in the council's delivery of procurement would be necessary and that these would involve key decisions by the executive. The committee made recommendations upon the following issues:

- adoption by the council of a corporate approach to procurement, including the centralisation of procurement operations by the establishment of a dedicated specialist unit to deliver and monitor procurement activity;
- development of a new corporate procurement strategy, placing the resident at the centre, and which includes an action plan of targets, milestones and a timetable for implementation and which links to corporate objectives and priorities;
- development, and electronic delivery, of a corporate procurement manual, to include all relevant corporate procedures, policies and strategies, standing orders, financial regulations and guidance for suppliers (particularly to enable local businesses to compete on a level playing field);

- enhancement of the role and membership of the council's procurement working party to ensure that it has the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise to drive forward the fundamental changes required;
- opportunities for working in partnership, with other authorities, organisations and suppliers;
- e-procurement, in accordance with e-government targets;
- the VAT implications of procurement.

The committee recognised that these fundamental changes to the council's principles and practice for procurement would need to be accepted and approved before the more detailed work of developing the strategy and associated procedures could sensibly be progressed.

It further recognised that, faced with a 'moving target', it was important that the council progressed these suggested improvements and opportunities without delay.

To ensure that due consideration would be given to the extensive recommendations included within the report, the executive set up a working party comprising chair and vice chair of the scrutiny committee, the member champion for procurement and e-Government and the portfolio member for corporate finance. This working party has concluded its deliberations and, since then, the IDeA has conducted a Procurement Fitness Check, the executive will now consider the resulting reports.

Informal approaches have been made by neighbouring councils to develop a joint strategy and to form a joint procurement unit.

Website: [www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk](http://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk)

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## Bracknell Forest: abandoned vehicles

For scrutiny to be effective its recommendations need to be acted upon and make a difference.

At Bracknell Forest a recent example of scrutiny helping to improve the lives of local people was through a policy review on untaxed and abandoned vehicles in the Borough.

Abandoned and untaxed vehicles have been an environmental problem for authorities nationally, gaining much attention over the years both as an eyesore and as a large financial cost to the community. There is also a proven link to criminality - the police estimate that in 80% of criminal acts involving cars, the vehicle used is untaxed.



For Bracknell Forest, inaction on abandoned vehicles was never an option, so when the opportunity arose to consider taking on devolved powers from the DVLA by adopting their protocol on the removal of untaxed cars, a cross-party scrutiny working group undertook to look at the issues to see where local action could be taken.

The working group investigated the problem as one aspect of the Public Scrutiny Commission's overall review of community safety. Through meetings with officers, the DVLA and Thames Valley Police, Members examined the legal situation, the practicalities and assessed how other local authorities were addressing the

problem. The DVLA powers would enable a local authority to take on further responsibility for removal of the vehicles either in house or via a contractor to removing or clamping untaxed vehicles which would previously been their responsibility.

The scrutiny working group considered that the Council already had a robust approach to abandoned vehicles, but that it urgently needed to address the issue of untaxed cars, which required different and more targeted action.

The final report of the scrutiny working group highlighted the key issues to successfully tackle the problem. It was received unanimously by the Council's Public Scrutiny Commission, which commended the report and its recommendations to the Executive. As a direct result of this review the following action was taken:

- a successful long-term amnesty was re-introduced in June 2004 to encourage residents to have their untaxed cars removed by the Council at no or little cost, prior to devolved powers being introduced. This resulted in the collection of 148 vehicles over a seven month period
- the newly launched initiatives of the DVLA were reviewed and considered as part of a new Bracknell Forest policy
- a range of publicity focussed residents' attention and raised awareness of the issue
- during June 2004 the Police, Council and the Fire Service worked together successfully to reduce vehicle crime and disorder by removing dangerous vehicles and fire hazards
- in November 2004 there was a successful clamp down on untaxed vehicles. The DVLA, the Council and the police removed untaxed vehicles from local roads - twenty vehicles being removed on one day
- at the end of January 2005, the DVLA, Police and the Council again had a crack down on untaxed vehicles and over one hundred vehicles were dealt with by removal. It was evident that the Council policy of reporting and promoting the DVLA hotline has helped ensure the high level of attention that this



initiative has received

- the Council entered negotiations with the DVLA, who have now agreed a scheme of working and it is hoped that through the Council, DVLA and a local contractor, that working under devolved powers will commence this year with a target date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005. The intention is that the Council takes on powers to support the DVLA and act as an alternative. The DVLA hotline will continue to be promoted and joint actions taken.

