



Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Governance & Audit Committee – 12 October 2021

Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21 & Scrutiny Work Programme (For Information)

Purpose:	This report supports the development of a strong relationship between Scrutiny and the Governance & Audit Committee by providing the recently published Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21 and information about the current Scrutiny Work Programme.
Policy Framework:	Council Constitution
Consultation:	Legal, Finance and Access to Services
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Finance Officer:	Paul Cridland
Access to Services Officer:	Catherine Window

1. Scrutiny Work Programme

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for developing the Council's scrutiny work programme, and managing the overall work of scrutiny to ensure that it is as effective as possible.
- 1.2 The broad aim of the scrutiny function is to engage non-executive councillors in activities:
 - provide an effective challenge to the executive
 - help improve services, policies and performance
 - engage the public in its work

- 1.3 The Scrutiny Work Programme is guided by the overriding principle that the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant, focussed on issues of concern, and represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources. It also needs to be:
- manageable, realistic and achievable given resources available to support activities
 - relevant to Council priorities
 - adding value and having maximum impact
 - coordinated and avoids duplication
- 1.4 A range of scrutiny activity is carried out, either by the Committee or informal Panels (for in-depth scrutiny) or Working Groups (one-off meetings) established by the Committee. The Scrutiny Programme Committee maintains an overview of agreed scrutiny activities to ensure that the work programme is delivered effectively, and co-ordinate work as necessary.
- 1.5 Scrutiny communicates findings, views and recommendations for improvement from its activities through chair's letters to Cabinet Members, and where appropriate by producing reports for Cabinet, for response as necessary.
- 1.6 All Scrutiny meetings are accessible to the public. Agendas, reports, letters relating to all scrutiny activities will be published on the Council's modern.gov online platform:
<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

2. Developing the Relationship between Scrutiny and the Governance & Audit Committee.

- 2.1 The Council has long recognised the relationship between Scrutiny and Audit and need for:
- mutual awareness and understanding of the each other's work
 - respective work plans to be coordinated and avoid duplication / gaps
 - clear mechanism for referral of issues, if necessary
- 2.2 It is important that there is:
- clarity between the core roles of both functions
 - regular conversations about Committees' work programmes, and responsibilities
 - a way to ensure that issues can be passed between Committees, avoiding duplication

- 2.3 Action already taken as part of this process:
- i) Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee / Convener of Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel copied into Governance & Audit Committee agendas and vice versa, for information.
 - ii) Work Programme / Work Plans published, at least annually, in each other's agenda for information.
 - iii) Respective Chairs speaking, at least annually, at each other's Committee meeting on their work and the relationship between Scrutiny and Audit.
 - iv) Governance & Audit Committee chair invited to participate in the Annual Scrutiny Work Planning Conference.
 - v) Chairs raise any issues re. coordination / duplication on ongoing basis
 - vi) Where matters to be referred from Governance & Audit Committee chair writes letter to chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee, and vice versa.
- 2.4 The relationship benefits from a number of councillors sitting on both Committees, including the current Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee which is advantageous.
- 2.5 To facilitate the discussion the following papers are provided to the Governance & Audit Committee:
- Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21 (**Appendix 1**)
 - Current Scrutiny Work Programme, showing work being carried out through various Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups (**Appendix 2**)
 - the work plan of the Scrutiny Programme Committee itself (**Appendix 3**)
 - the work plans of Scrutiny Performance Panels, which provide in-depth monitoring and challenge for clearly defined service areas (**Appendix 4**)
- 2.6 The Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee has been invited to attend the Scrutiny Programme Committee meeting on 19 October.
- 3. Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21**
- 3.1 Every year Council requires that an annual report is produced for the work of scrutiny for the previous municipal year.
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Annual Report is used to:
- Highlight the work carried out by scrutiny
 - Show how scrutiny has made a difference
 - Support continuous improvement for the scrutiny function
- 3.3 The Annual Report looking back at 2020-21 was presented to Council on 2 September.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

4.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

4.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

4.2 There are no impact assessment implications associated with this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Any costs that arise out of work plan activities, for example expenses for witnesses or transport costs, are not envisaged to be significant and will be contained within the existing Scrutiny Budget.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21

Appendix 2: Current Scrutiny Work Programme

Appendix 3: The Scrutiny Programme Committee Work Plan

Appendix 4: Scrutiny Performance Panel Work Plans