

Scrutiny

Annual Report

2020-21



scrutiny

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

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

Democratic Services
Newport City Council
Civic Centre
Newport
NP20 4UR

Tel: 01633 656656

democratic.services@newport.gov.uk

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

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 Committees are live-streamed on the internet. Recordings of the meetings are also available online for the public to access after the event.

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.

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

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 one week in advance of the meeting, on the Council's website. Members of the public are usually welcome to attend any Committee meeting to observe proceedings, but Scrutiny meetings have been held virtually since April 2020 in order to meet the social distancing requirements under Covid restrictions. The public have been able to watch the Committees live using a live stream service on the Council's website, or to view recordings of the meetings after the event.

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 Democratic Services Team:

Democratic Services Team
Newport City Council
Civic Centre
Newport
NP20 4UR

Tel: 01633 656656

Email: democratic.services@newport.gov.uk

What is the purpose of this Annual Report?

Each year the Council produces 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 2021/22.

This report looks at the work of the Scrutiny Committees from May 2020 to April 2021. 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.

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Key Developments

The current Committee structure was adopted by the Council in May 2017. Since then, the Committees work has been focussed on 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

Due to the unforeseen nature of the events of 2020, formal training and development of the Scrutiny Committees was not completed. However, this will be reconvened as part of the Scrutiny programme during 2021-22.

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 reporting period was challenging, and there were fewer meetings held in the first six months than usual, due to resource being focussed on the Council's response to Covid-19.

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

The Committees received half-yearly updates on Service Plans for the Service areas, and have used this evidence base to scrutinise 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. These half-yearly updates also included details on how the Council have adapted and responded to the challenges faced by services and communities due to the pandemic. The Committees reflected on the response to the crisis, and also scrutinised the Council's Covid Recovery Aims that aim to ensure an effective response to the immediate and future needs of Newport's communities and businesses.

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 Information Reports on Enforcement of COVID Business Restrictions and Active Travel

Performance Scrutiny Committee – People requested an Information Report on the Youth Justice Services response to Covid-19, which was presented to the Committee in March 2021.

2.2 Overview and Management Scrutiny

The Scrutiny Members considered the Council's Annual Report that reflected on the achievements of the previous year, and identified where performance could be improved. This included the Council's Four Strategic Recovery Aims that are closely aligned to the Corporate Plan objectives. These aims enable the Council to recover its services, develop these new opportunities and learn from the Covid-19 crisis.

The Committee also shaped the consultation and engagement for the Pillgwenlly Public Spaces Protection Order 2021-2024, and reviewed the outcome of the consultation following completion.

- Corporate Safeguarding
- Strategic Equality Plan Report
- 2021/22 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

2.3 Performance Scrutiny Committee- Partnerships

The Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships

The Committee considered the Wellbeing Plan Annual Report presented by the Public Services Board, and submitted their comments to be shared with the PSB.

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Similarly, the Committee also scrutinised the performance against the Wellbeing Plan 2020-21, and submitted their comments to the Public Services Board for consideration.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board presented a proposal for the transformation of Mental Health Services to the Committee for consideration and comment.

The Committee also considered the Education Achievement Services (EAS) Business Plan 2021-22, and submitted their assessment of the plan to Cabinet.

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

9. Actions 2020-21 Update

Intended Outcome	Actions		Status	
Public Engagement	1	Improving the public's engagement with the scrutiny function by using a wider range of engagement methods	Ongoing	Further progress has been delayed due to the Covid restrictions and the requirements for remote meetings. However, a Public Engagement Strategy will be developed as part of the work programme for 21/22 to meet the requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
Member Development	2	Provide a structured and timely member development programme to improve Members scrutiny Skills and improve their understanding of their Scrutiny Role	Ongoing	Each Committee has continued to receive briefings to support them in undertaking their roles and regular briefings have been held with Chairs. A programme for member training and development will be completed in 21/22 in readiness for the May 2022 local elections.
		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.	Completed	The well-being principles have been firmly embedded within template reports to Scrutiny and the work of the Scrutiny Committees.
Executive Arrangements	3	Effectively holding Cabinet members to account for service performance when invited to scrutiny meetings.	Ongoing	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

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Intended Outcome	Actions		Status	
				<p>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.</p>
	4	Improve the planning and links between the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme and the Cabinet.	Ongoing	This is ongoing. The Cabinet Work programme is reported to Scrutiny Annually to ensure that the Committees have an opportunity to identify areas of
<p>Assessing Effectiveness and Impact</p>	5	Review the impact of the scrutiny structure and arrangements in driving improvement	Ongoing	Performance Scrutiny Committees have continued to work effectively in driving improvements to service delivery through the performance management and service planning process. Further work will be undertaken to review the roles of the Scrutiny Committees in 21/22 in the light of the new corporate performance self-assessment process under the

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Intended Outcome	Actions		Status	
				Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

9. Actions 2021-2022

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Intended Outcome	Completion Date	Responsible Officer
1	Develop a structured programme for member training and development to improve members' scrutiny skills and improve their understanding of their scrutiny role as part of the induction programme for new members following the May 2022 local elections.	Members understanding of their Overview and Scrutiny Role increases	March 2022	Democratic Services Manager and Scrutiny Advisers
2	<p>Providing further training for scrutiny members on the new socio-economic duty under the Equality Act to improve their understanding and consideration of the duty when undertaking scrutiny activity.</p> <p>Develop revised report templates for scrutiny, to include specific reference to the socio-economic duty.</p>	The principles of the socio-economic duty are more familiar to members and those are applied during scrutiny processes	<p>Training- ongoing to March 2022</p> <p>Revised report templates completed by September 2021</p>	Democratic Services Manager and Scrutiny Advisers
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.	Ongoing to March 2022	Democratic Services Manager and Scrutiny Advisers
4				

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

	<p>Reviewing the role of Scrutiny Committees in the light of the new corporate performance self-assessment process, the arrangements for regional PSB's and the development of CJC's</p>	<p>Ensure that the Scrutiny arrangements meet the requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and continue to operate effectively in the light of the legislative changes.</p>	<p>Ongoing to March 2022</p>	<p>Democratic Services Manager and Scrutiny Advisers</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Develop and publish a Public Engagement Strategy to ensure arrangements are put in place to support public involvement and participation. 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 	<p>Ensure that the Scrutiny arrangements meet the requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 in terms of public engagement and participation.</p>	<p>January 2022</p>	<p>Democratic Services Manager and Scrutiny Advisers</p>

www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg