

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

ANNUAL REPORT

2005 - 2006

Democratic Services
Vale of Glamorgan Council
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Chairmen's Foreword Annual Report 2005 - 2006

The Council's Constitution provides that an Annual Report on the work and future work of Scrutiny Committees should be presented to the Council.

Attached are the Annual Reports of the four Scrutiny Committees which highlight the work of the Committees for 2005/2006. The Annual Reports contain statistical information and a summary of the issues considered by the four Committees.

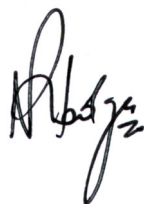
We have continued to work closely with Council officers and, where appropriate, Cabinet Members to maintain the contribution which the Scrutiny process makes to the services provided by the Council. One of our biggest challenges is to generate increased interest among the public, press and the Council's partners by demonstrating that Scrutiny can make a difference and we will continue to address this issue. With this in mind, 2005/06 has seen the production of the Council's Scrutiny Handbook which has been acknowledged by external auditors as an example of good practice and an excellent tool able to be used by all those involved in the Scrutiny process.

We are grateful for the invaluable help provided by officers of the Council and are confident that Scrutiny will continue to make a valuable contribution to the Council's performance and service delivery.

Chairman of Community Wellbeing & Safety
Councillor Mrs. M.E.J. Birch



Chairman of Economy & Environment
Councillor N.P. Hodges



Chairman of Corporate Resources
Councillor C.J. Williams



Chairman of Lifelong Learning
Councillor C.P. Franks



SCRUTINY COMMITTEES - ANNUAL REPORTS **MAY 2005 - 30TH APRIL, 2006**

Introduction

The following report has been produced in accordance with Section 6.03(d) of Article 6 of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Constitution which states that "Scrutiny Committees must report annually to Full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate".

Background

The main role of Scrutiny Committees is to help improve the Council's performance through monitoring and review, to look at Cabinet decisions and to help in the development of emerging policies and monitoring performance of the existing policies/strategies and services of the Council to ensure that they remain relevant and meet the changing needs of the community of the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Scrutiny process provides opportunities for non-Executive Members to examine the services provided, and to ask questions on how decisions should have been made, to consider whether service improvements can or should be put in place and to make recommendations.

Scrutiny encourages the Council to measure its own performance and regularly report in public on how well it is meeting its promises. It ensures openness and accountability about the way decisions are made and enables Scrutiny Committees to hold the Executive to account.

One of the biggest challenges which continue to face the Council is how to generate more interest among the public, press and its partners by demonstrating that Scrutiny can make a difference. A range of improvements to make the Scrutiny function more effective were approved at the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2005, following recommendations made by the then Audit Commission in Wales. A review of progress on Democratic Renewal (including an assessment of the performance of the Council's revised Scrutiny arrangements) by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) commenced in late 2005. The Wales Audit Office has commended the excellent quality of the recently produced Scrutiny Handbook and has requested that it be used as an example of good practice throughout Wales. The Handbook will provide a useful tool for Members in terms of the wide range of issues covered by the document and the ability to learn from reviews undertaken. The Scrutiny Handbook is now available on the website of the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

The Scrutiny Chairmen/Vice-Chairmen Group was established, providing a forum to share good practice and lessons learnt and to co-ordinate work programmes. It has recently agreed that twice a year the meeting of the Group be replaced by a workshop format focusing on issues that have arisen for both Members and officers; building on good working relationships between committees and support officers and enhance the role of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen by sharing experience and good practice.

Performance indicators have recently been agreed that will help to monitor the effectiveness of each Scrutiny Committee. Cross fertilisation of good practice will

enable all Scrutiny Committees to perform well with regard to the future challenges of the Democratic Renewal agenda.

The final report of the WAO is expected shortly and is likely to include reference to the Council being recommended to give further consideration to:

- strategic nature/amount of business considered;
- implementation of Task and Finish Groups;
- reporting of performance management information.

Scrutiny Budget

In 2005/06 an annual scrutiny budget of £10,000 was established. The budget is held within Democratic Services with the purpose of supporting the work of the Council's scrutiny function, including:

- fact finding visits;
- out of pocket expenses for witnesses;
- identification of notable practice.

Promotion of the Scrutiny function

Articles have appeared in the Vale Waves and in the latest copy of the Citizen's Panel News. Once the new website Content Management System is in place, the Scrutiny website pages will be further developed.

Call in

One of the principal ways in which Scrutiny Committees can hold the Executive (Cabinet) to account is through the use of their role in the call-in procedure. Call-in allows non-Executive Members of the Council to request that decisions taken by Cabinet are suspended to enable a further review.

The following pages identify the Four Scrutiny Committee of the Vale of Glamorgan, their membership, work programmes and achievements to date.

Scrutiny Committee (Community Wellbeing and Safety)

The Committee's scope of responsibility covers the service areas of Housing, Community Safety and Social Services. The Membership is as follows:

Councillor Mrs. M.E.J. Birch (Chairman); Councillor R.F. Curtis, (Vice-Chairman); Councillors R.J. Bertin, Ms. R.M. Birch, Mrs. J.E. Charles, P. Church, J. Clifford, S.C. Egan, C.L. Osborne, Mrs. A.J. Preston, Mrs M. Randall, A.J. Readman, Mrs. S.I. Sharpe, K.R. Stockdale, W.C. Vaughan, Mrs. M.R. Wikinson and C.J. Williams.

Also under the Council's Constitution each of the Scrutiny Committees is entitled to recommend to Council the appointment of people / organisations as non – voting co-optees to the Committees. The Scrutiny Committee (Community Wellbeing and Safety) has appointed the following organisational representatives: -

Shakespeare Residents Association
Colcot Residents Association
Gibbonsdown Residents Board
Vale Housing and Homelessness Forum
Vale Housing Federation
Vale Council Residents Forum
Shelter Cymru.

Current Forward Work Programme 2005/06 -

The key areas identified for the Work programme included the following:-

- Annual Budget
- Review on Domestic abuse and its implications for the Vale of Glamorgan
- Homelessness review
- Quarterly Performance Monitoring
- Bi-monthly monitoring of the Children's Placement Strategy
- Service Plans
- Monthly Revenue and Capital Monitoring.

Meetings

During the Municipal year 2005/06, the Committee met 15 times, 11 of the meetings were scheduled and 4 extraordinary which were called to deal with extra items of business and items requested by the Chairman.

Engaging with the Community

The Committee planned at the beginning of the year to rotate venues for its meetings throughout the Vale of Glamorgan and as a result visited the Hub Project in Barry, the Gladstone Project and Gibbonsdown Children's Centre. It is envisaged that this practice will continue as an ongoing initiative to include themed agenda items pertinent to the local area where the meeting takes place. The Committee plan to visit the Children's Centre in Llantwit Major in the first quarter of 2006/07.

Site Visits

Members undertook visits to some Local Authority establishments during the year and have requested that a timetable be drawn up to visit the remaining establishments in 2006/2007.

Work undertaken during the year

The work of the Committee during the year included: -

- Examining / monitoring Quarterly Service Performance
- Examining the Initial Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals
- Re establishing the Housing Sub Committee
- Revenue and Capital financial monitoring
- Monitoring Delayed Transfers of Care issues
- Monitoring progress and developments on the Council's Children's Placement Strategy
- Continuing to reaffirm the principle of preventative work being recognised as a priority in the budget process
- Continuing to raise the Committee's profile including the role and importance of Scrutiny in general
- Working with the Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group to encourage consistency of approach and develop new ways of working in line with recommendations received from WAG and the Wales Audit Office
- Reprioritising planned reviews
- Concluding the substance misuse review
- Programming visits to Local Authority establishments
- Formalising and working with officers in undertaking the Homelessness Review.

Members also requested additional information on various topics for example Social Services Inspectorate Reports on Residential Care establishments, Exit interviews (to analyse recruitment and retention issues) major repairs allowances, special educational needs review and decision tracking feedback for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Reviews (Improvement) undertaken during the year

The Committee agreed to undertake three reviews of service areas which members of the Committee had highlighted to consider service delivery issues and notable practices. However the review on domestic violence/ abuse was rescheduled for 2006 /2007 due to capacity issues within the Improvement and Development team who together with the Democratic Services Officer support the reviews. The substance misuse review was completed in 2005 and the Homelessness review is currently ongoing:-

(i) Substance Misuse Review - The Review considered what was done locally to prevent substance misuse amongst young people in the Vale of Glamorgan and identify gaps in service provision. Consideration was also given to an Action Plan which addressed local issues identified within the Review which made proposals as to future service delivery. Whilst there would be additional funding requirements, the main aim was to achieve progress through existing resources by reshaping the way in which the work was currently being undertaken. The Committee agreed to review the Action Plan on a six monthly basis. As a result, the nine recommendations of the Review were referred to the Cabinet who subsequently noted the recommendations and agreed that the implications of the Substance Misuse Review be considered as part of the 2006/07 budget review.

