



## Overview and Scrutiny

# Annual Report 2017-18

## Foreword

Welcome to Pembrokeshire County Council's Annual Scrutiny Report which highlights the work of each of our five Overview and Scrutiny Committees during 2017-18.

The work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees is an essential part of the Council's democratic process and each of the five Committees – Services, Corporate, Policy and Pre-decision, Partnerships and Schools and Learning – have played a role in challenging and supporting decision-makers over the past 12 months as part of a dual responsibility to hold the Executive to account and to act as a 'critical friend'.

Scrutiny Chairs have in the past written separate reports on the activity of Committees over the year, and so this combined report sees a new approach towards documenting the valuable work that has been undertaken over the last 12 months, as well as highlighting the challenges ahead. It signifies the shared responsibility we have as Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to continue to work together to strengthen the Council's governance arrangements through delivering value-added scrutiny and a shared commitment to focus on the issues which matter most to Pembrokeshire residents now and in the future.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Overview and Scrutiny Members and officers from the Partnership and Scrutiny Support team for their continued support and work over the past year.



Cllr Brian Hall  
Chair, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr David Bryan  
Chair, Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Guy Woodham  
Chair, Policy and Pre-decision Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr John Davies  
Chair, Schools and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Rob Summons  
Chair, Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Contents

1. Overview and Scrutiny in Pembrokeshire	3
2. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	4
3. Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8
4. Policy and Pre-Decision Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12
5. Schools and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee	15
6. Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	19
7. Looking ahead towards 2018-19	22
8. Getting involved	23
9. Contact us	24

## **1. Overview and Scrutiny in Pembrokeshire**

Overview and Scrutiny is a key component of Pembrokeshire County Council's governance and democratic framework. Its role is to help shape and develop policy, to identify and challenge under-performance, to strengthen decision-making and to hold the Executive to account for the decisions it takes. It is common to think of scrutiny as a 'critical friend', and through constructive challenge and support it seeks to provide assurance to people in Pembrokeshire that decisions are robust and evidence-based, that service delivery is effective, and that Council policy has the desired impact.

Overview and Scrutiny is a legislative requirement under the Local Government Act 2000 which introduced major changes to the way in which Councils make decisions. The Act enabled Councils to introduce new political structures, including one involving a Leader and Cabinet model (the Executive) and Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Executive is responsible for taking key decisions about services in accordance with the policies adopted by the Council. Overview and Scrutiny Committees monitor performance, contribute to policy development and review and investigate matters which affect the County and its residents. Another function of Overview and Scrutiny Committees is to balance Executive powers, if necessary, by holding the Executive to account by examining and questioning their decisions. At its core, the function of scrutiny allows non-Executive Members to influence how decision-makers can work more effectively for the people they serve.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees are responsible for developing their own work programmes and are encouraged to adopt an outcome-focused, risk-based prioritised approach to the topics it decides to scrutinise. It is important to note that an Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot make decisions; it can only make recommendations. It is for the Executive to determine whether to accept or not recommendations made by a Committee.

In March 2016, following a review by the Corporate Governance and Democratic Services Committees and recommendations in the Welsh Audit Office Corporate Assessment of Pembrokeshire County Council in 2015, Councillors voted to introduce five new Overview and Scrutiny Committees from September 2016 to replace the previous 'thematic' Committees. This represented a significant change to the Council's governance arrangements and the pilot phase of the new structure will be subject to review and evaluation in July 2018. The current five Committees focus on the following key areas of Council business: Corporate, Partnerships, Policy and Pre-decision, Schools and Learning, and Services.

This annual report provides an overview of the work of each of the five Committees over the past 12 months and highlights some of the good practice and positive outcomes which have been achieved as well as noting some of the challenges the Committees face. Following the Committee updates, we include a section looking at areas which are still in need of further strengthening and some of the measures which we will look to put in place to bring about a more effective scrutiny function.

## **2. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### Role and remit

The role of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to review and scrutinise corporate functions and support services and its scope includes oversight of the overall strategic direction, policies, plans and priorities of the Cabinet and Council (post-decision) and to monitor the implementation of such as appropriate.

