



Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny Function Annual Report 2014/15

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword	04
Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire	05
Key Achievements in 2014/15	06
Implementation of the 'Effective Scrutiny Action Plan'	06
National Scrutiny Issues	08
The Scrutiny Committees	09
Community Scrutiny Committee	10
Education & Children Scrutiny Committee	12
Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee	14
Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee	16
Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee	18
Other Activities during 2014/15	20
Chairs & Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum	20
Scrutiny Member Development and Training	20
Wales Overview & Scrutiny Officers Network and CfPS Events	20
Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011	20
Looking ahead to 2015/16	21
Support for the Scrutiny Function	22
Scrutiny Committee Chairs & Vice-Chairs during 2014/15	24
Glossary of Terms	26

Foreword

I am pleased to present this Annual Report for Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny Function for the 2014/15 municipal year.

The Annual Report provides a useful opportunity to reflect on the work of the Council's Scrutiny Committees during the past year.

One of the highlights of the past year's work programme was the conclusion of the joint Scrutiny investigation into the impact of Welfare Reform which was fully endorsed by the Executive Board last June and the recommendations implemented by the Executive Member led Welfare Reform Programme Board. This will continue to be a high priority for Scrutiny going forward in light of increasing levels of poverty in the county as well as the further cuts in benefits announced following the general election.

Empty homes are increasing in number and a blight on the landscape across the county and amongst our communities. The Community Scrutiny Committee knew that we were one of the best performers in Wales in terms of bringing numbers of empty homes back into use however the scale of the problem was getting significantly worse. It decided to investigate the issue in depth to see what more could be done and research best practice. This work is now completed and the Task & Finish Group has made links with increasing the delivery of affordable housing, another top priority for people and households in this county.

Efficiency and making the most effective use of our shrinking resources has been a key area for Policy & Resources Scrutiny which has looked at spend on third sector services, external expertise and the activity of the Council's Transform, Innovate & Change Team.

Ensuring we provide the best opportunities for our children and young people to realise their potential continues to be a key focus for Education & Children Scrutiny. The implementation of Education through Regional Working (ERW) and its impact on supporting schools to improve and raise the standards achieved by our children and young people has been a key area for Scrutiny, which has also been involved in establishing a co-ordinated and consistent approach to Scrutiny across the region.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of our Scrutiny Committees for their constructive input during the course of the year as well as my colleagues on the Chairs & Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to our partners' participation in Scrutiny through formal reports and their engagement in our detailed investigations.

Finally I would like to thank all the officers who have provided support, advice and guidance throughout the year, particularly those in the Scrutiny and Consultancy and Democratic Services teams.

*Cllr. Hugh Richards
Chair of Chairs & Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum
and Carmarthenshire County Council's
Scrutiny Champion*

Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire

Scrutiny plays a key role in improving the services that the people and children of Carmarthenshire use. The majority of decisions are made by the Executive Board of 10 county councillors. Scrutiny offers the other 64 councillors an opportunity to influence those decisions and act as a “critical friend”. It is also useful in ensuring that Council policies reflect current priorities, as well as promoting efficiency and encouraging effective partnership working with external bodies. Scrutiny Committees’ main roles and responsibilities are to:

- Examine how well the Executive Board and Council are performing.
- Hold the Executive Board to account and seek to promote open and transparent decision-making.
- Monitor the performance of the Council’s services and functions.
- Review decisions made by the Executive Board where appropriate.
- Assist the Executive Board in the development, monitoring and review of policy.
- Scrutinise, as a key element of the consultation process, the proposed revenue budget strategy and capital investment programmes.
- Enable the participation of external organisations and partners in consideration of issues that may impact upon the delivery of Council and countywide priorities.

All non-executive councillors can be appointed to at least one Scrutiny committee, depending on their specialist interests or expertise. Carmarthenshire County Council has 5 Scrutiny Committees:

- Policy & Resources
- Community
- Education & Children

- Environmental & Public Protection
- Social Care & Health

The Committees normally meet 8 times a year on a 6 weekly basis to consider issues and reports included in a scrutiny forward work programme, which is developed at the beginning of the municipal year. Additional meetings are sometimes arranged if required and special or joint meetings may be held to consider urgent or cross-cutting issues.



The Scrutiny Committees are politically balanced to reflect, as far as possible, the political composition of the Council as a whole. The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Committees are appointed at the beginning of each municipal year for a period of one year (e.g. May 2015 to April 2016) by Council. They also participate in the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum which meets on a quarterly basis to oversee the strategic direction of Scrutiny.