(ii) Homelessness Review - The Review was identified to be undertaken in order to consider the effectiveness of the Council's Homelessness Strategy and the impact

on the community with one of the desired outcomes to put forward recommendations that would contribute towards preventing homelessness in the Vale. The Chairman has taken a lead role in the review and has provided feedback to Committee on the progress made to date. Interviews with various organisations and users have taken place and it is intended that the report will be completed in May for full consideration by the Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet Member involvement

Committee continued to encourage the attendance of the Cabinet Members for Housing and Community Safety and Social and Care Services at meetings to facilitate questioning on their portfolio service areas.

Presentations Received

The Committee received presentations on the following subjects during the year:

- Crime and Disorder in the Vale
- Restructuring of the South Wales Police Force
- Overview of the incident at Dow Corning - by the Emergency services
- Residential Care Home Providers - overview on their service area and pressures facing the service.
- Seminar on Mental Health services was held in July 2005 covering areas of mutual concern between the local authority and the Local Health Board.

Two presentations yet to be timetabled have been approved by the Chairman and will be scheduled to take place in 2006/2007 in the form of a seminar session. They will cover the Older Peoples Forum and Care and Repair in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Budget

The Scrutiny Committee utilised some monies from the £10,000 Scrutiny budget for attending conferences and undertaking research in respect of the Homelessness review as well as payment for the hiring of venues for Committee meetings within the Vale.

Requests for Call – in of Cabinet decisions

The Committee received 2 call-in requests during the year as follows: -

(i) 31st October, 2005 - Health and Social Care for Adults: Creating a Unified and Fair System for Assessing and Managing Care. The matter had been called in (by Councillor Mrs. M.E.J. Birch) in order that “the Scrutiny Committee could have a full understanding of the criteria to be employed”. Whilst endorsing the resolutions of Cabinet the Committee also recommended that “Cabinet be advised that should the local authority’s finances change, the moderate to low needs be reviewed at that stage”. Cabinet subsequently noted the recommendation.

(ii) 31st October, 2005 - Review of Homes 4 U - Allocation Policy. Called in (by Councillor G. John) to consider and debate “That priority status should give Vale of Glamorgan applicants priority over those from outside the County and in addition this priority status should be given to those applying for a property within their own area.” Cabinet, however, subsequently rejected the Committees recommendation that “Cabinet be requested to not adopt the review of Homes 4 U allocation policy at this stage, in light of the committee’s concerns and until the consultation that was requested be undertaken and the findings presented”.

Requests for Consideration of matter

The Committee received five requests for consideration during the year: -

(i) 18th July 2005 - Adult Respite Care Centre Rhoose - Councillor G. John requested that the Committee consider the costs of converting the property, the details of all staff in attendance and their qualifications and that a visit be undertaken to the premises. The Committee recommended that further reports on the subject be presented and that parents, relevant organisations, members of the public and service users be invited to a future meeting where an exchange of views, open/discussion would take place on services for people with learning disabilities. A programme of visits to Community Services residential establishments was also drawn up.

(ii) 3rd October 2005 - Additional CCTV - Councillor Mrs. A. Moore requested that consideration be given as a result of a request by residents/shopkeepers for further CCTV cameras. After due consideration the Committee requested Cabinet consider within the "budget setting framework for resources to be allocated for a feasibility study for additional CCTV within the Vale of Glamorgan." As a result Cabinet requested that a further report be presented to a future meeting and that a sum of £20,000 be added to the initial budget proposals to allow such further development of CCTV.

(iii) 1st December 2005 - Dow Corning Emergency Incident - Requested by Councillors Mrs. A. Moore, N. Moore and F.T. Johnson. An extraordinary meeting was called by the Committee to "allow members and Councillors to ask questions and seek clarification on the incident" that had occurred at the Dow Corning Site in Sully. As a result of the meeting the Committee requested to receive a progress report in six months to assess improvements to the Off-Site Emergency Plan with the Plan to include a definition of what was considered to be a major incident, that representatives of Dow Corning be invited to attend as external witnesses and that the Council, where possible, assist Dow Corning with the establishment of a telephone warning system.

(iv) 3rd October, 2005 - Update on the work of the Gibbonsdown Centre - Councillor R.J. Bertin requested the Committee receive an update and overview on the work of the Centre. In order to address this request a Scrutiny Committee meeting itself took place at the premises on the 3rd October 2005 with the Manager of the Centre providing a tour of the facilities and an overview presentation of the project.

(v) CCTV Brecon Court - (Councillor R.J. Bertin) - The Councillor withdrew the request for consideration after visiting the site and discussing the issues with the Head of Service. Agreement was reached that the site be kept under consideration and the position be reviewed in 2006.

References from Cabinet to the Scrutiny Committee

Six matters were referred by the Cabinet to the Scrutiny Committee in 2006/2007 as detailed below: -.

(i) Welsh Local Government Association - Social Services Summit - the Committee endorsed the Cabinets decision.

(ii) Supporting People Plan - The committee noted the plan but requested that a presentation on future needs for the service area be provided to a future meeting.

(iii) Manifesto for Welsh Local Government - All Scrutiny Committees were requested to comment on the manifesto and their comments were incorporated into the final response to WAG.

(iv) Section 180 Housing Act 1996 - Voluntary sector Funding proposals - the Cabinet decision was noted.

(v) South East Wales Improvement Collaborative - The Committee noted the resolutions of Cabinet but requested that reports on the progress and the key collaborative issues identified by the service be presented to a future meeting.

(vi) Pressures on Services and Budgets for People with Learning difficulties

References from the Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet

The Committee made ten referrals to the Cabinet with varying degrees of success as below:-

(i) Health and Social Care for Adults Creating a Unified Assessment - The Committee requested to receive updates on the progress of the Unified Assessment Implementation and that consideration be given to amending the Eligibility band level due to the limited Community Care resources. Cabinet accepted that updates be received but did not accept considering amending the eligibility band level.

(ii) Major Repairs Allowance - The Committee on 23rd May, 2005, considered a report which contained reasons for the underspends in relation to the Capital Programme 2004/05 Major Repairs Allowance. Members had noted that the reason for the underspends had been primarily one of capacity in that there had been a lack of dedicated staffing capacity to undertake the planning, procurement and management of the Housing Capital Programme, and decided to draw Cabinet's attention to the same.

Cabinet was advised that a further report would be presented in respect of the matter in due course and thus noted the concerns of the Committee.

(iii) Substance Misuse Review - On 5th September, 2005 the Committee considered a review of substance misuse provision for young people in the Vale of Glamorgan which identified gaps in existing services. 11 recommendations were made to Cabinet who resolved that the recommendations be noted and that the implications of the Substance Misuse Review be considered as part of the budget review 2006/07.

(iv) Decision Tracking - The Committee regularly received decision tracking information on items referred to Cabinet for consideration however the committee considered that when rejecting or noting recommendations the Cabinet's reasons for decisions were brief and they requested fuller reasons. The Cabinet however resolved "that an explanation, where possible, be given if it is reasonably practicable and affordable and that 'noted' is, in itself a clear indication that the points have been noted. If further action is required, it will be recorded in the minute."

(v) Revenue and Capital Monitoring - The Committee recommended that Cabinet be requested to investigate the uses of the HRA funding for Disabled Facilities Grants and a further report be provided to the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee as a matter of urgency." Cabinet resolved that the recommendation be not accepted prior to consideration of the Housing Stock Investment Review Programme.

(vi) Closed Circuit CCTV - On 3rd October, 2005 the Committee considered a report which contained a petition for additional Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in Cadoxton and considered a request from Councillors for additional CCTV in Cadoc Ward. It was recommended to Cabinet that consideration be given within the budget setting framework for resources to be allocated for a feasibility study for additional CCTV within the Vale of Glamorgan. The Cabinet as a result subsequently agreed to receive a further report on the matter and during the budget round £20,000 additional money was earmarked for the extra work.

(vii) Exit Interviews - The Committee noted the lack of facilities at a number of office premises and requested that Cabinet consider providing suitable rest rooms/restaurants (to ensure the provision of food and drink) in all the Council's workplace areas. Cabinet therefore requested that a more detailed report on the matter be presented to a future meeting.

(viii) Health and Social Care Creating a Unified Assessment - - update - During consideration of the monitoring of the proposals the Committee recommended that Cabinet be advised that should the local authorities finances change that the moderate to low needs be reviewed following which Cabinet duly noted.

(ix) School Transport - Walked Routes to School - The decision of the Cabinet to endorse changes in school transport provision in respect of the St. Donat's to Llantwit Major Comprehensive School and Michaelston -Le-Pit to the Murch routes had been strongly rejected by the Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment) who had in turn referred all its recommendations to the Scrutiny Committee (Community Wellbeing and Safety) and the Community Liaison Committee for further consideration. The recommendations were endorsed with an addition that in future all routes be assessed during the winter months.

As a result of the referral Cabinet reaffirmed their original decision but requested that a further report be submitted to Cabinet on the points of concern raised by the Scrutiny Committees and the Community Liaison Committee.

(x) Tackling Anti Social Behaviour - (see Section on Anti-social behaviour (page 12)).

(xi) Revenue and Capital Monitoring - Concern was raised in respect of the provision of the Social Services Fund and a report requested on the number of staff vacancies in the Housing Department. Cabinet requested that a report be presented to a future meeting.

