

Annual Stakeholder Survey 2017
Councillors

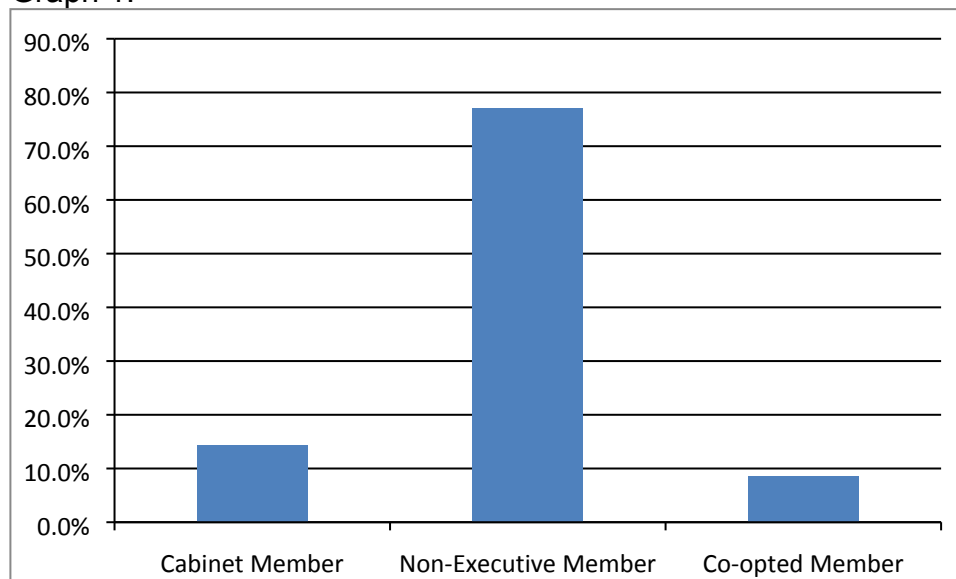
1.0 Introduction

1.1 1. All councillors and co-opted members received a copy of the annual stakeholder survey. 35 completed the survey. The results were analysed and the results were as follows. Total numbers are shown in the brackets.

1.2 Q2. **Are you a:**

Councillor – Cabinet Member - 14.3% (5)
Councillor – Non Executive Member - 77.1% (27)
Co-opted Members – 8.6% (3)

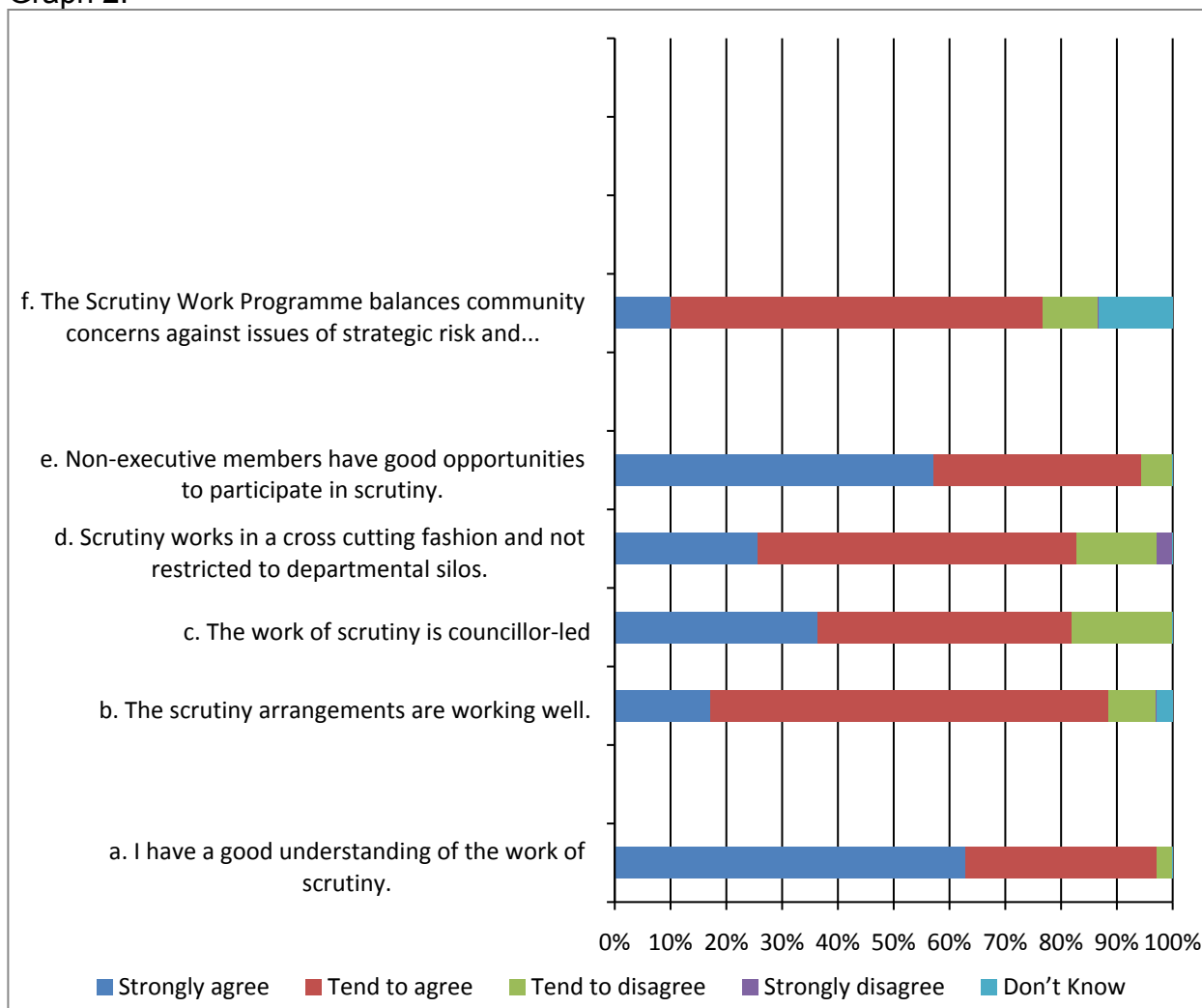
Graph 1:

