

| | |
|---|---|
| Meeting of: | Council |
| Date of Meeting: | Monday, 09 December 2019 |
| Relevant Scrutiny Committee: | All Scrutiny Committees |
| Report Title: | Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report May 2018 - April 2019 |
| Purpose of Report: | To present the 2018/19 Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report to Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution |
| Report Owner: | Rob Thomas, Managing Director |
| Responsible Officer: | Mark Thomas, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer |
| Elected Member and Officer Consultation: | Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairmen have been consulted on the document |
| Policy Framework: | Section 7.4.4 of the Council's Constitution requires Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report to be presented to Full Council and to include details of future work programmes. |
| <p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Annual Report has been produced in accordance with Section 7.4.4 of the Council's Constitution which states that 'Scrutiny Committees must report annually to Full Council on their workings, with recommendations for their future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.' The report details the role of Scrutiny, how Scrutiny is undertaken in the Vale of Glamorgan and highlights key achievements from the work of each Scrutiny Committee, significant events during the year and future working, specifically in relation to the Council's agreement that the work of Scrutiny should be closely aligned to four Wellbeing Objective Outcomes that form the main basis of the Council's Corporate Plan as published in April 2016. | |

Recommendation

1. That Council receive the Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report for the period May 2018 - April 2019.

Reason for Recommendation

1. To receive the Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report as required under the Council's Constitution.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Annual Report has been produced in accordance with Section 7.4.4 of the Council's Constitution which states that 'Scrutiny Committees must report annually to Full Council on their workings, with recommendations for their future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.'

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The report details the role of Scrutiny, how Scrutiny is undertaken in the Vale of Glamorgan and highlights key achievements from the work of each Scrutiny Committee, significant events during the year and future working, specifically in relation to the Council's agreement that the work of Scrutiny should be closely aligned to the four wellbeing objective outcomes that form the main basis of the Council's Corporate, Plan which was published in April 2016.
- 2.2 For information, Members are advised that the Annual Report is only "reported to Council" as opposed to it requiring actual approval. The Annual report itself is attached separately at the back of the Council agenda.
- 2.3 For Members' information, page 11 of the Annual Report refers to the Vale of Glamorgan annual report (Improvement Plan part II) 2017/18. The Wales Audit Office (WAO) report findings were generally positive and concluded that overall the Council was meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement. A number of proposals for improvement were made specifically focusing on strengthening scrutiny arrangements within the Council to enable it to respond to future challenges and have greater impact. Further strengthening our arrangements for Scrutiny remains a priority for the Council as identified in the Council's Annual Self-Assessment and work is underway to address these.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The Annual Report contributes to the long term future by ensuring that Scrutiny Committees adhere to their Wellbeing Objectives and Wellbeing Outcomes through on-going monitoring and reporting.
- 3.2** The Annual Report contributes to the prevention of problems through the monitoring and reporting of issues and the work of the Scrutiny Committees in this regard.
- 3.3** The Annual Report ensures collaboration/involvement through the monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of Scrutiny Committees in working with external partners, stakeholders and the public in achieving Wellbeing and other Objectives for the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** There are no direct financial implications.

Employment

- 4.2** There are no direct employment implications.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.3** The Council is required to comply with the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the subordinate legislation in relation to the Scrutiny function.

5. Background Papers

Annual Scrutiny Report May 2018 - April 2019



VALE of GLAMORGAN COUNCIL
SCRUTINY
Annual Report
2018-2019

○ What is SCRUTINY?

Scrutiny Committees carry out important work for the Vale of Glamorgan Council and its partners. It offers reassurance to local people, helps to develop policy, challenging the performance of the Council and its services and holds the Executive to account for its decisions.

Scrutiny acts as a ‘**critical friend**’, standing back from the day to day decision-making to look at and review outcomes for local residents.

“...holds the Executive to account for its decisions”

Scrutiny Committees can make recommendations and scrutinise the policies, decisions and performance of the Cabinet. The Cabinet, in turn, consults with Scrutiny Committees on issues, and respond to Scrutiny Committee recommendations. There are five Scrutiny Committees within the Vale of Glamorgan Council.