References from Scrutiny Committee to Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee Economy and Environment referred for comment the report on Walked Routes to Schools (as detailed in item (ix) above) and the Scrutiny Committee Lifelong Learning referred for information their Review on Looked After Children. The Committee made two additional recommendations to the Review which the Lifelong Learning committee accepted and referred to Cabinet.

References received from other Committees

The Committee also considered a reference from the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee in respect of Grants Subsumed Into The Revenue Support Grant Cabinet subsequently resolved that the views of both Committee's be deferred pending consideration of a report from the Corporate Management Team on the budgetary implications.

Re-appointment of the Housing Sub-Committee

The Housing Sub-Committee was reappointed by the Scrutiny Committee 23rd May 2005, with the remit to consider all matters arising under the following issues and report on suggested changes and improvements to Council policies to the Committee:

- Audit of housing need and the provision of affordable housing, including grants, allocations and the new housing developments
- Void management
- Cyclical maintenance programme
- Methods of paying rents
- Community Safety issues on housing estates
- Rolling programme of visits to housing estates
- Supporting People
- Homelessness

Work undertaken by the Housing Sub-Committee is reported to the Scrutiny Committee for discussion and recommendations to Cabinet. In addition to the existing non-voting co-optees to the Housing Sub-Committee, full Council approved the appointment of a representative from Shelter Cymru.

The Sub-Committee conducted a tour of the eastern Vale in September 2005 and visits by Members to the Homelessness Hostel and the Council's Void Properties were also arranged during the year.

The following Forward Work Programme and timetable for consideration of items was approved by the Sub-Committee on 27th October 2005:

Interim report on voids Anti-social behaviour	1 st December 2005
Methods of paying rents Housing Benefit payments Rent arrears	2 nd February 2006
Voids	16 th February 2006
Audit of Housing Need Provision of affordable Housing	2 nd March 2006
Audit of Housing Need Provision of affordable housing	6 th April 2006

Representatives of housing and tenant organisations were invited to submit items for consideration by the Sub-Committee and the following matters were raised and discussed:

- Homes 4U
- Tenants' Handbook
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Replacement of flat roofs (Council Properties)
- Council Policy on the collection of grass cuttings and whether used for compost
- Water Rates – charges made to Council tenants
- Dual Housing Benefits

Strategy for Tenant and Resident Participation in the Vale of Glamorgan

The invitation to tender for the Finance, Management and Housing Consultancy work, following the Housing Options Appraisal, had included the very clear need to develop a tenant participation strategy. Judith Wayne of TRIBAL HCH, Project Director, would be responsible for tenant engagement. A survey of all tenants had been undertaken in July/beginning of August 2005. There were currently three tenant organisations/resident boards operating within the framework of a Compact with the Council in the Barry area and these covered tenants who resided in approximately 30% of the Council housing stock. This left around 70% of Council tenants not represented by a formal housing organisation. A resident board that had operated in the Penarth area had disbanded as a result of the redevelopment of the Harbour View area, but it was hoped that this could be resurrected in the future in some form.

Members and representatives of residents associations agreed that it was best to have an inclusive strategy that met the needs of all residents. Traditionally there had been a clear public and private sector split but with many Council housing estates being of mixed tenure there was a need to tie both sectors closer together.

The purpose of the Housing Stock Investment Strategy was to identify how to target money and resources effectively in order for the Council to retain its housing stock and meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standards.

Empty Property Management: Interim Report on Void Properties

The Voids Team was situated within the Building Maintenance Service. A number of operational meetings had been held in conjunction with Housing Services (the client) to consider how performance could be improved. As a result of these meetings it was jointly concluded that action was required in specific areas if improvements were to be achieved. Areas to be addressed included:

- Classification of voids based on repair levels
- Key control
- Turn around targets
- Pre-notice for milestone activities
- Pre-set target dates

New procedures were implemented on 5th September 2005 and these were reviewed in November 2005 and February 2006.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced a new Section 218A to the Housing Act 1996 which placed a requirement on every social landlord to prepare a statement of its policy and procedure in relation to anti-social behaviour by 30th October 2005 in Wales. The Council and its landlord partners in the Vale of Glamorgan took this as an opportunity to bring together into one document their existing joint commitment to tackle anti-social behaviour in a consistent way. On 1st December 2005 a meeting to consider Anti-Social Behaviour was held and invitations were issued to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team based at Barry Police Station, Housing Association Partners, Environmental Health officers and representatives of the Mediation Service. Presentations were received from Jayne Hayman, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator and Chief Inspector Lewis of South Wales Police on the Four Stage Approach to Anti-Social Behaviour. Elaine Alford, Community Mediation Development Officer outlined the positive results that could be achieved with relatively little resource implications. The Mediation Service was self-funding so a small charge had to be made, however, it was a simple but effective tool to use in partnership.

It was recommended to the Scrutiny Committee (Community Wellbeing and Safety) that they support recommendations to Cabinet that

- (1) training be given to Members on how to deal with anti-social behaviour
- (2) for the promotion of the prevention of anti-social behaviour by greater pro-activity and increased use of the Mediation Service.

Both of the above recommendations were supported by the Scrutiny Committee (Community Wellbeing and Safety).

Cabinet subsequently accepted recommendation (1) and referred recommendation (2) to the Community Safety Partnership for consideration.

On 2nd February 2006, the Head of Finance presented reports on Housing Benefits Dual Payments and Performance Management Self Assessment. The self-assessment against the 2005 standards had identified that the Housing Benefit Service was performing at a high level. Claims were being dealt with speedily and would therefore have little, or no, impact on levels of outstanding Council rent arrears.

The Head of Housing and Community Safety reported on methods of paying rent and indicated that this would be extended to include Direct Debit payments. The development of a Rent Strategy for the management, prevention and collection of Council tenant rent by the Council had reduced rent arrears significantly from in excess of £500,000 in 2002/3 to just under £150,000 at the end of 2004/5. The Rent Arrears Strategy focussed not only on the collection of rent but also on ways of preventing tenants from going into arrears in the first place. A further report, following further discussion with Welsh Water, on the availability of a water rates discount for Council tenants was requested by the Housing Sub-Committee.

Outstanding Work Programme Items

Audit of Housing Need and Provision of Affordable Housing had been items due to be considered by the Housing Sub-Committee in March and April 2006. The Housing Investment Report produced by TRIBAL HCH had highlighted the options for the Council to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standards. Priority had been given to these areas of work, which had prevented the full work programme from being completed.

Work Programme 2006/07

At its meeting on 25th April, 2006, the Housing Sub-Committee deferred consideration of their work programme (to be agreed at the beginning of the forthcoming municipal year) pending consideration of the Housing Options Investment Report.

Examples of Achievements by the Scrutiny Committee and other work undertaken during the Municipal Year

The above report highlights the work undertaken and some achievements for the Scrutiny Committee during the Municipal Year, however, the Committee notes other achievements as below: -

A Joint Review of the Social Services Department was undertaken by the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales and the Wales Audit Office. This resulted in a Joint Review Team being established within the Directorate of Community Services which managed the inspection process and arranged regular seminar sessions for Members and officers prior to and during the inspection. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee were also interviewed along with the Leader

and relevant Cabinet Members. During the process of the Joint Review, Inspectors also attended Scrutiny Committee meetings to gather evidence for the review.

Whilst the findings of the Joint Review have yet to be published, the likely date the Directorate will receive some feedback is May 2006. In the Annual Report for 2005/06 the Committee stated that they recognised the importance of the Joint Review of Social Services and would support the Council in this area and have throughout the year cooperated with the Inspectors during the process by providing information and assistance as required.

The process of reporting quarterly performance monitoring of services to the Scrutiny Committees has allowed Members to increase their knowledge in the specialist service areas and provided up to date information which officers and Members can work on to further improve service delivery and target the areas of most need.

Regular requests for up to date information on monitoring Community Care budgetary pressures and Emergency pressures in delayed transfers of care have resulted in the Committee again highlighting areas for improvement and generated discussions to take place with partner agencies in respect of shared funding arrangements as indicated by the Welsh Assembly Guidance.

During the year the reviews undertaken by Committee resulted with Members becoming increasingly involved in the reviews and contributing to the refining of the process including the Chairman encouraging members of the public to take part in the process by advertising in the local press and encouraging involvement with outside organisations by inviting them to workshops to fully partake in the process.

The Committee also gave careful consideration to the budgetary proposals which formed the Committee's remit which were subsequently referred by the lead Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) to the Cabinet, who referred them to the Cabinet Budget Working Group who subsequently took them into account during the Working Group's deliberations on the proposals

Future Work Programme 2006 / 2007

The Committee will continue to monitor/receive the following as part of its work programme for 2006/07:

- Children's Placement Strategy
- Emergency Pressures Delayed Transfers of Care Updates
- Quarterly Performance Monitoring
- Revenue and Capital Expenditure Monitoring
- Budget Proposals
- Improvement Plan
- Domestic Violence/Abuse review
- Exit Interviews
- Unified Assessment Progress Reports
- Reappoint the Housing Sub-Committee
- Substance Misuse - Review of Action Plan

Furthermore, as a result of the Joint Review of Social Services being undertaken by the Wales Audit Office and the Social Services Inspectorate, the Committee also intends to assess the findings of the review and any areas identified in the review for service improvement will be considered for inclusion in its Work Programme for 2006/07 at a later date.

Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources)

The Committee's scope of responsibility covers service areas of Chief Executive's, Democratic Services, Human Resources and Equalities, Finance, ICT and Property, Legal Services and Regulatory Services. Membership is as follows:

Councillor C.J. Williams (Chairman); Councillor Mrs. C.V.L. Clay (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Ms. L. Burnett, Mrs. J.E. Charles, P. Church, J. Clifford, A.D. Dobbinson, N.P. Hodges, G. John, Mrs. M. Kelly Owen, N. Moore, C.L. Osborne, A.G. Powell, Mrs. A.J. Preston, B.I. Shaw, Mrs. M.R. Wilkinson and M.R. Wilson.

Current Forward Work Programme 2005/06

In April 2005 the Scrutiny Committee identified a number of issues for inclusion in their work programme and these related to the following:

- Corporate Projects Review - To consider the impact of corporate projects across the Vale including how these had contributed to the regeneration of the community.
- Job Evaluation - To review the effectiveness of the Job Evaluation process, how successful this had been implemented within the Council and the impact of staff.
- Looked After Children - A Review of Looked After Children costs for the Council, including the use of independent providers and the link between Education, Social Services and Housing.

Meetings

During 2005/2006 the Committee met 18 times. 13 of the meetings were scheduled with the remaining 5 extraordinary meetings.

Work undertaken during the year

The work of the Committee in the past year included Monitoring/ Reviewing/Assessing the following:

- Corporate Plan Review
- Improvement Plan Review
- Monthly Revenue and Capital monitoring
- Quarterly Performance Service monitoring
- Trading Accounts monitoring
- Initial Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals
- Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy
- ICT Facilities for Members
- Asset Management Plan
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Expenditure in Children and Family Services
- One Vale E-Government Programme Implementation
- Use of Consultants.

Presentations

The Committee received presentations on Departmental Service Plans and in relation to the review of expenditure into Children and Family Services (Deloitte).

Examples of Achievements during the Municipal Year

(i) Initial Budget Proposals (Revenue and Capital)

The Scrutiny Committee gave careful and lengthy consideration to the service areas' budgetary proposals which fell within the Committee's remit and also to the recommendations of the three other Scrutiny Committees in relation to the initial Budgetary Proposals (Revenue and Capital) which fell within their respective remits.

The Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations of the three other Scrutiny Committees and also made specific recommendations to the Cabinet on their behalf and on matters which fell within its own purview.

All of the recommendations from the four Scrutiny Committees on the initial Capital and Revenue Budget Proposals were subsequently referred to Cabinet for consideration. Cabinet subsequently referred these matters onto the Cabinet Budget Working Group for further consideration. These were subsequently taken into account during the Working Group's deliberations on the subject.

(ii) Use of Consultants

The Scrutiny Committee undertook an analysis of the use and associated costs of consultants who were commissioned to undertake work on behalf of the Council during the financial year 2004/05. A report on this subject was considered in March 2006. Having considered the information and in recognition of the Scrutiny Committee's continued desire to investigate the matter further the Scrutiny Committee established a Task and Finish Group with a view to undertaking a more detailed assessment of the use of consultants.

(iii) Review of Major Corporate Projects

The Review aimed to consider three key areas in relation to corporate projects namely; the general management of the project, the use of and success or otherwise or partnership working and the levels of external funding and success access to grants. The Review concentrated on projects undertaken over the last five years at a cost of £500,000 or more.

Several key themes were identified as a result of the research particularly, the general lack of support or expertise of officers, the availability of external grants on occasions, officers were operating in isolation and not aware of existing partnerships that other departments had with external bodies, were unaware of other bids being submitted for grants from the same funding stream, not considering whether their project met with the Council's key priorities and were able to continue after grant funding had ended.

The Scrutiny Committee will consider the findings of the WLGA study on Excellence in Capital Investment and make recommendations to Cabinet on the implementation of any lessons that could be learnt in relation to the management of large-scale projects within the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The Scrutiny Committee also requested Cabinet to consider requesting the Project Management Unit to:

- make clear their roles and responsibilities especially between client and the Major Project Manager
- utilise the Council's Corporate Project Management methodology

- introduce further quality control procedures to ensure greater consistency in the approach to those involved in delivering major corporate projects
- provide a quarterly briefing note to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) on current major corporate projects and upon completion of a project (or a phase) an assessment on the impact on the relevant community.

The Cabinet was also requested to reaffirm the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment) in their recent review of Community Regeneration Projects (Cabinet Minute No. C2305 refers) and extend to cover all major corporate projects. The Cabinet decision in respect of these matters is pending.

The Corporate Management Team subject to the approval of Cabinet has also been requested to assess the feasibility of one officer taking on the role of Corporate Grants Officer, their role to include the following:

- co-ordinate bids with external funding, ensuring that they were linked to priorities agreed by strategic partnerships
- responsibility for the Grant Finder software and Grants Networks meetings
- provide support and assistance on grant applications
- provide support to services through the application process to reduce the burden on officers
- create and maintain a database on existing partnerships and grant applications which was accessible by all Council officers

Subject to approval of the above, the Corporate Grants Officer will be required to provide a quarterly briefing note to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) on current major corporate projects (other than those managed by the Project Management Unit) and upon completion an assessment on the impact upon the relevant community.

Cabinet, at its meeting held on 25th April, 2006 approved the recommendations of this Scrutiny Committee subject to the requirements of the Project Management Unit providing the same details as proposed in paragraph (iii) above to the client

Call-ins

A total of 5 call-ins were made on the following Cabinet decisions:

- (i) Closure of Accounts – This matter had been called-in by Councillor M. Wilson and considered at the meeting held on 26th July, 2005. The purpose of the call-in was to scrutinise the variances, slippages, overspends and underspends. He was concerned that the Committee had not had the opportunity to scrutinise the report prior to the matter being referred to the Council meeting on 29th June, 2005. The report was subsequently noted by the Scrutiny Committee.
- (ii) Treasury Management - The matter had been called-in by Councillor M. Wilson and considered at the meeting held on 26th July, 2005. The purpose of the call-in was to scrutinise why creditors had increased as well as investors. The report was subsequently noted by the Scrutiny Committee.
- (iii) Major Project Posts - This matter had called-in by Councillor N. Moore and was considered at the meeting held on 14th February, 2006. The purpose of the call-in was to discuss the rationale for the proposed regradings. Reservations were expressed in respect of the justification for doing so. The reservations of the Committee related to insufficient information and evidence to consider the matter in

terms of comparative information, ongoing job evaluation, recent appointments and “hard to fill” positions.

The Scrutiny Committee requested Cabinet to commission a further detailed report for consideration by the Cabinet and this Scrutiny Committee in respect of the issues raised in paragraph 4 of the original Cabinet report dated 1st February, 2006. The Scrutiny Committee also called upon Cabinet to include within this report further information relating to the clarification of the full costs to the Council of the regradings and benchmarking data obtained for similar posts at other local authorities.

Cabinet on 1st February, 2006 reaffirmed its original decision, with it being agreed that should such a matter come before a future meeting of Cabinet, then the issues raised by the Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) be a matter for consideration, i.e. clarification of the full costs to the Council of regradings and submission of information relating to benchmarking data obtained for similar posts at other local authorities.

(iv) C.A.S.H. Grants Scheme - This matter was called-in by Councillor R.F. Curtis and was considered at the meeting held on 14th March, 2006. The purpose of the call-in was to discuss funding received by Town Councils under this Scheme when compared against funding received by Community Councils. He considered that the current proposals for the award of funding paid no regard to priority of need or population served. He suggested that the proposed criteria be reviewed to factor in proportionality either by per household or per head of population and prioritising schemes so that they concentrated on the most disadvantaged areas of the Vale of Glamorgan.

The general view of the Committee was that the C.A.S.H. Scheme criteria be reviewed to include matters of proportionality, priority of need and that assistance be provided to Town and Community Councils to enable them to maximise funding.

The Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that it give consideration to the following issues:

- (a) a copy of their proposals be forwarded to all Town and Community Councils to facilitate a consultation exercise on this matter.
- (b) consideration be given to amend their proposals to include the allocation of grant funding linked to population served and priority of need.
- (c) provision of further historical information regarding the number of applications refused and those declined due to the Scheme being over-subscribed and dependent on the findings consider reviewing the funding of the C.A.S.H. Scheme with a view to increasing the overall funding allocation.
- (d) additional support being provided to Town and Community Councils to enable them to identify appropriate schemes and prepare bids for funding under the C.A.S.H. Scheme.

Cabinet on 15th March 2006, did not accept the Scrutiny recommendations as it was considered that “factoring proportionality into the scheme” would give preference to the larger Councils when the prime criteria for the award of grant was the quality of the bid; and, assistance was currently given to Councils in the preparation of their bids.

