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Public	report

REPORT BACK ON CONFERENCE/SEMINAR

REPORT TO: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee REPORT OF: CIIrs Cliff Ridge and Joe Clifford TITLE: Centre for Public Scrutiny 6th Annual Conference DATE: 10 June 2008

VENUE: Victoria Park Plaza Hotel, London

1. Recommendation

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to note this report.

2. Background

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) promotes the value of scrutiny in modern and effective government - not only to hold executives to account but also to create a constructive dialogue between the public and its elected representatives - to improve the quality of public services.

CfPS manages the Department of Health "Health Scrutiny Support Programme".

The annual CfPS conference – this was the sixth, titled "Public Accountability and Empowerment: A New Era for Scrutiny" – has become an established feature of national consideration of development of scrutiny, and is usually supported by Ministers. This year marked the inauguration of the first annual CfPS "Good Scrutiny" awards.

3. Cost of attending

Rail travel:£339Conference fees:£420 (£210 x 2)

Total: £759

NB We were granted one free place thanks to being shortlisted for an award.

4. Benefits

Speakers included:

- Sir Michael Lyons, Chair, BBC Trust
- Meredith Vivian, Department of Health lead for Patient and Public Involvement

- John Healey MP, Local Government Minister
- John Tizard, Director, Centre for Public Service Partnerships

Speakers provided useful information on the implementation of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, announcing to conference that the Department of Health has decided to offer a further £1 million for the Health Scrutiny Support Programme.

Mr Healey reported that draft guidance and regulations related to scrutiny of partnerships, LAAs and duty-to-co-operate partners would be the subject of consultation later in the summer. He argued that overview and scrutiny committees have a key role in supporting local authorities to make use of the flexibilities and freedoms granted by government. He encouraged local authorities to begin to experiment with Councillor Calls for Action and other mechanisms for public engagement prior to agreement on definitive guidance, which would also come out this year. Following questions, however, he noted that enactment of the provisions of the Police and Justice Act 2006 relating to scrutiny of crime and disorder issues was still "under consideration".

Attendees participated in the following seminars/workshops:

- Scrutiny café
- Party Politics and Scrutiny
- Building local partnerships

The final session of the day comprised the announcement of the 2008 CfPS Good Scrutiny Awards.

Coventry won in the "Health Scrutiny" category, the shortlist for which had been announced before the conference. Our joint entry, with Coventry Teaching PCT and University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust, was short listed for the review of the experiences of older people in hospital and after discharge. The health scrutiny category had the highest number of entries.

Coventry also won the overall "Impact Through Scrutiny" category, which was selected from among the winners across all the awards.

List of background papers	
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