

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Introduction

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.

Overview and scrutiny should be carried out in a constructive way and should 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.

Scrutiny Committees

In order to achieve this, the Council has appointed five Scrutiny Committees which between them will:

review or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions, whether by the Executive or another part of the Council, but with the exception of any matter which is specifically identified in the terms of reference of any other Scrutiny Committee;

make reports or recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet in connection with the discharge of any functions;

consider any matter which affects the Council's area or its inhabitants; and

exercise the right to call-in for reconsideration of decisions made, but not yet implemented, by the Executive and Officers.

In undertaking the above, Scrutiny Committees shall, in particular, have regard to

- compliance with Council policy;
- consideration of the need for changes to policy and/or practice;
- Continuous Improvement.

Role, Scope and Terms of Reference

The role, scope and terms of reference of the Scrutiny Committees are described in the table below:

Committee Title	Scope	
	Corporate Plan Outcomes and Objectives	Council Functions
Corporate Performance and Resources	Overall monitoring of Corporate Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Policy and Performance • Communications • Customer Relations • Corporate Performance • Finance • ICT • Property • Legal • Democratic • Human Resources • Surplus Land and Property • Capital Schemes • Revenue Proposals over £300,000 • Public Services Board
Environment and Regeneration	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment. • Promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development • Tourism • Countryside • Regeneration • Waste Management and Cleansing, Highways & Engineering and Grounds Maintenance • Planning • Transportation • Fleet Management, Cleaning and Security

Homes and Safe Communities	<p>An Inclusive and Safe Vale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing poverty and social exclusion. • Providing decent homes and safe communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Housing • Public Housing Maintenance • Public Protection including all Shared Regulatory Services functions • Community Safety • Private Sector Housing and Renewal Areas • Crime and Disorder Matters (as required under the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) • Families First, Flying Start and Communities First
Learning and Culture	<p>An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising overall standards of achievement. • Valuing culture and diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools (Pupil Support, School Improvement and School Support) • Post 16 Education and Training • Libraries • Community Education and Youth Service • Equalities • Welsh Language • Arts Development
Healthy Living and Social Care	<p>An Active and Healthy Vale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging and promoting active and healthy lifestyles. • Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Services • Children and Young People's Services • Social Services Business Management and Innovation • Leisure, Parks, Sport and Play

Specific Functions

Policy Development and Review

The Scrutiny Committees may:

- (a) assist the Council and the Executive in the development of its Budget and Policy Framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
- (b) conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- (c) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;

- (d) question Members of the Executive and/or Committees and Chief Officers from the Council about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area;
- (e) liaise with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working; and
- (f) consider the impact of policies to assess if they have made a difference.

Scrutiny

The Scrutiny Committees may:

- (a) review and scrutinise the decisions by, and performance of, the Executive and/ or Committees and Council Officers in relation to individual decisions and over time;
- (b) review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- (c) question Members of the Executive and/or Committees and Chief Officers from the Council about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
- (d) make recommendations to the Executive and/or appropriate Committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- (e) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Scrutiny Committees and local people about their activities and performance; and
- (f) question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).

Finance

Scrutiny Committees may exercise overall responsibility for the finances made available to them.

Annual Report

The Scrutiny Committees must report annually to the Full Council on their workings, with recommendations for their future Work Programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

Officers

Scrutiny Committees may exercise overall responsibility for the Work Programme of the Officers employed to support their work; it being noted that Officers supporting the scrutiny function also undertake non-scrutiny related duties.