Westminster City Council

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City of Westminster

City of Westminster Model: Designing successful scrutiny

Mark Ewbank, Westminster City Council

Wednesday 9th April

Concerning issues in 2011 / 2012

- **Long Agenda**

- **O&S used as a *route for information***

- **Dissatisfaction / disengagement**

Open-Question Consultation:

- **with all O&S Councillors**

...in addition to officers*, stakeholders*, local associations / groups and members of the public.

Consultation was *predominantly Member-driven*

How do you think that Westminster Policy & Scrutiny committees...

1) ...can contribute towards **improving public services** in the borough?

2) ...can more effectively **amplify the concerns of the public**?

3) ...can provide **constructive 'critical friend' challenge**?

4) ...can **hold-to-account and lead with responsibility**?

1) IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES

- **Focus**

- **Strategy**

- **Promotion**

- **Evaluation**

IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES

- **Focus**

A limit to the number of items

Offline update / information papers

IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES

- **Strategy**

    O&S should ensure that work programmes reflect a year-long view (or more) and become more strategic.

IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES

- **Promotion**

  Advertising work more widely and circulating information on outcomes to national databases

IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICES

- **Evaluation**

Make formal recommendations on each major item

Actively monitor recommendations

Evaluate work by national standards

AMPLIFY THE CONCERNS OF THE PUBLIC

- **Co-option**

- **External Witnesses**

- **Primary & Secondary Research**

AMPLIFY THE CONCERNS OF PUBLIC

- **Co-option**

  Engaging with those outside the council through co-option of non-statutory, non-voting representatives

AMPLIFY THE CONCERNS OF PUBLIC

- **External Experts / Witnesses**

Take greater advantage of the local presence of academics, researchers, professionals and service users

AMPLIFY THE CONCERNS OF PUBLIC

- **Primary & Secondary Research**

  Quantitative & Qualitative research into issues – where active involvement is difficult

CONSTRUCTIVE, CRITICAL FRIEND CHALLENGE

- **Fewer, more regular committees**

- ***Rapporteurs***

CONSTRUCTIVE, CRITICAL FRIEND CHALLENGE

- **Fewer, more regular committees**

  To stop focusing issues into one Agenda, spreading a work programme out lightens the load for each Committee.

CONSTRUCTIVE, CRITICAL FRIEND CHALLENGE

- *Rapporteurs*

  To increase Member engagement in the process, a lead on scrutiny for issues

RESPONSIBILITY & INDEPENDENCE

- **Shared service arrangements**

- *Self-selection of Chairmen*

- **Cabinet Member Q&A**

CONSTRUCTIVE, CRITICAL FRIEND CHALLENGE

- **Shared service arrangements**

   Innovative structures to ensure accountability

CONSTRUCTIVE, CRITICAL FRIEND CHALLENGE

- **Self-selection of Chairmen**

  To ensure independence - allow self selection of Chairmen

CONSTRUCTIVE, CRITICAL FRIEND CHALLENGE

- **Cabinet Member Q&A**

   To ensure Cabinet Members are scrutinised for their decisions and plans at each Committee