



## Scrutiny Questionnaire for Members

Responses to this survey: **29**

### 1: In your opinion, does Overview & Scrutiny work at West Lancashire?

Option	Total	Percent
No	14	48.28%
Yes	13	44.83%
Don't know	2	6.90%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

#### The 13 Members that replied 'yes', provided the following reasons:

1. The process for scrutiny is sound, so it works well when items are called in / put forward for scrutiny. However, more items should be scrutinised to ensure that decisions are being made with full transparency, and also to raise awareness and understanding of the decisions made.
2. Specific decisions can and are reviewed in formal meetings with evidence given by the decision maker and anyone calling in the decision
3. Cross party opinions meaning no whipped decisions
4. Able to challenge the Executive and explore in depth decision making
5. If needed items can be called in and scrutinized properly. I know it's not a perfect system but it works and west lancs should keep the system
6. It gives members a chance to voice their ideas and opinions and ask questions about things that effect their wards. It also gives insight into the workings of the officers dealing with a variety of things
7. Scrutiny gives great opportunity for cross party working, close working and collaboration with Officers and outside agencies and the chance to look closely at Council decisions and workings.
8. The reason the scrutiny works is because those involved in the process are invested in it, they are driven to ensure that things are delivered well and strive for continuous improvement, the agenda is able to be influenced by the membership of the committee and is open to the public and public speaking is welcomed, therefore making it accessible
9. It gives cross party's the chance to look at ways of trying to improve or to ask the question why !
10. Overview and scrutiny is fundamental to the accountability of the Council, there seems to an integrated approach with the sharing of information between members and officers of the council and heads of services. Having reviewed previous annual reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees this appears to be working well.
11. It allows things to be looked at a more in depth
12. Allows non cabinet members and back benchers to ask questions

13. Because it is important that members have the ability to call things up in front of the committee and that they are properly scrutinised. To not have them would lead to decisions not being subjected to checks and balances.

**The 2 Members that responded 'don't know' provided reasons:**

1. Not on scrutiny committee.
2. do not feel opposition members have sufficient information or knowledge of background of item discussed. Need to be more involved.

**The 14 Members that responded 'No' provided suggestions for improvements:**

1. Initially a lack of training and explanation for members, this was solved into the second year of office.
2. The committees do not fulfil the intended purpose.
3. There is an increasing tendency to hold Cabinet meetings immediately before Council meetings. It is impossible to scrutinise decisions taken at such meetings
4. There is hardly any use of pre-decision scrutiny. This has been neglected in recent years. Items discussed following decisions see division along party lines. Call-in at 5 councilors of the O&S committee is unduly restrictive. Projects at Corporate Overview and Scrutiny are much too led by officers. The chairman and vice-chairman should be taking a lead. Overview and scrutiny chairmanships should NOT be with the ruling group.
5. Ruling group have overall control so can out vote other parties. Vice chair should be from opposing party, to make it fairer.
6. The ability of a Scrutiny committee to consider items seems to be limited by a scoring system that in practice has shown itself not fit for purpose I feel.
7. There's a failure to consult.  
Rules stop some members.
8. Better up to date information it should be led and Owned by members. Understanding what scrutiny is. Relevant investigation and reviews
9. Firstly, I feel that the chairman of O & S committees should be a member of the opposition parties and NOT of the overall ruling party. I believe that this would result in a more fair and constructive committee having an open and honest discussion. I also feel that all reports produced by officers to be scrutinised should be written in a more 'reader friendly' format and avoid using complicated terminology (This suggestion was agreed by the training specialist, David McGrath, who has hosted previous O & S workshops)
10. When the chair and majority of members of a scrutiny committee are whipped outside of the meeting, they will never have the scrutiny at heart. Regardless of having no whip in the meeting. I know full well how pointless it was for me to fill in this form because nothing will change but in order to it to, the chair and majority of members have to be from opposition.
11. More input from non Cabinet members and more decision making is required. Perhaps with some work aspects passed to committee prior to decision making by Cabinet and full council.

Much of what we have now is a tick box exercise. With Cabinet members receiving much more knowledge having been continually briefed by Council officers.

12. The governance of Scrutiny committees is dominated by the ruling party. This means that anything referred to overview and scrutiny will still be approved by the majority whip. The lack of items referred to scrutiny demonstrates the apathy inherent in a system that fails to uphold genuine scrutiny
13. There are differing understandings of what overview and scrutiny means, there needs to be clear guidance of what it means so all members and officers are working from the same point. Also, the politics needs to be taken out of it, otherwise good ideas don't come forward for fear of being rubbished politically early on, and can lead to party in power railroading through their ideas rather than having sound discussion
14.
  1. Papers and documents are not being read by committee members
  2. Lack of understanding of the function of the scrutiny Committee - At one meeting I suggested a Paper should be returned to Cabinet. This resulted in one member saying that was not our role. But another member asserted that this was exactly what the scrutiny committee should be doing.
  3. It's unclear what scrutiny can do with Cabinet resolutions., especially when it is stated that no'call in' is allowed because this item is to be heard by Scrutiny.

