

Community Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report

2017-18

DRAFT



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Chair's Foreword

As the Chair of this Committee, I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the Community Scrutiny Committee for the 2017/18 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.

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, and I am confident we will continue to focus on how to improve services effectively and efficiently.

I am looking forward, once again, to the challenge of chairing this Committee for 2018/19 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.

I would also like to thank all members of the Committee for their contributions and dedication during 2017/18 and to my former Vice Chair, Councillor Ken Howell who, having provided me with support and assistance during my first year as Chair, has moved on to become Chair of Cartrefi Croeso Ltd, the new Council Housing Company.

Cllr. Sharen Davies
Chair of Community Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution requires all scrutiny committees to "*prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committees activities over the previous year.*"

The main aims of the report are to highlight the work that has been undertaken by the Community Scrutiny Committee during 2017/18. It outlines the potential future work of the Committee. The document may also facilitate discussions on other items that could be included within future work programmes.

The Committee is chaired by Cllr. Sharen Davies and is made up of 13 Elected Members. Support is provided to the Panel by the Democratic Services Team and other Council officers as and when required.

This report provides an overview of the work of the Community Scrutiny Committee during the 2017/18 municipal year. It gives Members the opportunity 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 scrutiny.

2. Overview of the work of the Committee 2017/18

2.1 Number of Meetings

The Scrutiny Committee held 7 meetings in the 2017/18 Civic Year.

2.2 The Forward Work Programme

The Scrutiny Committee develops its own Forward Work Programme (FWP) and in the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined in the FWP, which was confirmed by the Committee at its meeting on 5th October 2017.

The Forward Work Programme 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 Community Scrutiny Committee's key responsibilities are for:

- Housing – Social and Private Sector
- Planning Policy
- Community Regeneration including physical and rural development
- Economic Development
- European and Externally Funded Programmes
- Libraries
- Arts and Theatres
- Museums and Archives
- Countryside facilities
- Sports, Leisure and Recreation

To compliment the work undertaken during formal meetings, the Committee also undertakes other scrutiny functions such as task and finish, visit to establishments falling within its remit together with member development sessions

The following sections will provide a snapshot of the main areas of the Committee's work.

2.3 Performance Monitoring 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 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 Community Scrutiny Committee received these reports at its meetings in October 2017 and March 2018. The reports mainly focussed on underperforming indicators.

As part of its performance management role the Committee received relevant information from the Council's key strategies and plans. In October, 2017 the Committee considered the Council's draft Annual Report for 2016/17 which included the second year progress report on the Corporate Strategy 2015-20. Annual reporting is one of the prime opportunities for review, monitoring and reflection and for the authority to capture its on-going activity around meeting its general and specific duties.

Outcome:

The Council approved the 2016/17 Annual report

2.4 Revenue & Capital Budgets

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.

As well as monitoring the current budget, the Committee was also consulted on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2018/19 to 20/21. The report provided the Committee with the current proposals for the Revenue Budget for 2018/19 together with the indicative figures for the 2019/20 and 2020/2021 financial years.

The consultation of the Five Year Capital Programme 2018/19 – 2022/23 was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 12th January 2018. The feedback from this consultation process along with the final settlement informed the final budget report presented to Council in February 2018.

Outcome:

As part of the widespread consultation undertaken on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21, the Community Scrutiny Committee considered the budget proposals and whilst a number of comments were raised the Committee did not put forward any recommendations to change the budget proposals.

With regard to the Five Year Capital Programme 2018/19 – 2022/23, Council at its meeting in February noted that within the Communities Department new funding had been provided for Pembrey Country Park, Carmarthen Museums Collection and Parc Howard together with the continuation of support for private sector housing in 2022/23.

2.5 Annual Monitoring Report 2016/17 Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan

In July 2017, the Committee received the above plan, produced in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Local Development (LDP) Regulations 2016 which required local authorities to submit their Annual Monitoring Reports to the Welsh Government by the 31st October 2017

The Committee debated a wide range of issues relevant to the plan's operation. Those included:-

- land availability for housing development,
- criteria for the submission of development sites within the revised LDP,
- impact of large scale developments on community infrastructure,
- pre-application consultations,
- potential impact of the Swansea BAY City Deal Region and the Wellness Centre on housing and infrastructure within the Llanelli area,
- the preparation of place plans
- a suggested review to be undertaken of the Local Development Plan.

The Committee endorsed the report for submission to the Executive Board and Council for approval, prior to onward submission to the Welsh Government, and for a review to be undertaken of the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan

Outcome:

The Executive Board and Council at their meetings held in July and September 2017 endorsed the report recommendations with Council resolving to commence the early full or partial review of the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan.