Through all this activity there have already been great benefits to both the local community, and the Council, including:

- the removal of eyesores, fire hazards and vehicles being driven without tax or insurance
- the generation of additional car parking

capacity for residents

- vigorous pursuit of owners leading to reduced numbers of vehicles requiring removal
- within the council there has been increased joint working across departments and increased external partnership working on this issue

Members and officers have been very pleased with the positive impact and outcomes arising from this scrutiny review. The challenge for us now in Bracknell Forest is to build on this and maximise the opportunities for scrutiny to make a real difference within the Borough.

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## West Sussex: childhood obesity and health scrutiny conference

The West Sussex Health Scrutiny Select Committee hosted a highly successful conference in February 2005 as part of a major research project into Childhood Obesity. The purpose of the conference was to examine the problem, to share good practice and to investigate ways to improve the situation.

The Scrutiny Team had to learn fast to organise the conference! Although we have staff who are experienced in organising smaller events, marketing and public engagement, no-one had ever organised a conference on such a large scale before. We were able to take advantage of other county council staff's expertise, as well as the wealth of knowledge on the web.

Considering the short lead time for the conference, it was very well attended. Almost 100 delegates attended, including County and District staff and councillors, school and nursery teachers and governors, health staff and Social Workers. The day itself included speakers talking about the problem, including from a local PCT and a PCT in Staffordshire. We felt that it was very important to engage young people and so invited the West Sussex Youth Cabinet to the conference. They spoke from a young person's perspective, giving a unique insight into the problem. It certainly gave the delegates food for thought (no pun intended!).

Delegates were also given the opportunity to participate in workshops including one on how to motivate young people to eat more healthily and take more exercise and a hot topics obesity debate, both of which were run by the young people themselves. They were treated to a healthy lunch and given the opportunity to feed back throughout the day.

The conference was a great success! Not only were the aims of the conference met but it provided the opportunity for staff working in the field of childhood obesity to share their work and network with like-minded colleagues. The day was evaluated through a survey and everyone felt the day had been worthwhile. It was also well reported in the local press.



Dr James Walsh, Chairman of the Childhood Obesity Task Force and Robin Brown, Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Select Committee at the conference.

- 97% felt that the day provided them with useful information;
- 100% felt that they had sufficient opportunity to contribute to discussions;
- 100% felt that the environment was conducive to open discussion of their thoughts and ideas with colleagues;
- 100% felt that the day provided an opportunity to network with colleagues;
- 78% felt that the day will make a difference to the problem of childhood obesity in West Sussex.

The main learning experience, discussed by both the Scrutiny Team and the project team, was that in the future, more time is needed to organise such events. Colleagues in the conference business are amazed that we managed to pull it off in four months, but it was tight! However, the day itself was a great success and it was a brilliant way to get professionals on board and involved in the work of Scrutiny.

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## Northamptonshire: Jamie Oliver eat your heart out!

### Northamptonshire scrutineers get their teeth into schools' food and drink

When Jamie Oliver helped to raise national concern about the state of school meals in spring 2005, he received full marks from Northamptonshire's education and health scrutiny councillors. After all, his passionate argument for better school meals echoed their own. The councillors had just spent a year examining how to improve students' access to good nutrition, and their findings, which pre-empted many of Jamie's, prompted the county's Cabinet to agree substantial proposals for change in December 2004.

The review of food and drink in schools was set up in January 2004 by Northamptonshire County Council's education scrutiny committee, after the county's health scrutiny partnership expressed concerns about nutrition in schools and the take-up of free school meals (which at 72.5 per cent for the primary level is well below the national average of 82.2 per cent). Since meals are only part of what pupils eat and drink over the school day, the scope of the review covered all types of food and drink in schools, as well as their social and educational aspects.

Responsibility for school meals in Northamptonshire has been delegated to schools, other than special schools, since 1991. The schools make a variety of arrangements, from buying large-scale services directly or through the county council, to contracts with single-site companies or even employing their own staff. Over two-thirds of primary schools provide no hot meals.

