

Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report

2022 - 2023

Scrutiny
in Carmarthenshire



carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



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Chair's Foreword

Welcome to the annual report for the Corporate Performance and Resources [formerly the Policy and Resources] Scrutiny Committee for the civic year 2022/2023. As Chairman I am pleased to present this report to you detailing the work undertaken by the committee in the last year.



Following the local elections in May 2022 a number of new members were appointed to serve on the Committee. As a consequence of the elections induction seminars related to the services provided by the County Council were held for all members and the first meeting of the Committee was therefore not held until October 2023.

We were again, during this year, subject to the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 which came into force on the 22nd April 2020 allowing the Authority to make arrangements for meetings to take place remotely. Having been using remote video conferencing software since 2020 some council members were well versed in participating in this way, which has allowed us to continue monitoring standard and regular reports, as well as new policies and strategies being introduced by the County Council.

With the coronavirus still amongst us the Committee continued in its role to monitor sickness absence.

I am looking forward, once again, to the challenge of chairing this Committee in the coming year and with the assistance of my Vice Chair and the rest of the Committee I hope we will have a positive impact on the outcomes for the residents of Carmarthenshire. We will continue to work closely with the Council's senior managers and staff to ensure that it is a productive year ahead.

One of the most positive aspects of the past year has been the continued increase in members of the public tuning in to watch scrutiny meetings. Whilst the council continues to move back to a more hybrid style of holding meetings, with some members in council offices and others using technology from their home or work place I very much hope that the interaction between us as councillors and the public continues.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the Committee and officers for their contributions and dedication during 2022/23.

Cllr. Giles Morgan
Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution requires all scrutiny committees to "*prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committee's activities over the previous year.*"

The main aims of the report are to highlight the work that has been undertaken by the Corporate Performance Resources Scrutiny Committee during 2022/23. It outlines the potential future work of the Committee. The document may also facilitate discussions on other items that could be included within future work programmes.

The Committee is chaired by Cllr. Giles Morgan and is made up of 13 Elected Members. Support is provided to the Panel by the Democratic Services Team and other Council officers as and when required.

This report provides an overview of the work of the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee during 2022/23 municipal year. It gives Members the opportunity to reflect on the achievements during the year and to identify what worked well and where improvements could be made. This analysis is instrumental in developing scrutiny.

2. Pre-decision Scrutiny

Scrutiny plays a key role in promoting accountability in the decision-making process of the Local Authority. It is also useful in ensuring that Council policies reflect current priorities, as well as promoting efficiency and encouraging partnership working with external agencies.

In order for Scrutiny Committees to take on greater ownership of their own Forward Work Plans, a pre-decision method of scrutiny was introduced in September 2022 which allows Scrutiny Committees to decide which reports from the Cabinet Forward Work Plan they wish to come before them. As per normal process Committees are also able to identify their own topics and Cabinet are still able to invite a Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise a decision which was in the pipeline.

3. Scrutiny remits

The Scrutiny Committee remits were updated by Council following the May 2023 elections and each Scrutiny Committee became responsible for the overview and scrutiny of specific Cabinet Portfolios and their respective services. The remit of the Corporate Performance and Resources Committee is attached as Appendix A.

4. Overview of the work of the Committee 2022/23

4.1 Number of Meetings

The Scrutiny Committee held 4 meetings in the 2022/23 Civic Year.

4.2 The Work Programme

The Scrutiny Committee develops its own Forward Work Programme (FWP) which, for 2022/23, was confirmed by the Committee on 19TH October 2022 following the local government elections on May 2022.

The Forward Work Programme (FWP) was mainly based on key areas identified as objectives within the Council's Corporate Strategy 2018-23 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 its own work agendas. The benefits of such an approach has led to an improved level of debate and input during scrutiny committee meetings.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 put long term sustainability at the forefront of how public services are designed and delivered and it places emphasis on public bodies to work in partnership with each other and the public to prevent and tackle problems. The Act established Public Service Boards (PSB) for each Local Authority in Wales.

To ensure that PSBs are democratically accountable there was a requirement on Councils to designate an overview and scrutiny committee to scrutinise the work of the PSB. As the Council's designated Scrutiny Committee in this regard the Corporate Performance & Resources Scrutiny Committee has continued in its role of scrutinising the work of the PSB and holding it to account on its performance in meeting the objectives of the Local Well-Being Plan. In this regard the Committee regularly received the minutes of meetings of the PSB.

The following sections will provide a snapshot of the main areas of the Committee's work.

4.3 Revenue & Capital Budgets

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.

