

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE: 1ST JULY, 2024

REFERENCE FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS
GROUP: 28TH MAY, 2024

“(7) Annual Scrutiny Impact Survey: 2024 Edition –

The report advised that the Scrutiny Impact Survey was published on an annual basis each April with the latest edition being published on 12th April, 2024. The Annual Impact Survey helped to maintain and assess the effectiveness of the Council’s scrutiny function and the unedited results of each annual survey, as well as a progress summary document which was presented to the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group on an annual basis for consideration and to raise any proposed actions as a result.

The responses to the survey were attached at Appendices A and C to the report and as a result of the analysis of the survey four actions had been identified which were detailed at Appendix B to the report.

The Chair advised that he was disappointed that the survey had been completed by a very small number of Members although it was noted that the majority of responses received were positive, with an equal split of respondents across the five Scrutiny Committees.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

AGREED –

- (1) T H A T the status of the existing 2023 Outstanding Actions, as set out in the appended 2024 Outstanding Actions Summary document, be agreed.
- (2) T H A T the proposed actions in response to the 2024 Scrutiny Impact Survey, as set out in the appended 2024 Outstanding Actions Summary document, (and as referred to in paragraph 2.4) be considered and endorsed.
- (3) T H A T a further progress update on both the 2023 and 2024 Survey proposed actions be presented to the next meeting of the Group on 12th September, 2024.
- (4) T H A T the report be referred to the Democratic Services Committee for consideration.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) Having regard to the content of the appended documents and discussions held at the Group meeting on progress made against the previously agreed 2023 Survey actions
- (2) Having regard to the content of the appended documents and discussions held at the Group meeting on the newly proposed actions as a result of the 2024 Survey results
- (3) To ensure that Group Members are kept informed of progress against actions that have been agreed by the Group to enhance the effectiveness of the Council's Scrutiny Function
- (4) To ensure that the Democratic Services Committee is sighted on the report to meet its responsibility for overseeing the Council's approach to Member Development, as per the Committee's Terms of Reference."

Attached as Appendix: Report to Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group – 28th May, 2024

Meeting of:	Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 28 May 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	Annual Scrutiny Impact Survey: 2024 Edition
Purpose of Report:	To update Group on the rolling annual process to date and feedback received following publication of the Annual Scrutiny Impact Survey 2024.
Report Owner:	Karen Bowen; Interim Head of Democratic Services
Responsible Officer:	Amy Rudman; Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	All Scrutiny Committee Members as of 12 th April 2024 were requested to complete the Survey. Democratic and Scrutiny Services Team.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scrutiny Impact Member Survey is property of the Vale of Glamorgan Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group and administered by Democratic Services Officers. • The Annual Impact Survey helps to maintain and assess the effectiveness of the Council's Scrutiny Function. • The Survey is published on an annual basis, each April, with the latest edition being published on 12th April, 2024. • The un-edited results of each annual Survey, as well as a progress summary document, are presented to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group on an annual basis for consideration and to raise any proposed actions as a result. 	

Recommendations

1. T H A T the status of the existing 2023 Outstanding Actions, as set out in the appended 2024 Outstanding Actions Summary document, be agreed.
2. T H A T the proposed actions in response to the 2024 Scrutiny Impact Survey, as set out in the appended 2024 Outstanding Actions Summary document, (and as referred to in paragraph 2.4) be considered and endorsed.
3. T H A T a further progress update on both the 2023 and 2024 Survey proposed actions be presented to the next meeting of the Group on the 12th September, 2024.
4. T H A T subject to Recommendations (1)-(3) above be agreed, the report be referred to the Democratic Services Committee for consideration.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. Having regard to the content of the appended documents and discussions held at the Group meeting on progress made against the previously agreed 2023 Survey actions.
2. Having regard to the content of the appended documents and discussions held at the Group meeting on the newly proposed actions as a result of the 2024 Survey results.
3. To ensure that Group Members are kept informed of progress against actions that have been agreed by the Group to enhance the effectiveness of the Council's Scrutiny Function.
4. To ensure that the Democratic Services Committee is sighted on the report to meet its responsibility for overseeing the Council's approach to Member Development, as per the Committee's Terms of Reference.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Impact Member Survey is the property of the Vale of Glamorgan Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group and administered by Democratic Services Officers. The Annual Impact Survey helps to maintain and assess the effectiveness of the Council's Scrutiny Function.

The Survey is published on an annual basis, each April, with the latest edition being published on 12th April, 2024. Please refer to Appendix B.

- 1.2 The Survey also took in to account the actions identified and considered by the Scrutiny Committees in relation to the principles for effective scrutiny and responses are recorded accordingly.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 Members are asked to note that there was an equal split of respondents across the five Scrutiny Committees.
- 2.2 The majority of responses received were positive.
- 2.3 Members are asked to consider the responses identified in Appendices A and C attached to this report and make any recommendations.
- 2.4 Committee is asked to consider the four actions that have been identified as suggested options, in Appendix B, for further consideration as a result of the analysis of the 2024 Survey.

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

- 3.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act sets out a duty for the Council to ensure the Sustainable Development Principle underpins all of the work undertaken by the Authority, requiring us to demonstrate how decisions are formulated, taken and scrutinised via five ways of working, the Act underpins the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 3.2 The approach to managing and developing the Scrutiny Impact Survey was collaborative and involving. The contents of the Act would be used to inform the development of any subsequent actions arising from the Survey feedback.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1 The use of electronic surveys is an approach taken to minimise printing and postage costs however, a hard copy of all surveys are available on request. This approach is aligned to the Council's response to the climate emergency; Project Zero, and its intention to use new technologies and digital practices.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1 Any future Member Development provision will continue to comprise a mixture of delivery which, whilst largely delivered internally, will also include external facilitators where considered appropriate and beneficial.

Employment

- 5.2 There are no direct employment implications arising from the carrying out of the rolling annual Survey process. The main implication was in terms of Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer time.

The Survey was compiled, disseminated and assessed in-house by Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officers on behalf of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** The Council is required by law to discharge certain overview and scrutiny functions. These functions are an essential component of local democracy. Overview and Scrutiny Committees (this Council's are called "Scrutiny Committees") should be powerful Committees that can contribute to the development of Council policies and also hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions. Another key part of the overview and scrutiny role is to review existing policies, consider proposals for new policies and suggest new policies. Therefore, the Annual Impact Survey helps to maintain and assess the effectiveness of the Council's Scrutiny Function.
- 5.4** Section 7 of the Vale of Glamorgan Constitution sets out how Overview and Scrutiny should be carried out in a constructive way as well as aim to contribute to the delivery of efficient and effective services that meet the needs and aspirations of local inhabitants. Scrutiny Committees should not shy away from the need to challenge and question decisions and make constructive criticism.
- 5.5** This report encompasses the 13 Principles of Effective Scrutiny as set out in the Council's Insight Board Action Plan.

6. Background Papers

Appendix A – Scrutiny Impact Member Survey: April 2024 Edition: Responses 1-10 as of 17-05-2024.

Appendix B – Scrutiny Impact Member Survey: Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group: Results Report April 2024.

Appendix C – Scrutiny Impact Member Survey: 2024 Outstanding Actions Summary.

1. Which Committee are you a member of?

[More Details](#)

● Corporate Performance & Reso...	3
● Environment & Regeneration	2
● Healthy Living & Social Care	3
● Homes & Safe Communities	2
● Learning & Culture	4



2. What do you understand the main purpose of Scrutiny within the Vale of Glamorgan to be?

10 Responses

1	anonymous	To scrutinize Cabinet and policy decisions to improve effective operation of the organisation
2	anonymous	To ensure good decision-making by the cabinet through sharing information such as good practice, questioning thought processes and actions, and providing alternative proposals.
3	anonymous	The main purpose is influence polices and decisions made by Council in delivering public services. These committees should gather evidence and make recommendations on the findings.
4	anonymous	Challenge and scrutinise policy and decisions.
5	anonymous	To hold the officers to account and to clarify how and why decisions are made
6	anonymous	To review and challenge(where necessary) proposals brought before the committee
7	anonymous	To look at the pro's and con's of each proposal and judge them on merit and evidence.
8	anonymous	Scrutinise decisions and reports made by offices and Cabinet.
9	anonymous	To be a critical friend to the council and best represent my ward community
10	anonymous	Careful and detailed examination of something in order to get information about it.

3. Does the Scrutiny Committee(s) you are a member of have a clearly defined well-being outcome and valued role in the council's improvement arrangements to achieve its vision of 'strong communities with a bright future'?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	8
● No	2
● Other	1



4. Do you think the Committee is focused on the right issues?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	9
● No	1
● Other	0



5. Which topics considered by the Scrutiny Committee have had the biggest impact on Vale of Glamorgan residents?

10 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Social Care and digital support for people Social work support Leisure offer
2	anonymous	Oracle, Procurement Strategy, and by far the biggest Project Zero. Frankly the ADP and Budget discussions have had little impact, which is sad due to the potential and with the amount of time devoted to these subjects, simply not utilised by councillors. For their part, officers are inflexible on these subjects, mainly due to the financial constraints... which I'd understandable but frustrating.
3	anonymous	The financial aspect is an important issue and keep on top of environmental issues, along with providing services which affect all residents ie waste collections, maintaining road structures etc and educational provisions and social care.
4	anonymous	One doesn't out trump another as it depends on who you ask would be the most important.
5	anonymous	Dealing with the homeless and safety in the community
6	anonymous	All topics considered could have an impact on VOG residents
7	anonymous	green spaces and social housing.
8	anonymous	I would say all do, it depends on the characteristics of each individual resident.
9	anonymous	being statutory services for the most vulnerable members of our community I believe all topics have a massive impact
10	anonymous	The Annual delivery plan, and nearly all, if not all topics discussed have impact on our residents.

6. What do you feel limits, if anything, the effectiveness of the Committee?

10 Responses

1	anonymous	Unwillingness of some members to express ideas and ask questions
2	anonymous	Lack of external expertise and evidence when scrutinising, creating an echo chamber. Cabinet Members hiding behind officers. Not enough background research by councillors, I suspect partly due to lack of expertise and a dispassionate motivation in the subjects spoken about in a majority but not all cases.
3	anonymous	The main issue which affects all Councils at this present time is financial and having to make decisions in order to provide all services the Council needs to run a successful service.
4	anonymous	The chair!
5	anonymous	Sometimes I'm not sure whether to run my questions by the leader first ,rather than being spontaneous
6	anonymous	We can provide a strong case to amend or change a proposal presented to us
7	anonymous	political bias
8	anonymous	I believe many of us struggle with understanding the financial reports. When any meeting lasts longer than 180 minutes it is difficult to maintain concentration.
9	anonymous	None I can think of
10	anonymous	Nothing I can think of. The more knowledge you have on the topic the better.

7. Do you feel that Scrutiny is member-led and has ownership of its forward work programme?

[More Details](#)