2.6 Carmarthenshire Community Infrastructure Levy –Update and Progress report

In July 2017, the Committee received a progress report on the preparatory works undertaken on the process for the adoption of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for Carmarthenshire. The report outlined Welsh Government thinking on the future progression of CIL's, which would be addressed after April 2018 when consideration of their implementation would become a 'devolved matter' under the provisions of the Wales Act 2017.

The Committee accepted the report recommendations to hold any further work on the possible introduction of a CIL for Carmarthenshire in abeyance pending further direction from the Welsh Government.

Outcome:

The Executive Board and Council at their meetings held in July and September 2017 endorsed the report recommendations

2.7 Carmarthenshire Museums Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022

In October 2017, the Committee received the proposed Carmarthenshire Museums Strategic Plan detailing the vision for the progression of the Museums Service during the period 2017-2022. The Plan set out the following five key objectives for the plans delivery:-

- Manage and develop our resources, facilities and workforce to become more resilient and build a stronger economy;
- Become recognised for our innovative approach to developing and using museum collections;
- Create a great visitor experience through excellent services and programmes;
- Support opportunities to promote health and well-being.

2.8 Annual Performance Report (Planning)

In October 2017 the Committee considered the Authority's second Annual Performance Report on Planning for the period April 2016-March 2017, produced in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Performance Framework Table for submission to the Welsh Government by the 31st October.

The Committee debated a wide range of issues relevant to the Division's performance. Those included:

- staff resources,
- income,
- limitation of national and local planning policies on the provision of new homes for farmers
- enforcement
- limitations on development arising from the designation of flood areas by Natural Resources Wales.

Outcome:

The report was received and forwarded to the Welsh Government by the 31st October, 2017 deadline.

2.9 Establishment of a Council Owned Housing Company

In November 2017 the Committee considered a report on the Council's proposals to establish a wholly owned Local Housing Company. The company's aim was to become a development vehicle to accelerate house building within Carmarthenshire to increase the supply of homes, creating jobs and apprenticeship opportunities deliver the Council's regeneration ambitions.

The Committee discussed a wide range of issues relative to the proposals including the development of a business plan, appointment of company directors; role of the company, council control over the company and investment

Outcome:

The Council formally approved the operational arrangements for the company in June 2018.

2.10 Introduction of a 'Choice Based Lettings' Process for Council Housing in Carmarthenshire

In November 2017 the Committee considered a proposal for the introduction of a 'Choice Based Lettings' Process for Council housing in Carmarthenshire which would see the current system of offering properties to prospective tenants changing to a system of openly advertising vacant properties and inviting people on the Housing Choice register to bid for those properties.

Outcome:

The Committee endorsed the proposal which was formally adopted by the Executive Board in November 2017.

2.11 Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2006-2021 review Report

In December the Committee considered a report on a proposal for the Council to undertake a review of the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan.

Outcome:

The Committee endorsed the proposal which was formally adopted by the Executive Board/Council in November 2017 and January 2018.

2.12 Revised Carmarthenshire Local development Plan 2018-2033 Draft Delivery Agreement and Draft Site Assessment Methodology

In December the Committee considered the Draft Delivery Agreement and Draft Site Assessment Methodology proposals to be adopted for progressing the Revised Carmarthenshire Local development Plan 2018-2033 detailing the timetable for the Plan's preparation and the Community Involvement Scheme on consultation and engagement.

Outcome:

The Committee endorsed the proposal which was formally adopted by the Executive Board/Council in November 2017 and January 2018.

2.13 Housing Revenue Account and Housing Rent Setting 2017/18 (Revenue and Capital)

In January 2018, the Committee considered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Housing Rent Setting for 2018/19, presented as part of the budget consultation process. The report reflected the latest proposals contained in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, which was the primary financial planning tool for delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+).

Outcome:

The budget was adopted by Council in February 2018

2.14 The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) 'Delivering What Matters'

In January 2018, the Committee considered the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) Programme Plan for 2018-2021. Members were advised that the plan's three key aims were:

- To explain its provision over the next three year and what it meant for tenants
- To confirm the financial profile based on current assumptions for delivery over the plan period
- Produce a business plan for the annual application to the Welsh Government for Major Repairs Allowance for 2017/18 equating to £6.1m

Outcome:

The budget was adopted by Council in February 2018

2.15 Local Resilience Forum Business Plan

In February 2018, the Committee received a presentation on the operation of the Local Resilience Forum providing an overview on its operation via the business planning process, together with an understanding of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and its implications for the Council and the Dyfed Powys Police.

