



Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2015/16

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Committee Membership 2015/16



Cllr. Hugh Richards
Chair
Felinfoel
(Independent)



Cllr. Glynog Davies
Vice-Chair
Cwarter Bach
(Plaid Cymru)



Cllr. Ryan Bartlett
Betws
(Labour)



Cllr. Theresa Bowen
Llwynhendy
(Independent)



Cllr. Jeff Edmunds
Bigyn
(Labour)



Cllr. Wyn Evans
Llanddarog
(Independent)



Cllr. Ken Howell
Llangeler
(Plaid Cymru)



Cllr. Anthony Jones
Llandybie
(Labour)



Cllr. Alun Lenny
Carmarthen South
(Plaid Cymru)



Cllr. Giles Morgan
Swiss Valley
(Independent)



Cllr. Darren Price
Gorlas
(Plaid Cymru)



Cllr. Ryan Thomas
Kidwelly
(Labour)



Cllr. Elwyn Williams
Llangynnwr
(Plaid Cymru)

Chair's Foreword

I am pleased, as Chair of the Committee, to present this Annual Report for the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee for the 2015/16 municipal year.

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the work undertaken by the Committee during the period May 2015 to April 2016.

The past year has continued to be a challenging period for the Council as a whole, particularly the continued unprecedented budget situation. However, I feel that this Committee has continued to constructively play its part in terms of scrutinising performance and contributing to key council policies and decisions.

The Committee discussed and scrutinised a wide variety of topics during the past year. These included the standard and regular monitoring reports as well as new policies and strategies being introduced by the County Council.

It is pleasing to note that the Committee's recommendation in relation to the regular performance monitoring reports presented to all the Council's scrutiny committees, has been acted upon and that the report format has been reviewed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Committee for their on-going support and constructive input at meetings and other activities during the past year.

I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to my Vice-Chair, Cllr. Glynog Davies for his support during the past year and to all the officers who have provided support, advice and guidance during this period.

*Cllr. Hugh Richards
Chair of Policy & Resources Scrutiny
Committee*

Introduction

Purpose of Annual Report

The following report has been prepared in order to comply with Article 6.2 of the County Council's Constitution which states that a scrutiny committee must:

"Prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committee's activities over the previous year."

The report:

- Provides an overview of the work of the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee during the 2015/16 municipal year.
- Identifies key areas to be included in the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee's 'Forward Work Programme' for 2016/17.

Number of Meetings

In all, the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee met on 7 occasions between June 2015 and March 2016.

The Work Programme for 2014/15

In the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined by the Forward Work Programme for 2015/16, which was confirmed by the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 11th June 2015.

The Forward Work Programme (FWP) was mainly based on key areas identified as objectives within the Integrated Community Strategy and Improvement Plan together with standard items such as performance and budget monitoring reports, action plan monitoring

reports, and specific requests from the scrutiny committee itself. Additional reports were also requested by the scrutiny committee during the year and the Forward Work Programme was amended accordingly.

The development of the concept of the Forward Work Programme and the process for its agreement, has allowed each scrutiny committee to determine their own work agendas. The benefits of such an approach has led to an improved level of debate and input during scrutiny committee meetings.

The Committee's Remit

The Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee's key responsibilities are for:

- Monitoring authority wide policy and performance issues and scrutiny of the Local Service Board
- Cross-cutting issues
- Sustainable Development
- Finance
- Property
- Information Technology
- Communications
- Customer Services
- Audit
- Procurement
- Non-housing maintenance
- Organisational Development
- Human Resources
- Markets
- Emergency Planning

Key issues considered during 2015/16

Standard Scrutiny Monitoring Reports / Items

Half-Yearly Corporate and Departmental Performance Management Reports - One of the principal roles of scrutiny committees is to monitor the performance of services and functions within its remit. They undertake this work mainly through the consideration of half-yearly performance monitoring reports and various action plan monitoring reports. The performance monitoring report provides a balanced picture of performance across the relevant service areas. The Committee considered the half-yearly performance reports for its remit at its meetings in July and November 2015.

Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Reports

- The Committee received quarterly reports on the departmental and corporate revenue and capital budgets. These reports enabled members to monitor the level of spend in each area and the progress made in any capital works.

Actions & Referrals Updates - During the course of the municipal year several requests for additional items were made by committee members to assist them in discharging their scrutiny role. In total, 13 recommendations / requests from the Community Scrutiny Committee were formally recorded. These quarterly reports were produced to give an update on progress and information was also circulated to members outside the formal committee meetings.

