

Swansea Scrutiny Results Scorecard 2013-14

Scrutiny Practice	A. How much scrutiny did we do?	B. How well did we do it?
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of committee meetings = 16 ↓ 2. Number of panel meetings/working groups = 96 ↑ 3. Number of in-depth inquiries completed = 2 ↓ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Councillors who say they have a good understanding of the work of scrutiny = 97% ↑ 5. Staff who say they have a good understanding of the work of scrutiny = 53% ↓ 6. Average councillor attendance at scrutiny meetings = 63% ↓ 7. Backbench councillors actively involved in scrutiny = 83% ↓ 8. Councillors who agree that the level of support provided by the Scrutiny Team is either excellent or very good = 81% ↓ 9. Staff who agree that the level of support provided by the Scrutiny Team is either excellent or very good = 64% ↓
Scrutiny Outcomes	C. How much did scrutiny affect the business of the Council?	D. What were the outcomes of scrutiny?
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Number of chairs letters written to cabinet members = 45 ↑ 11. In depth inquiries reported to Cabinet = 6 ↑ 12. Action plans agreed = 4 ↑ 13. Follow ups undertaken = 2 ↓ 14. Number of Cabinet reports subject to pre decision scrutiny = 0 ↔ 15. Cabinet members who attended at least one question and answer session at the Scrutiny Programme Committee = 100% <small>new</small> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Scrutiny recommendations accepted or partly accepted by Cabinet = 95% ↓ 17. Recommendations signed off by scrutiny as completed = 50% ↓ 18. Councillors who agree that scrutiny has a positive impact on the business of the Council = 70% ↓ 19. Staff who agree that scrutiny has a positive impact on the business of the Council = 68% ↑

↓↑ = significant change, ↓↑ = small change, ↔ no change

Looking Back and Looking Forward

Councillor Mike Day, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

The last year has been a year of bedding in for scrutiny in Swansea. The new system, with its single committee supported by informal panels and working groups, introduced in November 2012, has now become established. While Scrutiny Performance Panels have been getting to grips with their work, and working groups have been dealing with one-off issues, the first in depth Scrutiny Inquiry Panels have been making their recommendations to Cabinet.

As you can see from this report the levels of activity this year have been high. As this is the second year that we have used a scorecard format we have the opportunity to make comparisons. Some highlights include:

- The number of panel meetings/working groups increased from 65 in 2012/13 to 96 in 2013/14.
- The number of chairs letters written to Cabinet members has increased from 13 in 2012/13 to 45 in 2013/14.
- The number of in-depth inquiries reported to Cabinet has doubled from 3 in 2012/13 to 6 in 2013/14.

The results based approach we have used means presenting a scorecard of key indicators that help us to understand:

- How much scrutiny we did
- How well we did it
- How much scrutiny affected the business of the Council
- The outcomes of scrutiny

Over the last 12 months scrutiny has gained greater national significance. Both the Welsh Government and the Wales Audit Office have pointed to a greater role for scrutiny if it can demonstrate effectiveness. Providing accountability, self regulation and a source of innovation for local government in what are very challenging times. The Williams' Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery supported this message arguing that 'the importance, status and value of scrutiny must be recognised, prioritised, continually sustained and reinforced'.

We are delighted that our work has gained national recognition. We were able to present some of our work to the main plenary at the 'Scrutiny in the Spotlight' conference in November and at the recent Welsh Local Government Conference the Local Government Minister highlighted Swansea as an example of good practice.

The last year has also been a year of learning. May 2014 saw the publication of 'Good Scrutiny? Good Question!' the Wales Audit Office's report into scrutiny effectiveness. This marked the end of a process from which we have learned much and we will be working our way through the recommendations of that report as we go forward. We will also be using the 'characteristics of

effective scrutiny', published as part of that report, as the basis for evaluation of our work.

Looking forward our key theme for the year ahead is impact. We have already agreed an action plan and will be taking a number of practical steps to ensure that the work we are doing really does make a difference for the citizens of Swansea. Overall we have five improvement themes for the year ahead:

- **Impact:** Making more of a difference
- **Work Planning:** Focusing on the things that really matter
- **Public Engagement:** Giving citizens a voice
- **Training and Development:** Ensuring we have the skills we need
- **Continuous Improvement:** Getting better at what we do

I look forward to report back our progress next year.