Key Achievements in 2014/15

Implementation of the 'Effective Scrutiny Action Plan'

The Chairs & Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum has continued to oversee the implementation of the effective scrutiny action plan developed following the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Improvement study, 'Good Scrutiny? Good Question!' Progress is outlined below:

WAO Recommendations	Progress
Further develop and promote the understanding of Scrutiny outside the Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Communications Strategy to promote and raise awareness of the work of Scrutiny has been agreed with the Press Team.
Continue to develop public engagement and involvement in Scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A review of the information about Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire available on the corporate website and how to get involved is planned following the launch of the new corporate website.
Strengthen the links between scrutiny work and audit / regulators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chair of the Audit Committee and relevant officers have attended a Forum meeting to discuss their respective roles, forward work programmes and key priorities. They have agreed to meet on a regular basis.• The Forum invited the Council's WAO Performance Audit Manager to attend a meeting to give feedback following his observations of Committee meetings and discuss the WAO work programme for the year. Scrutiny officers are also in regular contact with him.• CSSIW's comments about scrutiny arrangements in its Performance Evaluation Report 2013/14 were, "Scrutiny arrangements are effective and officers provide elected members with detailed information, with members providing officers with robust challenge to ensure decisions are made effectively".• ESTYN inspectors will be meeting with the Chair of Education & Children during 2015/16.

WAO Recommendations

Progress

Further develop the expertise of scrutiny members

- 41 non-executive members attended outcome focused questioning and listening skills development sessions delivered in-house during January 2015.
- 21 members attended a chairing skills development session facilitated through the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) in March 2015.
- Development needs were discussed with all Committees at their informal FWP planning sessions. A number of scrutiny-specific and all member information briefings were identified and informed the overall member development strategy confirmed by the Democratic Services Committee. Site visits will continue to be provided as appropriate and at the request of Committees to enhance their understanding of key scrutiny priorities.
- The Forum was consulted with regarding the scrutiny and chairing aspects of the WLGA Councillor Guidance on Continuing Professional Development 2014 and its feedback was provided to the WLGA.

Further develop scrutiny of the Local Service Board

- Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee continues to monitor the Local Service Board (LSB) through an annual report which includes an update on the Integrated Community Strategy. It also is consulted with on the LSB priorities for the coming year.
- Members of the Committee have also observed meetings of the LSB and have agreed to set up a rota of a small group of Members to continue this in the coming year.

National Scrutiny Issues

During November 2014 Welsh Government announced that it was discontinuing the WLGA Improvement Grant from 1st of April 2015. The WLGA support for Members will continue with some free core services however there are now charges for coaching, training and workshops. The national Member Support Network will continue albeit at a reduced level. More information on councillor development and support services can be found at: www.wlga.gov.uk

The Scrutiny & Consultancy Team had been working with the WLGA to provide some workshops for Scrutiny Committees following the delivery of the outcome focused questioning and listening skills development sessions in January 2015 and a subsequent internal peer review utilising aspects of the 'national characteristics of effective scrutiny'*. This work was put on hold following the announcement of the cessation of the WLGA's Improvement Grant.

During February 2015 Welsh Government announced that funding for the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Wales programme and the Scrutiny Development Fund were being discontinued from 1st of April 2015. Whilst the formal scrutiny national and regional networks will therefore cease, scrutiny officers continue to communicate and look for best practice through their electronic network.

** Developed by the National Scrutiny Officer Network following the WAO Improvement Study 2013.*



The Scrutiny Committees



Community Scrutiny Committee

The Community Scrutiny Committee has 13 members and its remit covers:

- **Public and private housing**
- **Regeneration**
- **Economic development**
- **Recreation and leisure**
- **Sport**
- **Libraries/Arts/Theatres**
- **Museums/Archives**
- **European grants/ External funding**
- **Planning policy**

Committee meetings – During 2014/15 the Committee considered reports on a wide range of topics including:

- Externally Funded Projects
- Local Development Plan (LDP)
- The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus
- Contractor Partnering Framework
- The tender for Minor Building Works Frameworks under £150,000
- Cultural Services
- Swansea Bay City Region
- Progress on the implementation of the Joint Scrutiny Task & Finish Review on the Impact of Welfare Reform
- Annual Revenue Budget Consultation (2015/16 to 2017/18)
- Annual Capital Programme Consultation (2015/16 to 2019/20)
- The new European Funding Programmes 2014-20
- Affordable Homes and confirmation of Right to Buy suspension
- Economic Development
- Countryside Unit
- Sports & Leisure Unit
- Carmarthenshire Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2015-2018
- Fee structure for Mobile Home Site Licensing / Recovery of costs for the serving of

