

**WHAT WERE OUR PLANS FOR 2014/15?**

Councillors have identified some areas in which they would like to further strengthen scrutiny in 2014/15:

What we want to do?	How are we going to do it? – an action plan for 2014/15
<b>Actively look for ways to improve the level of community and public involvement in scrutiny</b>	<p>Research and review how other (similar) authorities involve and engage the public in their scrutiny process.</p> <p>Continue to invite topic suggestions from residents and explore idea of getting issues raised through existing channels/agencies (including town/parish councils, youth councils, community groups, partnership meetings etc).</p>
<b>Strengthen and highlight use of evidence from independent or outside sources.</b>	<p>Scrutiny members (particularly Chairmen and Vice Chairmen) to make it clear that they would expect to see some comparative evidence when they commission a report.</p> <p>Use cost effective and timely ways of bringing external evidence into any review where relevant or requested: through expert (external) witnesses – in person or in writing, visits, surveys/questionnaires, published documents/research and good practice examples from other (similar) authorities.</p>
<b>Clearly identify the ‘value added’ which scrutiny can bring to a topic and ensure this is monitored and recognised</b>	<p>Focus scrutiny reviews on topics where there is real scope for influencing change and where measurable benefits for residents can be seen.</p> <p>Bring monitoring reports on progress/outcomes from reviews to the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen meeting (3xyear).</p> <p>Identify outcomes which can be used in council publications to illustrate the positive impact of scrutiny to raise awareness (not just in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report).</p>
<b>Continue to keep scrutiny members informed and offer opportunities to develop skills needed</b>	<p>Continue to offer induction training and information to any newly elected member(s) and offer refresher and update training for returning members.</p> <p>Continue to publish the scrutiny e-Newsletter every 6 months and make use of weekly bulletin (MIB) to update councillors on significant issues/developments and scrutiny events.</p> <p>Send councillors ‘pre briefing’ material where relevant to widen knowledge on the context/background to topics and offer briefing/clinics before critical budget meetings.</p>
<b>Strengthen scrutiny of external public bodies and partners</b>	<p>Where relevant, move from ‘scrutiny of’ to ‘scrutiny with’ partners when reviewing local services offered to residents.</p> <p>Identify opportunities (jointly with other councils where possible for efficiency) to scrutinise aspects of the Local Strategic Partnership, Local Enterprise Partnership, Community Safety Partnership or any common issue.</p> <p>When invited, contribute (in person or in writing) to scrutiny reviews run by other authorities on issues which impact on East Herts residents.</p>