**2: Executive O & S Committee is responsible for post hoc scrutiny, which is undertaken by considering the minutes of the Cabinet meeting, after the meeting has taken place, in your opinion does this work well?**

Option	Total	Percent
No	11	37.93%
Yes	10	34.48%
Don't know	8	27.59%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**Of the 10 Members that responded 'yes', 9 provide reasons:**

1. Again, the process is sound for Exec O&S but more items should be scrutinised to increase transparency and to strengthen the decisions taken by having gone through the scrutiny process.
2. it meets the objectives set out by scrutiny
3. Extra layer of scrutiny over that of the cabinet, the controlling group and relevant officers. Allows transparency
4. Acts as a mirror for Cabinet, challenges rationale for decisions
5. The agenda for cabinet is published and cllrs can observe cabinet, the political groups allow for debate of the topics prior to cabinet, all of this helps to provide pre scrutiny, post scrutiny add to helping people evaluate the decisions and to be able to raise questions of any decisions, therefore I feel it meets its requirements
6. It gives the chance to understand and why if things need to be changed
7. It allows cross party to look at it
8. Always worked well
9. Because to not have it could lead to things being missed.

### **Of the 8 Members who replied 'don't know', 3 Members provided reasons:**

1. Too much red tape.
2. Being a new member, I would welcome some in-house training on the roles, functions and protocols regarding raising concerns on items under consideration. Or mentoring maybe by a more experienced member would be beneficial. Rather than having to search for this information within the constitution etc with very little guidance. With regard to the timings of the meeting it would seem to me this would be more effective if the committee met to discuss any issues arising from the set agenda then cabinet would be aware of concerns to discuss prior to decisions being made.
3. I am not part of the Exec. so have no background information. Need to be more involved by attending or at least by virtual participation.

### **The 11 Members that replied 'no', provided suggestions for improvement:**

1. Stop Cabinet meetings immediately prior to Council
2. The relevant officers should attend O&S. I asked three questions at two successive meetings early in the 2019/20 municipal year. There were NO officers present who could answer the questions.  
The chairman should go through minutes page by page - this does not consistently happen.
3. Less councillors should be needed to ask for item to go to overview and scrutiny
4. Draft should be circulated.
5. Minutes need to be more detailed. Better guidance training members better review of policy. A greater voice within council. Involving the public views
6. Improvement suggestions as previously mentioned.  
Basically, all cabinet discussions and decisions are 'pushed through' by the ruling party regardless of O & S observations, particularly those made by opposition party members on the committee.
7. Last year I asked for further companies to show us their compactable bins. This was agreed by the members and roundly ignored as it passed through with the original- and sole- presenter. I have asked for it to happen again and I am not holding my breathe. I fully assume that saving the council money is not top of the agenda.
8. This is just a tick box exercise with little or no options to deal with aspects of concern.
9. The Cabinet system fails to engender effective debate before decisions are made. Items tabled at the public Cabinet meeting have already been decided by the ruling party. The lack of interest from the public is testament to the lack of consideration given to public input.  
Greater effort needs to be made to engage in debate with Members and Public before items are brought to Cabinet.
10. It is a bit late looking at a decision after it has been taken, as it is too late to influence said decision. Surely the decision making should go the other way, ie put forward by Cabinet, considered by Scrutiny, then decided on by Cabinet with consideration of Scrutiny's views
11. understanding of what Scrutiny can do is not clear.  
Does Scrutiny merely 'note' the minutes?

### 3: Executive O & S Committee is responsible for pre-decision scrutiny in your opinion does this work well?

Option	Total	Percent
No	12	41.38%
Yes	11	37.93%
Don't know	6	20.69%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

#### Of the 11 Members that replied 'yes', 9 provided reasons:

1. Again, I don't think there are any issues with the process of scrutiny but it could be strengthened in regard to the number of items scrutinised and the level of detail covered. The process is sound but further training for members (and officers) would help to increase its efficacy.
2. Because of its key mechanism under Executive decision making
3. Can explore a decision and provide clarification and suggestions
4. An extra opportunity is given to examine forthcoming decisions.
5. It enables people to consider the reports and make recommendations, and enables cllrs to have informed argument a that they can lobby to cabinet to consider if they so wish
6. It allows non cabinet member s to also ask questions and how things work
7. As it allows the chance for more decisions
8. Because it works very well
9. Because it is important to have as many things checked as possible to uphold the confidence that the public have in the council

#### Of the 6 Members who replied 'don't know', 2 provided reasons:

1. Again I refer to my previous answer with regard to training of roles, responsibilities and processes / protocols of committee members. Reviewing the Annual reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees the processes in place do appear to work well and the Members updates are informative and timely therefore a good source of information sharing.
2. Do not have sufficient information to make a valid comment would appear to work well

#### The 12 Members that responded 'no', provided suggestions for improvement:

1. Not enough explanation of the background of issues, not enough opportunity to question.
2. There is no evidence Cabinet take any notice of comments. Perhaps Cabinet members had to come to the committee to answer questions that would enable genuine scrutiny to take place
3. Few if any matters are referred to O&S before decision. This is a major failing.
4. Ruling party out votes others .
5. If the council had a work plan going forward perhaps cabinet members would have the option to ask Scrutiny to collect relevant information or test out options etc?
6. The whole system requires review and revising.

7. Pre decision should provide councillors information for them to make comments and proposals and decisions it should be a selective approach through identifying items from cabinet.
8. As previous answers.
9. Decisions or a direction of travel has already been decided by Cabinet
10. Very few items are referred to Executive O&S. I believe it requires 5 Members to call in an item for consideration. This number should be lower to encourage greater scrutiny of decisions and the evidence that supports them
11. I have rarely seen pre-decision scrutiny, ever
12. It's not clear what Scrutiny can do on any items on the agenda apart from note the report or recommendations

**4: Executive O & S Committee is responsible for 'Call In', which is undertaken when 5 members of that Committee submit a request for a different decision to be taken from the decision made at Cabinet.**

**In your opinion does this work well?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No</b>	3	10.34%
<b>Yes</b>	24	82.76%
<b>Don't know</b>	2	6.90%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0.00%

**The 24 Members that answered 'yes' provided the following reasons:**

1. I have only experienced it on one occasion while on the committee, which had to be explained.
2. No. It means small groups on the Council will not have sufficient members on the committee to call in.
3. The need to describe an alternative decision is a good one.  
The requirement for 5 councillors to call-in is a high bar. I would favour it being reduced to two councillors. This would parallel the ability of a motion or amendment to be debated at full council if a proposer and seconder support it.
4. As with all of the scrutiny processes, I think the process of call in is sound but the understanding of it could be raised among members. If Cabinet has gone about deciding matters in a transparent and robust way, then the need for call in should be less, but there are occasions when decisions would benefit from the extra level of scrutiny that call in provides, particularly on issues that are of a sensitive nature or highly emotive to the general public. However, that would require more members to have a greater strategic understanding of decisions, so additional (and frequent) training in this area would help

strengthen the process further.

