

The **2009** annual survey of overview and scrutiny in local government



Introduction

This is a report of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's seventh annual survey of overview and scrutiny in local government. We are very grateful to all the officers and Members who took the time this year to complete the questionnaire.

The scope of the survey has developed since 2003 to provide what is now the most comprehensive national picture of overview and scrutiny available. For some areas of questioning we are now able to provide useful trend information that enables us to chart the development of overview and scrutiny within the context of other changes to the work of local authorities.

We are pleased that this year the rate of responses to the survey has increased to a healthy **75%** of all local authorities in England and Wales. For the second year running we asked respondents to identify whether they are officers or members giving us a much stronger picture of what elected representatives with responsibility for scrutiny are feeling about their role.

In terms of benchmarking information and trends, there have been some modest changes since 2008. The overall average number of scrutiny officer posts per authority has increased slightly, but discretionary budgets for scrutiny have fallen. While not surprising in the financial climate this is of concern given scrutiny's ever-increasing powers and responsibilities.

Our concern is enhanced when this figure is set against other findings from the survey, such as the finding that the two areas of greatest challenge for scrutiny are felt to be scrutiny of partnerships and holding the executive to account, and the fact that public engagement remains an issue, with the number of topics suggested by the public falling. Scrutiny needs to make the case for proper resourcing more strongly, and CfPS will be focusing on this in the coming year to support scrutineers in doing so.

Finally, as with last year we asked for your feedback on the services that CfPS provides. This reinforced the importance that our on-line services such as the library of scrutiny reviews and downloadable publications hold for practitioners, but also a need for us to do more to reach scrutiny elected members who showed much lower awareness of our services. What was really encouraging, however, was the appetite amongst members and officers for training. Scrutineers seem keen to improve their practice and to access development opportunities, and in the coming year we will focus on improving both the reach and quality of the services that we provide.

Report written by Adam Pickering, Research Officer at the Centre for Public Scrutiny

1. Response Rates

The survey was conducted amongst local authorities in England and Wales. Invitations for completion were sent to councillors and officers from local authorities that are registered with the CfPS Scrutiny Champions Network, along with individuals from councils who are directly involved in the scrutiny function and the survey was also available on the CfPS website <http://www.cfps.org.uk/>

A breakdown of the response rate is shown in the table below:

Authority type	Responding authorities # (at least one response)	
County Councils	26 (-1)	
Unitary Authorities	58 (+11)	
Metropolitan Boroughs	21 (-6)	
Welsh Authorities	12 (+2)	
London Boroughs	27 (+7)	
Districts / Boroughs	148 (+4)	
All authorities	293 (+18)	75% (+7%)

The response rate for the 2009 CfPS Annual Survey is **75%** of all authorities in England and Wales, which is an improvement of 7% on last year. The absolute number of responses is **630**, which represents a fall of 9% on last year's total of 690. This fall in responses could be attributed to the local government reorganisation on April 1st 2009 which saw 35 authorities reorganised into 9 new unitary authorities. As some authorities choose to submit just one response per the total response rate may have suffered as a result of reorganisation.

For the last two years we have asked respondents to our survey to declare their role giving them the choice of "member" or "officer". However, in light of the 2009 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act which compels top-tier authorities to designate a specific officer who has responsibility for the scrutiny function we felt it would be useful to gain a picture of where professional scrutiny support lies within local authorities.

Role	% of respondents
Councillor	39%
Scrutiny manager / officer	42%
Committee officer	3%
Democratic Services manager / officer	12%
Policy officer	3%
Other (all local authority officers)	2%

2. Committees, meetings and participation

Committees and structure

The average number of committees on an authority is 4 with a range from 1-11. These figures are sustained across most variables. The exception, as might be anticipated, is a low average among district councils (including those which have adopted the “fourth option” for their executive arrangements).

The following table documents the typical committee structures reported to be used for overview and scrutiny over the last four years, showing a gradual trend over time to a less rigid split between “scrutiny” and “overview”.

Committee Structure	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Multiple overview and scrutiny committees	69%	64%	65%	54%	59%
One "scrutiny" committee and multiple "overview" ctees	9%	7%	12%	8%	16%
One OSC that commissions time-limited panels	16%	19%	17%	12%	14%
One OSC that does all the work	5%	11%	7%	8%	7%

Number of scrutiny reviews

The average number of scrutiny reviews undertaken, across all authorities, is **5 (5.43)** which is a 5% fall from last year. This slight fall could be attributed to a narrowing in the range of responses from 0-28 in 2008 to **0-22** this year. The table below shows the percentage of councils that told us they had completed a certain number of scrutiny reviews. There is a clear cluster between 2-6 reviews being undertaken by most authorities.

