

DRAFT

Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

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Chair's Foreword

As the new Chair of this Committee, I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee for the 2016/17 municipal year. This report provides a comprehensive summary of the work undertaken by the Committee during this period and provides an opportunity to reflect on this work.



The past year has continued to be a challenging period for the Council and I feel that this Committee has continued to constructively play its part in terms of scrutinising performance and contributing to key council policies and decisions.

I would like to thank the previous Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee who directed the Committee well. On behalf of the current membership, I would also like to thank all members of the Committee for their contributions and dedication during 2016/17.

The Committee discussed and scrutinised a wide variety of topics during the past year. These included the standard and regular monitoring reports as well as new policies and strategies being introduced by the County Council.

The forthcoming year will no doubt be challenging, but I am confident that we will continue to focus on how to improve services effectively and efficiently. The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 established Public Service Boards (PSB) and this Committee has been designated to scrutinise this work. The aims of the Act are to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. During 2017/18 the Committee will continue to develop its role to ensure that Carmarthenshire's PSB is held democratically accountable.

I am looking forward to taking on the challenge of chairing this Committee and with the assistance of my Vice Chair and the rest of the Committee hope we will have a positive impact on the outcomes for the residents of Carmarthenshire. We have already had some stimulating discussions regarding the items for the 2017/18 work programme and the Committee will continue to work closely with the Council's senior managers and staff to ensure that it is a productive year ahead.

Cllr. Giles Morgan
Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Annual Report

The following report has been prepared in order to comply with Article 6.2 of the County Council's Constitution which states that a scrutiny committee must:

"Prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committee's activities over the previous year."

This report provides an overview of the work of the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee during the 2016/17 municipal year. It allows Members to reflect on the achievements during the year and to identify what worked well and where improvements could be made. This analysis is instrumental in developing the work of scrutiny and the Forward Work Programme for the upcoming year.

1.2 Number of Meetings

In all, the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee met on 8 occasions between June 2016 and March 2017 with one joint meeting with all other Scrutiny Committees in February 2017.

1.3 The Work Programme for 2016/17

In the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined by the Forward Work Programme for 2016/17, which was confirmed by the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 9th June 2016.

The Forward Work Programme (FWP) was mainly based on key areas identified as objectives within the Integrated Community Strategy and Improvement Plan together with standard items such as performance and budget monitoring reports, action plan monitoring reports, and specific requests from the scrutiny committee itself. Additional reports were also requested by the scrutiny committee during the year and the Forward Work Programme was amended accordingly.

The development of the concept of the Forward Work Programme and the process for its agreement, has allowed each scrutiny committee to determine its own work agendas. The benefits of such an approach has led to an improved level of debate and input during scrutiny committee meetings.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 put long term sustainability at the forefront of how public services are designed and delivered and it places emphasis on public bodies to work in partnership with each other and the public to prevent and tackle problems. The Act established Public Service Boards (PSB) for each Local Authority in Wales.

To ensure that PSBs are democratically accountable there was a requirement on Councils to designate an overview and scrutiny committee to scrutinise the work of the PSB. Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee has been designated as the Council's Scrutiny Committee for the purpose of scrutinising the work of the Carmarthenshire Public Service Board. The role of the Committee is to take an overview of the PSB's effectiveness through democratic challenge. The Committee has started to scrutinise the work of the PSB and considered Carmarthenshire's well-being assessment, which was published in March 2017. Policy & Resources will be further developing its scrutiny of the PSB during 2017/18. As part of this role the Committee will be scrutinising the development of Carmarthenshire's Well-being Plan and, once published, it will hold the PSB to account on its performance in meeting the objectives of the Plan.

