

WHAT WERE OUR PLANS FOR 2015/16?

What we wanted to do	How were we going to do it? – Our Action Plan for 2015/16
Actively look for ways to improve the level of community and public involvement in scrutiny	<p><i>Research and review how other (similar) authorities involve and engage the public in their scrutiny process.</i></p> <p><i>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).</i></p>
Strengthen and highlight use of evidence from independent or outside sources.	<p><i>Scrutiny members (particularly Chairmen and ViceChairmen) to make it clear that they would expect to see some comparative evidence when they commission a report.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
Clearly identify the ‘value added’ which scrutiny can bring to a topic and ensure this is monitored and recognised	<p><i>Focus scrutiny reviews on topics where there is real scope for influencing change and where measurable benefits for residents can be seen.</i></p> <p><i>Continue to bring monitoring reports on progress/outcomes from reviews to the Chairmen and ViceChairmen meeting (3xyear).</i></p> <p><i>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).</i></p>
Continue to keep scrutiny members informed and offer opportunities to develop skills needed	<p><i>Following the elections in May 2015, offer comprehensive induction training and information to all newly elected members assigned to scrutiny and offer refresher and update training for returning members.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>Send councillors ‘pre briefing’ material where relevant to widen knowledge on the context/background to topics and offer briefing/clinics before critical budget meetings.</i></p>
Strengthen scrutiny of external public bodies and partners	<p><i>Where relevant, move from ‘scrutiny of’ to ‘scrutiny with’ partners when reviewing local services offered to residents.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>When invited, contribute (in person or in writing) to scrutiny reviews run by other authorities on issues which impact on this council’s services and/or on East Herts residents.</i></p>