The Indicators

A. How much scrutiny did we do?

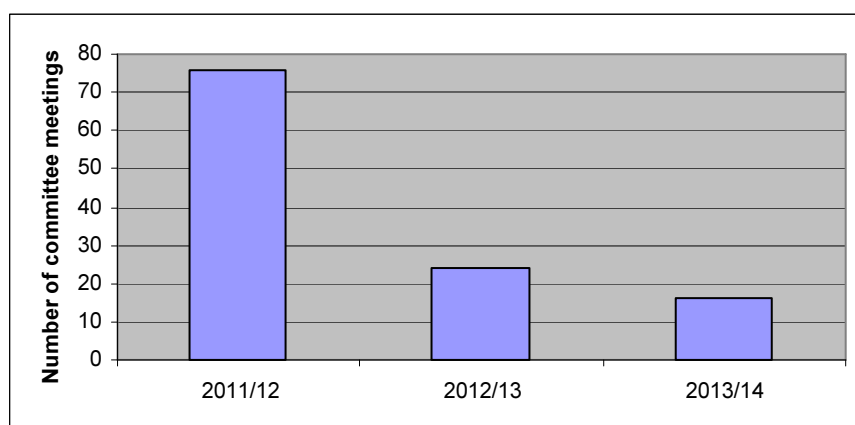
1. Number of formal committee meetings = 16

Formal committee meetings for scrutiny are held in public and give councillors the opportunity to hold cabinet members to account and provide challenge on a range of policy and service issues.

The committee meetings for 2013-14 were as follows:

- Scrutiny Programme Committee (12 meetings)
- Special Scrutiny Programme Committee – review of gypsy & traveller site search process (4 meetings)

Comparison with previous years:



(Note: During 2012/13 before the Scrutiny Programme Committee was established three Scrutiny Boards were operating. In 2011/12 there were five boards and two committees)

2. Number of panel meetings/working groups = 96

Panel meetings and working groups are established by the Scrutiny Programme Committee with an appointed convener.

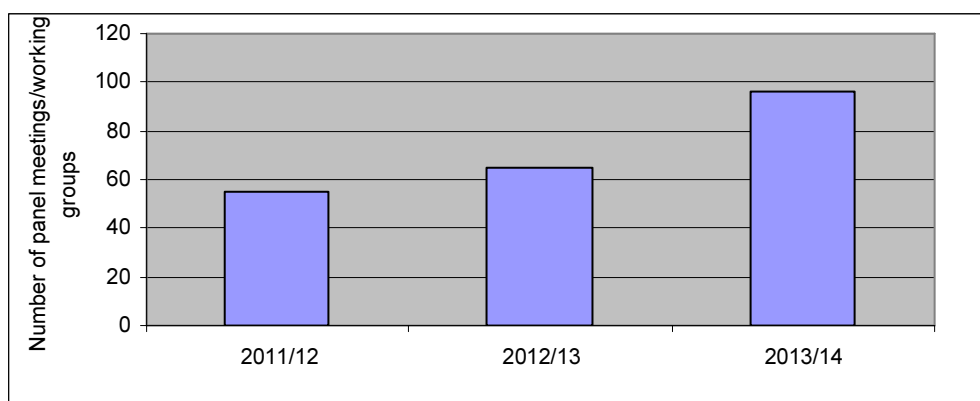
There are two types of panels:

Inquiry panels - these undertake in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis.

Performance panels - these provide in-depth monitoring and challenge for clearly defined service areas.

Working groups are one-off meetings established when a matter should be carried out outside of the committee but does not need a panel to be set up.

Comparison with previous years:



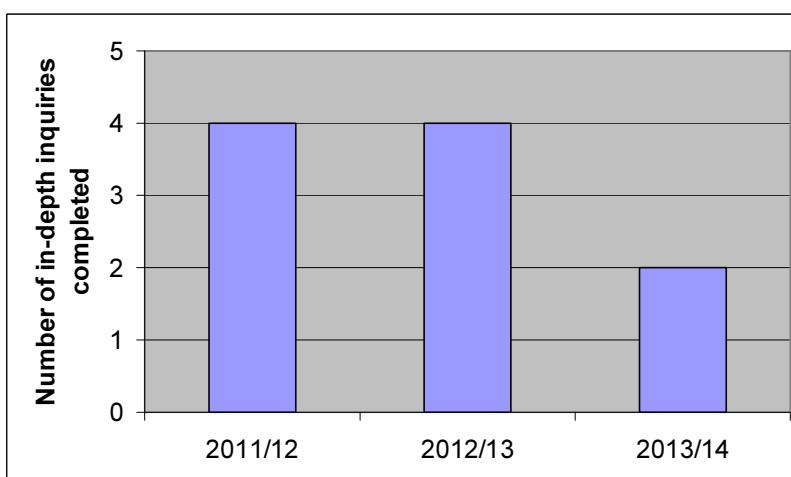
3. Number of in-depth inquiries completed = 2

