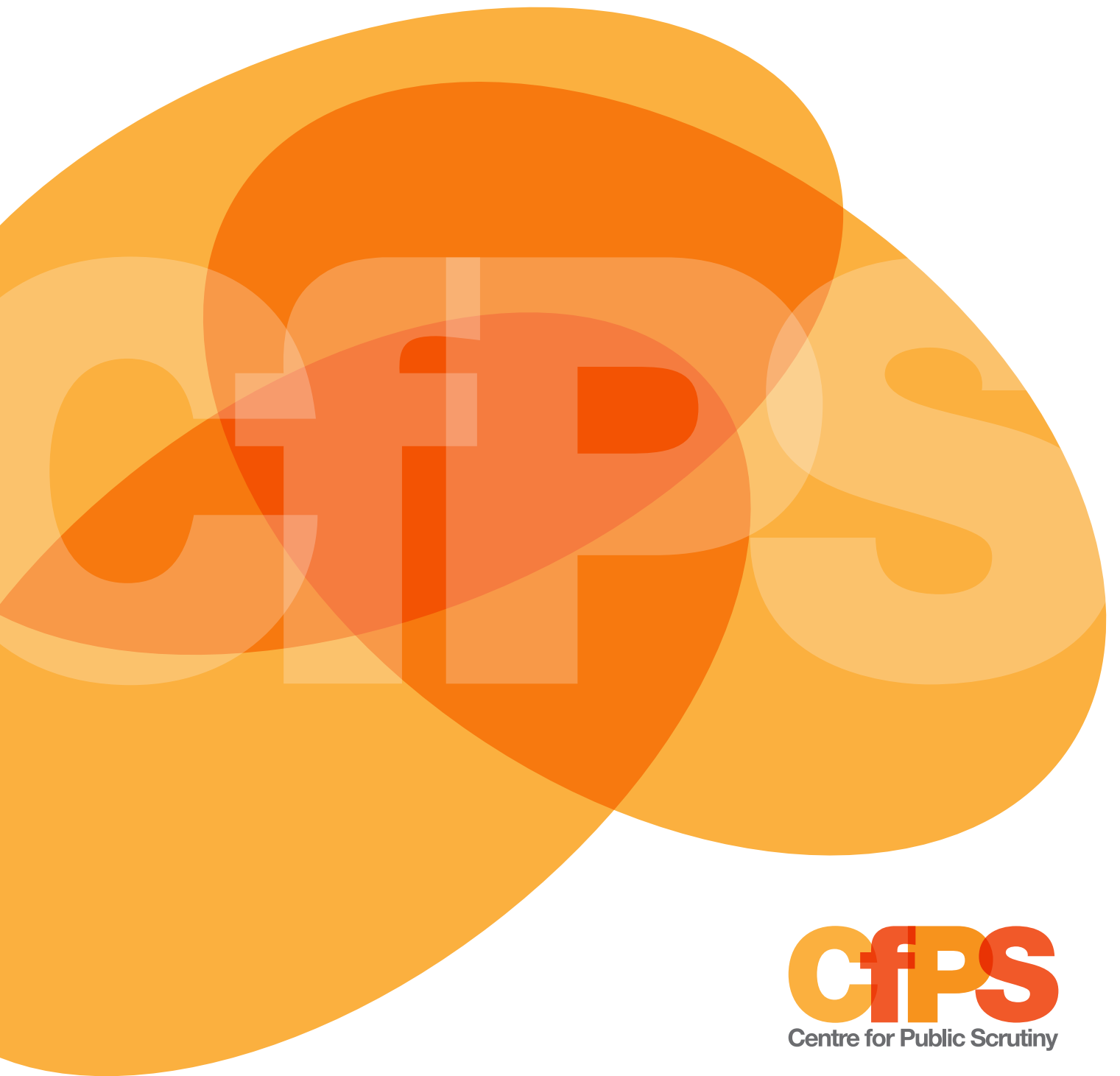


2019 Annual Survey of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government



Executive Summary

In 2019 the Centre for Public Scrutiny carried out its first comprehensive annual survey of overview and scrutiny in local government for several years (a shorter survey on scrutiny perceptions was carried out in 2017).

We received responses from 62% of councils in England and Wales.

This is an excellent sample – a solid basis on which to draw some conclusions about the quality of scrutiny in the same year that Government issued long-awaited statutory scrutiny guidance.

Overall, the results reflect trends identified throughout the 2010s a gradual fall in the level of officer support for scrutiny and worries about effectiveness tied up with those about resourcing. The number of full time equivalent (FTE) officers supporting scrutiny continues to fall – this is a factor in councils’ response to the challenge posed by the statutory scrutiny guidance published in May 2019.

We have taken the opportunity to try to test the contents of the statutory guidance – identifying, for example, where executive-scrutiny protocols exist, and where councils use information digests to disseminate information to councillors. By and large the evidence suggests that councils where these features are present tend to be those places where scrutiny is more effective. These features are all, we think, symptomatic of an environment where scrutiny is taken seriously. This cultural component – an executive commitment to scrutiny – is a feature that runs through the rest of our findings. We pick it up more detail in our publication [“Taking scrutiny seriously”](#) (2020).

We have also returned to the overall issue of effectiveness. “Measuring” the effectiveness of scrutiny continues to be vexed, and complex. In an environment where effectiveness rests on

others doing things that scrutiny recommends, finding solid proof here will always be difficult. It is an issue raised by research carried out by others on select committees in the House of Commons, and something that we picked up in a blog series in 2018.

This survey demonstrates that scrutiny does continue to have a positive effect on councils and the communities they serve, despite the issues we highlight above. But too few councils have rigorous methods for designing, reviewing and holding to account on recommendations. We intend to review what more we can do in the year 2020/21 to embed better practice in this area in particular. Too few councils, too, can demonstrate real reflection and critical thinking in how work programmes are put together.

Scrutiny practitioners around the country put in time and effort to make scrutiny count. It can be thankless work – and it can prove frustrating. The role can be isolating – particularly for officers. We hope that these survey findings, and other publications like our (at the time of writing) forthcoming “Scrutiny frontiers” report, highlighting excellent examples of transformative scrutiny from around the country, will help to give scrutineers a sense of what their peers and colleagues are doing, and how we can all learn from each other.

