

**The Institute of Local Government Studies  
The University of Birmingham**

**CHAIRING SCRUTINY**

**28 June 2006**

**Convenor: Colin Copus**

**Venue: Birmingham**

Chairing an overview and scrutiny committee, or any other overview and scrutiny event, is not like chairing an old style council committee. Nor is it like chairing a business meeting, or, for that matter chairing a meeting of a political party. Scrutiny chairs require an entirely new set of skills and expertise to meet the new setting that is an overview and scrutiny event and to meet the demands of those events. The seminar will explore the skill requirements of overview and scrutiny chairs and set out a practical plan for the development of those skills. It will also examine what scrutiny chairs need to do before, during and after scrutiny events. The seminar will consider:

- skill requirements and a practical plan for developing those skills
- planning, running and progressing a scrutiny event
- identifying sources of evidence
- encouraging investigation and evidence collection and assessment
- stimulating deliberation and exploration
- working with people outside the council
- the political process of a scrutiny event
- the party political dimension

Dr Colin Copus is a senior lecturer in local politics at the Institute of Local Government Studies. He was one of the joint authors of the ODPM publication: *The Development of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government*.

# **SCRUTINY AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

**3 July 2006**

**Convenor: Colin Copus**

**Venue: Birmingham**

Overview and scrutiny is a vital mechanism by which councils can pursue and develop their community leadership role. It provides councillors with a setting and a range of tools with which to engage and explore policy issues and problems, to develop new policy and to create a framework in which to ensure the good governance of the locality.

Overview and scrutiny can be the engine that drives the community governance process and enables councillors to reach beyond the confines of the council, into broader and richer governance networks, thus influencing the policies and activities of all those public and private agencies that impact on the well-being of local communities.

The seminar will explore the link between overview and scrutiny and community leadership and governance, set out how scrutiny can secure its place at the centre of the local governance network and examine how scrutiny can hold the executive and a range of other bodies to public account.

The seminar will consider:

- scrutiny and policy initiation and development
- scanning the community for policy problems
- holding the executive to account
- scrutiny and the local governance network
- accountability and external bodies
- scrutiny and regional and national governance

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# The Scrutiny of Local Strategic Partnerships

10 July 2006

**Convenor: Andrew Coulson**

**Venue: Birmingham**

Scrutiny work in local government has, to date, focussed to a large extent on policy development and review, and the overview of strategic policies, performance and the budget. It has been less involved in process issues, and (with the important path-breaking exception of Health Scrutiny) in scrutiny outside the Council. In particular, scrutiny of the Local Strategic Partnership, and of related partnership working, has seemed complex and difficult for some – it is not a coincidence that several councils who have scrutinized their LSPs have used external advisers to give the process a kick-start.

Yet this is a direction in which the ODPM wants local authorities to go, while recent Audit Commission research on partnerships highlights important issues in the management of partnerships – they are not always without problems or disagreements, they need proper support, and they have hidden and overt costs.

So this seminar has been set up for local authorities who are reviewing, or want to review, their Local Strategic Partnerships.

It will include both an assessment of the key issues that determine the success or otherwise of partnership working – and a series of case studies from local authorities who have begun the processing of reviewing their LSP (or community planning, the Scottish equivalent).

The seminar is intended especially for elected members who are involved in this kind of scrutiny review, but also for the scrutiny officers or corporate strategy officers who will support such reviews.

## Programme

- 9.30 Coffee, Registration
- 10.15 Welcome, Introductions  
Purpose and Aims of the Day
- 10.30 What makes an LSP successful?  
**Andrew Coulson, Institute of Local Government Studies**
- 10.45 Discussion and Questions
- 11.15 Group Discussions
- 12.00 Refreshments
- 12.15 The Principles and Practice of External Scrutiny  
**Andrew Coulson**
- 1.00 Lunch
- 2.00 Case Studies:-  
(1) The Contribution of the Local Authority to Leadership of the LSP in Rotherham

**Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny**

(2) The “Partnership Development and Evaluation Toolkit” for Evaluating all Partnerships including LSPs

**Councillor Nick Foster and Pat Turton, Princal Scrutiny Officer, NE Derbyshire**

(3) Scrutiny of Partnerships in Rural Scotland

**Councillor Martin Ford, Chair, Scrutiny and Audit Commission, Aberdeenshire Council**

4.00 Key Issues and Action Points

4.30 Seminar concludes