Statutory Notices

- Community Infrastructure Levy

The Committee was also consulted on the following issues:

- Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2013/14 and Improvement Plan 2014/15
- The New Local Authority Housing Financing System (HRAS Reform): Welsh Government Consultation Paper
- Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus Business Plan 2015-18 and the Reform of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System

Joint Meetings – The Committee held the following joint meetings during 2014/15:

Joint meeting with the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee – In May 2014, both Committees met to consider and endorse the findings and recommendations of the Joint Task and Finish Group's review of Welfare Reform, undertaken by members from both committees. The report was presented to the Executive Board on the 30th of June 2014 which endorsed all the recommendations and referred them to the Welfare Reform Programme Board for implementation.

Joint meeting with the Planning Committee – In June 2014, the Committees met to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Community Scrutiny Committee's Task & Finish Group's review of the Planning Enforcement Policy and Protocols. Three members of the Planning Committee had been co-opted as members of the Task & Finish Group. The Committees agreed the report and recommendations which were presented to the Executive Board on the 28th of July 2014.

Task & Finish Review 2014/15 – The Committee agreed to investigate the Council’s approach to bringing empty properties back into use in light of housing need and the high volume of empty properties. The main aims of the review were:

- To identify and evaluate the current activities undertaken by the Housing & Public Protection Division.
- To identify potential improvements and alternative delivery models.
- To identify cost effective best practice by other authorities, agencies and providers.

The Group held 7 meetings between November 2014 and June 2015 as well as a site visit (pictured below) to view some of the empty homes already known to the Authority. The review linked with the results of the public consultation regarding the delivery of affordable housing, the results of which supported bringing empty properties back into use.

The Community Scrutiny Committee endorsed the final report on the 22nd of June 2015. The Executive Board endorsed the final report and recommendations at its meeting on the 27th July 2015.



Site Visits – Following discussions about Burry Port Harbour at different meetings during the summer of 2014, the Committee undertook site visits to Pembrey County Park and Burry Port Harbour on Thursday 30th October 2014. The purpose of the visits was to give members the opportunity to view the facilities/developments in the Country Park as well as visiting the harbour in order to see and discuss the problems relating to the silting (pictured below).



The Committee also received a presentation from representatives of the Burry Port RNLI Lifeboat Team, outlining their vision for future facilities at the harbour. The Committee will continue to monitor conditions at the Harbour and options for its future management.

Development Sessions – No scrutiny-specific development sessions were held for the Committee during the municipal year but members attended other all-member development sessions (see Page 20).

Education & Children Scrutiny Committee

The Education & Children Scrutiny Committee has 18 members and its remit covers:

- Schools
- Children's Services
- **Youth Service**
- **Inclusion / Special Educational Needs**
- Adult Community Learning

Committee meetings – During 2014/15 the Committee considered reports on a wide range of topics including:

- Monitoring of the Local Authority's Education Services for Children and Young People (LAESCYP): ESTYN Inspection Action Plan
- Results of the 2014 Teacher Assessment and External Examinations
- Enhancing democratic scrutiny and monitoring of Education & Children's Services to support improvements in standards and safeguarding
- School Balances
- Carmarthenshire 14-19 Learning Network and Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Update
- Task & Finish Group Action Plan Monitoring: Review of the Youth Service's Youth Club Provision
- Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Annual Report 2013/14 and Programme for 2014/15
- Carmarthenshire Adult & Community Learning Service
- Youth Services Update Report
- The Youth Justice Plan Cymru 2015/16 – Carmarthenshire YOP Service
- Education through Regional Working (ERW) School Effectiveness Update
- Education & Children Scrutiny Committee Site Visit Activity Report 2013/14
- School Performance and Achievement 2013/14

- Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services on the effectiveness of Social Care Services in Carmarthenshire 2013/14
- Carmarthenshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2013/14
- Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales' (CSSIW) Inspection, Evaluation and Review of Local Authority Social Services 2013/14
- Integrated Family Support Strategy
- Looked after Children Strategy 2013-2017 Update
- Annual Revenue Budget Consultation (2015/16 to 2017/18)
- Annual Capital Programme Consultation (2015/16 to 2019/20)
- Modernising Education Programme: Ysgol Bryn Teg Evaluation Report
- Childcare Sufficiency Duty
- Play Sufficiency Duty
- Early Years Education Provision Review
- Welsh Language and Bilingualism for children with Additional Learning Needs

It was also consulted on the following policy matters:

- Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2013/14 and Improvement Plan 2014/15
- Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014-2017
- Proposal to discontinue Copperworks and Lakefield
- Schools and establish a new primary school
- Proposal to discontinue Llanfynydd Voluntary Aided Primary School

Task & Finish Review – The Committee did not undertake a task and finish review during 2014/15.