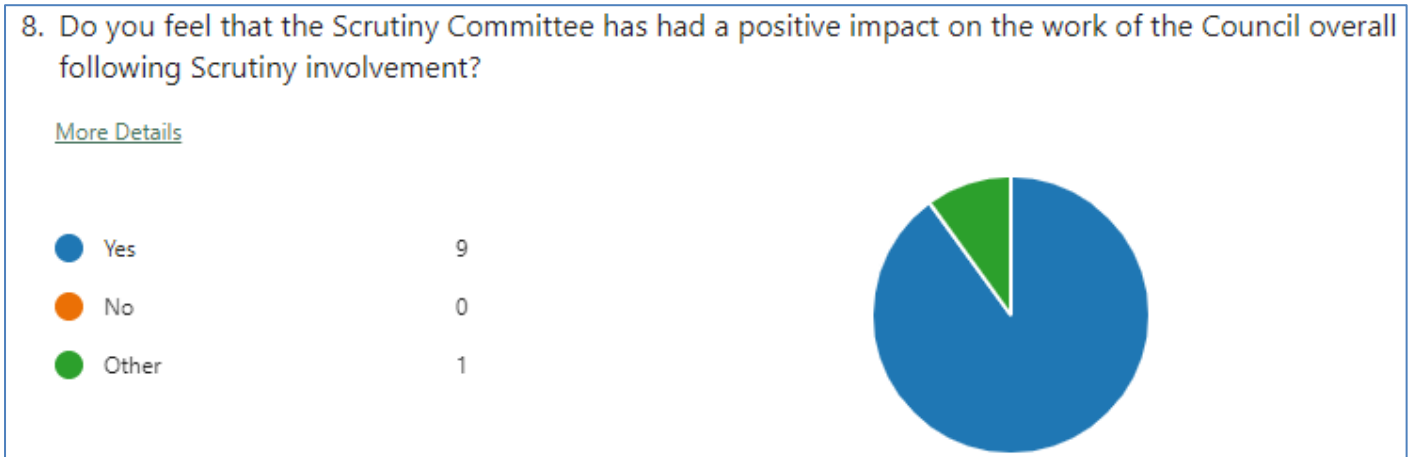
● Yes	6
● No	1
● Other	3



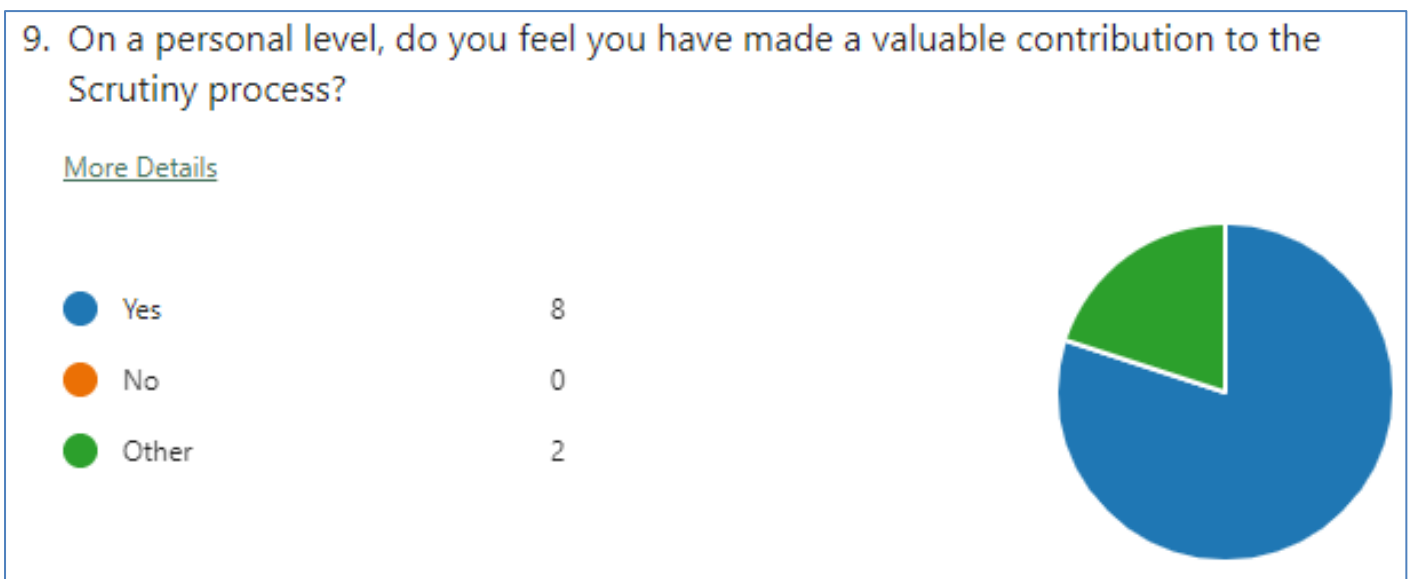
"Again some members seem unwilling to question the FWP"

"Mostly Cabinet-led, with some input from members such as with the task and finish. It would be wrong to say the committee is not at all member-led."

"Though the set agendas are necessary, I think it would be good for members to ask if certain topics could be discussed"



"In some cases."



"Sometimes"

"hopefully, but self praise is no recommendation"

10. Do you feel there is anything stopping you from contributing during Scrutiny Meetings?

10 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	no
2	anonymous	No
3	anonymous	I have never felt there was anything that prevented me from contribution at Scrutiny Meetings.
4	anonymous	No.
5	anonymous	Yes. I am conscious of painting the council in a bad light
6	anonymous	No
7	anonymous	not really
8	anonymous	See above regarding financial reports. The recent training made a huge difference to how i take part in scrutiny, and my confidence. It would have been helpful to have had time to discuss report reading, and best practice.
9	anonymous	None and the recent training session held by Democratic Services was amazing I would like to download all of their valuable knowledge into my head
10	anonymous	NO

11. How could Scrutiny in the Vale of Glamorgan be improved and / or what would you do differently?

10 Responses

1	anonymous	perhaps shorter agendas and encouraging members to participate more actively
2	anonymous	Cabinet Members need to lead on items, with officers supporting. Items to scrutinise over the course of the Year should be formally suggested by Scrutiny members when developing a FWP, with members directly asked for suggestions at the beginning of the municipal year. Some items need to be noted, with questions via email and only a vote in scrutiny if uncontroversial and small to minimise unnecessary time in committee. I think a generic Q&A with cabinet members who have responsibilities linked with that committee every quarter such as is done in the Senedd committees would be highly insightful.
3	anonymous	The two committees I sit on are run successfully and I cannot make any suggestions for any improvements. Both committees are chaired very well and all members are encouraged to participate, but it is always vital that all members read the paperwork in order to participate and ask the relevant questions for that committee.
4	anonymous	A chair should be receptive to questions and suggestions not dismiss or ignore them.
5	anonymous	A chance for members to have a good discussion on topics that aren't included in reports.
6	anonymous	Just an overview given at meetings for topics discussed, not full presentations, member should read presentations prior to or after the meeting.
7	anonymous	I am unsure at this time
8	anonymous	See above, training in report reading.
9	anonymous	Reports often repeat themselves I find this time consuming to navigate rather than just getting stuck into the nitty gritty of the reading.
10	anonymous	Happy with scrutinises as they are.

12. Do you feel you have had sufficient training and development opportunities to help you perform your role as a Scrutiny Committee Member?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	10
● No	0
● Other	1



"I do now, but didn't before."

13. Having undertaken your Scrutiny role since the Induction Programme following the 2022 Local Government Election; do you consider that further questioning skills training would assist you in developing your Scrutiny role?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	7
● No	3



14. Having regard to the Scrutiny Committee(s) you are a member of; what aspects of the work of the service areas that sit within your Committee(s) remit would you consider it...

10 Responses

1	anonymous	I'm not convinced that all members understand the day to day operation of the different parts of the directorate
2	anonymous	I think briefings from external experts on particular topics prior to scrutiny could be one way of breaking the echo chamber mentioned earlier.
3	anonymous	I believe that there such be on-going training in all areas as things move on and members need to be up-dated on a regular basis.
4	anonymous	School success stories.How improvements have benefitted pupils. Road resurfacing assessment.
5	anonymous	None
6	anonymous	School admissions policy
7	anonymous	I welcome all training, even if its refresher training
8	anonymous	Finance!
9	anonymous	I have found sitting on the school budget forum helpful others may find extra briefings on this useful. I also find it useful being involved in community centres as it gives me a great insight. I cant think of any extra briefings I might find useful atm.
10	anonymous	briefings are always helpful

Scrutiny Impact Member Survey

Results Report: 12.04.24 – 17.05.24

CONTEXT

The Scrutiny Impact Member Survey is property of the Vale of Glamorgan Scrutiny Chair & Vice-Chair Group and administered by Democratic Services Officers.

