



SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present this Report of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function over the period 2022/23 & 2023/24. The report provides an overview of the work undertaken by our Committee Members during this period. This includes work undertaken as part of our Committee Meetings as well as on our Panels in considering services essential to residents of the local community.

During this period, the four overview and scrutiny committees have undertaken 54 meetings and considered 80 reports (and an additional 5 Call-ins) covering a variety of work undertaken by the Council which in turn contributes to the Council's vision to act as "one Council working together to improve lives". In addition, the Committees collectively made 227 Recommendations and 199 requests for information.

During my time as the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it has been my ambition to ensure that the Committees don't only provide constructive challenge as a critical friend to the administration in an effort to improve outcomes for the people and communities which we represent, but also to have a laser focus on the "big ticket" items which will be affecting our local authority in the months and years to come.

Since 2022, we have been in the challenging situation whereby we have seen an in-take of 31 new Councillors from across the local authority who have had to quickly get up to speed and comprehend detailed policy areas. In 2023-24, as their knowledge and skills have developed, these Members have been able to make a fuller contribution to the debate about the future direction of our local authority and I have no doubt that the engagement and participation of Members in the scrutiny process will develop even further as this term of office progresses.

Here in BCBC, we are no different than any other local authority in that we have to confront significant budget pressures and, as a result, make some tough political choices and budget reductions. Scrutiny provides a crucial forum for the administration to test its ideas and policy proposals. It also provides an invaluable and rewarding opportunity for backbench and Opposition Members to play a role in the policy-making process through providing recommendations to Cabinet in an effort to assist them in making measured and considered decisions which can gain the support of the majority of Councillors.

A development which I think enhances the scrutiny process and is a credit to the scrutiny function here in Bridgend is the increase in the usage of pre-scrutiny prior to any Cabinet decision. It is welcome to see the willingness of both the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board to be open to Members' views and recommendations before a decision is made. Working in a collegiate way alongside Cabinet Members, Corporate Directors and the Scrutiny Team, I (and my fellow Committee Chairs) have all endeavoured to carefully construct our respective Committees' Forward Work Programmes with an eye on the future rather than the past while also being flexible to unexpected occurrences which require our immediate attention. I see this as best practice and is a development which I would like to see grow further as we go forward into uncharted territory.



**Cllr Alex Ulberini-Williams, Chairperson,
Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee (May 2022 - May 2024)**

OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGES AND OUTCOMES 2022-23 AND 2023-24

Budget and Training

The backdrop to this reporting period has included the scrutiny of successive challenging draft Medium Term Financial Strategies (MTFS) / budget positions for 2022-23 and 2023-24, later receipt of the draft Local Government Finance settlements by the Authority and the need to concentrate the scrutiny process into a shorter period to enable Scrutiny Recommendations to be coordinated by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) and reported to Cabinet within the condensed timetable.

As mentioned in the Chair's Foreword above, the Local Government Elections on 5 May 2022, resulted in the Council receiving a cohort of new Elected Members. Consideration was given to the range of support available and the training needed. High quality, comprehensive scrutiny training was made available to Members by Scrutiny and Democratic Services Officers, the Welsh Local Government Association and experienced external trainers. The Member Induction Programme and Member Development Programmes for 2022-23 and 2023-24 was extensive and covered related areas such as governance, decision making, effective chairing skills, questioning skills, etc. New and returning Members were encouraged to take advantage of the full offer. A full list of training provided is included on pages 31 to 32 of this report.

In addition, changes of Chairpersons required specific training and the development and establishment of new professional working relationships. Similarly, changes to Cabinet Members and Cabinet portfolios needed to be taken account of in the planning of meetings, documentation and processes.

Staffing

Despite advertising a vacant Scrutiny Officer post from November 2021, it was not successfully recruited to until March 2022. Following the appointment of a Scrutiny Officer, and also the appointment of the Democratic Services Manager with extensive Scrutiny and Democratic Services experience, there followed a period of significant training for the Scrutiny Officers by the Manager and the Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny, in order for the Scrutiny Officers to be able to lead meetings and provide advice. In Autumn 2023, the Scrutiny Team were impacted by periods of staff absence and maternity leave that commenced in December

2023. To minimise pressure on service delivery to Scrutiny Chairs / Committees, a Democratic Services Officer was seconded temporarily into the role of Interim Scrutiny Officer to cover the maternity leave period, and the Democratic Services Manager provided support where necessary, to maintain the number of Scrutiny meetings and the level of support to Scrutiny Chairs and Members.

Call-Ins

In addition, there were an unprecedented number of Call-Ins during the reporting period, due in part to the initial limited use of Pre-Decision scrutiny for this reporting period. Where possible, the Call-Ins were reported to a scheduled upcoming Scrutiny Committee meeting which sometimes placed pressure on the time to consider the scheduled reports for those meetings. However, some additional Extraordinary Meetings were convened for Call In reports to be considered, if there was not an upcoming meeting scheduled, using additional resources.

