

# DCLG Select Committee Report on Scrutiny in Local Government

North Kesteven District Council's Approach

# Scrutiny Structure at NKDC

## Corporate Priorities

Our Council

Our Communities

Our Economy

Our Homes

Our Environment

## Scrutiny Panels

Performance and Resources

Communities and Economy

Environment

## Chairmen



Councillor  
Lance Pennell



Councillor  
Ross Little



Councillor  
Chris Goldson

At NKDC, Scrutiny sits within Strategy and Transformation, within the Corporate and Customer Services Division  
not Democratic Services

# Select Committee Report : Capturing the essential elements

**FULL REPORT**  
57 pages



House of Commons  
Communities and Local  
Government Committee

## Effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees

First Report of Session 2017–19

Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report

## O&S Briefing Paper 6 pages

Committee: All OSPs

Briefing Topic: DCLG Select Committee Report on the effectiveness of scrutiny in local government

Circulation: All OSP Chairs & Vice-Chairs



### A. Purpose of Briefing Paper

To provide a summary of the key recommendations and findings of the report published on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017 by the Communities and Local Government Parliamentary Select Committee on the *Effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees*

### B. Potential for Future Recommendations

The briefing paper will be shared with all the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels and be agenda items at their next appropriate meetings, these being January 2018 meetings for Communities and Economy, and Environment Panels; and the February 2018 meeting of the Performance & Resources Panel (as the Jan 2018 meeting is the Target Budget)

A possible recommendation may then be to assess the "as is" state for NKDC as compared with the (relevant) recommendations and findings set out in the Select Committee report. This could also be a workshop type exercise within a panel meeting. There is the potential for further recommendations to arise on completion of this self-assessment activity.

### C. Briefing Summary

The key finding from the report is that Local Authority culture change is needed to ensure effective scrutiny and address two overarching themes within the report:

- the marginalisation of scrutiny at too many local authorities; and as a result that,
- scrutiny is not held in high enough esteem leading to a lack of constructive challenge to improve services for residents.

The key recommendations by the Select Committee are:

1. That overview and scrutiny committees should report to an authority's Full Council meeting rather than to the executive, mirroring the relationship between Select Committees and Parliament

## O&S Key Finding Summary 1 page

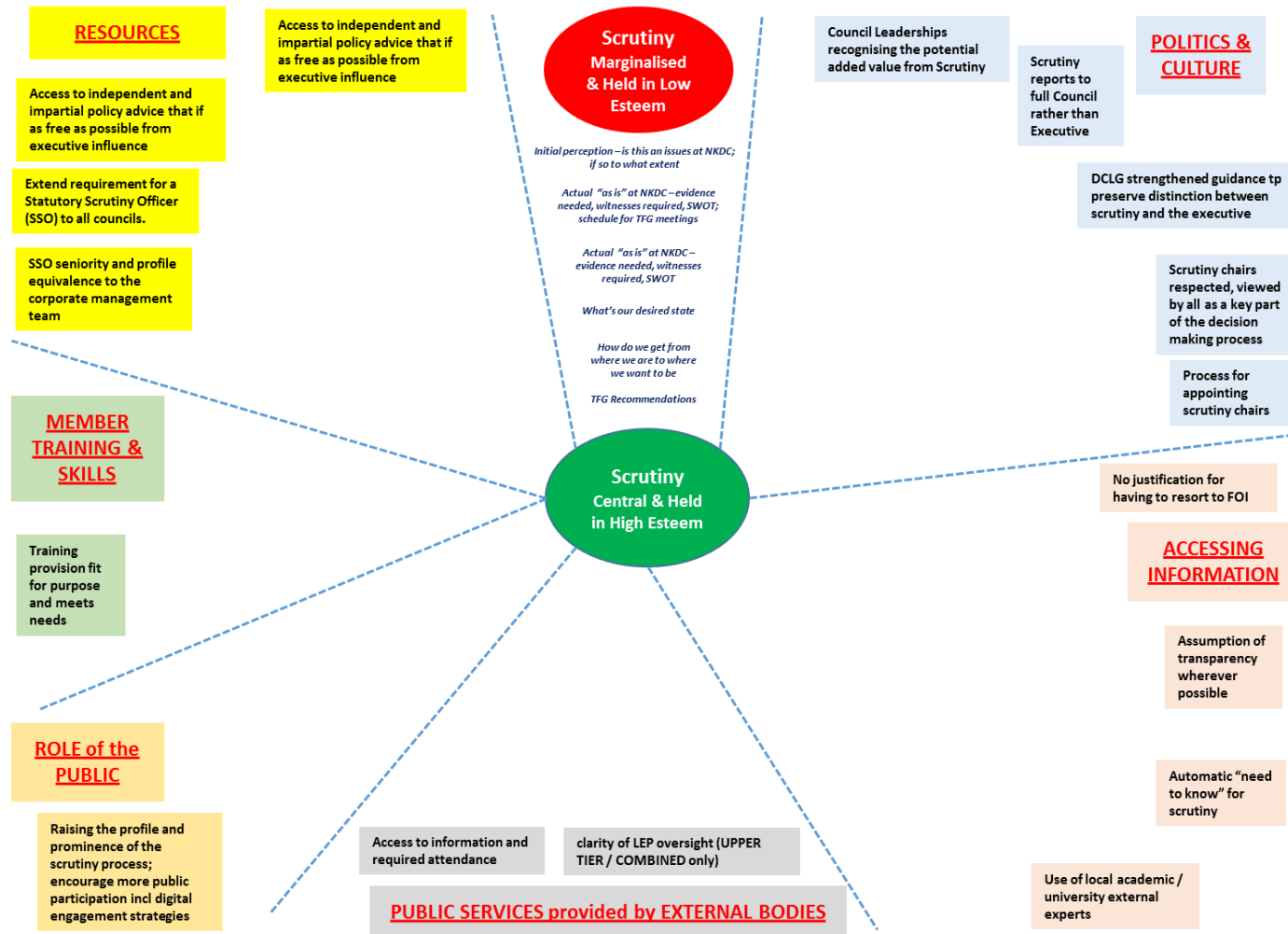
SELECT COMMITTEE KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS: CROSS-REFERENCING

