

**DRAFT**

**Policy and Resources  
Scrutiny Committee**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

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#### Chair's Foreword

As the Chair of this Committee, I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 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 also like to thank all members of the Committee for their contributions and dedication during 2018/19.



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 2019/20 the Committee will continue to develop its role to ensure that Carmarthenshire's PSB is held democratically accountable.

I am looking forward, once again, to 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 2019/20 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.

As Chair of the Committee, I also Chair the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Forum which discusses improvements to the scrutiny function for consideration by the Council's Constitutional Review Working Group and acts as a forum for sharing and disseminating scrutiny good practice. We have concentrated this year on effectiveness of scrutiny committee pre-meetings, identifying scrutiny training for officers and members, scrutiny committee good practice, paperless meetings and promoting the mod.gov app. The Scrutiny Essentials Training provided by the Centre for Public Scrutiny on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 was particularly informative and provided examples for strengthening and meeting current and future challenges.

Cllr. Giles Morgan  
Chair of Policy and Resources 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 Committee's activities over the previous year."

The main aims of the report are to highlight the work that has been undertaken by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee during 2018/19. 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. Giles Morgan 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 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee during 2018/19 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 2018/19

##### 2.1 Number of Meetings

The Scrutiny Committee held 8 meetings in the 2018/19 Civic Year.

##### 2.2 The Work Programme

The Scrutiny Committee develops its own Forward Work Programme (FWP) and in the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined by the FWP, which was confirmed by the Committee at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

The Forward Work Programme (FWP) was mainly based on key areas identified as objectives within the Council's Corporate Strategy 2018-23 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. As the Council's designated Scrutiny Committee in this regard the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee has continued in its role of scrutinising the work of the PSB and holding it to account on its performance in meeting the objectives of the Local Well-Being Plan. In this regard the Committee regularly received the minutes of meetings of the PSB.

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 Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee received these reports at its meetings in October 2018 and March 2019. The reports mainly focus on underperforming indicators.

As part of its performance management role the Committee receives relevant information from the Council's key strategies and plans. The Committee considered the Council's Annual Report (2017/18). Annual reporting was one of the prime opportunities for review, monitoring and reflection and an opportunity for the authority to capture its on-going activity around meeting its general and specific duties. It also noted that the Council was held by law to publish an Annual Report on past performance by the end of October each year.

Outcome:

County Council approved the Council's Annual Report for 2017/18.

#### **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 2019/20 to 2021/22. The report provided the Committee with the current proposals for the Revenue Budget for 2019/20 together with the indicative figures for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years.

Members accepted the report and endorsed the Charging Digest.

The Committee was consulted on the Five Year Capital Programme 2019/20 - 2023/24. It was noted that the proposed Delta Lakes schemes within the Wellness and Life Science Village were not part of the capital programme.

#### Outcome:

County Council approved the Revenue Budget Strategy and the Five Year Capital Programme.

#### **2.5 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 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018.

#### **2.6 2018/19 Departmental and Corporate 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 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 performance reports for its remit at its meetings in October 2018 and March 2019. During its meeting in March 2018, the Committee was assured that the agile working programme was progressing well.

#### **2.7 Sickness Absence Monitoring**

In June 2018 the Committee considered a report on Sickness Absence Monitoring end of Year 2017/18 which detailed departmental sickness absence data for the 2017/18 financial year along with benchmarking and performance ranking tables. The report also included a breakdown of the key causes for absence to enable the Committee to scrutinise the council's performance in relation to managing attendance. One of the outcomes of the report was the arrangement of a further development session for the Policy and Resources Committee on sickness management monitoring to apprise members of the type of sickness data circulated to departmental management teams.

In December 2018 the Committee considered a half-year [Quarter 2] report on Sickness Absence Monitoring for 2018/19 which showed a continuing downward trend compared to Quarter 2 2017/18. One of the outcomes of the report was the arrangement of a development session to apprise members of the initiatives taking place to help reduce sickness absence.

#### **2.8 Carmarthenshire Public Services Board (PSB)**

In June and October 2018 and February 2019 the Committee, as the designated scrutiny committee appointed to scrutinise the work of the PSB, considered the minutes of

meetings of the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board. Members of the Scrutiny Committee have again had the opportunity of attending PSB Meetings as observers.

#### **2.9 Annual Report 2017/18 on the Welsh language**

In July 2018 the Committee considered the Annual Report in relation to the Welsh language and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards during 2017-18. The Report had been produced in order to comply with the Welsh Language Commissioner's monitoring arrangements.

