

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

06 SEPTEMBER 2017

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present Council with a review of work undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny during the period September 2016 - September 2017.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of all the Corporate Priorities by:

- a) **Supporting a successful economy** – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
- b) **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
- c) **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background.

3.1 The Scrutiny Function

- 3.1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees oversee the decision making of the Cabinet Members and support the work of the Cabinet and the Council. They allow citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public meetings into matters of local concern. These lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

- 3.1.2 Within their terms of reference, Overview and Scrutiny Committees will:

- (a) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- (b) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint Committee in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- (c) consider any matter affecting the County Borough or its inhabitants; and

(d) exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made by or on behalf of the Cabinet but not yet implemented.

3.1.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committees can 'call-in' a decision which has been made by Cabinet or an Officer but not yet implemented. This enables them to consider whether the decision is appropriate. They may recommend that the Cabinet reconsider the decision. They may also be consulted by the Cabinet or the Council on forthcoming decisions and the development of policy.

3.1.4 In 2012/13, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) took an active role in the WAO Improvement Study, ["Good Scrutiny? Good Question"](#). The outcome of this study was the publication of the "Characteristics of Good Scrutiny". These characteristics have been used to undertake an assessment of the scrutiny function in Bridgend.

3.1.5 In the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015-2016, it was identified that the following developments would require further work:

- a. Enhancing the evidence base for challenge and ensuring the inclusion of outcomes in reports presented to Scrutiny Committees
- b. Review the pre-agenda meeting process
- c. Continue to develop the ability of Scrutiny to communicate effectively with the public and to better facilitate engagement and participation in democratic accountability.
- d. Developing a standing item to follow up in information requests
- e. Enhancing the functionality of Modern.gov to benefit scrutiny particularly with the tracking and monitoring of responses and conclusions.

3.2 Assessing the impact of Scrutiny

3.2.1 Members will recognise that capturing and assessing the impact of Scrutiny is not an easy task as the outcomes of Scrutiny activity are not always tangible and able to be measured in a systematic way.

3.2.2 Whilst 'outputs' like the number of recommendations approved by Cabinet may shed light regarding relations between the Executive and the Scrutiny function, this does not reveal the extent to which the substance of the recommendations were actually implemented and whether or not intended outcomes were achieved. Care should be taken in focussing too carefully upon the number of recommendations approved and adopted by Cabinet as this gives no indication of the quality of the recommendation made in the first instance and the extent to which it may have been later implemented.

3.2.3 It is important to reflect some of the intangible effects of Scrutiny and its ability to influence decision makers through discussion and debate. Sometimes there are no measureable outputs from Committee discussion yet the opportunity for Cabinet Members and Officers to reflect on proposed courses of action has undoubtedly influenced the way in which the proposal was implemented.

3.2.4 Scrutiny activities can be wide ranging and diverse and are not necessarily experienced by stakeholders within the process in a consistent and easily describable way. Research and Evaluation Panels provide a less formal form of interaction

between Committee Members and invitees than a traditional Committee meeting setting allows for. However, 'Call-Ins' are a very different experience for invitees and the impact of Scrutiny in these two instances will be specific to each case.

3.2.5 Striking an effective balance between the 'challenge' and 'support' elements of the Scrutiny function is reliant on Committees building strong working relationships and demonstrating other key skills such as negotiation and influencing, team-working, policy analysis and questioning techniques.

4.1 Current situation / proposal.

4.1 Impact Monitoring

4.1.1 The impact of Scrutiny is not clearly evident in that there may not be a precise recommendation or action that can be measured for outcome, however, this does not say that there are not outcomes that are being achieved behind the scenes. In Bridgend, Scrutiny Officers have developed and maintained a process for keeping a record of this impact in order to try and measure the outcomes of Scrutiny.

4.1.2 This process considers the issue, the risk, the action taken and the outcomes. It takes note of everything from a Scrutiny Committee review to a simple change in a scrutiny process. Examples of this include:

- Budget recommendations made to Cabinet from the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) to not progress certain budget cuts being accepted by Cabinet;
- the change in process for the information received in relation to Directorate Business Plans; reducing the amount of information focusing primarily on draft performance indicators. The Committees concentrated their work where they can have the greatest impact, ensuring PIs are set appropriately from the start.

4.1.3 This process was highlighted by Scrutiny Officers at a national training event where it was praised as a very effective tool for monitoring the impact of Scrutiny, following which requests have now been made for the methodology used by Bridgend to be shared with other authorities as best practice.

4.2 Outcomes and Achievements

4.2.1 The following progress has been made on the planned developments identified in paragraph 3.1.6:

- a. Enhancing the evidence base for challenge and ensuring the inclusion of outcomes in reports presented to Scrutiny Committees
 - The need for evidence of outcomes in reports from Officers is important to ensure effective monitoring. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the Early Help and Permanence Strategy and Action Plan. Following their consideration of the report the Committee recommended that the Joint Action Plan be revisited as the evidence for a number of actions did not support the outcomes. In response to this the lead officers agreed to review the joint

action plan taking into account the comments made by Scrutiny and present a revised version to the Early Intervention and Safeguarding Board for sign off.

