

SELF EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

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Recommendation: that the Committee consider which of the options set out in section 4 they would wish to pursue to complete the self evaluation framework.

1 Background

The Council has an action within the Council’s Corporate Plan that covers Overview and Scrutiny. This is:

Action	Outcomes (measurable)	Target date
Ensure that the way the Council manages its Scrutiny function is at least equal to the national standard developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny by completing the Centre’s self evaluation framework and developing an action plan arising from the self evaluation.	Self evaluation framework completed and an action plan implemented. Measurable proof that the Council’s Scrutiny function meets the national standard.	2008 with annual review

2. Self Evaluation Framework

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CFPS) is a national organisation which was established to promote the value of scrutiny in modern and effective government. The centre aims to do this through a number of measures, including the production of guidance, advice on best practice and promoting information sharing. Its research has shown that, in the relatively short time since Overview and **Scrutiny** was introduced; there has been a slow but gradual improvement of its executions and outcomes.

Recognising that each authority undertakes Overview and Scrutiny in a different way and the absence of objective measures by which its success or otherwise could be assessed, the Centre for Public Scrutiny has developed a self-evaluation framework.

The “self-evaluation framework” is a mechanism for all local authorities to examine the effectiveness of their overview and scrutiny arrangements and to identify areas for improvement. The framework is based on the CFPS four principles of good scrutiny, which are as follows:

- Providing critical friend challenge
- Reflecting the public voice
- Leading and owning the process
- Making an impact

The framework is a series of questions, based on the above principles, which requires the evaluator to demonstrate evidence of achievement, identify areas for improvement and also highlight potential barriers to improvement. Once completed, the framework can provide a clear picture of how overview and scrutiny operates in an authority and can then be used to identify priorities for improvement planning.

An improvement plan could 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 does not presuppose any current level of achievement and can be applied to any type of local authority. This evaluation tool would enable the committee to examine the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny bearing in mind the recent changes to the overview and scrutiny structure.

A copy of the framework is at Appendix “A”.

4. **OPTIONS**

It is up to us to decide how to use this framework, however members of the Committee might like to consider some of the following suggestions:

- a) create a questionnaire based on the framework as a postal survey to be sent to all members of the council and use the results to develop an action plan.
- b) hold a workshop with members of this committee and the scrutiny officers and/or a facilitator to complete the evaluation, using the results to inform production of the next annual report and to develop an action plan for improvement.
- c) contract external consultants to undertake the evaluation and produce

recommendations.

- d) the self-evaluation is undertaken by a Task and Finish Group. In order that the views of all three Committees can be represented, it is suggested that the Task and Finish Group comprises of 6 Councillors, two from each Committee.

5. CONCLUSION

The Committee is invited to consider which of the options set out in section 4 above they would wish to pursue to complete the self evaluation framework.

List of Appendices

Appendix "A" – CFPS Self Evaluation Framework

List of Background Documents:

None