

## **West Midlands Overview and Scrutiny Network Terms of Reference**

### **Purpose**

To provide a forum for overview and scrutiny members and officers to consider, discuss and exchange views and information on national and regional issues affecting local authorities in the West Midlands region and to voice those views as appropriate.

Members of the network will not carry out formal joint regional overview and scrutiny, but it may help authorities to identify issues of mutual interest which they wish to scrutinise.

### **Aims**

Members of the network agree to share experiences and knowledge and to work with other members to develop ideas and good practice which can support and strengthen overview and scrutiny in the region.

To provide support and networking opportunities for Councillors and officers who are members of the West Midlands Network

To represent the views of West Midlands local authorities' overview and scrutiny members at regional and national events.

### **Representatives**

Every local authority in the West Midlands region will be invited to send a minimum of one overview and scrutiny member and officer to each meeting.

Both members and officers attending the network events are encouraged to actively promote the work of the regional scrutiny locally and also disseminate information to colleagues in their own Local Authority, sub-region and professional networks, as appropriate.

### **Meetings**

The network will meet approximately quarterly.

Network meetings will comprise, for example, presentations from guest speakers, group discussions and practical workshop sessions aimed at developing specific skills. The members are free to arrange sub-groups on specific subjects and report back their findings at a future meeting.

### **Chairmanship of Meetings**

The members will elect a Chair for all meetings held during a municipal year.

In the absence of the Chair those attending will nominate an acting Chair.

The Chair will be the member representative for the West Midlands Region at the National Overview and Scrutiny Forum and this will be supported by an officer

### **Election of Chair**

The members to elect a Chair; each authority to have a single vote. The Chair will be elected at the start of the municipal year based on agreed process. See **Appendix 1** for details of the process for electing a Chair.

### **Agenda planning**

Members are encouraged to submit ideas to be added to a future meeting.

The officer support group will invite a representative(s) of relevant organisations to attend the meeting to present information on the topic and or to respond to specific questions; where possible questions will be sent in advance.

The draft agenda will be discussed and agreed with the Chair before being sent to other authorities for comments. A final draft will be sent to each authority at least 14 days before the date of the meeting.

Suggestions for issues to be discussed at network events should be sent to the contact details below

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Overview & Scrutiny Manager  
Worcestershire County Council  
Email: [so'leary@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:so'leary@worcestershire.gov.uk)  
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### **Voluntary Member Contributions**

Members will be asked to contribute an annual amount £100 per authority. The amount of the annual contribution will be reviewed at the start of each municipal year.

The pooled contribution will be used to meet the cost of possible training, travel expenses for invited speakers and refreshments. The funds will be held by **Wolverhampton Council** and details of spend presented by the Chairman for information and comment.

The continued membership by individual authorities of the group will **not** be dependent on payment of a contribution. The members will actively encourage representatives of authorities to attend and support the aims of the group.

January 2013

**Appendix 1 – Process for electing Chair West Midlands Overview and Scrutiny Network**

1. Each local authority who is a member of the West Midlands Overview and Scrutiny Network will have a single vote to elect a Chair.
2. A Chair will be appointed for the period of the municipal year.
3. A request will be sent to all members of the Network asking for nominations to be received by an agreed date.
4. If only one nomination is received then that person will be elected as Chair for the period of the municipal year.
5. If more than one nomination is received then each authority will be sent a voting paper (which may be by email). Each nominee will be entitled to draft a supporting statement – a maximum of a single A4 side. The statement will be sent with each voting paper.
6. All voting papers received (which may be by email) by an agreed date and time will be counted and the result published at the next meeting of the group.