**2.0 Scrutiny Arrangements**

2.1 Q3. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
a. I have a good understanding of the work of scrutiny.	62.9% (22)	34.3% (12)	2.9% (1)	0.0%(0)	0.0%(0)
b. The scrutiny arrangements are working well.	17.1% (6)	71.4% (25)	8.6% (3)	0.0%	2.9%(1)
c. The work of scrutiny is councillor-led	36.4% (12)	45.5% (15)	18.2% (6)	0.0%	0.0%
d. Scrutiny works in a cross cutting fashion and not restricted to departmental silos.	25.7% (9)	57.1% (20)	14.3% (5)	2.9% (1)	0.0%
e. Non-executive members have good opportunities to participate in scrutiny.	57.1% (20)	37.1% (13)	5.7% (2)	0.0%	0.0%
f. The Scrutiny Work Programme balances community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance.	10.0% (3)	66.7% (20)	10.0% (3)	0.0%	13.3% (4)

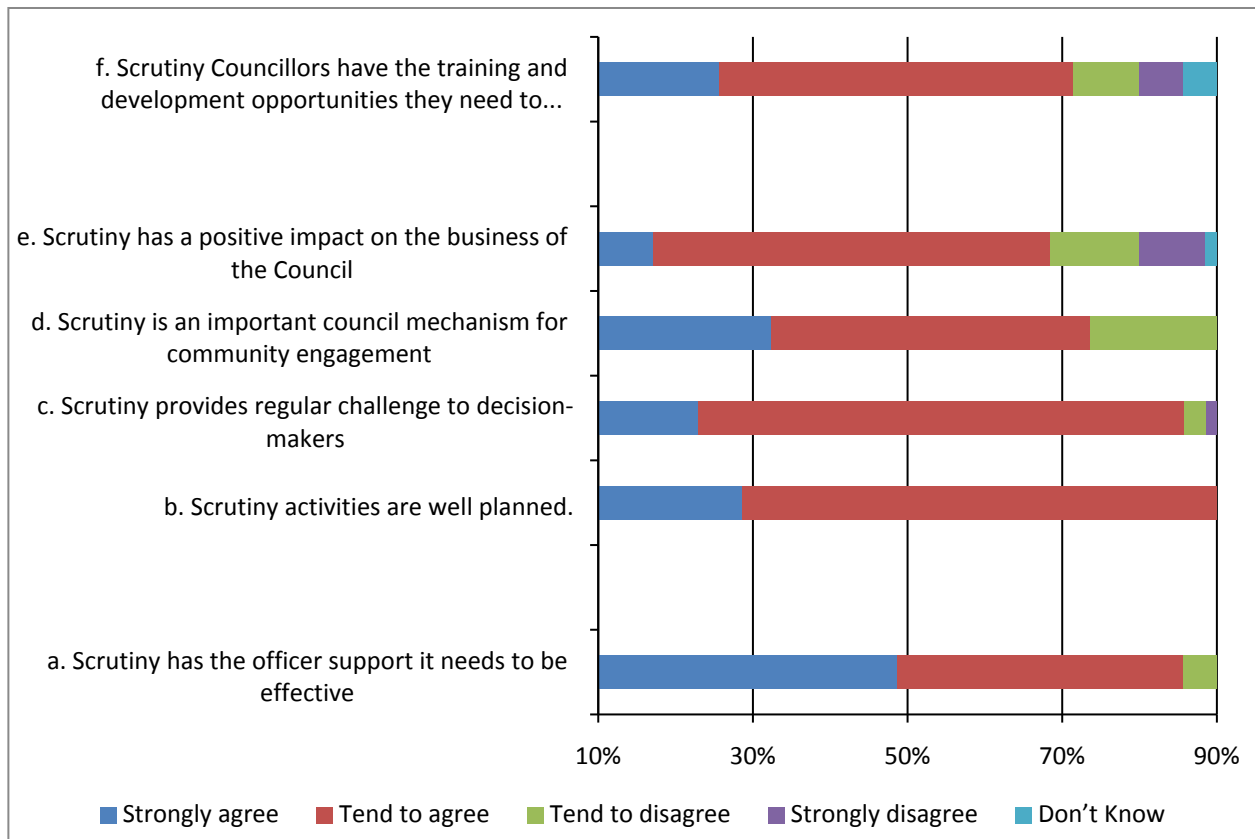
Graph 2:



2.2 Q4. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
a. Scrutiny has the officer support it needs to be effective	48.6% (17)	37.1% (13)	5.7% (2)	0.0%	8.6% (3)