The Committee's scope also includes scrutiny of corporate support services through the development of a risk-based approach utilising relevant management information such as Service Transformation Plans, performance measures, business risk and external inspection / regulatory reports. The remit of the Committee specifically covers the following:

Corporate functions:

- Office of the Leader
- Cabinet Member annual reports
- Chief Executive
- Budget monitoring (annual and quarterly)
- Corporate performance monitoring (annual and quarterly)
- Corporate planning
- WAO corporate reports
- Service improvement
- Safeguarding (corporate)

Corporate services:

- Financial Services
- Information Technology
- Audit and Risk
- Customer Services
- Human Resources
- Legal and Committee Services
- Procurement
- Marketing and Communications
- Electoral Services

### Membership

Membership of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is as follows:

Cllr Brian Hall, Chair (Independent)  
Cllr David Howlett, Vice-Chair (Conservative)  
Cllr John Cole (Non-affiliated)

Cllr Michael John (Independent)  
Cllr Samuel Kurtz (Conservative)  
Cllr Reg Owens (Independent)  
Cllr Michael Stoddart (Non-affiliated)  
Cllr Alison Tudor (Labour)  
Cllr Thomas Tudor (Labour)  
Cllr Jacob Williams (Non-affiliated)  
Cllr Michael Williams (Plaid Cymru)

### Work of the Committee in 2017-18

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme is largely driven by the Council's corporate and financial planning timetable, the review of budget and performance outcomes, and the development of the Council's strategic objectives. The Committee also maintains oversight of safeguarding as a corporate matter.

#### June 2017

- Role and remit of the Committee and development of forward work programme
- Pembrokeshire Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Report Quarter 4 2016-17
- Budget Outturn Report 2016-17
- Corporate and Financial Planning timetable 2017-18

#### September 2017

- Draft Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives 2018-19
- Improvement Review 2016-17 – Evaluation Report
- Safeguarding of Electively Home Educated Children
- Integrated Budget, Internal Control, Business Risk Management and Performance Monitoring – Q1 2017-18

#### November 2017

- Safeguarding of Electively Home Educated Children – Child Practice Review
- Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board Quality Assurance Report Q1 2017-18
- Draft Corporate Plan and Wellbeing Objectives 2018-19
- Integrated Budget, Internal Control, Business Risk Management and Performance Monitoring Quarter 2 2017-18

#### January 2018

- Draft Corporate Plan and Wellbeing Objectives 2018-19
- Draft County Council Budget 2018-19
- Integrated Budget, Internal Control, Business Risk Management and Performance Monitoring Q3 2017-18

- Transformation programme

March 2018

- HR Service
- Transformation Programme – Procurement Category Management work stream update
- Tackling Poverty in Pembrokeshire

### *What difference did the Committee make?*

During the past year, the Committee has taken time to scrutinise matters of corporate and financial planning, contributing to the content and focus of the Corporate Plan and Wellbeing Objectives. Members raised the issue of housing quality and availability and this issue is a priority identified in the Cabinet's Programme for Administration.

With its responsibility for corporate safeguarding, the Committee has identified issues and concerns with regards to the processes currently in place for electively home educated children. The Committee made recommendations to the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education on the matter which included proposing the introduction of mandatory registration. Although a positive response was received by return, the actions of the Cabinet Secretary have not yet extended to meet the ambitions of the Committee.

Members of the Committee took great interest in reviewing the Human Resources service and identified the key role HR needs to play in the Council's Transformation Programme. Members reflected on capacity challenges within services and the challenges of recruiting to some specific and senior roles. Members also focused on mental health and the work undertaken by the department on the Time to Change Wales initiative which has been identified as best practice. HR has subsequently been transferred to the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Transformation to support delivery of the Culture work stream.

### *Future challenges*

Aligning corporate and financial planning alongside the transformation programme is an ongoing challenge for the Committee and Members have expressed concerns about the ambition of plans against the reality of budgets. More can be done to monitor in year performance and delivery of the Corporate Plan and Wellbeing Objectives.

