

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES' DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

STRONG COMMUNITIES
WITH A
BRIGHT FUTURE



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The way that we work...

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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.

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



How does Scrutiny work in the Vale?

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

Well-being Outcomes	Scrutiny Committee
An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	Environment and Regeneration
An Active and Healthy Vale	Healthy Living and Social Care
An Inclusive and Safe Vale	Homes and Safe Communities
An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale	Learning and Culture

The **Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee** is the overview Committee and deals with corporate health.

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.

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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 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 way that we work...

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The Year in Summary

Key areas of work in 2017/18 include:

- Scrutinising how well the Council was 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;
- Consideration of topics with **significant public concern**;
- Evaluating proposals around services that will come out of the Council's **Reshaping Services** project;
- Exploring the **potential for shared services or joint working arrangements** in delivering services;
- Continuing to monitor the **attainment levels** of our pupils and to assess challenges facing schools;
- Looking at the **21st Century Schools Programme** in Barry and future school provision in the wider Vale;
- **Regeneration and sustainable development**;
- Considered various environmental proposals that affect the Vale of Glamorgan;
- Undertaking comprehensive Member Development and Training Sessions to apprise Members of the numerous different aspects of local government and the decision making process.

The following pages provide a summary of some of the work by the five Scrutiny Committees in 2017/18.

Corporate Performance and Resources

Objective - **Overall monitoring of Corporate Health**

Key areas the Committee has scrutinised and outcomes



- **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 2018/19. The Committee played a key part in monitoring the Council's investment strategy and have kept a watchful eye on the Housing Revenue Account as well as the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Monitored 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 been affected by the Benefit Cap and in the uptake of people applying for Universal Credit.

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- Considered a detailed insight into **employee turnover** rates within the Council and analysed further the reasons why people chose to leave employment with the Council. Cabinet will utilise the information for workforce planning purposes.
- Continued to closely monitor 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 was underway in a number of areas. These included the **Library, Catering and Additional Learning Needs services** and the ongoing work stream projects for Visible Services and Social Services.
- In line with a requirement of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, the Committee has scrutinised the **Public Services’ Board draft Well-Being Plan** considering how this linked into to the Council’s improvement objectives. Further consideration of the work and impact of the Public Service Board will be undertaken during 2018/19.
- Considered the results of the **2017 employee survey** and related activity as part of the Council’s Staff Charter, the Committee was pleased to note that the rate of return of the survey and the average positive response rate had increased flat last year, and that staff engagement work over the last year had built from the outcomes of the initial Employee Survey results of 2016 and to a large extent had contributed to the improvements in engagement levels and positive outcomes in 2017. Members were particularly pleased to note that responses remained high despite the challenges facing staff, and sought assurances that best value was achieved.



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 and outcomes



- Following significant concern, the Committee took a lead role requesting a report on the **Disposal of Dredged Material associated with the construction of Hinkley Point C Power Station**. In order to gather a balanced view, an Independent Marine Research Consultant and representatives from EDF Energy were invited to present to the Committee. It was noted that the Council had been consulted on the application for a licence to dispose of dredged materials and no objection had been raised, however it appeared that the major issues of concern to the Authority and of wider interest had been the subject of detailed research, conclusions of which seemed to indicate that the proposal could be carried out without significant impact. Concerns remained by individuals about the adequacy of the radiological assessment undertaken and the potential health implications of the proposed deposit of material.

During the detailed presentations, “Dumping of radioactive wastes at Cardiff Deep” and “Briefing on Dredging of Marine Sediment from the Seabed at Hinkley Point” the Committee was apprised of the studies, testing and environmental standards that applied to the case and the requirements of the licence. Questions were raised about the location of the disposal site and concerns were raised regarding conservation areas and the affect the sediment might have on the local area. As a consequence, the Committee requested the Managing Director write to Natural Resources Wales (NRW), seeking clarity of the legislative provisions in relation to the suggested requirement to dispose of the dredged material within the Severn Estuary, which in turn seemed to prevent depositing of the material in deeper and off-shore waters. Furthermore, NRW were asked whether tests had been made on the nature of the sediment situated on the Cardiff grounds and the impact of depositing material at this location. Following this, the NRW issued a statement advising that

“The dredged material was not radioactive waste, but sediment from the Bristol Channel. Results showed the material was suitable for disposal at sea, having been independently assessed by Cefas to ensure it did not contain any unacceptable levels of contamination NRW were confident that the results of the 2017 sample analysis showed the material was safe for disposal”.