5. if it does not work well it is a fault of the cabinet/ scrutiny system.
6. No because we cannot supply the 5 members .  
This is the Cruz of the problem and why it does not work for all in what is considered a democratic country.
7. I have seen this work well, were these decisions are made
8. Yes, but 5 members for call in might be a little high. Some items could be overlooked.
9. Yes although occasionally and inevitably can be open to use for narrow political purpose, though thankfully very rarely at WL
10. Within my term this option has never been used, therefore it is difficult to fully evaluate, but as pre decision debate is welcomed, this function should not be heavily Italians, so therefore the fact it isn't supports that other processes are effective
11. Well yes if the whole history and reasons are all looked at and things to be noted
12. Call can work at times but sometimes the call in are not really relevant given the Item.  
Call does not happen enough and I think that's because of a lack of understanding of the reasons why members can call items in.
13. It can as long as not used for political gain
14. It would work well in principle if the majority of members weren't whipped into a vote in other committees.
15. No, as the opposition rarely call anything in. It is unclear if ruling group have influence over its scrutiny committee members to deter them from calling in their own items
16. Again, I don't think there are any issues with the process of scrutiny but it could be strengthened in regard to the number of items scrutinised and the level of detail covered.  
The process is sound but further training for members (and officers) would help to increase its efficacy.
17. Because of its key mechanism under Executive decision making
18. Can explore a decision and provide clarification and suggestions
19. An extra opportunity is given to examine forthcoming decisions.
20. It enables people to consider the reports and make recommendations, and enables cllrs to have informed argument a that they can lobby to cabinet to consider if they so wish
21. It allows non cabinet member s to also ask questions and how things work
22. As it allows the chance for more decisions
23. Because it works very well
24. Because it is important to have as many things checked as possible to uphold the confidence that the public have in the council

**Of the 2 Members that replied 'don't know', 1 Member provided a reason:**

Not fully, please see previous answers with regard to training, I do not know the process or protocol for calling in a decision or how and when the 5 members debate or discuss and agree ultimately agree to call in a decision.

**The 3 Members that replied 'no', provided reasons:**

1. Basically the whole process, Would like a training session please.
2. Call In is used very infrequently with many items barring call in
3. The lack of items called in in this way demonstrates how ineffective this system is. The requirement for 5 needs to be reduced to encourage greater scrutiny

**5: Executive O & S Committee is responsible for Policy & Development tied to the Cabinet cycle, this is undertaken by submitting reports that are being considered by Cabinet to that Committee for consideration, either prior to the meeting of Cabinet or following the meeting of Cabinet.**

**In your opinion does this work well?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No</b>	10	34.48%
<b>Yes</b>	12	41.38%
<b>Don't know</b>	7	24.14%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0.00%

**Of the 12 Members that replied 'yes', 10 Members provided reasons:**

1. Again, the process is sound. However, in practice, the reality of decision making through cabinet, where timescales are often tight, means that the process isn't always as rigorous as we might like. If the standard timetable was always adhered to, the process would be fine. Where reports are coming to cabinet at the last minute, the current process could be seen to struggle to deliver on scrutiny, even if this is only perception over reality. To be transparent, we need to ensure that late reports and decisions are able to undergo the same scrutiny as standard reports, so post hoc scrutiny is essential and should be encouraged. Where decisions are deemed to have been incorrect, but it is too late to reverse them, the post hoc scrutiny should deliver recommendations on how to better address similar matters in future.
2. Decisions are made effectively
3. Again, scrutiny and challenge. Takes decision making into a more public arena
4. This gives an extra opportunity for members to voice opinions, raise concerns and queries and have comments noted on Cabinet reports.
5. As good dialogue exists with the cabinet there should never be major policy decisions reached that are a surprise to the councillors
6. Again making sure to know the history and ask questions

7. The cycle in my opinion works well. The work plan should be agreed in advance focusing on areas of service delivery maybe more time between cabinet and scrutiny to allow members to recommend items that can make a real difference some recommendations will take several month to investigate.
8. So things can be looked at the same time
9. Always worked well
10. Because I would have heard otherwise if it didn't work well.

**Of the 7 Members that replied 'don't know', 5 Members provided reasons why:**

1. Have there been instances of this process? I'm not aware not having served on Exec O&S
2. I am confused. Are the cabinet discussions open for members to listen in to or are they just held by the ruling party or am I getting mixed up with the Cabinet Working Group?
3. As a new member I can only form my answer by reviewing previous minutes and the annual reports whereby the process does appear to work.  
In my option this would be an effective way to deliver reports to cabinet for consideration., ie. prior to the meeting.
4. Do not have sufficient information about this procedure.
5. This process is not visible or evident to Members who are not on the Committee. IF this was effective then there surely would be more items on which Members would have a view that merits listening to.

