

# Report

## Council

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### Part 1

Date: 17 September 2024

**Subject** **Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24**

**Purpose** To present the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24

**Author** Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

**Ward** All

**Summary** The Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24, which summarises the work carried out by the Council's scrutiny committees during year from May 2023 to April 2024. The report also contains, at section 4, an action plan which sets out the actions which will be taken by officers to support the work of the scrutiny committees during 2024-25. This report is produced annually and forms part of the Council's arrangements for ensuring that it has in place effective scrutiny arrangements in order to comply with the requirements of s.21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

**Proposal** **To review, note and if appropriate comment on the Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2023-24 and to endorse the actions set out in section 4 of that report.**

**Action by** Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

**Timetable** Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Head of Law and Standards
- Head of People, Policy and Transformation
- Head of Finance

### Signed

Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

## Background

S.21 of the Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council to have one or more scrutiny committees. These committees are responsible for overseeing the discharge of the Council's executive functions and reviewing and scrutinising any decisions or action taken in respect of such functions. This Council has 4 scrutiny committees: the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and 3 Performance Scrutiny Committees: People; Place and Corporate; and Partnerships. These committees consider various aspects of the Council's work, as set out in their terms of reference.

Article 6.44 of the Council's Constitution requires the scrutiny committees to report to Full Council annually on their work. The attached report is produced for this purpose and sets out a summary of the work which has been undertaken by those committees during the year 2023-24. The report is intended to enable members to review the effectiveness of the work of the scrutiny committees and provide input as to matters which the committees could consider in the future in the light of challenges faced by the organisation as a whole.

Section 4 of the report sets out the measures which will be taken by officers in order to further develop and support the work of the scrutiny committees going forward.

Members are therefore invited to review, note and make such comments as they consider necessary on the attached report and to endorse the measures set out in section 4 of that report.

## Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

There are no specific costs associated with this report.

## 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 proposed steps to strengthen the role of the Council's scrutiny committees and sets out how the Committees will work to help develop policies and hold the executive to account in an open and transparent manner.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Lack of progress in enhancing the role of scrutiny committees will impact on its effectiveness and esteem	H	L	The Chairs of the Council's scrutiny committees 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 Cabinet	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

within the Council			to help develop that relationship and strengthen the position of scrutiny within the authority.	
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\* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

### Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The scrutiny function has an important role in helping the Council to achieve its corporate objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan 2022 - 2027:

- fair and inclusive - we will work to create fairer chances and reduce inequalities
- empowering each other - we will support communities, groups, and partners to thrive
- listening council - the views of communities and users will shape the services we deliver
- Newport’s values - council staff and representatives will put residents first. Making sure to focus on our values

The s work of scrutiny committees is also key to delivering the Council’s duties and responsibilities as set out in the Participation Strategy 2022-2026:

1. Promote awareness of the functions the Council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors.
2. Share information about how to go about becoming an elected Member, or Councillor, and what the role of Councillor involves.
3. Provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council.
4. Provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations.
5. Promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to Councillors.

### Preferred Option and Why

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 direct financial impacts coming from this report though the on-going work of the scrutiny committees have an impact on policy and service development across the Council and therefore potential financial impacts through those. The Annual Report shows that good progress has been made in delivering the targets and objectives set out in last year’s 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 in order to summarise the work carried out by the Council’s scrutiny committees during the 2023-24 civic year. The annual report itself raises no legal issues.

### Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

The report notes the emphasis of Scrutiny on ensuring that the Council acts in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and within key partnerships.

There are no direct HR implications arising from the report.

### Scrutiny Committees

The Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24 was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting in June 2024.

### **Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:**

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

No FEIA is required, as the Annual Report is for information purposes only. There are no negative impacts in terms of equalities or social disadvantage.

In terms of the sustainable development principle and 5 ways of working:

- Long-term – The Annual Report will assist Scrutiny committees and the Council in taking a long-term view about decisions taken and their effect on Newport's residents.
- Prevention – The Annual Report will help ensure Scrutiny committees are considering key topics and prevent oversight of important areas of scrutiny.
- Integration – The Annual Report has been produced in consultation with key stakeholders and demonstrates ongoing work with partners and stakeholders.
- Collaboration – The Annual Report will assist people in interacting with the Council and elected members, in a more collaborative way, as per the Participation Strategy. The Annual Report highlights the collaborative, non-political and cross-party work of Scrutiny.
- Involvement – The Annual Report will encourage greater involvement in the democratic and decision-making functions of the Council.

### **Consultation**

N/A

### **Background Papers**

[Corporate Plan 2022-27](#)

[Participation Strategy 2022-26](#)

[Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24](#)

Agendas and minutes of Scrutiny committees:

[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:**

17 September 2024