Report Authors

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Contents

4 / Key findings

- On resourcing
- On impact and influence
- On councillors and politics
- What councils could do differently
- Methodology

6 / Resourcing

- Key highlights
- The support model
- Council type and scrutiny model
- Perceptions of impact in the "specialist" model
- Perceptions of impact in the "committee" and "integrated" models
- Average numbers of officers
- Average number of FTE officers by council type
- Highlights from findings

9 / Impact and influence

- Key findings
- Effectiveness overall
- Perceptions in councils with $\geq 70\%$ of recommendations implemented
- Perceptions in councils with $< 70\%$ of recommendations implemented
- Recommendations accepted and implemented
- The scrutiny/executive relationship
- Executive/scrutiny protocol
- There is a constructive relationship between the executive and scrutiny
- There is parity of esteem between the executive and scrutiny
- Work programming
- Use of information to support scrutiny's work
- Arrangements in place for sharing performance information with councillors 'outside' committee
- Performance management through scrutiny
- Scrutiny and the budget
- Scrutiny officers feeling supported
- Whether structures make a difference

17 / Councillors and politics

- Key highlights
- Chairing and gender
- Does politically proportionate chairing make for better scrutiny?
- How are chairs selected to sit on committees?
- Support to councillors
- The influence of party politics more generally
- There is a cross-party approach within scrutiny committees
- There is not a cross-party approach within scrutiny committees

Key findings

On resourcing

- Average number of FTE scrutiny officers per authority falls again;
- Most common support arrangement for scrutiny is now one where democratic services officers provide some policy support to committees alongside other duties;
- Respondents suggest a steady state to scrutiny support in the near future – no big drops expected, but no improvements either;
- Drop in resources continues to have an impact on effectiveness, although the model of scrutiny support less so;
- Concept of “discretionary budget” for scrutiny has loosened significantly as a result of changes in support arrangements

On impact and influence

- Councils with a dedicated scrutiny officer resource tend to be more effective at scrutiny;
- The quality of the scrutiny/executive relationship – and the presence of an scrutiny/executive protocol – makes a difference to effectiveness;
- There continues to be a perception that scrutiny makes an impact on the council and the lives of local people;
- Most councils are fairly systematic when it comes to selection of topics for the work programme;
- Most scrutiny recommendations are accepted and implemented – but methods for measuring this are not as robust as they could be;
- More councils look at performance and finance information more effectively than in the past, although a small majority do not do this by way of an information digest;

- Councils’ approaches to scrutiny of finance (in particular, the budget) needs improvement, although there is evidence of improving practice here;
- The structure and number of scrutiny committees does not make much of a difference to the proportion of scrutiny recommendations successfully implemented;
- Where chairs are assigned politically proportionately, scrutiny tends to be more effectively.

On councillors and politics

- Political balance in chairing tends to make scrutiny more effective;
- Scrutiny is more effective in councils which take member support and development more seriously;
- The political contestability of councils (i.e. whether the political party holding the majority of the seats changes frequently) does not make much difference to scrutiny’s effectiveness;
- Most respondents felt that scrutiny was able to take a positive, cross-party approach.

What councils could do differently

- Ensure that you have proper systems in place for making good recommendations and then being able to monitor them;
- Address executive/scrutiny relationships – a job as much for the executive itself as scrutiny. Put in place an executive/scrutiny protocol;
- Tighten up work programming. This does not necessarily involve the use of detailed scoring criteria but reflection and self-criticism on topic selection does need to improve;

- Think seriously about a more systematic approach to budget scrutiny and to the use of performance and finance information – this may involve the use of an information digest to share key data with members;
- Pilot arrangements to introduce more political balance to chairing arrangements.

More detail on making scrutiny work can be found in “The Good Scrutiny Guide” (2019). This guide is available at www.cfps.org.uk/the-good-scrutiny-guide/

Methodology

Survey respondents were asked to fill out the full survey if they were the most senior officer with day-to-day responsibility for scrutiny in their council. All other respondents, junior officers or councillors, were asked to complete the abridged version.

This year the closing date for survey responses was November 15th, 2019. As such, results and analysis reflect the political balance, control of authorities, and reflections on scrutiny up to that date.

Since the mid-2000s, the Centre for Public Scrutiny has tried to carry out a full annual survey every year, although more recently we have tended to carry out a short annual survey focused on practitioners’ perceptions of the function. The last “full” survey – and hence the one to which we compare most figures in this report – was carried out in 2015.

The current methods and systems for measurements and analysis date from 2010; older data is not entirely comparable.

Of the 227 councils from which responses were received:

- 88% were Leader-Cabinet councils.
- 6% were Mayoral councils.
- 6% were Committee system councils.

Of those 227 councils:

- 10% were County Councils.
- 42% were District/Borough Council in a two-tier area.
- 12% were London Boroughs.
- 10% were Metropolitan Boroughs.
- 17% were other unitary councils.
- 3% were other authorities (e.g. Combined Authorities).
- 6% were Welsh Councils.

Region by region, 85% of London councils responded. At the other end of the scale only 51% of councils in the East Midlands responded.

Resourcing

Key highlights

- Average number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) scrutiny officers per authority falls again;
- Most common support arrangement for scrutiny is now one where democratic services officers provide some policy support to committees alongside other duties;
- Respondents state that support for scrutiny has been maintained at existing levels (with no big increases or decreases)
- The drop in resources continues to have an impact on effectiveness;
- Concept of “discretionary budget” for scrutiny has loosened significantly as a result of changes in support arrangements.

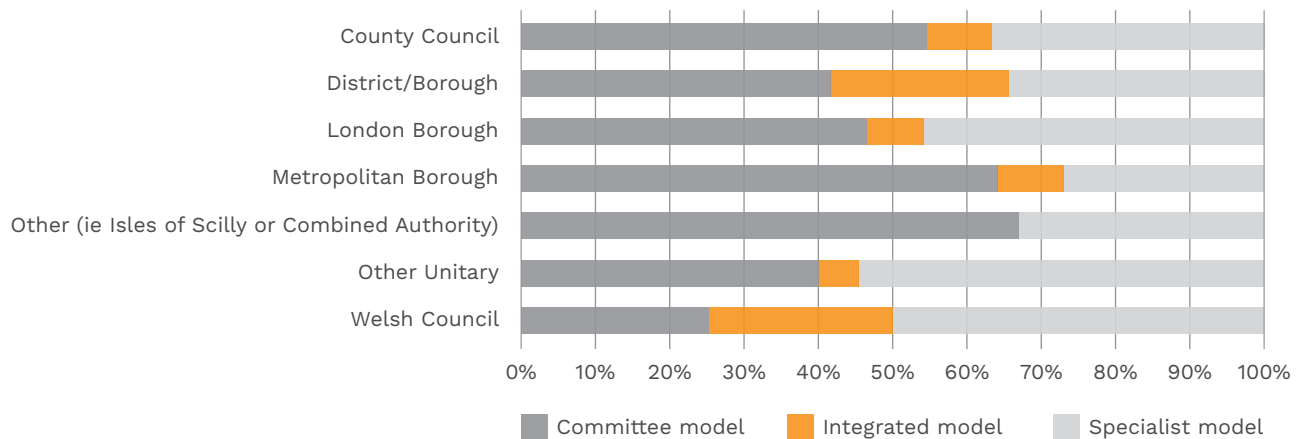
The support model

We have for many years identified three model types for scrutiny support in councils – specialist, committee and integrated.

- Specialist model: councils have a dedicated scrutiny support team or officer(s);
- Committee model: scrutiny support is principally provided by democratic services officers;
- Integrated model: scrutiny support comes mainly from policy officers in service departments.