2.16 Welsh Library Standards

In February 2018 the Committee received the Welsh Government's assessment on the operation of Carmarthenshire's Library Service for 2016/17. It was noted that the Service met all of its 18 core entitlements in full

2.17 Llanelli Town Centre - Regeneration

In March 2018 the Committee received a presentation on regeneration proposals within Llanelli Town centre aimed at stimulating growth and investment via number of different initiatives i.e.:

- The delivery of the Opportunity Street Programme
- Town Centre Loan Scheme
- Carmarthenshire Business Start Up Grant and Carmarthenshire Business Growth Fund
- Carmarthenshire Transformational Commercial property development Fund
- Targeted Regeneration Investment.

As part of its debate on the work to improve and promote Llanelli Town Centre, the Committee made reference to the wider regeneration of major towns and settlements within the County and for the Council to be apprised of that work.

Outcome:

Arrangements are to be made for a seminar to be arranged for all members of the Council on regeneration activity within the County

3. Other Scrutiny Activity

3.1 Task and Finish

The Committee did not undertake a task and finish review during 2017/18.

3.2 Site Visits

The Committee did not undertake any site visits during 2017/18.

3.3 Development Sessions

The following all-member development sessions /seminars were held during 2017/18, to which Committee members were invited:

- 15-05-2017 Ethics, Standards, Legal Duties and Responsibilities [induction] - 15th May 2017;
- Member Development and Training - Finance including Budgeting & Treasury Management - 17TH May 2017;
- Introduction to Marketing and Media for all members - 27TH June 2017;
- Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act - 4TH September 2017;
- Health & Safety (including Corporate Manslaughter) - 28th September 2017;
- Welsh Local Government (WLGA) Regional Workshop - 13TH October 2017;
- Digital Transformation Seminar - 16TH October 2017;
- Substance Misuse all member development session - 13TH December 2017;
- Members Development the Evaluation of the Councillor Induction Programme for 2017 - 11TH December 2017;
- Members' seminar regarding the Local Housing Company - 19TH March 2018;
- Financial Exploitation Safeguarding Scheme seminar - 27TH March 2018.

In addition, there were several departmental budget seminars held.

3.4 Referrals

As part of its scrutiny role the Committee in monitoring the Council's Annual Report for 2016/17, raised concerns on staff sickness levels within the Authority and had agreed to refer those to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Outcome:

A report on staff sickness levels was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in December 2017 where it agreed to convene a development session to provide members of that committee with a greater understanding of sickness management.

4. Challenges

Following the elections in May, 2017 the Community Scrutiny Committee saw a new cohort of Members. The newly formed Committee worked together as a team to familiarise themselves with the decision making process and the subjects within the remit of the Scrutiny portfolio.

5. Future Work

The Committee has made significant progress and will continue to concentrate on topics where Member's input will result in positive outcomes to drive forward service improvement. The future work of the Committee will be considered as part of the Forward Work Programme planning session. In addition, the FWP will continue to be monitored during the course of the year.

6. Support for the Scrutiny Function

Support for Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny function is provided 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 e-mail scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

7. Attendance

Attendance by members of the Community Scrutiny Committee during the 2017/18 year is shown in the table below. A total of 7 meetings were held between May 2017 and April 2018.

Scrutiny Committee Member	No. of meetings	%
Cllr. D. Cundy	6	86%
Cllr. S. Curry – up to 18/10/17	2 [out of 2]	100%
Cllr. Ann. Davies	6	86%
Cllr. Anthony Davies	7	100%
Cllr. H. Davies	5	71%
Cllr. S. Davies	6	86%
Cllr. K. Howell	6	86%
Cllr. B. Jones	6	86%
Cllr. H. Jones	6	86%
Cllr. S. Matthews	4	57%
Cllr. L. Roberts – from 18/10/17	3 [out of 5]	60%
Cllr. H. Shepardson	5	71%
Cllr. G. Thomas	4	57%
Cllr. A. Vaughan Owen	7	100%
Substitutes	No. of meetings attended	
Cllr. W.T.Evans	3	
Cllr. J. Prosser	2	
Cllr. J. Gilasbey	1	
Cllr. J.A. Davies	1	
Cllr. M.J.A. Lewis	1	
EBM	No. of meetings attended	
Cllr. L.D. Evans	3	
Cllr. C. Campbell	1	
Cllr. M. Stephens	1	
Cllr. P.H. Griffiths	2	