The working group received evidence from nutritionists, the food education curriculum co-ordinator, voluntary groups involved in food education, head teachers and catering companies, and visited two other counties. The members also observed and sampled school lunches in five schools.

Like Jamie Oliver, the councillors found that many pupils were not receiving adequate nutrition to meet the demands of modern

schooling. This was of particular concern as research showed strong links between nutrition in schools and pupil behaviour and attainment. Too few primary schools provided hot meals, and despite good practice in specific cases, the overall nutritional offer was a source of concern. There was frequently insufficient access to drinking water, while sweet drinks and snacks from vending machines were readily available. Finally, children were not being well enough educated about eating and preparing good food, nor were they being taught to see mealtimes as an enjoyable social occasion.

Challenges for improving school meals included considerable pressures on school meals budgets, and the lack of nutritional standards in England and Wales.

In its conclusions, the working group emphasised the importance of good nutrition for improving children's behaviour and attainment. It also argued that schools should provide children not only with food, but with knowledge about eating, cooking and nutrition, and that school mealtimes can play an important part in children's social education.

The sub-committee made a series of recommendations based on these principles, including:

- making hot meals available to all of the county's pupils by 2010;
- working with schools, parents, caterers and other stakeholders to improve nutrition over the whole school day;
- increasing participation in the Healthy Schools, free fruit and free milk schemes;
- raising the profile of food education in the county;
- working towards more structured school lunchtimes (e.g. keeping children on site)
- introducing policies on food marketing schemes and food-related rewards;
- draft good practice guidance for schools.



The Cabinet fully accepted these recommendations and, in view of their significant revenue and capital implications, allocated £50,000 to take them forward in preparation for next year's budget. This will include working with all relevant partners.

In early 2005, the schools service has already responded by scoping a project to implement short, medium and long-term measures, and taking steps to engage a project leader. In addition, it has been decided that all contractors who wish to renew their contracts with the county council must have or be working towards the Heartbeat Award.

This scrutiny review received a considerable amount of support from a wide cross-section of councillors, and has helped to decisively raise the priority of school food and drink provision in the county. It has also meant that councillors can give positive replies when people ask, "What are you doing about school meals?" in the wake of Jamie Oliver's excellent work.

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## Wakefield: developing scrutiny

Wakefield MDC has made significant improvements since its "poor" Comprehensive Performance Assessment rating in December 2002.

The Audit Commission carried out a re-inspection in February 2004, which resulted in Wakefield being given a rating at the top of "Fair" confirming us as one of the fastest improving Councils in the Country. This was confirmed when the Council won the LGC Award for most improved Council on 15th March.

The inspectors recognised that the Council had made great strides forward stating "the processes underpinning Overview and Scrutiny have been improved and the programme of work is better aligned with corporate priorities".

The inspectors added "the Council knows it must develop the scrutiny and representational roles of Councillors. The use of new mechanisms and processes for Overview and Scrutiny, a programme of training for Members and increasingly better alignment of the programme



for Overview and Scrutiny with the corporate priorities are starting to address this."

In response the Council took the following actions:

- reaffirmed its commitment to Overview and Scrutiny in the Corporate Performance Plan for 2004/05 by identifying the Service as a key Improvement Priority and undertaking to strengthen the Council's approach to this Service during 2004/05
- aligned the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to the Community Challenges identified in the Wakefield Community Strategy and given them new terms of reference
- restructured the Overview and Scrutiny Team
- appointed an Overview and Scrutiny Manager.

In October 2004 an internal assessment was undertaken to establish a baseline for the Service. A stakeholder survey was also undertaken to provide additional information and a Focus Group held for Co-opted Members. In December 2004 Improvement Plan was agreed



that dealt with the following issues:

- Improve relationship between CMT, Cabinet and Scrutiny to strengthen the role of Scrutiny
- Produce and Publish Toolkit that establishes clear procedures for developing, implementing and managing the Work Programme
- Examine how to strengthen Scrutiny's role in Performance Management, Partnerships and Fundamental Performance Reviews
- Develop Performance Management Systems for the Service
- Promotion of Service and Access to Information

2005 has seen these reforms begin to bite and Scrutiny is achieving a real impact.