**Of the 10 Members that replied 'no', 9 Members provided suggestions for improvements:**

1. Lack of communication.
2. Inexperienced members.
3. See comments about cabinet meetings immediately prior to Council meetings
4. Requires cabinet to take a totally different approach. There are other changes that I refer to in my responses that are easier to resolve and should be the initial focus.
5. I may be wrong, but as I understand it and as previously mentioned, the ruling party tends to use the Leader to use his casting vote to push a decision through. I don't think that is fair.
6. As previous
7. I have no idea what any of this means, we could start with understanding what is being suggested here
8. The Council Plan was considered recently and it was obvious that some had not read the doc.  
I had read the Plan and made suggestions for alterations. But, I was cut off from completing my comments.  
Whereas other members thought it was not appropriate for detailed comments to be given.

**6. Corporate & Environmental O&S Committee is responsible for in depth review or policy development. The Committee sets its own work programme in this regard and details of this can be found via Constitution 3.6.**

**6 (a): Topics are chosen via a consultation exercise, usually via a press release, and e-mails to Councillors and the Corporate Management Team, there is also an option to carry out this exercise at a workshop session. Are you aware of this process?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No</b>	11	37.93%
<b>Yes</b>	18	62.07%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0.00%

**6 (b): Do you feel that this process for selecting topics works well?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No</b>	12	41.38%
<b>Yes</b>	9	31.03%
<b>Don't know</b>	8	27.59%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0.00%

**Of the 9 Members that replied 'yes', 7 Members provided reasons:**

1. we have a good working relationship of policy development within the council
2. Open to all
3. As I say read ask questions and listen to the public
4. Pooling ideas and elimination.
5. Policy's need to be looked at to make sure up to date
6. Policies are there to be amended if needed but not broken
7. Open and transparent to members and public for their input

**Of the 8 Members that replied 'don't know', 4 Members provided reasons:**

1. The processes for in-depth review and policy development seem adequate but haven't necessarily been tested sufficiently. As a result, it's hard to say if they are working well or not. More feedback / data around these matters would help to increase understanding and ensure that the processes were implemented in the most effective way.
2. Because there are so many important policies and such a global and national changing landscape, there is just not the resource to achieve everything that cllrs would like to achieve
3. I am a new member and my knowledge of how topics are chosen is related to what I have read within documents on the councils intranet site and from the recent

Scrutiny workshops attended. But I do not know the process on how to put forward a topic I wished to be considered for in-depth scrutiny.

4. Because I do not have experience of the process

**Of the 12 Members that replied 'no', 11 Members provided suggestions for improvement:**

1. Transparency and communication.
2. Strategic issues should be scrutinised.
3. Make the procedure better known & used more often
4. The whole committee should debate and agree the topics.
5. Review
6. Not enough responses which leaves the door open for undue attacks from minority groups. Wider consultations should be encouraged through social media links or telephone consultations
7. Better engagement with the members and community training workshops. Public meetings.
8. To date , the public consultation process has been poor eg 27 responses to the Pagoda issue and then questionnaires carried out via social media, which generated a huge response but the responses were, on the whole, ignored by the Council. Putting a few questionnaires in shops is not sufficient. Not everyone has the Champion delivered or even bothers to read it! A significant proportion of the community does not or will not access the internet (as acknowledged by the Council) so as well as social media surveys/questionnaires include leaflets being available at post offices, delivered to retirement homes and community centres.
9. I have not been aware of this process and in any case would feel that due consideration would not be given to any suggestions made.
10. Members should be made aware of what is being talked about here
11. It's not clear how to submit ideas to be included in this process

**6 (c): Topics submitted are scored for importance and impact on a scale of 1-4 using a scoring guide.**

**Importance – how well a topic fits with the Council’s key aims and priorities.**

**Impact – likely potential impact of outcomes from a scrutiny investigation of the topic in terms of community benefit.**

**The scoring guide can be found on the Council's website under Overview & Scrutiny. Scoring is undertaken by the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Opposition Spokespersons.**

**Do you think this process of scoring topic suggestions works well?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No</b>	3	10.34%
<b>Yes</b>	12	41.38%
<b>Don't know</b>	14	48.28%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0.00%

**Of the 12 Members that replied 'yes', 10 Members provided reasons:**

1. The council aims and priorities should be the principle process for setting the agenda for decision making, and so the scoring works because it is measured against them.
2. Prioritises subject according to relevance and importance
3. It’s very straightforward, relevant to Council’s aims and is fair
4. This helps when officers are there to also assist
5. A scoring guide I feel this is the best way forward
6. Scored against info and relevance.
7. See how they work or over lap with other policy
8. Think it works well
9. Scoring appears to be fair between political parties
10. Because councillors across all parties have an input

**Of the 14 Members that replied 'don't know', 10 Members provided reasons:**

1. Lack of communication.
2. Scoring is fine but should be by whole committee.
3. perhaps these terms are too vague - the scoring system has not been working to produce reports that made a valuable contribution in the past.
4. Need opportunity to explore problems and proposals and challenge them in a sensible way.
5. Never heard of this
6. This would be influenced by the understanding of the topic by those understanding the scoring so therefore could be heavily waited by lack of information
7. no

8. I have seen the scoring guide but I am unable to comment on how effective this has been in the past, the priorities set seem to good benchmarks.
9. The ruling party will always find a way to support the policy ideas they want to promote. Scores can always be biased to achieve the result you want. Only If scored by an independent Party will this methodology work.
10. Never heard of this scoring process

**The 3 Members that replied 'no' provided suggestions for improvement:**

1. Inexperience or lack of autonomy.
2. The opposition should have far more influence. The objective is to scrutinise the Cabinet & to have members of the same political party deciding what should be considered reduces the chance of discussing issues Cabinet would wish were not discussed
3. It is a very small pool of people who undertake the scoring, which is a cover for basically they get to decide what is taken forward