○ How does SCRUTINY work in the Vale?

2016/17 saw the introduction of a fresh and **new approach** to the way that Scrutiny operates within the Vale of Glamorgan. The Council agreed that the work of Scrutiny should be closely aligned to the Council's four new **Well-being Outcomes**

Well-being Outcomes

● AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE and PROSPEROUS VALE

Scrutiny Committee
Environment and
Regeneration

● AN ACTIVE and HEALTHY VALE

Healthy Living and
Social Care

● AN INCLUSIVE and SAFE VALE

Homes and
Safe Communities

● AN ASPIRATIONAL and CULTURALLY VIBRANT VALE

Learning and Culture

The Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee is the overview Committee and deals with Corporate Health.

The way that we work...

• INTEGRATION • COLLABORATION • INVOLVEMENT • PREVENTION • LONG TERM

Each Committee is linked to one or more of the Wellbeing Outcomes; with its own individual **Objectives** as shown below:

● **Corporate Performance and Resources**

- Overall monitoring of Corporate Health.



● **Environment and Regeneration**

- Promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment.
- Promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment.



● **Healthy Living and Social Care**

- Encouraging and promoting active and healthy lifestyles.
- Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living.



● **Homes and Safe Communities**

- Providing decent homes and safe communities.
- Reducing poverty and social exclusion.



● **Learning and Culture**

- Raising overall standards of achievement.
- Valuing culture and diversity.



These Objectives are tailored to the Committee's remit and areas of focus, with annual **Forward Work Programmes** being produced (and updated quarterly) to show the matters to be considered.

The Committees' **Work Programmes** focus on how the Council will achieve its key priorities and objectives, as outlined within the Council's **Corporate Plan**. Individually and collectively, each Scrutiny Committee approaches its work in the following ways:

- Striving to improve services to achieve better outcomes for residents;
- Hearing public concerns and voices;
- Adding value to the way decisions are reached;
- Acting positively as a 'critical friend';
- Learning from others.

Strong
Communities
with a Bright
Future

○ THE YEAR IN SUMMARY

Key areas of work in 2018/19 included:

- Scrutinising how well the Council is meeting its objectives, as outlined in the **Corporate Plan**;
- Making positive contributions to policy development and to the continuous improvements to Council functions;
- Looking at the impact of the **financial savings** that the Council has to achieve and scrutinising the implications of further reduction in resources;
- Consideration of topics with significant public concern and ensuring public accessibility to these deliberations via new forms of media – for example, through the use of webcasting;
- Evaluating proposals around services that will come out of the Council's **Reshaping Services** project;
- Exploring the **potential for shared services or joint working arrangements** in delivering services;
- Continuing to monitor the **attainment levels** of our pupils and to assess challenges facing schools;
- Looking at the **21st Century Schools Programme** in Barry and future school provision in the wider Vale;
- **Regeneration and sustainable development**
- Considered various environmental proposals that affect the Vale of Glamorgan;
- Undertaking comprehensive Member Development and Training Sessions to apprise Members of the numerous different aspects of local government and the decision making process.



The following pages provide a summary of some of the work by the five Scrutiny Committees in 2018/19.

○ SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Corporate Performance and Resources



Key areas the Committee has scrutinised...

- **Reshaping Services.** There is ongoing consultation with Town and Community Councils (TCCs) and the public as well as regular monitoring by the Committee of the implementation of the Programme including Income Generation and Commercial Opportunities where the Committee endorsed a protocol for advertising and sponsorship. This protocol will also continue to be reviewed annually by the Committee.

The way that we work..