- The Committee considered the outcome of the Waste Resource Action Programme (WRAP) report and future arrangements for the **collection of waste and recycling** in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Committee requested a strategy be implemented to educate members of the public on the proposed changes to waste and recycling collections, working particularly with families and schools. A review was also requested on the use of plastics across all Council premises. These actions were also agreed to be implemented by the Council's Cabinet and are to be addressed through the Council's Communication Plan and Procurement Policy.
- **Civil Parking Enforcement service shared with Bridgend County Borough Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council, and the Environmental Enforcement Contract.** Members queried the priorities, locations, and frequency of enforcement action, with specific consideration given to the implementation of the 3GS contract for Environmental Enforcement, with the Committee requesting a fairer, more common sense approach aimed at being proportionate to the level of offence. The performance of 3GS in providing the Enforcement Contract was highlighted to Cabinet, as was data in relation to Civil Parking Enforcement, which also contained a recommendation for Cabinet to consider further future use of a camera car to operate around the Vale of Glamorgan. Cabinet agreed that this would be considered as part of the Council's Car Parking review.

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- **Biomass Development at Woodham / David Davies Road, Barry Docks**, the conditions attached to the associated planning permission were reported together with the action pursued to date in response to complaints which related to the commencement and implementation of development on the site. Speakers representing a range of views and organisations made representations evidence on concerns surrounding compliance with the Fire prevention and Mitigation Plan guidance 2016, environmental impacts, flooding and sewerage, site monitoring, and consultation with the public. Following an informative and engaging debate the Committee wrote to NRW and Welsh Government requesting that independent monitoring of the Biomass development be established to ensure confidence in the process and requesting that a full accident review and flood study be undertaken. As a result of the scrutiny Cabinet also agreed to write to NRW to request an independent expert to carry out monitoring to ensure that the emissions were within safe guidelines. Subsequently, during February 2018, NRW issued a permit for the Biomass development to begin operations, with NRW stating that they were investigating issues raised by local residents. As a consequence, Cabinet agreed to strengthen the environmental monitoring operation by purchasing two units to assess air quality at specific locations in the vicinity of the Biomass facility in Barry.
- **Welsh Transport Approved Guidance (WeITAG)** process for Improving Strategic Transport in **Dinas Powys** and **M4 Junction 34 to A48** Transport Network Studies. For the **Dinas Powys review**, the Committee meeting held on 14th September, 2017 received representations from a number of public speakers representing the Dinas Powys Bypass Action Group. The meeting provided the opportunity for an exchange of views and thoughts around possible options. In conclusion, Committee recommended an additional fourth option to the three proposed that a “bypass and multi modal” be considered and that representatives from neighbouring Community Councils (Llandough, Penarth, Barry and Sully) be included on the Dinas Powys WeITAG Review Group. This being on the basis that the impact of the study would be greater and affect neighbouring communities to Dinas Powys. Both recommendations were subsequently agreed by Cabinet. The additional membership of the Review Group would allow for the expressed views of the Town and Community Councils to be considered. The final report is expected to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee during autumn 2018.



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.



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Key areas the Committee has scrutinised and outcomes.....

- Following the tragic fire and loss of life at the Grenfell Tower in Kensington and Chelsea, the Committee considered the approach taken by the Housing and Building Services Department in the **management of fire risk within the Vale of Glamorgan Council's housing stock**. The Committee was reassured that the Housing and Building Services team operated a range of monitoring systems and processes which were supported by building technologies to control the spread of fire within the property to provide the best opportunity for residents to be safely evacuated. It was also noted that the Housing and Building Services team had delivered a programme of reassurance to Council tenants to reinforce the proactive programmes of work.
- **Monitoring progress of the Customer Service Strategy (Housing)** monitoring of progress against the actions identified in the operational delivery plan. Five key priorities were identified in the Strategy, namely: embedding a customer first culture within the Housing Team, expanding the range of personalised services available to tenants; developing the ways customers could access housing services; improving the quality of customer services provided to tenants and increasing the range of customer feedback and using this to drive service improvements. The Committee was advised that the strategy was broadly on target, with progress being made in a number of areas and work was already underway to address the Red action points, which were:
 - Consult with the local residents to identify key issues and future estate priorities;
 - Complete action plans for larger estates;
 - Develop customer portal, enabling tenants to access information and services online; and
 - Ensure access to customer portal is available in English and Welsh.

