

Good Scrutiny Awards 2010

Innovation



Hertfordshire County Council

With only two officers supporting scrutiny in this large county council, and in response to concerns about scrutiny's effectiveness and impact, Hertfordshire County Council streamlined their scrutiny structure and processes. A leaner, more focused way of working, with fewer committees, shorter reports, more robust recommendations, plus innovations such as a scrutiny café for their budget scrutiny process, have made scrutiny more effective and valued by a range of stakeholders.

Impact

- Over 18 months Hertfordshire have streamlined their committees down to two.
- They have adopted an innovative way of doing scrutiny, holding 1 or 2 whole day meetings to gather evidence and produce short reports based on clear objectives and robust and achievable recommendations.
- Budget scrutiny has changed from a formal meeting in the council chamber to a 'scrutiny café' approach which has involved more people and produced more effective recommendations.

Why shortlisted

- Hertfordshire demonstrated realism about their low level of resources and have adopted new ways of working that make the most of them.
- The entry demonstrated that it was possible to develop a different approach to scrutiny that was "leaner, tighter, more focused and was achieving more for less".
- Adopting the scrutiny café for budget scrutiny and holding six month review of recommendations meetings with the executive showed willingness to innovate for more effective outcomes.

“Senior officers and executive members believe scrutiny provides a well thought through challenge to monitoring policy implementation. Scrutiny's current success and high profile is due to listening to feedback from all concerned and revising practice to address this feedback.”

Caroline Tapster, Chief Executive, Hertfordshire County Council

“Fantastic model of innovation and effective scrutiny.”

Claer Lloyd-Jones, Good Scrutiny Awards 2010 Judge