• INTEGRATION • COLLABORATION • INVOLVEMENT • PREVENTION • LONG TERM

- The Welsh Government paper on **Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People**. Cabinet on 6th June 2018 acceded to the Committee's request on its draft response to the above paper to strengthen the response as follows:
 - In relation to the mergers creating on-going uncertainty and having significant consequences for the Council in terms of recruitment and retaining of certain professions.
 - In terms of the significant impact any merger proposals would have, and distraction in the delivery of regional projects e.g. transport as part of the Regional City Deal.
 - Consideration of the inclusion of an Executive Summary which set out the Council's position on the subject.
- **Corporate Safeguarding Mid-Year reports**. The Committee maintains an ongoing review every six months of work carried out to improve arrangements and the effectiveness of relevant policies, the work of the safeguarding group and all other safeguarding activities being undertaken across the Local Authority.
- **Monitoring the Council's Revenue and Capital budget spend and Closure of Accounts**. Whilst also considering the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan the Committee recommended that the Council continue to make the case to Welsh Government for a fairer funding settlement.
- **Continued Monitoring of the Public Services Board Wellbeing Plan**. Members in challenging the plan sought reassurance that there was a sufficient senior level approach by all parties involved in the PSB with the Committee being informed that mechanisms were being developed for monitoring and performance management processes with senior officers from all key stakeholders with lead roles including regular scrutiny of the PSB to be undertaken by the Committee.
- **Continued Monitoring of Staff Sickness Absence and Employee Turnover**. Regular reviews are undertaken by the Committee of sickness absence and employee turnover rates with the requests that benchmarking figures for Welsh Authorities and the actual sickness and absence figures for the Vale as opposed to percentage figures are also included.
- **Monitoring of Improvement Objectives, Welfare Reform and City Deal**.
- **Draft Parking Strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan**. Similarly to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, the Committee gave careful consideration and input to the proposals outlined in the draft parking strategy. In addition to those put forward by the Scrutiny Committee Environment and Regeneration (which can be found in the next section) the following recommendations were also put forward to the Cabinet - traffic surveys for residential parking zones and for Ward Members to be consulted on the duration and days that the surveys cover; one parking permit to be available for residents, which was transferrable between town centres, resorts and country parks; special free parking arrangements to be put in place for volunteers; free parking be available at country parks up until 10.00 a.m. - seasonal variations of charges for permits be introduced i.e. a six month or annual option that covers summer or winter months; for those individuals who already had an existing permit, that their first permit be free and further discussions and consideration of new Traffic Regulation Orders be undertaken, based on more robust data.
 - N.B. Following consideration of the comments of both Committees the Cabinet on 1st July 2019 agreed to feed all the Committees comments into a comprehensive and in-depth review of the matter.

○ SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Key areas the Committee has scrutinised...

- **Development of Tourism and Commercial Opportunities at Countryside Service Sites.** The Scrutiny Committee acted as a forum for review and challenge of the Council's approach to commercial activity in Country Parks, which resulted in-depth scrutiny and referral to Cabinet. It has also requested consideration be given to a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to be established to look at future proposals for Tourism and Commercial Opportunities at Countryside Service sites.
- **Revised Waste Management Strategy: The Future Collection Arrangements for Waste and Recycling.** The Committee reviewed and supported proposals for the implementation of a new and improved strategy for waste management, which intended to bring about the following changes:
 - from September 2018 there was the successful implementation of restricted 'black bag' collection service (fortnightly) in the Vale, which had resulted in a 35% reduction in waste collected during the implementation month compared to the average tonnage of each month for this financial year. This equated to a 36% increase in food waste recycling and a 2% increase in dry recycling.
 - a fully revised recycling collection service would be introduced from the summer 2019. An important element of this included a use of a waste transfer station for which an interim site had been secured in Cowbridge.
 - in terms of food waste, a new anaerobic digestion facility had been built in Cardiff as part of joint organics procurement exercise. The facility would also produce enough energy to power 4,000 homes and would reduce the release of harmful landfill gases into the atmosphere and result in zero waste being sent to landfill.
- **Superfast Broadband Provision.** The Committee had been involved in the scrutiny and monitoring of Welsh Government's Superfast Broadband Programme rollout, with 740,000 premises being connected, which equated to 96% of all households in the Vale. The Committee raised concerns around those remaining areas of the Vale – particularly rural areas – that still did not have superfast broadband access (4%) and received the following responses or actions:
 - the Council was working with a number of partners to look at connectivity and the fibre optic network – for example, B.T. were working with a number of communities across the Vale to look at alternative fibre solutions.
 - The Council provided advice to residents, so information would be developed for the Council's website.
- **Civil Parking Enforcement.** The Committee continued to challenge the year on year fall in Penalty Notices issued, in order to ensure this did not mean a decline in the enforcement of parking regulations and the prevention of illegal and irresponsible parking. A contributory factor was the high levels of successful appeals and potentially increased levels of compliance, as well as implementing more 'targeted' enforcement such as that carried out in Ogmore by Sea in response to resident concerns.
- **Enterprise Zones Report to National Infrastructure and Skills Committee.** The report (originally produced for the Welsh Government Infrastructure and Skills Committee) included a progress update on the Cardiff Airport and St. Athan Enterprise Zone – including numbers of jobs created and investment details – for example, 137.6 jobs had been created to date and with Aston Martin and other businesses choosing the zone for locating their business operations with new employment opportunities. The Committee recommended that in future, this report must have greater detail and emphasis in relation to how well the Cardiff Airport and St. Athan Enterprise Zone was doing and the impact of employment for the benefit of local people.