Work on the following in-depth inquiries was completed during 2013-14:

Inquiry	Panel
<i>Learning Lessons</i> : How can schools, the council and its partners improve wellbeing in schools?	Attainment and Wellbeing Inquiry Panel
<i>Workless not Worthless</i> : How can the council and its partners reduce economic inactivity in Swansea?	Economic Inactivity Inquiry Panel

Although this number is low there are four inquiries which will be completed in the early months of 2014/15.

Comparison with previous years:

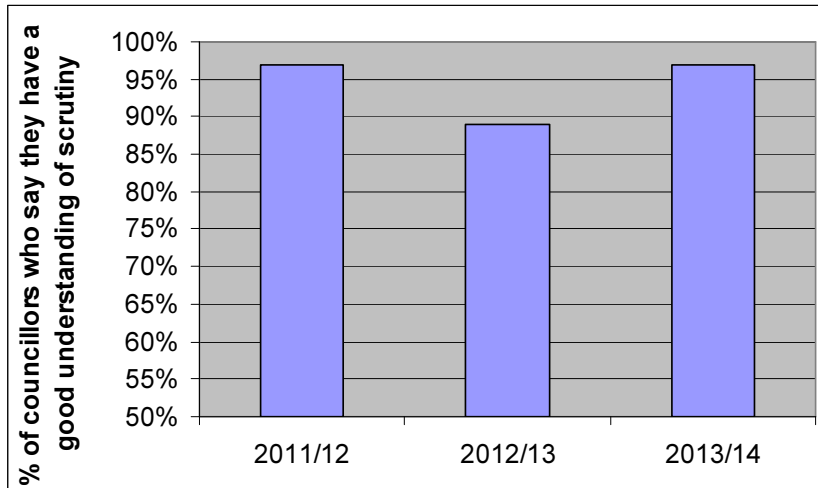


B. How well did we do it?

4. Councillors who say they have a good understanding of the work of scrutiny = 97%

Awareness and understanding of scrutiny is an important aspect of effectiveness. This data is collected via an annual survey of Councillors. The numbers of councillors who responded to the survey was 33 (53% of all councillors).

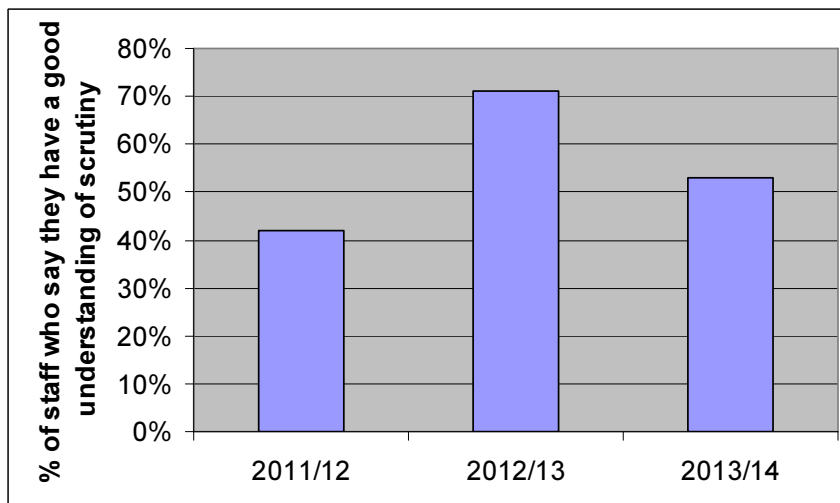
Comparison with previous years:



5. Staff who say they have a good understanding of the work of scrutiny = 53%

Awareness and understanding of scrutiny is an important aspect of effectiveness. This data is collected via an annual survey of staff and partners. The number of people answering this question was 74 which is a low number from which to draw meaningful conclusions.