Through Overview and Scrutiny, Featherstone Shopwatch made a successful bid for Financial Support and the Secretary of State for Health agreed with the Council that there had been inadequate consultation by a local Trust NHS trust Sec of State who confirmed that local maternity services should be retained for the immediate future.

The Executive has also accepted recommendations concerning the use of Section 106 Funds to improve play areas and open spaces that will see over £650,000 invested into new facilities.

We also undertook a 'one day scrutiny event' where we held a review to co-inside with Childhood Obesity week and ran a number of events throughout the day to help members reach their findings.

Much of what has been achieved is down to the hard work of the Scrutiny Support Team and support of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs. We have also enjoyed assistance from a number of Local Authorities and wish to repay this by publishing much of our recent work in the hope that colleagues will find it useful.

Visitors to our Website will find an online library where the following is available to download

- Stakeholder Survey Questionnaire and report
- Co-opted Member Workshop programme and report
- Improvement Plan - December 2004
- Publicity Materials
- Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit - this includes a number of templates that can be adopted for use by other local authorities
- Co-opted Members Recruitment and Induction Pack

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## CfPS Annual Conference 2005

Citizens, Scrutiny & Public Governance: the role of non-executives in enhancing accountability and improving public services.

Thursday 23rd June 2005  
Victoria Park Plaza, London SW1

### Keynote Speaker

Hazel Blears  
Minister of State for Crime Reduction,  
Policing and Community Safety, Home Office

Non-executives make a major contribution to public accountability by scrutinising the activities of public bodies on behalf of the wider population. These 'citizen governors', from government department board members to school governing bodies, face numerous challenges, including:

- ensuring their input complements existing audit and inspection mechanisms;
- performing hybrid roles that often combine executive and non-executive functions;
- working with limited resources and support to challenge powerful executives; and
- facing a dynamic public service environment, marked by a wide range of evolving accountability arrangements

Within this environment, how can scrutineers ensure they have maximum impact in improving service delivery and providing value for the public they represent?

How effective have recent reforms been - for example the creation of foundation trust hospitals and the modernisation of local government into distinct executive and non-executive functions - in ensuring citizens are able to participate in scrutiny processes?

Across government, how will this emerging citizen governor agenda evolve and how will it contribute to improving public accountability?

The Centre for Public Scrutiny's Third Annual Conference will give scrutineers and their support officers the opportunity to share learning with peers from their service area and across the public sector. Attendees will gain an insight into the common principles binding their activities and innovative insights into how to make public governance work in practice.

To book a place please contact:

Keith Clifford  
telephone 020 7324 4357  
email [keith.clifford@neilstewartassociates.co.uk](mailto:keith.clifford@neilstewartassociates.co.uk)  
web [www.neilstewartassociates.com/publicgovernance](http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/publicgovernance)

### Stop Press!

CfPS are planning to hold a "Scrutiny Officer Development Day" in the morning of 24th June 2005, the day after our annual conference.

To register your interest in this event, please contact:

[richard.syddall@cfps.org.uk](mailto:richard.syddall@cfps.org.uk)

*Vista, the Centre for Public Scrutiny and the Probation Boards' Association would like to draw your attention to three conferences taking place this June*

### *How you can attend all three conferences*

Ask for a booking form for each conference:

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#### **Vista Annual Conference**

##### **Amanda Williams**

School of Public Policy  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT

Telephone: 0121-414 7407  
Facsimile: 0121-414 4954  
Email: a.a.williams@bham.ac.uk

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Fee £200 per delegate. No VAT.

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#### **Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference**

##### **Keith Clifford**

Neil Stewart Associates  
PO Box 39976  
2nd Floor, 1 Benjamin Street  
London EC1M 5YT

Telephone: 020 7324 4357  
Facsimile: 020 7490 8850  
Email: keith.clifford@neilstewartassociates.co.uk  
www.neilstewartassociates.com/publicgovernance

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Fee £200 per delegate + VAT.

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#### **Probation Boards' Association Annual Conference**

##### **Christine Leeson**

Probation Boards' Association  
Vigilant house  
120 Wilton Road  
London SW1V 1JZ

Telephone: 020 7808 7722  
Facsimile: 020 7808 7723  
Email: christine.leeson@probationboards.co.uk

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Free,  
except for a nominal booking fee of £20 (twenty).