Recommendation Sub-Element	KEY FINDINGS (x2)		KEY RECOMMENDATIONS (x7)						
	A Scrutiny Marginalised	B Sharing best practice	1. Report to Full Council	2. OSP's & Exec Distinct	3. Access to info	4. Officer support	5. Public & service users	6. External witnesses	7. Elected chair pilot
Politics and Culture : Council Leaderships recognising the potential added value from Scrutiny	X								
Politics and Culture : Scrutiny reports to full Council rather than Executive	X		X						
Politics and Culture : DCLG strengthened guidance to preserve distinction between scrutiny and the executive	X			X					
Politics and Culture : Scrutiny chair(s) respected, viewed by all as key part of decision making process	X								
Politics and Culture : Process for appointing scrutiny chair(s)									X
Accessing Information : No justification for having to resort to FOI	X				X				
Accessing Information : Assumption of transparency wherever possible	X				X				
Accessing Information : Automatic "need to know" for scrutiny	X				X				
Accessing information : Use of local academic / university external experts					X			X	
Accessing information : Use of views and experiences of service users, not just officer views / reports					X		X		
Resources : Access to independent and impartial policy advice that if as free as possible from executive influence	X					X			
Resources : Support by officers that can operate with independence and provide impartial advice	X					X			
Resources : Extend requirement for a Statutory Scrutiny Officer (SSO) to all councils	X					X			
Resources : SSO seniority and profile equivalence to the corporate management team	X					X			
Member training & skills : Training provision fit for purpose and meets needs		X							
Role of the public : Raising the profile and prominence of the scrutiny process; encourage more public participation incl digital engagement strategies							X		
Scrutinising public services provided by external bodies : Access to information and required attendance					X			X	
Scrutinising public services provided by external bodies : clarity of LEP oversight (UPPER TIER / COMBINED only)					X			X	

# Cross Panel TFG



Cross Panel TFG Select Committee Report Effectiveness of Scrutiny : Approach Option



Where are we (NKDC) against each key area?

Where do we want / need to be?

How are we going to get there?

# Task and Finish Group – progress

## Witnesses:

- Panel Chairs
- Key Officers
- External Witnesses

## Research:

- Looking into what others are doing
- Member questionnaire
- Forums – such as today's forum

## Local Culture:

- Fit with priorities
- Resourcing
- Perceptions of the Overview and Scrutiny Function

- 3 meetings held to date
- We aim to present the findings and report back to the Panel in September/October