For the first time the most common model for scrutiny support is the “committee” model, where staff also responsible for committee administration provide policy support to scrutiny. 40% of councils now benefit from specialist support staff, but – as we note below – the average number of such specialist staff continues to fall.

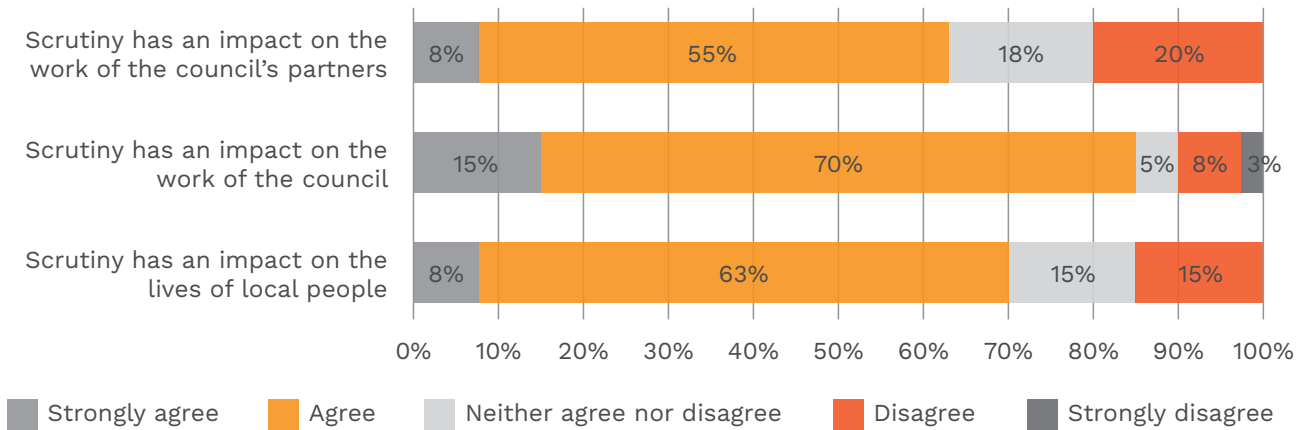
Council type and scrutiny model



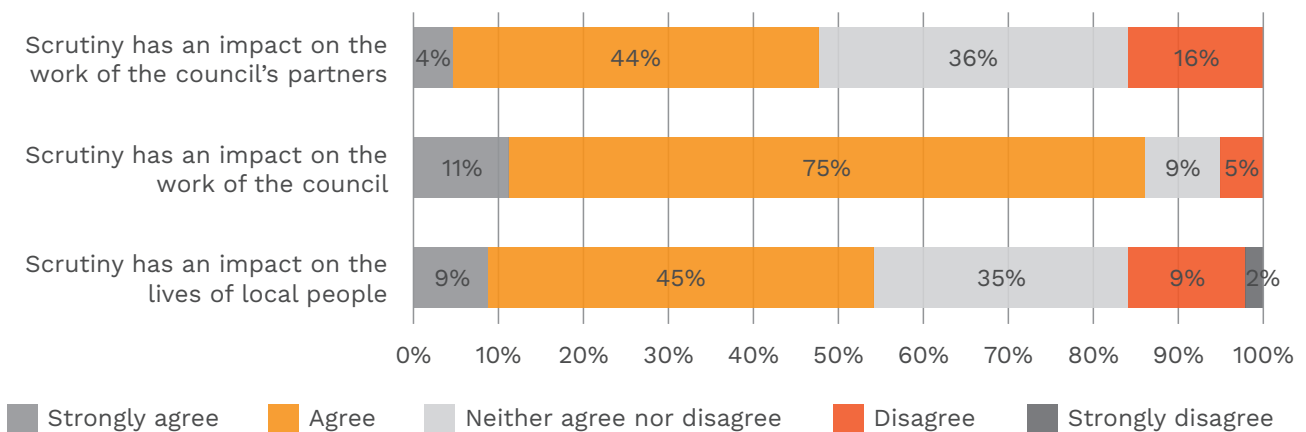
Generally, we have been told that where expenditure emerges that relates to scrutiny it is covered from the wider democratic services budget or from other sources.

When we asked people whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement “scrutiny does not make a meaningful contribution to the Council’s governance arrangements”, 17% of those people in councils without dedicated scrutiny officers agreed, while only 8% of those in councils with that resource did.

Perceptions of impact in the "specialist" model



Perceptions of impact in the "committee" and "integrated" models

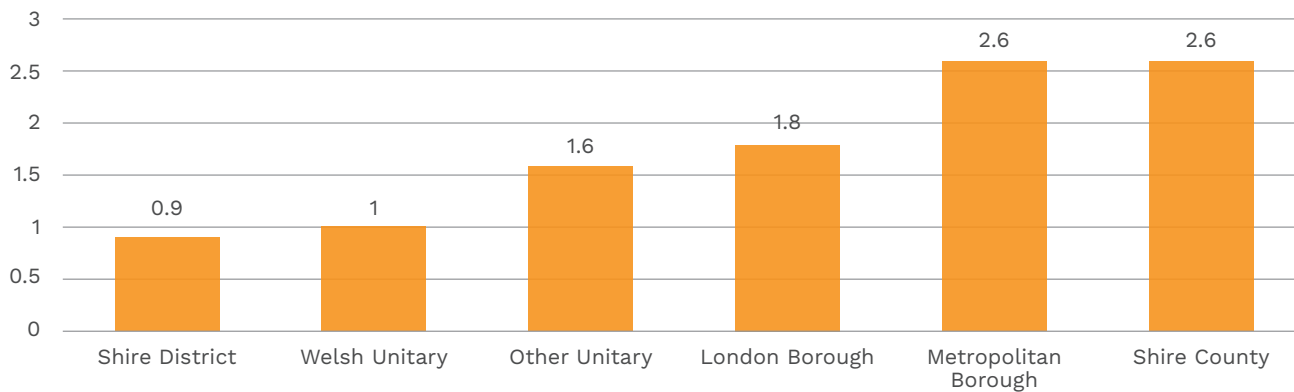


Average numbers of officers

- The average full time equivalent (FTE) officer resource available for scrutiny in 2019/20 was 1.29.
- The average FTE officer resource available for scrutiny for 2018/19 was 1.27.
- 81% of respondents expected that their FTE figure would be the same for 2020/21.

“Like most councils, we are struggling to resource all but essential, public facing services. Our staffing model benefits from a committed and hardworking team providing a high level of scrutiny support but is completely under resourced to do anything other than being responsive to emergent issues.”

Average number of FTE officers by council type



Highlights from findings

- The continuation of the general trend for a reduction in the FTE figure. The 1.27 and 1.29 figures are both a substantial drop from the 1.87 figure from 2015, itself a substantial drop from the high figure at the end of 2009.
- The possibility that the true figure is in fact worse, as we consider that those councils answering the survey are those likely to be more engaged in scrutiny and those where scrutiny is on average better resources;
- The fact that this raises risks around isolation for that individual, who may not benefit from management supportive of scrutiny, and where scrutiny can subject them to complex and difficult political situations outside of their control.

