

Scrutiny Annual Report 2018-19



scrutiny

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For further information on any of the information contained within this report, or on the Scrutiny process in Newport please contact:

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Introduction

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Scrutiny is the term given to the non-political process within the Council, whereby the decision makers (the Cabinet) are held to account for the decisions taken, whether they have been implemented effectively and whether they have resulted in improved services for people of Newport.

The Cabinet (also known as the executive) has the power to make the decisions needed to action the policies agreed by the Council. The remaining Councillors (non-executive) then form the scrutiny element, whose role is to challenge the performance of the Cabinet and hold them to account for the decisions taken. Scrutiny Committees can make recommendations and scrutinise the policies, decisions and performance of the Cabinet. The Cabinet, in turn, consults with, and responds to, Scrutiny Committee recommendations.

The underlying principle of Scrutiny arrangements is to ensure that the decision making process is open, accountable and transparent.

Scrutiny has the following roles:

- Hold the Cabinet to account for the decisions it makes;
- Ensure that the Cabinet and Officers perform effectively and that the Council is delivering what it said it would.
- Listens to the views of the public and make sure the public voice is heard;
- Develops and reviews policy to ensure that it is fit for purpose and provides the best outcomes for the people of Newport.

Scrutiny Committees do not have decision - making powers. In all cases the role of the Scrutiny Committee is to examine available options or consider how effectively an area is performing and then to make recommendations to the decision making body whether that is the Council; the Cabinet, an Individual Cabinet Member or external partners.

Scrutiny Committees are usually conducted in public, and the public are welcome to attend and observe any formal meeting of the Committee.

The Scrutiny Committee can operate in a number of ways, depending what the issue is that they are looking into. The most common approaches are either to consider issues via a report at Committee meetings, or to set up a working group to look at an in-depth issue.

Since the introduction of the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act, Scrutiny now has a statutory role to scrutinise the work of the Public Service Boards. PSB's are accountable to Scrutiny Committees in respect of how they work jointly to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area by contributing the achievement of the wellbeing goals in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

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Under the Act, Scrutiny has the power to:

- Review or scrutinise the decisions made or actions taken by the PSB;
- Reviewing or scrutinise the governance arrangements of the PSB;
- Acting as a consultee on key documents;
- Monitoring progress on the PSBs implementation for the wellbeing plan and assessing the delivery of objectives.

In carrying out these roles, the Scrutiny Committee can require any statutory member of the Board to give evidence, the capacity in which they do so must relate to the exercise of joint functions conferred on them as a statutory member of the board.

How can the public get involved in the Scrutiny Process?

Scrutiny Committee meetings are normally open to the public and the agendas are published 1 week in advance of the meeting on the Councils webpage. Members of the public are welcome to attend any Committee meeting to observe. Agendas, reports and minutes of meetings can be found on the [Council's website](#).

Members of the public can suggest items for the Scrutiny Committee to look into by writing, emailing or phoning the Scrutiny Team:

Scrutiny and Governance Team
Newport City Council
Civic Centre
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NP20 4UR

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What is the purpose of this Annual Report?

Each year the Council produced a Scrutiny Annual Report, which is intended to give an overview of the work undertaken by each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees over the previous 12 months. This report also sets out the planned actions for the next 12 months, summarised in Section 9, within the Action Plan for 2019/20.

This report looks at the work of the Scrutiny Committees from May 2018 to April 2019. The Annual Report is an essential tool for measuring the performance of Scrutiny, evaluating the progress made against previous targets and setting priorities for the coming year.

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Key Developments

Following the new Committee structure adopted by the Council in May 2017, the Committees work has been focused on embedding the benefits of the new structure and enhance the Council's scrutiny function relating to the roles below:

Performance Monitoring	Holding the executive to account
Policy Review and Development	Including consultation on decisions before they are made (pre-decision Scrutiny)
Performance of partnerships	in particular the PSB (but also NORSE, EAS, SRS, Newport LIVE).
Scrutiny of Corporate Strategies /Plans –	Such as the Corporate Plan, Improvement Objectives.
Coordination / management	of work programmes - including referrals, policy review groups, recommendations monitoring and setting processes for looking at Corporate issues such as the budget, public engagement, the Corporate Assessment)

Scrutiny's function has made a greater impact by devoting three of the four Committees to performance based work, becoming more outcomes based and linking to the Cabinet work programme, creating a cohesive approach to improve performance within the Council.

