



TRAINING COURSE EVALUATION

Course Title	Scrutiny of Finance and Performance
Date	10 th March 2008

1. My personal objectives were: (please tick box)

Exceeded	
Met	3
Partially Met*	3
Not Met*	

*Please comment and provide details of your objectives which were unmet.

I think that the scrutiny of both budget and performance issues were well covered and put in context.

I'm still not sure how to be a more effective scrutineer of financial performance – probably needs a culture change within our Council and I don't know how to bring that about!

Perhaps we need to look at integrating the Star Chamber and B&PP processes.

I don't know ! I just felt rather un fulfilled.

2. The time allocated for the event was: (please tick box)

Too much*	1
Sufficient	4
Too little*	1

*Please comment and provide details of how the duration of the event could be improved.

I think the time allowed was sufficient although personally I would have preferred the event to have started earlier and finished earlier.

The first couple of hours seemed to drag on a bit – we spent too long listening to the speaker and the slides had lengthy definitions which seemed unnecessary to me.

3. Please rate the following: (please tick box)

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Effectiveness of the Speaker	2	1	3	
Relevance of the event	2	3	1	
Pace		2	3	1
Supporting Documentation (if any)		3	2	1
Visual Aids (if any)		2	4	

4. Which part of the event did you find *most* useful? Why? Could it have been improved?

The group work and discussion were the most useful parts of the event as this allowed for the sharing of ideas and for both Members and Officers to hear about and understand how arrangements differed across authorities

Getting into practical details of scrutinising the BVPI data was useful but I think we spent a bit too long on this in our groups – I had to leave before there was any plenary discussion or conclusions.

I also really enjoyed James Doble's contributions! It's useful for councillors to understand how officers think (and vice versa I expect).

The point was well made about our tendency to spend more time scrutinising details and small amounts of income/expenditure, rather than large figures and the 'big picture' of service delivery that are less easy to understand.

Interventions by council officers [one of whom has left]very useful. More unvarnished officer interaction with members needed. If we are doing things badly/well we need to be told

Group work was interesting but not many contributed

General awareness of the ability to challenge constructively

5. Which part of the course did you find *least* useful? Why?

I don't think there was any part of the event which I did not find of use. Whilst I did not have any issue with the quality, effectiveness or balance of the presentations, I suppose this was not as beneficial as learning from each other in group discussion.

The first hour or two - pace was slow and I didn't feel very engaged.

But partly because this is a big subject to get to grips with and it's easy to feel disempowered by it. Trying to think of examples of where we have been effective scrutineers of finance/performance in the past was quite depressing – there didn't seem to be very many! However, it was useful to realise that.

None

I wasn't able to stay for it all so perhaps the most useful was after I had gone.

6. What, if anything, would you like added to the event content?

In terms of presentation, maybe alternative forms, such as a video in addition to PowerPoint.

In terms of subject matter, although linked, budgets and performance might merit separate and slightly shorter sessions. Whilst appreciating that it was primarily a Lancaster event, it might also have been useful to have invited speakers from other authorities, maybe from outside Lancashire to give a more regional/national perspective.

More hands-on practical stuff – perhaps role playing questioning of officers on a particular issue (I remember doing this kind of thing in scrutiny training a few years ago and found it useful – the 'officers' had information that they would only reveal if specifically questioned about it by the panel, which seemed realistic and emphasised the need to ask probing, relevant questions).

Methods plus all councillors should have council scrutiny handbook for reference. I have attended several training session but have yet to receive this document

7. Would you have preferred a different ratio of teaching methods?

Yes/No

(E.g. more discussion groups and fewer lectures?)

No

If yes, please say what and why

I think that, overall, the balance was right.

As above

Specific to training needs

Just a better mix in the groups – some had lots of people in them ours was missing lots !

8. What impact do you think the training will have on your ability to act as an effective representative of the local community?

I have a better understanding of the scrutiny role relating to finance and the budget

It will enable me to better consider how scrutiny of budget and performance can be taken forward in Lancashire and hopefully contribute to making the process more timely and transparent.

Unsure

Useful/more if better focused.

I think I'll think more about costs and seek more information if I feel concerned rather than accept answers given to me

Some improvement

Please make any additional comments you may have about the event in the space below.

I thought that the event was extremely informative and useful and it was good that it concentrated on two specific issues of some complexity rather than being too general. I thought it was a shame that the majority of authorities in Lancashire were not represented but this may have been partly to do with the early evening finish.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Completed questionnaires should be returned to Member Services as soon as you can.

Remember! – If you have particularly enjoyed this event, please recommend it to fellow Councillors.