(v) Council's Asset Management Plan - This call-in was subsequently withdrawn by Councillor R. Bertin on the understanding that the Director of Community Services would submit a report to this Scrutiny Committee as soon as possible clarifying the position with regard to Pencoedre Playing Fields inclusion within the "Tribal" HCH report.

Requests for Consideration of Matter

Four requests for consideration were received.

(i) Cowbridge Bowls Pavilion – Councillor Mrs. V.M. Hartrey in June 2005, made a request in respect of the increased cost associated with Cowbridge Bowls Pavilion scheme and the need for further monitoring information to generally minimise budget overruns in respect of capital schemes in the future. This matter was considered at the meeting held on 28th June, 2005. Members received a report from the Director of Finance, ICT and Property which set out the reasons for the increased cost of the above scheme and monitoring arrangements in place to minimise cost increases. The Committee noted the position.

(ii) Emergency Planning Function – Councillor N. Moore in February 2006, made a request relating to the Council's Emergency Planning function. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Legal and Regulatory Services at the meeting held on 14th March, 2006 in response to Councillor Moore's request which updated and apprised the Committee on progress regarding service delivery issues and recruitment to the Emergency Planning staffing structure. The Committee noted the arrangements in place with regard to this service.

(iii & iv) Disabled Access Facilities in Council Premises and Childcare Voucher Scheme - The remaining two requests for consideration were submitted by Councillor Mrs. M. Wilkinson in March 2006. Both requests were considered at the meeting held on 4th April, 2006. The first of these two requests related to Disabled Access Facilities in Council Buildings particularly, in respect of the Civic Offices Council Chamber which is used for public events including weddings. Members received a report from the Director of Learning and Development on progress the Council was making towards meeting its statutory obligations in relation to the Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA). The Scrutiny Committee subsequently made a recommendation to the Cabinet requesting that priority be given to implementing alterations to the Council Chamber so that it complies with DDA requirements by the end of 2006. Cabinet at its meeting held on 25th April, 2006 accepted.

The second request related to the Council's current Child Care Voucher Scheme. The Scrutiny Committee received a report from the Director of Learning and Development which detailed current arrangements in place to assist employees who met the Council's criteria for assistance under the above Scheme. Members were also apprised of other child care support schemes which were currently being investigated that could be of potential benefit to employees. The Scrutiny Committee will consider a further report by the Director of Learning and Development in July 2006, on this subject.

References from Cabinet (consultation)

A number of references were referred from the Cabinet to Scrutiny in 2005/2006 including the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget Strategy, Vale School Investment Strategy, the Budget process, Relationship Manager's Annual Letter, Treasury Management, Initial Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals. References from Scrutiny Committee to Scrutiny Committee

A total of 6 references were received from the Council's three other Scrutiny Committees during the year and these are detailed as follows:

- Community Wellbeing and Safety Budget (2) (Initial Revenue Proposals and Initial Capital Budget Proposals)
- Economy and Environment Budget (2) (Initial Proposals, Initial Capital Budget Proposals)
- Lifelong Learning Budget (2) (Initial Revenue Proposals and Initial Capital Budget Proposals)

References from Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet

The Scrutiny Committee referred 5 matters to Cabinet relating to the following against each of which the Cabinet decision is shown:

- Initial Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals – (9 recommendations were noted and referred to the Cabinet Budget Working Group)
- Major Project Posts. (1 recommendation - see para (iii) (page 19) for Cabinet decision)
- Regulatory Services - Quarterly Performance monitoring (3rd Quarter) - Funding of signage in respect of Control of Alcohol Consumption on Streets Orders (1 recommendation - Cabinet, at its meeting held on 25th April, 2006 accepted this Scrutiny Committee's recommendation that in the event of funding not being forthcoming from the Community Safety Partnership in full or in part that the Cabinet would consider the position at that time).
- C.A.S.H. Scheme. (4 recommendations not accepted - see para (iv) (page 19) for Cabinet decision)
- Disabled Access Facilities in Council Premises (1 recommendation - see paragraph (iii) (page 21) for Cabinet decision).

Future Work Programme 2006/2007

The work programme for 2006/2007 will be developed in line with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme and the parameters outlined in the Scrutiny Handbook and will include issues identified by the Committee and the continuance of performance monitoring and consideration of future budgets.

The following three Scrutiny Reviews will form part of the work programme for 2006/07 and be given priority as agreed at the extraordinary meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 24th April, 2006.

Draft Scope for Discussion

➤ Looked After Children

A review of looked after children costs the Council, including the use of independent providers, and the links between Education, Social Services and Housing.

Officers had commenced the review of the above subject during February 2006. It had proved difficult to progress due to existing workload/resource pressures experienced by staff in Community Services who were already committed to the Joint Review. It was agreed following informal discussions between the Chairman,

Vice-Chairman, Councillors A.D. Dobbinson (Labour Group Leader) and Councillor G. John (Independent Group Leader) that the review be revisited following the completion of the Joint Review.

Review period to be determined for 2006/07.

➤ **Job Evaluation**

A review of the effectiveness of the Job Evaluation process, how successful this has been implemented within the Council and the impact on staff.

Given that the implementation of the above scheme by the Council has yet to be completed it had not been possible for officers to progress the review within the original review period identified by the Committee.

Review period to be determined for 2006/07.

➤ **Holm View Leisure Centre**

The issue of Holm View Leisure Centre was originally raised during the Planning for Real Activity that took place in 2002. The issue was that local people felt that the facility was not well-used by local people; that it was run on a purely commercial basis, which overlooked the needs of the local disadvantaged community.

This matter was raised again at the Community Regeneration Working Group, and a number of actions were agreed to help overcome this problem, particularly:

- That certain times and days would be targeted for use by local people, especially young people;
- That leisure centre staff would be trained in working with young people.

Due to the manner of implementation, the changes have not been sustainable, and the centre has effectively reverted into a Council leisure centre, but is underused and failing to meet community needs. Only one member of staff has been trained in working more effectively with young people.

Review period to be determined for 2006/07.

Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment)

The Committee's scope of responsibility covers the services areas of Economic Development, Leisure and Tourism Services, Countryside and Environmental Projects, Visible Services (Waste Management and Cleansing, Highway Maintenance, Engineering Design and Procurement, Parks and Ground Maintenance), Public Works and Highways, Planning and Transportation, Building and Vehicle Services. The Membership is as follows:

Councillor N.P. Hodges (Chairman); Councillor S.T. Wiliam (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Ms. E. Burnett, P. Church, J Clifford, Miss J. Cole, R.F. Curtis, N.J. Gibbs, Mrs. V.M. Hartrey, G. John, Mrs. M. Kelly Owen, Mrs. A.J. Moore, Mrs. A. J. Preston, Mrs. S.I. Sharpe, W. C. Vaughan, E.T. Williams and M.R. Wilson.

Each Scrutiny Committee may also appoint Sub-Committees. This Committee, under Minute No. 52, reappointed the Traffic Sub-Committee and the Town Centre Sub-Committee each comprising 7 Members nominated in accordance with the requirements of political balance.

The terms of reference of each Sub-Committee were "to facilitate in-depth discussion and investigation to take forward and to make recommendations for further consideration by this Committee and the formulation of proposals for improved service delivery/policy development for submission to Cabinet" in respect of dealing with the challenge of traffic and town centre improvement and regeneration respectively.

Current Forward Work Programme 2005/06

The key areas identified for the work programme included the following elements:

- Quarterly Performance Monitoring
- Budget
- Monthly Revenue and Capital Monitoring
- Dealing with the Challenge of Traffic
- Town Centre Improvement and Regeneration
- Health and Wellbeing of an Ageing Population
- Dyffryn House and gardens
- Biodiversity
- Ongoing Improvement Reviews: Waste Collection Services; and Highway Maintenance
- Scrutiny Reviews: Making the best of Planning Gain; Regeneration and Project Management; and Rural and Urban Car Parking throughout the Vale of Glamorgan.

Meetings

Committee:

During the period, 12 scheduled meetings were held, of which 1 was held at an outside venue, namely Dyffryn Gardens. The meeting was preceded by a tour of Dyffryn House (in response not just to the Work Programme but to a call-in). A site visit was also undertaken at Barry Leisure Centre prior to an extraordinary meeting of the Committee convened for the sole purpose of focussing on current issues directly affecting the provision of services through the leisure centres.

4 extraordinary meetings were also held as follows:

- 30th June, 2005 - primarily to consider a call-in in respect of the car parking strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan and to receive evidence from traders and other interested persons in the Bassett area of Barry;
- 20th September, 2005 – as indicated above;
- 18th October, 2005 – primarily to consider matters within the remit of Visible Services
- 25th April, 2006 – primarily to consider the draft Annual Report and Forward Work Programme.

Sub-Committees:

3 meetings of the Town Centre Sub-Committee were held during the period, during the course of which the views of the Town Councils and local Chambers of Trade were canvassed on each town's SWOT analysis and on how best to encourage collaborative working; detailed feedback was received on meetings organised by the Town Centre Manager with traders and other interested parties in Barry and Llantwit Major which not only demonstrated the Council's commitment to consultation but which would inform the development of an Action Plan comprising realistic objectives achievable within a defined deadline.