- Members of the Partnerships and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified and requested more detail in their initial report request on Western Bay – Substance Misuse. Members asked that the report specifically include information on how the Council achieve their outcomes to ensure that we become an effective body of people to deal with the scourge of drugs in the area. Members also requested that the report include statistics and case studies as evidence of their outcomes.

b. Review the pre-agenda meeting process

- Scrutiny Officers have reviewed the current process of the pre-agenda meetings in line with the restructure of Scrutiny Committees and are proceeding with Officer Planning Meetings. These meetings will take place every 2 months with each Corporate Director and Scrutiny Officer, highlighting the items on the overall forward work programme. Details of reports and their purpose are discussed for approximately the next six items on the prioritised list so that Officers have an idea of the information likely to be requested as well as an indication of approximate timing which can be fed back to Scrutiny Chairs and the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Forward Work Programme (FWP) Development Meetings will also take place between Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Chairs every three months in order for both Cabinet and Scrutiny to discuss and coordinate their FWPs. Information will then be fed back to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of their FWP item for consideration and approval.

c. Continue to develop the ability of Scrutiny to communicate effectively with the public and to better facilitate engagement and participation in democratic accountability

- New user friendly Webpages to effectively engage with the public and encourage participation in democratic accountability to improve public services have been developed and launched. The Scrutiny webpages can be found at www.bridgend.gov.uk/scrutiny and they will be promoted to the public via the Council's social media channels in late autumn 2017. The Scrutiny webpages inform members of the public how they are able to participate in the Scrutiny process and includes a scrutiny request form to facilitate requests for an item for Scrutiny to consider. The form is sent directly to the Scrutiny team to consider and proceed with such requests accordingly.
- A survey asking residents of the Borough to have their say on issues they would like Scrutiny to discuss has recently been created. The survey will be shared via social media and the results will be fed back to the Overview and Scrutiny Unit to use as part of the forward work programme planning process.

- The use of webcasting to increase the openness and transparency of the decision making process within the Authority has been developed to raise the profile of what subjects Scrutiny are discussing.

d. Developing a standing item to follow up on information requests

- Following an evaluation by Members it was recommended that all comments made at Scrutiny meetings, as well as recommendations and requests for information, should be responded to, to ensure that there are clear outcomes from each meeting.
- Members further recommended that Scrutiny Officers should devise a method of recording and presenting what information was still outstanding, to enable the Members to query these with the relevant Officer at a subsequent meeting.
- It was determined that the best way to present this information would be through the current Forward Work Programme update as the report is a standing item on each Scrutiny Committee agenda. Members are able to clearly see any requests for information that are outstanding and how recommendations have been followed up.
- This was trialled with the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2017 and has been a successful way of providing Members with the responses to their conclusions; firstly so that they can see what is still outstanding but secondly and more importantly so that they can see the outcome and potential impact of their work and the value of Scrutiny.

e. Enhancing the functionality of Modern.gov to benefit scrutiny particularly with the tracking and monitoring of responses and conclusions.

- Although Modern.gov has been enhanced to provide additional functionality in a number of areas, the development of the tracking and monitoring functionality for Scrutiny has not been progressed as anticipated. Initial plans to dovetail the monitoring process with the report approval procedure were not able to be progressed. It is hoped that discussions with Local, Regional and National Modern.gov User groups will assist in identifying an alternative action tracking solution which can be implemented during 2017-18.

4.2.2 Scrutiny Officers have undertaken an assessment of the function using the Characteristics of Good Scrutiny to determine its performance during 2016-17. The assessment is at **Appendix A** to this report.

4.3 Webcasting

4.3.1 During this reporting period the priority for webcasting was allocated to the Development Control Committee due to its initial levels of live and archive viewers. Two meetings of the Partnerships and Governance Overview and Scrutiny

Committee webcast during this period and the viewing figures as at 30 June 2017 were as follows:

Date	Meeting	Live	On Demand	Total Views
21 Nov 16	P&G OSC	52	70	122
06 Dec 16	P&G OSC	35	120	155

- 4.3.2 The webcast viewing statistics are regularly monitored and it was identified that the number of views per meeting of the Development Control Committee had decreased significantly and that each of the two scrutiny meetings received a greater number of views than any Development Control Committee during the period.
- 4.3.3 The focus for webcasting has now been switched to a topic based allocation rather than priority being given to any specific committee. On 31 July 2017 the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee determined that scrutiny meetings considering the topics of Waste Management (Operational) and the Schools Strategic Review would be webcast. These topics would be promoted using the BCBC website and social media facilities to maximise viewers. Other suitable topics would be identified at subsequent meetings of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee which it considered to be of significant public interest.
- 4.3.4 The allocation of webcast meetings will not be limited to Scrutiny Committees and it is hoped that other meetings considering key topics of significant public interest will be identified and webcast.
- 4.3.5 Further opportunities to enable the webcasts to have an element of interaction with the viewing public during the meetings are being considered and will hopefully be trialled during the forthcoming year.
- 4.4 Scrutiny Review and Development
- 4.4.1 The scrutiny function is subject to the same reductions in resources as much of the Authority. The developments and improvements achieved during this year have been carried out within this context. Every effort is being made to ensure that the scrutiny function in Bridgend is carried out to the high standards that have become expected of the service.
- 4.4.2 It is evident from the self-assessment that scrutiny is delivering a good service but the expectations from partner Authorities, Estyn, the Wales Audit Office and the Welsh Government continue to increase. Regional and partnership Scrutiny arrangements have still not been fully developed and are expected to require a significant resource from this Authority.
- 4.4.3 Through previous Scrutiny reviews it has been identified that the structure of the Scrutiny Committees did not facilitate truly cross-cutting scrutiny. Therefore it was proposed that meetings be identified to facilitate Collaborative Committees to deal with cross-cutting issues.
- 4.4.4 A Collaborative Committee was piloted in early 2017 with three Scrutiny Committees looking into the subject of Dementia Care in the Local Authority. Adult

Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee was the lead committee with representation from the Children and Young People and Partnerships and Governance overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee received positive feedback from Members and officers and the Collaborative Committee was recognised as an effective way of working that would be beneficial to progress further.

4.4.5 The success of the Collaborative Committee in addressing issues of silo working and duplication between Committees combined with the prioritisation of scrutiny topics led to the proposal for a new Scrutiny Committee structure. A report was presented to Council on 28th June 2017 outlining details of the new Scrutiny Committee Structure, Terms of Reference and its processes.

4.4.6 The following areas were identified for future development during the 2017-18 period. These include:

- a) To take forward the effective implementation of the revised scrutiny structure;
- b) To enhance public engagement with the Scrutiny process – through development of the webpage, Scrutiny survey and through increased involvement of external invitees at Scrutiny meetings;
- c) To explore and develop Joint Scrutiny with other Local Authorities;
- d) To explore and develop the use of modern.gov to incorporate Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes and a record of decisions and actions.