Number of reviews	% authorities	change +/-	Number of reviews	% authorities	change +/-
0	9%	-2%	8	5%	0%
1	6%	1%	9	3%	1%
2	9%	-1%	10	6%	-1%
3	11%	-2%	11	0%	0%
4	12%	3%	12	2%	0%
5	12%	2%	13	2%	2%
6	10%	-4%	14	1%	-1%
7	8%	4%	15	1%	-1%
8	5%	0%	15+	2%	-5%

Committee membership

Across all authorities that responded, the average number of members on an overview and scrutiny committee is **eleven**, which has stayed the same in each of the last 5 CfPS surveys of overview and scrutiny. The numbers ranged from **3-21**, which is narrower than last year.

Non-statutory co-opted members

Across all local authorities each year, the average number of non-statutory co-opted members (i.e. not including parent governor and diocesan representatives in single and upper-tier councils) appointed to overview and scrutiny committees was **2.2**, which is the same figure reported in last year's survey. Over half of all authorities (56%) reported having no non-statutory co-opted members which has also remained relatively stable since last year.

74% of authorities do **not** give these co-opted members of overview and scrutiny committees full voting rights, whilst **26%** of authorities give voting rights to at least some non-statutory co-optees. This is an increase of 6 percentage points on the 2008 results.

Public engagement

The average number of suggestions for scrutiny topics coming from the general public in the last year was **4**, which is the same figure as reported in last year's survey. **45%** of authorities reported having received 0 suggestions for scrutiny which is encouraging when compared with the 55% of authorities who had not received suggestions for scrutiny topics from the public in 2008.

External witnesses

The average number of external witnesses who have attended overview and scrutiny meetings in 2009 was **23**, which is 3 more than in 2008. The range of figures received showed responses from **0** to over **188** which is a significant narrowing from last year which had outliers ranging up to 500. The average value is skewed by a small number of large values meaning that a median of **15** is perhaps more representative. An increased average and a decrease in outlying values points to a consensus that scrutiny should encourage the attendance of external witnesses where necessary but not for the sake of it.

Range	Number of external witnesses
0	7%
1 to 10	38%
11 to 20	23%
21 to 30	15%
31 to 40	2%
41 to 50	7%
51 to 60	1%
60+	7%

As part of the survey, we asked for details of how chair and vice-chair positions were apportioned. Across all authorities, the figures are as follows:

- Authorities giving NO scrutiny chairs to opposition: 44%
- Authorities giving SOME scrutiny chairs to opposition: 37%
- Authorities giving ALL scrutiny chairs to opposition: 19%

There was a general trend this year for executives to distribute fewer chair and vice-chair positions to the opposition with 44% giving no chair positions to the opposition – a rise of 6% on last year.

The table below summarises how chairs are shared according to majority party control.

Chair			
Control	Don't share Chairs	Keep at least one Chair but share others	All Chairs held by other parties
Con	38% (+3)	42% (+2)	20% (-5)
Lab	57% (-13)	29% (+3)	14% (+10)
Lib	37% (+20)	42% (-30)	21% (+10)

Vice Chair			
Control	Don't share VCs	Keep at least one VC but share others	All VCs held by other parties
Con	50% (+5)	32% (-6)	18% (+1)
Lab	38% (-7)	42% (+6)	21% (+3)
Lib	41% (0+/-)	41% (-6)	18% (+6)

There may be a number of reasons why chairing positions are offered or not and accepted or not, so it should be noted that these figures do not necessarily indicate good or bad practice on the part of the controlling group in individual authorities. The principle of sharing chairs according to the political composition of an authority is good practice, and CfPS would encourage controlling groups to offer at least one such position to a minority group. Note that the change from the previous year's figures (2008) is displayed in brackets after the results from 2009.

3. Support for Scrutiny

Support type

The following table documents the types of model by which overview and scrutiny is supported in authorities¹.

Authority Type	Committee Model		Integrated Model		Specialist Model		Other	
	2009%	% change	2009%	% change	2009%	% change	2009%	% change
County Council	17%	2%	4%	-11%	67%	12%	13%	-3%
District Councils	47%	-3%	4%	-3%	41%	5%	8%	0%
London Borough	18%	-5%	5%	5%	68%	-1%	9%	1%
Metropolitan Boroughs	19%	-5%	0%	-6%	67%	8%	14%	2%
Unitary Authorities	26%	2%	9%	0%	61%	-4%	4%	1%
Welsh Authorities	17%	-13%	0%	-10%	75%	15%	8%	8%
All Authorities	33%	-4%	4%	-4%	55%	8%	8%	0%

2009 has seen a rise in the prevalence of the specialist model for scrutiny where scrutiny has a dedicated officer resource. While the specialist model offers increased independence to the scrutiny function we recognise that other models may be more appropriate to the specific circumstances a given authority. For example, resource constraints and opportunities for the sharing of officer resources have led smaller District and Borough councils to favour the Committee model in the past. However, this year there has been a 5% increase in those operating a specialist model of scrutiny amongst District/Borough authorities.

