

# Report

## Council

---



### Part 1

Date: 29 September 2015

Item No:

**Subject** Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15

**Purpose** To present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15.

**Author** Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer

**Ward** All

**Summary** 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.

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.

**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** Chief Democratic Services Officer and Scrutiny Team

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Scrutiny Improvement Group
- Scrutiny Members
- 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.
- 2 Scrutiny has made good progress this year in delivering its work programmes and working towards the priorities set out in last year's plan. We have undertaken reviews on a number of key projects, the findings of which have been positively received by the Executive and taken into account in the final decision making process. These include projects which fed in directly to this year's budget process, for example the Riverfront Alternative Delivery Model. The outcomes of the Libraries and Community Centres were particularly well received, and demonstrate the positive impact of Scrutiny work taking an overview across all departments of the Council.

## Reviewing Scrutiny's Performance

- 3 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.
- 4 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). It includes the following sections:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Scrutiny Improvement Group**  
- Summary of activity and progress made
3. **The Scrutiny Committees**  
- Statements from the Chairs and summaries of key activities and projects
4. **Planned Actions 2014-15: Update**  
- Reviewing progress against the priorities set in last year's annual report
5. **External Feedback on our Performance**  
- A précis of scrutiny-related feedback from regulators in the past year
6. **Planned Actions 2015-16**  
- Our priorities and goals for the next year

## Financial Summary

- 5 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	M	L	The Annual Report informs the	Chief

scrutiny function could undermine the Council's corporate governance arrangements and lead to poor quality decision making			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.	Democratic Services Officer and Scrutiny Team.
Lack of progress in enhancing the role of scrutiny will impact on its effectiveness and esteem within the Council	H	L	The Scrutiny Improvement Group has been set up to examine what is being done well in Newport; what we need to improve upon and an action programme for improvement. This Group also hold regular meetings with the Executive to help develop that relationship and strengthen the position of scrutiny within the authority.	Chief Democratic Services Officer and Scrutiny Team.

\* 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 sets out to provide a commentary on how the Council is working to strengthen the role of scrutiny and it is recommended that the report is adopted.

### Comments of Chief Financial Officer

9 There are no specific financial implications arising from the report. As a matter of course, all Committees are advised of the financial consequences of any matter before them.

### Comments of Monitoring Officer

10 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, particularly the work carried out by the Scrutiny Improvement Group in overseeing the action plan arising from the National Scrutiny Study and the WAO Corporate Assessment. This work will continue throughout the current year, with a view to further strengthening scrutiny arrangements.

## **Staffing Implications: Comments of Head of People and Business Change**

- 11 The Annual Report demonstrates the value that the Administration places on robust scrutiny processes. Scrutiny plays a key role in reviewing and challenging service area activity, including actual/planned performance, predicted demand levels, customer feedback and actions arising from external regulators' reports and recommendations. This is evident from scrutiny reviews such as the Riverfront Alternative Delivery Model and the Libraries and Community Centre reviews which have informed and shaped final policy decisions. Over the course of 2014/15 Scrutiny also forged links with Newport Fairness Commission which led to the development of a bespoke training package for members delivered by the Chair of the Fairness Commission. This represents truly innovative work which is the first of its type in Wales and probably the UK. The extent of the work of the three Committees and the progress already made against the action plan is noted along with the clearly identified work programme going forward in 2015/16.

Dated: 18/9/2015