5.1 Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

5.1 This report accords with the relevant Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment.

6.1 There are no equality implications attached to this report.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 The cost of webcasting, translation of webpages, the Scrutiny survey and any future development needs will be met from within existing budgets.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 Council is recommended to note the contents of this report.

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Background documents:

Overview and Scrutiny Committees Revised Terms of Reference - Report to Council – 28th
June 2017

Bridgend County Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny Assessment using the Characteristics of Good Scrutiny 2016-17

“Better Outcomes”

Democratic accountability drives improvement in public services.

ENVIRONMENT

Overview & scrutiny has a clearly defined and valued role in the council's improvement and governance arrangements.

1. The role of executive members and senior officers in contributing to Scrutiny is clearly defined in the Bridgend County Borough Council Constitution which states:

Any Overview and Scrutiny Committee or sub-committee may scrutinise and review decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any Council functions. As well as reviewing documentation, fulfilling the scrutiny role may require (subject to the operation of the Member and Officer Codes of Conduct) the Leader and any (other) member of the Cabinet, the Head of Paid Service and/or any senior officer to attend before it to explain in relation to matters within their remit:

- (i) any particular decision or series of decisions; and/or
- (ii) the extent to which the actions taken implement Council policy; and/or
- (iii) the performance of their respective department / directorate portfolio and those persons shall attend if so required.

2. In addition to the ordinary Scrutiny Committees there are a small number of Research and Evaluation Panels which are undertaken by Members. At a time of increasing demand for services, public sector reform and the challenging financial outlook, one of these is the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) which runs throughout the year. The role of the BREP is to assist in delivering financial transparency and accountability of the draft budget proposals and the Corporate Priorities. This enables Elected Members to have the opportunity to engage in the development of Council policies and shape the delivery of services.
3. Corporate Director, Head of Service and Cabinet Member involvement has been embedded throughout the Overview and Scrutiny process, including attendance at pre-agenda meetings where the subject, focus, content and timescale for individual items of the forward work programme (FWP) are agreed. The Corporate Directors and Heads of Service are also involved in the report approval process, and are required to sign off the final version of the report.
4. Recommendations to Cabinet are either presented directly to Cabinet or are incorporated into Directorate Reports where they inform Cabinet in their decision making.
5. The BREP sent a series of recommendations to Cabinet in January 2017 regarding the Authority's draft Budget proposals. Several of these related to improved ways of working with Town and Community Councils with the aim to both improve and retain local services and facilities. The Panel's recommendations were formally responded to

by Cabinet at a subsequent meeting detailing where they would take the proposals forward. The report also included a series of recommendations relating to community services such as street lighting and weed spraying which were also accepted by Cabinet.

6. In addition to this following the introduction of the Future Generations and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2015 which formally established Public Service Boards, the Public Service Board Overview and Scrutiny Panel made its first set of recommendations to the Board under its new remit. The panel's recommendations proposed a systematic process to evidence outcomes and success. The panel stated that without consistent performance monitoring approaches using measurable targets there was a risk of objectives and real results not being achieved, gaps in provision and no evidence available for public accountability. These recommendations led to the Partnership support team working with the Public Service Board to develop a performance management framework that included a pro-forma and a progress monitoring report that has enabled project monitoring and review by the Public Service Board. The support team are now also in the process of helping the Public Service Board strengthen these arrangements by adopting and developing measures to evaluate the success of collaborative activities and by introducing post intervention learning to ensure the Public Service Board is clear what went well and where lessons can be learned.

Overview & scrutiny has the dedicated officer support it needs from officers who are able to undertake independent research effectively, and provides councillors with high-quality analysis, advice and training.

7. Bridgend County Borough Council has for many years had dedicated Scrutiny Officer support. Although the number of Scrutiny Officers has reduced in recent years, the quality of their work and the personal dedication to achieve positive outcomes for Scrutiny, the Authority and the residents of the County Borough remains unwavering.
8. Scrutiny Officers proactively keep up to date with the most current information on a national and local level to enable them to support and advise Members effectively. This is done through independent research, such as in the case of recent changes introduced by Welsh Government through the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the Future Generations and Wellbeing Act, the latter of which brought in statutory powers for scrutiny of Public Service Boards.
9. Training is also carried out using external providers. For example, Scrutiny Officers Mid and West Wales Scrutiny Officers' Network run by Public Governance Wales which looked at the draft content and structure for the forthcoming guidance on Public Service Board Scrutiny.
10. This proactive approach ensures that the Authority has the benefit of regional and national input and enables the Scrutiny team to feedback lessons learned and develop best practice into the Scrutiny process. Officers are able to use the experience to help to support colleagues in improving and developing the type of information used as a basis for decision making.
11. Scrutiny Officers have also undertaken in-house E-Learning training via the authority's Learning and Development website. Examples of E-Learning modules are

Safeguarding of Children and Adults and Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