Attention will also need to be focused on the alignment between Corporate Wellbeing Objectives and the recently published Well-being Plan for Pembrokeshire produced by the Public Services Board (the scrutiny of which lies with the remit of the Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee). Under the Well-being of Future Generations Act the Council has statutory requirements placed on it as a corporate body and the Committee has a key role to play in providing assurance that the Council is delivering against this important legislation.

In line with its remit, the Committee undertook its first review of a corporate service at their March meeting when it scrutinised the work of the HR service. This was well received and it is planned to develop this element of the Committee's work programme so that each corporate function will appear before the Committee over the remaining term of the administration.

The Committee has been pleased that the new Cabinet has taken a prominent role in the work of scrutiny over the past year and have welcomed and been open to challenge. It is hoped and anticipated that the relationship between scrutiny and the Executive continues to strengthen and develop through 2018-19.



### **3. Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

#### *Role and remit*

The role of the Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to review and scrutinise activity where the Council works in partnership or collaboratively with other agencies. The Committee has been designated with the statutory responsibility for scrutinising the activity of the Public Services Board (PSB) as required under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and this provides the main focus for its work.

More broadly, its scope includes oversight of all of the Council's key strategic partnership arrangements and to scrutinise, where appropriate, where the Council works collaboratively to deliver or commission services at a local, regional or national level. To this end, the remit of the Committee covers the following:

PSB scrutiny:

- Development and production of a local Well-being Assessment
- Development and production of a Well-being Plan
- PSB Annual Plan
- PSB activity and progress in delivering its priorities
- Requiring any member or invited participant of the PSB to attend and give evidence (only in respect of the exercise of joint functions conferred on them as members of the PSB).

Other:

- Strategic Partnerships
- Joint strategic commissioning
- Statutory partnerships (e.g. Community Safety Partnership)

#### *Membership*

Membership of the Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee is as follows:

Cllr David Bryan, Chair (Conservative)  
Cllr Dr Simon Hancock, Vice-Chair (Non-affiliated)  
Cllr Margot Bateman OBE (Independent)  
Cllr Aden Brinn (Conservative)  
Cllr Joshua Beynon (Labour)  
Cllr Vic Dennis (Labour)  
Cllr Paul Dowson (Non-affiliated)  
Cllr Stephen Joseph (Non-affiliated)  
Cllr Phillip Kidney (Non-affiliated)  
Cllr Myles Pepper (Independent)

Cllr Paul Rapi (Plaid Cymru)  
Cllr Kenneth Rowlands (Independent)

Co-optees:

Superintendent Ian John, Dyfed-Powys Police  
Amy Richmond, MWWFRS  
Anna Bird, Hywel Dda University Health Board  
Wales Probation Service

*Work of the Committee in 2017-18*

June 2017

- Public Services Board update
- Notice of Motion – Critical Skills

September 2017

- Hywel Dda University Health Board – Transformation of Clinical Services
- Hywel Dda University Health Board – Transformation of Mental Health Services
- Public Services Board: development of the Well-being Plan

October 2017

- Draft Well-being Plan for consultation
- PCC working with the voluntary sector on health, social services and wellbeing
- Notice of Motion – Critical Skills

January 2018

- Draft County Council Budget 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2018-22
- Notice of Motion relating to Collaboration and Sharing Services with other Authorities

March 2018

- Referral of Notice of Motion from Council – Collaboration and Sharing of Services with other Authorities
- Public Services Board – Final Well-being Plan

*What difference did the Committee make?*

The principle focus of the Committee is to scrutinise the work of the Pembrokeshire Public Services Board (PSB). In 2017-18, the Pembrokeshire PSB has been working on its Well-being Plan and the Committee has taken a keen interest throughout the process looking to ensure

elements such as rurality and poverty are recognised in the Plan. The Chair of the Committee has shown leadership through attending the PSB meetings to support awareness and understanding between the two entities and ensure timely and integrated communication. This has meant that he is able to inform Committee Members about the process and detail of the PSB's deliberations and provide greater context to its work.