2 meetings of the Traffic Sub-Committee had been held in the same period. Following detailed consideration, the Council's involvement with SEWTA had been supported; progress in respect of matters pertaining to the Vale of Glamorgan railway line had been assessed and a further monitoring report was awaited; efforts had been made to introduce a late-night bus service from Cardiff into the Vale for a 3 month trial period but Cabinet had rejected the recommendation to make available the additional funding of £12k. requested; and matters relating to highway improvements in the Penarth/Llandough area concerning which representations were to be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration in the new municipal year.

Presentations/Invited Speakers/External Experts

During the period, Committee received, inter alia:

- Mr. A. Dakin (WDA) and Mr. P. Haley (Pride in Barry) to contribute to the discussions relating to the Audit Commission in Wales Improvement Study on Regeneration.
- Mr. P. Wilson, FIRSO, to understand the criteria and methodology governing the assessments undertaken in respect of walked routes to school. 9 members of the public also attended the meeting, several of whom expressed concern at the outcome of the assessment process in respect of particular routes.
- Dr. K. Pryor, Ecologist, to illustrate how the Council delivered the key role within the Corporate Plan of "conserving and enhancing the environment".

- Mr. C. Clarke and Ms. H. Jones from PTI Cymru Limited, a non-profit making company based on a partnership between the WAG, local authorities and bus operators, to discuss matters pertaining to the collection and dissemination of timetable information relating to public transport services through "Traveline".
- Mr. M. Howitt, Arriva Trains Wales, to facilitate consideration of a request for consideration (see para. 18 above).

Examples of achievements during the year

In addition to the matters outlined in paragraph 36 below (page 13), the Committee referred the following matters to bodies other than the Cabinet in order to engage more widely:

- Overview and Scrutiny: Performance Indicators – referred to the Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group
- School Transport: Walked Routes to School – referred to Scrutiny Committee (Community Wellbeing and Safety), Community Liaison Committee, and the Community Safety Partnership
- Scrutiny Review: Community Regeneration – referred to Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee.

The Committee was involved in a number of reviews which were informed through external witnesses supported by the Improvement and Development Team. Each of those reviews have now been reported to Cabinet with, in the main, the recommendations of the Committee accepted.

As a consequence of examining quarterly performance statistics in Building Services, the Committee became involved in the cross-cutting issues of empty property management. Further reports have been called for and a DSO Service Delivery Study to examine the future role of the DSO is proposed to be undertaken.

Wider engagement with the general public/stakeholders/external witnesses in, e.g. car parking strategy and walked routes to school where members of the public actively participated in the discussion at Committee (see para. 27 below), and in informing the recommendations resulting from the Scrutiny Review.

Members of both Sub-Committees have built upon their knowledge base and given detailed consideration to the matters within their remit, prior to forwarding recommendations for action to the Committee (see para. 16 above).

Call-In

5 call-ins of a Cabinet decision were considered by the Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment):

- St. Donat's Arts Centre – from Councillor G. John, considered on 24th May, 2005, to ascertain why Councillor A.J. Readman was no longer this Council's representative. The Leader, having been invited to attend the meeting, explained the reasoning behind the Cabinet decision. In light of that information, the Committee took the view that it was essential to discuss the matter further with a representative from the Arts Centre. The Council's Constitution did not, however, permit a deferral and the Committee consequently referred the matter to Council. The Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) was also requested to examine the processes and procedures adopted in the appointment of representatives to outside bodies.
- Dyffryn House and Gardens – from Councillor Mrs. V.M. Hartrey, considered on 21st June, 2005, to receive details as to the reasons for the delay in completion of

the new visitor centre, the implications of that delay, and for any increase in expenditure to be identified. Councillor Harvey gave a detailed explanation in response, following which the Committee recommended that contingency plans be made to ensure that, if necessary, temporary improved facilities be provided in situ during the centenary year celebrations, and that regular detailed progress reports be made.

- Car Parking Strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan – from Councillor B.I. Shaw, considered on 30th June, 2005, to assess the impact of the introduction of car parking charges on traders in the Bassett area of Holton Road, Barry; to receive evidence from representatives of traders and other interested persons concerning those proposals; and to be advised of progress in seeking additional parking sites. The call-in had received widespread media coverage and, consequently, the representatives invited from the Bassett area had not attended the meeting; 2 persons from Cowbridge were, however, present and Mr. V. Pearce addressed the meeting. Councillor Harvey also spoke on the matter, following which Cabinet was asked to consider amendments to 3 resolutions within Min. No. C1921. Cabinet subsequently noted the Committee's recommendations.
- School Transport 2005/06: Walked Routes to School - from Councillors G. John and Mrs. V.M. Hartrey, considered on 4th October, 2005, to express major concern relating to the "safe" assessment awarded to 2 routes, and to question the methodology adopted by the external consultant in undertaking the assessment. The Committee considered both the views put forward by Mr. Wilson, the consultant, and those expressed by residents utilising the routes in question at the meeting. The Committee put forward 6 recommendations, only 1 of which was not accepted by the Cabinet. The Committee also referred the matter to the Scrutiny Committee (Community Wellbeing and Safety), the Community Liaison Committee and the Community Safety Partnership for further consideration.
- Penarth Esplanade: Pier Pavilion and Esplanade Shelter - from Councillor Ms. L. Burnett, considered on 18th October, 2005 to draw attention to the limited consultation with ward members and the fact that the proposed decision making process lacked transparency thereby making effective scrutiny difficult. The Committee asked Cabinet to agree to report back to Cabinet the outcome of discussions/proposals relating to the future uses of the above buildings. Cabinet subsequently noted the Committee's recommendation but agreed to consult local ward members prior to the acceptance of any tender in respect of either building.

Requests for consideration of matter

9 requests for consideration were made as follows (2 of which will receive consideration in 2006/07):

- Urban Parks Programme - Victoria Park, Barry: from Councillor Mrs. A. Moore, considered on 4th October, 2005 to assess progress. The Committee recommended that progress to date welcomed.
- Domestic Collection Service for Cement Bonded Asbestos Waste: from Councillor R.J. Bertin, considered on 18th October, 2005 to ensure the safe and proper disposal of such waste not only to protect public health but to maintain a clean and enhanced environment. The Committee recommended that the existing service be maintained but that a consultation exercise be carried out to determine the scope of the need for a kerbside collection service together with the associated costs of introducing any such service and the current costs of removing fly tipped asbestos waste.
- Lease/Management Agreements with Sports Clubs: from Councillor A.J. Readman, considered on 1st November, 2005 to ascertain that whether the best interests of local Council tax payers were being looked after given the varying

types of agreement that were in place. Committee was informed that a report addressing the current anomalies was currently being prepared and would include value for money considerations. Members recommended that a detailed report should first be submitted to this Committee.

- Porthkerry Country Park issues: from Councillor N.J. Gibbs, considered on 29th November, 2005 to know what was, what could, and what should be done to maintain and improve Porthkerry Park. The Committee recommended that a future bid for capital bid be made.
- Old Place, Llantwit Major: from Councillor G. John, considered on 10th January, 2006 to ascertain what progress had been made in disposing of the property. The Committee recommended that Cabinet be urged to declare the property surplus as a matter of urgency and officers instructed to dispose of the property expeditiously.
- Recycling of Tetra Paks: from Councillor R.F. Curtis, considered on 30th March, 2006 to find out why this Council was not currently recycling such materials. The Committee recommended that contact be made with the Liquid Food Carton Manufacturers Association and neighbouring authorities to explore opportunities to develop a carton recycling initiative in S.E. Wales and, where it could be shown to be economically viable and operationally possible, further consideration given to participation in a Tetra Paks recycling initiative.
- Local Arriva Train Services: from Councillor M.R. Wilson, considered on 30th March, 2006 to be updated on the timetable; to receive data on punctuality; and to look at plans for the near future regarding train stock and line management. The Committee recommended Cabinet urged to identify ways to fund Customer Information Displays at Penarth and Dingle Road railway stations, and regular performance reports on the Valley Line service made.
- Steps required to achieve Fair Trade status for the Vale of Glamorgan Council: from Councillor M.R. Wilson, to receive a detailed report outlining the steps to achieve Fair Trade – Council only agreed to seek Fair Trade status on 6th March – a progress report is likely to be submitted at the 1st meeting of the Committee in 2006/07.
- The ambitions of Cardiff International Airport: from Councillor M.R. Wilson to discuss the plans and issues to be derived from the expansion plans at the CIA – Mr. S. Hodgetts, Commercial Manager at CIA, to address Committee on the matter on 23rd May.

References from Cabinet to the Scrutiny Committee

The Committee received 11 references from the Cabinet relating to:

- Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): a Developer's Guide
- WLGA Manifesto for Welsh Local Government
- A Model Design Guide for Wales: Residential Development
- Assessment of Bus Service provision
- VOG Local Development Plan (LDP): production of Delivery Agreement (DA)
- Scrutiny Review: Community Regeneration
- SPG – Sustainable Development: a Developer's Guide: outcome of public consultation
- Leisure Charges 2006/07 and Leisure Membership Scheme
- Draft SPG: Public Art
- St. Athan Park – draft Development Brief
- VOG UDP – outcome of judicial review proceedings.

