Title: Public assurance of locally delivered public services and the development of the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

Authors: Michael Hewitt and Pete Murphy.

Abstract. Recent research into the public assurance, performance management and financial assurance regimes for locally delivered public services, has highlighted inadequacies in the public assurance regime that has resulted from the changing remits, responsibilities objectives and operationalization of accountability, transparency and scrutiny arrangements within Healthcare, Police, Local Government, and Fire and Rescue Services since 2010. (Ferry and Murphy 2015, Murphy 2014, 2015, NAO 2013, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c).

In 2003, the Centre for Public Scrutiny was established by a consortium of the Local Government Association, CIPFA, LGIU and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, to focus on scrutiny, accountability and good governance, both in the public sector and amongst those people and organizations who deliver publicly funded services. Initially their work concentrated on local government, but they now work extensively with and for, health and social care bodies, the police, fire and national park authorities, housing associations and other housing management organisations, universities, regulators, parliament and select committees and government departments. This paper will outline the development and nature of the public assurance regime for locally delivered public services in England and investigate the role that the Centre for Public Scrutiny has played in this development since its establishment.

Title: The importance of strategic financial leadership in the UK public sector in a time of financial austerity.

Author: Glynn Lowth

Abstract: Given the severity of on-going financial pressures on public authorities, this presentation is based upon a report that is concerned with how finance managers in public services are coping with the demands placed on them and how they can demonstrate improved value by providing more effective strategic financial leadership. It considers how they are applying managerial approaches and solutions to the challenges of austerity and the role that the public sector finance function can play in this process.
**Title:** The reasons that result in Emergency Department attendances, in contrast to alternative care and diagnostic options, for a defined Millennials/Generation Y population in Nottingham.

**Author:** Don Harradine

**Abstract:** Nationally and locally, demand for Emergency Department (ED) services has increased significantly with attendances increasing by over two million in the last decade to 16 million. Emergency admissions to hospital have increased every year between 2002/03 to 2014/15. NUHT is the largest Acute Hospital Trust outside of London and the ED is the only one in the city. This study looks at the use of ED by people between the ages of 19 to 21. This is the largest age group in the Nottingham population because of the relatively large student population.

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**Title:** After the watershed: Did centralist institutional change in English local governments prior to 2010 inadvertently equip them with the capacities needed to cope with the impact of 2010 austerity measures?

**Author:** Martin Jones

**Abstract:** 2010 marked the introduction of the UK government’s austerity policy. For English local authorities this meant having to absorb a real-terms cut of 37% in central government funding between 2010-11 and 2015-16, contributing to a real-terms reduction in total income of 25%, requiring them to display high levels of financial resilience in order to maintain appropriate operational functioning.

2010, also saw the end of a number of initiatives aimed at improving the management and leadership of English local government. The 1997-2010 UK government’s improvement programme for English local government included a range of centralist initiatives that focused not only on service delivery, but also the improvement of corporate and financial capacity and capability within local governments.

Using a multiple-case study approach of a number English local authorities, this paper examines the relationship between the centralist institutional changes that took place leading up to austerity and English local governments’ preparedness for its impact. In particular it considers whether these prior changes led to the embedding of corporate and strategic capacities that shaped the response to austerity of English local governments.

The study shows that austerity has led to a mix of strategic responses, but that these have been influenced by a similar range of corporate capacities, largely due to previously imposed institutional changes.
Title: Coordination of Emergency Services and the Problem of Governance: A UK Perspective.

Authors: Geoff Heath and Paresh Wankheda.

Abstract: Emergency services provide a complex occupational environment for management amidst different governance structures in dealing with emergencies and saving lives. Citing evidence from the UK, this paper will highlight the issues and challenges for greater coordination and interoperability between the emergency services. It will analyse the latest UK Government proposals for a new governance model for managing three ‘blue light’ services with disparate histories, professional cultures and management structures. This paper argues a case for addressing professional cultures and leadership development in the emergency services for a successful co-operation between the services.

Title: How adequate are the Statements of Assurance for Fire and Rescue Services?

Authors: Thomas Spencer and Jo Hayden

Abstract: Previous research by one of the authors, relating to the Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge process, indirectly highlighted inadequacies in the form and reporting arrangements of the current ‘Statements of Assurance’ required under the 2014 Local Auditing and Accountancy Act. Although there has been an improvement over previous years in the compilation and reporting of the statements for 2014/15, there are still clear inadequacies and room for improvement in their form, reporting requirements, and hence the level of public assurance provided by the statements. The aim of this research is to identify these inadequacies and recommend improvements for implementation in future years. During the course of carrying out the research earlier this year and following the publication of the NAO report on the DCLGs oversight of Fire and Rescue Services, ([https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Financial-sustainability-of-fire-and-rescue-services-amended.pdf](https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Financial-sustainability-of-fire-and-rescue-services-amended.pdf)) the Home Office undertook its own survey of Statements of Assurance.

Title: An appraisal of the single department plans for 2015-2020 published by the government in February 2016.

Author: Pete Murphy

Abstract: This paper looks at the series of central government ‘single department’ 5-year plans which have been produced for the 20 central government policy and service delivery departments. It will analyse the content of the ‘single departmental plans’ of the non-devolved departments which are intended to cover the 2015-2020 period of the Conservative Government.
The original intention was to analyse the process and outcome of the “single departmental plans’ against various models. However, the author was invited to contribute to both to the scoping of the exercise and the content of the formal appraisal by the NAO. The NAO report was published in July 2016 (https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Governments-management-of-its-performance.pdf) and the Public Accounts Committee investigation is due in the autumn.

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