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Bookings are subject to availability and should be made as soon as possible.

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## Three Conferences for June 2005

*Vista Annual Conference*  
**21st June 2005**

*Centre for Public Scrutiny  
Annual Conference*  
**23rd June 2005**

*Probation Boards' Association  
Annual Conference*  
**30th June 2005**

*Governance, accountability,  
trust and values;*

*The CfPS conference will  
examine public scrutiny  
within criminal justice and  
other policy areas.  
The Vista and PBA  
conferences concentrate on  
their importance in the  
management of offenders  
in the 21st Century*



Vista Annual Conference  
**21st June 2005** Birmingham Botanical Gardens

*Governance, Accountability and Responsibility in the new National Offender Management Service*

**Christine Knott**  
 National Offender Manager

**David Faulkner**  
 Senior Research Associate, University of Oxford

**Sue Richards**  
 University of Birmingham

**Cedric Fullwood**  
 Cheshire Probation Board

**Martin Wargent**  
 Probation Boards' Association

**John Raine**  
 Probation Boards' Association

This year's conference provides the opportunity to consider the key principles that should guide decision-making in this regard and also to discuss the criteria by which the success of NOMS should be judged. In addition to listening to what the key-note presenters have to say on these matters, the conference agenda provides delegates with valuable time to reflect upon and discuss the issues for the national, regional and local levels alike.

Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference  
**23rd June 2005** London Victoria Park Plaza

*Citizens, Scrutiny & Public Governance*

**Hazel Blears MP**  
 Minister of State for Crime Reduction,  
 Policing and Community Safety, Home Office

**Ferdinand Mount**  
 Vice-Chair, POWER Commission

**Sir Ian Kennedy**  
 Chair, The Healthcare Commission (TBC)

Conference Chairs:  
**Jon Snow**  
 Channel 4 News

**Dr Tony Wright MP**  
 Chair, Public Administration Select Committee &  
 Centre for Public Scrutiny

Non-executives make a major contribution to public accountability by scrutinising the activities of public bodies on behalf of the wider population. These 'citizen governors', including Police Authority and Probation Board members, face numerous challenges, including:

- ensuring their input complements existing audit and inspection mechanisms
- performing hybrid roles that often combine executive and non-executive functions
- working with limited resources and support to challenge powerful executives
- facing a dynamic public service environment, marked by a wide range of evolving accountability arrangements

Within this environment, how can scrutineers ensure they have maximum impact in improving service delivery and providing value for the public they represent?

The Centre for Public Scrutiny's Third Annual Conference will give scrutineers and their support officers the opportunity to share learning with peers from their service area and across the public sector. Attendees will gain an insight into the common principles binding their activities and innovative insights into how to make public governance work in practice.

Probation Boards' Association Annual Conference  
**30th June 2005** London The Brewery

*Core values and building trust in the management of offenders*

**Baroness Kennedy QC (TBC)**  
 Chair of the POWER Commission

**Baroness Neuberger DBE**  
 Author of 'The Moral State we're in'

**Marcel Berlins (TBC)**  
 Law in Action, BBC Radio 4

Conference Chair:  
**John Raine**  
 Probation Boards' Association

*"The mood and temper of the public in regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unfailing tests of the civilisation of any country... a constant heart-searching by all charged with the duty of punishment, a desire and eagerness to rehabilitate in the world of industry all those who have paid their dues... these are the symbols which... mark and measure the stored-up strength of a nation and are proof of the living virtue of it."* 20th July 1910 Winston Churchill (Home Secretary) address to House of Commons.

*"There is a widely expressed view that our penal policy is a mess: We are putting more people into prison, but we have less and less idea about whether we are trying to punish, rehabilitate, contain or simply forget about them... what we have is a failure of trust combined with an aversion to risk."* Baroness Neuberger, 'The Moral State we're in', 2005.

The related issues of values and trust have yet to be fully debated in the new world that is the National Offender Management Service. How can we build trust with offenders, victims, those responsible for the delivery of services, as well as the public more generally? What values should be at the heart of a service that deals with offenders in today's society?