b. Scrutiny activities are well planned.	28.6% (10)	65.7% (23)	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	0.0%
c. Scrutiny provides regular challenge to decision-makers	22.9% (8)	62.9% (22)	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	5.7% (2)
d. Scrutiny is an important council mechanism for community engagement	32.4% (11)	41.2% (14)	23.5% (8)	2.9% (1)	0.0%
e. Scrutiny has a positive impact on the business of the Council	17.1% (6)	51.4% (18)	11.4% (4)	8.6% (3)	11.4% (4)
f. Scrutiny Councillors have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively	25.7% (9)	45.7% (16)	8.6% (3)	5.7% (2)	14.3% (5)

Graph 3:

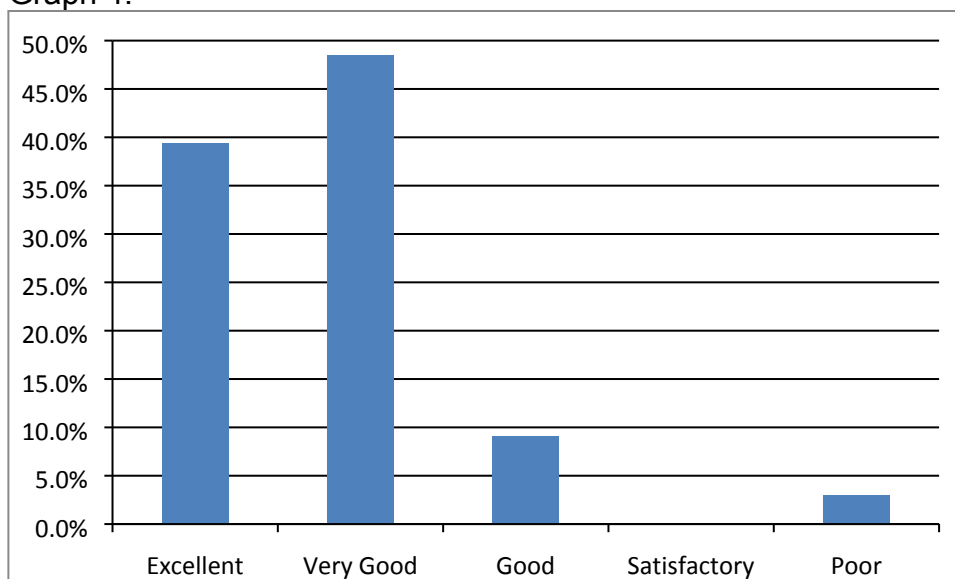


3.0 Officer Support

3.1 Q5. How would you rate the level of support you receive from the scrutiny team?

- Excellent - 39.4% (13)
- Very good – 48.5% (16)
- Good – 9.1% (3)
- Satisfactory – 0.0%
- Poor – 3.0% (1)

Graph 4:



Q6. How could the scrutiny support be improved?