Joint Scrutiny – Following the implementation of ERW from 1st of April 2014 and the appointment of key personnel, scrutiny officers across the region have met regularly on an informal basis with the ERW Managing Director. The aim of the discussions has been to ensure a consistent and co-ordinated approach to scrutiny of ERW and standards and performance in schools as well as sharing of best practice. The officer group has agreed that more formal arrangements are inappropriate at this stage. A seminar for lead Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs has been planned for the 22nd of September 2015 hosted by Neath Port Talbot. The seminar will focus on producing guidance on key lines of enquiry on the following 3 areas:

- Pupil Performance and Categorisation
- Support, Challenge and Intervention for Schools
- Other Activities for School Performance

Site Visits – In addition to its regular meetings, the Committee also continued with the programme of school visits and visited 18 schools during the 2014/15 municipal year (visits to Ysgol Y Felin and Ysgol Llansadwrn pictured right), as well as two Integrated Children’s Centres.

Co-opted Members – Only the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee has co-opted members. There are places for 5 co-optees - 3 Parent Governors and 1 representative from both the Church in Wales and the Roman Catholic Church. There is currently one vacancy for a Parent Governor position.

Development Sessions – A scrutiny-specific development session was held in September 2014 for members of the Committee. The objectives of the briefing session were:

- To give an overview of the Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People (LAESCYP) - ESTYN inspection process
- To give the background of the Authority’s statutory powers over schools
- To brief members on Carmarthenshire’s inspection history and progress made
- To give an overview of developments in recent years in relation to our systems and processes for assessing, monitoring and challenging school performance (DAWN, TREM)
- To give examples of how we support schools to improve standards and achievements

Committee members also attended other all-member development sessions (see Page 20).



Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee

The Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee has 14 members and its remit covers:

- **Visible front-line services (e.g. highways, street cleaning, waste and recycling services, town-centre management, grounds maintenance, public conveniences, bus shelters and maintenance of car parks)**
- **Regional Waste Plan**
- **Transport**
- **Vehicle Maintenance**
- **Road Safety**
- **On/Off Street and Residents' Car Parking**
- **Conservation**
- **Consultancy & Design Services**
- **Shoreline Management**
- **Coastal Protection**
- **Contaminated Land**
- **Air Pollution**
- **Trading Standards**
- **Community Safety**
- **Environmental Health**
- **Environmental Enforcement (e.g. litter, dog fouling)**
- **Pest control**
- **Planning Enforcement**

Committee meetings – In addition to its regular monitoring reports, the Committee requested and received a number of reports on areas of specific concern and interest, such as:

- Area Planning Board Report on Drug and Alcohol Misuse Strategy and Development 2013/14
- Public Transport Update
- Hydrology Contract with Dŵr Cymru-Welsh Water
- Task & Finish Group Action Plan Monitoring: Review of Enforcement Services
- Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2013/14

- Public Health Services Annual Report 2013/14
- Trading Standards and Animal Health Services Annual Report 2013/14
- Annual Revenue Budget Consultation (2015/16 to 2017/18)
- Annual Capital Programme Consultation (2015/16 to 2019/20)
- Street-Scene Divisional Update on Highway Condition and Backlog / Bridge Strengthening
- Update on No Cold Calling Zones and Associated Initiatives
- Rural Conservation Business Unit Annual Report 2014
- Road Safety Strategy (Investment Programme)
- Delivering With Less: The Impact on Environmental Health Services and Citizens – Wales Audit Office Study

It was also consulted on:

- Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2013/14 and Improvement Plan 2014/15
- Environmental Enforcement & Dog Control Orders
- Contaminated Land Strategy
- Local Air Quality Management (LAQM): Detailed Assessment of Air Quality in Llanelli and Carmarthen

Task and Finish – The Committee did not undertake a task and finish review during 2014/15.

Site Visits – The Committee undertook 3 site visits during 2014/15.

Two separate visits to different coastal locations were arranged for the Committee to view the work being undertaken to protect the county’s coastline and discuss the options for protecting the shoreline from future erosion (visit to Pendine pictured right).

A third visit was arranged to CWM Environmental’s Household Waste Recycling Centre and landfill site at Nant-y-Caws to view the new facilities and developments undertaken since the Committee’s last visit in 2013 (pictured below).