The Survey is published on an annual basis, each April, with the latest edition being published on 12th April 2024.

Responses were collated over a thirty-five-day period (5 working weeks), ending on Friday 17th May 2024, and dealt with anonymously.

There are 54 Vale of Glamorgan Elected Members but Cabinet Members (x8) as well as Elected Members who did not have a seat on a Scrutiny Committee (x3) as of 12th April 2024 were not consulted; leaving a maximum of 43 Members qualified to respond.

Out of a possible 43 respondents, 10 replied, giving a return of 23%. This is a reduction on the response rate for the last edition in April 2023 which saw a return of 61%.

The Survey was compiled using Microsoft Forms (accessible on both VoG Laptop and Mobile) and sent to all relevant respondents by email.

Since the publication of the 2023 Survey, three 'Tools for Effective Scrutiny' Workshop(s) have also been facilitated by Democratic Services Officers, with all Scrutiny Members invited to attend. Scrutiny Members were also requested to provide feedback on the workshop(s) directly, the results of which are also presented to the Scrutiny Chair and Vice-Chair Group on 28/05/24 for consideration alongside this report.

This Report, the Outstanding Actions Summary '24 as well as the Un-edited Results of the survey (as of 17th May 2024) are presented to the Scrutiny Chair & Vice-Chair Group on 28/05/24 for consideration. With it recommended:

- 1) *T H A T the status of the existing 2023 Outstanding Actions, as set out in the appended 2024 Outstanding Actions Summary document, be agreed.*
- 2) *T H A T the proposed actions in response to the 2024 Scrutiny Impact Survey, as set out in the appended 2024 outstanding actions summary document, be endorsed.*
- 3) *T H A T a further progress update on both the 2023 and 2024 Survey proposed actions be presented to the next meeting of the Group on the 12th of September 2024.*
- 4) *T H A T the report be referred to the Democratic Services Committee for consideration.*

Q1 - Which Committee are you a member of?Analysis

There was an equal split of respondents across the five Scrutiny Committees. The highest number of responses (marginally) were received from the Learning & Culture Committee.

Proposed Actions

None

Q2 - What do you understand the main purpose of Scrutiny within the Vale of Glamorgan to be?Analysis

The responses received reflected a good understanding of the decision-making processes/hierarchy within the council as well as the function holding Cabinet to account to the benefit of the Vale of Glamorgan Electorate. Key themes within the responses were good decision making, to influence policies and decisions and gathering information.

A single response referred to holding Officers account which is not the purpose of the Scrutiny Function.

Proposed Actions

None

Q3 - Does the Scrutiny Committee(s) you are a member of have a clearly defined well-being outcome and valued role in the Council's improvement arrangements to achieve its vision of 'Strong Communities with a bright future'?Analysis

The vast majority of responses to this question were positive; 8 answered 'Yes.' Only 2 responses answered 'No.'

Only 1 respondent left a comment under 'Other,' as follows:

"I feel the chairs personal beliefs are stopping the committee from examining a wider range of areas. Which would give a better understanding of our area of scrutiny."

Proposed Actions

None.

The single comment left under 'Other' has been presented to the SC&VC Group on the 28th May 2024 for consideration. Therefore, Scrutiny Chair's have been informed of the respondent's opinion on Chair conduct.

Q4 - Do you think the Committee is focused on the right issues?Analysis

The vast majority of responses to this question were positive; 9 answered 'Yes.' Only 1 response answered 'No.'

There were no comments left against this question.

Proposed Actions

None.

The single respondent who chose to select 'No' did not provide any further context for their answer.

Q5 – Which topics considered by the Scrutiny Committee have had the biggest impact on Vale of Glamorgan residents?

Analysis

Responses reflected a wide range of services offered by the Council.

Recurring themes (but not exclusively) were Housing and Homelessness, Household Waste and Recycling, Social Support for Vulnerable Individuals, and Project Zero.

Comments also suggest an equality across all topics considered by the Council and that financial aspects/consideration, although important, "have had little impact."

Proposed Actions

None.

All four themes that were identified by respondents were also stated within the results of the 2023 Annual Survey. 2023 Confirmed Action 10 (J) refers.

Q6 - What do you feel limits, if anything, the effectiveness of the Committee?

Analysis

The majority of responses provided a reason/factor. Only two responses provided a nothing answer.

Factors stated that limited effectiveness can be summarised as follows:

- Unwillingness and/or lack of confidence of some members to express ideas and ask questions,
- Not enough background research by councillors,
- Current Financial Climate,
- Quality of Chair,
- Political bias,
- Complex report content, and
- Meetings lasting too long.

Proposed Actions

(A) That the factors stated by respondents in response to Q6 of the 2024 Survey be presented to the SC&VC Group meeting on the 28th May 2024 and that the Group be requested to suggest any mitigating actions in response as deemed collectively necessary.

2023 Confirmed Action 15 (O) relates.

Q7 - Do you feel that Scrutiny is member-led and has 'ownership' of its work programme?Analysis

The majority of responses reflect a 'Yes' (x6) answer, only one respondent answered 'No.'

Three respondents chose to leave a comment under the 'Other' option as follows:

- 1) "Again some members seem unwilling to question the FWP"
- 2) "Mostly Cabinet-led, with some input from members such as with the task and finish. It would be wrong to say the committee is not at all member-led."
- 3) "Though the set agendas are necessary, I think it would be good for members to ask if certain topics could be discussed"

Proposed Actions

(B) That on publication of the quarterly tracking reports for each Scrutiny Committee, the relevant Chair emails all committee members to confirm:

- 1. The quarterly tracking reports are property of the Committee and Committee may influence the content.*
- 2. Members may suggest any topics for Task and Finish Projects in advance via the Chair or relevant DSSO or at the meeting itself. Relevant processes will then follow if Committee agrees.*
- 3. Members may suggest topics for inclusion on the Committee's FWP in advance via the Chair or relevant DSSO or at the meeting itself. Relevant processes will then follow if Committee agrees.*

Q8 - Do you feel that the Scrutiny Committee has had a positive impact on the work of the Council following Scrutiny Involvement?Analysis

The majority of responses to this question were positive; 9 answered 'Yes' and no 'No' responses were received.

One respondent left a brief comment under 'Other' as follows: "In some cases."

Proposed Actions

None.

Q9 - On a personal level, do you feel you have made a valuable contribution to the Scrutiny process?Analysis

The majority of responses to this question were positive; 8 answered 'Yes' and no 'No' responses were received.

Two respondents left brief comments under 'Other' as follows:

- 1) "Sometimes"
- 2) "hopefully, but self praise is no recommendation"

Proposed Actions

None.

Q10 – Do you feel there is anything stopping you from contributing during Scrutiny Meetings?Analysis

8 respondents (80%) answered no for this question.

However, from the comments provided, reasons given were as follows:

- conscious of painting the council in a bad light,
- many councillors struggle with understanding financial reports.

Two respondents also complemented the recent Effective Scrutiny Workshop development sessions and the advantages it provided in terms of valuable knowledge and report analysis.

Proposed Actions

None.

The second comment suggests that additional financial report training is required however, this point has already been raised and will be actioned via 2023 Confirmed Actions 14 (N) and 30 (DD).

Q11 - How could Scrutiny in the Vale of Glamorgan be improved and/or what would you do differently?Analysis

Several concise responses were provided that can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Shorter agendas and encouraging members to participate more actively,
- 2) Cabinet Members need to lead on items, with officers supporting.
- 3) Items to scrutinise over the course of the Year should be formally suggested by Scrutiny members when developing a FWP, with members directly asked for suggestions at the beginning of the municipal year.
- 4) Some items need to be noted, with questions via email.
- 5) Only a vote in scrutiny if uncontroversial and small to minimise unnecessary time in committee.
- 6) A generic Q&A with cabinet members who have responsibilities linked with that committee every quarter.
- 7) Always vital that all members read the paperwork in order to participate and ask the relevant questions.
- 8) A chair should be receptive to questions and suggestions not dismiss or ignore them.
- 9) A chance for members to have a good discussion on topics that aren't included in reports.
- 10) Just an overview given at meetings for topics discussed, not full presentations, member should read presentations prior to or after the meeting.
- 11) Member training in report reading.
- 12) Report content not repeated.

Proposed Actions

(C) That the Leader be informed of comments 2 and 6, under Question 11 of the 2024 Survey, for their information and future consideration in relation to Cabinet member participation at Scrutiny Meetings.

Q12 - Do you feel you have had sufficient training and development opportunities to help you fulfil your role as a Scrutiny Committee Member?

Analysis

The vast majority of responses to this question were positive; all 10 respondents answered 'Yes.'

One respondent left a brief comment under 'Other' as follows: "I do now but didn't before."

Proposed Actions

None.

Democratic Officers believe the single comment referred to the individual having recently attended the Tools for Effective Scrutiny Member Workshop.

Q13 - Having undertaken your Scrutiny role since the Induction Programme following the 2022 Local Government Election; do you consider that further questioning skills training would assist you in developing your Scrutiny role?

Analysis

The majority of responses to this question were 'Yes' (7). Three respondents answered 'No.'

There were no additional comments provided for this question.

Proposed Actions

None.

Q14 - Having regard to the Scrutiny Committee(s) you are a member of; what aspects of the work of the service areas that sit within your Committee(s) remit would you consider it useful to have further training, information and/or a briefing on?

Analysis

Further training topics identified were:

1. Day to day operation of the different parts of the directorate.
2. Briefings from external experts on particular topics prior to scrutiny [meetings].
3. School success stories and how improvements have benefitted pupils.
4. Road resurfacing assessment.
5. School Admissions Policy.
6. Finance.
7. Briefing on the School Budget Forum.
8. Involvement in Community Centers.

Proposed Actions

(D) That the further training topics suggested by respondents, in response to Q14 of the 2024 Survey, be considered alongside planning for the future Member Development offer following the results of the 2023 Learning Needs Assessment.

2023 Confirmed Action 30 (DD) relates.

Scrutiny Impact Member Survey: April 2024 Edition.

Outstanding Actions Summary

Context
<p>The results of the April 2024 Survey Edition were presented to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SC&VC Group) on 28th May, 2024 for consideration. With it recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) T H A T the status of the existing 2023 Outstanding Actions, as set out in the appended 2024 Outstanding Actions Summary document, be agreed. 2) T H A T the proposed actions in response to the 2024 Scrutiny Impact Survey, as set out in the appended 2024 Outstanding Actions Summary document, be endorsed. 3) T H A T a further progress update on both the 2023 and 2024 Survey proposed actions be presented to the next meeting of the Group on 12th September 2024. 4) T H A T the report be referred to the Democratic Services Committee for consideration. <p>4 Actions are proposed for SC&VC Group approval following the 2024 Survey Edition.</p> <p>77% of Actions (23 of 30) have now been completed following the 2023 Survey Edition with 23% (7 of 30) ongoing as labelled below.</p>

Proposed Actions – April '24 Edition	
1	(A) That the factors stated by respondents in response to Q6 of the 2024 Survey be presented to the SC&VC Group meeting on 28 th May 2024 and that the Group be requested to suggest any mitigating actions in response as deemed collectively necessary.
2	(B) That on publication of the quarterly tracking reports for each Scrutiny Committee, the relevant Chair emails all Committee Members to confirm: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The quarterly tracking reports are property of the Committee and Committee may influence the content. 2. Members may suggest any topics for Task and Finish Projects in advance via the Chair or relevant DSSO or at the meeting itself. Relevant processes will then follow if Committee agrees. 3. Members may suggest topics for inclusion on the Committee's FWP in advance via the Chair or relevant DSSO or at the meeting itself. Relevant processes will then follow if Committee agrees.
3	(C) That the Leader be informed of comments 2 and 6, under Question 11 of the 2024 Survey, for their information and future consideration in relation to Cabinet Member participation at Scrutiny Meetings.
4	(D) That the further training topics suggested by respondents, in response to Q14 of the 2024 Survey, be considered alongside planning for the future Member Development offer following the results of the 2023 Learning Needs Assessment.