References to Cabinet from the Scrutiny Committee

The Committee referred 17 matters to Cabinet relating to the following against each of which the Cabinet decision is shown:

- Improvement Review: Waste Collection – 3 recommendations accepted and a further report requested.
- Car Parking Strategy for the VOG – noted.
- Improvement Review: Highway Maintenance – recommendation accepted.
- Dyffryn House and Gardens – recommendations noted.
- Draft SPG: sustainable Development – a Developer’s Guide – recommendations accepted.
- School Transport 2005/06: Walked Routes to School – 1 recommendation not accepted, 1 noted, 2 agreed.
- Scrutiny Review: Planning Gain – 4 recommendations agreed, 2 not accepted, 3 further reports required.
- Funding of Late Night Bus Service from Cardiff to the VOG – 2 recommendations noted, 2 rejected.
- Progress on Sustainability Issues in the VOG – 1 recommendation not accepted, 1 rejected.
- Reinstatement Works by Utility Services – 1 recommendation not accepted, 1 rejected.
- Penarth Esplanade: Pier Pavilion and Esplanade Shelter – recommendation noted.
- Old Place, Llantwit Major – recommendations accepted.
- Scrutiny Review: Community Regeneration – recommendations initially deferred but subsequently accepted.
- Proposed Charges at Dyffryn Gardens, Cosmeston Lakes Country Park and Medieval Village and Porthkerry Park - recommendations endorsed.
- Visible Services proposed Fees and Charges 2006/07 – recommendations endorsed.
- Allocation of funding for Alleygates - yet to be considered by Cabinet.
- Request that Cabinet defer endorsing the Draft Development Brief in respect of Land North of the Railway Line, Rhoose for consultation purposes - yet to be considered by Cabinet.

Outstanding Items 2005/06

Various matters remain outstanding from 2005/06:

Work Programme Items:

- Health and Wellbeing of an Ageing Population – new leisure management software now in situ which will facilitate the collection of data relating to the use of the Leisure Centres by older people – report anticipated to be submitted to this Committee early in 2006/07.
- IDT Scrutiny Review: Rural and Urban Car Parking throughout the VOG – premature given, inter alia, the protracted consultations which were still ongoing.

It should be noted that it might be necessary to amend the scope of the review if Committee decides that a review of car parking should be undertaken in 2006/07.

Other Matters Pending include:

- Representative(s) from the following bodies invited to attend future meetings:
 - Barry Joint Initiative, WDA & ABP to discuss issues relevant to the future development of the Waterfront and the regeneration of Barry;
 - external experts on the creation of “Home Zones”,
- Reports requested on:
 - Voids/Empty Property Management;
 - Leases/management agreements with Sports Clubs;

- Contracting Procedure within Building Services;
- Appointment and Development of Apprentices;
- Allotments - occupancy, turnover etc.
- Meeting of the Committee to be held in Penarth Leisure Centre, preceded by a tour of inspection as part of the ongoing monitoring of service provision at the Council's leisure centres.
- Meeting of the Traffic Sub Committee, if re-appointed, to be held in Penarth Leisure Centre, preceded by a tour of the existing rail infrastructure in the area and potential sites for development - a representative from Network Rail (and Arriva Trains if appropriate) to be invited to attend.

Future Work Programme 2006/07

The Committee will continue consideration of the following as part of its work programme for 2006/07:

- Quarterly Service Performance Monitoring
- Monthly Revenue and Capital Monitoring
- Initial Revenue Budget and Initial Capital Programme proposals
- Town Centre Improvement and Regeneration
- Dealing with the Challenge of Traffic
- Local Development Plan
- Improvement Plan.

The Work Programme for 2006/07 will be developed in line with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme and the parameters outlined in the Scrutiny Handbook. Having had regard to the following matters suggested by members to form part of the Work Programme:

- Recycling
- Alleygates
- Street Lighting and Illuminated Street Furniture

and to other suggestions made at the meeting held on 25th April, 2006, Committee agreed the topics indicated below as matters for Scrutiny Review:

- Recycling
- Rhoose Point and the impact thereon of development north of the railway line, Rhoose.

Other issues raised at the meeting which would either continue to be monitored and/or proposals put forward for development included

- Alleygates
- Internal Sustainability
- Leisure Services.

Scrutiny Committee Lifelong Learning

The Committee's scope of responsibility covers the services areas of Schools (Pupil Support, School Improvement and School Support), Post 16 Education and Training, Libraries, Community Education and Youth Service. The Membership is as follows:

Councillor C.P. Franks (Chairman); Councillor Ms. M.E. Alexander (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Mrs. M.E.J. Birch, Ms. R.M. Birch, Mrs. C.V.L. Clay, J. Clifford, S.C. Egan, E. Hacker, Mrs. V.M. Hartrey, F.T. Johnson, Mrs. M. Kelly Owen, C.L. Osborne, A.G. Powell, Mrs. S.I. Sharpe, B.I. Shaw, W.C. Vaughan and E.T. Williams.

The Scrutiny Committee also, under legislation, were afforded the opportunity to include in its membership co-opted members and the following organisations representatives were appointed with voting rights in relation to education functions:-

Roman Catholic Church
Church in Wales
Parent Governor - Primary Sector
Parent Governor - Secondary Sector
Representative from other faiths or denominations.

Each Scrutiny Committee shall also be entitled to recommend to Council the appointment of a number of people/organisations as non-voting co-optees and again the Scrutiny Committee Lifelong Learning recommended to Council the following representative appointments:-

Primary Sector
Secondary Sector
Special Educational Needs Sector
Headteachers
Free Churches.

Forward Work Programme for 2005/06

The key areas identified for the work programme included the following elements:-

- Quarterly Performance Monitoring
- Budget
- School Investment Strategy
- Monthly Revenue and Capital Monitoring
- Co-education
- A Review of How The Council Contributes to Improved Life Chances of Look-After Children
- A Review of Youth Provision in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Meetings

During the period, 12 scheduled meetings were held, of which 11 were held at outside venues, mainly schools throughout the area.

Call-Ins

One call-in of a Cabinet decision was considered by the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning), relating to Cadoxton House.

Requests for consideration

One request for consideration was made by a member of the Committee relating to Cadoxton House.

References from Cabinet to the Scrutiny Committee

The Committee received and noted six references from the Cabinet relating to:-

- School Inspection Reports
- Public Library Standards – Annual Report 2004/05
- Welsh Public Library Standards – Three Year Plan 2005/08
- Cadoxton House
- WLGA Manifesto for Welsh Local Government
- Vale School Investment Strategy.

References to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee

(i) On 18th April, 2005, Committee noted the position with regard to the 2004/05 Revenue and Capital Monitoring and requested Cabinet to agree to the final underspend on the Asset Renewal (Schools) Budget 2004/05 being retained within the Capital Budget of the Directorate of Learning and Development for 2005/06. The request of the Scrutiny Committee was noted by Cabinet.

(ii) On 27th June, 2005, Cabinet were recommended to refer the task of developing a preferred Model for co-education in Barry to the Admission Forum, that the stakeholders be consulted on any proposals and that Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) continue to be involved in the consultation process. Cabinet agreed to the recommendations subject to the word “refer” being replaced by “consult”.

(iii) On 27th July, 2005, cabinet were recommended to address the effects of the cutbacks caused to the current year’s budget within the Youth Service and that adequate financial resources be allocated to provide a fully resourced lifelong learning service. Cabinet resolved that no action be taken at this time but that the recommendations be considered in the next budget review.

(iv) On 7th November, 2005, Scrutiny Committee made a total of 23 comprehensive recommendations relating to the way in which the Council contributes to the life chances of looked after children. Having considered the recommendations, Cabinet accepted 9 of the recommendations and, in respect of the remaining recommendations requested that the Director of Learning and Development and the Director of Community Services produce an Action Plan for further consideration by Cabinet.

(v) On 16th January, 2006, having heard the comments of representatives of the School’s Budget Forum on the initial Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2006/07, it was recommended that both the Cabinet and Welsh Assembly Government be advised on the comments made by the Members of the School’s Budget Forum with regard to the initial budget proposals for 2006/07. Cabinet resolved that the recommendations be noted.

(vi) On 13th February, 2006, having considered a review of Youth Provision in the Vale of Glamorgan, Committee made 18 comprehensive recommendations. Having

considered the recommendations, Cabinet resolved that consideration of the reference be deferred to allow the Director of Learning and Development to assess the implications and viability of each recommendation and to submit a report on the same to Cabinet prior to any decision be taken.

Presentations

During the period, Committee received presentations on:-

- Youth Provision Within the Vale
- School Performance Data.

Work undertaken during the year

During the year, Committee were involved in the consideration of a number of major reviews undertaken by the Improvement and Development Team.

A review of how the Council contributes to the life chances of looked after children was considered by the Committee in October and November 2006 following Member engagement which had highlighted this as a key priority for the Council.

The review considered existing notable practice implemented by other Councils and involved the use of “expert witnesses” from another local authority and from stakeholders.

