

Terms of Reference

Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel

1. Why is this topic important?

- Scrutiny can make an important contribution to the budget process by providing a critical friend for the Cabinet and engaging non executive councillors
- Scrutiny can make an important contribution to the annual improvement process, in particular to the Corporate Improvement Plan, Annual Review of Performance and the response to the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report.
- The Welsh Government states that *“There is a clear role for an authority’s scrutiny function in its improvement processes: as part of its role in holding local decision makers and policy makers to account, and in its policy development role”*.
- The Welsh Government further states that: *“If an authority’s scrutiny processes are sufficiently developed, and there is clear evidence that this is the case then this scrutiny activity can be drawn upon by the Auditor General and relevant regulators in the course of their dealings with the authority¹.”*

2. What is the purpose of this Panel?

To ensure that the Council's budget, corporate and service improvement arrangements are effective and efficient.

3. What are the possible lines of inquiry?

- Consider quarterly and annual corporate finance reports
- Consider proposals for the Council’s annual revenue and capital budgets including savings proposals
- Look at medium and long term planning arrangements
- Look at whether financial and policy objectives are aligned
- Consider quarterly and annual performance reports and whether any issues need to be looked at further
- Consider the Council’s overall improvement processes
- Look at the fitness of the Council to discharge the general duty to improve
- Look at the processes that the Council has gone through in the selection of its improvement objectives, including engagement with stakeholders
- Look at how the delivery of improvement objectives are monitored
- Provide challenge and new ideas

¹ Local Government Measure 2009 – Part 1 Guidance to Local Authorities – Wales Programme for Improvement para 3.29 & 3.30.