	Confirmed Actions – April '23 Edition	Update/Notes
1	A) Some of the responses implied that the Scrutiny function also acted as a method to hold officers to account. As this is not the purpose of the Scrutiny function, and as the purpose of the Scrutiny function is to act as a 'Critical Friend' of the Executive, this point will be included within the upcoming Scrutiny Workshop materials [see point (U) below].	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Tasks within the Tools of Effective Scrutiny Workshop focused on the Elected Member Scrutiny Committee Member Role Description [Section 25, 25.16, Pg 304] in the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>The workshop also highlighted Section 7 of the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which clearly states "hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions."</p>
2	B) Further training on time management, data analysis and being effective to be arranged to support members with digesting committee reports. These development sessions and/or e-learning modules should be made available to Members as soon as possible [2021 Outstanding Summary Actions C+D].	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>In relation to Data Analysis: The Data Cymru Understanding and using performance data (for Councillors) course was offered to all Scrutiny Committee members and LC Co-opted Members with voting rights on 21/03/24. 6 Elected Members were in attendance. 1 Co-opted Member was in attendance.</p> <p>The Tools of Effective Scrutiny Workshop also focused on Scrutiny Report structure, analysis and questioning using performance reports as an example.</p> <p>On 8th September 2023, all Scrutiny Members were provided with a Scrutiny Question Aide Memoire to support them with data analysis of Scrutiny Reports.</p> <p>In relation to Time Management and Being Effective: Sessions on these topics are still required and expected to be part of a future member development offer following the 2023 Local Needs Assessment.</p>
3	C) Further training on the Council's Corporate Plan and role that the Scrutiny Function plays in achieving this to be arranged and made available to Members as soon as possible.	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>All Scrutiny Members were invited to attend a 30minute Member Briefing Session during the March 2024 Scrutiny Cycle ahead of a report being considered by each Scrutiny Committee in relation to Service Plans and Target Setting to deliver the Council's Annual Delivery Plan.</p>

		<p>These briefing sessions followed on from a collective session, also facilitated by the Director of Corporate Resources on 1st February 2024.</p>
4	<p>D) Scrutiny meeting content should be related to matters that Scrutiny Members have an active role in and are being asked to 'do' something. This would allow the Committee to better demonstrate its impact through its decision making. Chairs and Vice-Chairs have a role here in managing the meeting and its contents and should consider <u>what</u> members are being asked to <u>do</u> with each agenda item and challenge whether the item needs to be put before the Committee or more simply shared with Members 'for information' via an alternative method. This process is best placed during Agenda Conferences and should be adopted by all Chairs immediately.</p>	<p>COMPLETE This approach was adopted by 7 Chairs in seat during the 2023-24 Municipal year on 5th September 2023.</p>
5	<p>E) Items for Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programmes (FWPs) to be discussed with relevant Cabinet Member and Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Committee and, as referred to in the Cabinet and Scrutiny Member protocol, with a view to taking FWPs in the Municipal year approx. May / June. The first meeting of the Committee in the Municipal Year to consider the proposed annual FWP, with all Members able to provide views on the content for agreement and an overview of the refreshed approach to Committee FWP [13 Principals, Action 3].</p>	<p>COMPLETE As part of the preparation of the detail for the Cabinet Annual Strategic Forward Work Programme (ASFWP) for consideration by Cabinet in April 2024, relevant Cabinet Members, Chairs and Vice-Chairs of all five Scrutiny Committees were approached to discuss the draft ASFWP, with the meetings taking place as follows: CPR – 1st February '24 HSC – 29th February '24 HLSC – 7th March '24 LC – 7th March '24 ER – 21st March '24</p> <p>Q4 Decision Tracking and Annual FWP Reports taken to May and June 2024 Scrutiny Cycles as is standard practice.</p>
6	<p>F) At all Agenda Conferences with Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Committees management of the Committees' work programme to be a standing item and officers to advise of suggested areas for scrutiny. This does take place, however, more in depth discussion regarding Scrutiny of items should be encouraged with officers providing advice/ steer to Chairs and Vice-Chairs on areas where attention is needed and to discuss the method of scrutiny – for example, by report, presentation, visit etc. and the most appropriate and useful people to have in</p>	<p>COMPLETE Forward Work Programme (FWP) content has been a standing item on Scrutiny Agenda Conference Agendas since the September '23 Scrutiny Cycle. Scrutiny Committees continue to receive quarterly tracking reports which requests approval to upload the updated version of</p>

	attendance, for example external partners, experts etc. [Q4 Tracking report, paragraph 2.14 and 13 Principals, Action 7].	the FWP to the public website after Committee consideration.
7	G) It is proposed that the size of Committee reports to be reduced with more attention given to the executive summary section to make reading the reports more manageable for Members. Moving to an exception reporting approach would support this. This suggestion should be raised with Service Area Officers as well as the Council's Performance Monitoring and Finance Teams at relevant DMTs.	ONGOING This approach was endorsed by the SC&VC Group on 5 th September 2023 in relation to agenda and FWP planning. Report templates and analysis was also raised during the Tools for Effective Scrutiny Member Workshops held in March 2024.
8	H) It has also recently been agreed and actioned that Directorate Management Team (DMT) meetings to be attended by Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officers to consider / inform work programmes, and feed back to Committee Chairs prior to Agenda Conferences, to pinpoint areas that require specific Scrutiny [13 Principles, Action 1].	COMPLETE Democratic Officers have been attending DMT meetings since July 2023. Each Directorate operates differently in terms of the frequency of DMT meetings, but each Democratic Officer has an arrangement in place with the relevant director for the Committee they support. Any points of interest that arise from DMT meetings are shared with Committee Chairs during their regular Democratic Officer discussions.
9	I) Corporate Performance Team (CPT) to also be requested to advise on priority areas for Scrutiny (through performance monitoring) and advise on areas where further probing by Members should be considered (identified via the current exception reporting arrangement). <i>A representative of the CPT will also be present at the Scrutiny workshop to assist Members in this regard</i> [13 Principles, Action 2].	ONGOING CPT Officers helped to facilitate the Tools of Effective Scrutiny Workshops held through-out March 2024. Further discussions with the CPT will be ongoing in relation to this item. The CPT have recently suggested Public Service Board (PSB) items for consideration by Scrutiny Committees and these will be forwarded to Scrutiny Chairs as part of agenda planning.
10	J) The reoccurring themes identified via this question should be considered by Committee Chairs to steer future Task & Finish Work for Committees [Q4 Tracking report, paragraph 2.11]. Themes: Housing and Homelessness, Household Waste and Recycling, Transgender Toolkit for Schools, the Council's C1V Contact Centre, Social Support for Vulnerable Individuals, Project Zero, and impacts of the Cost-of-Living Crisis.	COMPLETE The themes were identified by members in response to the 2023 Annual Scrutiny Impact Survey. The results of which were presented to all Scrutiny Chair and Vice-Chairs, in seat, in September 2023. Any new Chairs in seat for the 2024-25 Municipal year have been