Requests to change Meeting Dates

Given the number of invitees to Scrutiny meetings, requests to change meeting dates were a challenge after the calendar of meetings had been agreed at the Annual General Meeting of Council and meetings scheduled in calendars, but these were accommodated where possible. The death of the late HM Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022 led to two meetings being cancelled for the National Period of Mourning which placed some additional pressure on the work programming of the remaining meetings scheduled for 2022-23.

Registered Representatives

The terms of office of the Secondary School Parent Governor Representative and the Church in Wales Registered Representative who attended Scrutiny Committees for the consideration of Education items came to an end in Autumn 2023. In addition, there was a vacancy for Primary and Special School Parent Governor Representative for Education items and nominations were therefore sought for all positions. Nominations for the Church in Wales Registered Representative and the Special School Parent Governor Representative were received and approved by Council on 20 September 2023. Nominations were sought and have been re-sought for the Primary and Secondary School Parent Governor Representative vacancies and are awaited.

Key Outcomes/Achievements 2022-23 and 2023-24

The Key outcomes and Achievements for the reporting period include:

- The Development, preparation and delivery of a targeted Member Induction Programme and ongoing training and development programme for Members, a high proportion of whom were newly elected Members was promptly and efficiently delivered during an intensive initial training period, including training on Committees, Scrutiny, Questioning Skills, Chairing Skills, roles and responsibilities, etc. This has been followed by ongoing training and development throughout the reporting period, including subject specific training for Committees during increasingly emerging budget and staffing pressures across the Authority in 2023-24.
- Training and development of newly appointed Scrutiny Officers appointed in September 2021 and March 2022 and an Interim Scrutiny Officer in January 2024 seconded to cover maternity leave period, all of which has built and strengthened Team resilience and support to Scrutiny Committees, Scrutiny Chairpersons, Scrutiny reporting processes and the forward work planning process, as confidence has grown.
- Increasing the number of external Invitees to Scrutiny Committees for related reports as part of our work towards the targets set out in the Council's Engagement and Participation Strategy, thereby gaining additional stakeholder views via the Scrutiny process.
- Supporting the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) process and preparing concise and clear Budget reports including context in the Recommendations to COSC for consolidation, and to the Cabinet, following consideration of which a significant number of Recommendations were accepted which impacted on these two extremely difficult budgets.
- The Team has continued to drive the benefit of Pre-Decision Scrutiny, and there has been an increase across the period, as can be seen later in the report in each Committee's Performance table lists of reports, including for example, pre decision reports on the: Education Directorate Strategic Plan 2023-26, Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022-23, and Future Waste Service Options. This will continue to be raised to strive to increase the opportunity for Scrutiny Committees to contribute to more pre-decision items.
- Working with the Performance Team on the optimal scheduling timetable for reports upon Quarterly Performance Monitoring looking back and Pre Decision reports upon the draft Corporate Plan, draft Corporate Plan Delivery Plan, Performance Indicator (PI) Targets and Self-Assessment, while the changes in Performance requirements resulting from the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act were being implemented.
- Forward Work Planning (FWP) Meetings have been strengthened and are held regularly between the Scrutiny Chair, Corporate Director and the relevant Cabinet Member(s) to ensure that FWPs are up to date, that report timings are both robust and realistic and whether there are any emerging priority and pre-decision items needing to be scheduled.

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Role of the Committee



Chairperson
Cllr Alex
Ulberini-Williams

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) considers the service provision, planning, management and performance, policies, protocols and plans relating to corporate performance and governance reports and the Corporate Plan. The Committee contributes to the annual budget consultation and coordinates the response of all the Scrutiny Committees to the Cabinet's draft budget proposals and the MTFs budget consultation process. The Committee also has responsibility for coordinating the Forward Work Programmes of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Quote from the Chairperson – *“During this challenging time, the Committee’s overarching strategic role in holding the administration to account cannot be underestimated and it is therefore one of the most important Committees of Council. I would like to thank Members of the Committee for the thorough and effective way in which they have exercised their duties over the last two years, leaving politics at the door. I would also like to thank Cabinet Members; officers and external invitees for the constructive way in which they have engaged with the scrutiny process, and the Democratic Services Team for all of their support and hard work during my time as Chair of the Committee.”*

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Performance

Highlights	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number of substantive reports considered across the Committee	17	18	19
Number of Pre-Decision reports	*	5	8
Number of Performance Monitoring reports	*	7	9
Number of Policy Review/Development reports	*	2	0
Number of Information reports/Progress Updates	*	3	2
Number of Cabinet decisions debated under ‘call-in’	0	1	0
Number of Recommendations made	35	41	48
Number of requests for information	2	41	36
Number of external representatives attending a scrutiny meeting	0	3	0

* New Indicator for Reporting Period

Key items looked at during 2022 – 2023 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Revenue Budget Outturn 2021-22
- Budget Monitoring 2022-23 Q1, Q2 and Q3 Revenue Forecast
- Council's Performance against its Commitments for the Year 2021-22 and Q2 of 2022/23
- Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021/22

Pre-Decision

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27 and Draft Budget Consultation Process
- Corporate Plan 2023-28
- Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 23-24
- Capital Strategy 2023-24 to 2032-33

Policy Review/Development

- Temporary Accommodation
- Cost of Living Payment Scheme

Information Report/Progress Update

- Workforce, Recruitment and Retention
- Re-Development of Maesteg Town Hall
- Disabled Facilities Grants – Progress Report and Position Statement