RECOMMENDATION

During its meeting in July 2015, the Committee expressed concerns about the format and length of 'Report B' (PIMS data). The Committee also commented that the information was out of date by the time the members came to consider it. At the meeting, the Committee was advised that members had previously requested a move from exception based reporting to a balanced and comprehensive format several years ago but that changing back to exception based reports could be accommodated, subject to endorsement by the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Forum and consultation with other committees. The Committee unanimously resolved to suggest:

- That the other scrutiny committees be offered the opportunity to receive Performance Management Report B on an exception basis.
- That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum review the format of Report B.

OUTCOME - This referral was presented to and accepted by the other scrutiny committees at their meetings in November 2015. At its meeting on the 11th February 2016, the Chairs & Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum was briefed on the on-going work to develop a new performance monitoring report template for the scrutiny committees which would be presented via the new dashboard layout and by members using their iPads. The new format will be rolled out during 2016/17 and the performance reports presented on an exception basis for Quarter 1 and Quarter 3. The end of year performance position will be outlined as part of the Annual Report & Improvement Plan which is presented to each scrutiny committee during May and June each year.

Quarterly Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Reports - The Committee received quarterly updates outlining the activities within the Treasury Management Function, in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy approved by the County Council on the 24th February 2015.

Performance / Progress Monitoring

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2014/15 - In July 2015, the Committee received the 2014/15 annual report for the Strategic Equality Plan which was approved in March 2012. It was advised that the People Strategy Steering Group was now taking the lead on equalities and improving diversity.

Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report 2014/15 - In July 2015, the Committee considered this annual report listing the treasury management activities which occurred during 2014/15 financial year, in line with the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2014/15, adopted by the County Council on the 19th February 2014. Committee members commended the work of the Treasury & Pension Investments Team during such challenging financial circumstances and requested that their thanks be forwarded to the relevant staff.

Wales Audit Office's (WAO) Assessment of Carmarthenshire County Council's Transform, Innovate and Change Programme - At its meeting in October 2015, the Committee was presented with a report of a review of the Council's TIC Programme by the Audit Office's Performance Audit Manager. The report had been undertaken during 2014/15 and published in May 2015. The Committee welcomed the report which gave a positive

assessment of the TIC programme in terms of its governance arrangements, objectives and contributions however included 3 proposals for improvement. The TIC Programme Manager advised members that the proposals had already been implemented with stronger business cases in terms of risk and anticipation of outcomes.

Spend on External Consultants 2014/15 - In November 2015, the Committee considered an annual update report that it had requested in respect of expenditure on external consultants and legal expertise.

Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report 2014/15 - In November 2015, the Committee also considered the Annual Report on the Welsh Language Scheme, which was necessary in order to comply with the Welsh Language Commissioner's monitoring arrangements. The report included the statutory and local indicators which measure compliance with the Scheme. It was advised that Standards would replace the current system of Welsh language schemes. The Welsh Language Commissioner gave Carmarthenshire County Council a compliance notice regarding the Welsh Language Standards Regulations on 30 September 2015 which required the Council to comply with most of the standards by 30 March 2016.



Complying with the new Welsh Language Standards - In February 2016, the Committee received a report detailing the progress being achieved by the Council in implementing, and complying with, the 170 new Welsh Language Standards received from the Welsh Language Commissioner on the 15th September by the designated timescales of either 30th March 2016 or, the 30th September, 2016.

ICT Strategy Update - In February 2016, the Committee considered a report detailing the progress being achieved in implementing the Council's ICT Strategy 2015-18, as approved by the Executive Board in December 2014. The Committee noted that since September 2015, a Joint Head of ICT had been in place between Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire County Councils, replacing the former arrangement with the Dyfed Powys Police.

Carmarthenshire Local Service Board Update 2015 - In March 2016 the annual update of the Carmarthenshire Local Service Board (LSB) was presented to the Committee. The update included a summary of the Board's structure, matters discussed during the year and progress with projects and specific pieces of work taken forward. The Committee was reminded that the LSB had been established in 2007 and that 2015-16 was the final year of its existence prior to the establishment of the Public Services Board (PSB) in May 2016 to meet the requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The PSB would be responsible for improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the County and would utilise the sustainable development principle to maximise its contribution to the achievement of the seven national well-being goals.

The Committee was informed that whilst arrangements for the scrutiny of the PSB's work

had yet to be finalised there was an expectation that a designated local authority scrutiny committee (likely to be the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee in Carmarthenshire) would take on this role. The designated scrutiny committee could require any PSB member to give evidence to the committee but only in respect of the exercise of joint functions conferred on them as a member of the PSB.