1.4 The Committee's Remit

The Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee's key responsibilities are for:

- Cross-cutting issues
- Sustainable Development
- Finance
- Property
- Information Technology
- Communications
- Customer Services
- Audit
- Procurement
- Non-housing maintenance
- Organisational Development
- Human Resources
- Markets
- Emergency Planning
- Public Service Board

2. Key issues considered during 2016/17

2.1 Standard Scrutiny Monitoring Reports / Items

Half-Yearly Performance Management Reports - One of the principal roles of scrutiny committees is to monitor the performance of services and functions within its remit. They undertake this work mainly through the consideration of half-yearly performance monitoring reports and various action plan monitoring reports. The performance monitoring report provides a balanced picture of performance across the relevant service areas. The Committee considered the half-yearly performance reports for its remit at its meetings in July and November 2016.

RECOMMENDATION: During its meeting in July 2016, the Committee queried what the Authority was doing about the high level of sickness absence that was demonstrated within the report. The Assistant Chief Executive (People Management and Performance) reminded the Committee that ultimately good and poor management was a key factor and if stress was given as a reason for absence an employee stress questionnaire would be completed in order to understand more. Furthermore, the Authority had made it easier for staff to be more open to discuss problems in the work place or at home

Following a suggestion the Committee unanimously resolved that:

- The Chair and Vice-Chair, in conjunction with the Assistant Chief Executive (People Management and Performance), arrange for Heads of Services to attend future meetings of the Committee to discuss their approach to reducing sickness absence within their respective service areas.

Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Reports - The Committee received quarterly reports on the departmental and corporate revenue and capital budgets. These reports enabled members to monitor the level of spend in each area and the progress made in any capital works.

Quarterly Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Reports - The Committee received quarterly updates outlining the activities within the Treasury Management Function, in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy approved by the County Council on the 23rd February 2016.

Actions & Referrals Updates - During the course of the municipal year several requests for additional items were made by committee members to assist them in discharging their scrutiny role. These quarterly reports were produced to give an update on progress and information was also circulated to members outside the formal committee meetings.

2.2 Progress Monitoring

Third Sector Funding Review – In June 2016, the Committee considered an update report on Third Sector Funding Review findings. The report also detailed the handover arrangement from the TIC Team to a new centralised function to meet the recommendations of the review. The Committee noted that whilst a target of reducing fund to the 3rd sector by £1m had been set areas of spend had been difficult to influence. However, it was reported that reductions of £742,075 (34%) had been identified due to early dialogue with organisations and awareness raising of the project.

Following a query, regarding representation on the 'Challenge Panel' Members were informed that no decision on funding cuts would be made without the matter being approved by Members.

RECOMMENDATION: That the progress report and the recommendations contained within be endorsed and that the Committee be updated with the Challenge Panel's deliberations.

Asset Transfer Annual Report 2015/16 - In June 2016, the Committee considered the annual update on the progress of Community Asset Transfers where it was noted that whilst some good progress was being made with various Community and Town Councils there had been delays in the process mainly due to legal issues. Furthermore, the Property Division, working with officers from across the Council, continued to focus efforts on progressing transfers to ensure that services and provision important to local communities for current and future users were retained.

In response to a comment the Committee was informed that the impact and relevance of the Wellbeing of Future Generations [Wales] Act 2015 on the Asset Transfer Policy was being taken into account and that report templates were also being amended to reflect its implications. Members were assured by the Head of Property that the Committee would be consulted on any proposals regarding the disposal of surplus assets for community purposes in their wards.

End of Year Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report 2015/16 - In July 2016, the Committee considered this annual report listing the treasury management activities which occurred during 2015/16 financial year, in line with the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2015/16, adopted by the County Council on the 24th February 2015.

Transform, Innovate & Change (TIC) Programme Annual Report 2015/16 and Business Plan 2016/17 - The Committee considered the 2015/16 Annual Report for the TIC programme, as well as its Business Plan for 2016/17. The Committee also received a presentation outlining projects relating to back office processes which had led to significant savings in both time and money, as well as leading to more efficient methods of working.

The TIC Officer informed the Committee that adopting technological approaches had not only improved processes internally but was allowing the Authority to interact with external organisations and suppliers much more efficiently.

