



CLILC • WLGA

What does an effective scrutiny chair do?

A range of skills necessary for a chairing of scrutiny committees, based on nationally accepted good practice, members' experiences, observations and recommendations.

A good scrutiny chair:

Knows the context

- Understands and promotes the role of and expectations for the scrutiny function in their authority
- Understands the purpose and terms of reference of the committee they chair
- Understands the purpose of each meeting
- Knows who should be involved and their roles –scrutiny members, co-optees, Cabinet members, officers and witnesses

Plans the work

- Works with other scrutiny chairs, scrutiny and other officers and committee members to establish a scrutiny work programme which takes account of:
 - The needs of the community
 - The plans, priorities and performance of the authority
 - The Cabinet Work Programme
 - The time available to, and capacity of the committee
- Publicises the work of the committee to the public and seeks their views on the work programme and items for investigation

Leads the team

- Works with scrutiny and other officers to deliver effective scrutiny
- Ensures that their committee has the information and support they need to undertake their role
- Enables and encourages the committee to perform effectively

Prepares for each meeting

- Leads pre meetings to prepare the committee, allocate pre work, invite and prepare attendees and plan the questioning strategy
- Chooses a suitable venue if appropriate
- Establishes the purpose of and required outcome for each agenda item. For example recommendation to Cabinet, monitoring and reporting performance, investigating community issue.
- Makes sure that the meeting has been publicised effectively

- Checks whether the meeting is to be broadcast

Knows the meeting rules

- Quorum
- Apologies
- Interests
- Motions
- Voting – including the prohibition of whipped voting
- Press and public
- Confidential items
- Use of Social Media

Manages the meeting

- Welcomes participants and makes introductions/explains roles as necessary
- Explains the purpose of the meeting at the beginning
- Explains how contributions should be made
- Uses plain language
- Manages the Politics of others and acts apolitically themselves
- Introduces each agenda item and its purpose
- Summarises discussions
- Ensures that everyone has a chance to contribute
- Encourages contributions from the reticent
- Manages the contributions of the over enthusiastic or unfocused or emotional
- Moves the agenda along and manages the time spent on each item
- Checks the meaning of any unclear contributions
- Makes sure decisions are made or actions decided and that both are recorded.
- Makes sure that responsibility for carrying out actions is clear, timescales decided, and arrangements for monitoring are in place
- Thanks people for attending at the end
- Reminds people of the date of the next meeting/pre meeting/any task and finish group

Follows up

- Checks on the progress of action/decisions on the dates due rather than at the next meeting
- Checks that any research required by the committee is undertaken
- Checks that any communications arising from the meeting are actioned
- Addresses any issues which may have arisen with committee members such as non-contribution