Call-in

- Recycling and Waste Service Post 2024

Key items looked at during 2023 – 2024 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Revenue Budget Outturn 2022-23
- Budget Monitoring 2023-24 Q1, Q2 and Q3 Revenue Forecast
- Corporate Plan / Delivery Plan Review 2024-25-2022
- Corporate Self-Assessment 2022-23
- Quarter 4 Performance 2022-23 and Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 Performance 2023-24

Pre-Decision

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28 and Draft Budget Consultation Process
- Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2023-24 and Performance Framework
- Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Targets
- Performance Management Improvement Plan
- Capital Strategy 2024-25
- Strategic Workforce Plan
- Engagement and Participation Strategy

Information Report/Progress Update

- ICT Resilience

Call-in

- Cabinet's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the Recycling and Waste Service Post 2024

External Stakeholders and Representatives

- Trade Union Representatives:
 - UNISON
 - GMB
 - Unite

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Role of the Committee

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 is the first forum for Education which includes in its membership Registered Representatives, nominated by Church in Wales, Roman Catholic Church, and Parent Governor Representatives from a Primary, a Secondary and a Special School. The Committee scrutinises reports upon related service provision, planning and performance, contributes to the Annual MTFS budget consultation process for service areas within the remit of the Committee and proposes items for its Forward Work Programme.



Chairperson
Cllr Alex
Ulberini-Williams

Quote from Chairperson – *“Since 2022, it has been a pleasure to have chaired Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1. It has been particularly helpful to hear from frontline staff from the education sector; young people; registered representatives and other invitees, the contributions of which have informed our work and have been invaluable in developing our final recommendations on the broad range of items which we have considered.”*

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 Performance

Highlights	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number of substantive reports considered across the Committee	6	5	7
Number of Pre-Decision reports	*	3	2
Number of Performance Monitoring reports	*	1	1
Number of Policy Review/Development reports	*	1	3
Number of Information reports/Progress Updates	*	0	1
Number of Cabinet decisions debated under ‘call-in’	0	0	0
Number of Recommendations made	6	21	40
Number of requests for information	0	23	27
Number of external representatives attending a scrutiny meeting	31	23	24

* New Indicator for Reporting Period

Key items looked at during 2022 – 2023 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Annual Local Authority Scrutiny Report Central South Consortium 2021-2022

Pre-Decision

- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
- New Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability to support the Curriculum for Wales
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27

Policy Review/Development

- Pupil Attendance, Exclusions, Health and Safeguarding

Key items looked at during 2023 – 2024 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Annual Local Authority Scrutiny Report Central South Consortium 2022-2023

Pre-Decision

- Education and Family Support Directorate Strategic Plan 2023-2026
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28

Policy Review/Development

- Bridgend Youth Justice Service Update and Operational Plan
- Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) and Operational Issues within the Catering Service
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2022-2032)

Information Report/Progress Update

- Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing

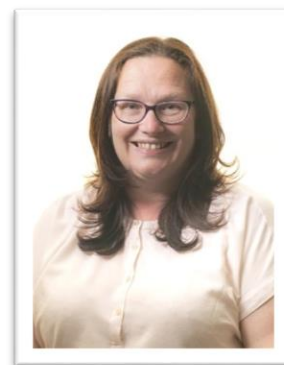
External Stakeholders and Representatives

- Registered Representatives
- Primary School Headteachers:
 - Afon Y Felin
 - Brackla Primary
 - Bryncethin Primary
 - Cefn Glas Infants
 - Llangynwyd Primary
 - Mynydd Cynffig Primary
 - Nantyffyllon Primary
 - Penybont Primary
 - Pen Y Fai Church in Wales Primary School
 - St. Robert's Catholic Primary School
 - Ysgol Cynwyd Sant
 - Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon Y Cymoedd
- Secondary School Headteachers:
 - Brynteg Comprehensive
 - Bryntirion Comprehensive
 - Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen
 - Porthcawl Comprehensive
 - The Bridge Alternative Provision
 - Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd
 - Ysgol Maesteg
- Central South Consortium Representatives
- Public Health Wales
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

Role of the Committee

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 is the first forum for Social Services and Wellbeing items (but not exclusive to) and scrutinises reports upon Children Services, Adult Services and Wellbeing service provision, planning and performance, in order to respond to issues relating to the Care Inspectorate Wales and the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The Committee contributes to the Annual MTFS budget consultation process for the service areas within the remit of the Committee and proposes items for its Forward Work Programme.