12. Scrutiny Officers continuously raise awareness of the need and importance of considering comparisons with other local authorities to identify best practice and to monitor our performance from a national perspective. Scrutiny Officers often carry out research to assist this and ensure that where this information is available it is included in the Officers' report to Committee.
13. A number of Research and Evaluation Panel (REP) meetings have taken place, for example BREP, the Member and School Engagement Panel (MSEP) and the Public Service Board (formerly LSB) Scrutiny Panel. This requires intensive organisation, preparation and support by Scrutiny Officers as well as detailed research prior to meetings and development of suggested areas of enquiry to assist and advice Members in their questioning.
14. Support and Training for Members – The Member Development Programme provides a series of events for all Elected Members which supports their Scrutiny role. Pre-Council Briefings are one example of this where over the last 12 months Members have received briefings on items including Digital Transformation and Dementia. These briefings have assisted Scrutiny in its FWP planning and in terms of providing a form of introduction to topics so that Scrutiny deliberation can then be more focused and in depth.
15. More recently, following the Local Authority elections there has been a detailed Member Development Programme that has encompassed Scrutiny based training including the Scrutiny Unit's own 'Introduction to Scrutiny in Bridgend' and introductory briefing sessions from each Corporate Director.
16. In previous years it has been recognised that there is a need to be flexible in the methods by which Members receive information and training. The new Scrutiny structure supports this by encouraging a much stronger focus on priority items therefore where information or clarification on a particular subject is needed for example, this can be dealt with through Member briefings sessions or briefing notes outside of the Committee.
17. Committee Support – Scrutiny Officers organise and attend pre-meetings with Chairs to provide an opportunity to discuss detailed analysis of reports to identify areas of focus and ensuring best use of time during Committee meetings. The Scrutiny team work closely with all parties to ensure that requests for information for Scrutiny reports are clear and are understood. Report authors are identified at the start of the process to enable liaison with Scrutiny Officers ensuring that the emphasis of the report remains as requested, accessible and clear. Working more closely with the report authors has been a key benefit to the Scrutiny process to ensure information provided to the Committees is as accurate and full as possible. An example of this is where Members that were nominated onto the Collaborative Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise dementia care in Bridgend, met initially to consider background documents provided by Scrutiny Officers and agree clear lines of enquiry; to list questions which they wished to ask of invitees and to clarify internal and external invitees for the following meeting. The outcomes from this meeting were then provided as a comprehensive report request to Officers.

18. Support and advice is further extended to all Committee Members during the meeting where detailed advice is provided as part of a pre-discussion and summing up process at the beginning and end of every meeting.
19. Going forward under the new Scrutiny structure, a focus on one item at a time enables much more focus by both the Committee and the Scrutiny Officers and allows for more detailed research to be undertaken by the Scrutiny Unit to support the Committee.
20. Previously Members have identified the need for Officers to provide a response to all conclusions and comments from each Committee meeting, not just further information requests. In this way, Members wanted to ensure that there is a response from Officers to the Committee's conclusions and therefore clear outcomes from each Scrutiny meeting. It was determined that the best way to present this information would be through the current Forward Work Programme update item as the report is a standing item on each Scrutiny Committee agenda. Members are able to clearly see responses to any requests for information that are outstanding and how their recommendations have been followed up.
21. This was trialled with the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2017 and has been seen as a successful way of providing Members with the responses to their conclusions; firstly so that they can see what is still outstanding but secondly and more importantly so that they can see the outcome and potential impact of their work and the value of Scrutiny.

PRACTICE

Overview & scrutiny inquiries are non-political, methodologically sound and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives.

22. The BCBC Constitution requires that the Scrutiny Committees and the appointment of Chairpersons be politically balanced and therefore this mirrors the make-up of Council. However, Members put aside their political differences to ensure that all outcomes from Scrutiny are in the best interest of the Authority and its constituents.
23. Every Committee and Research and Evaluation Panel investigation has flexible but clear terms of reference.
24. Officers also use the following sources in order to identify items for inclusion on the Scrutiny FWP:
 - *Corporate Plan ;*
 - *Directorate Business Plans;*
 - *Performance Reports to Scrutiny Committees;*
 - *Annual business planning and budget setting process.*
25. Under the new Scrutiny structure FWPs are developed with contribution from each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee using pre-determined criteria which emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation.
26. The Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees are then allocated items to consider individually from the overall FWP by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee,

undertaking Scrutiny investigation of the subject over a maximum of two meetings. This enables Members to undertake more detailed Scrutiny investigation until they are satisfied with the outcome.

27. Focusing on one item at a time enables greater focus on a smaller number of items and also removes silo working for Members and provides greater knowledge of the Authorities overall services and their current status.
28. Areas or subjects where representation from all Committees and Directorates is appropriate are identified and planned for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure the best approach is used. For example, this approach is used when considering items such as the Performance and Financial Monitoring for the whole Authority as well as the Corporate Plan.
29. As outlined in paragraph 4.2.1 of the cover report, Scrutiny Officers have reviewed the current process of the pre-agenda meetings in line with the restructure of Scrutiny Committees. Officer Planning Meetings now take place every 2 months with each Corporate Director and Scrutiny Officer, highlighting the items on the overall FWP. FWP Development meetings take place between the relevant Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair every two months in order for both Cabinet and Scrutiny to discuss and coordinate their FWPs. Outcomes from the meetings are then fed back to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of their FWP item for consideration and approval.
30. In terms of incorporating more evidence and representation from external bodies and partner organisations, the Scrutiny Committees have increasingly expressed the wish to improve this and has had some success with it over the year. Firstly, in relation to the Collaborative Committee, professional representation from Alzheimers Society, Age Connect and ABMU were in attendance at a meeting to discuss and provide evidence on dementia support and care in Bridgend County Borough. Secondly, the Partnerships and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the item of Safeguarding, where Members of the Committee welcomed the wide range of agency representative in attendance which included South Wales Police, AMBU and various management across both Directorates that provided a positive insight into the partnership working across both the Safeguarding Boards.

IMPACT

Overview & scrutiny regularly engages in evidence based challenge of decision makers and service providers.

31. As a matter of course, Scrutiny Committees require Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors to attend Committee meetings, as well as pre-agenda meetings where discussions over the detail in the forward work programme take place between Cabinet members, Officers and the Scrutiny Chair.
32. Overview and Scrutiny regularly engages with and holds to account partners and associates of the Authority responsible for providing and supporting service delivery.
33. Examples of this include meetings of the MSEP where Head teachers and Chairs of Governors of individual schools are invited to meet with the Panel based on set criterion and are then held to account on their performance and improvement. This

provides an opportunity to identify good practice, which can then be communicated and replicated in other schools in the County Borough.

34. Further examples include scrutiny and performance monitoring of Awen Cultural Trust, our service provider contracted for the management and provision of Cultural Services which include our libraries. Representatives from Awen were invited to the meeting to give an account of their performance and improvement plans which gave members an opportunity to provide officers with feedback and to hold them to account on their performance. Following the meeting members agreed to revisit the item to review progress from the five year business plan that was being introduced from April 2017. They also agreed to monitor the Growth Plan of the newly appointed Development Manager which would look at exploring the opportunity of paying an allowance for Wood B and B Leaf trainees. There is also ongoing communication and engagement with the Central South Consortium, to monitor the quality and provision of service and ensure the needs of service users are met as agreed.

