

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD – 13TH JUNE 2018

Report of the Chief Executive

ITEM 8 CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS - UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

To update the Board on progress with the recommendations arising from the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) review.

Action Requested

To note the progress that is being made to deal with the recommendations arising from the CfPS review.

Reason

So that the Board is kept up to date on the implementation of the recommendations.

Progress Summary

The full CfPS report, which is attached as Appendix 1, made the following recommendations:

1. Review and agree scrutiny's role and purpose, and ensure that this role and purpose is well understood
2. Clarify the role of cabinet members in respect of scrutiny to ensure a clear process of holding to account
3. Scrutiny Chairs to lead a process to develop a clear view of what's needed to enable 'good scrutiny'
4. Refresh the work planning programme process, allowing scrutiny to focus on the most important issues for residents and the council
5. Be creative in the approach to scrutiny and experiment to engage more widely and hear different voices
6. Review the structure of scrutiny committees with the aim of making them more outcome focused
7. Devise a more effective approach to monitoring impact
8. Consider how to maximise the support resource available to scrutiny

A meeting was held on 9th May, attended by the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chair of SMB, Vice-chair of SMB, Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Democratic Services Manager, at which the following initial actions were agreed in response to the CfPS recommendations:

- Reports to scrutiny committees to be in the names of the relevant Cabinet Member(s),
- Cabinet Members to attend scrutiny meetings to lead on presenting reports and answering questions, with officer support - they will need to approve reports before publication and be briefed before scrutiny meetings,
- CfPS to be commissioned to provide a workshop for councillors focussing on the role and purpose of scrutiny, work programming, and ensuring effectiveness,
- Scrutiny committees to meet ½ hour before the public commencement time so that the Chair and members can discuss and agree lines of questioning,
- Scrutiny structure to be reviewed – Monitoring Officer to draft initial options,
- Implementation and progress to be overseen by a group consisting of the Deputy Leader (Cllr Barkley), Chair of SMB (Cllr Miah), and the Monitoring Officer

Appendices: Appendix 1 – CfPS Report

Background Papers: None

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Supporting scrutiny in Charnwood Borough Council

Review Report

February 2018

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Review Report

Introduction

1. The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) was commissioned by Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) to consider the effectiveness and impact of their current approach to overview and scrutiny.
2. Thank you to the elected members and officers who took part for their time, insights and honesty. Also to Karen Widdowson and colleagues for their support in arranging interviews and collecting evidence.

Scope and methodology

3. The scope of the review was to 'assess the current approach to scrutiny and make recommendations aimed at improving its impact and effectiveness in Charnwood BC'. We explored the value and impact of scrutiny in terms of:
 - Effectively holding the executive to account
 - Contributing to policy-making
 - Acting as a voice for the public
 - Whether scrutiny is organised in the best way to have an impact and move at pace
4. Specific areas of focus included:
 - How well the role of scrutiny is understood within the council and amongst external stakeholders and the perception of its value?
 - How the public are involved in the work of scrutiny?
 - How focused and well managed the work programmes are in relation to corporate priorities and issues of immediate concern?
 - How effectively scrutiny constructively challenges executive decisions?
 - How much impact scrutiny has had, for example in relation to the performance of the council, its partners and within the borough?
 - How members are trained and supported to undertake scrutiny and how this contributes to their broader development?

A more detailed summary of our findings against these questions can be found at Appendix A.

5. The principle questions used for evidence gathering were:
 - What do people want to be different?
 - What would good look like for Charnwood?
 - What works already?
 - What new things could be tried?

6. Evidence gathering included:

- Desk research of key council documents including: corporate plan, scrutiny work programme, committee agendas, and minutes
- Member survey
- Observations of scrutiny meetings
- Interviews with key members, officers and partner stakeholders
- Focus groups/ discussions with: staff, committee members, Cabinet and senior officers

A copy of the member survey results can be found at Appendix B and details of the meetings observed and interviews undertaken can be found at Appendix C. In relation to the member survey, only 7 responses were received, and the results are therefore not representative. Interviewees are from within the council, a police representative was approached but not interviewed.

