

Strategic Scrutiny in Practice Network

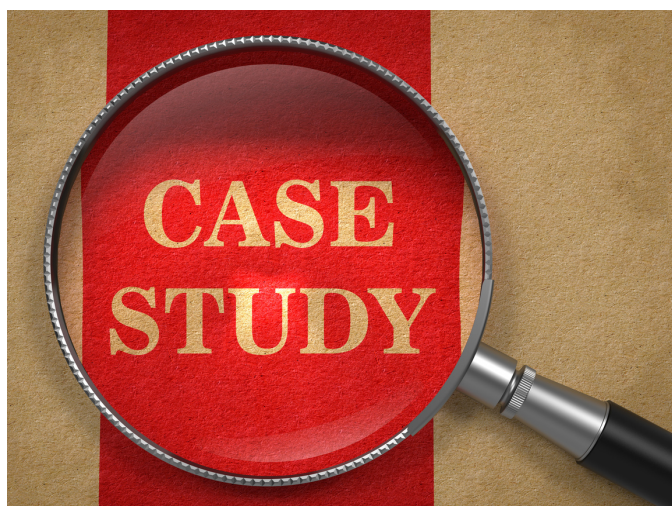
Monday 12 December 2022



20 Participants

Welcome

Sharon Senior, Executive Director at North West Employers welcomed everyone to the network on behalf of Cllr Emma Ellison, Chair of the network.



Sharon welcomed Annette Aiken from CfGS. Annette shared some key findings from the 21/22 annual scrutiny survey.

You can see a copy of Annette's slides [Here](#) 

[Annette also launched the Regional Networks page on the CfGS website](#)

Annette is looking for case studies from across the regions to showcase and share best practice. If you have something to share, please let us know or you can contact Annette directly Annette.Aiken@cfgs.org.uk

[For more information about the training courses offered by CfGS](#) [Visit the CfGS webpage:](#)



Contingency Planning through the scrutiny lens

With the challenges facing the sector at the moment, we considered what contingency plans were in place to support residents. Councils are signposting residents to resources, warm banks etc. One council had carried out an internal review of their contingency plans to ensure they are fit for purpose.

[Useful links:](#) 

[NW ADASS Contingency Planning Toolkit & Guidance \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

[The national flood emergency framework for England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Expectation and Indicators of Good Practice Set for category 1_2_Responders.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Market sustainability & contingency planning | Local Government Association](#)



Scrutiny and Budgets



Given the uncertainty around future settlements, the recent pay award and the increasing Cost of Living, councils are rightly concerned about budget positions. Some councils are providing standalone development sessions on budgets and finances for Councillors.

Useful Links:

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/financial-scrutiny/>

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/?publication=financial-scrutiny-practice-guide>

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/governancerisk>

<https://www.grantthornton.co.uk/insights/lesson-s-from-recent-public-interest-reports/>



Rogue Landlords

This discussion topic was introduced by Cllr Howard Ballard, Vice Chair of the network to explore what was happening across the region in relation to working with private landlords. Examples included:

- Sefton shared details of their existing scheme and that which is currently out to consultation

<https://yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/housing-investment-services/private-housing-licensing-consultation/>

- Creation of a task and finish group to review this issue
- Recognition of the challenge in bringing housing stock up to standard
- Retro-fitting housing
- Expanding existing housing strategies to factor in homelessness and cost of living
- Landlord licencing schemes

Useful links:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-fairer-private-rented-sector>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-deal-for-private-renters-published-today>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-sector-decarbonisation-scheme>



Network stocktake – end of year reflections and forward plan



Here's what you said, if you have any other ideas, please let us know.....

We asked... "What do you value most about the network?"

Value most - benchmarking and hearing about best practice elsewhere across the region. In Sefton we also have a standing item on the O&S Management Board agendas to let Members know what has been discussed at these meetings

Good to touch base, best practice, keeping up to date new issues nationally. Contacts in other authorities are always useful.

Keeping abreast of new issues for scrutiny and learning from others about new approaches to old problems.

- Feedback at team meetings to help share organisation learning.
- Good to hear about good practice from others
- Broaden our horizons
- Keeping open minded

- Good to listen to others & refer to
- New to Scrutiny, good to explore ideas in groups.
- Pinch good ideas

- Very reassuring – newer to role
- Best practice – task groups

What would you like to see in future networks?

- Online please
- One a year face to face would be great - Seconded!
- Yes Zoom or Teams is fine - we have all got used to both these days.



On offer from CfGS

Short Form Training Sessions offered as either 45min-1 hour virtual standalone sessions (Via Zoom/Teams):

- Chairing skills
- Scoping and managing scrutiny reviews
- Skills in reviewing and understanding performance information
- Financial scrutiny
- Developing effective member/officer relationships

If you have any other feedback or ideas, please send them to denisei@nwemployers.org.uk



Date of next meeting – TBC

CLLr Howard Ballard, Vice Chair of the network thanked everyone for their contributions to the network over the last year before closing the session and wishing everyone a happy Christmas and New Year.



To access a recording of the session – [click here](#)