**Public Services
Boards**

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - In March 2016, the Committee considered a report on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which was due to be implemented from April 2016 onwards. The Act, which would apply to 44 public bodies across Wales (including Carmarthenshire County Council), was aimed at improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and sought to set this principle at the heart of everything Welsh public service undertook.

Pre-Decision Scrutiny

Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2016/17 to 2018/19 - In January 2016, the Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 16th of November 2015. The Committee was advised that Welsh Government (WG) had announced the provisional settlement on the 9th of December and that Carmarthenshire would see a 1% cut in budget rather than the 3.3% on which the Strategy was predicated. This equated to an additional £7.5m for the 2016/17 budget however this also included the Outcome Agreement Grant. WG had funded £35m to protect education and £21m to protect social care on an all Wales basis which equated to £2.1m and £1.3m respectively for Carmarthenshire.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee resolved to accept the report and endorse the Charging Digest.

OUTCOME - The budget was endorsed by County Council at its meeting on the 23rd February 2016.

Five Year Capital Programme 2016/17 - 2020/21 - In January 2016, the Committee also considered the five year capital programme which had been approved by the Executive Board for consultation on the 4th of January 2016. The Committee was advised that the timing of the provisional settlement had meant that it was the only scrutiny committee being consulted, however it was also planned to present the programme at a members' seminar. The overall programme was more than £221m capital investment and was strongly linked to regeneration and job creation in the county.

During discussions, the Committee questioned why Phase 2 of the Ammanford Valley Distributor Road had not been considered a priority in the draft capital programme, given the links with regeneration in the area and particularly in light of some of the projects included in the programme.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee unanimously resolved that the draft Five Year Capital Programme 2016/17 – 2020/21 be endorsed subject to a request being made to the Executive Board that it re-consider including the Ammanford Valley Distributor Road Phase 2 in the new capital programme and continue to lobby the Welsh Government for Local Transport Grant funding for the project.

OUTCOME - The Committee's comments were considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on the 1st February 2016. At its meeting on the 23rd February 2016, County Council endorsed the Capital Budget.



Policy Development and Review

Draft Corporate Strategy 2015-2020 - In June 2015, the Committee considered this draft strategy which had been based on key areas such as 'making the best use of resources', 'building a better Council' and so on. This was in order to align with the current Annual Report & Improvement Plan reporting structure. The Committee noted that the strategy the recent Welsh Government White Paper on Reforming Local Government, entitled 'Power to Local People', made reference to a requirement that all local authorities should have published a Corporate Plan.

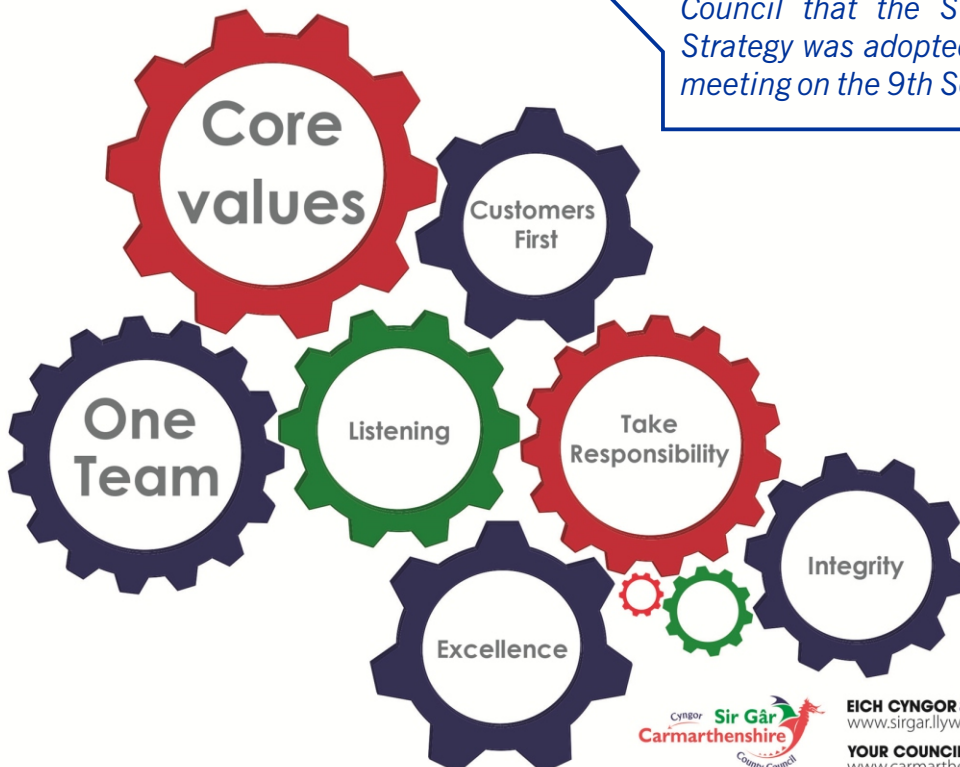
The Committee made a number of suggestions in relation to the strategy and the Council's core values, including; using the term 'residents' rather 'customers', that there should be fewer core values and distinction made between values and aims.