At the outset of the year, the Committee identified a desire to look into how the Council works with the voluntary sector on matters of health, social care and wellbeing and the Committee established a task and finish group to investigate these matters in greater detail. The task and finish group gathered initial input and evidence from a variety of voluntary sector partners and from these initial findings invited a number of these to meet with members of the group. These meetings were particularly insightful to gain greater depth and detail of ongoing work and to compare and contrast different models of service delivery. The task and finish group has identified three themes from their work namely funding, integration of services and prevention and has sought a response from the Director of Social Services to further inform the development of its work.

Finally, the Committee has been engaged in the work of Hywel Dda University Health Board around the transformation of their services. The Transformation of Mental Health Services has been a well-received piece of work due to extensive engagement with service users and partners and the Transformation of Clinical Services work was presented to the Committee as part of its initial development.

### Future challenges

The Well-being Plan has been signed-off by the 4 statutory partners and the Public Services Board. The role of the Committee now will be to scrutinise the PSB and its members in relation to the contribution each is making, both individually and collaboratively, to the delivery of the Plan. This will be a priority area of focus during the coming year.

The most appropriate scrutiny method for this will need further exploration and consideration, as Members of the Committee may find it more valuable to visit partner organisations delivering work as well as receiving progress and monitoring information as part of a formal Committee meeting. This has the potential to develop into a more appreciative model of scrutiny, looking at who does what well and where and how we learn from and share these examples.

The complexity of regional delivery structures and the governance of such arrangements in many areas is still emerging. Swansea Bay City Deal and the West Wales Care Partnership are both currently developing appropriate governance structures and the implications for the Council and the scrutiny role the Committee can expect to play are still unclear. In order to provide some clarity, Cabinet has recently reviewed the Authority's list of key strategic partnerships and it resolved that the Committee should consider this work in the future shaping of its forward work programme.

The contribution made by co-optees to the Committee has been helpful in the development of scrutiny of the PSB. However these co-optees are technically in attendance for matters in relation to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and their status as PSB representatives has the potential to cause complications and possible conflicts of interest as scrutiny of the PSB is further embedded. Further work needs to be done on delineating the scrutiny of partner organisations and the value of co-optees to the scrutiny committee and their exact role.

## **4. Policy and Pre-decision Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### *Role and remit*

The role of the Policy and Pre-decision Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of policies, plans and strategies in order to contribute to the quality and robustness of Cabinet decision-making. The remit and scope of the Committee includes:

- Cabinet's forward work programme
- Proposals for services changes, transformation and / or efficiencies
- Integrated Impact Assessments
- Strategies and plans, as appropriate
- Annual budget proposals

### *Membership*

Membership of the Policy and Pre-decision Overview and Scrutiny Committee is as follows:

CLlr Guy Woodham, Chair (Labour)  
CLlr Josh Beynon, Vice-Chair (Labour)  
CLlr Tony Baron (Conservative)  
CLlr Michelle Bateman (Non-affiliated)  
CLlr Kevin Doolin (Non-affiliated)  
CLlr Paul Dowson (Non-affiliated)  
CLlr Tim Evans (Non-affiliated)  
CLlr Huw George (Independent)  
CLlr Stan Hudson (Conservative)  
CLlr Mike James (Independent)  
CLlr Elwyn Morse (Independent)  
CLlr Rhys Sinnett (Plaid Cymru)

### *Work of the Committee in 2017-18*

The main focus of the Committee during the past year has been the Waste Service review, a major piece of work aimed at significantly changing the approach to the delivery of waste services in response to current and future challenges presented by stretching performance targets and severe budget pressures.

This Committee has been engaged in the review since 2016 and during the past year it has continued to have the opportunity to shape the review process and the options under exploration. In addition the Committee established a Waste Working Group to ensure continued Member engagement in, and scrutiny of, the detailed work required to properly explore the options under consideration as part of the review, and to report back to full Committee with clear, evidence-based recommendations.