**6 (d): In depth Scrutiny is usually undertaken by the main committee, however it may also be carried out by informal cross party member working groups. Members of these informal groups can include Cabinet Members, although they should not take a lead role. The only informal group under O&S is the Member Development Commission. Informal Working Groups of this type have been established under Cabinet (Local Plan, Leisure, Grants to Voluntary Bodies, Community Wealth Building, Estates Regeneration, Flooding & Drainage, Landlord Services Committee), which do allow Cabinet Members to take a lead role.**

**Can you give the Member Development Commission your views in this regard?**

1. Working groups tend to be slightly less party political and have the potential to be a very productive part of the process. They should be open to non-voting non-councillors too, if those individuals can bring expertise to a particular topic.
2. Should be cross party
3. Working groups are a very effective way of working through decisions but they are entirely dependent on the strength of member input. In theory, they provide a useful forum for allowing members to air their views and to discuss matters without overt political influence, while working through the detail of specific issues. In practice, the level of political steering depends entirely on the individual members and their willingness to approach matters on the basis of community benefit, rather than political gain. This can veer dramatically from extreme to the other depending upon the members involved. When the members involved are willing to work to shape and inform decision making on the basis of community benefit, putting politics to one side in favour of bringing experience and knowledge to bear, then the working groups are a highly effective and vital process. They allow for members to bring their personal experience and skills to the process, which can only benefit decision making by making it more robust. Only when members try to play political games within working groups do they fail

to deliver for the public.

4. These are held in private and also only report back to cabinet as far as I can see, Surely if a working group happens under the auspices of 'scrutiny' then it should report back to its parent scrutiny committee for that committee to make recommendations to cabinet.
5. After due consultation with all concerned so that opinions and ideas can be provided.
6. The group works really well with all members able to input information.
7. It works in its present format.
8. Works well, allows for consensus
9. If I was to give a policy opinion I wouldn't do it through these means
10. I think its important for those in a lead role to have experience of the area covered by the working group, if this means they are cabinet members then that is ok. Its important that any other member with equal experience could be given the same opportunity.
11. Cabinet members can bring in depth knowledge to a working group
12. As the cabinet members are not Hierarchical in there manner I do not have an issue of there involvement, however I would comment that there involvement and in depth knowledge of the subject matter can be a real asset to the process
13. Yes it shows how close things can be in the borough
14. I think it works well with a good representation of the parties
15. no, because I do not understand enough about it.  
I think a training session is appropriate to furnish Members with the workings of the council instead of them trying to navigate their way through all of this!
16. To have in-depth scrutiny it must include all key stakeholders and those with knowledge to share. This should be within a forum that enables open discussion, transparency and for all views to be considered without judgement. If Cabinet members are best placed to take a lead role then consideration should be given as to whether the above can be facilitated or if Committee members have any objections.
17. Additional feedback to cabinet to help with decision making.
18. All the party's mentioned and above as it needs input from all
19. It works well in my opinion
20. Training is available to members from time to time by Member Development Commission. No in depth knowledge of Commission or how many take up the offer of training
21. Happy with this to continue
22. As previous
23. There need to be much more sharing of information with all non-cabinet members. With more consultation taken with scrutiny by Cabinet.
24. As with earlier comments, the process is devalued by the fact that Cabinet members chair the Working Groups and therefore the ruling party will always support their own proposals.
25. Opposition play too much politics with cross part groups which is why these would often be setup as cabinet groups instead of scrutiny sub committees.
26. Not sure how effective they are. Council needs to be more inclusive. Citizens consultation panels should be established to gain ideas of what our customers want and not just decide from the top

**7: Any Councillor is able to submit an item on any matter or a Councillor call for action on to the agenda for Corporate & Environmental O & S Committee. The Councillor is then able to attend the meeting and present that item to the Committee and the members of the Committee will decide what further action to take. The Protocol can be found at Constitution 18.3.**

**<https://democracy.westlancs.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Cid=305&info=1&MD=Constitution>**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No</b>	6	20.69%
<b>Yes</b>	13	44.83%
<b>Don't know</b>	10	34.48%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0.00%

**Of the 13 Members that replied 'yes', 11 Members provided reasons:**

1. It works well but, once again, the process is entirely dependent on the effective understanding and commitment of members.
2. It is important that all councillors are able to do this to serve all residents of the borough
3. Open to all
4. Do not change this !
5. It can be that thru other committee's things link on and needs to be investigated an need to be approved
6. Every member has the opportunity to call in an item the process is easy to follow and can help resolve issues outside of council policy
7. It seems an effective process for members to raise concerns.
8. It allows the person who. may. no be a cabinet member
9. It allows all to have a voice and others opinions are heard which is good
10. There appears to be a reasonable response from Cllrs for call in where appropriate. Call In appears to work well
11. Because it is important that things can be called

**Of the 10 Members that replied 'don't know', 6 Members provided reasons:**

1. No experience of this
2. The idea is a sound one but I worry the rules governing when a call for action can be made are too restrictive.
3. System weighted towards ruling party  
Others unable to promote ideas or suggestions.
4. Have only witnessed this happening once so am unable to comment further.
5. I have not seen this process in place as it has not been used during my term, however I have no issue with this provision existing

6. Firstly, I wasn't aware of that process and secondly I am not aware of any Councillor having called anything in and presented it to the committee. I am not experienced enough and do not possess enough knowledge on this subject.

