

## **The Vale of Glamorgan Council**

### **Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee: 18th September, 2017**

#### **Report of the Managing Director**

#### **Scrutiny Committees' Draft Annual Report May 2016 to April 2017**

##### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider and approve the Scrutiny Committees' draft 2016/17 Annual Report.

##### **Recommendation**

That the Scrutiny Committee approve the contents of the draft Annual Report for the period May 2016 to April 2017, subject to any further minor amendments being agreed in consultation with the Chairman, and that the report be submitted to Full Council in September 2017.

##### **Reason for the Recommendation**

To approve the draft Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report to allow it to be submitted to Full Council in September 2017.

##### **Background**

2. In accordance with Section 7.4.4 of the Council's Constitution, Scrutiny Committees' must report annually to Full Council on their workings and make recommendations for their future work programmes and amend their working methods if appropriate.

##### **Relevant Issues and Options**

3. The draft Annual Report attached at Appendix A to this 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 agreement that the work of Scrutiny should be closely aligned to four wellbeing objective outcomes that form the main basis of the Council's new Corporate Plan which was published in April 2016.

4. In considering the draft Annual Report, Members are requested to refer specifically to the relevant sections for their Committee and to make any amendments or suggestions as appropriate.
5. The Annual Report will subsequently be submitted to Full Council in September 2017 and will then be available on the Council's website. For information, Members are advised that the Annual Report is only "reported to Council" as opposed to it requiring actual approval.

### **Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)**

6. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

7. None as a direct result of this report.

### **Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)**

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

### **Crime and Disorder Implications**

9. None as a direct result of this report.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)**

10. None as a direct result of this report.

### **Corporate/Service Objectives**

11. The Council's Corporate Plan 2016-20 contains an Integrated Planning Action - "Review the current arrangements to support effective scrutiny and facilitate more robust challenge and improved accountability". The Council's approach to performance management has been reviewed as part of this process and to ensure effective scrutiny of the Council's cross-cutting Corporate Plan actions.

### **Policy Framework and Budget**

12. Section 7.4.4 of the Council's Constitution requires the Scrutiny Committees' Annual report be presented to Full Council and to include details of future work programmes.

### **Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)**

13. The reporting of the Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report is an internal matter and therefore no external consultation is necessary.

### **Relevant Scrutiny Committee**

14. All.

### **Background Papers**

Council's Constitution  
Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee minutes 2016/17

**Contact Officer**

Mr. J. Rees, Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer

**Officers Consulted**

All Directors

**Responsible Officer:**

Rob Thomas, Managing Director

# SCRUTINY COMMITTEES' DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

STRONG COMMUNITIES  
WITH A  
BRIGHT FUTURE



## What is Scrutiny?

Scrutiny is vital to the work of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and its partners. It offers reassurance to local people, helps to develop policy, improves the performance of the Council 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.

Most of the decisions in the Council are taken by a small group of Councillors known as the **Cabinet** (also referred to as the Executive). Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet are known as Non-Executive Members. It is these Non-Executive Members who have the opportunity to sit on a Scrutiny Committee.

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.



## How does Scrutiny work?

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**

- **An Inclusive and Safe Vale**
- **An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale**
- **An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale**
- **An Active and Healthy Vale**

These form the main basis of the Council’s new Corporate Plan and are reflected in a move away from the previous “service focused” scrutiny arrangements. This involves a greater degree of “cross cutting” across Council services and Directorates, each working together to achieve the Council’s main aims and objectives.

As a result of this, since May 2016, the titles and remits of the Scrutiny Committees have been re-aligned accordingly:

- Corporate Performance and Resources
- Environment and Regeneration
- Healthy Living and Social Care
- Homes and Safe Communities
- Learning and Culture.

## 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.



### **Homes and Safe Communities**

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



### **Learning and Culture**

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



### **Healthy Living and Social Care**

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

These Objectives tailored 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 way that we work...**

● INTEGRATION ● COLLABORATION ● INVOLVEMENT ● PREVENTION ● LONG TERM

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.

### The Year in Summary.

Key areas of work in 2016/17 included:

- Scrutinising how well the Council is meeting its objectives, as outlined in the new **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;
- 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;
- Receiving updates on the progress of the Action Plans developed from the Task and Finish Group reviews into **Traffic Management and Assistive Technology**;
- Receiving progress reports around the implications of the **Welfare Reform Agenda**;
- Looking at the **21st Century Schools Programme** in Barry;
- **Regeneration and sustainable development**

The following pages provide a summary of the work of the 5 Scrutiny committees in 2016-17

### The way that we work...

● INTEGRATION ● COLLABORATION ● INVOLVEMENT ● PREVENTION ● LONG TERM

## Corporate Performance and Resources

Objective - **Overall monitoring of Corporate Health.**



Key areas the Committee has scrutinised.....

**Monitored the Council's budget** and spending plans throughout the year, focusing on key areas of pressures and supported the process for setting the Council's budget for 2017/18. We have played a key part in monitoring the Council's investment strategy and we have kept a watchful eye on the Housing Revenue Account.

Reviewed the range of activities being undertaken to promote **sustainability** and highlighted the current projects installed or awaiting installation, which are predicted to save the Council £237,000 per year in fuel costs and reduce emissions by 1,500 tonnes per annum. The Committee acknowledged the work that was being undertaken and will continue to monitor progress in this area.

The Committee was able to monitor progress of the work undertaken by the Council in regard to the implementation of the UK Government's **Welfare Reform** Agenda. The impact of the Welfare Reform changes are continuing to be monitored, particularly in relation to the number of people who have seen a reduction in their Housing Benefit and in the uptake of people applying for Universal Credit.

The Committee received a detailed insight into **employee turnover** rates within the Council and considered further analysis of the reasons why people chose to leave employment with the Council. The findings of this were reported to Cabinet, who will utilise the information for workforce planning purposes.

Closely monitored the level of **sickness absence** in the Council and sought to look, in more detail, at the high levels of sickness absences attributed to stress, along with the support and assistance that the Council provides to its staff.

In the light of budget reductions, the Council has embarked on a strategy to look at the way that services are delivered – "**Reshaping Services**". As part of the first and second phase of service-based reviews, work is underway in a number of areas. These include the **Shared Regulatory Service** with Bridgend and Cardiff Councils and also in relation to the way in which **Library, Catering and Additional Learning Needs services** operate.

A Wales Audit Office Report review of the Council's Strategy provided reassurance to the Committee that the Reshaping Services Strategy conformed to good practice and demonstrated that it was following the right process to achieve transformation.

### The way that we work...

● INTEGRATION ● COLLABORATION ● INVOLVEMENT ● PREVENTION ● LONG TERM





## Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

### Well-being Outcome - **An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale**

#### Objectives –

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

#### Key areas the Committee has scrutinised.....

As part of the Council's **Street Lighting and Energy Reduction Strategy**, and having been referred by the Cabinet in April 2016, a number of options were presented, with the Committee recommending Option 3 as it was, in their view, the most comprehensive strategy for the Council to follow. Option 3 being to "Dim existing LED lights at midnight and invest £1.2m in 2016/17 and £100k in 2017/18 and 2018/19 in LED residential street lighting to be dimmed at midnight". The option also provided the third greatest savings when reductions in maintenance and carbon tax were taken into account. The pay-back period for the investment associated with the work was shown as 7.54 years, with the estimated additional saving being reported as £134k.

Members raised concerns about the safety of LED lighting but were reassured that the LED luminaires specified would be compliant with the relevant Directive. Following considerable discussion Committee was further informed that the LED modules themselves were totally sealed with the lens being made from vandal resistant polycarbonate and as a result of the fact that LEDs did not have a filament lamp or glass enclosure, they were largely impervious to vibration. LED luminaires also did not produce infrared or ultraviolet emissions and were used to protect foraging areas to preserve the habitat for bats.