June 2017

- Waste Service Review

October 2017

- Waste Service Review

November 2017

- Leisure Service Review
- Outline Budget 18-19
- Outline Medium Term Financial Plan
- IT strategy

January 2018

- Access to Services Transformation project
- Social Media Strategy

February 2018

- Waste Service Review
- Council Tax 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes Premium: community element

*What difference did the Committee make?*

The Committee's contribution to the Waste Service review was recognised by Cabinet and officers alike, and this work demonstrated the value the Committee can add to the decision-making process through its positive influence and constructive challenge. The active involvement of non-executive Members in the shaping and development of such an important policy change was a positive development for the Council as a whole and as such the methodology will hopefully be used as a blueprint for the Committee's future role in undertaking pre-decision scrutiny of significant proposals prior to Cabinet consideration.

Similarly, the Committee has an important role to play with regards to the Council's transformation programme and this will continue to develop moving forward. During the past year it has contributed to key pieces of work linked to the programme such as the IT strategy and Social Media strategy as well as the Access to Services project.

As was the case with all Committees, options relating to proposed Council Tax increases were brought before the Committee in early 2018. It is recognised that scrutiny played an important role in the process of Council agreeing a radical increase in Council Tax levels through

engagement with Members in a full and frank discussion on the options under consideration prior to decision by Council.

The Committee also took the opportunity to scrutinise proposals around the allocation of the community element arising from the premium on council tax for second home owners. While supporting the preferred option, Members were clear that the Committee need to retain oversight of the scheme's implementation and will expect to scrutinise the responsible Cabinet Member on the outcomes from the delivery of the scheme over the next 12 months.

On a slightly different note, the Committee is keen to seek greater citizen engagement in the scrutiny process and as part of this the Chair and vice-Chair were involved in the first scrutiny Facebook Live session promoting the meeting held in February 2018 at which the final recommendations emerging from the Waste review were considered. Further work will be undertaken in this regard and the Committee will be pro-active in improving how it engages citizens in its work.

### *Future challenges*

Given its pre-decision function, the Committee's work programme needs to be fully aligned with that of Cabinet's so that sufficient time is built into the decision-making process to allow the Committee to undertake its work in a timely, informed way. Further work needs to be done in respect of this, particularly to ensure that scrutiny is given the time to explore proposals to the level of detail required so that any recommendations it makes are properly evidence-based.

In view of ongoing pressures, the financial position of the Council is not likely to improve over the medium term and this will continue to have a significant impact on the Council's budget and Council Tax levels. The Committee has a key role to play in the development of budget proposals prior to Cabinet consideration and to support it in its work it has established a Finance Panel to work alongside the Director of Finance and Cabinet Member to enable the type of detailed investigative work which will allow the full Committee to make properly informed, evidence-based recommendations. The Finance Panel has a key role to play over the next 6 months whilst budget proposals for 2019-20 are under development and the process will be reviewed and refined following its initial work.

Finally, the willingness of Cabinet Members to fully engage in the work of the Committee should be noted and the positive relationships which are forming between Executive and non-Executive Members through scrutiny is a positive sign of improving governance arrangements in the Council. It is vital that the relationship between the Committee and Cabinet continues to develop over the next 12 months so as to further strengthen the decision-making process in the Council.

## 5. Schools and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Role and remit

The role of the Schools and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to review and scrutinise services delivered to improve outcomes for children and young people, youth support and other community based services including Adult Learning, and to support the raising of educational standards and outcomes for learners.

The remit and scope of the Committee includes the following:

- Educational outcomes for all ages, particularly at Key Stage 4
- School categorisation
- Education through Regional Working (ERW)
- Individual Schools (through a Schools Scrutiny Panel)
- Inclusion Services
- Youth support and other community based services
- Post-16 learning, skills and training
- Financial information relating to schools and learning
- Safeguarding in Education

### Membership

Membership of the Schools and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee is as follows:

Cllr John Davies, Chair (Independent)  
Cllr Steve Yelland, Vice-Chair (Conservative)  
Cllr Michelle Bateman (Unaffiliated)  
Cllr Vic Dennis (Labour)  
Cllr Paul Harries (Unaffiliated)  
Cllr Stanley Hudson MBE (Conservative)  
Cllr Mike James (Independent)  
Cllr Paul Rapi (Plaid Cymru)  
Cllr Ken Rowlands (Independent)  
Cllr Mike Stoddart (Unaffiliated)  
Cllr Viv Stoddart (Unaffiliated)  
Cllr Alison Tudor (Labour)

Co-optees:

Reverend Brian Douglas Witt (Church in Wales representative)  
Mr Paul White (Roman Catholic representative)  
Mr Philip Williams (Parent Governor representative)  
*Vacant* (Parent Governor representative)



## Work of the Committee in 2017-18

The Committee has scrutinised a broad and diverse range of topics related to schools during 2017-18. As well as standing items on Safeguarding in Education and ERW, the Schools Scrutiny Panel has undertaken visits to Ysgol y Preseli and Portfield School and a task and finish group has looked at School Finance. The Committee received one submission from a member of the public during the year, a request to scrutinise early entry into examinations, and the Committee looked at this in January 2018. Throughout the year, the Committee scrutinised the following:

June 2017

- Review of the Scrutiny of Schools process (Schools Scrutiny Panel)

August 2017 (extraordinary meeting)

- Memorandum of Understanding – Delivery of Post-16 Education in Pembrokeshire

September 2017

- The role of Governor Support Services
- Safeguarding in Education
- School Performance for 2017 (unvalidated data)
- Budget proposals for 2017-18
- School staff absence data
- Schools Scrutiny Panel update

November 2017

- School Behaviour and Exclusions
- Estyn Outcomes and Self Evaluation
- Performance data Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2
- Transition Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3

December 2017 (extraordinary meeting)

- Audit of data used to develop the Memorandum of Understanding for Post-16 Education in Pembrokeshire
- Mental Health Awareness training in Secondary Schools
- Safeguarding of Home Educated Children

January 2018

- ERW support to Pembrokeshire Schools
- School Staff Absence data

- Early Entry into Examinations

April 2018

- Audit of Viable Pupil Number for 6<sup>th</sup> Form classes
- School Categorisation outcomes
- Whistleblowing in Schools
- Schools Scrutiny Panel Reports (Ysgol y Preseli and Portfield School)
- School Finance Task & Finish Group update

For 2018-19 the Committee will also start to receive additional information in the form of service performance and risk information for services within the Children and Schools Department. This will enable the Committee to further refine the areas for scrutiny in their work programme for the year ahead.

### *What difference did the Committee make?*

The Schools and Learning Committee has scrutinised a wide range of performance data during the year and the work of ERW continues to be monitored on an annual basis. The School Finance task and finish group undertook an in-depth piece of work looking at funding available to schools, in particular the challenges around school budgets that would likely be experienced over the next three years, financial management in Primary Schools compared to Secondary, and the value of the financial advice provided to schools by the Local Management of Schools (LMS) team. The Committee has accepted the recommendations of the task and finish group which are aimed at supporting schools to strengthening management of their finances.

The information that the Committee has looked at will assist them in developing their work programme for the year ahead. For example, school categorisation data has helped the Schools Scrutiny Panel to identify two underperforming schools to visit during the coming year. The Schools Scrutiny Panel visited two high performing schools during 2017-18 and are keen to ensure that the good practice evident in these schools is shared with other schools throughout the County that may not yet have achieved the same level of performance.

The Committee also had an important role to play in helping to finalise the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Local Authority and Pembrokeshire College for the delivery of Post-16 Education in Pembrokeshire. The Committee's initial involvement in its development was at an Extraordinary meeting in August 2017 where it made recommendations for a number of changes to be made prior to the MOU being approved by Council. The Committee looked again at the MOU in December 2017, recommending that further work be undertaken by officers at each of the secondary schools in conjunction with finance and education staff, to ensure consistent data is captured for the current and future financial years when calculating the viable pupil number for A-Levels. The Committee will further review this calculation on an annual basis and is due to undertake a review of the MOU in 2018.