As well as monitoring the current budget the Committee was also consulted on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 to 2025/26. The report provided the Committee with the current proposals for the Revenue Budget for 2023/24 together with the indicative figures for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years.

Members accepted the report and endorsed the Charging Digest.

The Committee was consulted on the Five -Year Capital Programme 2023/24 - 2027/28.

Outcome:

County Council approved the Revenue Budget Strategy and the Five-Year Capital Programme.

4.4 Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Reports

The Committee received 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 2nd March 2022.

4.5 Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2020/21

In October 2022 the Committee considered and endorsed the draft Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2020/21 together with the relevant Well-Being Objective [WBO] detailed reports relevant to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny.

4.6 Carmarthenshire Public Services Board (PSB)

In October and December 2022 and January 2023 the Committee, as the designated scrutiny committee appointed to scrutinise the work of the PSB, considered the minutes of meetings of the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board.

4.7 Sickness Absence Monitoring

In December 2022 the Committee considered the half-year Sickness Absence Monitoring for 2022/23 which detailed departmental sickness absence data and provided sickness absence monitoring data and an overview of the employee wellbeing support provided.

4.8 TIC - Council's Transformation Programme

In December 2022 the Committee received a report which set out a vision/business case for the next phase of the Council's transformation and change (TIC) programme, which will be used to inform the development of a Transformation Strategy.

5. Other Scrutiny Activity

5.1 Task and Finish

The Committee did not undertake a task and finish review during 2022/23.

5.2 Site Visits

The Committee did not undertake any site visits during 2022/23.

5.3 Development Sessions

The following member development sessions / member seminars were held during 2022/23:

- Attendance Management Development Session;

In addition to the above, several budget seminars were held during January as part of the Council's consultation process on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget and the five-year capital programme.

6. Challenges

In undertaking its work the Committee has faced several challenges, which have included items not being reported in line with the Forward Work Programme and the time lapse in receiving financial reports though the latter was being addressed insofar as financial procedures permitted.

7. Future Work

The Committee has made significant progress and will continue to concentrate on topics where Members' input will result in positive outcomes to drive forward service improvement. The future work of the Committee will be detailed in its Forward Work Programme which will continue to be monitored during the course of the forthcoming year.

8. Support for the Scrutiny Function

Support for Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny function is provided by the Democratic Services Unit, based in the Administration & Law Division of the Chief Executive's Department. This includes:

- Providing 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
- 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.wales/scrutiny

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or e-mail scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

9. Attendance

Attendance by members of the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee during the 2022/23 year is shown in the table below. A total of 4 hybrid meetings (County Hall, Carmarthen and Zoom) were held between May 2022 and April 2023.

Scrutiny Committee Member	No. of meetings attended out of possible 4	%
Cllr. K. Broom	4	100%
Cllr. L. Davies	4	100%
Cllr. T. Davies	3	75%
Cllr. A. Evans	3	75%
Cllr. H.A.L. Evans	2	50%
Cllr. A.D. Harries	1	25%
Cllr. J. Hart up to 19/10/22	0	0
Cllr. R. James	4	100%
Cllr. D. Jones	4	100%
Cllr. M.J.A. Lewis	3	75%
Cllr. K. Madge	4	100%
Cllr. A.G. Morgan	4	100%
Cllr. D. Nicholas	1	25%
Substitutes	No. of meetings attended	
Cllr. P. Hughes Griffiths	1	
Cllr. H. Jones	1	
Cllr. D.E. Williams	2	
CABINET MEMBERS	No. of meetings attended	
Cllr. P.M. Hughes	2	
Cllr. A. Lenny	3	
Cllr. D. Price	1	

10. Glossary of Terms

CIPFA - The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

PSB - Public Service Board

FWP - Forward Work Programme

TIC - Transform, Innovate & Change

WCFG – Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

APPENDIX 'A'

Corporate Performance & Resources Scrutiny Committee Remit

TITLE	MEMBERS	RESPONSIBILITIES
Corporate Performance & Resources Scrutiny Committee	<u>13 Members</u>	The Scrutiny Committee is responsible for the scrutiny of Cabinet and the following Cabinet Portfolios and their respective service areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="922 562 1057 594">• Leader<li data-bbox="922 604 1097 636">• Resources<li data-bbox="922 646 1333 678">• Organisation and Workforce

Leader – Cllr Darren Price:

Chair of Cabinet	Liaises with other political group leaders
Welsh Government Relations	Translation Services
Local Government Relations	City Deal Delivery
Represents Council at WLGA	Communications
Represents the Council on the Swansea Bay City Region	Determines Cabinet Portfolios
Marketing and Media	Public Services Board
Appoints Cabinet Members	Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
Liaises with Chief Executive	Partneriaeth Regional Service