		<p>presented with the themes via this report.</p> <p>As is standard practice, all Task and Finish requests are approved by the relevant Scrutiny Committee and Chair. In the event of multiple Task and Finish requests for a single Committee, these will be presented to the SC&VC Group to establish priority giving consideration to resources available within the Democratic Services Team at that time.</p> <p>*See point 12*</p>
11	<p>K) A review and re-launch of the Scrutiny topic suggestion form that exists on the Council’s website for residents / Members, that should be easily accessible and supplemented by a ‘What is Scrutiny?’ video (via requests for consideration process and not forgetting the Call-in process) to put forward suggested topics for Scrutiny whether by Task and Finish groups or other means with consideration also being given to the Council’s Public Participation Strategy.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>A review and re-launch of the Scrutiny topic suggestion form on the public website was completed bilingually on 12th January 2024. A new digital form has been live and available since this date.</p> <p>Since that time, 1 suggestion form has been received and considered by the relevant Committee Chair. It was subsequently agreed by the relevant Chair not to progress with the request based on a previous answer provided at Full Council.</p> <p>Due to capacity with the Democratic Services Team, it has not been possible to create the ‘What is Scrutiny?’ video to date, however this item will be taken forward when possible.</p>
12	<p>L) All topics for Task and Finish work to be taken to the Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group to be prioritised in line with Corporate Objectives in compliance with Council policy; consideration of the need for changes to policy and/or practice; and in seeking continuous Improvement.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>This approach was endorsed by the SC&VC Group on 5th September 2023 and has been adopted since. Although, as a point of clarity, it is recognised that T&F requests will only be presented to the SC&VC Group should there be more than one request for any given Committee at any one time.</p> <p>*See point 10*</p>
13	<p>M) The sharing of good practice and examples of conducting effective scrutiny at Committee meetings be a standing item on future Group agendas [13 Principles, Action 6].</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>The ‘Sharing of Good Practice and Conducting Effective Scrutiny – Verbal Report by Chairs and Vice-Chairs, if any’ has been included</p>

		within SC&VC Group meeting agendas as a standard item since 30 th May 2023 meeting, having been agreed by the Group at its 24 th January 2023 meeting.
14	N) Re-establishing in the Vale previous performance panels of Members of Committees to undertake in-depth Scrutiny of matters such as corporate performance and the budget. Therefore, freeing up agenda space and aid knowledge building [13 <i>Principals, Action 12</i>].	ONGOING
15	<p>O) Scrutiny workshop to include reference to above points raised by Members for discussion.</p> <p>Factors that limited effectiveness could be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of Task and Finish Work, - Meeting remotely and a reliability on technology to participate, - Members not fully trained (lack of subject knowledge) or equipped to scrutinize, - Members being politically led during scrutiny meetings, - One-sided, narrow debate, - Lack of debate time, - Reports considered by the wrong committee, - Lack of Member confidence to participate, - Formatting and size of Officer reports, - Members not reading reports prior to the meeting, - Poor Chairing, and - New ideas and approaches are not necessarily encouraged. 	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Democratic Officers feel they have made considerable efforts to try and support Scrutiny Members to mitigate the factors listed within the 2023 Annual Scrutiny Impact Survey. Some of the factors are politically motivated and related to individual input by Committee Members which is not within the remit of Democratic Officers.</p> <p>Task and Finish Project Groups have been undertaken during the 2023-24 Municipal year. The Council's Hybrid Meeting Platform has been introduced and operational for all corporate meetings since November 2023. All Scrutiny Committee Members have been offered the opportunity to attend a Tools of Effective Scrutiny Workshop in March 2024. Scrutiny Chairs, with Democratic Services Officer support, continue to manage the amount of agenda content for each meeting to allow for adequate time to consider each agenda item.</p>
16	P) The action outlined in the Scrutiny and Cabinet Protocol agreed by Cabinet in 2021 to be relaunched i.e. Specific meetings with Cabinet Portfolio Holders to be arranged with Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs on a regular basis and on a biannual basis the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs to meet to allow both the Cabinet and Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes to be developed and agreed for decisions to take place having regard to Council priorities [Q4 <i>Tracking Report, paragraph 2.15 and 13 Principals, Action 8</i>].	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>As part of the preparation of the detail for the Cabinet Annual Strategic Forward Work Programme (ASFWP) for consideration by Cabinet in April 2024, relevant Cabinet Members, Chairs and Vice-Chairs of all five Scrutiny Committees were approached to discuss the draft ASFWP, with the meetings taking place as follows:</p>

		<p>CPR – 1st February '24 HSC – 29th February '24 HLSC – 7th March '24 LC – 7th March '24 ER – 21st March '24</p> <p>Subsequent meetings will be arranged in collaboration with Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Chairs.</p>
17	Q) Single, pre-Cabinet consideration, item meetings are scheduled on approval from the Committee Chair to allow for greater consideration/scrutiny of a single matter.	<p>COMPLETE This approach was endorsed by the SC&VC Group on 5th September 2023 and will be actioned as and when the relevant Committee Chair establishes an appropriate matter in discussion with the relevant Committee Director.</p>
18	R) Chairs to encourage debate and consider ways to encourage Members who may not be confident to raise matters and suggest recommendations. Discussion / ways identified to be undertaken at Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group and Scrutiny workshop.	<p>COMPLETE This approach was endorsed by the SC&VC Group on 5th September 2023 and has been adopted since. Following the Council's 8th May Annual Meeting, it was agreed that all outgoing Chairs retain their seats for the 2024-25 Municipal year. Therefore, Committee Chairs are aware of any Committee Membership changes between municipal years to continue this approach. The practical tasks set out in the Tools for Effective Scrutiny Workshop, provided to all Scrutiny Members in March 2024, were designed to promote discussion amongst members on meeting input and participation.</p>
19	S) Further training be considered for elected members on effective Scrutiny and collating of recommendations [2023 Learning Needs Analysis, Question 87].	<p>COMPLETE All Elected Members as well as Co-opted Members with voting rights on the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee, were invited to attend a Workshop entitled 'Tools of Effective Scrutiny' on a choice of three dates in March 2024. The workshop focused on three objectives: 1) To identify and sign-post members to the various tools readily available to support them with their scrutiny work. 2) Increase Member awareness on the Scrutiny Chair and</p>