Through work programming and oversight of educational outcomes and other relevant data, the Committee will continue to provide assurance that there is appropriate Member oversight and challenge of school performance, educational standards and outcomes for learners.

### *Future challenges*

In the year ahead the Committee will use relevant service performance and risk information, educational outcome data, Estyn Reports and information on Departmental priorities to develop and monitor its work programme.

In particular, there are two challenging areas of work which the Committee will address in 2018-19.

Firstly, the Committee has indicated a desire to look more closely at Additional Learning Needs in the year ahead linked to the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill. The impact that the requirement to provide support to young people up to the age of 25 will have on Education services within the County could be significant and it is likely that a task and finish group will be set up to look at this issue in more detail.

In addition, the Committee is scheduled to undertake a review of the Memorandum of Understanding for Post 16 Education within the County that was adopted by the Authority in 2017.

## **6. Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### Role and remit

The Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews services delivered by the Council to its customers. To determine its priorities the Committee assesses the quality and performance of Council services using a range of management information including Service Transformation Plans, performance measures, business risk and external inspection / regulatory reports.

Specifically, the remit and scope of the Committee covers the following Council services (and divisions within them);

- Highways and Construction
- Environment and Civil Contingencies
- Housing
- Planning
- Property
- Public Protection
- Regeneration
- Cultural and Leisure Services
- Adult Care
- Children's Services

### Membership

The membership of the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is as follows:

CLlr Rob Summons, Chair (Conservative)  
CLlr Jonathan Preston, Vice-Chair (Plaid Cymru)  
CLlr Jamie Adams (Independent)  
CLlr John Cole (Unaffiliated)  
CLlr Tim Evans (Unaffiliated)  
CLlr Brian Hall (Independent)  
CLlr Dr Simon Hancock (Unaffiliated)  
CLlr Stephen Joseph (Unaffiliated)  
CLlr Phillip Kidney (Unaffiliated)  
CLlr David Pugh (Independent)  
CLlr Tony Wilcox (Labour)

### Work of the Committee in 2017-18

The Forward Work Programme is an important tool for the Committee, helping it to prioritise its workload and ensuring that, as much as possible, the work of the Committee adds value to the work of the Council and contributes towards improved Council services for residents through appropriate and proportionate support and challenge.

During the past year the Committee has scrutinised a range of services during which were identified through the active monitoring of Service Performance information collected quarterly for all services within the Authority. Committee Members have been given electronic access to this information to enable them to have access to up to date information outside of meetings and to bring emerging matters of concern to the Committee's attention.

Through looking at the performance of services over several months, the Committee identified a range of concerns regarding services or specific service areas and requested these be brought before the Committee, as follows;

June 2017

- Development of work programme through identification of areas of underperformance / risk

September 2017

- Housing – Disabled Facilities Grants

October 2017

- Property Service
- Public Protection Service

February 2018

- Housing – Council House Rent Increases for 2018-19

April 2018

- Regeneration Service
- Property Service (follow up to October 2017)

Further, the Committee established a task and finish group to look at issues pertaining to the Council's use of civil enforcement, and a number of Members looked in greater detail at the opportunities for utilising civil enforcement in the active management of environmental crime within the County. The work of the task and finish group has been aligned with work already ongoing in this area within the Authority and the Committee are due to receive further information in this regard at the beginning of the new municipal year.

### *What difference did the Committee make?*

Demonstrating tangible outcomes and improvements from scrutiny can be difficult as it is often best seen as one tool in a range of measures that bring positive pressure and challenge and which ultimately result in improvement.

In October 2017, the Committee scrutinised the Property Service, having particular concerns around divisional capacity, marketing / sales and industrial unit vacancies throughout the County. Following this session, the Committee requested that the Property Service returned to update on performance in six months' time and this was added to the work programme for April 2018.

At the April 2018 update it was acknowledged that while there were still issues with divisional capacity, the October 2017 scrutiny session had prompted a change of focus within the service to concentrate on new lettings rather than rent reviews and lease renewals. This resulted in a 7% increase in occupancy rates of industrial units throughout the County, including a 100% occupancy rate for mid-Pembrokeshire.

