

Report

Council



Part 1

Date: 28 September 2021

Subject **Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21**

Purpose To present the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21

Author Scrutiny and Governance Manager

Ward All

Summary The Scrutiny Committees are required by the constitution to submit an Annual Report each year to Council, to review how Scrutiny has operated in the last 12 months.

It is difficult to measure the impact of Scrutiny using traditional performance measures, which count the outputs from the Scrutiny Committees but do not measure the outcomes of our work, or show whether improvements have been made as a result. The Annual Report is a more useful tool in reviewing the effectiveness of Scrutiny, providing an opportunity to reflect properly on how Scrutiny has operated in the last year, and to identify upcoming challenges against which future performance can be judged.

Proposal **To agree the content of the annual report as a basis for the work of the Scrutiny Committees in the coming year.**

Action by Leanne Rowlands, Democratic Services Manager

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Head of Law and Regulation
- Head of People and Business Change
- Head of Finance

Background

- 1 The Scrutiny Committees are required by the constitution to submit an Annual Report each year to Council, to review how Overview and Scrutiny has operated in the last 12 months.

Reviewing Scrutiny's Performance

- 2 The Annual Report is a key part of the performance management cycle for Scrutiny. It is difficult to measure the impact of Scrutiny using traditional performance measures, which count the outputs from the Scrutiny Committees but do not measure the outcomes of our work, or show whether improvements have been made as a result. The Annual Report is a more useful tool in reviewing the effectiveness of Scrutiny, providing an opportunity to reflect properly on how Scrutiny has operated in the last year, and to identify upcoming challenges against which future performance can be judged.
- 3 As well as providing a commentary on scrutiny activity in the past year, the report is structured to review performance on the targets set last September, and agree priorities for the next 12 months (which will be used as the basis of our performance review next year).

Financial Summary

- 4 There are no specific costs to the adoption of this report. Support for Overview and Scrutiny is undertaken within the budget allocation.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
An ineffective scrutiny function could undermine the Council's corporate governance arrangements and lead to poor quality decision making	M	L	The Annual Report informs the Council of the efforts made to strengthen the role of scrutiny in Newport and how the Committees will work to help develop policies and hold the executive to account in an open and transparent manner.	Democracy and Communications Manger
Lack of progress in enhancing the role of scrutiny will impact on its effectiveness and esteem within the Council	H	L	The Chairs of Scrutiny are working together to oversee the development and progress of scrutiny in Newport; sharing best practice and driving forward the programme for improvement. Regular meetings are also held with senior members of the Executive to help develop that relationship and strengthen the position of scrutiny within the authority.	Democracy and Communications Manger

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- 6 The Scrutiny function has an important role in helping the Council to achieve its expressed aims:
- To make our city a better place to live for all our citizens
 - To be good at what we do
 - To work hard to provide what our citizens tell us they need

Options Available

- 7 The Council's constitution requires the production of an Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. Submission of this report is required in order to meet this requirement. The Council may accept the report, reject it, or ask for further work to be undertaken.

Preferred Option and Why

- 8 The report provides a summary of progress last year and a plan of action for improvements this year. It is recommended that the report is adopted.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no financial impacts coming from this report.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Council is required to establish arrangements for effective overview and scrutiny in accordance with Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government Measure 2011. In accordance with the reporting arrangements set out in the Constitution, an Annual Report is presented to full Council regarding the way in which the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements have operated during the preceding 12 months. The Annual report itself raises no legal issues. Each report to and from the Committees during the year has included my comments on any legal implications. The Annual Report shows that good progress has been made in delivering the targets and objectives set out in last year's Report. This work will continue throughout the current year, with a view to further strengthening scrutiny arrangements.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

The report notes the emphasis of scrutiny on ensuring that the Council acts in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Scrutiny members have previously had the opportunity to attend briefings on the Act and, importantly, the 2019-20 action plan includes the provision of further training for scrutiny members to improve their understanding and consideration of the Act when undertaking scrutiny activity.

The report also notes that the Council's scrutiny function is also responsible for scrutinising the performance of the One Newport Public Services Board (PSB). This function is performed by the Scrutiny Performance Committee – Partnerships with formal feedback twice a year from the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee to the PSB on how well it is delivering against its Well-being Plan.

There are no direct HR implications arising from the report, however arrangements will need to be made to cover the vacant posts in the service area with actions referenced in this report.

Local issues

N/A

Scrutiny Committees

The Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting in July 2021

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**

N/A

- **Equality Act 2010**

N/A

- **Socio-economic Duty**

N/A

- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

The Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships has scrutiny of the Public Services Board (PSB) Partnership within its remit, which considers the effectiveness of the Partnership and its associated plans. This is reflected within the Annual Report in the summary of the Committee's work this year.

The Scrutiny Committees considered the draft budget proposals in January and in the recommendations that were made to the Cabinet there were several that demonstrate that the Committees are considering how the Council is complying with the WFGA. The report also shows the new emphasis of scrutiny on ensuring that the Council acts in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The extent of the work of the Committees and the progress already made against the action plan is noted along with the clearly identified work programme going forward in 2019/20.

Consultation

N/A

Background Papers

Agenda and minutes of the Scrutiny Committees 2020/21

[Newport City Council - Committee details - Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee](#)

[Newport City Council - Committee details - Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships](#)

[Newport City Council - Committee details - Performance Scrutiny Committee - People](#)

[Newport City Council - Committee details - Performance Scrutiny Committee - Place and Corporate](#)

Dated: 21 September 2021