Overview & Scrutiny provides viable and well evidenced solutions to recognised problems.

35. Overview and Scrutiny Committees carry out pre-decision scrutiny where they have provided views on options for service delivery, often linked to a direct decision of Cabinet. Opportunities for pre-decision during the last year have been limited due to many of the authority's projects and substantial pieces of work being in their early stages. This has meant that it has been too early for pre-decision Scrutiny. Work has now been undertaken on the Cabinet FWP which already indicates that there will be a number of substantial pre-decision items in the forthcoming Scrutiny FWP.
36. Recommendations made and accepted by Cabinet provide a good indication that Executive Members and Officers recognise the value of Scrutiny as a constructive check and balance to decision making.
37. As part of the BREP process this year the Panel made a series of recommendations to Cabinet. The majority of these recommendations were accepted and taken on board in the final budget proposals that went to Cabinet including some initial proposals being removed in response to the views expressed by the Panel. Members listened and gathered evidence and information from discussions with Officers and external invitees and also made recommendations for alternative proposals.
38. Recommendations are also made directly to Officers, an example of this being in relation to those made by the Community, Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the BREP on the Highways Maintenance report. Members recommended that communication between the Local Authority and Town and Community Council's should include that of the clerk so that any matters or issues can be taken before full Town Council as necessary. The Clerks are now invited to meetings of the Town and Community Council Forum so they are able to feedback issues to their Town and Community Councillors and also have a quarterly meeting with the Head of Democratic Services to feedback any issues that may need addressing. Furthermore Members recommended providing Town and Community Councils with detailed costing information where services had been reduced due to budget pressures in order for them to be able to contribute to the cost of the service so that it would not be reduced as there was a willingness from Town and Community Councils to contribute in certain areas such as grass cutting if they were made fully aware of the financial commitments expected from them. It also allows the Town and

Community Councils a chance to consider what their priorities are for the year ahead and work together more effectively with BCBC to ensure the priorities would be reflected in any potential reductions in resources and budgets.

39. Likewise recommendations were made to Officers in relation to the Corporate Plan and Directorate Business Plans that have been implemented including one to incorporate the rationale behind each Performance Indicator. This has been introduced and has been seen as a positive step by Officers and Members as it enables a greater understanding of the PIs. This has been particularly important where there are significant changes going on in a service such as changes in curriculum in education therefore there are changes in the PIs that need clarification.
40. Further recommendations were made regarding Apprenticeships target in the Corporate Plan. A previous recommendation from the Scrutiny Committee requested that the role of Apprenticeships should be to be incorporated into the Corporate Plan as the Authority should be seen to take the lead on this initiative. A further recommendation this year requesting clarification in the Corporate Plan on the Apprenticeships programme within the Authority resulted in targets for apprenticeships being amended to incorporate a 50% increase in apprenticeship opportunities across the Local Authority (LA).

“Better decisions”

Democratic decision making is accountable, inclusive and robust.

ENVIRONMENT

Overview & scrutiny councillors have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively

1. The Democratic Services Committee prioritises the Member Development Programme for all Elected Members. Topics identified as potential scrutiny topics can be included in the programme to provide a greater awareness of the subject matter and assist in the development of relevant Scrutiny recommendations and positive outcomes.
2. Members are also able to identify development opportunities in the Personal Development Reviews which when circulated to the Head of Democratic Services, can be included in individual or corporate member development plans.
3. As mentioned above at paragraph 14 and 15 in Part 1, there is a rolling Member Development Programme that ensures that all Members are provided with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills and undertake the Scrutiny role effectively.
4. As already stated, this training programme has been particularly busy following the recent Local Authority elections and feedback from the relevant Scrutiny sessions has been positive with feedback indicating that a 77.27% of respondents identified that the session completely met their needs with the remaining 18.18% stating that their needs were only partly met. Some of the written comments included
 - What worked well and why?
 - *Great overview of Committees and Scrutiny*
 - *Overview of Committees and initial information in respect of the changes to scrutiny*
 - *The knowledge of presenters was faultless*
 - What do you feel didn't work and why?
 - *Some of the spoken and written detail on scrutiny was long-winded*
 - *I thought it was all good*

The Scrutiny Charing session provided by the WLGA was considered as very useful by all attendees and additional comments included:

- *Very informative – well-presented and full of detail*
 - *Nicely paced informative and engaging*
5. Further training is also planned as part of this programme for September 2017 onwards include:

- the WLGA's providing sessions on 'Scrutiny Questioning Skills', and "The Public Service Board"
 - workshops on Dementia the meet the recommendations of the Collaborative Scrutiny Committee
 - performance and financial training in preparation for consideration of the budget
6. The Corporate Management Board are supportive and have effectively engaged in the Scrutiny process throughout the year. They have been positive regarding the changes of the new Scrutiny structure, particularly in respect of focus on large priority items and reducing the potential for duplication across Committees. They regularly participate in Scrutiny pre-meetings to assist in the FWP planning process. The key purpose of this is ensuring that information provided to Overview and Scrutiny is of high quality and is provided in a timely and consistent manner.

PRACTICE

Overview & Scrutiny is councillor-led, takes into account the views of the public, partners and regulators, and balances the prioritisation of community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance.