The comments received were analysed and the following themes emerged:

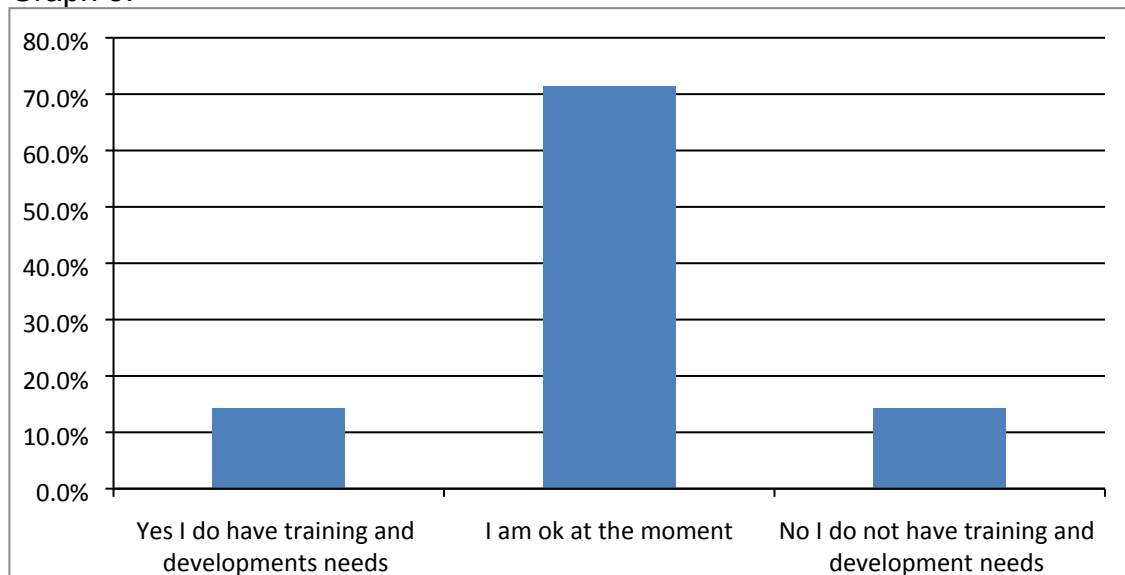
- More staff and resources (4)
- Providing hard copy agendas to co-opted members, as Councillors are.
- Delivery of scrutiny papers via specialist software (e.g. Diligent.com) would help and be more efficient/cheaper.
- Having information about cabinet business – taking this into account in the work of scrutiny and getting more joined up.
- No need for an annual scrutiny work planning conference as the process is ongoing, and topics for scrutiny should (and are) put forward at any time for consideration by the Scrutiny Programme Committee.
- Clarity of purpose of scrutiny activities and occasional informal briefings with the chair and support officer would help cabinet members prepare for meetings and have clear understanding.
- Involving and communicating with all relevant cabinet members when dealing with cross cutting issues e.g. when requesting written response, or attendance at meetings

4.0 Training & Development

4.1 Q7. Do you have any training and development needs that you feel would assist you in your role as a Scrutiny Committee/Panel member?

Yes I do have training and development needs - 14.3% (5)
I am ok at the moment but I would like to receive information on any future opportunities - 71.4% (25)
No I do not have any training and development needs – 14.3% (5)