Chairperson
Cllr Freya
Bletsoe

Quote from Chairperson – *“We have seen some challenging times in Social Services recently but despite the heavy workload the Committee has faced as a result, it has been really good to hear from service users of their personal experiences of services being scrutinised and from representatives from our partners in the Integrated Health Service. They have added a wealth of information which has been invaluable to our scrutiny meetings, and I look forward to this continuing to increase further participation from our stakeholders in the scrutiny of future topics.”*

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 Performance

Highlights	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number of substantive reports considered across the Committee	8	9	10
Number of Pre-Decision reports	1	1	4
Number of Performance Monitoring reports	*	4	4
Number of Policy Review/Development reports	*	1	0
Number of Information reports/Progress Updates	*	2	2
Number of Cabinet decisions debated under ‘call-in’	0	1	0
Number of Recommendations made	2	11	16
Number of requests for information	3	21	20
Number of external representatives attending a scrutiny meeting	5	11	10

* New Indicator for Reporting Period

Key items looked at during 2022 – 2023 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Performance Evaluation of Children's Social Care Services 23-27 May 2022
- Update on the Care Inspectorate Wales Inspections of Bridgend County Borough Council's Regulated Services in Adult Social Care for 2022
- Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and Adults
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Improvement Check Visit to Children's Social Care Services – 21-24 November 2022

Pre-Decision

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27

Policy Review/Development

- The Development of Learning Disability Services

Information report/Progress Update

- Adult Social Care Pressure Areas
- Support for Young Carers and Adult Carers

Call-in

- Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay

Key items looked at during 2023 – 2024 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in Bridgend 12-16 June 2023
- Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2022/23
- Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022/23
- Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection of Bridgend County Borough Council's Regulated Services in Adult Social Care

Pre-Decision

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28
- 3 Year Sustainability Plan to Improve Outcomes for Children and Family Services in Bridgend
- The Learning Disability Transformation Programme
- Social Services and Wellbeing Commissioning Strategies 2023-28

Information Report/Progress Update

- Prevention and Wellbeing, Leisure (Halo) and Cultural Trusts (Awen) and Further Integration with BAVO
- Adult Community Mental Health Services

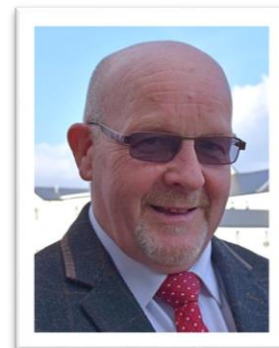
External Stakeholders and Representatives

- Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection Team Representatives
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg
- People First Bridgend
- Learning Disabilities Services Users
- TuVida Representatives (Bridgend Carers Wellbeing)
- Young Carers and Adult Carers Service Users
- Halo Leisure Representatives
- Awen Representatives
- Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) Representative
- Public Speakers/Representations from:
 - A Voice for the Future of Porthcawl;
 - Porthcawl Civic Trust Society; and
 - Sustainable Walesfor consideration of the Call-In Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay.

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

Role of the Committee

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 is the first forum for Communities (but not exclusive to) and considers reports upon related service provision, planning, and performance, contributes to the Annual MTFS budget consultation process for the service areas within the remit of the Committee and proposes items for its Forward Work Programme.



Chairperson
Cllr Paul Davies

Quote from Chairperson – *“I would like to thank Officers and Invitees who have contributed, provided requested information and attended meetings, which assisted with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s work over this period and the breadth of topics scrutinised. Looking ahead to the challenges of the next 12 months and the contribution the scrutiny function can make to contribute to the Council, I encourage Members of the public to get involved where possible.”*

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 Performance

Highlights	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number of substantive reports considered across the Committee	6	7	8
Number of Pre-Decision reports	*	1	3
Number of Performance Monitoring reports	*	0	0
Number of Policy Review/Development reports	*	1	0
Number of Information reports/Progress Updates	*	4	3
Number of Cabinet decisions debated under ‘call-in’	0	1	2
Number of Recommendations made	5	22	28
Number of requests for information	0	23	8
Number of external representatives attending a scrutiny meeting	5	8	1

* New Indicator for Reporting Period

Key items looked at during 2022 – 2023 included:

Pre-Decision

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27

Policy Review/Development

- Play Sufficiency Duty, Assessment and Action Plan to Secure Sufficient Opportunities in Bridgend County Borough

Information Reports/Progress Updates

- The United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund
- Levelling Up Fund Priority Projects
- Porthcawl Regeneration
- Housing Position Statement *

*Combined Meeting with Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Call-in

- Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy

Key items looked at during 2023 – 2024 included:

Pre-Decision

- Housing Support Programme Strategy (Homelessness Strategy) 2022-2026
- Future Waste Service Options
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28

Information Reports/Progress Updates

- Update on Shared Prosperity Fund
- Update on Communities Directorate Position and Challenges
- Strategic Transport Projects

Call-in

- Hybont Project Gateway Review
- Proposed Use of Land Transaction Transfer Protocol with Cardiff Capital Region for Land at Brynmenyn and Bryncethin

External Stakeholders and Representatives

- Awen Representatives
- Registered Social Landlord Representatives:
 - Coastal Housing Group
 - Hafod Housing
 - Linc Cymru Housing Association
 - United Welsh
 - Valleys to Coast
 - Wales and West Housing
- Crisis Cymru Representative
- Maple Cone Representative

CALL-IN

Over the period for 2022-23 and 2023-24 there were 5 Call-Ins retrospectively compared with only 2 for 2019-20 and indeed for the whole of the previous electoral term from May 2017 to April 2022.