**The 6 Members that replied 'no' provided suggestions for improvements:**

1. Communication.
2. How often is this exercised?
3. Judging by the items on the agenda for scrutiny committees this is not working - either not needed or not delivering what is needed.
4. There is little knowledge of this from members with many not knowing how to progress these
5. Not enough awareness of these given to councillors, no support from officers when it does happen
6. How many times has this occurred?  
I've never heard of this happening.

**8: General Information Items (not including planning and licensing matters) are circulated via the Corporate & Environmental O & S Members Update. This includes items in relation to delegated decisions, performance monitoring, One West Lancs, LCC Health Scrutiny and Police & Crime Panel meetings. Any Councillor can request these items to be included on the Corporate O&S Committee agenda for scrutiny. The Protocol can be found at Constitution 9.2. <https://democracy.westlancs.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Cid=305&info=1&MD=Constitution>**

**1. Do you think this process works well?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No</b>	5	17.24%
<b>Yes</b>	15	51.72%
<b>Don't know</b>	9	31.03%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0.00%

**Of the 15 Members who replied 'yes', 12 Members provided reasons:**

1. This is fine. Councillors though do not use it because of wider problems with how scrutiny works.
2. The process is sound but should be used more often by members, where they have a detailed understanding of the issue and can bring something new to bear through the process.
3. Again it is important that all councillors are able to bring items to meetings
4. Open process
5. I've had no problems with this system

6. It means that many items that are for information do not end up filling an agenda, which allows for a more focused agenda
7. Yes as you can go to officers ask for in-depth questions and portfolio holders
8. Although we only get access to the reports pack one week before the committee meeting, it does give members the opportunity to read (again, complex and long winded reports) raise questions and hopefully get answers from council officers at the committee meeting.
9. It seems an effective way for members to raise an issue for scrutiny
10. So questions can be asked Why it is going good or bad. Up or down
11. Works well
12. Because input from as many sources is important

**Of the 9 Members that replied 'don't know', 5 Members provided reasons**

1. No experience
2. As before complete review needed
3. Cannot make a comment either way. Members needs to be more involved e.g. knowledge and understanding. Would appear to be working well.
4. Not aware of any items circulated to Members as part of this process
5. Never heard of this happening

**The 5 Members that replied 'no' have provided suggestions for improvement:**

1. Transparency and communication.
2. Training.
3. It is not at all clear what exactly a member needs to be referring back to committee, as these reports are varied in their format etc.
4. It comes back to councillors engaged with the process and keeping up to date by reading papers/ reports and understanding what's going on. I think training awareness responsibility of councillors. Should be part of a contract when they sign up to be a councillor.
5. I never knew about this. Moving to paper has made it even more difficult to keep abreast of all the information thrown at members

**9: The Corporate & Environmental O & S Committee considers performance management reports, including the annual reports from West Lancs Community Leisure/ Serco and BT Lancashire Services Ltd. Do you think this works well?**

Option	Total	Percent
No	8	27.59%
Yes	17	58.62%
Don't know	4	13.79%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**Of the 17 Members that replied 'yes', 14 Members provided reasons:**

1. It works well.
2. It works reasonably well.
3. Again, there is no issue with the process, but the efficacy of members can vary wildly, which means that the level of scrutiny varies too.
4. Re performance management it is possible on an item raised by a member for an officer to attend to address concerns raised.
5. to ensure that everything works well for the residents of the borough
6. These 3rd party organisations should be aware that their performance is scrutinised. They represent the council in some of the most front-facing roles and as such should be scrutinised further!
7. Open process although unsure of influence over external bodies providing services to the Council
8. A good opportunity for queries to be raised via cross party working and for suggestions to be noted and minuted.
9. Statistical data is fine, but sometimes offers of further information do not come to fruition
10. Although the presentations/reports are all generally glowing and positive, it does provide the opportunity for members to raise concerns that they may have over the running/management of the organizations.
11. Important statistics indicate performance of council activities.
12. So things can be monitored and to make sure kept to a high standard
13. Appears to work well from information received. Lack of in depth knowledge
14. Because scrutiny is important when services are being used to ensure value for money and that what is supposed to be given is indeed given

**Of the 4 Members that replied 'don't know', 2 Members provided reasons:**

1. No experience
2. If reports are distributed for full consideration ie. in a timely way it would seem to work.

**Of the 8 Members that replied 'no', 7 Members provided suggestions for improvement**

1. It is not well publicised, nor are the reports.
2. Needs rethink
3. I T has been the biggest problem
4. There needs to be a lead to challenge more often. More transparency more communication
5. Little confidence in the accuracy and validity of reports. Statistics are all too easily manipulated to portray positive outcomes. Measures are often ambiguous or meaningless and do not instil confidence that the Council is performing effectively.
6. Seems to just be a rubber-stamping. Even where questions or concerns are raised, there isn't the function available to follow up on as they don't have to return to the committee for 12 months, by which point the membership may have changed and the matters raised long since forgotten about

- I sub'd on this committee once and raised concerns about not meeting targets on recycling AND that the targets were too low. We should be more ambitious. But my concerns fell into a black hole. I made representations to the Portfolio holder that we should introduce recycling machines as in Denmark. But was told that this would affect the targets and we may lose allowances from LCC

**10: The Corporate & Environmental O & S Committee acts as the Council's Crime & Disorder Committee. (See Constitution 18.1) <https://democracy.westlancs.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Cid=305&info=1&MD=Constitution> and it receives a presentation annually from representatives of the West Lancashire Community Safety Partnership.**

**Do you think this meets/facilitates the requirement for effective scrutiny?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No</b>	9	31.03%
<b>Yes</b>	13	44.83%
<b>Don't Know</b>	7	24.14%
<b>Not Answered</b>	0	0.00%