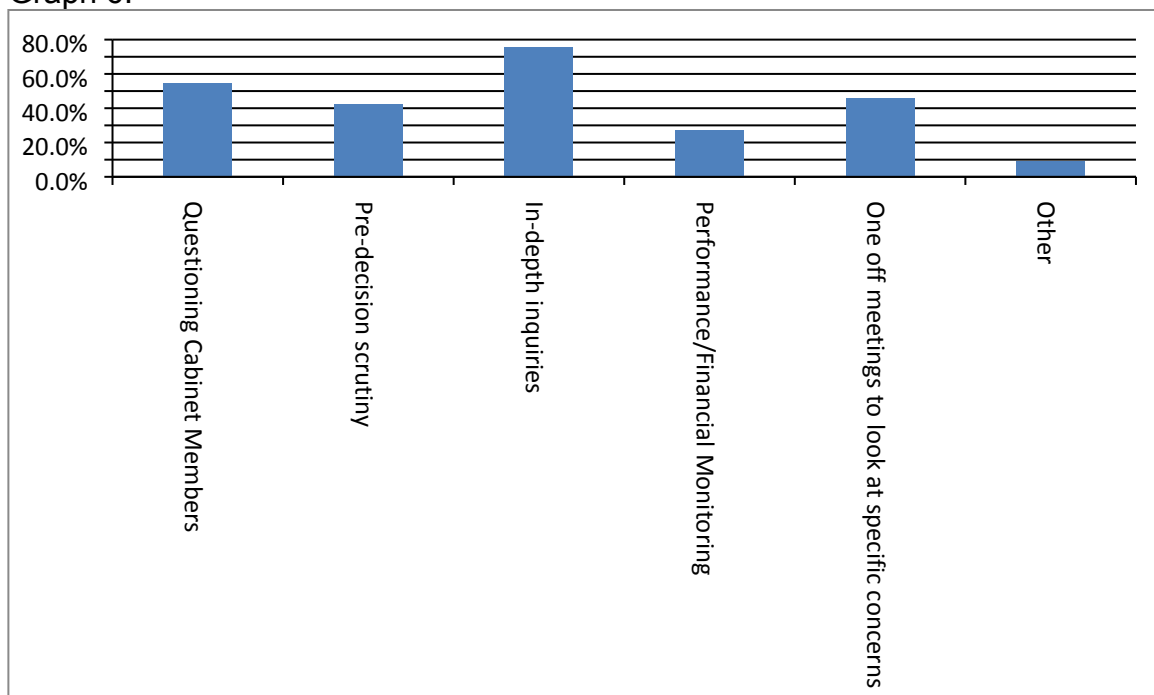
Graph 5:



	<p>Q8. If you do have any training and development needs? Please give further detail below.</p> <p>The following comments were received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to prepare for meetings • Briefings to help understand services (e.g. planning) to enable better scrutiny • Refresher training on styles of questioning to be an effective "critical friend" would be helpful • Awareness of any new legislation relevant to scrutiny • Opportunities for councillors to visit scrutiny meetings in other authorities. • Opportunities to shadow relevant officers for a couple of days. • ICT • High-level finance training
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Suggestions for the Scrutiny Work Programme</p>
<p>5.1</p>	<p>Q9. Do you have any suggestions of topics for possible in-depth inquiry?</p> <p>The following suggestions can be identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Building Services (2) • Procurement (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what are procedures currently in place by the council and are all service users aware of the process? - procurement and tendering process – what is the framework, use of approved list, is it transparent, are we achieving value for money, use of local firms? • Impact of ‘Austerity’ - assess what impact ‘austerity’ has had on the resilience of Council services, especially where savings have come from the head count (e.g. some LAs in Wales are barely able to sustain a robust planning control function) • Recruitment Process (e.g. systems in place to ensure transparency / accountability when post/application forms are received) • Renewable Energy • Child trafficking / exploitation (e.g. not only by people trafficking for the sex and drug trade. Do we consider young people in particular girls who are exploited by other young people not much older? What happens to the young people who are used to look after the drug houses?) • Streetscene (impact of changes to service areas - has the service improved?) • Direct Labour Organisation • Civil Enforcement Service • Bus Services within Swansea • Youth Service Provision • City Deal • Lord Mayor’s Office • Implementation of the Welsh Language Standards (this would help assess compliance with the new laws for Local Government) • Buildings Maintenance