A further major review undertaken by the Committee concerned Youth Provision within the Vale of Glamorgan which had been undertaken as a result of Member engagement.

The review has considered the provision currently in place for youths, principally provided through the Council’s Learning and Development and Community Wellbeing Directorates and through the support the Council receives from its partners in the voluntary sector. Existing notable practice implemented by another Council had been considered and had informed the review and its recommendations.

Continual monitoring of service performance on a quarterly basis also allowed the Committee the opportunity to agree service performance targets and receive explanations for those service targets not achieved.

The Committee continued to take a direct interest in the Capital Investment Strategy for schools and received a reference from Cabinet, for consultation purposes, on proposed options to deliver the School Investment Strategy and which sought approval to commence delivery of the Strategy.

Committee continued to regularly invite the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning to attend the Committee and present an update on current educational matters, followed by a question and answer session.

Arising from a call-in of a resolution of Cabinet that Cadoxton House be declared surplus to the requirements of the Directorate of Learning and Development and that the property be disposed of in the most appropriate manner, Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) recommends to the meeting of Full Council to be held on 6th March, 2006 that the Friends of

Cadoxton House be granted a period of 3 months to formulate their plans for the use of Cadoxton House following which a further report on this matter be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

- (2) T H A T the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) further recommends to the meeting of Full Council to be held on 6th March, 2006 that Cabinet Minute C2302 be reconsidered in the light of the above recommendation.

Council, on 6th March, 2006

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the Friends of Cadoxton House be granted 3 months to formulate their plans for the use of Cadoxton House, following which a further report on their continued use of Cadoxton House be presented to Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) for consideration.
- (2) T H A T officers co-operate with the Welsh Arts Council and Friends of Cadoxton House whenever and wherever necessary.
- (3) T H A T Council “objects” to Cabinet Minute C2302 in light of recommendations (1) and (2) above and in accordance with Part 4(e), paragraph 16, of the Constitution.

Cabinet, on 15th March, 2006, having considered the resolution of Council,

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the decision of Cabinet on 1st February, 2006 (Minute C2302 refers) be re-affirmed.
- (2) T H A T the implementation of decision (1) above be deferred for a period of 3 months in order that the Friends of Cadoxton House may be given time to produce a fully costed business plan for the future use of Cadoxton House for consideration by Cabinet prior to the end of the 3 month period.

Outstanding Items 2005/06

Three items remain outstanding from 2005/06:

- A review of nursery roles across the Vale of Glamorgan to establish the level of service provision and placement take-ups across the Council. (See below);
- Presentation on the Welsh Baccalaureate;
- Report on the provision of Hearing Loops within Lifelong Learning establishments.

Future Work Programme 2006/07

The Committee will continue to monitor the following as part of its work programme for 2006/07:

- Quarterly Service Performance Monitoring
- Monthly Revenue and Capital Monitoring
- Initial Revenue Budget proposals
- Initial Capital Programme proposals
- Estyn Inspection Reports
- Improvement Plan.

One Work Programme item remains outstanding from 2005/06, relating to a review of nursery roles across the Vale of Glamorgan to establish the level of service provision and placement take-up across the Council and it has been agreed that this review be conducted in 2006/07.

In addition, the following matters have been agreed to form part of the Work Programme:

- Budget
- Positive action to improve the education of certain groups of children.

Statistical Information

The following matters relate to statistical information relating to the work of the four Scrutiny Committees during the current municipal year.

Total Number of Scrutiny Committee Meetings held between May 2005 - 30th April, 2006

Scrutiny Committee	Extraordinary	Scheduled	Workshops
Community Wellbeing and Safety	4	11	2
Corporate Resources	5	13	-
Economy and Environment	4	12	-
Lifelong Learning	1	11	-

Call in Statistics May 2005 - 30th April, 2006

Scrutiny Committees	Community Wellbeing and Safety	Corporate Resources	Economy and Environment	Lifelong Learning
No of call ins received	2	5	5	1
Withdrawn	-	1	-	-
Refused	-	0	-	-
Approved for call in purposes	2	4	5	1
Cabinet decisions endorsed by SC	1	2	4	-
Recommendations referred to Cabinet	2	2	6	-
Cabinet Final Rejected Decisions -	1(r)	1(r)	1	-
Noted -	1		5	-
Endorsed -	1		2	-
Decisions Pending	-	1	-	-
Referred to Full Council	-	0	1	1
Recommendations referred to other Committees	-	0	1	-

Total number of Call ins Received - 13

Requests for Consideration of Matter

May 2005 - 30th April 2006

Scrutiny Committee	No. of requests received	Requests withdrawn	Pending	No. of requests for further info.	No. of requests noted by Committee	No. of requests referred to Cabinet
Community Wellbeing and Safety	5	1 dealt with in another way	1 site visit to premises and overview of project provided	1	1 plus additional report requested	1
Corporate Resources	4		1	1	2	
Economy and Environment	7		2	5	1	2
Lifelong Learning	1				1	0

Total Number of Requests Received - 17

References from Cabinet to Scrutiny Committee (Consultation)

May 2005 - 30th April, 2006

Scrutiny Committee	No. of references	No. Scrutiny Committee Noted / Endorsed	No. of Recs referred to other Committees or Council or for further reports	No. Recs referred to Cabinet	No. Recs Noted by Cabinet	No. of Recs accepted (a) / rejected (r) by Cabinet
Community Wellbeing and Safety	6	3 (1 of above being deferred)	2	1		1 deferred pending further report
Corporate Resources	8	8	0	0	0	0
Economy and Environment	11	6				5(a)
Lifelong Learning	6	4	1	1		(a)

Total Number of References Received - 31

References received from Scrutiny Committee to Scrutiny Committee

May 2005 - 30th April, 2006

Scrutiny Committee	No. of references received	No. of Scrutiny Committee Noted / Endorsed	No. Recs referred to Cabinet	No. Recs Noted by Cabinet	No. of Recs accepted (a) / rejected (r) by Cabinet
Community Wellbeing and Safety	3	3	2		1(a) 1(r)
Corporate Resources	6 (Budget Proposals)	6	9	9 (Cabinet referred these to the Cabinet Budget Working Group)	
Economy and Environment	-	-	-	-	-
Lifelong Learning	1	1	1		Pending

Total Number of References received - 10

References from Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet

May 2005 - 30th April, 2006

Scrutiny Committee	Total No. of References Made	No. of recs Noted by Cabinet	No. of recs accepted/ endorsed	No. of recs pending	No. rejected by Cabinet	No. partially agreed	Referred to other Committees / Working Groups
Community Wellbeing and Safety	11	1	2	4	1	2	1
Corporate Resources	5	1	2	-		1	1
Economy and Environment	17	6	16	2	9	-	4
Lifelong Learning	6	2	1	2	1		

Total Number of References made - 39

Areas That Have Worked Well During The Municipal Year

There has been over the last year:

- Improved co-ordination and focus for the Council's Scrutiny function
- Improved co-ordination and management of Scrutiny's involvement in the budget consultation process
- Further development in the Scrutiny role in the Council's Performance Management framework
- Ongoing reviewing and monitoring the Corporate Plan, Improvement Plans and Service Plans of the Authority/Departments
- Consultative and agreed proposals for example Procedures for Development Briefs for the Vale of Glamorgan
- Agreed protocols addressed in relation to Ward member consultation on issues/activities in their areas.

Themed Meetings And Best Practice

Throughout the year Scrutiny Committees have been held at various venues around the Vale of Glamorgan. However, in the future Scrutiny Committees may wish to consider continuing this practice but also include on agendas, specific items pursuant to the area where the meeting will take place.

Since the introduction of Scrutiny in the Vale of Glamorgan, Members have been keen to ensure that their Committee's recommendations take into account examples of best practice elsewhere and a great deal of effort has been put into speaking to people and calling in expert witnesses to benefit from their expertise in many areas.

Member Development Scrutiny training to date has stressed the need for each Committee to be focussed in its approach to identifying issues for its work programme and to concentrate on a few strategic matters.

How Local People Become Involved In Scrutiny

Attend meetings

All Scrutiny meetings are generally held in public except where matters of an exempt or confidential nature are under consideration. (Access to Information Rules) Agendas for meetings are available at the Civic Offices and Council Offices and facilities i.e. libraries within the Vale of Glamorgan, 3 days prior to the meeting.

Witnesses

Scrutiny Committees can call a range of individuals to e.g. explain matters within their remit or discuss matters of local concern. They can be members of the public, representatives from local organisations and officers of the Authority.

Co-opted Members

Committees are able to recommend to Council the appointment of people/organisations as non-voting co-optees (including on a Task and Finish Group)

CONCLUSION

The Four Annual Reports illustrate the extent to which all four Scrutiny Committees are continuing to identify, and consider, issues relating to the Council's performance and service delivery. Sub-Committees and Task and Finish Groups enable Members to look, in smaller groups, at issues.

The Scrutiny process continues to evolve and ongoing efforts will be made to increase interest in and awareness of residents of the Vale of Glamorgan and other agencies of the valuable contribution which Scrutiny can offer.