The Committee asked how the desire to innovate and embrace more efficient ways of working was being embedded in line managers' thinking and whether managers should be expected to operate in this way. The TIC Programme Manager informed the Committee that the long-term strategy was to embed the methodology within services. The TIC Programme Manager highlighted that a Vanguard-style review was being utilised and that a cross-section of relevant services were invited to participate, including heads of service, senior manager as well as front-line staff. Using this model enabled the departments themselves to confidently undertake further reviews of their services using this approach, rather than depending on the TIC Team to facilitate further reviews.

Reference was made to one of the case studies where the school kitchen ordering process had been revised and it was asked whether this would lead to a reduction in the amount of food wasted. The TIC Officer stated that whilst this was not known, the new procedures enabled schools to order supplies up to two days before the delivery date, rather than a week in advance. Theoretically schools could manage their stocks more efficiently.

Tackling Poverty Action Plan – In July 2016, the Committee considered an update report in relation to the Authority’s approach to and activities in tackling poverty. The report included details of the work of the cross-party Focus Group, the Council’s Tackling Poverty Action Plan and the establishment of a Tackling Poverty Advisory Panel to support the Executive Board member with responsibility for the agenda.

Officers answered queries that arose in relation to:-

Training and volunteering (success and monitoring of activities)

The number of jobs created through initiatives such as Communities First.

Discussions also took place surrounding the possibility of opening school kitchens during the school holidays in order to provide those who were eligible with a free school meal. The Committee was informed possibility of employing teaching assistants to provide the service had been previously discussed, however there were issues such as cost and the stigma that could be associated with receiving free meals would need to be addressed. The Committee noted examples of where voluntary organisations with the County were already offering such services, however, currently was no overall co-ordinated approach.

Spend on External Consultants 2015/16 - In November 2016, the Committee considered an annual update report that it had requested in respect of expenditure on external consultants and legal expertise.

2.3 Pre-Decision Scrutiny and Consultation

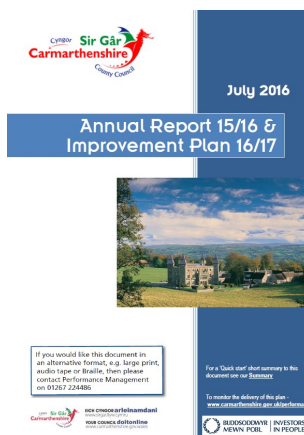
Corporate Asset Management Plan 2016 – 2019 - The Committee considered, the Council’s Corporate Asset Management Plan 2016-19 which highlighted the property strategy and requirements of the next 3 years.

RECOMMENDATION: *That the Plan be endorsed.*

OUTCOME: *At its meeting on the 22nd December 2016, the Executive Board resolved that the revised Corporate Asset Management Plan 2016-2019 be approved.*

Annual Revenue Budget Consultation – At its meeting in January 2017, the Committee considered both the annual consultation report for the Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2017/18 to 2019/20 and the Five Year Capital Programme 2017/18 - 2021/22.

Carmarthenshire County Council’s Annual Report 2015/16 and Improvement Plan 2016/17 – In line with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure the Authority must publish an Improvement Plan as soon as it is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year and an Annual Report on past performance. These two documents combined, enabled the previous year’s results to be evaluated and future outcomes to be agreed. Each scrutiny committee was afforded the opportunity to consider items in relation to their specific work areas.



RECOMMENDATION: *In June, 2016 the Committee considered and endorsed a report which included extracts relevant to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.*

County Council’s Well-being Objectives 2017/18 - In February 2017, all Scrutiny Committees which included the Environment and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee, met together to form a Joint Scrutiny Committee. Together, all Scrutiny Committees considered a report on the Carmarthenshire County Council’s Well-being Objectives for 2017/18.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires most public bodies in Wales to carry out sustainable development with the objective of improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their area.

Each of the Council’s Well-being Objectives 2017/18 were developed to comply with the Act, which states that public bodies must carry out sustainable development, improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. This includes the adoption of the 5 new ways of working, demonstrating that the sustainable development principle has been applied.

The 5 new ways of working aims to encourage collaboration, avoid duplication of effort between public bodies and tackle some long-term challenges. In addition, in order to ensure that those public bodies listed within the Act were working towards the same vision, the Council’s well-being objectives were linked to the 7 National well-being goals which the Act had in place.