In terms of a "watching brief" and as part of its work programme, the Committee requested updates be provided on three **flood alleviation schemes** in the Vale; namely Coldbrook Catchment, Llanmaes and Boverton. Prior to a full presentation being provided to the Committee in February 2017 a site visit was undertaken morning of the Scrutiny meeting to Coldbrook Catchment with invitations also being extended to local Ward Members.

The Coldbrook Catchment Scheme had been a complex scheme and there had been significant management issues to address as well as undertaking site / street clearance in a number of areas. Although acknowledging that the cost of the Coldbrook Catchment Scheme had escalated and there had been a number of changes within the scheme since its initial planning, Natural Resources Wales had requested that the site be reassessed with the request that a significant increase in the water storage area be established. As a result, such increases in the complexity of the scheme, including the various issues that were found during its construction, e.g. large amounts of concrete being found in culverts which had to be disposed of, together with a number of minor design changes, ground conditions, etc. had resulted in an additional £1.5m being requested. Members welcomed the fact that newsletters were regularly being sent to local residents by the contractor which provided details of the programme and up to date information.

Detailed responses to Members' questions, in particular to the increase in costs, were provided and a further presentation was also received on other flood alleviation schemes being undertaken throughout the Vale e.g. Llantrithyd Road, St. Hilary; Llancadle; Lougher Place, St. Athan; Old Wick Road, Llantwit Major; Readers Way, Rhoose; Smithies Avenue, Sully; Penarth Road, Penarth; and Windsor Road, Penarth.

As Lead Authority, the Council has the statutory responsibility to investigate significant flooding, has permitted powers to develop flood alleviation schemes ranging from minor improvements to multi million pound civil engineering works and, although acknowledging that some risks could be managed, it was also acknowledged that the risks could never be truly eliminated.

In view of the impact to local residents in respect of works being undertaken, Committee acknowledged that a number of residents had tolerated the ongoing work over recent months in particular those who had not been the subject of flooding, but who had been inconvenienced by the ongoing works being undertaken.

The progress being made following the **Traffic Management Task and Finish Review** continued to be monitored, with the acknowledgement that the majority of actions had been significantly progressed or completed with some being duplicated in the adopted Local Transport Plan and the two work stream reports being combined to enable the Committee to receive updates in one single report from 2016/17 onwards. Following Committee recommendations the **improvement actions** contained within the Plan had been progressed through a variety of funding sources, for example internal capital or revenue budgets, transport grant funding, Section 106 funding, Section 278 Highways Works as part of new developments, and other grant funding.

As a result of the review, weekly updates on highway issues were now being provided to all Members, proving to be an extremely useful management and information tool.

A detailed presentation on the Council's **three year resurfacing plan** took place, with invitations to attend being extended to all Members of the Council.

The presentation not only detailed the costs to maintain the network, but also the maintenance methods used on the roads. The three year plan included a carriageway surface prioritisation scoring system, which considered eight criteria. The Cabinet Member for Building Services, Highways and Transportation at the time advised that there were 616 miles of highway to be considered and in such austere times there would never be enough money to resurface the way the Council would want. As such, the three year plan targeted capital expenditure where it was most effective and needed.

The way that we work...

● INTEGRATION ● COLLABORATION ● INVOLVEMENT ● PREVENTION ● LONG TERM



## Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee

### Well-being Outcome - **An Inclusive and Safe Vale**

#### Objectives -

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

#### Key areas the Committee has scrutinised.....

Reviewed the performance of contractors involved with the **Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)** improvement works in Council housing within the Vale of Glamorgan and assessed how the Council monitored financial risks. The Committee considered reasons for delays, evaluated satisfaction levels and looked at how the Council ensured that the necessary standards of work were met.

