



Overview and Scrutiny Consultation on the 2008/09 Work Programmes

The Windermere and Bowness Chamber of Trade have been requested by the South Lakeland District Council to pass comments on the below:

South Lakeland District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees are consulting on their work programmes for the coming council year and would like suggestions for issues and topics that residents of the District think would benefit from a scrutiny review.

The Government has been looking at making local democracy more open and with an aim to involve local people as much as possible. Scrutiny committees at the Council act as a critical friend and look at the Council's policies, its key decisions and the services it provides. Their job is to make sure that its decision-making is efficient, open, and in the best interests of people visiting and living in the District. Effective scrutiny adds real value to the work of the Council by effecting *how* it does things and *what* it does.

There are four main jobs for scrutiny in the Council:

- **Holding the executive to account.** This is where The Committees look at, and if they feel is needed, challenge decisions that are being made.
- **Policy review and policy development.** Here The Committees look at whether the Council's policies have done what they were set out to do. They often make recommendations to Cabinet on how to improve or change them, which means scrutiny is directly involved in developing Council policies;
- **Best value and performance management.** For this The Committees look at the Council's services to make sure they are providing good value both to people living and visiting the area and also to the Council.
- **External scrutiny.** Scrutiny committees have got the power to look at anything that will help the economic, social and environmental well being of the area and their local communities.

There are two main Scrutiny Committees at the Council, one is inward looking, reviewing the Council's own processes and the way it works, the other is outward looking and considers all those issues which directly affect the communities in the District.

There are many areas the Committees can look at, such as: how people access Council information and services, community safety, the parks in the District, litter, our town centers and services, just to mention a few.

The Committee's collect evidence for their reviews in many ways such as talking to people who are affected by an issue, visiting the place itself and talking to other Councils and bodies who are held up as doing that particular thing well. Some examples of issues The Committees have looked at over the last year are:

- How the Council works with other organisations in partnership
- Waste Service Review - how well are we collecting our rubbish and recycling this?
- Looking at the Ulverston East area to see how we provide more / different services for people living there.
- Looking at housing in the District - how can we provide more housing which people can afford to buy or rent?
- Concessionary travel - how well is this scheme working, and are there ways in which this could be improved?

(If you want more details of these reviews they can be found on the scrutiny section of the Council's website or by contacting the scrutiny officers.)

The Scrutiny Committees decide their year's work at the first meetings of the new council year, and these work programmes are based on issues and topics that have been suggested from a number of sources such as the public, tenants committees, Councillors and Staff. The Committees then have to choose which issues they should look at, and they do this by considering which ones are going to be most beneficial to the District and the Council.

South Lakeland District Council's Scrutiny Committees would like suggestions for topics and issues relating to things you think need looking at in the local area. Please forward all suggestions to the scrutiny officers Tracey Ingham and Steve Richards so they can be passed on to the committees for consideration.

Many Thanks

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