Development Sessions – No scrutiny-specific development sessions were held for the Committee during the municipal year but members attended other all-member development sessions (see Page 20).



Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

The Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee has 13 members and its remit covers:

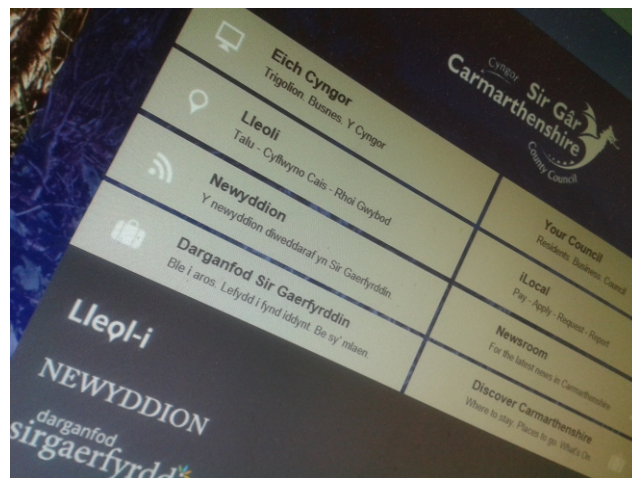
- **Monitoring authority wide policy and performance issues and scrutiny of the Local Service Board**
- **Cross-cutting issues**
- **Sustainable Development**
- **Finance**
- **Property**
- **Information Technology**
- **Communications**
- **Customer Services**
- **Audit**
- **Procurement**
- **Non-housing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

Committee meetings – Reports considered by the Committee this year included:

- Quarterly Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Monitoring reports
- Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report 2013/14
- Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report 2013/14
- Procurement Progress Report 2014
- Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2013/14
- Tackling Poverty Position Statement and Action Plan
- Spend on External Legal Advice (1st April 2013 to 1st October 2014)
- Spend on External Consultants 2013/14
- Annual Revenue Budget Consultation (2015/16 to 2017/18)
- Annual Capital Programme Consultation (2015/16 to 2019/20)
- Carmarthenshire Local Service Board

Update 2014

- Third Sector Funding Review Update
- Asset Management and Co-Location
- The Welsh Language within Social Services for Older People
- Welsh Language Standards and Regulations
- The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill
- Transform, Innovate & Change (TIC) Programme Annual Report 2014
- Joint Community and Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group Final Report 2012/13
- Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group Final Report 2013/14: Review of the Council's Engagement Mechanisms



It was also consulted on:

- Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2013/14 and Improvement Plan 2014/15
- Revised Corporate Health & Safety Policy
- Corporate Smoke-Free (Workplaces and Premises) Policy
- Revised Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy
- Revised Stress Management Policy
- Corporate ICT Strategy 2015-18

- Dyfed Pension Fund Governance: Local Pension Board
- Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2015/16
- Revised Press & Media Protocol

Joint Meeting – A joint meeting with the Community Scrutiny Committee was held in May 2014. Both committees met in order to consider the findings and recommendations of the Joint Task and Finish Group’s review of Welfare Reform, undertaken.

Task & Finish Reviews – The Committee did not undertake a task and finish review during 2014/15 however it completed its review of the Council’s engagement mechanisms following consideration of some additional information prior to submission to Executive Board in January 2015. The Executive Board noted the recommendations and referred them to the Constitutional Working Group for consideration.

Development Sessions – Two development sessions were held for the Committee during 2014/15. The sessions were:

- Treasury Management (16th June 2014)
- Sickness Absence (3rd February 2015)

Committee members also attended other all-member development sessions (see Page 20).

Press & Media Protocol Focus Group – At its meeting in March 2014, the Committee requested that a cross-party focus group be established to review the existing Press & Media Protocol. A cross-party group of six members from the Committee was subsequently established and it met on three occasions, in October and December 2014 and then again in February 2015. The Group presented its recommendations to the main Committee at its

meeting in March 2015.



NEWYDDION THE NEWSROOM

Local Service Board observation – Committee members attended and observed meetings of the Local Service Board (LSB) in order to further enhance their understanding of the Board and its work.

Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee

The Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee has 14 members and its remit covers:

- **Social services for older people**
- **Adults with learning disabilities**
- **Mental health services**
- **Nutritional standards**
- **Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC)**

Committee meetings – Reports considered by the Committee this year included:

- Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services on the effectiveness of Social Care Services in Carmarthenshire 2013/14
- Residential Social Services: Practice & Policy
- The Welsh Language within Social Services for Older People
- COASTAL End of Project Report
- Annual Report on Adult Safeguarding, Commissioning and Complaints (2013-14)
- Progress in implementing the 'A Positive Future: Making person centred care a reality in Carmarthenshire'
- Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales' (CSSIW) Inspection, Evaluation and Review of Local Authority Social Services 2013/14
- Supporting People with Learning Disabilities
- Delayed Transfers of Care
- Support for People who have Dementia
- Developments in Carmarthenshire relating to identification, assessment and care management of the frail older adult which promote well-being, independence and reduce the risk of falls
- Mental Health Support Services
- Services for Older People: Promoting Independent Lives
- The Nutrition Action Plan for Older People
- Annual Revenue Budget Consultation (2015/16 to 2017/18)
- Annual Capital Programme Consultation (2015/16 to 2019/20)

It was also consulted on:

- Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2013/14 and Improvement Plan 2014/15
- To consider and agree new charges for non-residential Social Services for Adults which are currently free and the general rules applicable to the financial assessment and application of the charge
- Carmarthenshire Carers Action Plan 2014-2017
- The future model of delivery for Coleshill Centre for Economic Inclusion: Options Appraisal

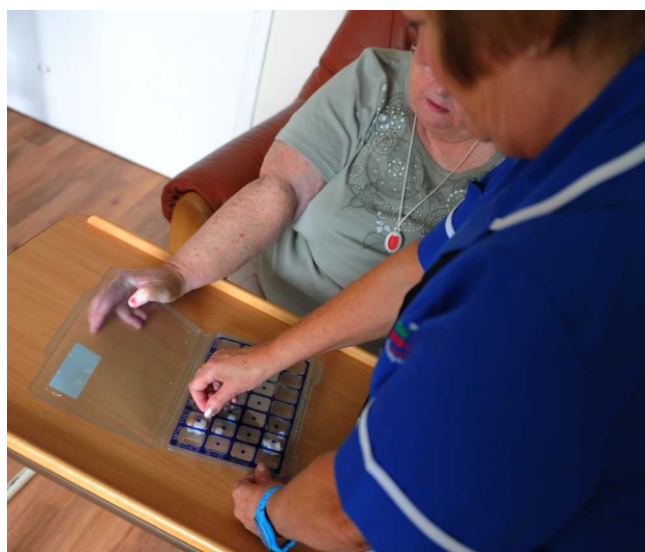


Task & Finish Review – During 2014/15, the Committee's Task & Finish Group established in May 2013 to review Social Care Services for Older People, continued its work. The review focussed on the range of services provided for older people aged 65 + from low level befriending schemes to residential care services. The Group held 10 meetings between September 2013 and October 2014. The Group concluded its evidence gathering of in October 2014 and agreed to feed its findings into the future work of the Joint Scrutiny Forum in relation to unscheduled care.

Joint working with the Hywel Dda Community Health Council – During 2014/15 the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee continued to work with the Carmarthenshire Branch of the Hywel Dda Community Health Council, as part of the Carmarthenshire Joint Health & Social Care Scrutiny Forum (the Forum). The Forum held 3 meetings during the reporting period.

Development Sessions – No scrutiny-specific development sessions were held for the Committee during the municipal year but members attended other all-member development sessions (see Page 20).

Site Visit – Following discussions at its meeting in November 2014, the Committee agreed that members of the Committee (one from each political group), would accompany the Director and relevant local members on a visit to the Glanmarlais and Tegfan Care Homes. The visit took place on the 22nd December 2014.



Other activities during 2014/15

Chairs & Vice -Chairs of Scrutiny Forum

The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Council's Scrutiny Committees meet on a quarterly basis to discuss issues relating to the scrutiny function. The Forum, which was established in 2004, is chaired by the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee, who is also the Council's 'Scrutiny Champion'. During 2014/15, the Forum met on 4 occasions.

Scrutiny Member Development and Training 2014/15

Briefings and development opportunities continued to be held to enhance scrutiny members understanding of their remits and their role. There are strong links between Scrutiny member development and the overall Member Development Strategy. During 2014/15, the following development sessions were held for all scrutiny members:

- Questioning and Listening Skills – 26th and 27th January 2015 (*pictured right*)
- Chairing Skills training session – 17th March 2015

Wales Overview & Scrutiny Officers Network and CfPS Events

Scrutiny Chairs and officers attended the following national and regional events during 2014/15

- 6th of June 2014 - Gwent Scrutiny Challenge Conference; focusing on the role of auditors and independent regulators.
- 26th of June 2014 – CfPS National Scrutiny Conference; launching the “Raising the

stakes – financial scrutiny in challenging times” guide developed by Grant Thornton, which cites our budget consultation approach as good practice.