Cabinet Member for Resources – Cllr Alun Lenny:

Finance Strategy and Budget	Procurement & Frameworks
Capital Programme	Savings Delivery
Property / Asset Management	Financial Services
Commissioning & Procurement	Community Benefits
Risk Management and Risk Planning	Council Tax
Housing Benefits	National Non-domestic Rates (NNDR)
Revenues	Strategic Finance (Corporate Projects)
Annual Governance Statement	

Cabinet Member for Organisation and Workforce – Cllr Philip Hughes:

Contact Centres and Customer Service Centres	Agile working
Equalities – policy and workforce	Health & Safety Policy Lead
Human Resources and Workforce Planning	Corporate Delivery of Priorities
Performance Management	Electoral Services
Business and Service Improvement	Coroners
Wales Audit	Registrars (Birth Deaths and Marriages)
Training – Learning and Development	Trade Union Engagement
I.C.T. Digital Service Delivery	Skills Development
T.I.C. (Transformation, Innovation and Change)	Regional Workforce Planning
Police relations	Skills and Talent Programme (City Deal)
Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015	Workforce Diversity
Armed Forces Champion	Community Leadership
Lord Lieutenancy	Community Centres

Community Cohesion and Tackling Extremism	Anti-Slavery and Ethical Employment Champion'
Core Values	Occupational Health
Employee Wellbeing	Complaints
Socio Economic Duty	

Generic Terms of Reference for all Scrutiny Committees

In respect of matters which are relevant to their thematic and other responsibilities:

- (1) To develop and publish an annual forward work programme, identifying issues and reports to be considered during the course of a municipal year, taking into account the Council's Forward Work Programme.
- (2) To review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge by the Cabinet and/or the Council of any of their functions and to make reports to the Council and/or the Cabinet in connection with the discharge of any functions.
- (3) To exercise the right to call-in decisions as set out in paragraph 6.7 of this Article.
- (4) To monitor performance of the Cabinet/Authority in delivering key targets and objectives through the receipt of regular performance monitoring reports.
- (5) To scrutinise the development and implementation of service business plans including the monitoring of progress against specified actions and targets.
- (6) To monitor progress in the undertaking of WPI reviews including the recommendation of future service options/performance targets to Cabinet/Council and the monitoring of subsequent action plans.
- (7) To undertake reviews as requested by the Cabinet in response to issues highlighted by the annual risk assessment.
- (8) To participate in consideration of the authority's budget-setting process.
- (9) To contribute to the Authority's policy development and review process including the proposing of amendments to the Cabinet and/or Council as appropriate. To receive requests from the Cabinet/Cabinet Members to contribute to the executive's decision making process by undertaking reviews of current policies/service provision and formulating views on proposed new policies or legislation.
- 10) To undertake independent research through Task & Finish Groups, One Day Inquiries etc. with the aim of supporting improvements in service delivery and contributing to the Council's policy development and reviews.

- 11) To undertake further independent research with the aim of supporting improvements in service delivery (to also undertake requests received from the Cabinet in this area).
Updated at Council 22/10/2020
- 12) To refer issues to Cabinet / other Scrutiny Committees for consideration (supported by evidence based reports and proposals).
- 13) To consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants with respect to their specific remit.
- (14) To question members of the Cabinet and/or Committees and Chief Officers and partners about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area.
- (15) To prepare an Annual Report giving an account of the Committee's activities over the previous year.

Specific Additional Terms of Reference for the Corporate Performance & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Where matters fall within the remit of more than one Scrutiny Committee, to determine the issue following consideration of the Committees' reports and presentations by the appropriate Chairs where the Chief Executive deems this appropriate.

To resolve any issues of dispute between scrutiny committees.

To contribute to the authority's policy development and review process in respect of corporate and cross-cutting issues.

To contribute to the development and monitoring of the Corporate and Community Strategies.

To scrutinise the Authority's Improvement Plan including specified performance targets.

To scrutinise and monitor the Council's overall performance against a set of key targets and objectives through receipt of regular performance monitoring reports.

To consider and contribute to the Council's response to reviews including the undertaking of cross-cutting reviews and scrutinising progress and issues emerging from annual risk assessment. (Note scrutiny provides the discussion and debate on which improvement depends, and audit provides assurance upon the fitness and operation of the council's systems and processes).

To monitor delivery of the Council's efficiency programme.

To scrutinise the work of the Carmarthenshire Public Service Board (in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015).