

## Police Authority Scrutiny Groups

### Background

The development of the scrutiny function will assist the Authority in holding the Constabulary to account for the services it provides, its performance and also the policies it develops. It will also assist in the delivery of the Authority's revised Best Value function.

This approach will give the Authority the opportunity to incorporate other areas of its work (consultation, engagement, partnerships, research and equality and diversity) into the whole area of performance management.

### How consultation will feed into the process

Members represent the people of Cheshire and must ensure that the policies, practices and services delivered to them are meeting local needs and to an acceptable standard. The concerns of local people raised through Police Forums or through other engagement methods may influence the issues chosen for scrutiny. Members themselves will have a good knowledge of local issues and concerns. Consultation and other surveys undertaken by the Authority or Constabulary provide a wealth of information which will supplement the information presented to Members on a more formal basis.

### How are services performing?

Scrutiny must lead to improvements in performance/service. Members will require good quality and timely information to identify how the Constabulary and other external organisations performance can improve. There is no shortage of Performance Indicators both nationally and locally and there will therefore be a need to select the most relevant information and seek clarification and interpretation of the results. This area of work will initially be undertaken by the Research Officer who will undertake background research in the area requested and feed back to the Deputy Chief Executive for report to the Scrutiny Group. In addition, information will need to be acquired from the Constabulary on specific issues.

### How will the Groups work?

Stage	Activity
1	Principle of review agreed by Authority/Committee/Panel
	Scrutiny Group of 3 Members established
2	Determine what is being reviewed (what is currently wrong with the existing process), determine the review's scope, the inputs, outputs and the outcomes
	Basic fact-finding via research (including literature review) and initial meetings
	Prepare draft terms of reference and work plan (including

	timescale)
3	First meeting of Scrutiny Group approves ToR and work plan
	Ongoing desktop research, including a comparison of other organisations and identification of good practice
	Preparation of consultation material
	Decide if witnesses are to be called
	If so, prepare questions and briefing material (including remit of review) for witnesses
	Arrange and hold witness sessions and/or other scrutiny methods (ie of policies or procedures)
	Summarise evidence and report back to Group.
4	Prepare draft report and recommendations.
	Group approves draft report and recommendations (with some cost/benefit analysis).
	Draft report / recommendations circulated for feedback to senior Constabulary officers and key consultees
	Feedback from Constabulary and key partners
	Propose amendments to draft based on feedback.
5	Group approves final report and recommendations
	Report submitted to Committee/Panel who endorse report / request action plan.
	Final report / recommendations published formally.
6	Ongoing review of action plan by parent Committee/Panel – but actions must be time limited and not drawn out
7	Post implementation review at later date to analyse success of review

### **Member involvement**

Throughout this whole process, Members will be actively involved with the officers of the Authority in dictating the overall direction of the work, and agreeing the progression to the next stage of work. Whilst the Group itself may only meet 2-3 times, there will be regular dialogue with Members in developing the work.

The parent Committee/Panel will nominate the Members to sit on a Scrutiny Group. This will need to take account of ensuring involvement of all Members in the scrutiny process, whilst also ensuring that those Members with the appropriate skills/interests are involved in the most appropriate Groups.

Scrutiny Groups may only take place if at least 2 Members are present.

### **Proposed Terms of Reference for Scrutiny Groups**

“To scrutinise an area of activity within the Authority or Constabulary and report findings to the appropriate Committee/Panel.”

### **Methodology**

- terms of reference drafted following initial research and consultation with both Authority and Constabulary officers and other key stakeholders (where appropriate)
- Scrutiny commences with a period of research gathering – this also enables any other relevant agencies to be identified to take part in the review
- baseline the current performance level
- seek views on performance issues from relevant officers – this could be done by way of a self assessment process
- Interviews carried out to clarify any issues raised during the self assessment process
- External literature review carried out – this would help identify successful initiatives which may have been carried out in other organisations as well as other countries which could usefully inform the process
- full analysis of Constabulary performance data to identify trends etc
- consultation undertaken with relevant stakeholders – this could be done by way of questionnaire
- consultation identified number of themes for further exploration with officers – this could be through personal appearance or by written submission
- Final report drafted using findings from the evidence hearings and other consultation, best practice from other sources and conclusions drawn from performance statistics.
- key witnesses and senior officers circulated with final draft of report to challenge its contents

# Police Authority Scrutiny Groups - operation