Summary of findings

Context

7. The importance of good governance and the value of accountability and openness in local government is well documented, and scrutiny is a key contributor. Scrutiny's role is becoming more important in terms of contributing to public trust, hearing different voices, managing risk and driving innovation. The recent Communities and Local Government Select Committee review into local government scrutiny ([report here](#)) supported the value of scrutiny and confirmed that the culture of an organisation is vital to ensuring independent and effective challenge.
8. Many councils have been undergoing significant change and transformation. CBC's approach to partnerships, different models of service delivery and income generation is reflective of this. For some organisations, this has required scrutiny to become more responsive and flexible and to use its time and resource more intelligently. This has proven extremely challenging for many councillors. But without these changes, scrutiny will become irrelevant.
9. CBC has seen political changes recently with the appointment of a new Council Leader, Cllr Jonathan Morgan, and changes to Cabinet roles. This also led to some changes to scrutiny positions. The new Council leader is ambitious for the people of Charnwood in terms of improving outcomes, tackling important issues around the economy, supporting residents and delivering excellent services. To achieve this, he recognises that the pace of delivery in the council needs to improve and the Council needs to have its voice heard within the region and beyond. An LGA Peer Review is taking place in March 2018 which is a positive reflection, alongside this review, of the council's willingness to seek external insight and challenge into how they currently work and how the organisation becomes fit for the future.

Scrutiny in Charnwood

10. Scrutiny's overall role is to hold the executive to account, to carry out policy development work and contribute to performance management. Generally, this role is well understood and can be articulated by both members and officers. Most are able to describe its purpose and the contribution it should be making.

11. The scrutiny function, in terms of structure, is well-established and well-supported by a dedicated team of officers with a strong mix of experience and skills. Members and officers are engaged and positive about the potential for scrutiny to make a difference. There are known processes for work programming planning, agenda setting and managing the meetings. Recently audio recording of committee meetings has been introduced and members are managing this change well. The meetings are well-run in terms of logistics, layout, attendance and how witnesses are made to feel welcome.
12. Meetings are generally well-chaired although there is an inconsistency in terms of understanding the leadership aspects of the chair role. Individual chairs work hard to ensure everyone has a say in meetings. Members talk positively about the support they get from Democratic Services and the positive working relationship was visible.
13. Members are more engaged, compared to many other councils, in terms of attending training and other information sharing activities. The council was recently awarded the East Midlands Regional Councillor Development Charter. Democratic Services staff are also actively engaged in training and learning from others through the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) Network and wider.

Areas for improvement

14. There is certainly a lot of scrutiny activity happening in Charnwood, with four permanent committees plus budget scrutiny and the potential for task and finish panels. The work programme is large, and agendas are usually full, and many reports are long. There are some examples where scrutiny is seen to have made a difference (most came from specific task and finish panels). More generally however scrutiny was described by most people as being ineffective in relation to impact, lacking in rigour and several interviewees described scrutiny as being an industry.
15. The foundations are in place for Charnwood to raise its game in terms of impact. To do this there are a number of factors which need to be addressed:
16. **Culture** – in terms of ways of working, Charnwood Council is clearly well run and well led. Its financial position and relatively stable politics have helped avoid the harder edges and pace of change that some councils have needed to adopt. In this context, scrutiny has shifted away from its core focus of holding the executive to account. This position has happened over time, rather than by design, and has become normal and established. For many it is not seen as problematic. To achieve effective democratic accountability however scrutiny needs to focus on the executive. The public have a right to know how decisions which affect them are made and that decision-makers are open to scrutiny as this builds trust and confidence. It is not the role of officers to fill in for this expectation.
17. **Clarity of vision/ the corporate plan** – there is a lack of understanding or visibility of the council's corporate plan. The main outcomes can be described but there is little that sits below it that scrutiny can grasp hold of in terms of informing their priorities. This may exist in the organisation, but it is not used. Members are very passionate about their local areas and the borough but lack a sense of what the purpose and priorities are for the organisation and place. This could be the reason why everything is seen as a priority the committees, the lack of focus on outcomes and sense of value in scrutiny's work.

18. **Scrutiny's role in democratic accountability** – whilst the role of scrutiny can be articulated it does not overall translate into practice. As referenced, scrutiny is currently mainly focused on holding officers to account and not the executive. Cabinet members rarely attend scrutiny and when they do most of the questions are directed at officers. Cabinet seem content with how scrutiny is currently functioning and there is no sense of the 'critical friend'/ 'grit in the oyster' that you would hope to see.

It seems that much of the focus of scrutiny committees is on monitoring operational performance. Much of scrutiny's time is spent on 'checking up' rather than exploring ways to improve through challenge and investigation as well as being the vital critical friend. Scrutiny could offer much greater value if it stretched itself to more innovative exploration and enquiry of policy, decisions and delivery.