The way that we work...

• INTEGRATION • COLLABORATION • INVOLVEMENT • PREVENTION • LONG TERM

- **Draft Car Parking Strategy.** The Committee gave considerable time to scrutinising the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed strategy. The Cabinet has been requested to rethink the draft Strategy, consider the lessons learned to date from previous car parking proposals, and reconsider the suitability of undertaking the consultation during the summer months in future due to a number of people being away on holiday, etc, at this time.
- **Barry Town Centre Summit.** The Committee recommended the creation of a working group, to include representatives of the Vale Council, Barry Town Council, Traders and other interested parties be considered during the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan and Town Centre Strategy.



○ SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee

Key areas the Committee has scrutinised...

- **“Your Choice” – a new approach to commissioning outcome focused care and support at Home.** The Committee asked a number of challenging, probing questions seeking clarification on various facets of this pilot scheme, which had attracted attention from other Local Authorities who were interested in replicating it. The Committee has since put in place a six monthly monitoring regime to assess the impact of the initiative.
- **Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2017-2018 (Challenge Version).** The Committee raised the unsuitable condition of the building for the Mental Health Team staff – resulting in the Director of Social Service subsequently submitting a report to the Committee about this and the broader developments in community mental health services (and would do so on a regular basis) in the Vale of Glamorgan. It had been confirmed that progress has been made with relocation of the Mental Health Team to a more suitable premises.
- **Children and Young People Services - Annual Placement Review.** The Committee continued to undertake an active role in overseeing the key statutory function with regular updates through existing reporting arrangements, including the monthly Budget Programme report and update reports on the Corporate Strategy for Children in Need of Care and Support and also through the Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy.

- **Development of a Locality Model of Mental Health Provision across the Vale of Glamorgan.** This would help to meet increasing public, service user and policy expectations. The Committee played a key role in the on-going monitoring and review of this project on developing community services for adults with mental health problems in the Vale of Glamorgan in partnership with the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (UHB) in three Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs), working with the GP surgeries in the Central, Eastern and Western Vale areas of the Local Authority area.
- **The Families First Plan.** The Committee has highlighted the extremely positive work undertaken to support children, young people and families in the Vale of Glamorgan such as Team Around the Family project (FACT), Wellbeing Youth Mentoring Service, Parent Support Project and Families First Advice Line (building on the success of the earlier pilot). This was reflected in the success of, and positive feedback that had come back from users for, projects such as Families First Advice Line (FFAL) which had helped reduce referrals to FACT (Families Achieving Change Together) by 4.9% and respite services for Young Carers with 94% of users who felt less isolated as a result of accessing the service.
- **Reshaping Services - a Sustainable Approach to the Provision of Single User Outdoor Sports Facilities.** The Committee, following consideration of the costs incurred in maintaining and providing sites and facilities that were predominantly for the benefit of a single club/organisation, recommended that Cabinet hold discussions with each individual clubs/organisations in order to gather their views on consolidation, costs and potential assets transfers as well as what options were available. A series of meetings were arranged with clubs and organisations likely to be effected by the new policy. All clubs and organisations have been offered an individual meeting with officers to assist in planning for the future and discussions regarding multi-use sites undertaken as well.
- **Childhood Obesity in the Vale of Glamorgan.** As a result of the presentation from representatives of Public Health Wales, the Committee encouraged support from the Vale of Glamorgan Council for the development and delivery of the Cardiff and Vale Health and Well-Being Board's "Moving More / Eating Well" Framework and the Public Service Board's actions - such as Food Vale / Healthy Travel.



○ SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee

Key areas the Committee has scrutinised...

- **Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) Scheme.** The initiative aimed to ensure that all dwellings are of good quality and suitable for the needs of existing and future residents. This had been a large scale programme over a number of years monitored by the Committee. The Wales Audit Office had confirmed that the Council had met the Standard with effective arrangements for tenant engagement in place.

The way that we work..

• INTEGRATION • COLLABORATION • INVOLVEMENT • PREVENTION • LONG TERM

- The Committee kept under review the **Vale Timebanking Pilot project** during the project's 12 months. This was an innovative project to increase volunteering amongst Council tenants and to promote better community spirit and successful and resilient communities. The project was highly successful in terms of public engagement, community cohesion and re-introducing the benefits of volunteering to Council Tenants. Its success has seen the project extended for a further 12 months.
- The introduction of the **Homelessness Prevention Strategy** and relevant **Action Plan**. The Committee scrutinised and endorsed the Strategy and the work undertaken by the Housing Solutions Team in conjunction with other agencies such as Shelter Cymru and Street Link. The positive work in using 'soft skills' - to show clients empathy and provide a personalised service to homeless persons, as well as setting out key priorities – early intervention, improved access to services, ensuring suitable accommodation/ support, ensuring a client centred service and improving the quality of advice on homelessness was welcomed by the Committee who have since required quarterly reports to ensure that they are kept up to date on progress surrounding the Strategy.
- Ongoing monitoring and scrutiny of **Environment and Neighbourhoods Strategy (Housing), Youth Offending Service (YOS)** to ensure that key indicators and performance targets are being met in these key areas.
- **Review of Services to Leaseholders including the potential for introducing a new Leaseholder Sinking Fund**. The Committee has requested that consideration be given to the following when reported to Cabinet detailing options for the payment of major repair works by leaseholders: a) an in-depth leaseholder consultation exercise be undertaken; in order to consolidate and improve the way the Council manages leasehold properties and to maximise the Council's income through the recovery of service charges; and b) an educational resource be produced and disseminated to all leaseholders on their rights and responsibilities regarding their lease(s).
- **Community Investment**. The Committee continued to monitor, receive updates and be a forum to showcase and acknowledge the positive work undertaken by the Community Investment Team. During 2018/19 to date, over 2,800 residents had engaged in community activities, including fun days, consultations and national safeguarding around health and wellbeing, employment, training, volunteering digital service and inclusions; and green spaces - as well scrutinise the work undertaken by them, such as improvements to the work done around Digital Inclusion.



○ SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee

Key areas the Committee has scrutinised...