It was also noted that, given the Strategy was aimed at the public, it was important that the content should be clear and in user friendly language. It was queried whether or not the planning "wedding cake" and "golden thread" should also refer to the Westminster Government and Europe given their influence on our policies and funding. It was also suggested that a corporate staff survey would be helpful in finding out what staff think and how they feel.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee resolved to endorse the draft Corporate Strategy to the Executive Board in light of the Committee's comments.

OUTCOME - The Corporate Strategy was considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on the 13th July 2015. The Board unanimously resolved to recommend to County Council that the Strategy be adopted. The Strategy was adopted by County Council at its meeting on the 9th September 2015.



Ageing Well In Wales: Local Ageing Well Plans

- In October 2015, the Committee considered the draft Local Ageing Well Plan for Carmarthenshire which had been developed to meet two key strategic drivers; the Ageing Well in Wales programme with five themes and The Strategy for Older People in Wales. The Plan linked with the 'Vision for Sustainable Services for Older People', under development within Communities. It also supported the 2015 Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, through contributing towards sustainable communities that enable people to age 'in-place'.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the draft Plan to the Executive Board.

OUTCOME - The draft plan was endorsed by the Executive Board on the 30th November 2015 and by County Council at its meeting on the 13th January 2016.

Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020

- In November 2015, the Committee considered the draft Carmarthenshire County Council Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 which had been prepared to outline how the Council will meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duties for Wales. The Committee welcomed the Plan as it was concisely and clearly written. It was advised that an action plan would be developed to assess progress against the Plan's priorities and objectives. Annual reports would continue to be presented to the Committee.

Welsh Language Skills Strategy

- In November 2015, the Committee considered the new strategy which, further to the research and recommendations made by the Census Working Group, had been reviewed in order to manage and plan staff language skills. The Committee was advised that the Council developed its first Language Skills Strategy in 2008, in order to ensure that sufficient skills were available in the workplace (through learning and development and recruitment) to meet the requirements of the Welsh Language Scheme. The aim of the revised strategy was also to ensure that the Council implemented the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, specifically the Operational Standard.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee resolved to endorse the Strategy.

OUTCOME - At its meeting on the 13th January 2016, County Council resolved to endorse the Executive Board's recommendation that the Welsh Language Skills Strategy and ALTE framework be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee resolved to endorse the report.

OUTCOME - At its meeting on the 10th February 2016, County Council unanimously resolved to endorse the Executive Board's recommendation that Carmarthenshire County Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 be implemented from April 2016.

Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2016-17 - In February 2016, the Committee considered the proposed Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2016/17 and was reminded that, as part of the requirements of the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council was required to maintain a Treasury Management Policy detailing the policies and objectives of its treasury management activities, and to approve a Treasury Management Strategy annually prior to the commencement of the financial year to which it related. Additionally, under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003, the Council was required to approve its Treasury Management Prudential Indicators for the coming year.

RECOMMENDATION

Unanimously resolved that the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2016/17 and associated appendices be endorsed.

OUTCOME - At its meeting on the 23rd February 2016, County Council resolved that the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2016-17 and the recommendations therein be approved, as well as approving the Treasury Management Indicators.

Consultation

Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2014/15 and Improvement Plan 2015/16 - In June 2015, the Committee considered the Council's draft Annual Report for 2014/15 and Improvement Plan for 2015/16. The Local Authority must publish an Improvement Plan as soon as it is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year

and publish an Annual Report on past performance by the end of October each year. Each scrutiny committee is afforded the opportunity to consider these items in relation to their specific work areas.