Call-In of Cabinet Decision: Recycling and Waste Service Post 2024

In June 2022, three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 requested to Call-In the Cabinet decision of 14 June 2022. Details as to the reasons for the Call-In were summarised as follows:

- Insufficient information for Cabinet to make a fully informed decision.
- No presentation of the alternative options that could be considered.
- No indication of the procurement costs or a cost benefit analysis.
- No consideration given to alternatives to procuring the plant and existing fleet from Kier.
- Cabinet made a decision without a full understanding of the costs.
- Cabinet failed to challenge the assumptions made in the paper.
- The decision had not been properly considered and required further scrutiny.

Full details of the Call-In can be read in the report to the Committee [here](#).

Members considered the evidence presented to them by Officers and Cabinet Members and the Committee agreed by majority that it would not refer the matter back to Cabinet for further consideration but to send a report to a future Cabinet meeting recommending the following:

- a) That any future consideration of the Waste contract be presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a suitable time so as to enable pre-decision scrutiny and effective input into any forthcoming decision. The Committee requested that this incorporate any specialist advice that is commissioned for the future waste service model, before referring on to Cabinet, as mentioned at paragraph 9.5 of the Cabinet report;
- b) That going forward, contingency measures as well as a deeper look at other possible options for waste service provision is fully and openly considered and deliberated;
- c) That the other options that were considered in order for Cabinet to arrive at the current decision for a short-term waste contract from 2024 to 2026, be published in the public domain to ensure full openness and transparency.

Therefore, the decision of the Cabinet would take effect from the date of the Scrutiny Committee on the 30 June 2022.

Call-in Of Cabinet Decision: Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay

In October 2022, five Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chairs of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 requested to Call-In the Cabinet decision of 18 October 2022. Details as to the reasons for the Call-In were summarised as follows:

- Following representations from members of the public and responses to the public consultation were overwhelmingly against the appropriation of land.
- To provide public assurance as to why the appropriation of all of the land was necessary and to explore why Cabinet did not discuss the option of a reduction in the area of the land proposed for appropriation.
- The Cabinet report did not make reference to the survey which expressed a desire to retain a suitable and sufficient area of land which would protect it from permanent development.
- How Cabinet considered The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the 5 ways of working embedded in this Act (including involvement and collaboration with the community), and Planning Policy Wales guidance.

Full details of the Call-In can be read in the report to the Committee [here](#).

Members of the Committee heard from 3 members of the public on how Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay could have a potential impact on them or their organisations.

Following consideration of the evidence presented to them by Officers and Cabinet Members and examination of the decision, The Committee concluded that the Decision would not be referred back to Cabinet but made the following Recommendation to Cabinet:

a) That having regard to concerns expressed to Members by Porthcawl residents, views shared by public speakers and questions from Members, that Cabinet be requested that going forward for the next stages in the process that they involve Porthcawl Town Council, all stakeholders and the public in further consultation and engagement.

Therefore, the decision of the Cabinet would take effect from the date of the Scrutiny Committee on the 3 November 2022.

Call-in Of Cabinet Decision: Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy

In December 2022, three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 requested to Call-In the Cabinet decision of 13 December 2022. Details as to the reasons for the Call-In were summarised as follows:

- Financial implications and a need for profiling of estimated costs over the next 7 years.
- Performance and Monitoring –insufficient clarity as to how the strategy would be monitored and on what frequency.

- Appropriateness of the oversight and governance arrangements and the resources required to support the Strategy.

Full details of the Call-In can be read in the report to the Committee [here](#).

Members considered the evidence presented to them by Officers and Cabinet Members and following its examination of the decision, the Committee recommended that the decision be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration for the following reason:

Concerns were expressed about the lack of costing information contained in the original Cabinet report and Members felt that Cabinet needed to consider the wider financial costs before making the decision, with indicative longer term financial implications and more detail on the costs of achieving the 2024 milestones.

At a special meeting of Cabinet held on the 12 January 2023, Cabinet re-affirmed its previous decision made at the meeting dated 12 December 2022 with it noted that costings up to the period of 2024 will be outlined in the Action Plan that supports the Strategy.

Call-in Of Cabinet Decision: Hybont Project Gateway Review

In September 2023, four Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 requested to Call-In the Cabinet decision of 19 September 2023. Details as to the reasons for the Call-In were summarised as follows:

- Insufficient information for Cabinet to make a fully informed decision, no critical questioning to support the decision making and no consideration of alternative options.
- Incomplete and confusing financial and technological information.
- Lack of information regarding the arrangements around the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Insufficient information regarding the Council's Net Zero Carbon 2030 Strategy reliance on the project.
- The decision gave greater weight to financial considerations than carbon reduction in line with the Council's Net Zero Carbon 2030 Strategy to counter the climate emergency.
- Lack of detail regarding the 'small stake' in the 'JVCo' in return for land.

Full details of the Call-In can be read in the report to the Committee [here](#).

Members considered the evidence presented to them by Officers and Cabinet Members and the Committee agreed by majority that it would not refer the matter back to Cabinet for further consideration.

Therefore, the decision of the Cabinet would take effect from the date of the Scrutiny Committee on the 2 October 2023.

