

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	25 SEPTEMBER 2024
Report Title:	SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 & 2023/24
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Responsible Officer:	MERYL LAWRENCE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER – SCRUTINY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council’s Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.
Executive Summary:	The purpose of the report is present to Council the Scrutiny Annual Report for a two-year period, 2022/23 and 2023/24, for noting.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Council with a review of work undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committees over a two-year period 2022/23 and 2023/24.

2. Background

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Scrutiny is required to submit an Annual Report to Council with a review of how the function has operated for the previous period. The review is a useful tool for

reviewing the effectiveness of Scrutiny, providing an opportunity to reflect properly on how Scrutiny has operated, the challenges and outcomes. The report provides commentary on scrutiny activity for the period.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 and 2023/24 is attached at **Appendix A** and provides detail on the challenges and outcomes for Scrutiny Committees and Panels for the period, as well as identifying some areas of focus for improvement to ensure Scrutiny continues to develop and achieve positive outcomes for the residents of Bridgend.
- 3.2 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the Scrutiny Annual Report at its meeting held on 9 September 2024 and made the following comments and recommendations which have either been actioned and incorporated into the attached report or will be actioned as part of Scrutiny's future work:
1. The Committee recommended that the Annual Report should include comparative data on the number of call ins in previous years;
 2. The Committee recommended that consideration be given to ensuring that more external representatives are invited to attend scrutiny meetings;
 3. The Committee highlighted that where reports cover issues that cross service boundaries, consideration is given to communicating with all Scrutiny Members regarding this so that they have the opportunity to engage via their fellow members sitting on the Committee and/or observe the meeting;
 4. The Committee expressed concern about the number of call-ins reported in the Annual Report and strongly supported the priority highlighted for a focus on pre-decision Scrutiny going forward ahead of any major decisions to Cabinet. It was acknowledged that Forward Work Programme planning and communication is paramount for this to succeed.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.
- 5.2 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 Ways of Working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The scrutiny function contributes to the 5 Ways of Working set out in the

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and how they contribute to the Council developing its own five ways of working, driving and measuring those ways of working.

5.3 The scrutiny arrangements assist in the achievement of the Council's 7 Well-being Objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, listed below:

1. A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable
2. A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
3. A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
4. A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
5. A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency
6. A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
7. A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 Climate Change continues to form part of Scrutiny's priorities and links with various aspects of the Scrutiny's Committees' work detailed within the Annual Report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting continue to form part of Scrutiny's priorities and aspects of their work reported within their Annual Report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Council is recommended to note the contents of the Scrutiny Annual Report for the periods 2022/23 and 2023/24 attached at **Appendix A**.

Background documents

None.