**Of the 13 Members that replied 'yes', 9 Members provided reasons:**

- Explained clearly.
- It provides a suitable forum for scrutiny and discussion. It is therefore up to members to ensure that they deliver to the highest standards.
- Seen it action, useful function
- Members can ask questions 365 days a year of cabinet members and officers? Therefore an annual summary is sufficient
- Yes can ask direct questions
- See previous answer.  
Also, members have the opportunity to have issues explained and clarified where necessary after the presentation. I usually enjoy these.
- If comments feedback was taken on board
- We can keep updated on service
- Because scrutiny is important

**Of the 7 Members that replied 'don't know', 4 Members provided reasons:**

- No experience
- Not aware of
- unsure
- I would like more information and be more involved in order to make a valid comment

**Of the 9 Members that replied 'no', 8 Members provided suggestions for improvement:**

- These are important subjects that should be scrutinised by full council.

2. Needs a representative of the police present as well as the council lead officer.
3. Not clear on the powers or scope at present of the Community Safety Partnership
4. 3rd party auditing would be better at uncovering all pertinent information
5. I would feel better if the brief came from the PCC or from the police themselves.
6. Not enough engagement or challenges again members need to understand their role
7. If this was effective then we wouldn't be seeing the steady increase in petty and anti social crime. Police resources are constantly being stated as being stretched and the crimes that are repeatedly committed are not able to be prosecuted, typically traffic offences and anti social behaviour. The committee should be addressing the lack of resources and directing the focus on community policing and well being.
8. Never knew this was the council's crime and disorder committee. Much like the previous question and answer, one half hour presentation per year is pathetic - where is the actual scrutiny?
9. Yet again, this is not including the wider public . We need more consultations.

**11. The Overview and Scrutiny terms of reference are contained at Constitution 9.1**

**<https://democracy.westlancs.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Cid=305&info=1&MD=Constitution>, and, as described above, these duties are currently split across 2 Committees (Executive O&S Committee and Corporate & Environmental O&S Committee), further details in relation to the split of duties can be found at Constitution 3.6: Article 6 – Overview & Scrutiny Committees**

**11 (a): In your opinion, how many scrutiny committees do you think West Lancashire should have?**

One Committee	7	
Two Committees	16	<p>I think the current committees have been sufficient but if more items were to be brought through the process then perhaps splitting out the committees might be necessary.</p> <p>I think the 2 we have are enough, otherwise there is the danger of getting bogged down 'scrutinising' to much and not actioning things.</p> <p>This question needs a lot of thought and</p>

		should be discussed either in political group or across parties.
Three Committees	2	
Four – Ten committees	1	
As many as are needed for effective scrutiny.	1	
Can't say	2	

**11 (b): What would your suggestion be on the name/s of the Committees?**

1. Council Scrutiny	
2. The Executive's decisions must be scrutinised. The funding and relationship with external agencies whose work impacts the borough council's role and expenditure should be scrutinised. The legal and financial aspects of the council's activities should be scrutinised.	
3. Scrutiny committee	2
4. Overview and scrutiny	2
5. As they stand, the names are sufficient but we should always be looking at ways to make our processes clearer and more understandable to the general public. Retitling the committees as simply as, e.g. "Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Executive (cabinet) Decisions" and "Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Corporate & Environmental Decisions" could help increase transparency by making the functions clearer, but more thought should be given to this.	
6. council and community council as service provider or split between holding cabinet to account for service delivery and scrutinising the council's relation to other bodies but in either case there is overlap between the two. The present Exec remit relates directly to cabinet current business which is clear but limited to post hoc scrutiny role. Pre-decision scrutiny should be possible from either committee... so perhaps the present remit is a reasonable division for post decision/event scrutiny but the resources of both need to be able to generate task and finish group activities and the members to be a pool of resources to support any such T&F group?	
7. Needs rethink	
8. Overview and Scrutiny, and Executive Overview and Scrutiny	

9. Executive, Corporate, Environmental as 3 separate entities	
10. 1. Executive Scrutiny Committee 2. Corporate Scrutiny Committee (Drop the 'overview')	
11. OK as they are.	7
12. If one is only is required then it is a General O/S Cttee More than one should be discussed in political group or across parties	
13. 1 scrutiny ran more often with opposition chair and more members.	
14. One for each area of scrutiny, eg crime and disorder, leisure, corporate, environmental, executive, etc	

**11 (c): The main functions of Overview & Scrutiny, and the Committee that function is considered by, are listed below. Which functions would you like to see remaining under that Committee and which function would you like see either move to Executive O&S Committee or Corporate & Environmental O&S Committee or an additional new Committee:**

**Functions currently under Executive O&S Committee: - Post hoc & pre decision scrutiny & policy & budget development tied to the Cabinet cycle**

Option	Total	Percent
Remain/no change	18	62.07%
Changes to Corporate & Environmental	3	10.34%
New Committee	8	27.59%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**Functions currently under Executive O&S Committee: - Call in**

Option	Total	Percent
Remain/no change	17	58.62%
Changes to Corporate & Environmental	3	10.34%
New Committee	9	31.03%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**Functions currently under Executive O&S Committee: - Acts as the co-ordinating committee for overview & scrutiny**

Option	Total	Percent
Remain/no change	16	55.17%
Changes to Corporate & Environmental	3	10.34%
New Committee	10	34.48%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

### 11 (d): Functions currently under Corporate & Environmental O & S Committee:

c) Functions currently under Corporate & Environmental O&S Committee - In-depth review or policy development as set out in the work programme agreed by the committee each year

Option	Total	Percent
Remain/no change	17	58.62%
Changes to Executive O&S	3	10.34%
New Committee	9	31.03%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

c) Functions currently under Corporate & Environmental O&S Committee - Member update items

Option	Total	Percent
Remain/no change	19	65.52%
Changes to Executive O&S	2	6.90%
New Committee	8	27.59%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

c) Functions currently under Corporate & Environmental O&S Committee - Member items/CCfA) (See Section 18.3 for Protocol)

Option	Total	Percent
Remain/no change	18	62.07%
Changes to Executive O&S	3	10.34%
New Committee	8	27.59%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

d) Functions currently under Corporate & Environmental O&S Committee - Performance monitoring. This also includes scrutiny of the One West Lancashire minutes and the LCC Health Scrutiny Committee Minutes.