Assessed the **satisfaction levels of Council tenants** following a large-scale survey ("STAR") carried out. The overall results of this survey were positive, with high scores achieved for neighbourhoods as a place to live, staff approach and rent being value for money. However, lower satisfaction scores were reported around repairs and maintenance, and not all tenants found it easy to make contact with the right person in the authority which resulted in tenants not feeling listened to.

The results of this survey were also shared with tenants and Council staff, and have helped to inform areas of improvement and identify key issues and priorities. This included the formulation of an Action Plan to address key issues and drive improvements, consideration of ways to improve communication and identification of how to gather satisfaction data on an ongoing basis.

Linked to the **Youth Offending Service Performance and Youth Justice Plan**. reviewed performance and saw positive outcomes for individuals accessing support for substance misuse difficulties. Members were also made aware of the risks and challenges from reduced funding and have forwarded concerns onto the Ministry of Justice.

The Committee analysed national and local statistics on alcohol fuelled anti-social behaviour to determine the likely success of a **breathalyser scheme**, within the Vale of Glamorgan late night economy areas, and to consider the future plans for the initiative since its launch thus, fulfilling its role of promoting partnership action to reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime within the Vale of Glamorgan.

#### The way that we work...

● INTEGRATION ● COLLABORATION ● INVOLVEMENT ● PREVENTION ● LONG TERM



## Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee

### Well-being Outcome - An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale

#### Objectives

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

#### Key areas the Committee has scrutinised.....

Overall standards of achievement in **School Performance** continued to be monitored with interventions recommended where necessary. The Committee is also keen to continue to monitor progress on narrowing the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not.

**School Performance Panels** were undertaken in the year to underachieving schools (namely Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School and Fairfield Primary School) the purpose being to discuss with the schools and the Chair of Governors the capacity for rapid and sustainable improvement at the school. With regard to Bryn Hafren, an Accelerated Improvement Board to assist in the improvement journey was recommended be established and the 2017 GCSE examination results are awaited. Panel Members recognised the importance of sharing good practice and that any tools / systems devised are shared throughout all schools to assist with improvements.

The need for individual school progress meetings can be triggered by a number of events, such as the publication of weak results in external examinations, the outcome of Estyn inspections placing a school in a statutory category or the outcome of a national categorisation process identifying that the school was in need of higher levels of support in order to improve. The Panels also seek to identify any **barriers to improvement** that can be resolved by additional support from the Council.

The work of the **Central South Consortium (CSC)** continues to be monitored with the opportunity to hold the (CSC) Managing Director to account with invitations being extended to attend Scrutiny meetings on an annual basis and as and when required. Recently a working group of the five Local Authorities (that form the CSC) was established, with the membership including the Chairman of each of the Local Authorities' Scrutiny Committees and their respective Scrutiny Support officers. The group will consider proposals to deepen the Consortium's relationship with the scrutiny function on a regional level, to consider regional performance and share best practice and information. A report on the work programme and remit of the group is shortly to be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committees of the Local Authorities for approval.

#### The way that we work...

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The Committee in October 2016 considered the proposal to establish **New Mixed Sex Secondary Schools in Barry**. The meeting provided members of the public, key stakeholders and trade union representatives, Governors from the schools involved and feeder schools the opportunity to make representations on the proposals directly to the Committee.

From the engagement activity carried out with the public, pupils, staff and Governors of Barry and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive Schools and Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, the Advisory Board that had been established to consider options had agreed preferred options as detailed below:

- (i) Expand Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg on its current site with the provision of new entrance from Port Road;
- (ii) Build a new 11-18 mixed sex school on the site of Barry Comprehensive School;
- (iii) Create a modern 11-18 mixed sex school by refurbishing and modernising the Bryn Hafren site with the provision of some new facilities.

The drivers for transforming the current single sex English medium school provision related to surplus places, the condition of school buildings and school standards.

Members' questions centred round the proposed catchment areas, the establishment of two separate Governing Bodies, the transition period, the impact of building work, potential gains for pupils, the establishment of a Centre of Excellence and financial resources.

