

Scrutiny Report



Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Part 1

Date: 20 September 2018

Subject **Wales Audit Office – ‘Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future?’ Report**

Author Scrutiny Adviser

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

Invitee:	Area / Role / Subject
Elizabeth Blayney	Scrutiny and Governance Manager
Eleanor Mulligan	Democracy and Communications Manager

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1 Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked;

1. To review the ‘Overview and Scrutiny - Fit for the Future?’ Report (FFTF) and the NCC Management response and decide whether it wishes to make comment to Cabinet for consideration.

2 Context

Background

- 2.1 The Report identifies and examines how the Councils scrutiny function is fit for the future. The WAO considered how councils are responding to current challenges, including the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 in relation to their scrutiny activity, as well as how councils are beginning to undertake scrutiny of Public Service Boards. WAO also examined how well placed councils are to respond to future challenges such as continued pressure on public finances and the possible move towards more regional working between local authorities.

The WAO review aimed to:

- Identify approaches to embedding the sustainable development principle into scrutiny processes and practices to inform practice sharing and future work of the Auditor General in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations Act;

- Provide assurance that scrutiny functions are well placed to respond to current and future challenges and expectations;
- Help to embed effective scrutiny by elected members from the start of the new electoral cycle; and
- Provide insight into how well councils have responded to the findings of our previous Scrutiny Improvement Study.

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

3.1 Appendix 1 – ‘Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future?’– Newport City Council

The main body of the report is split into four sections;

- Proposals for Improvement – This section identifies the ways that the Council could further improve the effectiveness of its overview and scrutiny functions.
- The Council has made recent changes to its scrutiny arrangements, which now need to be strengthened and embedded effectively in order for it to be well-placed to meet current and future challenges.
- The Council is creating a new environment for scrutiny to drive improvement; however members need a fuller understanding of their role in scrutiny and timely and specific member training to improve their effectiveness.
- The Council is improving the planning and operation of its scrutiny function, which can be strengthened by greater alignment between the work of scrutiny and Cabinet.

Appendix 2 – NCC Management response to the WAO recommendations.

The NCC Management response will detail the response to the Proposals for Improvement, while providing additional information on the completion date and Officer responsible.

4. Suggested Areas of Focus

Role of the Committee

The role of the Committee in considering the report is to:

- Establish whether the management comments are adequate enough to answer the WAO Improvement points.
- Decide if the Management comments are achievable and can be measured to monitor implementation.
- Conclusions:
 - What was the overall conclusion on the information contained within the report?
 - Do any areas require a more in-depth review by the Committee?
 - What Comments / Recommendations do the Committee wish to make to the

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 All of the Proposals for Improvement listed in the WAO report are taken into consideration by the action plan contained the Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18. A link to which can be found [here](#).

6 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- The report and related management comments are intrinsically linked to all of Wellbeing Objectives and Corporate Plan Commitments the Council has set itself. This is because Scrutiny provides an important function in the Council:

Well-being Objectives	Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment	Improve skills, educational outcomes & employment opportunities	Enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient	Build cohesive & sustainable communities
Corporate Plan Commitments	Thriving City	Aspirational People		Resilient Communities
Supporting Function	Modernised Council			

7 Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

7.1 General questions

- How is this area / policy affected by the new legislation?
- How will this decision / policy / proposal impact upon future generations? What is the long term impact?
- What evidence is provided to demonstrate WFGA has been / is being considered?
- Evidence from Community Profiles / other data?
- (When published:) Evidence of links to Wellbeing Assessment / Objectives / Plan?

7.2 Wellbeing Goals

- How are the Wellbeing goals reflected in the policy / proposal / action?
 - A prosperous Wales*
 - A resilient Wales*
 - A healthier Wales*
 - A more equal Wales*
 - A Wales of cohesive communities*
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language*
 - A globally responsible Wales*

7.3 Sustainable Development Principles

- Does the report / proposal demonstrate how as an authority we are working in accordance with the sustainable development principles from the act when planning services?
 - Long Term**
The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs

- **Prevention**
How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives
- **Integration**
Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies
- **Collaboration**
Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives
- **Involvement**
The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

8. Background Papers

Include all additional documents that are referenced in the report, and those that you have used as background reading.

- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan](#)
- Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18

Report Completed: 14 September 2018