Option	Total	Percent
Remain/no change	14	48.28%
Changes to Executive O&S	4	13.79%
New Committee	11	37.93%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**e) Functions currently under Corporate & Environmental O&S Committee - Performance Management reports, including the Annual Reports from West Lancs Community Leisure/ Serco and BT Lancashire Services Limited**

Option	Total	Percent
Remain/no change	16	55.17%
Changes to Executive O&S	2	6.90%
New Committee	11	37.93%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**f) Functions currently under Corporate & Environmental O&S Committee - Acts as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee**

Option	Total	Percent
Remain/no change	17	58.62%
Changes to Executive O&S	1	3.45%
New Committee	11	37.93%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

## **12: Can you provide your views on how scrutiny members could take a more strategic role?**

1. Training.
2. They must undergo training in their role, the function of the committee and output expected from the committee.
3. Earlier consideration of items
4. It requires the political groups to assign responsibilities to the councillors in their groups but then the ruling group and lead officers to share more thinking at an earlier stage with opposition spokespersons. These spokespersons sit on scrutiny committees and could provide a more informed view.
5. Have a fairer number of councillors from each party on the committee
6. For me, the key element is for members to undertake further training on making strategic decisions. That would ensure that members are fully aware of the council's aims and priorities, and able to make strategic decisions to ally scrutiny to them.
7. Members need to be empowered to put forward topics for T&F groups that engage members and make a contribution to the council's

8. By cross party discussion on important matters.
9. By supporting the cabinet, and acting as a sounding board
10. To ensure all members understand the information they are taking in it could be good to see each member make a small submission with their personal views on the items for reference only.
11. Need to be informed and proactive
12. I have sometimes found some scrutiny committee reading a bit overwhelming but have found that discussing items with other members helps. This depends on the item covered.
13. Further meetings with relevant Officers, to see how their suggestions are working in action.
14. This is difficult for those who work full time, but being able to meet with the authors of the reports before they are finalised to discuss points in more detail would be a good provision
15. Member need to want to engage with the process and committees functions take up training to get a better understanding
16. Having access to more reader friendly reports that are not full of council terminology that is off putting and wearying to read.
17. Following on from the workshops to identify topics for working groups to work with heads of service and officers on priorities and policy formation
18. Maybe member visits to areas under scrutiny to see first-hand any issues that could be dealt with more effectively.
19. Maybe have a work shop before main committee to ask more and allow things to come back in a shorter time ??
20. Be more involved in the business of item under scrutiny. Be part of that cttee or listen and watch by virtual participation. Knowledge gives more confidence to scrutinise.
21. To lead on certain aspects of work in consultation with Portfolio Holders.
22. For Scrutiny to be effective and strategic, the committees must be chaired by a Member from an opposition party. There is no scrutiny when the ruling party simply has the majority to dismiss any challenge to decisions they have already taken
23. Perhaps they could be offered a more strategic role. Come up with ideas and submit to cabinet member for consideration by relevant portfolio holder
24. Need for further training for understanding of process of scrutiny and all should read the documents.  
But there is no opportunity for the committees to raise strategic ideas when only considering papers with predetermined recommendations

### **13: Do you have any further suggestions for making improvements to scrutiny in general?**

1. It should feedback and BE SEEN to feedback to the running of the council.
2. The vice chair of scrutiny should be from an opposition party
3. Only more strategic decision making training for members.
4. Complete review needed so all members can put forward Ideas and make sensible contributions
5. Maybe lay members?

6. I think we need to understand scrutiny better. I know we have had training but I feel that as a group/council we could work out what scrutiny means to US. There seems to be a few different ideas as to what scrutiny is. I see it as looking at things a bit more in depth and being 'critical' in a positive way to find best practices and ways forwards though projects or items.
7. Agendas could be shorter, or meeting could take place every other month.
8. Training/Introduction sessions for newly elected members instead of just throwing them in at the deep end and expecting them to understand how it all works and what is going on. I am still struggling at committee meetings and based on the lack of input from some other committee members, I am guessing that they do not understand half of what is being 'scrutinized' either!

Also, regular refresher sessions for committee members to attend. I found David McGrath's workshops informative and refreshing, yet I don't see any evidence of the scrutiny committee adopting any of his ideas or approaches, we all just appear to muddle on with the same tactics and methods.

9. As previously stated in house training or mentoring for new members when delegated to the committees.
10. Presentations are good but sometimes site visits are useful.
11. more knowledge of item under scrutiny and more involvement in process so that an understanding is reached giving more confidence to ask questions.
12. We had a presentation about effective scrutiny earlier in the year. There have been no moves to establish best practice scrutiny in West Lancashire. The fact that we paid consultants to make this presentation and then do nothing about it shows the ineffectiveness of scrutiny in our Council.
13. Larger membership, more members may mean more people actually read the papers. Or more committees, meaning members have a more defined focus
14. More training and members should be reading papers