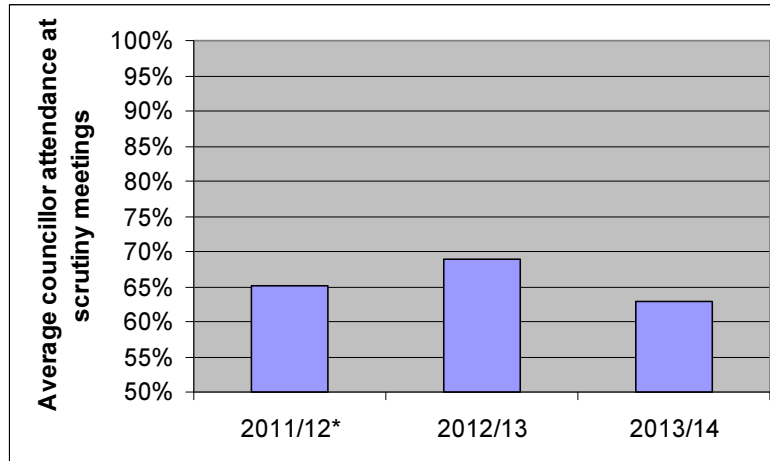
Comparison with previous years:



6. Average councillor attendance at scrutiny meetings = 63%

The rate of councillor attendance measures an important aspect of effectiveness as it reflects the engagement of councillors in the scrutiny process. Attendance figures for councillors attending formal meetings are collected by the Members Support Team and published on the Council's website. 2013/14's figure is an overall attendance figure that includes the Scrutiny Programme Committee, panel meetings and the working groups.

Comparison with previous years:

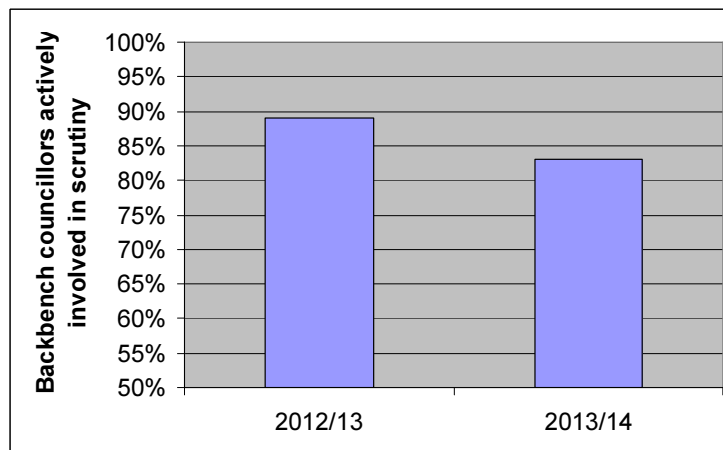


*formal meetings only

7. Backbench councillors actively involved in scrutiny = 83%

The large majority of backbench councillors were involved in scrutiny either through the Scrutiny Programme Committee, panels or working groups.

Comparison with previous years:

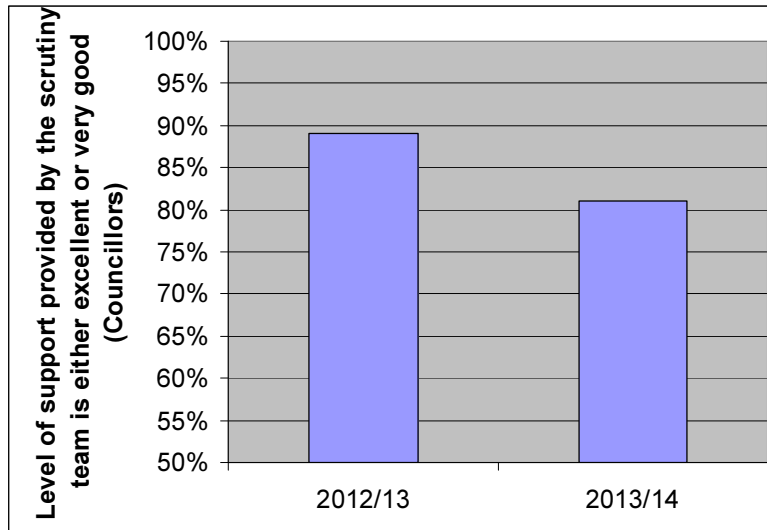


8. Councillors who have used the service who agree that the level of support provided by the Scrutiny Team is either excellent or very good = 81%

The Scrutiny Team provides capacity for the committee and the panel meetings/working groups to undertake their work by undertaking, for

example, project management, research, report writing and liaison with cabinet and witnesses. This data is collected via an annual survey of councillors. The number of people answering this question was 33.