Call-in Of Cabinet Decision: Proposed Use of Land Transaction Transfer Protocol with Cardiff Capital Region for Land at Brynmenyn and Bryncethin

In March 2024, three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 requested to Call-In the Cabinet decision of 12 March 2024. Details as to the reasons for the Call-In were summarised as follows:

- Insufficient information for Cabinet to make a fully informed decision, no critical questioning to support the decision making and no consideration of alternative options.
- Lack of information regarding the reference to surplus land, whether or not there had been any third-party approach for the land either for a commercial sale or for a community use and information regarding the future of the land.
- Whether the Council ought to have sought independent legal advice and awaited consents and permissions prior to Cabinet making a decision.
- Lack of information regarding the value to be paid and the financial implications of possible abortive costs.
- The transfer did not protect the land for public use as the wider public would understand that phrase.
- Strong local opposition to the Scheme and the lack of consideration of the public interest.

Full details of the Call-In can be read in the report to the Committee [here](#).

Following consideration of the evidence presented to them by Officers and Cabinet Members and examination of the decision, the Committee concluded that the Decision would not be referred back to Cabinet but made the following Recommendation to Cabinet:

1. That Cabinet consider receiving a further report at the appropriate time on further information including the length of the lease and the terms of the value of the lease.
2. That Cabinet note the concerns raised in the Committee as contained in the Notice of Call-In and take them into account during any further deliberation.

Therefore, the decision of the Cabinet would take effect from the date of the Scrutiny Committee on the 26 March 2024.

PANELS

Budget Research and Evaluation Panel

The role of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) is to:

- a) Achieve consensus on the direction of the budget over the life of the medium term financial strategy;
- b) Achieve a detailed overview and assessment of the budget proposals where the expertise and knowledge of each Committee contributes to a Corporate understanding and appreciation of the draft budget proposals;
- c) Assist the Council to develop a budget for the forthcoming year that aims to meet the needs of the communities of Bridgend County Borough;
- d) Facilitate firmer understanding of the budget setting process and the draft proposals in order to assist the Committees in making informed comments, constructive challenge or recommendations to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process.



Chairperson
Cllr Tim Thomas

The BREP process provides a unique opportunity, outside of traditional scrutiny arrangements, to undertake a cross-party approach to support strategic leaders in financial planning, compliance with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and identify and support potential areas of growth.

The BREP met 5 times between August 2023 and January 2024 and submitted its [report](#) including 4 Recommendations upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28 including the proposed budget pressures and draft budget proposals for 2024-25, to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 January 2024. The Recommendations from BREP were endorsed and consolidated by COSC and reported to Cabinet on 6 February 2024, together with the coordinated Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. A response from the Cabinet was reported to the meeting of Cabinet on 20 February 2024, details of which can be viewed in the Appendix to the report [here](#).

This reporting period included difficult budget rounds with challenging budget pressures and draft budget savings, and for 2023-24 some postponement of meetings for more timely

information to be provided. During the consultation process with Scrutiny Committees in January 2024, the role and function of BREP was discussed and several Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees called for the future BREP purpose and process to be reviewed. The response to Recommendations advised that the issues would be picked up in the review of BREP for the following year.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) Public Services Board (PSB) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC)

A report on the new Public Service Board (PSB) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) arrangements to scrutinise the regional newly merged CTM PSB was submitted to Council on 19 July 2023. Please click on following link to see the: [**Council Report.**](#)

In accordance with statutory requirements and guidance Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board was created. A Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, comprising elected members from Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend local authorities and co-opted citizen members, was set up in May 2023 on the same footprint of the newly merged CTM PSB.

In September 2023, ahead of the JOSC's inaugural meeting, the nominated JOSC Members attended in-person training session facilitated by the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner, bringing the Members of the newly formed Joint Committee together in an informal environment to meet. The training supported members of the JOSC in their understanding of the seven Well-being Goals and the 'Five Ways of Working', the long-term impact of decisions within Cwm Taf Morgannwg, and how to tackle persistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change, through the lens of the Act. Important points were also raised for each local authority to ensure their overview and scrutiny has the power to: *'review or scrutinise the decisions made or actions taken by the Public Services Board and review or scrutinise the board's governance arrangements'*.

The Committee convened on 6 October 2023 and Councillor Robert Bevan (Rhondda Cynon Taf), was appointed as Chair, having previous experience as chair of the Cwm Taf PSB scrutiny with Councillor Simon Griffiths (Bridgend) as Vice Chair. The Committee met on 3 occasions.

Core principles have been established in the first year of the regional arrangements, and a priority noted to ensure good collaboration across the partnership. The agreed aim for the JOSC was to look at 'how' the PSB measures own success in delivering against the Objectives

set out in the Well-being Plan, as well as taking a proactive approach and undertake 'pre-scrutiny' so that the Committee is involved early in the decision-making process. The JOSOC also carried out their role within the context of budgetary pressures facing public services, promoting the sharing of good practice, better joint working and reducing the potential for duplication. The JOSOC will produce their own annual report, which will be available from each of the Local Authorities on publication later in 2024.