The four Committees;

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Performance Scrutiny Committee – People
- Performance Scrutiny Committee - Place and Corporate
- Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships

To support the Members in executing their Committee duties, a number training course and seminars have been held. These include

- PREVENT Training
- Equalities Training
- Review of Schools in Red/Special Measures
- EAS Event – Accountability and Curriculum Reform
- Out of County Placements
- Presentation from Motor Neurone Disease Association
- Information Security Training
- Well-being Plan and Well-being Assessment Briefing
- Housing
- Homelessness

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- Understanding Educational Attainment Data
- Review of Schools in Red/Special Measures
- Service Plans
- The Quality of the Road Network

Below is a summary of the major developments and achievements this year.

1.1 Performance Scrutiny Committee – Place and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee – People

The two Performance orientated Committee's range of knowledge about the service area has increased and grown as they progress through their work programme.

The understanding and knowledge base throughout the Committee Members has increased with Members developing their questioning skills and strategies to allow for more in depth scrutiny and targeting of the poor performing targets and measures.

The Officers and Cabinet Members are being held to account better for their actions and decision making processes.

The Committee have built on the established performance focus by not only scrutinising performance data but taking a holistic look at the service area through service plans. At the beginning of the Year the Committees were receiving performance updates for the Service areas focusing on performance indicators as the main source of information. Since then, the Committees have begun to scrutise the service areas through the Service Plans which provides a more rich evidence base for the Committee to consider performance in a wider context. The Service plans have included financial information, links with corporate goals, Wellbeing goals and work towards goals set external of the Council.

Both of these Committees have also received reports on the Cabinet's responses to the Recommendations the Committees had made to the Draft Budget proposals as part of the Committee's remit of measuring and assessing its own impact and value.

Performance Scrutiny Committee – Place and Corporate have also considered the Draft Highways Asset Management Plan 2019-2024 following an all Member briefing in September 2018.

Performance Scrutiny Committee – People considered 2018 End of Key Stage Teacher Assessment Outcome's and National Test Results report, ESYTN Inspection Reports

The Committee have also had many briefings to assist Members to understand the background to the item before the Committee meetings. These briefings included with an update on the work being undertaken on Additional Learning Needs in Gwent and an update on the Transition from Children's to Adult Social Services.

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2.2 Overview and Management Scrutiny

The Members are increasing in confidence asking questions which addressed national policy, especially the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. These questions created a thread between meetings that allowed themes to develop, and questions to hold more weight and a greater need for Officer responses to be of a higher quality and show how the Officers linked each strategy to the overall Corporate plan.

- Corporate Safeguarding
- Recommendations Monitoring – Budget and Public Engagement
- Recommendations Monitoring – Economic Regeneration
- Recommendations Monitoring – Corporate Plan
- Wales Audit Office Report – Scrutiny – Fit for Future?
- Implementation Monitoring – Pillgwenly Public Spaces Protection
- Director of Social Services Annual Report
- Public Engagement Review
- Annual Information Risk Report
- 2019/20 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTPF)
- Recommendations Monitoring - Waste Services Review
- Wales Audit Office Report – Waste Services Follow Up Review

2.3 Performance Scrutiny Committee- Partnerships

The Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

- PSB – Well Being Plan 2018-23
- PSB – Well Being Plan 2018-23 – Mid Year Update
- PSB – Single Integrated Plan Report 2017-18
- Cardiff Capital Regional City Deal Joint Scrutiny
- Education Achievement Service – Governor Support
- Education Achievement Services (EAS) Business Plan 2019-20
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy
- Shared Resources Service (SRS) Update
- Regional Area Plan 2018-19 Summary Update

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9. Actions 2018-19 Update

Intended Outcome	Actions		Status	
Public Engagement of Scrutiny	1	<p>Redevelop Scrutiny's Public Engagement Strategy to ensure arrangements are put in place to support public involvement and participation within scrutiny is encouraged. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilising social media to promote Committee work. - Encourage public participation and involvement. - Improving the public's engagement with the scrutiny function by using a wider range of engagement methods. 	Not Completed	<p>This has not been progressed.</p> <p>Due to a shift in priorities the focus of the web developments have centred on implementing the Welsh Version of the Agenda publication software to ensure that the Council webpages are compliant with the Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>This change in priority has meant that improving the website for the public will be revisited next year.</p>
Member Development	2	<p>Ensure an effective member development programme is implemented to support Scrutiny Members to undertake their roles. This will need to include feeding into to an overall member development programme and providing comprehensive support to Members.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Each Committee has requested a number of briefings to support them in undertaking their role. This forms part of wider development through the Democratic Services Committee to implement the Member development Charter.</p>