¹ **Committee Model** – where committee officers, who also support other political forums, such as the executive, provide support to the full council and so on.

Integrated Model – where support is provided, on an ad hoc basis, from a variety of sources, including committee services, officers within departments, and corporate policy officers.

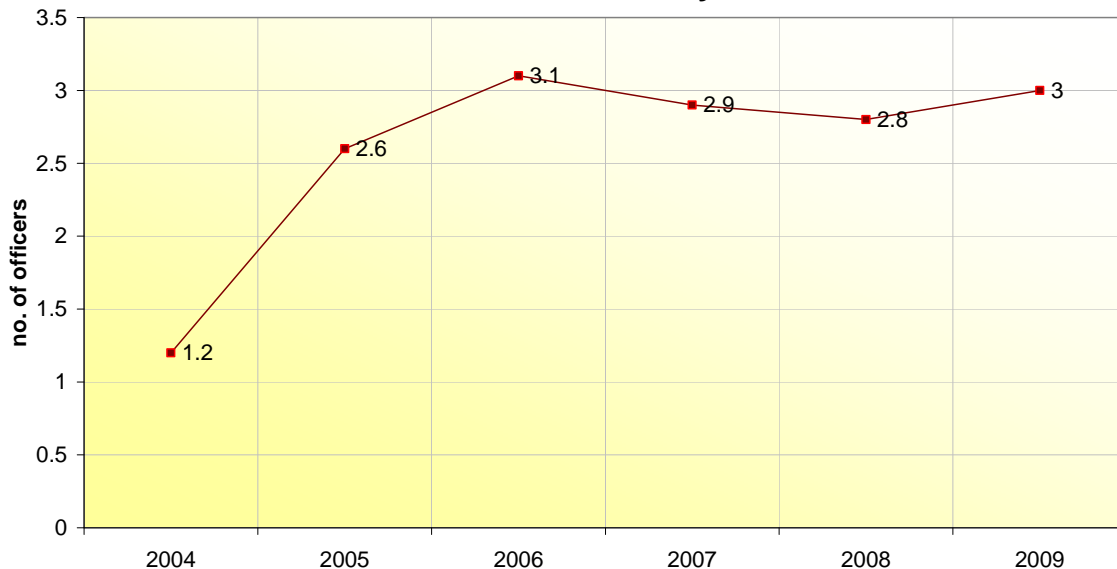
Specialist Model - support is provided by a scrutiny support unit with dedicated officers, who only work to the overview and scrutiny function

Scrutiny teams and FTE officers

From the survey, **74%** of authorities had a dedicated scrutiny officer/team, whereas **26%** did not. These figures have stayed stable since last year's survey.

The average number of FTE scrutiny officers for all authorities, including those who have no dedicated support, is **2.29** which represents an increase of 0.21 from last year's survey. Amongst authorities that said they do have a dedicated scrutiny officer/team the average number of FTE officers was **3** which is an increase of 0.2. Plotted on a graph (below) these figures amount to a halt in the decline in officer provision we have seen over the past 3 years. Factors such as new responsibilities for Crime and Disorder scrutiny, dealing with Councillor Call for Action and partnership scrutiny as well as the new requirement for top-tier authorities to have at least one dedicated scrutiny officer (2009 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act) could have contributed to this positive trend.

Av. Number of FTE Scrutiny Officers in authorities that have a 'dedicated scrutiny officer'



When looking at dedicated scrutiny officer provision in different types of authority some clear trends emerge.

- Firstly, with the exception of Unitary authorities, support in top-tier authorities with a dedicated officer team has declined with the best resourced experiencing the sharpest fall. The decrease of support seen in London Boroughs of one full time officer per authority is particularly concerning. The figures for Unitary authorities may well have been bolstered by the creation of 9 new authorities which may have given

scrutiny greater structural priority in response to recent policy and legislation.