- **Support for Carers in the Vale of Glamorgan.** The Committee added to the contribution made by the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee by requesting a further report to the Committee on the activities and steps that were being undertaken to assist young carers in the Vale of Glamorgan including their levels of educational attainment.
- **Estyn School Inspection reports.** The Committee continued to assess the performance of schools within the Vale of Glamorgan by reviewing the findings of Estyn. Best practice was noted for at least one school which had been invited to attend the Estyn Awards Evening as a result of this. The Committee also gained confirmation that such best practice was being shared throughout the Vale and the wider South Wales region as well a planned visit to see how best practice was being implemented by the school in question.
- The Committee continued with its **monitoring of the Central South Consortium (CSC)** with an update on the work of the Central South Consortium Scrutiny Working Group after the first year of its establishment. The Committee would also take the lead on areas of Members' concern such as well-being and mental health, instances of cyber bullying and the work of Pastoral Care Teams in schools to be picked up as part of the Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2019/20.
- **Governor Training.** There is an ongoing monitoring of training plus an overview of the numbers of governors, schools and training courses involved, with the Vale of Glamorgan Council having by far the highest percentage of governors attending training of the five Central South Consortium Local Authorities. The Committee asked that targeted and competency based training be identified and provided for specific governor roles.
- **Reconfiguration of Primary Provision in the Western Vale.** The Committee obtained public input (including that of the relevant Community and Parent School governors) as well as Officer and Expert Witness input in order to recommend Cabinet engagement with the community in order to consider the future of primary provision the Western Vale and to make a final determination on this issue.



The way that we work...

• INTEGRATION • COLLABORATION • INVOLVEMENT • PREVENTION • LONG TERM

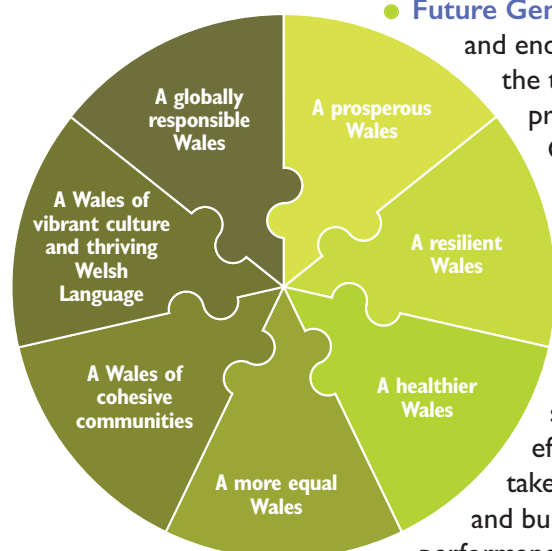
○ ALL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES



Key areas/examples where all or several Committees scrutinised...

- **The Vale of Glamorgan Annual Report (Improvement Plan Part 2) 2017/18.** All of the Council's Scrutiny Committees reviewed and endorsed this key annual report on Welsh Councils and other public bodies entitled, the 'Annual Improvement Report (AIR)' which summarised the audit work undertaken during the period 2017 to 2018. The report brought together the key findings from all audit work undertaken in the Council during 2017-18 including those of other inspection and regulatory bodies such as Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Schools in Wales) and Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). The Wales Audit Office (WAO) report findings were generally positive and concluded that overall the Council was meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement. A number of proposals for improvement were made specifically focusing on strengthening scrutiny arrangements within the Council to enable it to respond to future challenges and have greater impact. Further strengthening our arrangements for Scrutiny remains a priority for the Council as identified in the Council's Annual Self-Assessment and work is underway to address these.

- **Future Generations Act and Committee Reporting.** All Committees reviewed and endorsed this key proposal on a new format report which would improve the transparency, aid the decision-making process and would show how proposals were grounded in the Five Ways of Working, aligned to the Council's Corporate Wellbeing Objectives, and through these objectives, to the 7 National Wellbeing Goals for Wales.



- **Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report.** Corporate Performance and Resources, Learning and Culture, and Healthy Living and Social Care reviewed and endorsed this update on the work that had been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults who required specific Council services and to ensure that the arrangements were effective. The Scrutiny Committees' questioned the length of time it takes to undertake DBS checks, increases in the number of referrals made and building on the good work already being done towards improving performance, better regulation of the licensing of children in employment and entertainment and chaperones. The Committees also supported improvements to the Council's Safer Recruitment Policy.