Progress on the Strategy is to be reported to the Committee every six months, in order to ensure that actions identified are completed in a timely and satisfactory manner.

- **Monitoring of the Youth Offending Service Performance and Youth Justice Plan.** Decreases in First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice were reported, alongside increases in the number of young people reoffending and frequency rates of re-offending. Additional information was provided to the Scrutiny Committee that provided an insight into the complex needs of young people within the Youth Justice System and the range of interventions provided by the Youth Offending Service and its partners to try and address the underlying causes of offending.
- **Committee continued to monitor Housing Solutions** offered by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and partnership organisations, including Llamau, to ensure that all residents had access to the help and support that they needed to live in decent and affordable homes.
- The Councils **Tenant Engagement Strategy** is the Housing Services most important delivery document. Participation is a two way process involving sharing of information and ideas, where tenants are able to influence decisions and take part in what is happening. Scrutiny together with the assistance of the 4 tenant representatives who sit on the Homes and Safe Communities committee were able to challenge, shape and refocus the draft Strategy. Members/Representatives suggested and agreed to improved communication between tenants and members via Tenant working groups, greater use of digital technology, and links with the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Forum.

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The Tenant Engagement action plan that will deliver the strategy will be monitored and reported to Scrutiny during the life of the Strategy.



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 and outcomes

- Overall standards of achievement in **School Performance** continued to be monitored with interventions recommended where necessary. The Panels also placed an emphasis on discovering and **sharing best practice** between schools and Local Authorities which has been included in the Committees work programme.
- Recent **School Inspection reports** from Estyn were examined. The inspection process and judgments for inspection areas were detailed and excellent practice identified in various schools in the Vale of Glamorgan. Estyn invited schools to prepare written case studies on areas of best practice and these would be published and shared with other schools. The Committee felt that where inspection results were excellent, letters of congratulations should be sent to the relevant schools, and Cabinet be notified accordingly.
- 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 Committee's work programme each year. The Headteacher of St. Cyres Comprehensive School was also requested to attend a meeting in order that Members could scrutinise its budget recovery plan.
- The work of the **Central South Consortium (CSC)** continued to be monitored with the opportunity to hold the (CSC) Managing Director to account for the performance of the CSC. Invitations are extended to the Managing Director to attend Scrutiny meetings on an annual basis and as and when required. A working group of the five Local Authorities (that form the CSC) was established to consider proposals to strengthen regionally the Consortium's relationship with the Authorities, particularly scrutiny oversight of the service, to consider regional performance and share best practice and information. Reports of the

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work of the CSC will be presented on a regular basis to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee.

- The Scrutiny Committee has also looked at the **provision of free sanitary products in schools**. Local schools were contacted in relation to existing practices and arrangements and a representative from Wings Cymru, a charity which worked with a neighbouring Local Authority to raise funds and collect donations of menstrual products, was invited to speak to the Committee. Members supported the principle and a working group of the Scrutiny Committee has been established to investigate the best approach to implement arrangements for provision throughout the Vale of Glamorgan, and how to distribute funding of £31,512 received from Welsh Government for 2018/19. The findings of the review will be reported to Committee in due course. In the interim the Committee also recommended that each secondary school receive £100 and each primary school £30 worth of sanitary products prior to the Scrutiny Committee examining the matter in more detail. The Cabinet subsequently agreed the recommendation.
- **Future use of Tŷ Deri** (a specialist residential facility for children and young persons with significant care needs) – Consideration of options available for the future use of Tŷ Deri was debated. A reduced staffing structure had been implemented to ensure the provision broke even in terms of cost, however the input of the Committee was required to address the underutilisation of the building. Following a question and answer session on the different options for the site, the Committee endorsed the proposal to adapt the underutilised part of the Tŷ Deri building to meet classroom space demand at nearby Ysgol Y Deri.