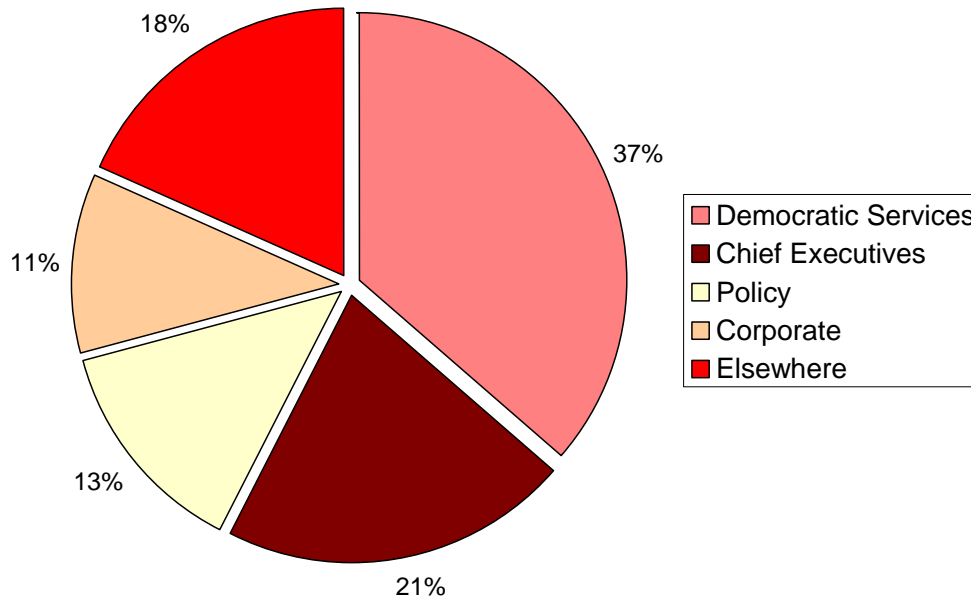
- Secondly, despite the fact that officer resources in top-tier authorities which have a dedicated resource have fallen, when we include authorities which do not have a dedicated officer resource in the average the picture changes. Metropolitan Boroughs, Welsh authorities and County Councils all saw an overall increase in support but a decline in authorities which had a dedicated team. This could be explained by the fact that more top-tier authorities have chosen to have dedicated officer support for scrutiny (perhaps because of LDEDC 2009) but that levels of support amongst these authorities is relatively low.
- Thirdly, there are fewer District/Borough authorities with a dedicated officer provision bringing the overall average down by 0.5 to **0.89**, **reflecting the pressure on resources in smaller councils**. However, in second tier-authorities which do have a dedicated officer the figure rose by 0.1 from last year officers to **1.5**.

Authority Type	Ave # (of those who have a dedicated officer)	Change in officers (+/-)	Ave # (including authorities with no dedicated officer)	Change in officers (+/-)
County Councils	4.3	-0.5	3.79	0.01
Unitary authorities	3.6	0.3	2.88	0.17
Met Boroughs	4.1	-0.4	3.74	0.06
Welsh authorities	4	-0.3	3.69	0.24
London Boroughs	4.3	-1	3.93	-0.89
District/Boroughs	1.5	0.1	0.89	-0.05
All authorities	3	0.2	2.29	0.21
Excl. District/Boroughs	4	-0.2	3.46	-0.2

Location of scrutiny support within the council

This year, the survey repeated a question to identify what department scrutiny officers or teams are located within. There were a variety of responses, but the most popular location for scrutiny support was within the Democratic Services department which accounted for **37%** of responses. However, this represents a **9%** fall from last year which is shared between the other areas quite equally. Other popular departments for scrutiny support were the Chief Executive's office (which has grown by **4%** to account for **21%** of authorities), Policy and Performance (up **7%** to **13%** of total) and Corporate Services (up **4%** to **11%**).

