

**Responding to the IDeA Scrutiny Fitness Check
Draft Action Plan**

	IDeA Recommendation	Actions	Intended/desired outcomes	By whom	By when
1	<i>Develop and agree a shared vision for scrutiny in Shropshire to ensure the role has clarity of purpose.</i> (paragraphs 18-19, 42, 49)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose a vision and purpose for Scrutiny Members through Member Working Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a clarity of purpose and role among councillors and officers Vision and purpose is shared and understood by partners Enhanced understanding and relationship between executive and scrutiny, building on the provisions within the Constitution and Practical Guides to Scrutiny 	Member Working Group	June 2010
2	<i>Ensure there are regular opportunities for constructive dialogue between executive members, senior officers and the chairs of overview and scrutiny about the scrutiny work programme.</i> (paragraphs 20, 43-46, 63-64)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairs of Scrutiny to meet bi-monthly with Leader and Chief Executive (see recommendation 4) Schedule attendance of Cabinet Member to update scrutiny committee on portfolio activity as appropriate Encourage attendance of Scrutiny Chairs at meetings of Cabinet on Scrutiny issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help to ensure overview and scrutiny has a timely focus on the important issues for Shropshire. More regular dialogue and engagement with Cabinet and senior officers regarding the scrutiny work programme 	Scrutiny Support Officers	<p>First one held October 2010</p> <p>Bi-monthly from October 2010</p>
		Develop a work programme that includes : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy development Both strategic and public interest issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a more balanced workload Provides scrutiny with a valuable role in raising the profile of an issue and 	Chairs of Scrutiny with Support Officers	October 2010

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partner and council areas of responsibility • scrutiny and overview work • hot topics or big issues where Scrutiny can make a difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • catalyst for action from difference agencies • Fits better with the context of Total Place • Scrutiny is more integrated into the strategic work of the Council • Scrutiny will be looking at the right things and the right time 		
3	Further develop the relationships between scrutiny and LSP partners, to enhance mutual understanding and expectations of the scrutiny role. (paragraphs 21-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a protocol with the broader Shropshire Partnership that sets a framework for a new relationship and role within the context of the recent Home Office guidance [i.e. willing to be scrutinised]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual expectations of scrutiny members and partners of the community safety scrutiny process are clearer 	Chair of Scrutiny Chairs Group & Chair of Safer Shropshire Partnership with Support Officers input	October 2010
4	Revise and develop scrutiny committee structures (paragraphs 47-48, 50)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a management/co-ordinating body of Scrutiny Chairs, chaired by the Chair of the Performance and Strategy Committee to meet bi-monthly and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have regular dialogue with the Executive and senior management - Effectively manage the Council's scrutiny business and co-ordinate the work programme - Share practice and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better co-ordination and management of an annual scrutiny work programme • Clearer commissioning of scrutiny work (task and finish) and the scrutiny research budget • Sharing of practice and learning to inform the future and continued development of the scrutiny function • A more external and strategic focus 	Assistant Chief Executive Legal & Democratic Services	First meeting October 2010

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		<p>in managing the work programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a senior officer champion 	communications		
6	<i>Introduce an annual 'scrutiny development day' (paragraph 55)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose and programme to enable: A regular self-evaluation/review of scrutiny, facilitates sharing of learning and practice, informs the annual report and shapes the scrutiny work programme for the following year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny is more integrated into the strategic work of the Council Work is informed by a wider range of people and information Work programmes are developed more systematically Learning and experience of members will further develop the scrutiny function The development of the scrutiny function is shaped, informed and owned by members 	Assistant Chief Executive Legal & Democratic Services	Late September 2010
7	<i>Further develop how overview and scrutiny enables the voice and concerns of the public (paragraphs 29-30 and 38-39)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a more two-way relationship between the scrutiny function and LJsCs, helping to ensure scrutiny is informed by local people's experience and perspective Develop a communications plan/protocol to ensure the successes of overview and scrutiny are effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny gets appropriate credit for the work it does and improvements to which it has contributed Successful scrutiny is effectively communicated to a wide range of stakeholders Type of support scrutiny 	<p>Head of Community Working & Head of Performance</p> <p>Scrutiny Support Officers with Communications</p>	Late October 2010

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		<p>promoted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider linking a Communications Officer to each Scrutiny Committee • Develop a mechanism to communicate back to members of the public who have participated (via questions, statements, and petitions of which notice has been given) • Make better use of website by including more information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publish work programmes - Information on how people can get involved including guidance and promoting public question time on scrutiny agendas - Publish completed Task and Finish Group reports and/or annual reports • Consider the use of e-democracy tools to engage local people and communities – e.g. online discussion forums, engage with any existing social networking 	<p>can expect from the Council, in terms of publicity is agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Chairs forge/continue positive relationships with the media • Opportunities for the public to participate in the scrutiny process are maximised • The concerns of local people and communities are reflected in the work of scrutiny • Compliance with forthcoming guidance from Central Government on the petitions duty. • Uses existing consultation and engagement mechanisms to both inform the work of scrutiny and promote and publicise its role • Increases participation of key stakeholders in scrutiny work and scrutiny reflects the public voice • Segments of the population that would not necessarily 	Officers	

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			engage via the more traditional methods have access		
8	Further develop the role of overview and scrutiny in performance management (paragraphs 60-61)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus activity on exception reporting, challenging target setting, and ensuring the council responds proactively and robustly to external challenge, audit and inspection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O&S adds value and does not duplicate monitoring work undertaken by others Ensures council responds proactively and robustly to external challenge, audit and inspection Shifts balance from monitoring activities to in-depth reviews that provides better outcomes for the people of Shropshire 	Head of Performance	October 2010
9	Ensure that there are clearer processes for appointing co-opted members to Scrutiny Committees and they receive an induction package covering roles, responsibilities and procedures. (paragraphs 32-34)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a regular refresh of co-opted members, allowing the flexibility for Committees to appoint their own Provide induction activity for co-opted members and have access to training and development Consider more involvement of non-statutory co-optees in Task & Finish Groups Committees to decide on appointment of co-optees for relevant items as and when required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of co-opted members continue to be realised and maximised, e.g: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures a range of perspectives and interests are represented. Provides direct access to experience and expertise Engages with hard to reach groups Adds value from service user's point of view 	Assistant Chief Executive Legal & Democratic Services	January 2011

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10	<i>Provide a programme of learning and development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure future learning and development opportunities are linked to the role descriptions that have been developed • In the context of more in depth review work and critical friend challenge of partner organisations - provide further development for Members on questioning skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members will benefit from further development and support • The development of the scrutiny function is shaped, informed and owned by members 	Head of Organisational Development Unit	January 2011