Impact and influence

Key findings

- Councils with a dedicated scrutiny officer resource tend to be more effective at scrutiny;
- The quality of the scrutiny/executive relationship – and the presence of an scrutiny/executive protocol – makes a difference to effectiveness;
- There continues to be a perception that scrutiny makes an impact on the council and the lives of local people;
- Most councils are fairly systematic when it comes to selection of topics for the work programme;
- Most scrutiny recommendations are accepted and implemented – but methods for measuring this are not as robust as they could be;
- More councils look at performance and finance information more effectively than in the past, although a small majority do not do this by way of an information digest;
- Councils' approaches to scrutiny of finance (in particular, the budget) needs improvement, although there is evidence of improving practice here;
- The structure and number of scrutiny committees does not make much of a difference to the proportion of scrutiny recommendations successfully implemented;
- Where chairs are assigned politically proportionately, scrutiny tends to be more effective.

The statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny has a great deal to say on effectiveness. For Government, the challenge lies with first establishing scrutiny's role, before focusing on the way that this role is used to target and prioritise work. But before this, the right corporate culture has to be in place.

Culture is crucial to scrutiny's effectiveness, and

the results of questions in this question have to be seen in this context. Councils where scrutiny is valued and useful, and makes a difference to local people's lives, are those where a strong and supportive culture exists around scrutiny. Where this culture is absent, scrutiny is likely to be marginalised and ineffective.

The onus falls on the leadership of the authority to make scrutiny effectiveness as much as it does on scrutiny.

Effectiveness overall

For this and other reasons, we have for some years used a basket of several measures to evaluate effectiveness – the figures of the numbers of scrutiny recommendations accepted and implemented amongst them. This year, we asked a wider range of questions about culture – including the concept of parity of esteem. Parity of esteem is the extent to which scrutiny is treated as being as important for the health and effectiveness of the authority as the council's executive, benefiting from consideration and resourcing which reflects its role. (It does not mean that scrutiny and the executive should receive the same level of resourcing!)

We have drawn together a number of these measurements to form an overall measure of effectiveness. The measures are:

- The presence of 70% of scrutiny recommendations accepted and implemented within the last three years;
- Whether respondents recognise a constructive relationship between the executive and scrutiny;
- Whether respondents consider that scrutiny has a positive impact.

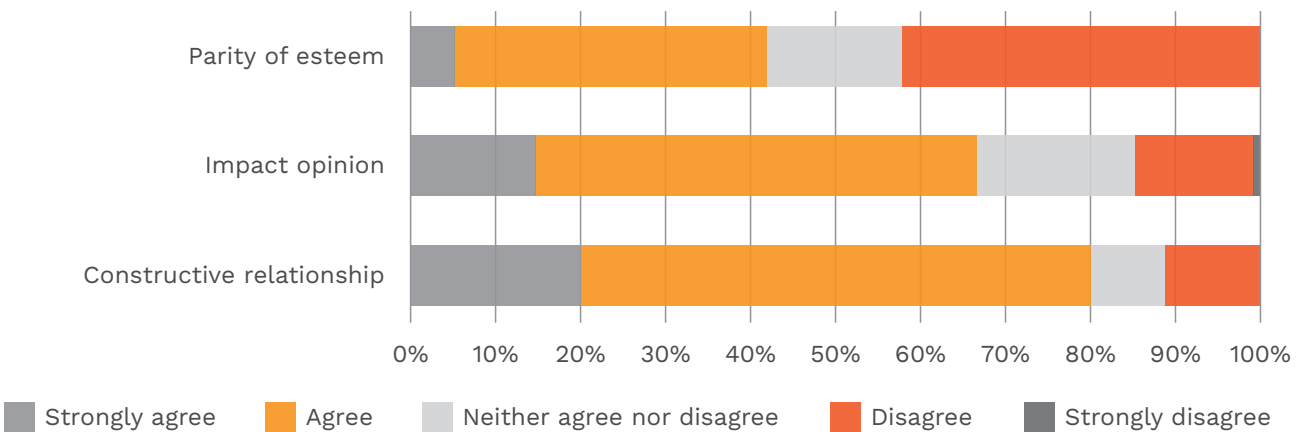
Bear in mind that we have done this for comparative purposes – attempting to evaluate whether there are commonalities in the councils all performing well under these measures. The

questions of causation – what leads to this high performance – is much more difficult to discern. We will continue to explore these causes as we work to better understand political culture and the practical impact of scrutiny work.

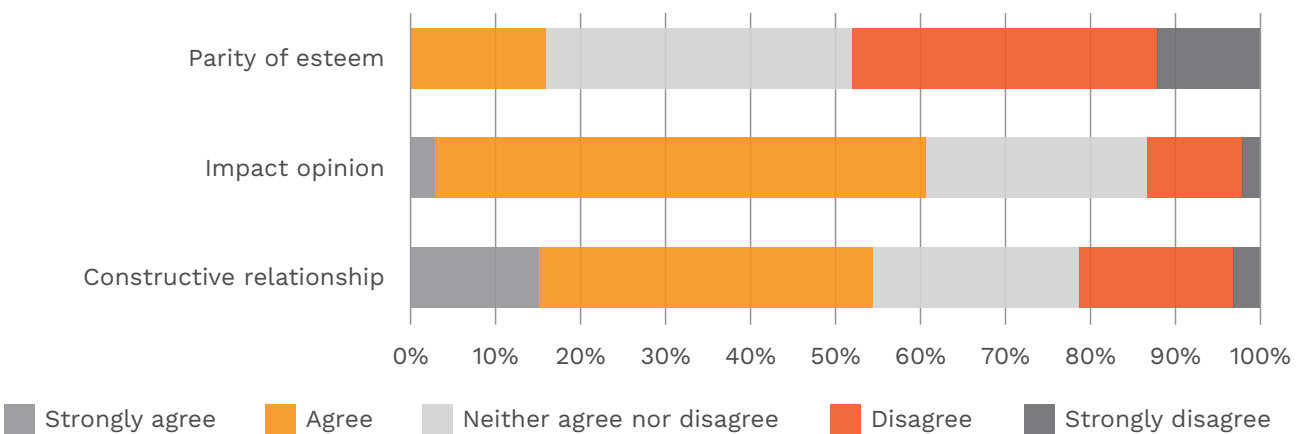
In the councils that met these ‘effective scrutiny criteria’, **56% operated a “specialist” model of scrutiny support, higher than the 40% of councils which operates such a support model overall.** The number of scrutiny committees a council has makes no difference to effectiveness measured in this way.

As before, it is difficult to establish conclusively that scrutiny in such authorities is always more effective. It may support the contention that there is still a risk that officers’ time for scrutiny support is being “crowded out” by committee administration work in certain support models. We continue to recognise that in some authorities, resources are such that other models appear to be the only sustainable way to retain some scrutiny support. We will with our national sector partners (including membership bodies like ADSO) to try to understand how we can improve the support available to officers and members working under these circumstances.