Location of scrutiny support

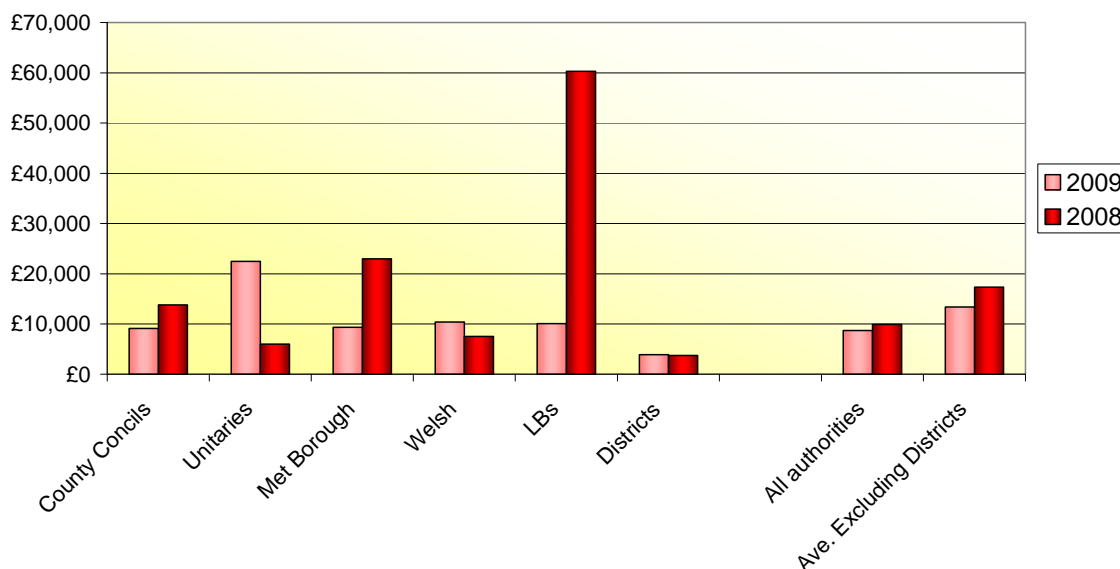


Scrutiny budgets

In 2004, the average amount of money available to support scrutiny across all authorities was £8,280. In 2005 that figure had risen 120% to £18,141, decreasing to £11,853 in 2007 and £9,917 in 2008. The 2009 survey shows a continuation of this downward trend with a reduction of **£1,230** from 2008 to **£8,687** in 2009. It is worth pointing out that a discretionary budget may be inflated for a variety of reasons that do not necessarily relate to the relative health of support for scrutiny. As such the large range (**0 - £200,000**) illustrates the differing circumstances of each authority and explains why such large annual fluctuations are possible. Nevertheless there is a clear negative trend in the size of allocated discretionary budgets for scrutiny.

As shown in the chart below, there is no uniformity in discretionary budgets amongst the different types of authorities. On the whole top-tier authorities, which are typically well resourced, have experienced a dramatic decline in discretionary budgets. London Boroughs have been hit hardest where discretionary budget have fallen by **83%**. An increase in the number of authorities reporting a £0 discretionary budget has contributed to this stark decline and is evidence that scrutiny is vulnerable to cuts in a climate of revenue shortfalls. However, bucking this trend Unitary authorities have seen an increase of **275%**. The creation of new Unitary authorities with well funded scrutiny functions may have contributed to this phenomenon.

Average Discretionary Budget



4. Roles for OSCs and members

Roles undertaken by OSCs

Respondents were asked to identify what types of role are undertaken by the overview and scrutiny function at their authority.

Rank (change)	Role	Percentage of authorities
1 (1)	Performance monitoring	95%
2 (2)	Holding the executive to account	93%
3 (3)	Policy review	90%
4 (7)	Scrutiny of partnerships	82%
5 (4)	Policy development	80%
6 (5)	Pre-decision scrutiny	77%
7 (6)	External scrutiny (not health)	72%
8 (8)	Health scrutiny	66%
9 (9)	Best Value reviews	23%
10 (10)	Other	11%

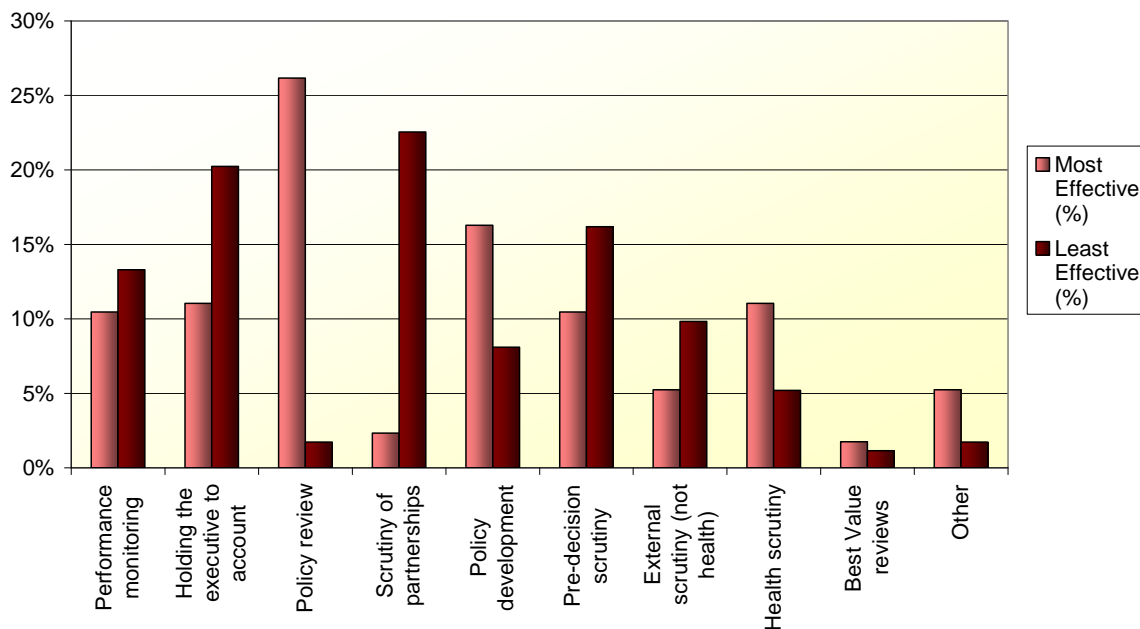
As last year, **performance monitoring** is the role most frequently undertaken by the overview and scrutiny function. The only change in the prevalence of roles since 2008 is the rise in **scrutiny of partnerships** which has risen from 7th to 4th.

