

East Midlands Scrutiny Network

16 March 2018

Attendees

Bolsover District Council	Joanne Wilson
Charnwood Borough Council	Nicky Conway
Charnwood Borough Council	Cllr Geoff Parsons
Charnwood Borough Council	Michael Hopkins
Chesterfield Borough Council	Rachel Appleyard
Chesterfield Borough Council	Cllr Peter Innes
East Midlands Councils	Kirsty Lowe
Erewash Borough Council	Lynne Ghent
Erewash Borough Council	Angelika Kaufhold
Erewash Borough Council	Cllr James Dawson
Erewash Borough Council	Cllr John Frudd
Erewash Borough Council	Cllr Terry Holbrook
Gedling Borough Council	Helen Lee
Gedling Borough Council	Cllr Meredith Lawrence
Gedling Borough Council	Cllr Marje Paling
Kettering Borough Council	Cllr Mick Scrimshaw
Lincolnshire County Council	Nigel West
North Kesteven District Council	Duncan James
North Kesteven District Council	Emily Wilcox
Rushcliffe Borough Council	Charlotte Caven-Atack
Rushcliffe Borough Council	Martin Elliott
Erewash Borough Council	Cllr David Doyle

Apologies

Blaby District Council	Linda McBean
Blaby District Council	Cllr Louise Richardson
Blaby District Council	Cllr Les Philimore
Bolsover District Council	Cll Hilary Gilmour
Bolsover District Council	Cllr Jen Wilson
Chesterfield Borough Council	Cllr Kate Sarvent
Erewash Borough Council	Angela Taylor
Lincoln City Council	Cllr Jackie Kirk
North East Derbyshire District Council	Sue Veerman
North East Derbyshire District Council	Cllr Reader
Northamptonshire County Council	Cllr Victoria Perry

Notes

Welcome and introductions

Cllr Lawrence welcomed network members to Long Eaton and thanked Erewash Borough Council for hosting the network meeting.

Notes from the last network meeting were agreed.

Water Safety/drowning prevention and local council's responsibilities

Cllr James Dawson, LGA Drowning Prevention Lead for the LGA Safer and Stronger Communities Board provided a presentation on Water Safety and drowning prevention, this covered;

- Activity in Erewash
- Work in the East Midlands
- National activity

Cllr Dawson's presentation covered;

- Background to preventable drownings relevant statistics
- Role of Education
- The National Water Safety Forum
- Recent drowning tragedies, including Camber Sands and LGA support to Rother District Council in its response to the drownings in August 2016 including LGA assistance with the production of a new water safety plan
- LGA work with the National Water Safety Forum (NWSF) and its members, including RNLI
- LGA work to encourage councils to share data for inclusion on WAID (water related incident data) and to consider joining the National Water Safety Forum
- LGA work to encourage councils to have a community-level risk assessment and water safety plan and to in turn encourage local recreational activity organisations to have a clear strategic risk assessment and plans that address key risks
- Make the case for a session on water safety at the LGA's 2017 annual conference
- LGA Safer and stronger communities board - campaign this summer, looking to raise awareness

Cllr Dawson provided details of work locally in the East Midlands following two fatalities in Nottinghamshire in recent years that resulted in establishing Nottingham Water safety forum. To date the forum has agreed terms of reference, action plan, working with health and safety colleagues in local authorities in Nottinghamshire.

Cllr Dawson confirmed that they are looking at activities and training events locally on water safety and first aid.

Cllr Dawson provided details of Erewash Borough Council's plan to review water safety within the borough, with a scrutiny task and finish group to explore water safety in Erewash, including lifesaving equipment and notices.

A question followed on 'What do you see scrutiny's role in this?', a discussion followed on the role for scrutiny in understanding the work of councils around water safety, what procedures are in place, are they being followed and reviewed? Whose responsibility is it in the authority to review?

A discussion followed on; Awareness of water safety, capturing local understanding of water, need for education around cold water shock.

Cllr Dawson confirmed that Erewash Borough Council is currently in the information gathering stage of their review at the moment.

Action: Erewash BC feedback progress at a future meeting

Charnwood Borough Council

Michael Hopkins provided a presentation on a recent Centre for Public Scrutiny review of the scrutiny function at Charnwood Borough Council. The presentation covered;

- Reasons behind the review and the timings of going through the process, including their new leader and recent changes in scrutiny appointments
- Peer review process
- Opportunity to have a look at the scrutiny function, 'how scrutiny could up its game'

Michael shared with the network that the experience was enjoyable, the process was good, with positive feedback for CfPS.

He confirmed that detailed work went into the scoping of the terms of reference, which were broad but logical. He provided details of how the review took place, including the use of focus groups to seek views of members and officers, along with an online survey for all councillors to express views on scrutiny. Michael confirmed that the review had hoped to explore with partners and stakeholders what they thought of scrutiny, involving key partners in voluntary sector and police.

Michael provided details of the findings, including the positive and negative elements. Themes included;

- Getting beyond scrutiny activity, understanding why scrutiny is being done
- Prioritisation of scrutiny programme
- Ensuring public engagement in scrutiny
- Holding executive to account

Michael reflected on the need now to move forward and consider recommendations. He posed to the group; 'How scrutiny structure helps or hinders - how much difference does changing the structure change the way that scrutiny works?' A discussion followed on culture and scrutiny. Gedling Borough Council - Cllr Lawrence provided details of the recent review of scrutiny at Gedling Borough Council.

Question to Michael

A discussion followed on how you measure the scrutiny process. Cllr Parsons, Charnwood Borough Council provided a member perspective of the scrutiny review at Charnwood.

The network members were invited to work in small groups to;

1. Share experience of reviewing scrutiny
2. Share details of how scrutiny is done locally
3. Provided examples of what has been done to promote scrutiny, internally, with partners and members of the public

Feedback from the group work covered;

- Culture change
- Culture of organisations
- Member engagement
- Work programme
- Awareness training for councillors
- Reporting back
- Culture change - review of scrutiny
- Structures
- Chairs from opposition parties and experience of

- Officer scrutiny
- Political environment training course - awareness of scrutiny
- Member induction - include scrutiny as a mandatory element
- A number are looking to review scrutiny
- Pro-forma to encourage submission of ideas from Councillors
- Colour code work programme - NKDC - can they share details?
- Self-promotion with councils
- All about impact of scrutiny - show that scrutiny is making a difference
- Role of call in

Scrutiny update from around the region

Charnwood Borough Council - 5 year housing land supply

North Kesteven District Council - also looking at housing land supply, Scrutiny in looking to the future.

Northamptonshire County council - Budget Scrutiny.

CLLr Lawrence provided details of an area being looked at by Gedling Borough Council, that of recording of meetings. He was keen to capture views on what others do on recording of meetings.

Feedback from network members;

- Lincolnshire webcast council meetings
- Rushcliffe - trialling recording of meetings
- Charnwood Borough Council already record public meetings
- Erewash Borough record full council
- North Kesteven District Council record all public meeting

A discussion followed on how recording are made, how and how long they are stored.

Work programme

Kirsty informed the network members that she will be exploring with Chesterfield Borough Council about providing the venue for the December network meeting.