Perceptions in councils with ≥70% of recommendations implemented



Perceptions in councils with <70% of recommendations implemented



The charts above compare the responses to ‘is there parity of esteem between the executive and scrutiny?’, ‘does scrutiny have an impact?’ and ‘is there a constructive relationship between the executive and scrutiny?’ with the percentage of recommendations implemented in the last three municipal years.

Where respondents felt positive about the culture around, and future of, scrutiny in their authority, they tended also to think that scrutiny has a positive impact on the lives of local people. There was less positivity about scrutiny's impact from respondents in those councils where there was a smaller amount of direct officer support.

Most people who were positive about scrutiny's future felt that it had an impact in their

authority and felt that scrutiny and executive had a constructive relationship.

Those who were positive about the future of scrutiny tended to be from councils where more than the average proportion of recommendations were accepted and implemented.

“I think the impact could be far greater if scrutiny was taken more seriously by the administration and had greater resources.”

Recommendations accepted and implemented

Of councils responding:

- 82% of recommendations accepted, 65% of recommendations implemented in the municipal year 2018/19;
- Over the past three years, 63% of recommendations implemented;
- Only 44% of recommendation asked the council or its partners to actually do something – a further 40% were asking that a course of action be “considered”, or asking for further reports. The remainder were “non-recommendation” recommendations – a category including general statements of an issue's importance rather than a specific request for action;
- Only 42% of councils could point to these figures being backed up by rigorous recommendations monitoring systems;
- 79% of those with rigorous recommendation monitoring systems had an executive-scrutiny protocol in place.

There may be a number of reasons why councils find it difficult to monitor recommendations systematically.

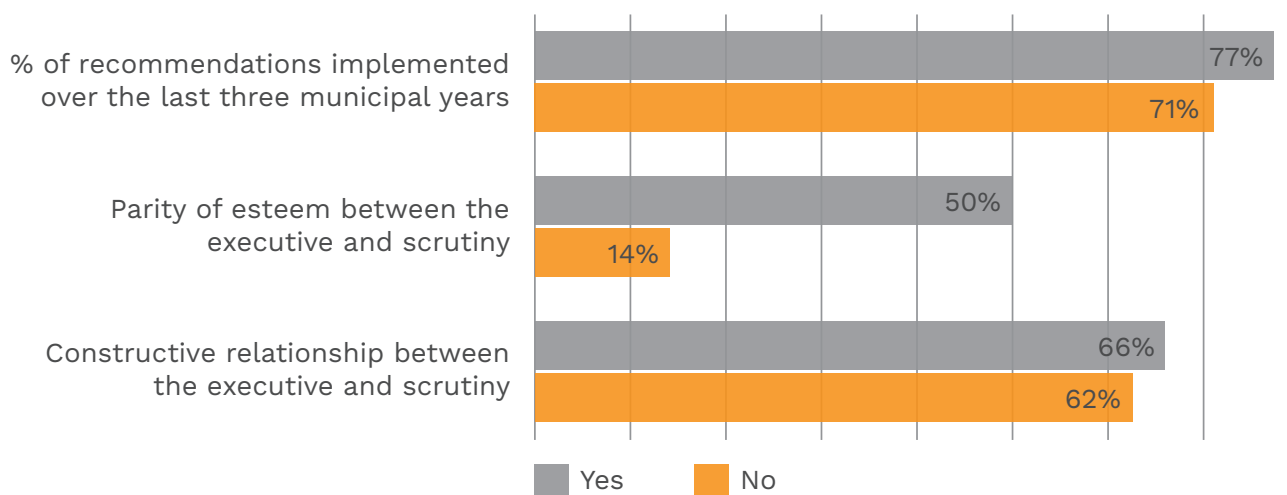
- It can be difficult to secure systematic feedback from the executive on the extent to which recommendations are implemented;
- Recommendations may not set clear measures for success, making monitoring difficult (we note below that on average only 44% of recommendations made by scrutiny in a typical council specifically require that action be taken);
- The resource to monitor systematically may not exist;
- Members may not prioritise the monitoring of recommendations.

The scrutiny/executive relationship

The statutory scrutiny guidance (published in 2019) highlighted the importance of an executive/scrutiny protocol – documentary evidence of an agreement between scrutiny and the executive about mutual roles, responsibilities and expectations.

Only 36% of respondent’s councils said that they had an executive/scrutiny protocol in place. However, of the 65% respondents that did not, 19% of them were planning one.

Executive/scrutiny protocol

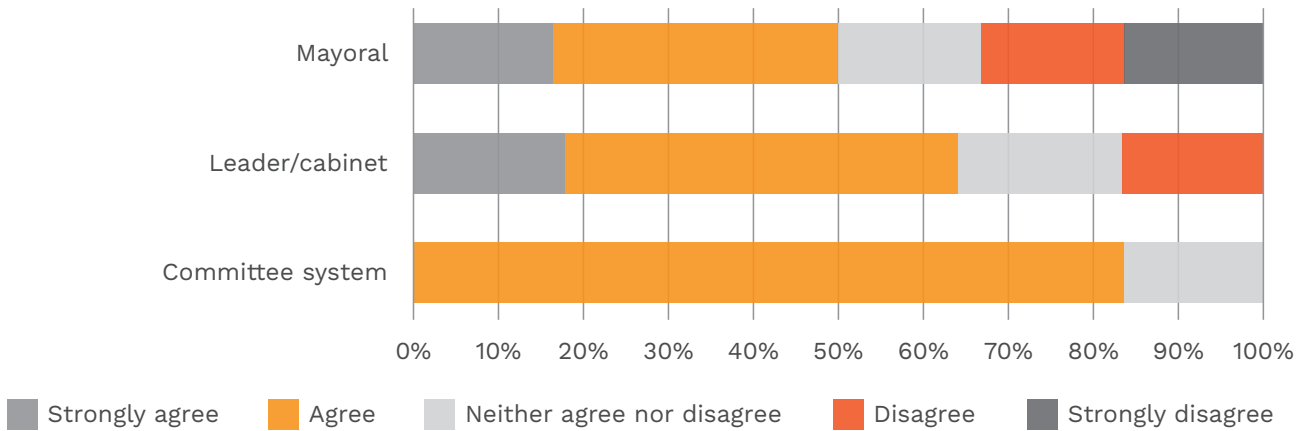


Where councils had an executive/scrutiny protocol in place:

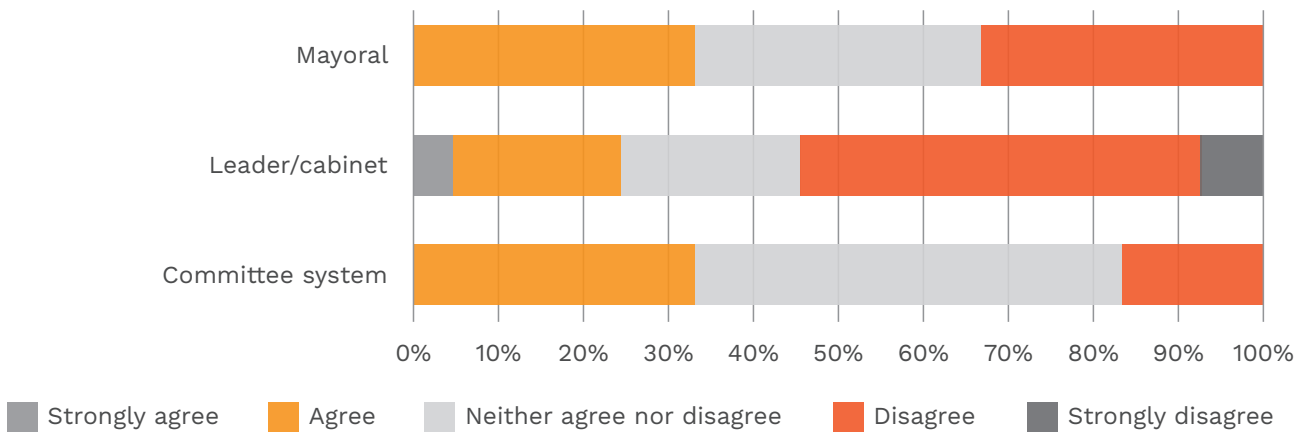
- 50% of respondents agreed that there was parity of esteem between the executive and scrutiny. In council’s that lacked such a protocol, this figure was significantly lower at just 14%.
- They tended to have more committees than those without;
- Their average Full Time Equivalent (FTE) figure in terms of levels of support was 1.7. In councils that didn’t have such an arrangement in place the FTE figure was 1.3.

Overall 64% of respondents believed the executive and scrutiny had a constructive relationship, but within the mayoral system this relationship appears weakest with only 50% agreeing with the statement. The fact that overall nearly 40% of councils reported that there was not a constructive relationship is a cause for concern – and should provoke monitoring officers in all councils to take proactive steps to reflect and review scrutiny’s position, and the regard in which it is held by those in executive positions, working with the statutory scrutiny officer where relevant.

There is a constructive relationship between the executive and scrutiny



There is parity of esteem between the executive and scrutiny



Overall only 26% of respondents agreed that there is parity of esteem between the executive and scrutiny, whilst within the Leader/cabinet system perceptions of executive-scrutiny parity were the lowest. This is a concern. We are doing more work this year to engage directly with the executive side of councils to raise awareness of the need to support and resource scrutiny – respect and esteem is a key element of this.

Going by the answers to other questions (where we ask whether senior officers are supportive of scrutiny’s work or not) it may be that some of the perceived challenge comes from the attitude of Cabinet members.

Work programming

- 47% of respondents develop their scrutiny work as an annual process aligned to the municipal or financial year,
- 20% develop their scrutiny work on a meeting by meeting basis.
- 49% of councils develop their programme based on considered discussion or the use of scoring criteria.

In other areas, the approach to work programming varies considerably – in some councils it is ad hoc and uncoordinated. This is a worry.

The position on public influence of the scrutiny work programme is more positive; 70% of councils build in a specific opportunity for the public to engage with and influence the scrutiny work programme.

That said, how this tallies with a more general worry about scrutiny’s engagement with the public is not clear. It is unsurprising that in Wales where the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act in particular has provoked a direct focus on local people’s long-term needs, that this figure is 100%.

71% of respondents giving positive answers on the culture and future of scrutiny in their local authority said there were opportunities for the

public to influence scrutiny’s work programme, compared to 50% who answered negatively.

Use of information to support scrutiny’s work

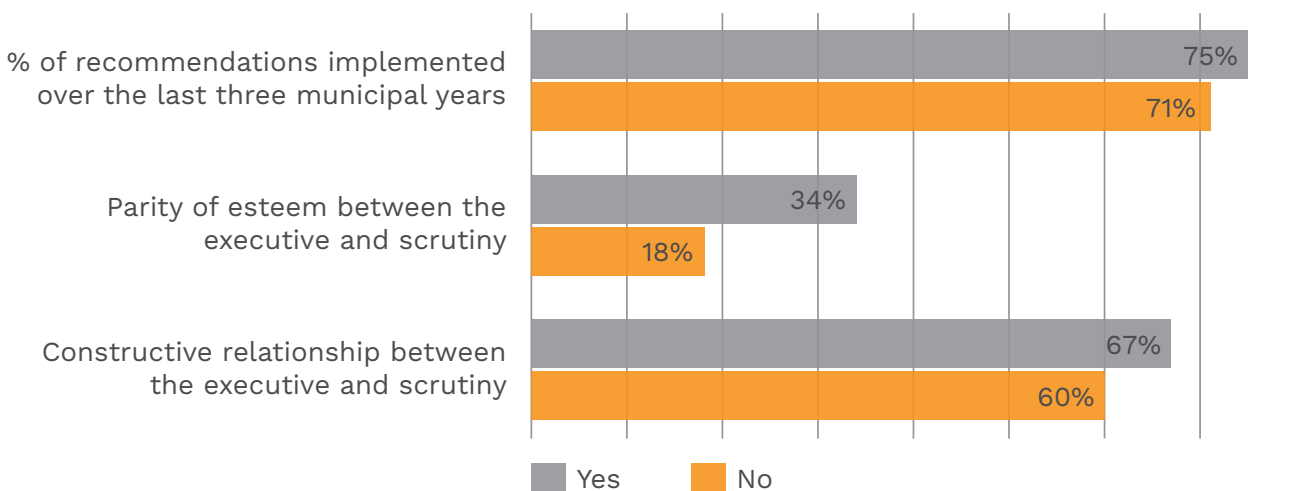
The statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny suggested that councils should share certain key sources of information with members on a regular basis rather than taking it to committee. This information, presented in the form of a digest, would provide members with a holistic sense of how services are delivered and allow councillors to escalate matters of concern to committee for more detailed investigation.

We asked which councils had these measures in place.

- 47% do; of the 53% who do not, only 5% said that they were planning one.
- 54% of councils which were positive about the culture and future of scrutiny in their local authority had these digests or similar systems for sharing information in place. This compared to 20% of councils who were negative about these aspects.

Overall, councils with information-sharing arrangements like this in place tended to be those which were more effective.

Arrangements in place for sharing performance information with councillors ‘outside’ committee



“Over the years, scrutiny has been officer-led and isn't wholly honest about council performance. There is a culture within the senior management which tends to want to hide things from scrutiny.

Performance management through scrutiny

Review of performance information varies. In line with the statutory scrutiny guidance we have suggested that councils should consider taking performance information as part of an information digest rather than as a quarterly update to committee. This is because critical matters can then be escalated for more detailed discussion in a more timely way (as already cited in the section on the information digest above).

Generally, most respondents felt that scrutiny made a difference to council performance, and that performance information was used to decide what to escalate for work programme consideration. This suggests that while some councils may not formally use an information digest, there is still evidence of councils in practice in using performance information to escalate matters for detailed discussion.