7. As well as determining their Annual FWP and identifying items for future meetings, part of the ongoing Scrutiny FWP process was to revisit those items previously identified as potential scrutiny topics. These items were considered and reprioritised by the Committees as necessary. The reasons for reprioritisation included the appropriate timing of a proposed report such as in the case of the Schools Strategic Review where the project was not progressed enough to receive it as a pre-decision item. As the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee also had two of its own Members who sat on the Authority's Strategic Review Board and kept the Committee updated via this, it was felt that receiving an update at that time was not necessary as it would simply be for information purposes. The Committee instead scheduled a report on Residential Childcare Provision and Looked After Children where they had the opportunity to provide comments on the plan for the future of Residential Childcare and offer views to contribute to the forthcoming options appraisal for the project.
8. This priority driven Scrutiny has been the basis for the new structure to ensure that the Committees' work is focused and can produce the best outcomes. This has been the inspiration behind the introduction of a criteria form which can be used for proposing future items for Scrutiny. The form emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation.
9. The new structure and FWP process along with the criteria form aim to ensure that Scrutiny is Member led and priority driven and encourages Members towards balancing those priorities against the numerous needs of both public and the organisation.
10. Embedded in the ongoing FWP process is the option for Committees to refer specific items to other Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees for consideration. This occurred in the Corporate Resources and Improvement Committee, as a result of the Committee's monitoring of the Local Authorities financial and service performance. It is then for the relevant Scrutiny Committee to determine where this item would then sit in terms of priorities on their own FWP. Recently the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified the subject of Dementia Care through a report on

Community Services. The Committee expressed serious concerns over the delays and lack of progress in the area of support for people with Dementia. Members highlighted that Dementia care was a priority for the Health Board and a growing concern for the public due to the increase in individuals diagnosed with Dementia. In light of this it was this Committee that put forward the proposal for Collaborative Scrutiny with Partnership and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the item of Dementia Care in Bridgend. Going forward under the new Scrutiny structure it is the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee's role to prioritise and allocate items to the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees. It is still their responsibility to highlight items from regular performance and budget reports and to allocate an item for investigation to a Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Both these processes require a significant amount of input, trust and strategic focus from Members.

11. BREP is proactively involved in developing future budget savings. They are able to bring their experience as Councillors in representing the views of their communities whilst realising the need for budget reductions within the Authority and assisting to managing any potential tensions between the two. Taking forward the recommendation of last year's BREP Review, the Cabinet Member – Resources/Deputy Leader was invited to sit on BREP meetings for 2016-17. This proved extremely beneficial in providing a strengthened link between BREP's views and their debate, and Cabinet and also a real opportunity for BREP to help develop and shape Council policies on the delivery of services.
12. In addition to this, the BREP 2016-17 were also very successful in prioritising their work and focusing on three key areas that were both of public concern and politically sensitive and challenging. In considering these three items the BREP Members requested that external invitees including Head teachers and Town and Community Clerks be invited to attend to assist in providing evidence and their viewpoints on future provision and services. In this way the BREP Members both engaged the public and took their views into account and also considered the strategic aspects such as budget pressures, risks and corporate priorities.

Overview & Scrutiny meetings and activities are well-planned, chaired effectively and make best use of the resources available to it.

13. As outlined in other headings there is a comprehensive forward work programme planning process which includes:
 - Pre-Agenda meetings
 - Detailed report requests
 - A structured report approval system with set milestones for every stage e.g. Legal and Finance approval
 - Dedicated time allocated for Scrutiny Officers to meet with Chairs prior to Committee meetings to both understand and agree the focus that the Chair and the Members may wish for the meeting
 - Pre-discussions in Committee meetings.
14. The Scrutiny Chairs are typically “seasoned” elected members with skills and experience that have been developed with the delivery of specific Scrutiny Chairs Training. This is/has been replicated with new Scrutiny Chairs via WLGA Scrutiny

Chairpersons training sessions. These sessions considered the role of the Scrutiny Chairperson, useful practices and to assist in developing individual approaches.

15. Whilst recognising the limited resources available the Scrutiny Committees are still keen to utilise different approaches to achieve the best outcome. The pilot of the Collaborative Committee was first evidence of this, following which the introduction of a complete new structure of Scrutiny Committees and their processes demonstrates the receptiveness of Members to change and hopefully more effective ways of working.

IMPACT

Decision makers give public account for themselves at Overview and Scrutiny Committees for their portfolio responsibilities.

16. In accordance with the constitution, all Scrutiny Committees require Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors to attend Committee meetings to give public account for themselves.
17. Previously Corporate Directors attended pre-agenda meetings where discussions over the detail in the forward work programme take place between Cabinet members, Officers and the Scrutiny Chair. This ensures that the content and focus for reports being presented to the Scrutiny meetings are agreed and that requests for information to be included in the reports are understood by everyone. This has now been revised to a structure of Officer planning meetings (Scrutiny Officers and Corporate Directors) and FWP Development Meetings (Scrutiny Chairs and Cabinet Members) but with essentially the same purpose.
18. One of the other rationales behind the Scrutiny Committee restructure was to account for the changing remits of Directorates and also the cross-cutting portfolios of Cabinet Members. Often items became complicated in terms of their cross-cutting nature which made effective Scrutiny difficult as Committees were bound by a specific remit and areas of work. The new Centralised Committee Structure allows for any future changes to Directorates and more importantly encourages a much stronger focus on priority items within the Authority which Members are then able to look at in their entirety without being restricted by their remit. It facilitates cross-cutting scrutiny and avoids duplication within each Scrutiny Committee enabling Members to hold decision makers to account much more effectively. An example of this is on the subject of Safeguarding where previously this could have been considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Children's safeguarding, the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Adult safeguarding and Partnerships and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee under the subject of Western Bay. This could have led to a considerable amount of duplication both by the Director in the reports and by the Members of the Scrutiny Committees. Under the new structure the subject of Safeguarding and the joint working that is being undertaken between the directorates as well as the partnership working being undertaken under the remit of Western Bay can be considered as one subject allowing Members to look at the big picture and reducing the amount of duplication between Committees.
19. Over the past year there has been a real drive for Members to provide clear guidelines and detail to advise report authors on the inclusion and presentation of relevant information in order to provide accessible reports which provide an accurate reflection

of requests from Members. This has been very successful and has resulted in the reduction of further information requests from Committee meetings. This was even more successful with the Collaborative Committee in that there was detailed focus on one item, allowing Members to really address what they wanted to investigate. Furthermore with the Collaborative Committee running over two meetings, Members were able to really drill down over a short period of time into the subject and achieve some successful outcomes.