- 28th of November – CfPS M&WW Regional Seminar; Evidence based accountability for better decision making in challenging times.
- 10th of December 2014 – WAO, CfPS and Grant Thornton National Seminar; Mirror Mirror...reflecting on good governance.
- 27th of March 2015 – WG, CfPS and Cardiff Business School National Conference; on Scrutiny, Partnership, Collaboration and Regulation and also launching the “Step by Step to Joint Scrutiny - A Handbook for Scrutineers”. Carmarthenshire's joint Social Care & Health Scrutiny and Carmarthenshire branch of the Hywel Dda Community Health Council Forum is used as a case study in the handbook.



Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

The Scrutiny & Consultancy Team continues to advise and support the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as guidance is published.

Looking ahead to 2015/16

Each Scrutiny Committee must develop and publish a forward work programme for the forthcoming year and an annual report of what it has done through the previous year.

Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Scrutiny Committees have a duty to engage with the public and other stakeholders in developing their forward work programmes.

The Scrutiny Committees agreed their respective Forward Work Programmes for 2015/16 at their meetings in May/June 2015. The work programmes are available to view online at:

www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny

The Council continues to face serious budgetary pressures and needs to identify and achieve more than £45m of savings and efficiencies over the next three years.

A key achievement for the Authority will be to maintain and deliver improvements to services, whilst meeting the required savings targets. Scrutiny Committees will continue to contribute and challenge in a constructive way to support the Council in meeting these challenges.

Other key areas that the Committees will be focussing on will be:

Community – Increasing the provision of affordable housing (with Social Care & Health) and the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Education & Children – Improving standards and performance in schools and closing the attainment gap for pupils receiving free school meals.

Environmental & Public Protection – School Transport Policy (with Education & Children),

reviews of the Licensing and Gambling Policies, Highways and Cleansing reviews as well as car parking charges.

Policy & Resources – Efficiency and making the most effective use of our shrinking resources, a revised Procurement Strategy and the new Welsh Language Standards.

Social Care & Health – Developing a 10 year plan for services for Older People (with Community), Charges for Flexi-Bed Placements and the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.

Support for the Scrutiny Function

Scrutiny & Consultancy Team

The role of Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny & Consultancy Team, based in the People Management & Performance Division of the Chief Executive's Department, is to assist in the management of change on an authority wide basis by providing independent and objective advice. The Team is responsible for providing two services to the Authority, namely, Management of Change and Improvement / Corporate Support and Scrutiny Support.

Its **Scrutiny Support** includes:

- Provides support and 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
- Gives 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
- Manages 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
- Advises and supports the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as guidance is published
- Manages the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny forward work programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny members

- Manages and co-ordinates 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
- Manages the Scrutiny member development programme.

The team members who support the Authority's scrutiny function have specific responsibility for one or more committee, as outlined below:

- Bernadette Dolan (Senior Consultant) with the strategic lead responsibility for the Scrutiny function and specific responsibility for the Community and Education & Children Scrutiny Committees
- Cheryl Reynolds (Senior Consultant) with specific responsibility for the Policy & Resources and Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committees
- Matthew Hughes (Assistant Consultant) with specific responsibility for the Environmental & Public Protection Scrutiny Committee whilst assisting the Senior Consultants in supporting their committees

Democratic Services Team

A team of 4 Democratic Services Officers provide a high quality support service for meetings of the Council, Executive Board, Scrutiny, Regulatory, Other Committees and Panels. This includes the following specific support for Scrutiny Committees:

- Despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of 4 working days prior to the meeting and making Scrutiny Committee minutes available to members, officers and the public to view within 10 working days of the meeting.
- Ensuring that the Council's constitution, registers of elected members and officers' interests and declarations of gifts and hospitality are kept up to date and to continuously review and recommend any amendments to those.
- Ensure that information relating to Councillors is timely and available to the public.
- To draw up and maintain the Council's diary of meetings, including all Scrutiny Committee meetings.

During the latter part of the year, a review of the two functions was undertaken and the decision made to merge the Scrutiny Function within Democratic Services under a new Head of Democratic Services (who was appointed on the 6th of March 2015). This merger will be a priority for the service in 2015/16.

