

Appendix 2

Outcomes and characteristics for effective local government overview and scrutiny

Wales Scrutiny Officers Network

Outcomes and characteristics for effective local government overview and scrutiny

Outcome <i>What does good scrutiny seek to achieve?</i>	Characteristics <i>What would it look like? How could we recognise it?</i>
<p>1 Democratic accountability drives improvement in public services.</p> <p><i>'Better Outcomes'</i></p>	<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Overview and scrutiny has a clearly defined and valued role in the council's improvement and governance arrangements. ii) Overview and scrutiny has the dedicated officer support it needs from officers who are able to undertake independent research effectively, and provides councillors with high-quality analysis, advice and training. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) Overview and scrutiny inquiries are non-political, methodologically sound and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives. <p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv) Overview and scrutiny regularly engages in evidence based challenge of decision makers and service providers. v) Overview and scrutiny provides viable and well evidenced solutions to recognised problems.
<p>2 Democratic decision making is accountable, inclusive and robust.</p> <p><i>'Better decisions'</i></p>	<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Overview and scrutiny councillors have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively. ii) The process receives effective support from the council's corporate management team who ensures that information provided to overview & scrutiny is of high quality and is provided in a timely and consistent manner. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) Overview and scrutiny is councillor-led, takes into account the views of the public, partners and regulators, and balances the prioritisation of community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance. iv) Overview and scrutiny meetings and activities are well-planned, chaired effectively and make best use of the resources available to it. <p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v) Decision makers give public account for themselves at overview and scrutiny committees for their portfolio responsibilities.

<p>Outcome <i>What does good scrutiny seek to achieve?</i></p>	<p>Characteristics <i>What would it look like? How could we recognise it?</i></p>
<p>3 The public is engaged in democratic debate about the current and future delivery of public services.</p> <p><i>'Better engagement'</i></p>	<p>Environment</p> <p>i) Overview and scrutiny is recognised by the executive and corporate management team as an important council mechanism for community engagement, and facilitates greater citizen involvement in governance.</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>ii) Overview and scrutiny is characterised by effective communication to raise awareness of, and encourage participation in democratic accountability.</p> <p>iii) Overview and scrutiny operates non-politically and deals effectively with sensitive political issues, tension and conflict.</p> <p>iv) Overview and scrutiny builds trust and good relationships with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>v) Overview and scrutiny enables the 'voice' of local people and communities across the area to be heard as part of decision and policy-making processes.</p>