In referring to the impact of the building work required, Members were reassured that the Council was experienced in handling such disruption and the good practice and lessons learned from other schemes would be used in executing the proposals, it being accepted that major building work would be scheduled to be undertaken during school holidays.

Monitoring of **schools' balances** together with consideration of the measures to be put in place to reduce the excessive balances being held by individual schools continues to be part of the Committees work programme each year. In also referring to budget recovery plans for schools the Head teacher of St. Cyres Comprehensive School was requested to attend a meeting in October 2017 in order that Members could ascertain the preparations that were being put forward to reduce the deficit budget and to understand what involvement the Governors had had in devising the recovery plan.

The way that we work...

● INTEGRATION ● COLLABORATION ● INVOLVEMENT ● PREVENTION ● LONG TERM





## Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee

### Well-being Outcome - An Active and Healthy Vale

#### Objectives -

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

#### Key areas the Committee has scrutinised.....

Following on from a great deal of work undertaken during 2015/16, the Committee received two update reports on the Council's approach to implementation of the **Social Services and Well-being Act**. The Committee was able to highlight to Cabinet the considerable amount of work that had been undertaken in order that disruption to current service users was as minimal as possible. Despite this, the Committee did raise concern that as result of changes to care practices for older people, one direct consequence appeared to have been an increase in the waiting times for Adult Services.

Both **the Older People's Commissioner for Wales and the Children's Commissioner for Wales were able to take time from their busy schedules to address the Committee**. The Committee found it extremely insightful to be given an overview of some of the Commissioners' key challenges and areas of work. Around older people, the Committee paid particular attention to the importance of older people being listened to more carefully and how their experience and knowledge should be seen as an untapped resource.

For children, the **key messages** from the Commissioner included the importance of embedding children rights when Councils were formulating their key wellbeing objectives and also for greater focus to be paid when care leavers were transiting into adult hood.

The Committee evaluated the challenges associated with high rates of **child obesity** and considered some of the key actions in tackling this extremely important issue. A presentation was provided by Dr Suzanne Wood, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, with the Committee being pleased that the rate of child obesity for reception year school children in the Vale was the lowest in Wales. However, the Committee also considered the vital role played by schools and questioned whether more could be done to encourage families to eat healthier and partake in more physical activities.

#### The way that we work...

● INTEGRATION ● COLLABORATION ● INVOLVEMENT ● PREVENTION ● LONG TERM

During the year the Scrutiny Committee monitored progress with the development of a strategy for the way in which the Council could help to ensure that the **needs of older people for Accommodation with Care** would be met. It was highlighted that significant challenges remained, especially given reducing financial resources available to the Council and rising demand for services for people aged over 65. Given the need for both capital and revenue investment in accommodation for care facilities, potential changes in legislation and policy need to be taken into account when planning service developments that will take some time to achieve.

The Committee was able to assess how **mental health services** in the Vale operated and considered the additional work being undertaken by community support workers around meeting the healthy living lifestyle needs of adults with a mental health issue. The Committee also looked at the impact on community resources as a result of increasing demand following new legislative changes.

One area of concern for the Committee was the condition and suitability of the Amy Evans building which accommodates the Central Vale Community Mental Health Team. These concerns were passed on to Cabinet, which has raised the issue with the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and asked for an update on future plans for investment.

During 2016 and prior to Cabinet approval, the Committee evaluated two projects to have come out of the Council's **Reshaping Services** programme.

The Committee was asked to look at the future delivery of the **Meals on Wheels service**. After considering a number of proposed options, a proposal to cease the internal Meals on Wheels service and to signpost service users to alternatives was endorsed. This has resulted in the Council working with a new social enterprise called 'The Food Shed'.

