

## North East Regional Joint Scrutiny Member/Officer Network

### Notes of Meeting - 28 June 2023

#### Attendance:

CfGS	Ed Hammond, Megan Ingle
Durham CC	Rachel Parker
Gateshead Council	Rosalyn Patterson
Hartlepool Council	Joan Stevens
Middlesbrough Council	Cllr Dennis McCabe, Bernie Carr
NHS	Hayder Qureshi
Newcastle City Council	Cllr Nicu Ion, Kate McLoughling
North Tyneside Council	Cllr Jim Montague
Northumberland CC	Cllr Richard Dodd, Chris Angus, Sean Nicholson
Redcar & Cleveland Council	Cllr Karen King, Alison Pearson, David Boville
South Tyneside Council	Cllr Geraldine Kilgour, Jonathan Lunness
Stockton Council	Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley, Judy Trainer, Gary Woods, Jonathan Nertney, Rachel Harrison
Sunderland City Council	Nigel Cummings

#### 1. Apologies

Darlington Council	Hannah Miller
Durham CC	Cllr Joyce Charlton, Cllr Bev Coult, Cllr Chris Lines, Cllr Rob Crute, Cllr Veronica Andrews, Cllr Matt Johnson, Cllr Philip Heaviside, Cllr Jonathan Elmer, Cllr Anne Reed, Cllr James Cosslett, Cllr Bill Moist, Cllr Angela Surtees, Stephen Gwilym
Gateshead Council	Cllr Stuart Green, Cllr Brenda Clelland, Cllr Maria Hall
Middlesbrough Council	Cllr Chris Cook, Cllr Donna Jones
Newcastle City Council	Cllr Stephen Wood, Cllr Thom Campion, Cllr Tanya Pretswell, Cllr Steven Fairlie, Cllr Gareth Kane, Cllr Teresa Cairns, Cllr Peter Lovatt, Linda Scott
Northumberland CC	Cllr Liz Dunn, Jackie Roll
Redcar & Cleveland Council	Cllr Jemma Joy
South Tyneside Council	Cllr Andrey Huntley, Susan Clennel
Stockton Council	Rebecca Saunders-Thompson

#### 2. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair deferred to the next meeting. The meeting was chaired by Joan Stevens (as Chair of the Officer network) for this meeting only in the absence of nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair.

3. **Minutes of meeting held on 15 February 2023**

Decision - Minutes were approved subject to the addition of Cllr Beall and Walmsley to the list of those in attendance.

4. **Terms of Reference - NE Regional Member/Officer Scrutiny Network**

Decision – The updated Terms of Reference were agreed.

5. **CfGS:**

- i) Guidance Publications; and
- ii) CfGS Policy Issue Update (Standing Item)

An update was provided in relation to:

- CfGS Conference and the plan to hold it outside London, in an effort to make it more accessible for local authorities across the country (potentially Leeds or Manchester, although Darlington was also suggested by a network member). Alternative 'hybrid' models for the conference were also being explored.
- The outcomes of the annual CfGS survey which are to be published shortly.

The Network's attention was drawn to the availability of CfGS guidance around:

- The use of call-in: guidance for English authorities  
<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/?publication=the-review-and-redrafting-of-constitutions-guidance-for-english-authorities>  
<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/?publication=the-use-of-call-in-guidance-for-english-authorities>
- The review and redrafting of constitutions: guidance for English authorities
- Reviewing schemes of delegation: guidance for English authorities  
<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/?publication=reviewing-schemes-of-delegation-guidance-for-english-authorities>

The Network's attention was drawn to emerging policy in relation to:

- English Devolution. Production of a Scrutiny Protocol is expected in early autumn, with a need to look at how Combined Authorities (CA) will work with constituent local authorities (LA's). There being an expectation that LA scrutiny and CA will liaison.
- Health Scrutiny:
  - o One year on from the creation of the ICS and ICB/ICP's timescales for the introduction of new scrutiny arrangements are still being awaited. Although it was hoped that further information / clarity would become available in the next couple of weeks.

- There had, however, been some progress with changes to legislation now requiring the involvement of overview and scrutiny (O&S) where the Secretary of State makes the decision to intervene.
- Establishment of the Office for Local Government (Oflog) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-local-government/about>). This will be a new performance body for local government finance and will be a smaller version of the Audit Commission. There is a role for scrutiny in helping councils know how this will work, with the development of a relationship between O&S and Oflog in terms of the sharing of local intelligence and information. Further information / guidance is expected from Oflog or central government shortly and it was agreed that once this is available a further update would be provided to the network.

The network was advised that the training will again be available via the CfGS, funded by the LGA (free to all LA's). This will include training in relation to:

- Development (Constitutions, Governance and O&S)
- Devolution Planning
- Effective Work Programming

There had been a large call on these resources, with 85 days already allocated, however, emphasis was being placed on the need to ensure a fair geographical allocation of the training. It was agreed that Ed Hammond's contact details would be provided to officer leads on the network to allow discussions to occur with individual LA's who have a training need that meets the eligibility criteria for accessing the free training.

Following the update, a number of questions were raised:

- New CQC powers to assessment of care at a LA and ICS level (<https://www.cqc.org.uk/news/our-approach-assessing-local-authorities>). The Health and Care Act 2022 has given the CQC new powers to provide a meaningful and independent assessment of care at a local authority and integrated care system level. The network sought clarification on whether the CfGS would be producing guidance on this and it was noted that LA's were finding it difficult to establish engagement arrangements with the CQC.

It was hoped that clarification would be available in the next couple of weeks and scrutiny officers were asked to relay any experiences that they may have had with the CQC to Ed Hammond.

Decision – The CfGS was thanked for its update.

## 6. **Local Authority Best Practice (discussion)**

No examples of best practice were provided at this meeting.

**7. List of on-going scrutiny investigations**

Decision – Details of work programmes for 2013/24 were noted with a summary to be circulated to the network under separate cover.

**8. Training Programme Update**

Clarification was sought as to whether the network wished to continue to access the free CfGS training offer and the preferred timing of training. It was agreed that a continuation of last year's CfGS training offer would be welcomed and that a mix of formats would be preferred:

- Scrutiny Essentials 'bite size' training as part of agendas
- More detailed training sessions (separate to network meetings starting at 6pm)

On this basis a programme of training was to be developed and presented to the next network meeting.

Decision – The draft training programme, and preferred timings, was approved and a finalised programme to be presented to the next network meeting.

**9. Meeting Schedule**

Joint Member/Officer meeting - all meeting times proposed 10am to 11.30am, via Teams.

Wednesday 13 December 2023

Thursday 21 March 2024

Decision – Member/Officers to note the future network arrangements and meeting dates / times as detailed above.

**10. Meeting Schedule / Potential Agenda Items for each meeting**

**11. Any Other Business**

None.