- The **Welsh Government Educated Other Than at School framework guidance** and the National Youth Strategy necessitated a change in the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Support Services and the Committee considered recommendations for changes to youth provision in the context of the overall proposals for developing the Vale Youth Offer. The Committee was informed that the loss of management roles from the structure would provide more operational staff but would put staff at risk of redundancy. The reduction of part time roles would also result in staff at risk of redundancies. Members felt that there were still outstanding details that needed to be provided, in particular in relation to conversations with the Third Sector providers which had not yet taken place; subsequently the Committee did not endorse the proposals, but requested to consider the final proposal post consultation prior to the final decision being made.
- **Reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale** by establishing a 210 place primary school with a 48 part-time place nursery class at Rhoose Point and the migration of Llancarfan Primary School into the new site. The Committee had previously considered the issue of Surplus Places through a Task and Finish Group and some Members supported the proposals as a result of the work of that Group. The Committee's comments were referred to Cabinet with regard to the impact the proposals would have on the local community, and the importance of considering the views of local residents through consultation was stressed. Final proposals following the consultation are awaited.

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- The Committee contributed to the Welsh Government **White Paper on proposals for a Welsh Language Bill**, which aimed to strike the right balance between regulations, promotions and enforcement. Members felt that it would be important for Welsh Government to ensure that there were enough Welsh medium teachers in positions to help achieve the goals and recommended the Council's response be amended to reflect this.



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 and outcomes

- **Mental health services in the Vale** – The Committee continued to assess the operational delivery of services and considered the additional work being undertaken by community support workers around meeting the health 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 legislative changes. The Committee assessed progress of plans to reconfigure and improve the way services for children were delivered, with it being pleasing to note that waiting times for assessments were reducing, staff vacancies had been filled and a new multi-disciplinary neuro-developmental team had been introduced.
- Presentations were received from the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board concerning the **Cardiff and Vale Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy 2017-2020** and the **Cardiff and Vale Draft Dementia Strategy 2017-2027**. The Committee was advised of the number of cases for each in the Vale of Glamorgan locality, with potential risk factors identified, and the importance of raising awareness of these serious issues underlined. As part of the respective strategies, strong partnership and multi-agency arrangements were created and the comments from the Scrutiny Committee fed back to steering groups
- A working group consisting of Members of the Committee was established to monitor the quality of **service provided at Legacy Leisure sites**. Legacy Leisure is a registered charity set up after 2012 Olympics, and is responsible for the day to day management of the Council's leisure centres. The Group visited Legacy Leisure sites within the Vale of Glamorgan on a quarterly basis to assess the quality of the service. A five year update on the Leisure Management Contract was also reported for the Committee to monitor parts of

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the contract and specification provided by Legacy Leisure. A number of achieved successes were considered, including utilisation of previously unused space in Penarth Leisure Centre, the relocation of the Hammer Strength gym to Barry Leisure Centre, new spin room at Penarth, improvements to reception areas at various sites and gym extensions / redesigns at Cowbridge and Llantwit Major. In addition Legacy Leisure had introduced an online lesson platform for swimming lessons that allowed swimmers progress to be tracked and also had continued to invest in staff training. Overall Leisure Centre usage had seen a growth of 13.7% between years two and five of the contract, with the trend of participation continuing to rise. Furthermore Membership had grown most notably at Barry and Cowbridge Leisure Centres.

- Going forward, the Committee is keen to monitor the progress of work to upgrade the changing room facilities at Penarth and Barry Leisure Centres.



- The Committee evaluated two projects to have come out of the Council's Reshaping Services programme namely **a review of learning disabilities day services and Meals on Wheels:**

- **Review of learning disabilities day services.** As there had been a decrease in demand for the Castle Avenue facility it was considered no longer financially viable for the Castle Avenue facility to remain open. The Committee sought assurances that the remaining service provision offered met the priority needs of individuals, that staff would not be unduly affected, and that all service users could be accommodated within alternative services. The Committee agreed that it would endorse the decision to close the Castle Avenue facility, given that the Committee had received the assurance that the alternative community based options were more suitable. As a result, the proposals would see the Council moving to a different service model, which meant that the service would be able to make better use of resources and be better positioned to meet the changing complex needs of individuals.