19. **Prioritisation and pace** - A vagueness around scrutiny's role and a lack of clarity on the organisation's priorities have contributed to the challenges around work programming and prioritisation. This has led to a large and unwieldy work programme and a lack of real member engagement in agenda management.

The focus on operational issues has also led to scrutiny taking on a monitoring rather than scrutiny role. Briefings are common place and many items are on a regular loop of appearing regularly on scrutiny agendas (some for years) with little purpose or value. Panels are also in some cases taking a long-time to complete and as a result acting as a drain on limited service resource. Overall this is leading to a lack of flexibility and pace in the focus of scrutiny and its ability to support a faster pace of decision-making.

20. **Lack of public involvement and external focus** – scrutiny is currently mainly internal in its focus looking at council processes and reviewing decisions. There is little evidence of scrutiny acting as the voice of the public (apart from using specific ward issues to highlight concerns). Scrutiny is also impenetrable in how its presented on the website to help understand the structure and how to get involved. Panel reports also do not lend themselves to public consumption and missing opportunities for wider engagement and involvement.

21. **The quality of scrutiny/ behaviours** – most scrutiny takes place in committees and there is little evidence of members acting as a team with clear lines of inquiry. This is leaving space for un-co-ordinated individual questions, some of which result in scrutiny happening but not usually by design. Some members report that officers are not open or used to be scrutinised. Some officers described a lack of respect, scrutiny as an unpleasant experience and rude/ unprofessional behaviour in meetings.

22. **Evaluation and review** – an annual report is produced which sets out the activities and achievements of scrutiny. It was however difficult for members and officers to recount where scrutiny had made an impact beyond task and finish panels.

Summary of recommendations

23. The following eight recommendations are made:

24. **Review and agree scrutiny's role and purpose, and ensure that this role and purpose is well understood**

Getting a consistent and shared view of scrutiny's role and purpose is vital. The lack of understanding was cited as a key issue getting in the way of good scrutiny in a recent CfPS/ [APSE Report](#). Undertaking this as a joint exercise would provide a route for Cabinet to demonstrate its commitment to being challenged. It could also form part of a refreshed work programming process (see below).

25. Clarify the role of cabinet members in respect of scrutiny to ensure a clear process of holding to account

Scrutiny's job is to hold the executive to account, this means Cabinet members should be front and centre. Reports should therefore be in their name and they attend meetings as a matter of course. Whilst the current committee structure does not lend itself well to this (Cabinet members could be at all of them, all of the time), a prioritised focused work programme should remove this demand. Officers can obviously be present but for technical support only.

26. Scrutiny Chairs to lead a process to develop a clear view of what's needed to enable 'good scrutiny'

Scrutiny members need a clearer sense of what is required of them as committee members and the work involved which allows good scrutiny to happen. This should draw on the member code of conduct which will help refresh on acceptable behaviours, as well as looking at a focus on good questioning skills and use of evidence, etc.

Practically the chairs must aim to build a team approach to identifying issues where scrutiny can have an impact, evidence gathering and questioning. Support from officers will help but this must be member-led.

Currently the chair and vice chair are the only people briefed before a meeting and no effort is made to meet as a 'team' beforehand (even for half an hour). All of which would result in shorter, sharper meetings. Some members lack key skills in operating in a scrutiny role, which means that it is difficult for them to play a complete and effective role or for the committee to act as a team. It would be useful if scrutiny members were briefed and advised before the public scrutiny meeting and solid lines of enquiry were established so that scrutiny meetings themselves were more productive.

Meeting chairing and leadership is also inconsistent. Key skills development would support chairs to organise and lead more effective scrutiny.

27. Refresh the work planning programme process, allowing scrutiny to focus on the most important issues for residents and the council

A high-quality work programme is critical to success. A good work programme is about impact and outcomes. Work programming is about highlighting and proceeding with those matters where scrutiny can make the most difference to the lives of local people.

This relies on two things – firstly, having the information at hand to be able to make informed choices. Secondly, it is important that scrutiny understands what "impact" looks like, so it can plan for it.

There are opportunities for CBC to engage with the public regarding the selecting of topics (through public forums/ focus groups/ on-line voting), alongside the current approach which takes account of insight, corporate priorities and members' own concerns. Working closely with members, the single work programme managed by democratic services, would benefit from sharper, even ruthless prioritisation. It will also help scrutiny to experiment more effectively with different approaches to its work, as we suggest below.