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Intended Outcome	Actions		Status	
<p align="center">Executive Arrangements</p>	3	<p>Review the arrangements for Cabinet Member attendance at Scrutiny in light of changes to the performance reporting. To enable the Committees to effectively hold Cabinet Members to account for Service Performance, when invited to scrutiny Committees and utilise Cabinet Member time effectively at the meetings.</p>	Completed	<p>Regular attendance of the lead Cabinet Member to be held to account for the performance of the Service Area alongside the Director and Head of Service.</p> <p>The Performance Scrutiny Committee- Place and Corporate and the Performance Scrutiny Committee- People have received the mid year and year end update on the service plan, for which the relevant Cabinet Member has been invited and contributed to the Committees consideration of the performance of each service area.</p> <p>The Leader has also been in attendance for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for the discussion of the progression of the Council's Corporate Plan in December 2018.</p>
	4	<p>Improve the planning and links between the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme and the Cabinet.</p>	Ongoing	<p>This is ongoing. The Cabinet Work programme is reported to Scrutiny Annually to ensure that the Committees have an opportunity to identify areas of interest.</p> <p>The next stage is to develop the use of the software Mod.gov to publish work programmes which will make it easier to track the history of items that have gone to Cabinet and Scrutiny. This has not been progressed this year due to the priority of developing the Welsh Mod.gov facility to ensure the Council is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards.</p>

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Intended Outcome	Actions		Status	
	5	To continue regular meetings of the Chairs of Scrutiny, the Scrutiny Officer Team to ensure a positive relationship continues, and workloads are coordinated effectively. This will include meetings with the Executive.	Complete	<p>This is ongoing. The Chairs have continued to meet throughout the year to coordinate the work programmes collectively and ensure a consistent approach is being delivered.</p> <p>Following discussion with the Leader, the Cabinet had elected a Scrutiny contact within the Cabinet to attend meetings and discuss working practises between Cabinet and Scrutiny. Councillor Deb Harvey has attended meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs meetings to discuss Cabinet Members attendance at Scrutiny ensuring a consistent approach is being taken between the 4 Committees on this matter. It also will ensure an ongoing dialog to address any issues that may arise during the course of the year.</p>
<p align="center">Assessing Effectiveness and Impact</p>	6	Review the impact of the new scrutiny structure and arrangements in driving improvement to include a repeat of the Scrutiny Self Evaluation and Peer review exercises	April 2019	<p>The Self Evaluation was completed this year with Committee Members, Cabinet Members and Officers in January 2019. Only 4 responses were received. The issue was discussed with the Chairs and it was decided to repeat the exercise in April to attempt to increase turn out. There were still not sufficient numbers of forms returned to analyse the outcomes and use the data to determine areas of development for next year. This will be discussed at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs and alternative options will be looked to engage with Scrutiny Members, including setting up a Peer Review with neighbouring authorities to obtain external views on Newport Scrutiny Arrangements.</p>

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9. Actions 2019-20

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Intended Outcome	Completion Date	Responsible Officer
1	Provide a structured and timely member development programme to improve Members scrutiny Skills and improve their understanding of their Scrutiny Role	Members understanding of their Overview and Scrutiny Role increases	TBC	Scrutiny and Governance Manager
2	Providing further training for scrutiny members on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act to improve their understanding and consideration of the Act when undertaking scrutiny activity.	The principles of the Act are more familiar to members and those are applied during scrutiny processes	Establish training needs September 2019 through reissuing the training and development questionnaire to Members, continue development of programme ongoing throughout the year.	Scrutiny and Governance Manager
3	Effectively holding Cabinet members to account for service performance when invited to scrutiny meetings.	Ensure that the Council has arrangements to enable scrutiny to hold Cabinet members to account more effectively and ensure Cabinet Members are equipped and prepared to be held accountable for the roles they hold.		Scrutiny and Governance Manager / Cabinet Office Manager
4	Reviewing the impact of the new scrutiny structure and arrangements in driving improvement.	Ensure that the new structure and arrangements are achieving the intended outcomes.	Scope Peer Review with other authorities September 2019	Scrutiny and Governance Manager

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5	Improving the public's engagement with the scrutiny function by using a wider range of engagement methods	Ensure that there are greater opportunities for the public to help to influence scrutiny forward work programmes	Jan 2020	Scrutiny and Governance Manager
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