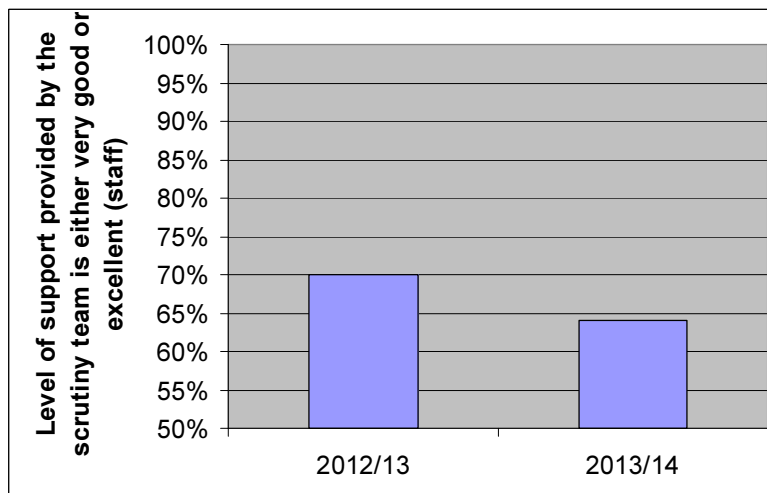
Comparison with previous years:



9. Staff who agree that the level of support provided by the Scrutiny Team is either excellent or very good = 64%

The Scrutiny Team provides capacity for the committee and the panel meetings/working groups to undertake their work by undertaking, for example, project management, research, report writing and liaison with cabinet and witnesses. This data is collected via an annual survey of staff and partners. Only those who have used the service are asked this question. The number of people answering this question was only 14.

Comparison with previous years:

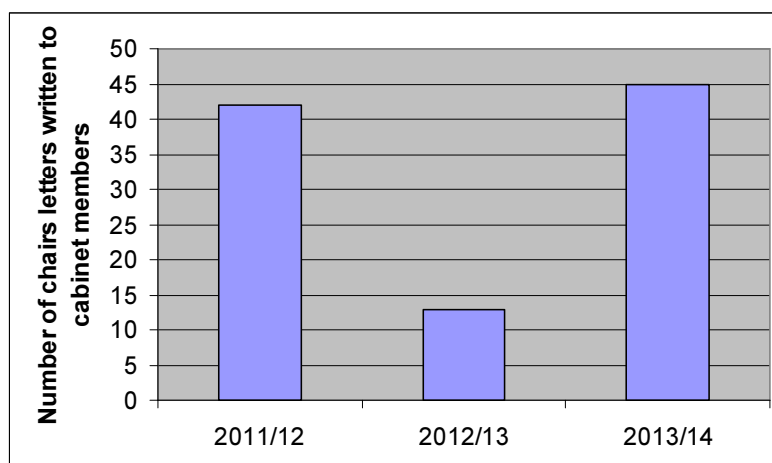


C. How much did scrutiny affect the business of the Council?

10. Number of chairs letters written to cabinet members = 45

Chairs letters allow the committee and panel meetings/working groups to communicate quickly and efficiently with the relevant cabinet members. They use these letters to raise concerns, highlight good practice, ask for further information and make recommendations.

Comparison with previous years:

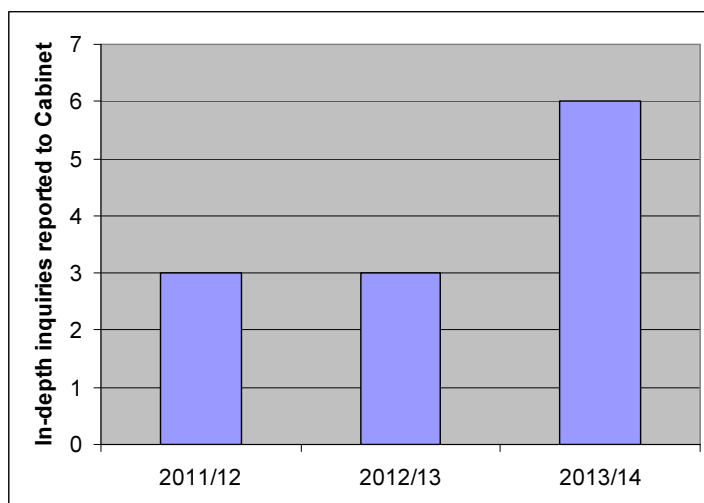


11. In-depth inquiries / reviews reported to Cabinet = 6

In depth inquiries are reported to Cabinet for a response to the recommendations agreed by scrutiny and action plan on how the recommendations will be implemented. The following in-depth reviews were reported to Cabinet from scrutiny with the number of recommendations from each shown in brackets:

- Tourism in Swansea (14)
- Improving Services for Looked after Children (15)
- Economic Inactivity (7)
- Wellbeing in Schools (11)
- Public Transport and Social Inclusion (14)
- Affordable Housing (13)

Comparison with previous years:

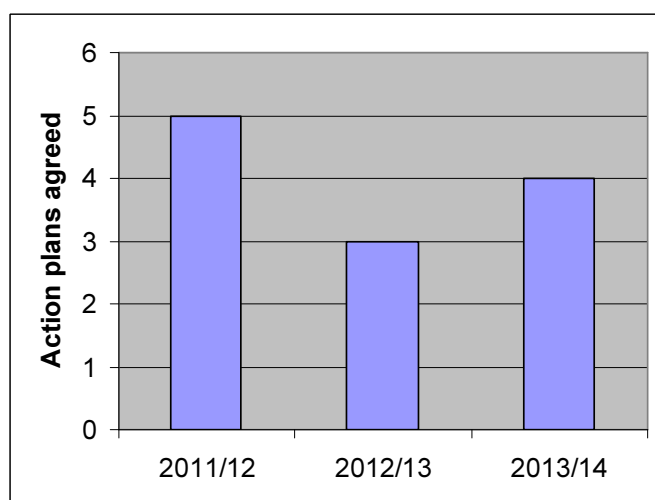


12. Action plans agreed = 4

Once recommendations and an action plan have been agreed by cabinet, scrutiny will follow up on progress with implementation and impact. The following action plans were agreed following in-depth inquiries during 2013-14:

- Improving Services for Looked after Children
- Tourism in Swansea
- Public Transport and Social Inclusion
- Affordable Housing

Comparison with previous years:

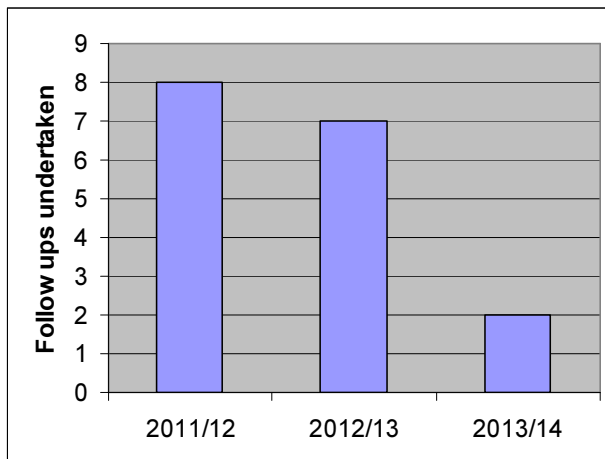


13. Follow ups undertaken = 2

In order to check whether the agreed action plans have been carried out, scrutiny will ask for follow up reports from cabinet members. If councillors are satisfied they can then conclude the work for that inquiry. The following follow ups were considered in 2013-14:

- The Role of Teaching Assistants across the Primary Sector in Swansea
- Support for Care Leavers

Comparison with previous years:



14. Number of Cabinet reports subject to pre decision scrutiny = 0

Pre decision scrutiny involves scrutiny councillors considering cabinet reports before cabinet makes a final decision. In the previous year no cabinet report was subject to pre decision scrutiny.