Whilst there are benefits to the current scrutiny committee structure, it is leading to confusion about which committee looks at what and therefore the work programme. If this structure is to be maintained, work is needed to be ensure members fully understand the model and a stricter approach to item allocation and equally importantly when items are removed. Structure of the committees is addressed below.

28. Be creative in the approach to scrutiny and experiment to engage more widely and hear different voices

There is currently an over-reliance on committee-based scrutiny. Panels are seen as more effective but resource intensive and can last a long time. Members should investigate how different approaches are used which build on members' interest and give scrutiny more focus where they can add value and are less resource intensive.

There are a wide range of models, systems and approaches to undertaking scrutiny and managing committee meetings, and to carrying out task and finish groups, which CBC can trial and adapt to its own circumstances.

This could also include thinking about the way space is provided for community-led scrutiny at borough level. For issues affecting multiple localities, it may be appropriate for scrutiny to facilitate community-led meetings, seminars or other sessions at which councillors may play a role – but not necessarily a leading role. These can produce evidence and findings which can be fed back into the more formal scrutiny process.

Scrutiny should review and revise the approach that it takes towards co-option both of expert professionals (who may also be local people) and local people who while not professionals, may still have expertise in specific issues. This could be done along with thinking more generally about scrutiny's ability to draw in and involve local people more.

29. Review the structure of scrutiny committees with the aim of making them more outcome focused

Changing the structure of scrutiny committees is rarely a panacea in terms of bringing about immediate changes, the cultural issues are more important. However, we received feedback from the majority of people (members and officers) that the current structure is complex and therefore confusing and involves lots of officer time in supporting and attending all the committees.

There are benefits to the current structure in terms of wider understanding of the organisation and the focus on policy, which many organisations do not achieve in

scrutiny. However, they appear to be outweighed by issues such as members being unable to develop more in-depth knowledge, build relationships with key people and understand issues relating to a topic/ service over a period of time.

Given the need for scrutiny to become more outcome focused, a structure which reflects the corporate priorities or is more aligned to outcomes or even service departments could work well in the future. We are happy to provide further advice on what the new structure could be, although the best approach would be to design with members.

30. Devise a more effective approach to monitoring impact

In order to secure its impact, scrutiny should improve how it monitors and evaluates its own performance.

There isn't a single methodology to measure the impact of scrutiny, many focus on process (and therefore weaker) measures such as recommendations adopted. The APSE report referred to above has a summary of recent thinking and CfPS has also produced guidance on securing return on investment. The latest APSE work reflected that for many good scrutiny means:

- Improving outcomes
- Being an instrument of ensuring monitoring, review and accountability of local government
- Being a platform for constructive debate, more decision legitimacy, or being an alternative voice

For CBC, there would be value in the committees regularly considering their impact in terms of citizens, the borough/ place and organisation. This may help support the shift away from operational monitoring.

31. Consider how to maximise the support resource available to scrutiny

CBC has maintained a good level of resource for scrutiny compared to other district councils and the lead committee support role has ensured senior officer involvement. There are some concerns about the lack of capacity to do the latter role (alongside a demanding day job), who does this role could be reviewed if a committee restructure took place.

In terms of Democratic Services officer support, the majority of resource is currently directed at 'clerking', an important task but is missing the opportunity to tap into the existing experience, brain-power and enthusiasm in the team in order to enhance the quality of scrutiny. Whilst maintaining the member-led approach and independence, more proactive Democratic Service officer support would greatly enhance scrutiny's impact.

Conclusion

32. There are solid foundations already in place for Charnwood to build on, which will deliver purposeful scrutiny that is valued and makes a difference to residents' lives and the council.

33. The recommendations in this report require commitment from senior officers and the council's leadership. Scrutiny councillors, and the officers who support them, cannot make scrutiny effective, and enhance its impact, on their own. Part of the change will require a shift in mindset from the senior political leadership which makes it receptive to challenge.

Report Author: Jacqui McKinlay, Centre for Public Scrutiny

Analysis against scope

How well the role of scrutiny is understood within the council and amongst external stakeholders and the perception of its value?