We had expected that scrutiny would have a greater impact where performance information is used to escalate matters to committee, rather than quarterly scorecard information just being presented as a regular report. Perceptions of impact were only slightly better where councils operated the former approach.

Overall, responses suggest that councils are becoming more systematic about how they use performance information. Well over half feel that they use performance information systematically to influence what goes in the work programme; over half feel that scrutiny, by looking at this information, makes a difference to council performance.

Scrutiny and the budget

When asked how scrutiny undertakes review of the budget.

- 38% of respondents hold a set piece meeting in December/January,
- 27% hold several committee meetings over the course of the autumn and winter,
- 8% have a standing panel or sub-committee which sits throughout the year,
- 10% do not review the budget at all.

Of the 17% of respondents taking a different approach, the majority mentioned a combination of sub-committee/standing panel as well as monitoring throughout the year dedicated to budget review.

We have not asked detailed questions on the budget before: in general we have suggested to councils that they review the budget as it is developed through the autumn and winter rather than focusing on a single, set-piece event. It is positive to see that a substantial minority of councils do this. It is a concern that a small minority of councils appear to have no arrangements in place for member scrutiny of the budget.

Views on scrutiny and the budget more generally are mixed, and cut across authority type. This demonstrates that while there are efforts – and successes – in many councils on financial and budget scrutiny (for example, the 50% reviewing the budget year-round), a minority do very little.

- Views are mixed on whether scrutiny is able to “follow the council pound”;
- Most felt that scrutiny is fairly well placed to tackle the big challenges that the council and the area face;
- Most felt that scrutiny brings an understanding of financial issues into its consideration of other topics;
- Almost half thought that scrutiny has an impact on the budget;

- A majority asserted that scrutiny reviews financial issues year-round (this could be budget development scrutiny and/or in-year financial monitoring).

Scrutiny officers feeling supported

All English councils which are not shire districts must designate a “statutory scrutiny officer” to support the scrutiny function. We wanted to understand how these people – and others involved in scrutiny support –

- 80% of statutory scrutiny officers overall said they felt supported in their role.

- 52% of statutory scrutiny officers said there was a parity of esteem between the executive and scrutiny

- Respondents operating within a specialist model felt most supported, with those operating within a committee model least supported.

- All statutory scrutiny officers who gave negative views on the culture and future of scrutiny in their authority also felt unsupported in their role.

“Generally, I feel supported yes, but we do need to change the view of Scrutiny to be one of support as a critical friend, not just a constitutionally necessary committee.”

In councils that had a designated statutory scrutiny officer, 52% of those responding agreed that there was parity of esteem between the executive and scrutiny. In councils that lacked such a designated statutory scrutiny officer (which would be shire districts) only 18% agreed. Furthermore, in councils that had a designated statutory scrutiny officer, 71% thought that scrutiny had an impact compared to 60% in councils that didn’t have a designated statutory scrutiny officer.

It is also interesting to note that councils giving positive answers on the culture and future of scrutiny in their local authority had an average Full Time Equivalent figure of 1.8. Yet, councils giving negative answers had an average FTE figure of 0.8.

Whether structures make a difference

- 74% of councils giving positive answers on the culture and future of scrutiny in their local authority had three or more scrutiny committees,

- On impact more generally, the number of committees overall seems to make no difference.

Councillors and politics

Key highlights:

- Political balance in chairing tends to make scrutiny more effective;
- Scrutiny is more effective in councils which takes member support and development more seriously;
- The political contestability of councils (ie whether the political party holding the majority of the seats changes frequently) does not make much difference to scrutiny's effectiveness;
- Most respondents felt that scrutiny was able to take a positive, cross-party approach.

Chairing and gender

“I think there's a genuine problem with the dominance of men in chairman roles. The male councillors here have a heroic view of leadership, so an aggressive male always steps forward and the female councillors always stay silent.”

The position on gender parity has actually fallen since we last asked this question – 65% of those in chair and vice-chair positions are men. With 63.3% of councillors in England being male (according to the 2018 councillor census) the figure at least demonstrates that representation reflects the wider councillor cohort.

half of those in chair and vice-chair positions are in fact elected – but within their own groups. While this suggests that the outright power of whips to select people may be less keenly felt than we had previously thought, the hidden nature of this exercise continues to cause concern.

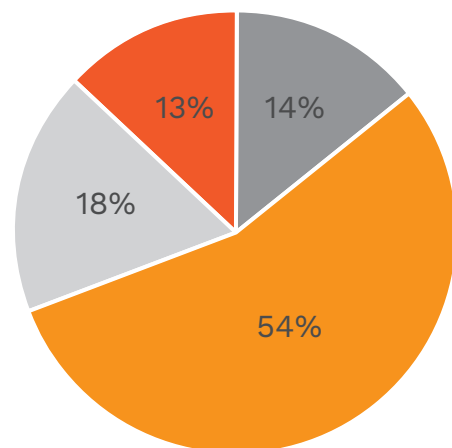
Does politically proportionate chairing make for better scrutiny?

In nearly 50% of councils, the largest party hold all chair and vice-chair positions.

In only a minority are chairing arrangements “political balanced”, although in a larger number, some chair and vice-chair positions are allocated to minority parties. In these councils, scrutiny is generally more effective when measured by the proportion of recommendations accepted and implemented. In these councils, there tends to be a perception that there is a better scrutiny/executive relationship as well.

The Communities and Local Government Select Committee has recommended that councils trial elections for politically proportionate chairs. It is interesting to note that, at present, more than

How are chairs selected to sit on committees?



- By whips
- By internal elections within the party group(s)
- Through intra- and inter-party horsetrading
- Some other mechanism

Support to councillors

“There is definitely support from senior officers and senior politicians within the council, but some backbenchers are reluctant to engage with scrutiny, which is a concern as it is their opportunity to hold officers and portfolio holders to account.”

“I believe that the role of the scrutiny chair is essential to the effectiveness of scrutiny. Unfortunately, many councillors are very poor chairs. And scrutiny/chair training is usually poorly attended. Those who do attend are usually the councillors who require the least training. This is a perennial problem and I have no answer!”

- Around 50% of councils have defined role profiles for members;
- Around 50% have clear member development plans and priorities.

This was despite the most popular answer to the question “what would make scrutiny more effective” being ‘better member skills’. Role profiles do not automatically make members better skilled, but we think that they can allow councils to better direct and focus their member development work, if profiles are developed carefully to accurately reflect members’ needs.

It was also despite the fact that 58% of councils giving positive answers on the existing culture, and future, of scrutiny in their local authority had a plan for training and developing scrutiny councillors, compared to 40% who answered negatively. Councils that have implemented 70% or more of recommendations made over the last three municipal years also tend to be those who have offered more support and development to scrutiny members in all aspects (in-house training, external training, attending conferences, peer support within the council etc.)

We know anecdotally that with drops in budgets are also associated with the ability of councils to set time and resource aside for member training.

In this year’s survey, 88% of all councillors that responded said they felt supported by others in their group for the work that they do in scrutiny. 97% of councillors giving positive answers on the culture and future of scrutiny in their local

authority felt that they had support from others in their group.