5.2	<p>Q10. Do you have any suggestions of areas for in-depth performance/financial monitoring?</p> <p>The following suggestions can be identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study how budgets (as opposed to allocations) might be set in key areas (where 'budget' is defined as 'a financial representation of an agreed plan of action, for a defined period of time') • Procurement procedures • Capital schemes and changes • Financial decision monitoring - budgetary control is going to be one of the main planks for any future planning • Procurement and tendering process – money can be saved. • Corporate Buildings (planned works and activities) • Fleet Management (looking at our vehicle fleet, usage of the fleet and how we can monitor the mileage etc.) • ER/VR policy / process (criteria for approval - why some staff have been allowed to leave and others not) • Buildings Maintenance. • Regular Scrutiny of Planning Service
5.3	<p>Q11. Do you have any suggestions of topics for one-off scrutiny meetings?</p> <p>The following suggestions can be identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage/listed buildings (Council and private owned) – responsibilities including upkeep etc. • Care Services to the Elderly • Renewable Energy • School Music Service • Civic Centre / Guildhall Parking • Review of Impact of Communities First in Swansea • Dog Fouling • Provision of Community/Play Facilities • Councillor Meeting Rooms • The Palace Theatre High Street Development • ABP's plans for the Dock area. • Tethered Horses (progress since last Working Group / further opportunities for improvement)
6.0	General
	<p>Q12. For you, what have been the most important aspects of scrutiny?</p> <p>Questioning Cabinet Members – 54.5% (18) Pre-decision scrutiny – 42.4% (14) In-depth Inquiries – 75.8% (25) Performance/Financial Monitoring – 27.3% (9) One-off meetings to look at specific concerns – 45.5% (15) Other – 9.1% (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long-term scrutiny of schools performance • Learning about various aspects of council work • It was difficult to pick three options

Graph 6:



6.1 Q13. In your opinion, what has worked well about scrutiny in Swansea?

The comments received were analysed and the following themes emerged:

- The work of Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups (5)
 - Child & Family Services Performance Panel
 - Adult Services Performance Panel
 - 'One off' quick scrutiny
 - Flexibility over timescales to complete work has permitted more questions to be introduced which has resulted in a more robust scrutiny
 - The contribution of pre-decision scrutiny which has increased over the last 12 months in areas such as Commissioning Reviews.
- Holding to account (3)
 - Cabinet Members
 - The opportunity to test the work being undertaken by senior managers and Leaders
 - It tests the mettle of officers and cabinet members - and partner bodies such as NHS and can also be a support mechanism for officers.
- Councillor engagement (3)
 - Involvement of all members (x2)
 - Interested councillors self-selecting their involvement
- The ability to scrutinise topics in-depth (2)
- Ability to ask questions (2)
 - Members able to ask questions, gives members a knowledge of services provided by authority and to be a critical friend and look at things with fresh eyes
 - Being able to ask questions about areas of topic to interested partners/agencies e.g. about working together, improvements in services, better outcomes.

- General:
 - Initially sceptical of the effectiveness of the new arrangements in 2012. However, it would appear that there is now more detailed scrutiny of specific areas, when the need has been identified and a lot of good work is being done.
 - Good communication throughout process and excellent follow up of actions.
 - Having the opportunity to meet with officers to dig down into the work of the council and make changes in direction if necessary.
 - Good working relationship with officers good working relationship with colleagues, especially on long-term scrutiny boards
 - The work of the staff and members has been very good
- From cabinet perspective have been treated fairly at meeting and scrutiny councillor have acted in the truest sense as critical friends.

6.2 Q14. In your opinion, what has not worked well and could be done differently?

The comments received were analysed and the following themes emerged:

- Scrutiny Process (6):
 - Time of meetings – have been occasions when majority of panel members cannot attend and can lead to skewed subjective outcomes without any balance
 - Speed of the scrutiny process
 - Lack of meaningful data and background information to support what has been said and to test the veracity of what is being said to scrutiny
 - More information provided and the time to appraise information properly.
 - More clarity needed when dealing with cross cutting issues on which responsible cabinet member is best placed to respond
 - Outcomes and the way in which they are monitored
- Membership / Attendance (5):
 - Attendance of members is sometimes very scarce
 - Balance on committees, some do much more work than others, although some just sit on more committees than others
 - A wider range of councillors taking part in scrutiny
 - Political balance is important
- Duplication between CACs and scrutiny (2)
- Other:
 - Scrutiny needs to be more involved in the monitoring/challenging of council large scale projects (e.g. there was lack of involvement in the gypsy traveller site search project)
 - Scrutiny Programme Committee flounders a bit.
 - The Poverty Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - felt there were gaps in hearing evidence from some key individuals.
 - Political influence - sometimes the feeling that some members of the committee are not able to express their views fully
 - The leadership has not shown that it understands or supports scrutiny
 - Go back to the committee system.

