

Introduction to Scrutiny

Scrutiny seeks to improve services for the local community. It examines the performance of the Cabinet, Council departments, health bodies, contractors and external agencies that provide services within the borough. Scrutiny committees and panels aim to actively engage people in the decision-making processes of the Council and highlight local issues.

All meetings are held in Public, except where panel members have reason to believe that it would be prejudicial to the public interest to consider a matter in a public form. Public participation is at the discretion of the panel/committee Chair. For more information on getting involved in the scrutiny process, please see the **Getting Involved** subsection.

Roles and Principles

Every four years, Ealing voters elect 69 councillors – these councillors form the Council.

At its annual meeting, the Council appoints a Leader and no more than nine other councillors to a Cabinet.

The Cabinet is the main decision-making body for Ealing Council. Each Cabinet member has a portfolio of responsibilities.

Councillors who are not on the Cabinet can be appointed by Council to one or more of the scrutiny committees. This is normally done at the Annual Council meeting in May each of year.

The scrutiny committees are independent of the Cabinet and answer only to Council.

There are four primary roles for scrutiny:

- Holding the executive (i.e. Cabinet and senior officers) to account
- Policy review and development
- Performance management
- External scrutiny

The [Centre for Public Scrutiny](#) has identified four principles for effective scrutiny.

Effective scrutineers:

- Provide 'critical friend' challenge to executives as well as external authorities and agencies
- Reflect the voice of concerns of the public and its communities
- Should take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public
- Should make an impact on the delivery of public services