During consideration of this item, the Committee expressed concerns about the all-Wales data used by the Welsh Government (WG) to judge local authority performance as it was felt there was a disparity with the measures used within the Council, which potentially caused confusion in the public domain. The Committee learnt that there was widespread dissatisfaction across Welsh local authorities at the way the all-Wales data was presented and when it was published. The all-Wales data was collated in a different way as some measures were merged, whilst the Authority collated data and measures linked to the Outcome Agreement Grant. Officers agreed to raise the concerns with the Wales Audit Office.

RECOMMENDATION

Unanimously resolved to endorse the draft Annual Report 2014/15 and Improvement Plan 2015/16 to the Executive Board as amended in light of the Committee's comments.

OUTCOME - The Annual Report 2014/15 and Improvement Plan 2015/16 was considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on the 15th June 2015 which in turn recommended to County Council that it be adopted. At its meeting on the 8th July 2015, County Council resolved to adopt the recommendation that the Annual Report for 2014/15 and Improvement Plan 2015/16 be approved.

Other activities during 2015/16

Development Sessions

The following development session was held for the Committee during 2015/16:

- Treasury Management Refresher Training - In April 2016, a refresher session was held for members of the Committee in relation to its Treasury Management responsibilities.

The following all-member development sessions were held during 2015/16, to which Committee members were invited:

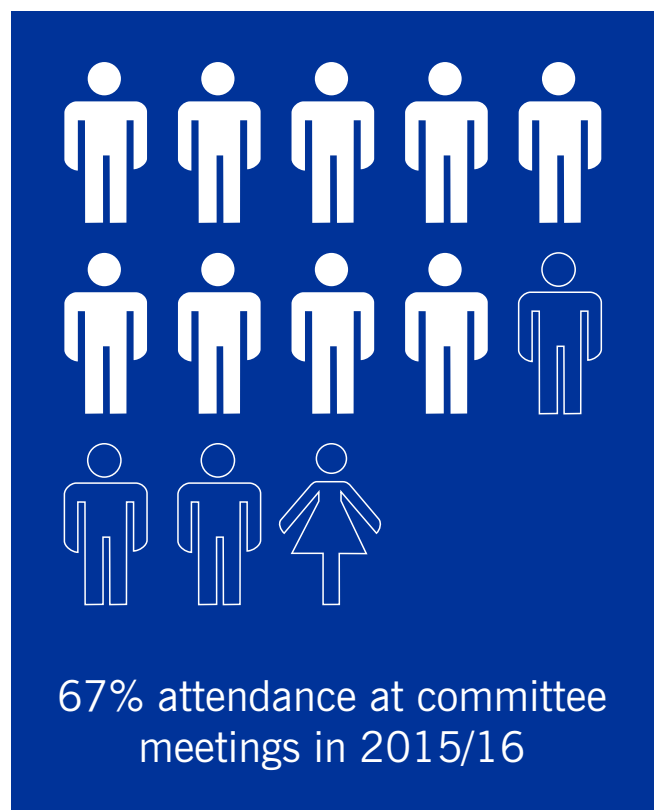
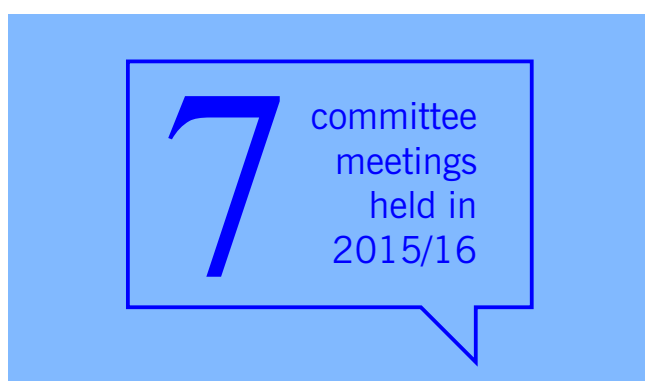
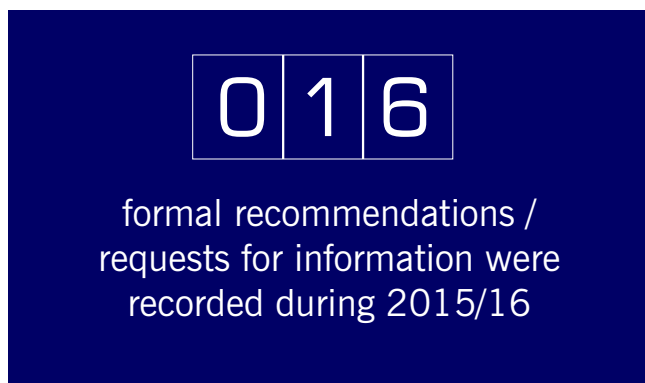
- Social Media and Members (June 2015)
- Customer Services (October 2015)
- Responsibilities under Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Equality Act 2010 in relation to Gypsies and Travellers (December 2015)
- Safeguarding Children (January 2016)
- Trading Standards (February 2016)