Chairs & Vice-Chairs during 2014/15

Policy & Resources



Cllr. Hugh Richards
Chair
(Felinfoel)
Independent



Cllr. Jan Williams
Vice-Chair
(Lliedi)
Labour

Community



Cllr. Deryk Cundy
Chair
(Bynea)
Labour



Cllr. Edward Thomas
Vice-Chair
(Llandeilo)
Independent

Education & Children



Cllr. Eirwyn Williams
Chair
(Cynwyl Gaeo)
Plaid Cymru



Cllr. Ryan Bartlett
Vice-Chair
(Betws)
Labour

Environmental & Public Protection



Cllr. Peter Cooper
Chair
(Saron)
Labour



Cllr. Ivor Jackson
Vice-Chair
(Llandovery)
Independent

Social Care & Health



Cllr. Gwyneth Thomas
Chair
(Llangennech)
Plaid Cymru



Cllr. Sue Allen
Vice-Chair
(Whitland)
Independent



18 schools and 2 family centres visited by the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee

6

development sessions held

4

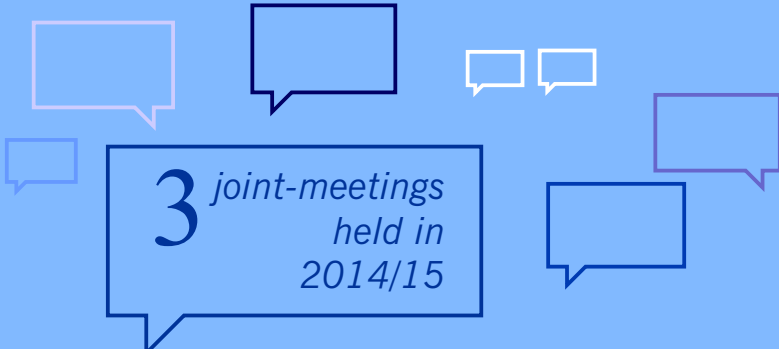
Chairs & Vice-Chairs Forum meetings held




7 site visit held by the other committees during 2014/15

41 *committee meetings held in 2014/15*

3 *joint-meetings held in 2014/15*

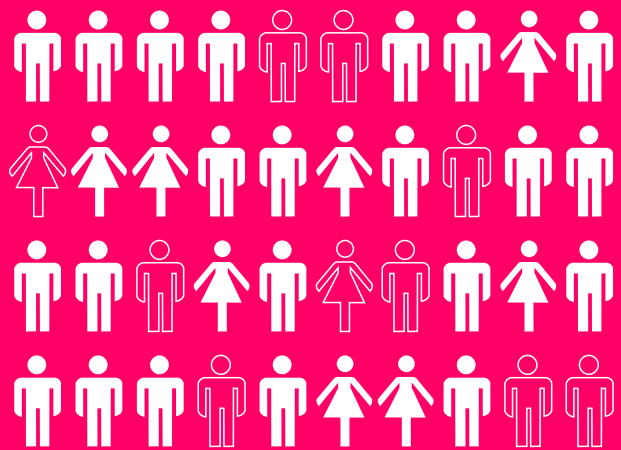


157

formal recommendations / requests for information recorded during 2014/15



3 task and finish reviews completed during 2014/15



75% attendance at committee meetings during 2014/15

Glossary of Terms

CfPS - Centre for Public Scrutiny

COASTAL - Creating Opportunities And Skills Teams Alliance was a regional project across South West Wales with the aim of supporting people who were not able to work due to illness, disability or social exclusion to secure employment or training.

CP - Community Primary (School)

CSSIW - Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales

CWM Environmental - A wholly owned subsidiary of Carmarthenshire County Council, established under the 1990 Environmental Protection Act as a Local Authority Waste Disposal Company to manage the waste disposal in the County.

DAWN - Pupil tracker software system in primary schools

DToC - Delayed Transfers of Care

ESTYN - The Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

ERW - Education through Regional Working

FWP - Forward Work Programme

HRA - Housing Revenue Account

HRAS - Housing Revenue Account Subsidy

ICT - Information & Communication Technology

LAESCYP - Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People

LAQM - Local Air Quality Management

LDP - Local Development Plan

LSB - Local Service Board

M&WW - Mid & West Wales

MEP - Modernising Education Programme

PSMW - Public Service Management Wales

RCP - Roman Catholic Primary (School)

RNLI - Royal National Lifeboat Institution

TIC - Transform, Innovate & Change

TREM - Pupil assessment / monitoring software system for schools

VAP - Voluntary Aided Primary (School)

WAO - Wales Audit Office

WG - Welsh Government

WLGA - Welsh Local Government Association