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal was a programme agreed in 2016 between the UK Government, the Welsh Government and the ten local authorities in South East Wales to bring about significant economic growth in the region through investment, upskilling, and improved physical and digital connectivity. A Joint Committee of all ten local Authorities of South East Wales was established for the purpose of overseeing and co-ordinating the discharge of the Councils' obligations in relation to the City Deal. The CCR City Deal was a programme for accelerating growth by maximising significant government investment in a long-term goal to improve economic conditions in South East Wales.

The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSOC) comprised one non-executive Member from each appointing Authority (and a Deputy to attend in their absence). The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee met to monitor the CCR City Deal's progress against its Programme plan and make reports and recommendations to the Regional Cabinet and / or to any of the Appointing Authorities and any of their Executives in respect of any function delegated to the Regional Cabinet in accordance with the Joint Working Agreement. The Committee met 4 times during 2022/23 and 3 times during 2023/24, chaired by Cllr Andrew Whitcombe, a Caerphilly County Borough Councillor.

Welsh Government legislation introduced in April 2021, led to the establishment of the South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC), in place of the CCR City Deal and has powers to aid regional economic wellbeing and is responsible for regional transport and strategic development plans. The Corporate Joint Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been created in place of the CCR City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the CJC.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCRUTINY IN 2024-25 AND BEYOND

Detailed below are the areas summarised as future priorities:

- **Scrutiny Review** – following Recommendations from the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel and Scrutiny Committees an independent Scrutiny Review was commissioned, following which an outcome was that a Scrutiny Protocol/Charter should be drafted and Scrutiny Chairs and Members be consulted and asked to sign up to its principles. It was also established that questioning summaries should be more thematic and that reports should be made available in a timely manner to ensure efficient scrutiny of Agenda Items, which are being taken forward this year.
- **Training** – as part of the above independent review, the following training needs were identified: Chairing, Questioning, Roles and Responsibilities and Call-In and consideration is being given to arrangements for the training.
- **BREP** – following a Member Briefing from the Section 151 Officer, a round of Group Briefings is underway, following which a meeting of BREP will be convened in September 2024 to formally start the process.
- **An Audit Wales Review of Governance** has recently been undertaken and the report is awaited, following which any issues identified and recommendations will be considered and a response provided.
- **Research and Evaluation Panels** – consideration will be given to how we can engage more partner organisations and identify and scope Research and Evaluation Panel topics in greater detail including potential research to be undertaken to support the work of a Scrutiny Panel.
- **Voice of Children and Young People** – Members have identified a need for young people to be involved in Scrutiny and the possibility of how to take this forward as a pilot will be explored, before potentially formalising it via nominations for Young Person Co-optees to Scrutiny Committees.
- **Explore more efficient methods of gathering/measuring the impact of Scrutiny** – Research commissioned by Scrutiny and undertaken by Graduates in the Performance Team regarding Methodologies and Performance Indicators, found that the Councils who responded believed Pre-decision scrutiny to be the most impactful method due to the understanding it provides Members, and that it challenges assumptions and assesses risks that may arise from the implementation of a decision, providing an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are finalised. Scrutiny will

continue to promote the benefit of Pre-Decision. Again, of those Councils who responded, performance measurement of the scrutiny function was under developed with most Councils having no Performance indicators for scrutiny, and a few Councils having some performance indicators. In this report, performance data has been included in a table for each Scrutiny Committee and in the coming year potential performance measurement / indicators will be considered for Scrutiny.

- **Better Public Engagement** - The Scrutiny Forward Work Plan for 2024-25 will be published on the Council's website to enable members of the public to engage and contribute to the work of Scrutiny. The Scrutiny Annual Report will also be published on the website to enable members of the public and other stakeholders to look at recent work and outcomes. The Scrutiny Committees will continue to strive to increase the number of external Invitees to Scrutiny Committees for related reports as part of their forward work programmes, working towards the targets set out in the Council's Engagement and Participation Strategy.
- **South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee**— The First Meeting of the CJC JOSC was held in July 2024 and Cllr Simon Griffiths has been nominated from Bridgend and Cllr Jon-Paul Blundell as Deputy. Looking ahead, there will be training on the CJC JOSC and forward work planning to identify and prioritise the topics to be scrutinised of the Corporate Joint Committee.
- **Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB JOSC** – it is being explored how to take forward meaningful Scrutiny of the Public Service Board, as requested by Members of COSC.
- **Evaluation and Feedback** - an annual Survey of Members will be explored and developed to contribute to the evaluation of Scrutiny and feed into future Scrutiny Annual reports, and the performance self-assessment requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBERSHIP 2022-23

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Heidi Bennett
Cllr Freya Bletsoe
Cllr Paul Davies
Cllr Richard Granville
Cllr Simon Griffiths
Cllr Martin Hughes
Cllr Martyn Jones
Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas
Cllr Tim Thomas
Cllr Graham Walter
Cllr Alex Williams (Chair)
Cllr Amanda Williams

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1

Cllr Richard Collins
Cllr Melanie Evans
Cllr Heather Griffiths
Cllr David Harrison
Cllr Martyn Jones
Cllr Johanna Llewellyn-Hopkins
Cllr Ellie Richards
Cllr Tim Thomas
Cllr Jeff Tildesley
Cllr Alex Williams (Chair)
Cllr Amanda Williams
Cllr Elaine Winstanley