- Following the closure of the Council's **Meals on Wheels**, the Committee reviewed the exploratory work underway with regard to the means of meal provision used by people accessing Adult Social Services within the Vale of Glamorgan. The Committee was apprised of the services provided by the Food Shed, which was a social enterprise based in Bridgend, Wiltshire Farm Foods, and various Third Sector organisations which provided luncheon clubs and/or meal provision. It was reported that 41 out of the 45 previous service users of the Meals on Wheels had consented for their details to be shared with the Food Shed. Currently, 36 of the 41 remained active customers with them. This meant that these people were able to access a freshly prepared hot meal on a daily basis. In addition, there was also the prospect of the Food Shed being able to expand and cover parts of the Vale, previously out of reach to the former Council run service. The review provided the Committee with an opportunity to assess how the changes had been implemented, as well as setting out plans for further work with regards meal provision within Adult Services. The Committee was provided with reassurance that the new model of services remained responsive to the needs of those using them and were consistent with the Council's Reshaping Services agenda.



The **Work...**

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SUPPORT FOR SCRUTINY

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

Following the recent elections, over half of the Council Membership is new. The Council has been pro-active in putting in place a comprehensive **Member Induction and Development Programme** for newly-elected and returning Councillors.

All candidates have been issued with Information Packs upon nomination, followed by a Market Place style induction for the successfully elected Councillors. A comprehensive training scheme then followed which consisted of various mandatory, voluntary, and committee specific induction and development sessions with all Members being afforded the opportunity of individual Personal Development Interviews. The training schedule covered a wide range of topics, including:

- “Ethics and Standards”
- “Introduction to Cabinet and Scrutiny”
- “Equalities and Welsh Language”
- “Information Governance and Data Protection”
- “Introduction to Finance”
- “Questioning Skills”
- “Smart and Safe Working”
- “Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding / Social Services and Wellbeing Act”
- “Treasury Management”.

The ongoing programme is designed to ensure all Elected 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)**.

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

Meetings of the **Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group** will re-commence in the Autumn and the Group will be key to the ongoing development of Scrutiny in the Vale.

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Looking Forward

Key work for Scrutiny 2018/19 will be:

- Continue to scrutinise how well the Council is meeting its objectives, as outlined in the Council's 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;
- Continue to monitor the attainment levels of our pupils and to assess challenges facing schools;
- To consider sustainable development and explore funding opportunities;
- Scrutinise the work and impact of the Public Service Board and the Central South Consortium and, through joint scrutiny, the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal;
- To respond to recommendations that have come out of the Wales Audit Office Scrutiny review by building on the detailed Member development programme, by looking at new innovative forms of Scrutiny, reviewing the Council's Cabinet and Scrutiny Protocol, looking at how Scrutiny can focus on where it can add value and encouraging more public participation in Scrutiny.

At the time of writing, the WAO has completed a follow up review of how Scrutiny in the Vale operates. From this, the WAO recognised the significant Member development programme that had been undertaken and the successful alignment of the Scrutiny Committees to the Council's key objectives. Seven proposals for improvement were also highlighted:

1. The Council should further consider the skills and training that scrutiny members may need to better prepare them for current and future challenges and develop and deliver an appropriate training programme to enhance the significant programme undertaken following the elections in May 2017.
2. The Scrutiny committees should ensure that where appropriate Cabinet Members rather than Council officers are held to account for the efficient exercise of executive functions in accordance with statutory guidance.
3. The Council should review the type of scrutiny support required to enable the scrutiny function to respond to current and future challenges.
4. The Council should explore different and more innovative methods for undertaking scrutiny activity.
5. The Council should consider how its scrutiny activity can focus on those areas where it would have most value.
6. The Council should be more innovative in how it engages the public in its scrutiny activity.
7. The Council should strengthen its evaluation of the impact and outcomes of its scrutiny activity and to learn from this in order to shape the future work of its scrutiny function.

In response to these, during 2018/19, an action plan will be developed to progress each of the proposals. The development of the action plan will include discussion with Members and will be monitored regularly by the Council's Insight Board, with six monthly monitoring by the Audit Committee as part of the monitoring of regulatory recommendations.

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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

To ensure that the Guide is fit for purpose, a **review of public participation** at Scrutiny will be undertaken during 2018/19 having regard to the feedback received to date.

Want to Know More?

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

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

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

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

Alternatively you can contact Democratic and Scrutiny Services:

Tel number: (01446) 709413

Email: democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

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