

REPORT FROM THE INCOMING CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

I am excited at taking up the reins of Scrutiny Commission Chairman at a time of profound change, in a challenging economic climate, and a time of opportunity, as The Localism Bill moves through its Parliamentary and legislative phases. In whatever paperwork we scrutinise in this coming year, all Members should keep their eye on each of these evolving situations.

This is a special Commission meeting at the beginning of a new political term. It is therefore timely to remind ourselves of Scrutiny's **apolitical** status and work:

**The body that refines Executive decisions and
makes recommendations, as required,
to both Executive and Full Council.**

The functions of Scrutiny can be summarised as:

- Policy review and development - helping to shape the way Council services are delivered.
- Scrutinising decisions - Is the action being taken the right action? Are services working effectively?
- Performance Management - Assessing how services are performing to identify areas for improvement.
- External scrutiny - Examining services that impact on the local community.

New members of the Scrutiny Commission are welcome to this debate on what will form the work-plan for the next six months.

My overriding vision for the next six months, and beyond, is for us all to keep as our working focus "*what is the best decision or strategic direction to take, that will benefit the residents we represent?*"

The Council, last year, undertook its budgetary process in the new context of "*Strategic Choice-Based Budgeting*". This budgetary framework is likely to be pursued again, with a key element of public involvement. Scrutiny is now experienced to make informed comment and choices throughout this process.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and welcome those to be appointed as chairs and vice-chairs to each of the Scrutiny Panels: **People**, **Places** and **Resources**. I will be seeking to form a Scrutiny Steering group, with the Panel chairs and vice-chairs, so that the chairs are in a place of authority to lead each of their respective panels.

I aim to ensure that our input into decision-making processes is felt by both the Executive and Full Council to contribute to robust and worthwhile outcomes for our residents.

I would like to thank Councillor Hart for all his work as Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission during the 2010/11 year and indeed his eventful 12 years of service to this Council.

I share much of Councillor Hart's vision for the future of Scrutiny and I take up his request to include, in this Work-plan, a report on the District's Public conveniences.

I look forward to working with you all during my time as Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission.

Councillor Bremner
Chair of Scrutiny Commission