#### **2.10 Digital Transformation Strategy – Annual Report 2018**

In July 2018 the Committee considered and endorsed the Digital Transformation Strategy Annual Report 2018.

#### **2.11 Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2017-18**

In July 2018 the Committee considered the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2017-18 which detailed how the Council had implemented its Strategic Equality Plan and fulfilled its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duties for Wales.

#### **2.12 Corporate Asset Management Plan and Office Accommodation Programme Update**

In January 2019 the Committee received an update on progress in relation to the actions contained within the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2016-2019 and Office Accommodation Programme. The report also provided an outline of the outcomes envisaged via agile working which was becoming a significant feature of the Office Accommodation Strategy.

#### **2.13 Information Security Policy**

In October 2018 the Committee considered and endorsed a proposed Information Security Policy which incorporated key elements of the Access Control Policy and Copyright Designs and Patents Act Policy.

#### **2.14 Complaints & Compliments Annual Report 2017/18**

In October 2018 the Committee received the Complaints & Compliments Annual Report 2017/18.

#### **2.15 Transform, Innovate & Change (TIC) Programme Annual Report 2017/18 & Business Plan 2018/19-2020/21**

In December 2018 the Committee received the 'Transform, Innovate & Change (TIC) Programme Annual Report 2017/18 & Business Plan 2018/19-2020/21'.

### **2.16 – Llanelli Life Science and Wellbeing Village**

The Committee received updates on the proposed Llanelli Life Science and Wellbeing Village at its meetings in February and March 2019 which was followed by a briefing session to update all members on the City Deal.

## **3. Other Scrutiny Activity**

### **3.1 Task and Finish**

The Committee did not undertake a task and finish review during 2018/19.

### **3.2 Site Visits**

The Committee did not undertake any site visits during 2018/19.

### **3.3 Development Sessions**

The following all-member development sessions /seminars were held during 2018/19, to which Committee members were invited:

- Transform, Innovate & Change Programme – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018;
- Member Mentor Training – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018;
- Choice Based Lettings – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018;
- Member Training - Improve your decision making skills -28<sup>th</sup> November 2018;
- Scrutiny Training / Centre for Public Scrutiny - 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

In addition, there were several departmental budget seminars held.

The Committee also visited the occupational health unit which was followed by an informal session on HR.

## **4. Challenges**

In undertaking its work the Committee has faced several challenges, which have included items not being reported in line with the FWP, level of detail in reports –sometimes too much detail sometimes too little.

## **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](http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny)

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or e-mail [scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

## 7. Attendance

Attendance by members of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee during the 2018/19 year is shown in the table below. A total of 8 meetings were held between June 2018 and April 2019.

<b>Scrutiny Committee Member</b>	<b>No. of meetings attended out of possible 8</b>	<b>%</b>
Cllr. F. Akhtar - up to 20/3/19	2	25%
Cllr. S.M. Allen	6	75%
Cllr. K. Broom	7	87.5%
Cllr. D. Cundy - from 26/4/19	1 [out of 1]	100%
Cllr. H. Davies	8	100%
Cllr. T.A.J. Davies	7	87.5%
Cllr. J. Edmunds - from 26/4/19	1 [out of 1]	100%
Cllr. D.C. Evans- up to 20/3/19	3	37.5%
Cllr. J. K. Howell	8	100%
Cllr. G.H. John	8	100%
Cllr. A.C. Jones	6	75%
Cllr. K. Madge	7	87.5%
Cllr. A.G. Morgan	8	100%
Cllr. J. G. Prosser	5	62.5%
Cllr. D.E. Williams	8	100%
<b>Substitutes</b>	<b>No. of meetings attended</b>	
Cllr. D. Cundy- up to 20/3/19	5	
Cllr. J. James	1	
Cllr. D. Jones	1	
Cllr. H.I. Jones	1	
Cllr. K. Lloyd	1	
Cllr. A. McPherson	1	
Cllr. H. Shepardson	1	

Cllr. E.G. Thomas	1
Cllr. D. Williams	1
<b>EBM</b>	<b>No. of meetings attended</b>
Cllr. C. Campbell	1
Cllr. David Jenkins	5
Cllr. M. Stephens	3

## 8. Glossary of Terms

CIPFA - The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

PSB - Public Service Board

FWP - Forward Work Programme

TIC - Transform, Innovate & Change

WBFG – Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015