The Council is required to publish an annual report showing progress made in meeting the objectives. The Joint Scrutiny Committee made additional comments and suggestions which finalised the Well-being objectives

RECOMMENDED: *That the report be referred to the Executive Board for its consideration subject to the inclusion of its comments and additional suggestions.*

OUTCOME: *At its meeting on the 27th February, 2017 the Executive Board unanimously resolved to recommend to Council that the draft report be approved. Subsequently, the Council meeting held on 8th March, 2017 unanimously resolved that the recommendation of the Executive Board be adopted “that the Draft report be approved”.*



Carmarthenshire Well-Being Assessment 2016/17 - In February 2017, the Committee considered, in accordance with the statutory consultation process, the Carmarthenshire Well-Being Assessment 2016/17. The report had been prepared and approved by Carmarthenshire Public Service Board under requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

The Assessment provided an overview of the nature and state of well-being in Carmarthenshire, explored positive and negative influences of well-being and highlighted potential trigger points or areas for concern. Whilst the Assessment was structured by life-stages it was emphasised that how well-being in Carmarthenshire was understood, assessed, measured and improved had to be a fluid process and it provided a foundation for building a clearer perspective of well-being now and in the future.

During consideration of the report the following items were discussed:-

- The difficulties that the Authority's Tackling Poverty Advisory Panel had experienced in assessing the levels of poverty in rural areas which was known to exist.
- Focus on young children living in poverty in rural areas, and the parents of those children, as initiatives such as Flying Start tended to be less accessible.
- Climate Change

RECOMMENDATION: *That the Carmarthenshire Well-Being Assessment 2016/17 be endorsed.*

2.4 Policy Development and Review

Strategy to Promote the Welsh Language – In October 2016, The Committee considered the draft Strategy to Promote the Welsh Language which the Council was required to publish as part of the Welsh Language Standards. The Strategy, which had been developed in partnership with the County's Strategic Welsh Language Forum, provided an opportunity for the Authority to work and share best practice with other organisations across the county through the Strategic Welsh Language Forum.

Amendments to the Email usage and Monitoring Policy – In June 2016, the Committee considered a report detailing proposed amendments to the Email Usage and Monitoring Policy of which defined the Carmarthenshire County Council's Policy for the effective and appropriate use of email. The amendments to the Policy ensures statutory obligations were met.

RECOMMENDATION: *That the amendments to the Email usage and Monitoring Policy be endorsed and that a report be submitted on an annual basis indicating the number of occasions emails have been tracked.*

Portable Device Usage Policy – In June 2016, the Committee also considered a report on the proposed introduction of a Portable Device Usage Policy. The Policy aimed to provide a strong and clear governance around the use of portable devices by Carmarthenshire County Council staff and Elected Members. Members noted that as a result of a drive there had been a significant increase in the use of portable devices which facilitated greater flexibility for elected members and staff to access various systems across the Council.

Carmarthenshire's Ageing Well Plan 2015/16 – Annual Report - In January 2017, the Committee considered Ageing Well Annual Report which was required by the Older Peoples Commission detailed the Authority's performance against key priorities. In reference to a concern that was raised regarding older people who lacked confidence to join social groups or felt isolated in their flats, the Assistant Chief Executive Regeneration and Policy agreed to raise this with the Community Services Department and a response was subsequently circulated to members detailing the opportunities available for older people.

Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2017-18 - In February 2017, the Committee considered the proposed Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2017/18 and was reminded that, as part of the requirements of the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council was required to maintain a Treasury Management Policy detailing the policies and objectives of its treasury management activities, and to approve a Treasury Management Strategy annually prior to the commencement of the financial year to which it related. Additionally, under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003, the Council was required to approve its Treasury Management Prudential Indicators for the coming year.