- **Revenue, Capital Monitoring, other budgetary reports.** All Committees monitored these on a regular basis including receiving the annual reports for scrutiny. All Scrutiny Committees on their review of the 18/19 Budget raised the impact that cost pressures placed on various key services such as Children and Adult Services and the need to reaffirm key Council roles, such as Home Loan Officer. These were channelled through to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee who questioned the Head of Service about cost pressures issues and the other observations raised by the Committees who replied these would be considered as part of the budget round. These recommendations were passed onto the Cabinet and the Budget Working Group for consideration.

○ SUPPORT for SCRUTINY

Scrutiny is supported by officers from **Democratic Services**, who are tasked with looking after the democratic process within the Vale. The team ensures that all Councillors have all the necessary information and evidence they need in order to properly consider any topic or area of interest.

A comprehensive Member ICT Refresh programme has been delivered. All Members have been provided with equipment to assist in undertaking their roles, whether that be in a formal committee meeting or, for example, dealing with constituents. The Council itself is already seeing the benefits in that a number of Members have already opted to go “paperless” and receive their papers for meetings electronically. Additionally, to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations, all Elected Members have been briefed on their obligations as a data controller to ensure that the rights of the citizen are observed.

The WAO completed a follow up review of how Scrutiny in the Vale operates. From this, the WAO recognised the significant Member development programme that had been undertaken – including mandatory training:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| ● 1 Member Induction | ● 7 Audit |
| ● 2 Ethics & Standards | ● 8 Equalities & Welsh Language |
| ● 3 Licensing | ● 9 Information Governance & Data Protection |
| ● 4 Planning | ● 10 Scrutiny Chairing Skills |
| ● 5 Standards | ● 11 General Chairing Skills |
| ● 6 Finance | ● 12 Corporate Parenting & Safe Guarding |



...as well as the successful alignment of the Scrutiny Committees to the Council's key objectives. Seven proposals for improvement were also highlighted:

1. The Council should further consider the skills and training that scrutiny members may need to better prepare them for current and future challenges and develop and deliver an appropriate training programme to enhance the significant programme undertaken following the elections in May 2017.

2. The Scrutiny committees should ensure that where appropriate Cabinet Members rather than Council officers are held to account for the efficient exercise of executive functions in accordance with statutory guidance.

The way that we work...

• INTEGRATION • COLLABORATION • INVOLVEMENT • PREVENTION • LONG TERM

3. The Council should review the type of scrutiny support required to enable the scrutiny function to respond to current and future challenges.

4. The Council should explore different and more innovative methods for undertaking scrutiny activity.

5. The Council should consider how its scrutiny activity can focus on those areas where it would have most value.

6. The Council should be more innovative in how it engages the public in its scrutiny activity.

7. The Council should strengthen its evaluation of the impact and outcomes of its scrutiny activity and to learn from this in order to shape the future work of its scrutiny function.

In response to these, during 2018/19, an action plan was developed to progress each of the proposals. The development of the action plan included discussions with Members and Chief Officers. Work is ongoing on implementation of the WAO recommendations.

○ LOOKING FORWARD

Key work for 2019/20 will be:

- Continue to scrutinise how well the Council is meeting its objectives, as outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan with a change in administration;
- Making positive contributions to policy development and to the continuous improvements to Council functions;
- Looking at the impact of the financial savings that the Council has to achieve and scrutinising the implications of further reduction in resources;
- Continue to evaluate proposals around services that will come out of the Council's Reshaping Services project;
- Continue to monitor the attainment levels of our pupils and to assess challenges facing schools;
- To consider sustainable development and explore funding opportunities.
- Scrutinise the work and impact of the Public Service Board and the Central South Consortium and, through joint scrutiny, the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal;
- To respond and progress the recommendations that have come out of the Wales Audit Office Scrutiny review by building on the Council's detailed Member development programme, by looking at new innovative forms of Scrutiny, reviewing the Council's Cabinet and Scrutiny Protocol, looking at how Scrutiny can focus on where it can add value and encouraging more public participation in Scrutiny.

○ PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT and SCRUTINY

Arrangements for public speaking at meetings of the Council's Scrutiny Committees have been in place since February 2016. These are designed to enhance / increase opportunities for public participation in the Council's democratic processes. It is acknowledged that there is a need to increase the promotion of the process through publicity and officers from Democratic Services will work with the Communications Unit on this aspect.