15. Cabinet members who attended at least one question and answer session at the Scrutiny Programme Committee – 100%

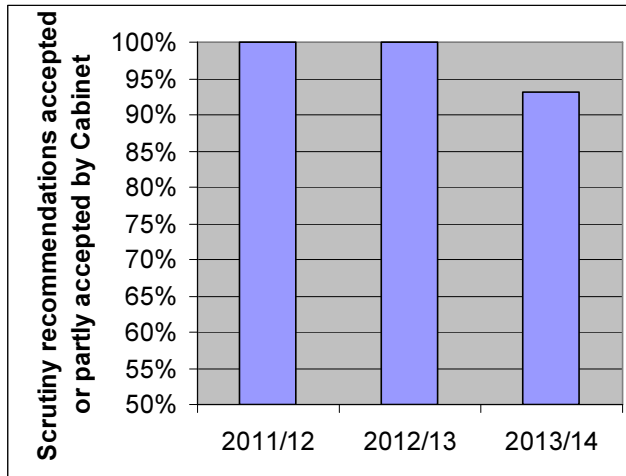
Cabinet members attend scrutiny meetings to answer questions and provide information. Cabinet attendance at scrutiny meetings is a good indicator that the 'holding to account' role of scrutiny is functioning well. In 2013/14 every Cabinet member attended at least one question and answer session at the Scrutiny Programme Committee. This is a new indicator.

D. What were the outcomes of scrutiny?

16. Scrutiny recommendations accepted or partly accepted by Cabinet = 93%

The rate that cabinet accept scrutiny recommendations is a good indicator of whether scrutiny is making strong recommendations based on robust evidence. Cabinet responded to 56 scrutiny recommendations in 2013-14 of which 48 were accepted and 4 were partly accepted. 4 were rejected.

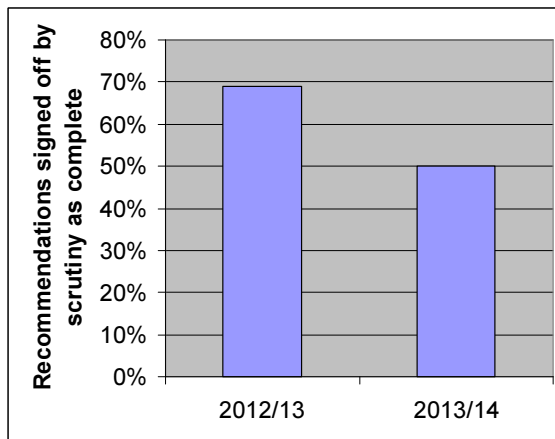
Comparison with previous years:



17. Recommendations signed off by scrutiny as completed = 50%

When follow up reports are presented to scrutiny they detail which of the recommendations from the in depth inquiry have been completed in line with the cabinet member's action plan and which have not. Scrutiny councillors then consider whether they agree with the assessment taking into account the evidence they are presented with. This indicator represents the percentage of recommendations accepted by scrutiny as being completed for the year (14 recommendations were considered of which 7 were signed off as complete).

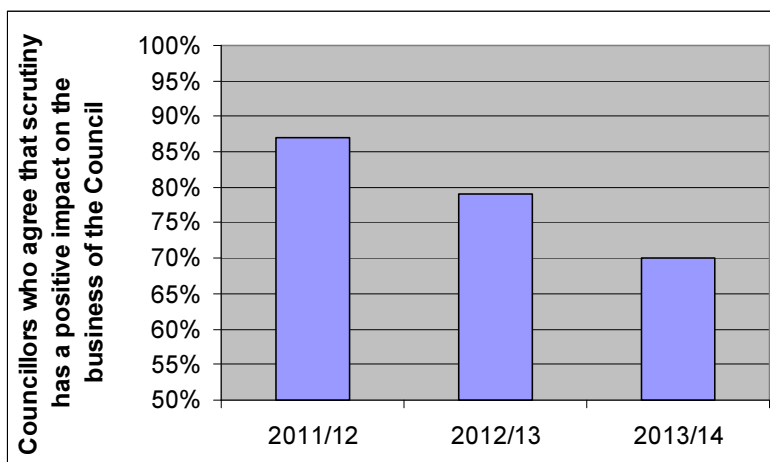
Comparison with previous years:



18. Councillors who agree that scrutiny has a positive impact on the business of the Council = 70%

As part of an annual survey, councillors are asked whether they believe that scrutiny has made a difference. The numbers of councillors who responded to the survey was 33 (53% of all councillors).

Comparison with previous years:



19. Staff who agree that scrutiny has a positive impact on the business of the Council = 68%

As part of an annual survey, staff and partners are asked whether they believe that scrutiny has made a difference. The number of people answering this question was only 74.

Comparison with previous years:

