



Councillor Tim Barker is Chair of Shropshire Council's Lead Scrutiny Committee. Here he explains how you can help set the Scrutiny agenda

All of us have heard of - and perhaps listened to and watched on TV recently - sessions of Parliamentary Select Committees.

Although Shropshire Council isn't Parliament, it has its equivalent - Full Council - and has elected Councillors. It has a Cabinet and a Leader who run the administration of its affairs and regular meetings of all Councillors.

Unlike Parliament these meetings don't happen daily, so much of the debating and questioning goes on in other public meetings of various committees responsible for looking at aspects of the council's work.

Very importantly amongst these committees are five which are called 'Scrutiny Committees', these are the nearest thing we have to Select Committees and, although not the same they do have similar purposes.

These bodies carry out what is called 'scrutiny' of the Cabinet and the Executive's running of the council.

Their main role is to **drive improvement of our services** and those of our partners for the benefit of local people. They are made up of open-minded members of the council who provide a 'critical friend' challenge in the development of council policy and performance management. They can examine and ask for changes to decisions made by Cabinet. You'll find more information overleaf.

A very important part of what they do is to **listen to the views of local people**, either indirectly through the experiences and knowledge of council members, or directly by looking at what is said in the media or by asking people to say what they think.

My colleagues and I, have decided to ask anyone who is interested or has a view to use a new way of talking to us.

We are asking you to use our new Facebook page - called **Shape My Shropshire** - to let me and my colleagues know what you think about services, how we should change them, what we should do more of, or indeed anything else you want to say.

I can promise that we will deal with every issue or point you raise as quickly as we can, either by giving you a direct answer or by directing you to either another site or body if that would be better. Please give this a try - I look forward to seeing what you have to say. Search for 'Shape My Shropshire' next time you're on Facebook.