A Guide to Public Speaking at Scrutiny meetings has been made available to members of the public via the Council's website and can be found here:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/Public-Participation-at-Council-Meetings.aspx

The public, following the attendance of Scrutiny meetings are encouraged to feedback on the process and to ensure that the Guide is fit for purpose.

○ Want to KNOW MORE?

Should you wish to find out more about the work of Scrutiny, you can do so at:

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/scrutiny/scrutiny.aspx

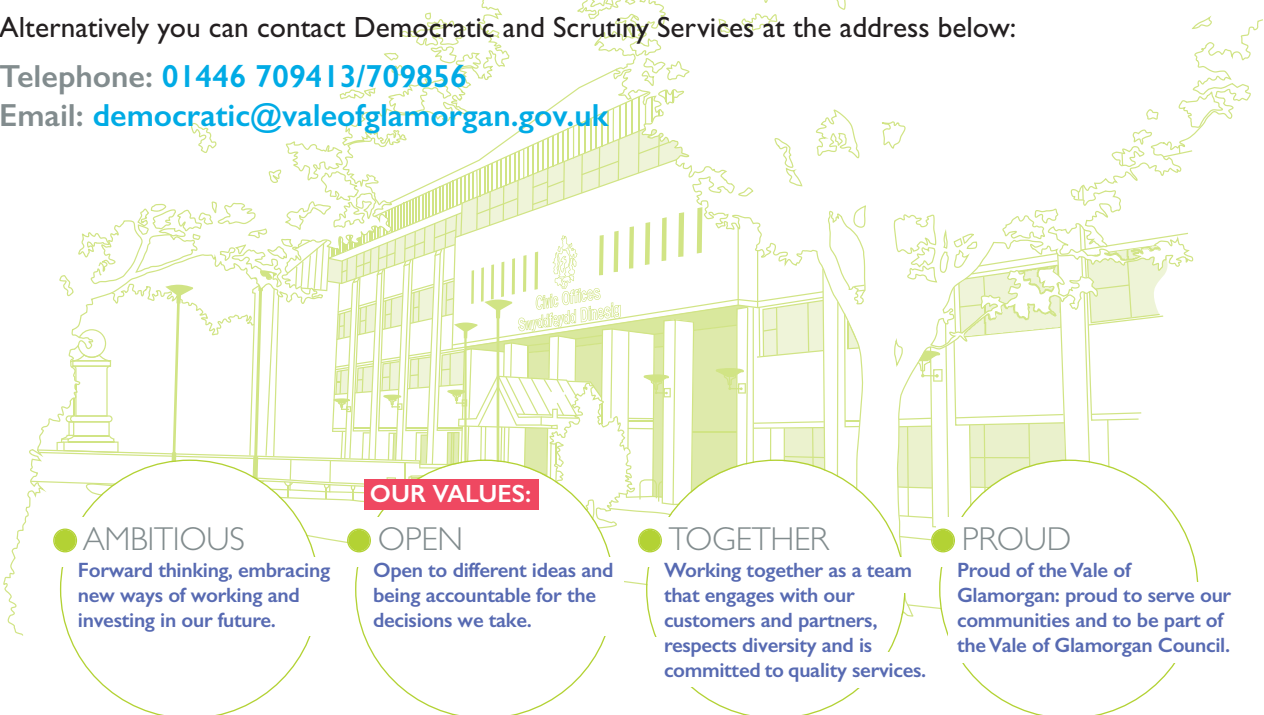
Please look at our website to see the dates, times and venues of forthcoming Scrutiny meetings:

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/minutes,_agendas_and_reports.aspx

Alternatively you can contact Democratic and Scrutiny Services at the address below:

Telephone: **01446 709413/709856**

Email: democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



The way that we work...

• INTEGRATION • COLLABORATION • INVOLVEMENT • PREVENTION • LONG TERM