WARM UP

1. What makes you excited about Scrutiny?

2. What makes you nervous?

3(a) What would you change about the way Scrutiny operates?

(b) What do you need to know to be an effective scrutineer?
Why does scrutiny matter?
Structure for delivering effective scrutiny
Powers for OSCs
Roles and responsibilities
Hounslow’s successes
Future for scrutiny?
WHY DOES SCRUTINY MATTER?

- Effective governance requires effective scrutiny;
- Public spend need effective oversight;
- Brings local people closer to decision makers;
- Makes a real difference to peoples’ lives
Overview and Scrutiny Committees have the following statutory powers:

- Review or scrutinise decisions or actions taken in respect of any executive, local NHS functions.
- Review or scrutinise decisions or actions taken in respect of any functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive.
- Make reports or recommendations to Council or the Executive, other public bodies on any matters which affect the Council’s area or its inhabitants.
THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

- NHS Act 2006
- Police & Justice Act 2006
- Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2010
- Flood & Water Management Act 2010
WHY ARE THESE NEW POWERS IMPORTANT?

Relevant partner authorities must provide information to O & S Committees

Council to consider and publicise response within 2 months

O & S Committees to copy to partner authorities recommendations affecting them

Partner authorities to ‘have regard’ to recommendations
Also in 2007 Act…

- Development of ‘Area Based’ Overview and Scrutiny proposed
- Authorities encouraged to scrutinise Local Area Agreements, Sustainable Community Strategies and other key strategic plans, therefore by definition to LSP’s
Guidance for Scrutiny Crime and Disorder Matters (implementing s19 and s20 of Police and Justice Act 2006)

- Committee structures (need to designate a “crime and disorder committee”);
- The role of the committee (minimal level, to deal with certain CCfAs, monitor the work of partners, make recommendations);
- Frequency of meetings (the regulations require that the committee meet at least once a year);
- Co-option (a potentially complex matter, complements existing provisions to co-opt members onto the committee under s115 of the Local Government Act 2003);
- The duty of partners to respond to requests (within a reasonable timescale);
- The duty of partners to attend committee meetings (as long as reasonable notice is given).
COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION

- Public approach ward Councillor or ward Councillor identifies issue
- Ward Councillor seeks to resolve issue informally (possibility of delegated budgets)
- Able to refer unresolved issues to Overview and Scrutiny Committee
THE 5 ROLES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- External Scrutiny
- Holding the Executive to Account
- Policy Development
- Performance Monitoring
- Policy Review
PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING 5 ROLES

- Provides ‘critical friend’ challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers

- Enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities

- Is carried out by ‘independent’ minded governors’ who lead and own the scrutiny process

- Drives improvement in public services
Scrutiny Roles in a Political Environment

Scrutiny is an apolitical process in a 3 dimensional Political environment

Issues

- Appointments – political balance
- Party Whip and ‘group’
- Choice of Chair
- Final Reports (Full Council and Minority Reports)
  - Community champion/s
Roles and Responsibilities

- Focus on performance not ideology
- Maintain focus on outcomes for taxpayers and service users
- Willingness to come with questions but have an open mind
- Understand how scrutiny's power works as opposed to executive powers
- Have the time devote to scrutiny work
Scrutiny Successes in Hounslow (1)

- Getting First Care GP practice into Blenheim Centre as originally promised to patients.
- Changes to housing criteria and averting damage to council reputation through petitioners.
- Making Paul Robeson theatre commercially viable
- Stopping deletion of posts supporting vulnerable children
Scrutiny Successes in Hounslow (2)

- Recommendations leading to savings of £1m in recruitment
- Pivotal in changing relationship between council and West Mid
- Important changes to £250m Highways PFI contract e.g. inclusion of roads on Hounslow Homes estates.
Scrutiny Successes in Hounslow (3)

- Leader’s Question Time
- Budget related scrutiny activity
- LOCATA and public engagement
- Executive/CMT Quarterly Performance Management Meeting
- Issue focussed
Building Relationships

• Developing trust is **vital**
• Political awareness at all times
• Learning when a conversation is not a conversation & beware of those bearing gifts!

Relationships

Councillors – Officers - Partners
Public – Media – Other Agencies
Engaging the Executive

- Executive Liaison Roles
- Joint Briefings (*Performance Management*)
- Joint Meetings with Cabinet (*Question Time*)
- Holding Executive Members to Account
- Inviting Executive Members to discuss
- Involvement with Task Groups
- Call-in
Scrutiny Officers

Evidencing
Evidence gathering & evaluating

Horizon Scanning
Looking ahead for opportunities

Support for Lay Scrutineers

Enabling
Championing scrutiny & engaging the public

Scrutiny Outcomes
Critical friend challenge, public sector improvements, performance targets and policy development
OSC STRUCTURE UP TO MAY 2010

- Adult Health and Social Care
- Budget and Performance
- Client and Partnership
- Children and Young People
OSC AGREED PANEL BEYOND MAY 2010

- Modernise panels
- Clarity for residents and public
- Responsive to changing landscape
- Simplify terms of reference
OSC STRUCTURE FOR AGREEMENT MAY 2010
Measuring Success

- Proving the value of scrutiny
  Use the Annual Report to show how scrutiny has added value to Corporate Priorities.
- Carry out surveys of members views on scrutiny,
  Collect basic performance data e.g. % of recommendations
- Monitor Implementation of Scrutiny Recommendations
- What has been the public/service user experience?
THE CHANGING ROLE OF SCRUTINY

- Wider scope for scrutiny of LSPs and related partnerships – Total Place
- Power to investigate any matter which affects the area
- Power to scrutinise NHS services and health issues
- Power to scrutinise crime and disorder reduction partnerships
- Community leadership
New Government’s legislation that could impact on scrutiny (1)

- Abolition of Comprehensive Area Agreement (CAA) and the current inspection regime for local government.
- Public Bodies Reform Bill – abolition or scaling back of quangos. Not clear which beyond some of the education ones already announced. There are over 700 quangos nationally.
Elected police commissioners. Scrutiny currently have a role in scrutinising crime and disorder partnerships.

Health – potential stronger commissioning role for GPs. How will they be held democratically accountable?
New Government’s legislation that could impact on scrutiny (3)

- Potential shift of traditional health scrutiny functions to local authorities’ executives
- More planning and economic development powers – or will these go to Mayor of London in the capital?
New Government’s legislation that could impact on scrutiny (4)

- Option for local authorities to abolish executive/scrutiny arrangements and return to committee model
- Referenda on directly elected mayors in England’s ten largest cities
- Removal of ring fence for government grants.
New Government’s legislation that could impact on scrutiny (5)

- Requirement on local authorities to publish all spend over £500
- Creation of "right to data" so that the public can request and use government datasets
- Disclosure of senior officer salaries and expenses
The Future is Scrutiny

Discussion and Conclusion
Scrutiny Induction Training Sessions

- Planned Scrutiny Induction Training Sessions
- Purpose is to give Members the opportunity to develop their scrutiny skills by undertaking scrutiny of a real life issue: The Emergency Response to the E coli outbreak at Feltham Hill Infant & Junior School.
- Delivered over three evening sessions - build questioning skills, identifying key lines of enquiry, formulating effective recommendations etc.
- Final session will invite some of the stakeholders that co-ordinated the response to the outbreak to come and give evidence and answer questions from Members.
- Members at the end of the three sessions should have a good understanding of the issues and lessons learnt from the response.
- This will be used to begin formulating recommendations to put to Executive and external partners on how to effectively manage future emergencies.