***RECOMMENDATION:** Unanimously resolved that the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2016/17 and associated appendices be endorsed.*

***OUTCOME:** At its meeting on the 22nd February 2017, County Council resolved that the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2017-18 and the recommendations therein be approved, as well as approving the Treasury Management Indicators.*

3. Other Activities during 2016/17

3.1 Development Sessions

No development sessions specific to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee were held during the 2016/17 municipal year. However, the Committee had identified the following Development sessions and resolved to incorporate them into the post-election Member Development Training Program:-

- Financial Education Safeguarding Scheme Seminar
- Corporate Manslaughter training

The following all-member development sessions were held during 2016/17, to which Committee members were invited:

- Changes to Community Services in Wales (May 2016)
- Changes to the Planning System (June 2016)
- Changes to Refuse and Recycling Collection Seminar (September 2016)
- Well-being Objectives (October 2016)
- Empty Houses in the Private Sector (November 2016)

The Committee did not undertake a task and finish review during 2016/17. However, potential options for further scrutiny investigation have been identified for 2017/18.

4. Support for the Scrutiny Function

Carmarthenshire County Council's scrutiny function is supported by the Democratic Services Unit, based in the Administration & Law Division of the Chief Executive's Department.

Support for the Scrutiny function includes:

- Providing support and constitutional advice to the Council's Scrutiny Committees and to members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring items arising from those meetings are actioned;
- Giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to executive and non-executive members of the Council and its officers;
- Managing the strategic development of Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire through engaging in national and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum, and the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Executive Board Forum;
- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as guidance is published;
- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny forward work programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny members;
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the operation of scrutiny task and finish groups, authoring reports in conjunction with the groups, and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews;
- Managing the Scrutiny member development programme;

- Despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of 4 working days prior to the meeting;

For more information on scrutiny in Carmarthenshire including work programmes, task and finish reports and annual reports, visit the County Council’s website at:

www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or email:

democraticservices@carmarthenshire.gov.uk



5. Committee Member Attendance

Attendance by members of the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee during the 2016/17 year is shown in the table below. A total of 8 meetings were held between June 2016 and March 2017.

Scrutiny Committee Member	No. of meetings attended	%
Cllr. S.M. Allen	7	88%
Cllr. G. Davies	7	88%
Cllr. T. Devichand	6	75%
Cllr. J.S. Edmunds	6	75%
Cllr. W.J.W. Evans	7	88%
Cllr. J. K. Howell	7	88%
Cllr. A.W. Jones	7	88%
Cllr. A. Lenny	6	75%
Cllr. A.G. Morgan	4	50%
Cllr. D. Price	7	88%
Cllr. D.W.H. Morgan	8	100%
Cllr. R. Thomas	7	88%
Cllr. D.E. Williams	8	100%

Substitutes	No. of meetings attended
Cllr. D.B. Davies	1
Cllr. P. Hughes-Griffiths	1
Cllr. J. Williams	1
Cllr. W. T. Evans	1
Cllr. M.J.A. Lewis	2
Cllr. K. Madge	1
Cllr. D. Cundy	1
Cllr. S. E. Thomas	1
Cllr. I.W. Davies	1

EBM	No. of meetings attended
Cllr. David Jenkins	7
Cllr. Pam Palmer	4
Cllr. Mair Stephens	3

Joint Committee Meetings

The Committee held 1 joint meetings during 2016/17 which was the joint Scrutiny Committee with all other Scrutiny Committees which was held in February 2017.

Scrutiny Committee Member	No. of meetings attended
Cllr. S.M. Allen	1
Cllr. G. Davies	1
Cllr. T. Devichand	1
Cllr. J.S. Edmunds	1
Cllr. W.J.W. Evans	1
Cllr. J. K. Howell	1
Cllr. A.W. Jones	0
Cllr. A. Lenny	1
Cllr. A.G. Morgan	1
Cllr. D. Price	1
Cllr. D.W.H. Morgan	1
Cllr. R. Thomas	1
Cllr. D.E. Williams	1

6. Glossary of Terms

- CIPFA - The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
- PSB - Public Service Board
- FWP - Forward Work Programme
- TIC - Transform, Innovate & Change
- WFBG – Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015