		<p>Committee Member Roles as per the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>3) To establish key considerations in relation to Scrutiny report analysis and recommendations.</p> <p>All Scrutiny Members were reminded of the Report Recommendation Writing Guidance available under Key Docs on StaffNet as one of eight scrutiny tools/resources.</p>
20	<p>T) Committee Chairs to continue to pro-actively ask members for contributions for each agenda item. With particular regard given to Members who have yet not participated during the meeting.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>This approach was endorsed by the SC&VC Group on 5th September 2023 and has been adopted since.</p> <p>*See point 18*</p>
21	<p>U) A workshop be held regarding the tools to support effective Scrutiny roles and the responsibilities as set out in the Council's Constitution (Elected Members and in their Roles as Chairs / Vice-Chairs and Members of Scrutiny Committees). This to also include the re-launch of the Scrutiny and Cabinet Roles and Responsibilities Protocol approved by Cabinet on 21st May 2021. The workshop should be designed to increase member confidence to participate during meetings, set-out the practicalities of how the scrutiny function works and the fact Members can approach officers / Chairs / DSSO in advance of meetings, explore different ways to undertake Scrutiny and to stress the point that Scrutiny Committees should not be political party agenda led but rather cross-party collaboration to the benefit of Vale of Glamorgan residents.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>All Elected Members as well as Co-opted Members with voting rights on the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee, were invited to attend a Workshop entitled 'Tools of Effective Scrutiny' on a choice of three dates in March 2024. The workshop focused on three objectives:</p> <p>1) To identify and sign-post Members to the various tools readily available to support them with their scrutiny work.</p> <p>2) Increase Member awareness on the Scrutiny Chair and Committee Member Roles as per the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>3) To establish key considerations in relation to Scrutiny report analysis and recommendations.</p> <p>A report on progress to date and feedback received from Scrutiny Members in attendance at the workshop was presented to the SC&VC Group for consideration at its 28th May 2024 meeting.</p>
22	<p>V) An Aide Memoire of Points when considering items for Scrutiny to be issued to All Elected Members <i>to assist in supporting effective Scrutiny and challenge at meetings.</i> [13 Principals, Action 11].</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>The Scrutiny Question Aide Memoire emailed to all Scrutiny Committee Members on 8th September 2023 and subsequently re-highlighted to members as part of the Tools for Effective Scrutiny Workshops held in March 2024.</p>

23	<p>W) The start time for the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee be moved to 6pm following consultation with Committee members [<i>Timing of Meetings Survey, Questions 3 and 6</i>].</p>	<p>COMPLETE Survey shared with all Committee Members and Officers who supported on Thursday, 12th October, 2023 at 11:57AM. A further completion reminder (email and text message) was sent to individuals yet to complete on 20th October 2023. Results were considered by the Chair, Vice and DSSO on 3rd November 2023 at 1pm and it agreed that meetings remain at 5pm based on the feedback received from the current Committee. Announcement provided to Committee at 7th November 2023 meeting.</p>
24	<p>X) Scrutiny Committee agendas are formulated based on the meeting lasting no longer than 3 hours [<i>2023 Learning Needs Analysis, Question 88 and Timing of Meetings Survey, Question 10</i>].</p>	<p>COMPLETE This approach was endorsed by the SC&VC Group on 5th September 2023 and has been adopted since.</p>
25	<p>Y) That Chairs and Vice-Chairs have regard to the comments above when managing meetings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) More contribution from experts and critical friends outside the Council on policy areas, 2) Have location specific face-to-face meetings, 3) More participation from members of the public, 4) Site visits with officers in attendance, 5) Operate an assumption that documents have been read, and thus questioning can commence instead of presentation, 6) Ensure presentations are presentations and not just the report again, 7) Developing an agenda which is more Member-led, by helping Councillors to determine what subjects they and their residents think are important and getting an informed report on the matter. This involves greater resource for Democratic Services to be more responsive in report-writing and research, 8) Members asking for clarification from officers before meetings, if necessary, 9) Compel each Committee to undertake at least one Task and Finish and be more outward facing to further improve engagement with members of the public. 	<p>COMPLETE Points 1-9 were endorsed by the SC&VC Group on 5th September 2023 and will be actioned as and when appropriate by the relevant Committee Chair subject to the livestream and hybrid nature of Committee meetings, the level of public interest in agenda items, context discussions with presenting officers and T&F suggestions raised by the Committee.</p>
26	<p>Z) Scrutiny Workshop and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group to have regard to the comments made above and consider ways to progress suggestions. The 15 suggestions to be considered in detail at the</p>	<p>COMPLETE The 15 suggestions were considered by the SC&VC Group at its 28th November 2023 meeting.</p>

	next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group.	
27	AA) Social Services Officers be requested to explore the compilation of hypothetical scenarios to demonstrate the responsive services being offered by the Social Care Directorate and to share the scenarios with members of the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee. This would be supplemented by a glossary of terms and acronyms used by the Directorate. Glossary of terms to also be made available for all Committees.	COMPLETE Request was raised at the Social Services DMT meeting and Officers agreed to consider incorporating scenarios into the Member Induction and Development sessions offered to all Members following the 2027 Local Government Election. Confirmation received that a glossary of terms and acronyms used by the Directorate was made available to all Members 8 th September 2022. This document is continually updated and available via Sharepoint.
28	BB) To complement the work undertaken by Democratic Services it is suggested Members undertake visits to other Local Authorities (remotely) to view Scrutiny elsewhere <i>[13 Principals, Action 1]</i> .	ONGOING Due to capacity issues within the Democratic Services Team, it has not yet been possible to take this item forward but is still intended to take place during 2024.
29	CC) Further questioning skills training be arranged for all Elected Members <i>[Q4 Tracking Report, paragraph 2.17 and 13 Principals, Action 10]</i> .	COMPLETE The Scrutiny Question Aide Memoire was emailed to all Scrutiny Committee Members on 8 th September 2023 and subsequently re-highlighted to members as part of the Tools for Effective Scrutiny Workshops held in March 2024. This follows on from the General Chairing and Questioning Skills member development session offered to Members in June 2022. A recording of this session is available on the Committee HUB for Member information/ future reference.
30	DD) That Member training sessions be considered to be arranged in relation to the suggested topics as appropriate. Further training topics identified were: 1. Development of policy with the policy team. 2. New legislation etc. that cover financial and environment issues. 3. The roll of becoming a Chair or Vice-Chair. 4. How far members of the public can participate in discussions.	ONGOING Topics 1- 12 will be considered as part of planning for a future Member development offer following the 2023 Local Needs Assessment.

<p>5. How to spot the signs and how to signpost or provide help to victims of domestic violence, money laundering and child exploitation.</p> <p>6. Budgets and finance. Management of Capital Programme. Details of and expending grants. External partners, costing breakdowns on infrastructure projects so members can see how much things actually cost.</p> <p>7. How/if the Committee could influence the Health Board to provide better access to healthcare services, GPs etc.</p> <p>8. Child carers.</p> <p>9. Libraries and how they are moving with the times.</p> <p>10. Carers and young carers information, and</p> <p>11. ALN provision in schools.</p>	
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