This is likely to be a response to new powers and responsibilities for scrutiny in scrutinising partnerships in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH 2007) and LDEDC 2009 and is encouraging evidence of scrutiny functions starting to take forward these new responsibilities.

Role: most/least effective at

This year the research also asked respondents to identify which role that overview and scrutiny has been most effective at. Below is an illustrative summary of the responses.

Scrutiny is most / least effective at...



The most frequent response in terms of scrutiny being most effective was **policy review** followed by **policy development**. Respondents felt that they were least effective at the **scrutiny of partnerships** and **holding the executive to account**, which indicates the areas where local authority scrutiny functions need most support in the future, as both of these are significant responsibilities for overview and scrutiny, and taken together with the previous section showing more involvement in scrutiny of partnerships demonstrates the importance of supporting scrutineers to get better at fulfilling this role.

Member involvement

Once again this year’s survey asked respondents about the roles that members undertake as part of the overview and scrutiny process. Below is a table summarising these responses.

Member role	Percentage of authorities	Percentage change (+/-)
Presenting recommendations	83%	-1%
Monitoring outcomes of previous work	85%	4%
Critically challenging decision-makers	88%	4%
Proposing/writing recommendations	67%	1%
Presenting an annual report to Council	69%	6%
Conducting research outside of meetings	54%	-5%
Proposing scrutiny topics at the public's request	56%	1%
Writing reports	20%	-1%
Publicising the work of scrutiny	41%	new

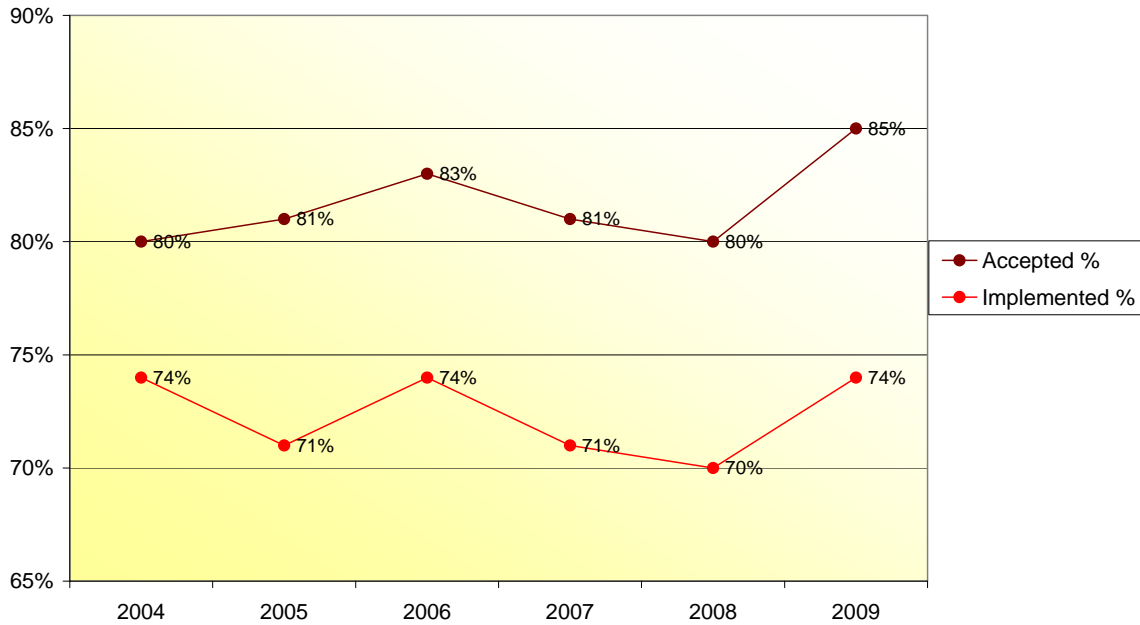
The above table shows that members are increasingly engaging in more challenging and expansive scrutiny and are more likely to engage in activities such as presenting **annual reports to Full Council** (6% rise), **monitoring outcomes of previous work** (4% rise) and critically challenging decision-makers (4% increase). The fact that members engage less in **conducting research outside of meetings** and **writing reports** suggests that the distinction between officer and member roles is becoming increasingly clear as the scrutiny function matures.