20. Improved agenda planning with Scrutiny Committees is a key feature under the new structure and, using the Collaborative Committee's example, a focus on one priority item at a time enables Members to ensure they receive the right information from officers and can effectively hold them to account.
21. Scrutiny Committees draw conclusions and also make recommendations to Officers as part of summing up at every committee meeting. Last year Committees were successful in gaining responses to all conclusions from Officers, not just information requests, and this year this has moved on further with responses being provided directly to the Committee as part of its Forward Work Programme update. In this way Members are able to clearly see any requests for information that are outstanding, how recommendations have been followed up and what outcomes there are from the Committee's work.
22. Reports are also presented directly to Cabinet containing recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee or recommendations are incorporated into Directorate Reports to Cabinet directly informing the decision making process, as in the case of the Corporate Plan.
23. Scrutiny Committees also ensure decisions are made with respect of current/new legislation – having reports on impact of legislation and then ensuring that this is taken into account in future decisions such as the implications from the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and those of resulting from the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
24. In addition to this each Corporate Director and Cabinet Member are held to account over their half yearly performance against their own PIs and also through Quarterly budget reports to the Corporate (and what was the Corporate Resources and Improvement) Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These reports present an overview of the Council's performance and compare this performance with the commitments to delivering the improvement priorities in the Corporate Plan for 2016-20. This process allows public accountability of the Authorities performance and of the achievement and impact of budget cuts and any resulting underspends and overspends. It also enables the Committee to identify areas of concern or dipping performance and possible areas for future Scrutiny.

“Better engagement”

The public is engaged in democratic debate about the current and future delivery of public services.

ENVIRONMENT

Overview & scrutiny is recognised by the executive and corporate management team as an important council mechanism for community engagement, and facilitates greater citizen involvement in governance.

1. The Bridgend County Borough Council Consultation and Engagement Toolkit was issued in August 2014 incorporates the Participation Cymru’s National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, which have been adopted by the Council. The document helps to ensure that all consultation and engagement projects are consistent, robust and effective.
2. Section 62 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (the Measure) places a requirement on local authorities to make arrangements that enable all persons who live or work in the area to bring to the attention of the relevant overview and scrutiny committees their views on any matter under consideration by the committee. Section 62 also provides that an overview and scrutiny committee must take into account any views brought to its attention in accordance with arrangements under this section.
3. As such, the statutory guidance in relation to the Measure states that overview and scrutiny committees are expected to raise public awareness about their role and function. In response to the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Members considered ways in which to promote public engagement in scrutiny in order to meet its statutory obligation, recognising that the resources required to implement and sustain any or all of these opportunities is likely to be limited and the most cost effective and efficient methods of engagement need to be prioritised and developed.
4. Areas that have been developed during this period include:

Webcasting

5. During this reporting period the priority for webcasting was allocated to the Development Control Committee due to its initial levels of live and archive viewers. Two meetings of the Partnerships and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee webcast during this period and the viewing figures as at 30 June 2017 were as follows:

Date	Meeting	Live	On Demand	Total Views
21 Nov 16	P&G OSC	52	70	122
06 Dec 16	P&G OSC	35	120	155

6. The webcast viewing statistics are regularly monitored and it was identified that the number of views per meeting of the Development Control Committee had decreased significantly and that each of the two scrutiny meetings received a greater number of views than any Development Control Committee during the period.

7. The focus for webcasting has now been switched to a topic based allocation rather than priority being given to any specific committee. On 31 July 2017 the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee determined that scrutiny meetings considering the topics of Waste Management (Operational) and the Schools Strategic Review would be webcast. These topics would be promoted using the BCBC website and social media facilities to maximise viewers. Other suitable topics would be identified at subsequent meetings of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee which it considered to be of significant public interest.
8. The allocation of webcast meetings will not be limited to Scrutiny Committees and it is hoped that other meetings considering key topics of significant public interest will be identified and webcast.
9. Further opportunities to enable the webcasts to have an element of interaction with the viewing public during the meetings are being considered and will hopefully be trialled during the forthcoming year.

Scrutiny Webpages

10. Following discussions with the Marketing and Engagement Team it was identified that further work was needed on the webpages to encourage greater accessibility and interaction. The scrutiny page was not very easy to find without actively searching for the term 'scrutiny'. Further work has been undertaken to provide the scrutiny webpages with a higher profile which will enable easier access to the public to hopefully allow for better engagement with members of the public
11. The Scrutiny webpages have been developed for ease of use and reading and include a toolkit of information to inform the public how they are able to get involved in the scrutiny process by requesting items to be considered for the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme, providing written evidence and attending a Committee meeting. The webpages also provide an opportunity for electronic submission of scrutiny request forms. This enables the public to request topics for scrutiny consideration. All requests will be responded to and any suitable requests received will added to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee FWP for scheduling and prioritisation.

Advertising the FWP

12. The Scrutiny FWP is advertised on the BCBC website and members intranet and updated regularly. Scrutiny Officers are keen to promote engagement with their Town or Community Council (TCCs) in accordance with the Bridgend Town and Community Councils Charter. FWPs have now been shared with TCCs through the Clerks quarterly meetings and will continue to be with updated versions throughout the year. Clerks have been requested to share the FWP with their Councillors and potentially:
 - Attend Scrutiny meetings as invitees
 - To submit written evidence on scrutiny topics
 - Identify other topics for the FWP
13. It is also hoped that with a revitalised Scrutiny webpage, the Scrutiny FWPs will be regularly updated online and shared and promoted through the Authority's own social media channels. Scrutiny Officers have also recently created a survey asking residents of the Borough to have their say on issues they would like Scrutiny to

discuss. The survey will be shared via social media and the results will be fed back to the Overview and Scrutiny Unit to use as part of the forward work programme planning process. This is scheduled to go live in Autumn 2017.