1. Elected members and officers overall can articulate the role and purpose of scrutiny, however the practical delivery of the function does not match this understanding. Scrutiny members are engaged in the meetings and appear committed to doing a good job. They regularly take part in training and development. Generally however this does not translate into a commitment outside the meetings to drive the scrutiny agenda, plan and do the work needed to create an effective member-led scrutiny function.
2. Over time the purpose of scrutiny in CBC has evolved away from its original purpose into more of a focus on information gathering, some policy input and performance monitoring. This is reinforced by the officer/ operational focus at meetings.
3. From an officer perspective, this focus has led to scrutiny being seen as overly critical and aimed at finding fault in officers' work. Some of this could be resulting from the broad focus and a lack of preparation and organisation before meetings by members in relation to key lines of inquiry and questioning strategies. A more organised approach would not remove the freedom of members to ask questions but could help focus on where scrutiny can add value and make a difference.

How the public are involved in the work of scrutiny

4. A measure of success for scrutiny is whether it acts as the voice of the public. Ideally taking opportunities to engage with the public in relation to informing priorities, conducting scrutiny work and assessing potential impact. There is limited evidence of public involvement currently.
5. The design of the work programme, primarily a committee-based approach to scrutiny and limited use of external witnesses or representatives from partners, has led to scrutiny being insular in its focus. Some councillors do act as the voice of residents in terms of representing their constituents and using examples to illustrate views. However, they tend to focus on operational or procedural aspects of the council's work. Scrutiny on the website could be significantly improved in relation to public involvement.

How focused and well managed the work programmes are in relation to corporate priorities and issue of immediate concern

6. The work programme in Charnwood is large and proves difficult to manage and prioritise. In our experience from other councils, councillors can be unwilling to take action to more effectively prioritise their work. There is often a sense that doing so will mean that things "fall between the cracks". The fear of missing something critically important that scrutiny should, somehow, have picked up and identified, often weighs heavily on the minds of members. However, it is impossible to look at everything from every angle, and where prioritisation is seen as a way to manage more intelligently what will always be limited resources, it must be seen as a benefit.
7. There is very little reference to the council's priorities (or a plan) and this could also be reason why scrutiny sees everything as a priority. There are also update items

which fall into the 'briefing' category and officers report of taking regularly performance reports back, some for years, which serve no purpose other than briefing the committee.

8. There was an overwhelming view from members that the most effective scrutiny takes place in panels. Members found these enjoyable as they provided an opportunity to get into an issue (it was described as giving a 3D view in terms of depth and breadth) allowing more specific recommendation to be made. It was acknowledged that not all have been successful, and many take a long time to complete, this was officers' view as well as members, but generally are seen as being more effective than the committee-based scrutiny. This view is reflective of many councils, where the impact tends to lie in task and finish groups.
9. Despite the support for Panels, it was interesting that none had taken place over the last eighteen months. A housing/ planning focused scope for a panel was agreed in February. There were a number of reasons cited for the gap – impact of the election and the number of new members, also a view that it reflects members lack of energy in driving scrutiny outside of attending meetings.

How effectively scrutiny constructively challenges executive decisions

11. Overall there is very limited constructive challenge of executive decisions. Scrutiny is involved at different stages of the process and pre-cabinet reviews cabinet papers. When decisions are reviewed the focus tends to be operational rather than strategic or outcome focused. It is not usual for cabinet members to be invited to attend meetings. Officers do a good job when they attend but are unable to talk at great depth about policy (or manifesto) based decisions.
12. The timing of some meetings also limits impact, pre-cabinet generally takes place a few days before the cabinet meeting. Whilst the scrutiny chair attends Cabinet to feedback, in reality there is limited opportunity at this stage to influence the decision and it is more of a tick-box exercise.
13. Discussions at meetings seems too often be quite exploratory – more about information gathering than anything else. Often, reports do not ask members to "do" anything other than to note them; recommendations at the scrutiny meetings could also be sharper in their focus.

How much impact scrutiny has had, for example in relation to the performance of the council, its partners and within the borough

14. There is limited evidence of impact to draw on beyond the function's annual report. Partners are rarely involved in scrutiny. The performance panel play a key role here, but the broad approach often limits the committees impact to monitoring rather than focusing on specific issues where they can have an impact.

How members are trained and supported to undertake scrutiny and how this contributes to their broader development

15. Charnwood is committed to member development and, better than other places, members are engaged in that they turn up and participate. What is less clear is whether the impact of this training is reflected upon and new approaches taken if there is no change.

16. Scrutiny provides an excellent opportunity for broader member engagement and an opportunity to support councillors to get an in-depth understanding of issues. This should be supported through broader member engagement in scrutiny where possible.