5. Impact and Influence

Recommendations

Over the last six years this survey has asked what percentage of recommendations from overview and scrutiny have been accepted by the executive or policy committee. This year the average has risen by 5% from last year to **85%**. Questioning the percentage of recommendations accepted by the executive or policy committee is usefully supplemented by asking how many of those accepted have gone on to be implemented. In 2008 the response to this question was 70%, which risen in 2009 to **74%**. Below is a graph plotting the average responses to these two questions over the last five years. It would seem that the downward trend in the proportion of recommendations being accepted and implemented year on year since 2006 has been halted. Statistical analysis of the data also suggests a correlation between those authorities who felt that party politics had a greater impact on overview and scrutiny, and those authorities reporting a lower percentage of recommendations accepted. The evidence also suggests that authorities operating a specialist model of scrutiny support are more likely to have higher acceptance and implementation rates.

Recommendations accepted / implemented



Call-ins

As last year, we asked how many call-ins there has been in each authority in the last year. The average number of call-ins this year was **2.5** which has remained stable from 2008.

Further to this question, we asked how many of those call-ins had resulted in an amended decision. In 2008 the average was **0.43** which increased substantially to **0.61** in 2009.

Evaluating scrutiny

The research also posed a question regarding the methods used to evaluate the impact of individual pieces of overview and scrutiny work and the function as a whole. Shown below are the tabulated responses.

Options	Percentage of councils	Percentage change (+/-)
Regular update on recommendations from scrutiny support	50%	0%
Regular update on recommendations from Members	15%	-7%
An annual report for overview and scrutiny is produced	80%	-8%
Reporting on performance measures and targets developed in-house	53%	-8%

External consultants have reviewed overview and scrutiny	21%	-3%
An internal review of the overview and scrutiny has been undertaken	42%	8%
Regular update on recommendations from those responsible for implementation	67%	-3%
The CfPS self-evaluation framework has been used	19%	-4%

As shown in the table, the most popular way to evaluate the impact of overview and scrutiny is via an **annual report**. The most significant increase has been in **internal reviews of overview and scrutiny** which taken alongside a decline in the use of external consultants and discretionary budget figures shows that scrutiny is having to adapt to tough financial realities.

6. Perception Tracking

As last year, the survey asked respondents for their perceptions about the overview and scrutiny function. This is to assess how practitioners think and feel about the function and its value to councils and beyond. However, this year we have expanded this section in order to gain a more fulsome understanding of what scrutineers are thinking. Below is a summary of the results.

In this section respondents are asked to score statements between 1 and 5. In every case 1 is the most negative response and 5 is the most positive.

General stature of overview and scrutiny

Statement	Officers	Members
Overview and scrutiny is good at holding the Executive to account	3.2	3.2
Overview and scrutiny is good at holding LAA partners to account	2.5	2.7
The Council's Executive are co-operative and helpful when being held to account by overview and scrutiny	3.4	3.3
Partners are co-operative and helpful when being held to account by overview and scrutiny	3.4	3.1
Overview and scrutiny adds value to the authority	3.7	3.7
Overview and scrutiny is valued by the authority	3.1	3.3
Overview and scrutiny is recognised and valued by the public	2.2	2.5
Party politics plays a role in overview and scrutiny	3.2	3.1
Regard the impact of party politics to be positive	2.4	2.6
Feel optimistic about the future of overview and scrutiny	3.3	3.5

The table above demonstrates that scrutiny officers and members share specific concerns. In particular, there appears to be agreement that scrutiny has not yet been able to effectively hold **Local Area Agreement partners to account** with officers rating performance in this area at just 2.5 out of 5. Scrutineers also recognise that scrutiny has not yet established a high profile with the public scoring the statement **overview and scrutiny is recognised and valued by the public** at just 2.2 out of 5. Despite these admissions of scope for improvement respondents felt that in general **overview and scrutiny adds value to the authority** rating their agreement to the statement at 3.7 out of 5.

Ideas for the future

Statement	Officers	Members
Reforming the selection process of scrutiny Chairs by introducing a 'secret ballot' process	2.8	2.7
Securing a declaration from political parties to make sure scrutiny is not whipped	3.7	3.9
Creating a shared scrutiny resource between authorities allowing non-executives to work jointly	3.2	3.4
Creating a shared scrutiny resource with local accountable partners	3.3	3.5
Creating a ring-fenced budget for overview and scrutiny	3.9	3.8
Requiring a minimum level of training for new scrutiny Chairs and/or members	4.2	4.1

With a general election looming large on the horizon we asked respondents to assess the following policy ideas from 1 to 5 with 5 indicating strong support for such a policy and 1 signalling opposition.

Although the idea of **reforming the selection process of scrutiny chairs** failed to attract the support of respondents who rated the idea at just 2.8 and 2.7 out of 5 other ideas were more popular. **Requiring a minimum level of training for scrutiny chairs** attracted strong support from both officers (4.2) and members (4.1) as did the **idea of creating a ring-fenced budget** (3.9 and 3.8 respectively) and **securing a declaration from political parties that scrutiny is not whipped** (3.7 and 3.9 respectively).