Councillors in authorities operating the “specialist” model of officer support tended to feel better supported than those in councillors operating other models of officer support, and members in these councils were also generally thought by a majority of respondents to be better engaged in the scrutiny process than in other authorities.

The influence of party politics more generally

Party politics can have an unpredictable impact on scrutiny’s effectiveness and impact overall. Scrutiny is by its nature political – issues under discussion will be those where there is a degree of political contention.

This year, we were interested to find out more about scrutiny in “contestable” authorities – those which change hands frequently. We wanted to test the assumption that cross-party working might either be more difficult in such councils – or that contestability made better joint working more necessarily in order to deliver a coherent work programme. Our results showed no real difference between our impact measures for contestable or non-contestable councils.

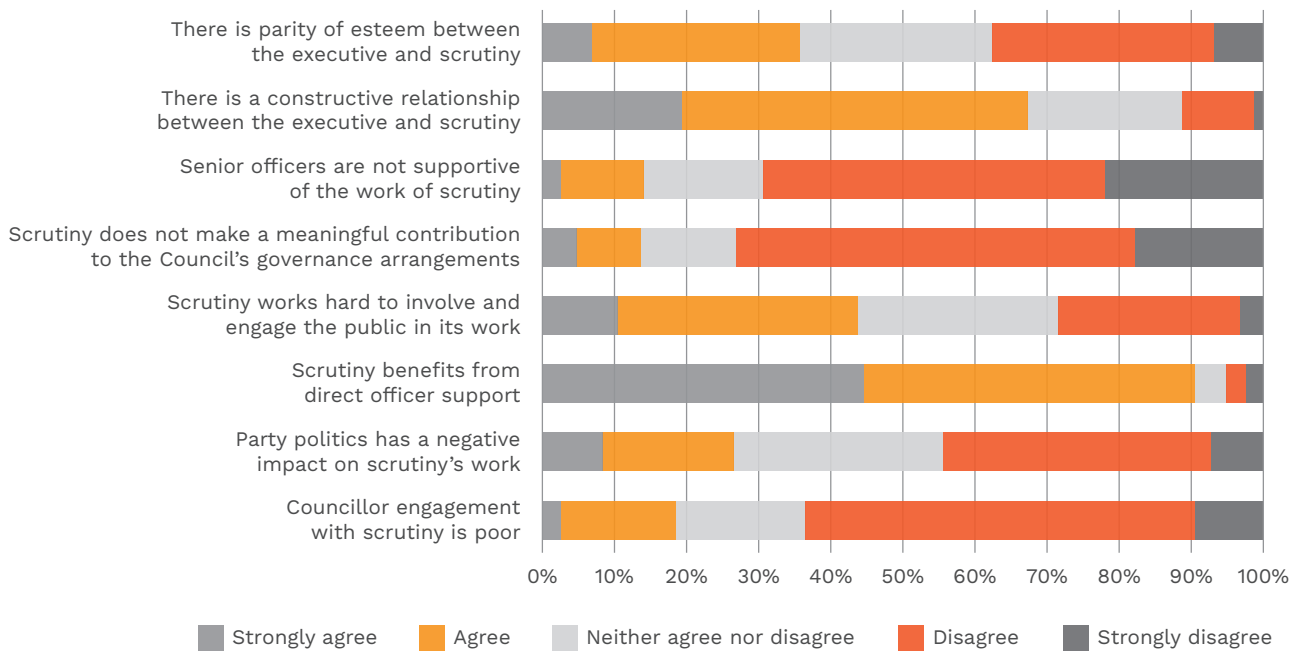
There is no doubt that, whatever the form of council, a cross-party approach is more effective in getting recommendations implemented.

78% of respondents thought that, overall, there

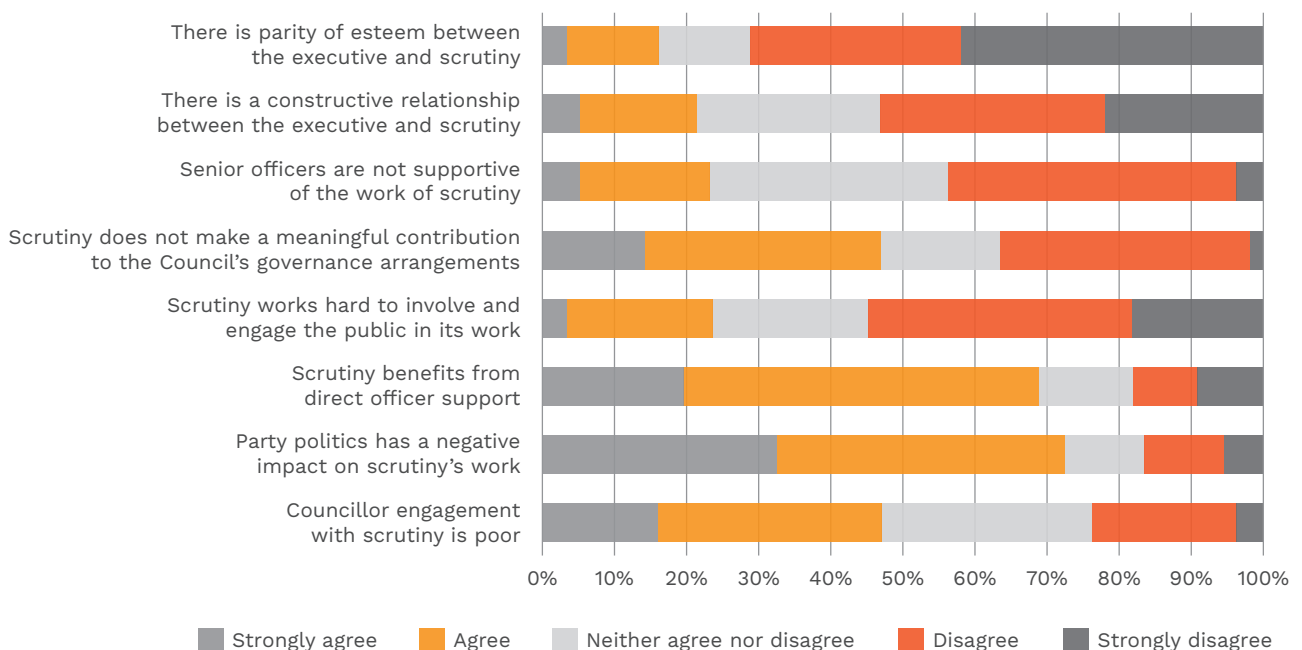
was a cross-party approach to scrutiny in their authority. Councils whose respondents thought this had an average of 75% recommendations implemented over the past three municipal years. In comparison those councils whose respondents disagreed with this had less, with a 69% average.

Respondents saying that there was a cross-party approach to scrutiny in their authority generally tended also to have considerably more favourable opinions on the culture and role of scrutiny overall.

There is a cross-party approach within scrutiny committees



There is not a cross-party approach within scrutiny committees





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