



## Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Governance & Audit Committee – 12 October 2022

### Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22 & Scrutiny Work Programme (For Information)

<b>Purpose:</b>	This report supports the development of a strong relationship between Scrutiny and the Governance & Audit Committee by providing the recently published Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22 and information about the current Scrutiny Work Programme.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Constitution
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal, Finance and Access to Services
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
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#### 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 to:
  - 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 each other's work
- respective work plans to be coordinated and avoiding 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 Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee.
- 2.5 To facilitate any discussion the following papers are provided to the Governance & Audit Committee:
- Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22 (**Appendix 1**)
  - Current Scrutiny Work Programme, showing the various Scrutiny Panel and Working Group topics (**Appendix 2**)
  - the work plan of the Scrutiny Programme Committee itself, which meets every month (**Appendix 3**)
  - progress report on Panels / Working Groups / Regional Scrutiny (**Appendix 4**)
- 2.6 During the last year, it was highlighted that some of the areas that will benefit from co-ordination between the Scrutiny and Governance & Audit include the new responsibilities arising from the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 around Council performance, and around the systematic reporting of external audit reports, and respective role in considering and monitoring these.

### **3. Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22**

- 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 2021-22 was presented to Council on 1 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 An IIA screening has been undertaken noting there are minimal impact assessment implications associated with this report (IIA can be viewed in **Appendix 5**). The work of Scrutiny is open to the public, promoted via Council media channels, and enable all citizens to ask questions, raise issues and/or input views. The Work Programme takes into account a range of factors, including Council priorities and community concerns. The public were invited to input scrutiny topic suggestions. The work of Scrutiny will involve examination of Council services and making recommendations for improvement to Cabinet Members (and other decision-makers). Scrutiny activities have the potential for engagement to ensure public views can feed into the Scrutiny process. Each Scrutiny Inquiry and report will be subject to its own IIA process.

## **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 2021-22

Appendix 2: Current Scrutiny Work Programme

Appendix 3: Scrutiny Programme Committee Work Plan

Appendix 4: Progress Report – Panels / Working Groups / Regional Scrutiny

Appendix 5: IIA Screening Form