Registered Representatives:

Rev Canon Edward Evans
Lynsey Morris

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2

Cllr Sean Aspey
Cllr Freya Bletsoe (Chair)
Cllr Eugene Caparros
Cllr Paul Davies
Cllr Paula Ford
Cllr Della Hughes
Cllr Maxine Lewis
Cllr Johanna Llewellyn-Hopkins
Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas
Cllr Alan Wathan
Cllr Amanda Williams
Cllr Richard Williams

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3

Cllr Steven Bletsoe
Cllr Norah Clarke
Cllr Colin Davies
Cllr Paul Davies (Chair)
Cllr Melanie Evans
Cllr Philip Jenkins
Cllr Mike Kearn
Cllr William Kendall
Cllr Jonathan Pratt
Cllr Graham Walter
Cllr Ian Williams
Cllr Martin Williams

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBERSHIP 2023-24

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Heidi Bennett
Cllr Freya Bletsoe
Cllr Paul Davies
Cllr Richard Granville
Cllr Simon Griffiths
Cllr Martin Hughes
Cllr Martyn Jones
Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas
Cllr Tim Thomas
Cllr Graham Walter
Cllr Alex Williams (Chair)
Cllr Amanda Williams

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1

Cllr Richard Collins
Cllr Melanie Evans
Cllr Heather Griffiths
Cllr Della Hughes
Cllr Martyn Jones
Cllr Johanna Llewellyn-Hopkins
Cllr Ian Spiller
Cllr Tim Thomas
Cllr Jeff Tildesley
Cllr Alex Williams (Chair)
Cllr Amanda Williams
Cllr Elaine Winstanley

Registered Representatives:

Angela Clarke
Samantha Lambert-Worgan

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2

Cllr Sean Aspey
Cllr Freya Bletsoe (Chair)
Cllr Eugene Caparros
Cllr Paul Davies
Cllr Paula Ford
Cllr Dave Harrison
Cllr Della Hughes
Cllr Maxine Lewis
Cllr Johanna Llewellyn-Hopkins
Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas
Cllr Alan Wathan
Cllr Richard Williams

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3

Cllr Steven Bletsoe
Cllr Norah Clarke
Cllr Colin Davies
Cllr Paul Davies (Chair)
Cllr Melanie Evans
Cllr Philip Jenkins
Cllr Mike Kearn
Cllr William Kendall
Cllr Jonathan Pratt
Cllr Graham Walter
Cllr Ian Williams
Cllr Martin Williams

LIST OF TRAINING AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2022/23 AND 2023/24

Scrutiny Specific Training

Overview and Scrutiny
Scrutiny Chairing Skills
Scrutiny Financial Monitoring
Scrutiny Questioning Skills
Scrutiny Performance Monitoring Training
Effective Engagement in Scrutiny
Questioning Skills

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Workshops

Performance Reporting Member Session

Chairperson Training

General Chairing Skills (meeting management)
Chair's Hybrid Meeting Training

All Member Training

General and Mandatory

Induction Sessions
Welcome Briefing
Microsoft Teams Training
How to Hit the Ground Running
Standards in Public Life / Code of Conduct & Refresher Training
General Outline of Committees
Equalities & Diversity
Safeguarding
Handling Online Abuse and Intimidation Webinar
Personal Development
Data Protection and Data Protection Act
Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse
Personal Safety & Self-Care
Fraud Awareness
Cyber Ninjas Training
Same Resident Event – Anti-social behaviour, waste enforcement, parking, fire service and arson reduction
Drop in Sessions – Member Surgeries – all Directorates

Corporate

Corporate Plan
Capital Strategy
Effective Decision Making in an Executive Governance System
Future Service Delivery Model

Corporate Health and Safety
Corporate Development Plan
Self-Assessment Member Training
Financial Awareness
Introduction to Treasury Management & Training
Local Government Finance
Housing Services
Public Services Board and the Wellbeing Plan

Education and Family Support

Support Services
Lifelong Learning Services
Learner Support Services
Family Support Services
Central South Consortium Joint Education Service
Relationships and Sexuality Education

Social Services and Wellbeing

Overview – Social Services & Wellbeing Directorate & Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act
Corporate Parenting & Safeguarding / Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act
Bridgend Corporate Parenting Strategy - Member Awareness Session
Members' Rota Visiting Scheme/Direct Care Service
Mental Health Matters
Wellbeing (including relationship with Halo and Awen)
Adult Social Care
Children's Social Care
Access Standards for Primary Care
Drug/alcohol guidance for Elected Members

Communities

City Deal and City Region
Bridgend CBC and Local Places for Nature
20MPH Speed Restriction Rollout
One.Network (Roadworks Map System)
Local Development Plan Update & 20 min towns
Employability Bridgend
Cardiff Capital Region Briefing
StreetSnap Training for Councillors
Invasive Non Native Species
Climate Change and Flooding

Scrutiny Training for Officers/Report Authors

Education and Family Support Directorate

Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 & 2023/24

Democratic Services

Chief Executive's Directorate

Bridgend County Borough Council

**For further details on the contents of this
report please email: scrutiny@bridgend.gov.uk**



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