

**SCRUTINISING FINANCE****18 April 2007****Convenor: Peter Watt****Venue: Birmingham**

An understanding of finance is vital for exerting a real influence on policy review and development within overview and scrutiny. A well-designed scrutiny function can be effective in facilitating working with the executive as a constructive, as well as a critical, friend. This seminar looks at the process of effective overview and scrutiny and how the financial implications of the authority's decisions can be effectively scrutinised. The seminar begins with a broad overview of the development of the scrutiny function in local government. Real life experience of finance scrutiny is then provided for the case of Warwickshire County Council, with an examination of their scrutiny of budgets, and for Wolverhampton City Council discussing their scrutiny of finance. A final session provides a briefing on key developments to the national local government finance system including the implications of the Lyons Inquiry.

The programme is tailored particularly for members with an interest in finance but is equally suitable for officers working in finance or in support of the scrutiny function.

**Speakers**

**Oliver Winters** joined Warwickshire County Council in 1991 as Group Accountant and became Deputy County Treasurer in 1999 and has recently been appointed as Head of Finance. He works very closely with elected members in delivering the budget process that has to operate in an authority with a minority Cabinet. He is responsible for developing the council's approach to Gershon and leads on VFM and User of Resources CPA assessment.

**Andrew Coulson** is a senior lecturer at INLOGOV. He is an economist and coordinates INLOGOV's work on scrutiny. He has recently published articles on scrutiny, the governance of partnerships involving the voluntary sector, the Private Finance Initiative, and the Labour government's reforms of local government in the UK.

**Rodger Mann** is Head of Scrutiny and Democratic Support at Wolverhampton City Council. He has contributed to the development of Scrutiny regionally and nationally through the West Midlands Local Government Association, the Centre for Public Scrutiny (where he is an Associate) and INLOGOV's scrutiny practitioner support programme.

**Peter Watt** is Associate Director at INLOGOV, where he provides the Financial Management block of their MBA. Recent research projects include work on Gershon Efficiency for the ODPM, work on Local Government Finance for the County Councils Network and on the efficiency of back office services for the Audit Commission. He writes regularly on local government issues for the *Municipal Journal*, *Local Government Chronicle*, *Public Money and Management* and *Fiscal Studies*. More details about Dr Watt are available on his website at <http://www.inlogov.bham.ac.uk/staff/watt/>

**PROGRAMME**

10.00	Registration and coffee
10.15	Introduction <b>Peter Watt, INLOGOV</b>
10.20	Effective overview and scrutiny <b>Andrew Coulson, INLOGOV</b>
11.20	Coffee
11.35	Scrutiny of budgets <b>Oliver Winters, Head of Finance, Warwickshire County Council</b>
12.40	Lunch
13.45	Engaging Scrutiny in the Budget Process <b>Rodger Mann, Head of Scrutiny and Democratic Support, Wolverhampton City Council</b>
14.35	Tea
14.50	The national context for scrutiny – the local government finance system <b>Peter Watt, INLOGOV</b>
16.00	Close

**FEE**

- £299 (VAT exempt) for advance payment with booking form
- £350 (VAT exempt) for payment via an invoice after the event

Cheques should be made payable to the University of Birmingham and forwarded to the Seminar Administrator

If you require any further information please contact Fay Wilson on 0121 414 4999 or email [f.e.wilson@bham.ac.uk](mailto:f.e.wilson@bham.ac.uk)