

# Report

## Council

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### Part 1

Date: 27 September 2016

Item No: 6

**Subject** Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015-16

**Purpose** To present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015-16.

**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:

- Chairs of Scrutiny
- 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.

## 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.	Chief 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 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.	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 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**

- 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 and in addressing issues raised by external regulators. This work will continue throughout the current year, with a view to further strengthening scrutiny arrangements and complying with additional duties under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

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

- 11 The Annual Report demonstrates the value that the Council places on robust scrutiny processes. Scrutiny plays a key role in reviewing and challenging decision making and how this impacts on service area activity, including actual/planned performance, predicted demand levels, customer feedback and actions arising from external regulators' reports and recommendations. Scrutiny plays a key role in ensuring that the Council has robust processes of engagement in place and that the impact of decisions are appropriately considered – this is clearly evidenced within the report and the importance of this is now heightened by the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. 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 2016/17.

Dated: 20 September 2016