

Essential scrutiny skills

Description

This half day course is designed for councillors who are new to scrutiny. It is also an ideal course for councillors who wish to improve or enhance their existing scrutiny skills.

We recognise that scrutiny select committees, panels, reviews and task groups are organised and run slightly differently across councils, however this course covers the core skills required to be a successful scrutineer. The course highlights the four principles of good scrutiny:

- Provides a 'critical friend' challenge to executives, external authorities and agencies
- Reflects the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- Takes the lead and owns the scrutiny process on behalf of the public
- Should make an impact on the quality of delivery of public services

Selection of topics covered

- Setting up a scrutiny event - co-option; expert witnesses, public, stakeholders, etc.
- Choosing and setting up the venue - who sits where etc.
- Putting people at ease, building trust and rapport and engendering collaboration
- Handling nervous or 'difficult' people sensitively - understanding body language
- Getting to the facts by asking open questions in a non-adversarial way
- Active listening skills - understanding what people *really* meant by what they said!

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