6.3 Q15. What have you found difficult about scrutiny, if anything?

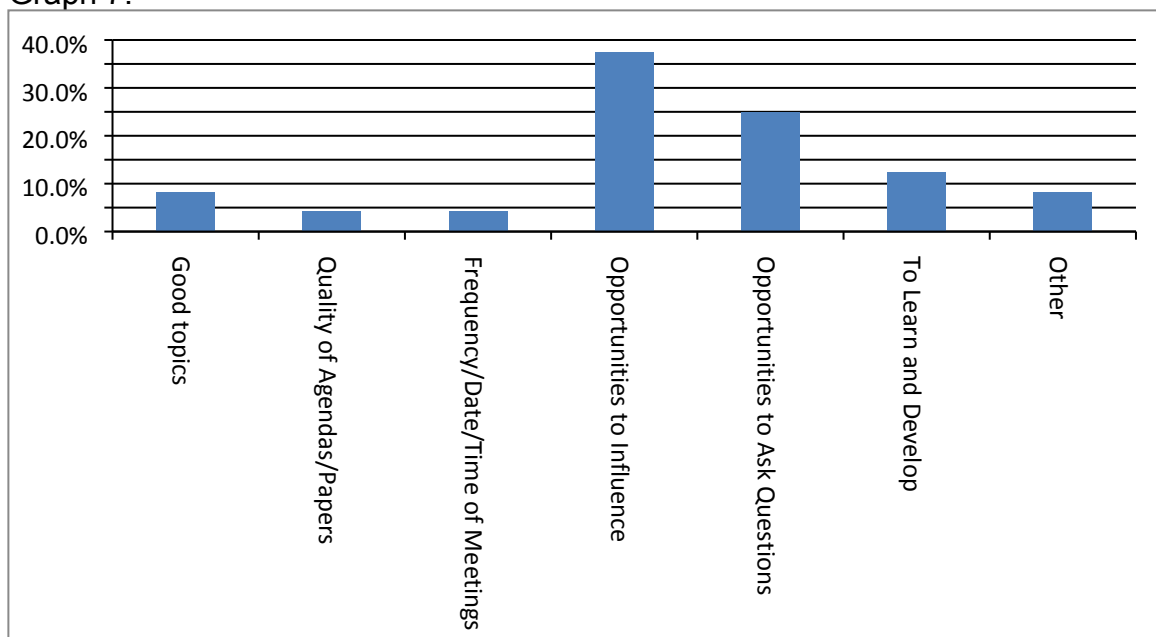
The comments received were analysed and the following themes emerged:

- Time of meetings (3)
- Political interference (2)
- Cabinet responses to recommendations from scrutiny (2)
- Cabinet engagement with scrutiny
- The creation of CACs
- Being dropped into something which is a continuation of the PSB without any prior involvement or briefing about it.
- De-coding the jargon
- The haste in which some scrutiny is undertaken, you cannot get quality outcomes or reliable outcomes
- Sometimes scrutiny hasn't grasped the subject, or thought through the recommendations. It is not necessary to have a long list of recommendations to validate a scrutiny investigation. The findings are just as important.

6.4 Q16. What is the main reason that you have engaged with scrutiny?

- Good topics – 8.3% (2)
- Quality of Agenda/Papers – 4.2% (1)
- Frequency/Date/Time of Meetings – 4.2% (1)
- Opportunities to Influence – 37.5% (9)
- Opportunities to Ask Questions – 25.0% (6)
- To Learn and Develop – 12.5% (3)
- Other – 8.3% (2)
 - Opportunities to improve council services
 - Cabinet member called to scrutiny

Graph 7:



6.5 Q17. What would improve your experience of scrutiny?

The comments received were analysed and the following themes emerged:

- Quality of information (3):
 - A complete knowledge of the subject to be scrutinised
 - Better briefings and background information with supporting evidence.
 - Information, comparisons, ideas and evidence coming from a range of sources outside the normal council viewpoint
- Timings of meetings (3)
- Everybody being engaged in the scrutiny process.(2)
- Better induction process
- Choice of conveners
- More in depth work.
- To receive feedback to Panel's on the outcomes of recommendation being implemented following the evidence gathered/received after investigation forwarded to Cabinet Members.
- Increased use of new technology to allow members to participate remotely through conference call/webcasting.
- The officers and team of scrutiny should be recognised for their hard work, commitment and individual advice.
- Stop going round in circles
- Do away with CACs
- Returning to the system put in place immediately after the 2012 election (SPC with 3 scrutiny committees)