Charnwood Scrutiny Survey – Member Results

7 responses

Summary:

The number of received responses was significantly lower than expected and results should therefore be considered to be informative rather reflecting a wider member view.

The overall trends are the following:

- Councillors are rather positive about scrutiny's work, its impact and effectiveness;
- Scrutiny at Charnwood enjoys good working relationship with senior officers, executive function, and scrutiny support systems.
- Councillors feel that they may be over-reliant on officers in terms of providing information, and there seems to be a need to diversify the ways of getting scrutiny evidence;
- Councillors feel that going forward scrutiny needs to be more focused, should be able to showcase its value, and involve residents more often.

Questions and Answers

On the role of scrutiny

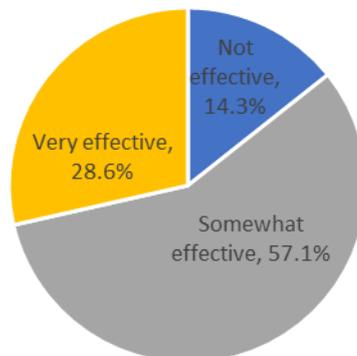
There was a wide variety of ideas about the role of scrutiny. The answers to that question ranged from looking into reports and asking more detailed questions, to improving failing areas, ensuring transparency, and scrutinising executive decisions. There were no mentions of scrutiny's wider role in policy development, for instance. While this is the trend that CfPS witnessed in many councils, it is still concerning that there is no unified understanding of scrutiny's purpose.

When asked about how well councillors understand the role and function of particular scrutiny committees, almost everyone said that they are well aware of specific functions and duties. However, some were concerned that there is an overlap between certain scrutiny functions, and some said that despite the general understanding, they don't see how all of the committees work together for the benefit of Charnwood.

On the impact/effectiveness of scrutiny

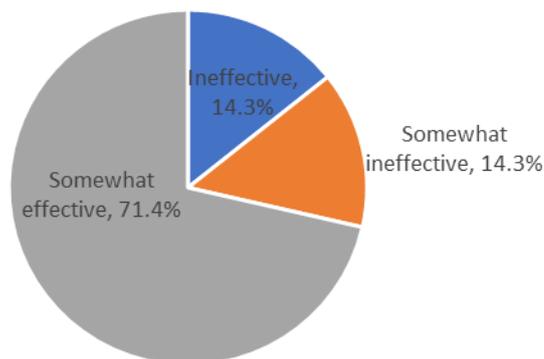
Most councillors were positive about the effectiveness of scrutiny in their council, which contrasts the national averages we collected on the same question in 2016/17.

How effective do you think scrutiny in Charnwood BC is at performing its role?



Scrutiny chairing was also rated quite positively, with the majority rating chairing as somewhat effective.

How effective do you think chairing of scrutiny committees is?



Councillors suggested the following to ensure that scrutiny becomes more effective in the future:

- Having a sharper focus, which involves a longer-term planning of key topics for scrutiny and their alignment with the work of the whole Council;
- Having better communications between the committees;
- Being better resourced but at the same time moving away from over-reliance on officers for information;
- Having faster processes and being more assertive of its value.

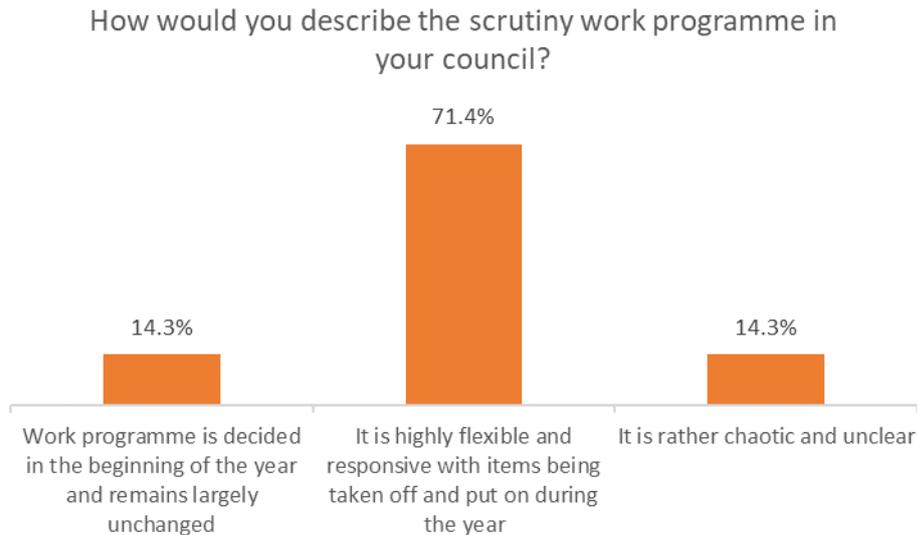
When asked about scrutiny's key priorities for the future 3 key issues emerged:

1. Planning and long-term economic growth and development;
2. Budget constraints and their impact on day-to-day service delivery, and

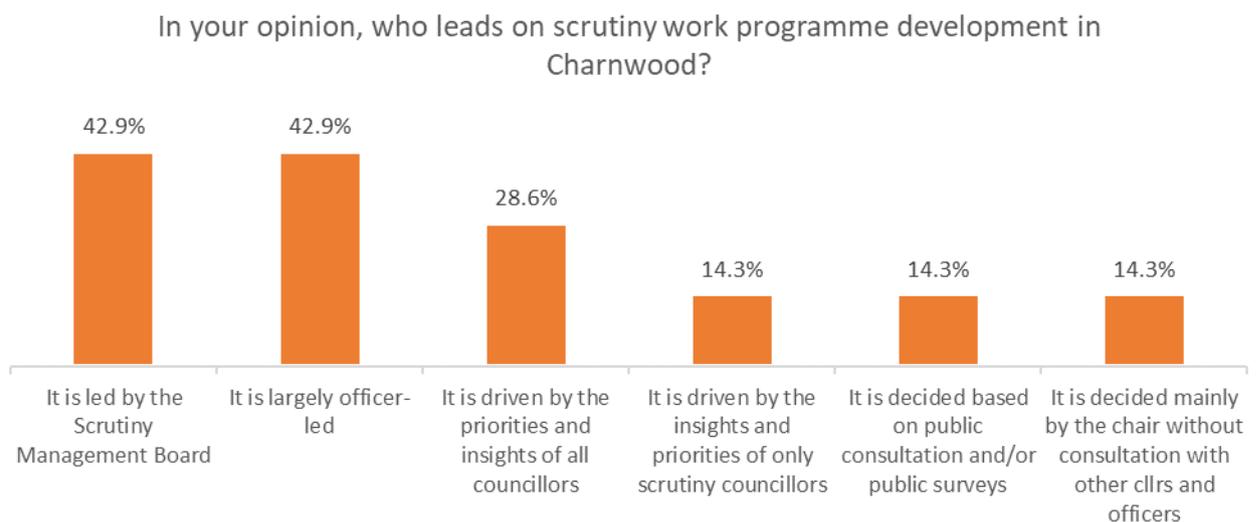
- The need to listen to residents, have more consultation with them, and ensuring that every resident is involved in the council’s work.

On scrutiny’s way of working

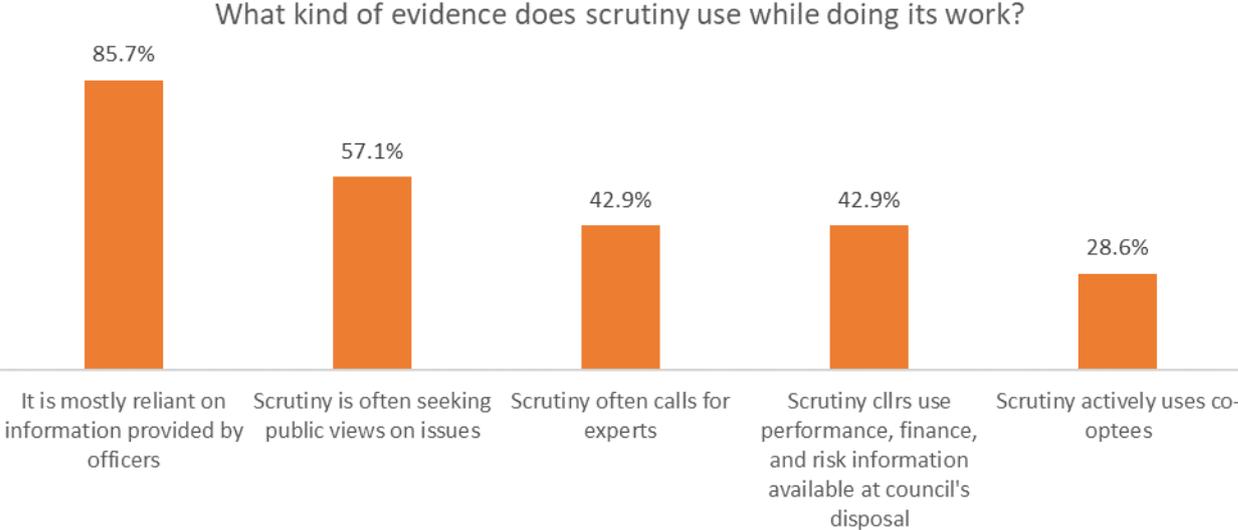
We asked several questions about scrutiny’s ways of working and looked at the scrutiny’s work programme development, support and training, along with the type of evidence scrutiny uses. Overall, work programme was rated as being flexible and responsive, which is certainly a positive development. Once again, Charnwood responses are significantly more positive than national averages collected by the CfPS for 2016/17.