Through its work programming and oversight of all Service Transformation Plans the Committee will continue to provide assurance that there is appropriate Member oversight and challenge of service performance.

### *Future challenges*

In the year ahead the Committee will continue to use relevant service performance and risk information to determine its work programme and a particular focus on services that are seen to be underperforming. Also, with the Transformation Programme within the Authority gathering pace there will also be an opportunity for the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have a wider remit in scrutinising and measuring the impact of service change brought about through the Programme.

## **7. Looking ahead towards 2018-19**

The Council has put a significant amount of targeted effort into improving the scrutiny function over the past several years. Despite the real improvements and good progress we have seen in many areas there still remains work to do to continue to strengthen and embed the role of scrutiny in the Council in order to meet current and future challenges and to reach our aspiration to be seen as among the best performing in Wales. Over the next 12 months our focus to improve will be concentrated in the following related areas:

### *WAO report - Overview and Scrutiny: Fit for the Future?*

Wales Audit Office undertook a review in late 2017 exploring with each of the 22 Councils in Wales how 'fit for the future' their scrutiny functions are. This work included consideration of requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and how councils are beginning to carry out scrutiny of Public Service Boards (PSBs). The WAO also examined how well placed councils are to respond to challenges such as continued pressure on public finances and the possible move towards more regional working between local authorities.

The final report will be published shortly and we can expect to see that the Council will be asked to strengthen and improve in a number of areas in order to provide a scrutiny function 'fit for the future'. This will likely include measures to ensure Members are sufficiently trained on key issues such as the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Swansea Bay City Deal, strengthening Committee ownership of work programming, continuing to build the relationship between Committees and Cabinet, and putting in place effective mechanisms to enable assessment of scrutiny's impact.

### *Developing a Vision for the role of Scrutiny in the Council*

The Council has worked closely with Rebecca David-Knight, an external consultant associated with the Centre of Public Scrutiny, over the past couple of years. Her most recent piece of work is to co-produce a vision for the Council setting out scrutiny's defined function, the values governing its operation and a shared understanding of the important role scrutiny is expected to play in meeting corporate challenges. It is anticipated that this will provide a context-specific governance framework for scrutiny against which performance and practice can be measured thus supporting other pieces of work aimed at improving the way in which we evaluate the impact scrutiny has and the value it adds. This piece of work will be concluded shortly.

### *Review and evaluation of the new Scrutiny Committee structure following the pilot period*

In 2018 Council will be asked to consider a review of the new scrutiny structure which was introduced in September 2016 and to consider the effectiveness of the new model in view of current and future challenges. Clearly, this review will need to be aligned with the work and findings from both the WAO and Ms David-Knight as referenced above and to incorporate key recommendations from these pieces of work as appropriate.

## **8. Getting Involved**

Citizen engagement is an essential element of effective scrutiny as it enables the 'voice' of local people and communities to be heard as part of the decision and policy-making processes.

There are a number of ways that people who live and work in the County can get involved in the work of Committees. Forward work programmes are available on the Overview and Scrutiny pages of the Council's website and are updated following each round of Committee meetings so that members of the public are kept informed as to what items will be on agendas over the Council year, and residents are able to bring views on any topic under consideration to a Committee's attention.

Forms are available on the website to enable people to submit their views on any matter already due to be considered by a Committee or to suggest topics for consideration by a Committee. A protocol for speaking before a Committee is also available for those invited to attend to present their views.

During 2017-18, two submissions for topics for consideration were made and accepted; one to the Schools and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee concerning early entry of students into examinations, and the other to the Policy and Pre-decision Committee regarding Council fees and charges.

Over the past year, scrutiny has been pro-active in promoting its work through the use of Twitter, Facebook and features in the local press. In 2018-19 we will be looking to raise the profile of scrutiny further through greater use of social media, with the aim of encouraging more people to get involved in the scrutiny process.

Contact the Partnership and Scrutiny team if you would like to find out more.



## 9. Contact us

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