In addition, proposals to change the way in which **respite care** was delivered for **adults with learning disabilities** were considered. The preferred option outlined was to close the facility at Rhoose Road and to use suitable respite alternatives. Members recognised that there was a balance between the needs of the current service users and the need to develop a wider range of options for new service users. The Committee therefore requested that prior to any decision; Cabinet should carefully consider the views of the current service users, as well as the transition arrangements for service users to alternative respite provision. The proposal was formally approved by Cabinet in December 2016.

The way that we work...

● INTEGRATION ● COLLABORATION ● INVOLVEMENT ● PREVENTION ● LONG TERM

## How are Scrutiny Members Supported?

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. For example, this can include hearing evidence from expert witnesses or arranging site visits. The team also conducts research and writes reports on behalf of the Committees and in relation to any Task and Finish Group work undertaken.

Many Scrutiny Committee Members are new to the Council. The Council has been pro-active in putting in place a comprehensive **Member Induction and Development Programme** for newly-elected and returning Councillors.

The ongoing programme is designed to ensure Members are given every opportunity to become familiar with how the Council works, the rules and procedures under which it operates and the complexities of the Elected Member role. Both the initial Member Induction Events and the ongoing Member Development Programme are being **delivered against the background of the seven Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales)**.

An **Introductory training** session, for members was incorporated into the Programme prior to the first meeting of each Committee and **“Chairing Skills”** and **“Questioning Skills”** sessions are also being provided. Feedback to date has been very positive

Under the Council’s ongoing **Digital Strategy**, a compressive **Member ICT Refresh** programme has been undertaken. 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

Meetings of the **Chairman and Vice-Chairman Scrutiny Group** will re-commence in the Autumn and the Group will be key to the ongoing development of Scrutiny in the Vale. One of the first items the Group will be asked to consider will be the approach to be taken in future to Task and Finish work

## Looking Forward

Key work for 2017/18 will be:

- Continue to scrutinise how well the Council is meeting its objectives, as outlined in the new 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;
- Continue to evaluate proposals around services that will come out of the Council’s Reshaping Services project;

**The way that we work...**

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- Continue to monitor the attainment levels of our pupils and to assess challenges facing schools;
- To consider sustainable development and explore funding opportunities.
- Explore Scrutiny arrangements of the Public Service Board and Central South Consortium.
- Supporting the Wales Audit Office with their follow-up visit.
- Continue to encourage Public Engagement in the scrutiny process.

### What Does the Auditor Think?

In 2013-14, the Wales Audit Office (WAO) commenced a four year cycle of Corporate Assessments of Authorities in Wales, in addition to its annual programme of improvement studies and audits of Council activity. This Council's Corporate Assessment report was published in August, 2016. The purpose of the Corporate Assessment, as described by the WAO, is to provide a position statement of an Authority's capacity and capability to deliver continuous improvement. The assessment process considers an Authority's track record of performance and the key arrangements in place to deliver continuous improvement. The focus is on the extent to which arrangements contribute to delivering improved performance and service outcomes for citizens.

**The WAO concluded by stating "Overall, the changes the Council is in the process of implementing represent an opportunity to ensure scrutiny activity has maximum impact by:**

- **aligning forward work programmes to focus on key issues;**
- **freeing up agenda time to focus on a more limited number of items in-depth, thereby increasing efficiency as well as impact;**
- **Improving the information scrutiny received by aligning financial and performance information with other important information, such as the citizen view, and increasing the focus on outcomes, and supporting consideration of value for money."**

### Public Engagement

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 at:

[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our\\_council/Council-Structure/Public-Participation-at-Council-Meetings.aspx](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/Public-Participation-at-Council-Meetings.aspx)

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## 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](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-Structure/minutes\\_agendas\\_and\\_reports/minutes\\_agendas\\_and\\_reports.aspx](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes_agendas_and_reports/minutes_agendas_and_reports.aspx)

Alternatively you can contact Democratic and Scrutiny Services

**Tel number: (01446) 709 413**

**Email: [democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)**

## The way that we work...

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