However, the answers to the question on who is leading the development of the scrutiny work programme were rather surprising, in a sense that there seems to be no common ground or opinion on that matter between councillors. This may be due to the small sample that we received, or due to the fact that different committees might be operating differently. In any case, councillors have a set of very different opinions on who is in charge of scrutiny work programme development, as witnessed by the graph.

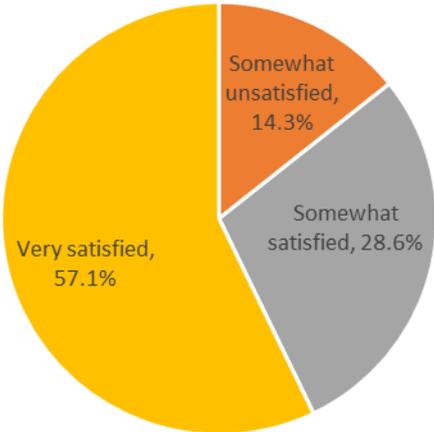


Another positive development of Charnwood scrutiny’s work is its wide use of various available resources. While most of information comes from officers, over half of councillors use public surveys or other ways of getting residents’ views, and scrutiny often calls for experts.



Finally, responses to the question on scrutiny training and support satisfaction levels revealed that the majority of councillors are very happy with existing provisions, and no one was dissatisfied. Councillors suggested looking at such topics as how to be more ambitious without being unrealistic, and how to have a stronger customer focus as future training topics.

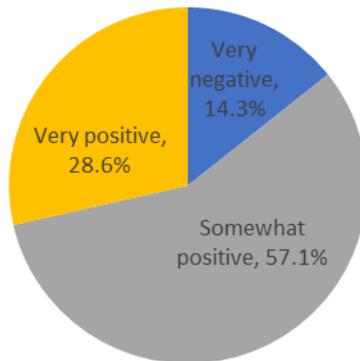
How satisfied are you with the current provision of scrutiny training and support?



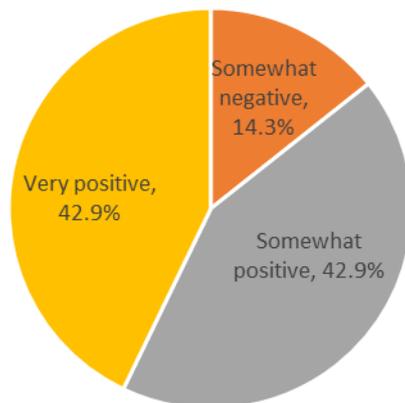
On scrutiny relationships

Overall, Charnwood scrutiny enjoys positive relationships with the executive function and senior officers, although, the relationship with senior officers is rated more positively. No one thought of relationship between scrutiny and senior officers as a very negative one, for instance, and the share of very positive responses is higher.

How would you describe the relationship between scrutiny and executive functions?



How would you describe the relationship between scrutiny and senior officers?



Evidence gathered

On-site – meetings and interviews

Scrutiny review steering group

Democratic Services staff interviews

Scrutiny Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners Focus Group

SMB observation

SMT meeting attendance

Heads of service interviews (7)

Leader and Cabinet leads interviews (4)

Member scrutiny focus group (3 attendees)

Policy Scrutiny Group

Performance Scrutiny Panel

Desk research –

Member survey (7 responses)

Corporate planning documents

Website review

Minutes and panel report review

Scrutiny work programme and annual report