Procurement Strategy Focus Group

At its meeting in June 2015, the Committee requested the establishment of a focus group to assist with the revision of the Council's Procurement Strategy. During the 2015/16, the Group met on two occasions and the members on the Group were:

- Cllr. Jeff Edmunds
- Cllr. Jan Williams
- Cllr. Wyn Evans
- Cllr. Glynog Davies
- Cllr. Hugh Richards
- Cllr. Alun Lenny

The Committee did not undertake a task and finish review or hold any site visits during 2015/16.



Committee Member Attendance

Attendance by members of the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee at its formal public meetings held during the 2015/16 year, is shown in the table below. A total of 7 committee meetings were held between May 2015 and April 2016.

Scrutiny Committee Member	No. of meetings attended
Cllr. Ryan Bartlett (<i>from 13th January 2016</i>) *	2
Cllr. Theresa Bowen	1
Cllr. Deryk Cundy (<i>until 13th January 2016</i>) **	5
Cllr. Alun Davies (<i>until 11th November 2015</i>) ***	2
Cllr. Glynog Davies	6
Cllr. Jeff Edmunds	5
Cllr. Wyn Evans	3
Cllr. Ken Howell (<i>from 11th November 2015</i>) ***	4
Cllr. Anthony Jones	4
Cllr. Alun Lenny	6
Cllr. Giles Morgan	4
Cllr. Darren Price	7
Cllr. Hugh Richards	7
Cllr. Ryan Thomas (<i>from 13th January 2016</i>) **	1
Cllr. Elwyn Williams	5
Cllr. Jan Williams (<i>until 13th January 2016</i>) *	2

Substitutes	No. of meetings attended
Cllr. Sue Allen	1
Cllr. Deryk Cundy	1
Cllr. Tegwen Devichand	1
Cllr. Tyssul Evans	2
Cllr. John James	1
Cllr. Irfon Jones	1
Cllr. Jean Lewis	1
Cllr. Kevin Madge	1
Cllr. Edward Thomas	2
Cllr. Kim Thomas	2

Executive Board Members	No. of meetings attended
Cllr. Linda Evans (Housing)	1
Cllr. David Jenkins (Resources)	4
Cllr. Pam Palmer (Communities)	3
Cllr. Mair Stephens (Human Resources, Efficiencies & Collaboration)	5

Changes to committee membership during 2015/16

* Following Carmarthenshire County Council's meeting on 13th January 2016, Councillor Ryan Bartlett replaced Councillor Jan Williams as a member of the Committee.

** Following Carmarthenshire County Council's meeting on 13th January 2016, Councillor Ryan Thomas replaced Councillor Deryk Cundy as a member of the Committee.

*** Following Carmarthenshire County Council's meeting on 11th November 2015, Councillor Ken Howell replaced Councillor Alun Davies as a member of the Committee.

Support for the Scrutiny Function

In July 2015, support for Carmarthenshire County Council's scrutiny function was transferred from the former Scrutiny & Consultancy Team, based in the People Management & Performance Division, to the Democratic Services Unit, based in the Administration & Law Division of the Chief Executive's Department.

Support for the Scrutiny function includes:

- Providing constitutional advice to the Council's Scrutiny Committees and to members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring items arising from those meetings are actioned
- Giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to executive and non-executive members of the Council and its officers
- Managing the strategic development of Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire through engaging in national and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum, and the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Executive Board Forum
- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as guidance is published
- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny forward work programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny members
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the operation of scrutiny task and finish groups, authoring reports in conjunction with the groups, and assisting in

the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews

- Managing the Scrutiny member development programme.
- Despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of 4 working days prior to the meeting.

For more information on scrutiny in Carmarthenshire including work programmes, task and finish reports and annual reports, visit the County Council's website at:

www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/scrutiny

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or email:

scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Glossary of Terms

ALTE - Association of Language Testers in Europe

CIPFA - The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

ICT - Information & Communication Technology

LSB - Local Service Board

PIMS - Performance Information Management System

PSB - Public Service Board

FWP - Forward Work Programme

WG - Welsh Government