PRACTICE

Overview & Scrutiny is characterised by effective communication to raise awareness of, and encourage participation in democratic accountability

14. It is recognised by Scrutiny that encouraging participation in the Democratic process should be at the centre of Scrutiny investigations. During the Budget consultation process Members of Scrutiny made comments in relation to the Authority's presentation of the MTFs report in that it has not always been user friendly and easy to understand for the public. Members stated that they often received queries from the public around an understanding of where Council Tax was spent with often a misconception that Council Tax was the sole income and budget for the Authority.
15. Members believed that there was a risk to public perception and a public understanding of the budget, its reductions and Council Tax increases. The BREP therefore made a series of recommendations for changes to the draft budget report and the way in which it was presented to the public. These recommendations were taken on board and included as part of the MTFs report enabling a much more user friendly document from which the public was able to clearly see where the budget was spent and what proportion of the whole budget is accounted for through Council Tax. A more accessible budget report essentially enables the public to better participate in the democratic process. This was also seen as an effective tool for Members in promoting the work of the Authority and as a very clear explanation of the Council's budget when they engage with their constituents.
16. Engagement opportunities are being developed with Town & Community Councils and third sector organisations to invite individuals with specific experience to scrutiny meetings. The aim of this is to provide scrutiny the opportunity to hear the views of others and gather evidence to make appropriate recommendations. A significant example of this was during the BREP process where invitees included representative head teachers and a number of Town and Community Council Clerks. Their input was invaluable to the Panel and had a great impact on the recommendations going forward to Cabinet. It also increased the participation in terms of the budget consultation process and provided key evidence towards future budget proposals. Examples of this include discussions and recommendations for improved communication and collaboration with TCCs to explore the possibilities for TCCs to take on or assist with the future provision of services.
17. It is hoped that engagement such as that above can be replicated in the future with the Youth of the County Borough, which has been raised as a priority for the Authority through the Youth Participation Strategy and Action Plan. Scrutiny is keen to support this and take this forward under the new structure with the aim of engaging members of the Youth Council and other young people representatives on various items in the Scrutiny forward work programme,
18. Further areas that have been developed include the Scrutiny webpages and a Scrutiny survey to raise awareness of the scrutiny process and encourage active public participation. The Scrutiny web pages will provide the public with information how to

get involved in Scrutiny such as the role and remits of the Scrutiny Committees, how to suggest an item to be considered by a Scrutiny Committee and also how the public are able to attend Scrutiny Committee meetings. The Scrutiny survey has been developed to seek the public's opinion on what subjects they would like to see considered by Scrutiny. Due to go live in Autumn 2017 it will also be utilised as an online Scrutiny request form on the webpage to encourage members of the public to contact and engage in the Scrutiny process.

Overview & scrutiny operates non-politically and deals effectively with sensitive political issues, tension and conflict.

19. Every Committee and Research and Evaluation Panel investigation has flexible but clear terms of reference. BREP has cross party membership and considers contentious issues at the early stages of development which Members approach with confidentiality and objectivity, irrespective of political allegiances. One example of this during the BREP process this year was on the subject of the reductions to the Education budget. The BREP were successful in debating and deliberating this item and collectively agreeing a recommendation despite this being a politically challenging topic.
20. Overview & scrutiny builds trust and good relationships with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders.
21. Scrutiny Officers and Chairs have also explored avenues for establishing Joint Scrutiny with other Local Authorities for services under Western Bay, Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) and Central South Consortium (CSC).
 - Western Bay Joint Scrutiny has unfortunately been unable to progress due to not all LAs wishing to sign up to the process at this stage.
 - A series of options have been discussed for the development of joint scrutiny for the SRS. This is being led by the Vale of Glamorgan but until any revised arrangements are agreed the SRS will continue to be scrutinised by each individual LA.
 - In relation to Joint Scrutiny for the CSC, work has progressed over the last twelve months and a Joint Working Group has been established between the five LAs. The Group consists of Scrutiny Chairs and Officers from the LAs within the Consortium whose purpose will be to consider items such as the CSC Business Plan, regional performance targets and national issues such as the gender gap. In this way, the group take a more regional perspective ensuring that LAs are receiving value for money from the Consortium and also do not duplicate the work of the individual Scrutiny Committees in monitoring their own LAs school performance. The Group have recently reconvened following the elections and there is a general consensus to go forward with the previous approach and to take the Groups proposal and Terms of Reference (TOR) to each Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to the CSC Joint Committee for formal establishment. It is then agreed that the Group will meet 3 times per year reporting annually to the relevant committee of each LA and make recommendations directly to the Joint Committee.

IMPACT

Overview and scrutiny enables the 'voice' of local people and communities across the area to be heard as part of decision and policy-making processes.

22. Members are proactive in their constituent roles and bring their experience from this into Scrutiny Committees whilst ensuring that they avoid a colloquial approach.
23. As mentioned in various sections above, Scrutiny has involved several external representatives over the year in the Scrutiny process in order to enable the 'voice' of local people and communities to be heard; in relation to the Budget proposals as part of BREP's investigations, providing evidence as part of the item on Safeguarding and participation in the Collaborative Committee on the subject of Dementia.
24. Scrutiny also challenges the Authority's consultation and engagement process and ensures findings from consultation and engagement activities are included in reports and are listened to, presented objectively and used to directly inform decisions.
25. Under the Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act, public service providers had to carry out and publish a Wellbeing Assessment, which looked at the state of wellbeing in the area, and in the communities. As part of the consultation process, Members of the Public Service Board Overview and Scrutiny Panel were requested to provide their help, expertise and ideas to ensure the assessment was an accurate reflection of the state of wellbeing in Bridgend. In response to the consultation, the Panel made several comments where they resolved that the assessment used terminology that was difficult to understand and queried the lack of reference within the document to mental health and safeguarding and vulnerability of adults and children.
26. It is this area that is a key focus for Scrutiny under the new structure and over the next 12 months – to enhance public engagement, to ensure there is appropriate representation from outside bodies, organisations and service users that can provide a much more detailed and balanced evidence base from which Members can make recommendations from.