Scrutiny needs to improve at...

Statement	Officers	Members
positive attitude to scrutiny in the authority	3.2	3.2
effective chairing of committees	2.9	2.8
dedicated officer support	2.6	2.6
a dedicated budget for scrutiny activity	2.8	3.2
training/member development opportunities	3.2	3.2
engagement with the local community	3.9	3.6

This year we asked respondents to indicate to what extent they felt scrutiny in their authority needed to improve in the following areas.

For the most part respondents rated the need for improvement in the areas highlighted by the above statements moderately. However, respondents felt that there was a need to improve **engagement with the local community** with officers rating this need at **3.9** out of 5 and members at **3.6**.

7. 2010

Scrutiny topics for 2010

This year we asked respondents to tell us what scrutiny reviews were planned for 2010. In a continuation of established scrutiny activities many authorities are planning to scrutinise the **budget, health issues** and **waste management**. As expected many authorities are planning to review areas that have been subject to recent government policy objectives such as **public involvement in scrutiny** and the **scrutiny of partnerships**. Many respondents signalled plans to look specifically at Local Area Agreements and feed into the Comprehensive Area Assessment. Other popular themes for scrutiny reviews in 2010 relate to recent events that are of concern such as the provision of **children and young people's services**.

The economic downturn has resulted in growing public concerns and overview and scrutiny will be undertaking reviews that look the current economic situation from a number of different angles. Some authorities have decided to look at **treasury management** and **financial risk** whilst others are focusing on how to mitigate the effects of recession by looking at **regeneration, worklessness** or supporting **local businesses**. Housing **allocations and lettings policy** are set to come under enhanced scrutiny. CfPS is producing a Library Monitor on this issue in April 2010.

CfPS has produced guides on scrutiny of worklessness, (Library Monitor) Treasury Management (Treasure Your Assets) providing accountability in tough economic circumstances (Global Impact, Local Solutions) and on a variety of health related issues. All of these publications can be accessed online at www.cfps.org.uk.

8. CfPS and you

Satisfaction with CfPS services

We asked respondents to tell us what services they were using and rate their satisfaction with those services 1 to 5 (1 being very poor and 5 being excellent). As part of our own commitment to being open to scrutiny as an organisation, the table below shows both the popularity (percentage of those who answered the question who are using a given service) and the average satisfaction rating for each CfPS service. We will use these results to inform our own service planning for the future and this survey provides a valuable baseline assessment for future improvements.

Scoring CfPS services

Statement	Officers		Members	
	Using service (%)	Rating	Using service (%)	Rating
Reviews library	89%	4.0	60%	3.1
Online Discussions forum	80%	3.5	35%	2.5
Other sections of the website	84%	3.5	49%	3.2
Events	77%	3.4	58%	3.3
In-house training from CfPS staff or Associates	46%	3.4	59%	3.2
Health programme	43%	3.3	42%	3.2
Free publications	83%	3.9	64%	3.5
Priced publications	45%	3.2	33%	2.5
Monthly e-bulletin	87%	3.8	59%	3.5

The table above shows that our most popular services, not surprisingly, receive the highest average scores for customer satisfaction. 89% of officers had used the CfPS scrutiny reviews library, rating their satisfaction as 4 out of 5 on average. Similarly popular amongst respondents were our free publications which had been used by 83% of officers and 64% of members in the last year and received an average satisfaction rating of 3.9 and 3.5 out of 5. The new look CfPS e-bulletin has proved to be very popular with 87% of officers and 59% of members using the service and rating it at 3.8 and 3.5 out of 5 respectively.

There were some significant differences between Members and officers in terms of their satisfaction with services. Members rated all of our services between 0.1 and 1.0 points lower than scrutiny officers. The general trend of Members rating

services lower than officers could be due in part to their lower exposure to CfPS activities compared with scrutiny officers. This is a clear indication that we should do more to reach Members directly.

CfPS in the future

In response to our request for suggestions of things that CfPS 'should do, or do more of' respondents provided us with a wealth of useful information which we will be using to help ensure our services are as targeted as possible. The most common suggestions were asking for CfPS to 'do more of' its existing activities, particularly in terms of providing updates and **guidance on government legislation, providing free publications, offering training and networking opportunities.**

In response to your requests CfPS will be producing **a guide which brings together all the relevant legislation with regards to overview and scrutiny.** We will also respond to requests for our work to be more inclusive and less England centric, and will develop our publications and training events programme accordingly.

We appreciate the warm comments we have received praising us for our work and calling on us to maintain and expand our services in support of scrutineers. We appreciate your feedback and aim to act on your suggestion wherever possible.

