

**Vale of Glamorgan Council  
Scrutiny Committees'  
Annual Report 2007/08**



## **Chairmen's Foreword**

This is the fourth Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committees of the Vale of Glamorgan. The report highlights the work of the four Committees for 2007/08, and includes statistical information together with a summary of the issues considered. The Wales Audit Office has acknowledged that the Council has "made significant progress in developing the scrutiny function". However, the Council has also embarked upon a further two year Scrutiny Action Plan designed to ensure scrutiny momentum is maintained. Details of progress to date in relation to year 1 of the Action Plan can be found at Appendix 3 of this report.

The ongoing work of the Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group has also enhanced the Scrutiny process. The Group meets on a regular basis and provides a sounding board for new initiatives within the field of scrutiny. It has identified new ways of working for scrutiny, developed a clear role for scrutiny in relation to performance management and considered ways where public involvement in scrutiny can be increased. The Group has also strived for consistency in the delivery of scrutiny and champions the scrutiny process within and outside the Council.

During 2007 the Group endorsed its commitment to a pilot exercise designed to "develop specialist functions within scrutiny by enabling Members to become experts in certain subjects". The pilot has commenced with a small group of Members from within the Scrutiny Committee Community Wellbeing and Safety meeting on a number of occasions to consider effective and meaningful monitoring of performance within its relevant service areas. It is intended that the concept be extended to the other Scrutiny Committees in the forthcoming year.

Scrutiny Committees acknowledge that one of the key roles of scrutiny is to work on behalf of residents to address the issues that cause concern to people who live, work and visit the Vale of Glamorgan and to this end the Council is committed to identifying ways of engaging the public and encouraging them to be involved in the scrutiny process. Members of the public, stakeholders and elected members are invited to suggest topics for review / consideration by a Scrutiny Committee. The appropriate forms can be found on the Council's website at [www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) or are available from the Scrutiny and Committee Services Section, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry.

As Chairmen we would like to record our appreciation of the commitment and support provided by officers, particularly those in the Scrutiny and Committee Services Section and the Improvement and Development Team. We remain committed to working with officers to ensure that the progress made to date is maintained.

## **What is Scrutiny?**

Scrutiny aims to make the Council's decision-making process transparent, accountable and inclusive. Members involved in Scrutiny can question, review and challenge the way the Council is carrying out its role and delivering services to its citizens.

Scrutiny is a positive activity that helps to ensure continuous service improvement and value for money. It reinforces the Council's local leadership role in promoting the wellbeing of the community and has the power not only to review Council services but also those provided by other local organisations.

There are 47 members of the Council, 10 of whom sit on the Cabinet, which is responsible for making most Council decisions. The remaining 37 Members sit on the Scrutiny Committees.

The Council's Scrutiny function is delivered by four Scrutiny Committees

- Community Wellbeing and Safety
- Corporate Resources
- Economy and Environment
- Lifelong Learning.

Membership of the four committees reflects the political balance of the Council as a whole and each has a Chairman and Vice-Chairman to lead its work. Meetings are usually held monthly and are open to the public. In addition to the formal committee structure, in-depth studies and / or reviews may be carried out by time limited working groups. Whilst Members themselves form the majority on the Committees, they also benefit from the participation of a range of external members, co-optees and advisers whose involvement can vary from permanent membership to the provision of advice on a short-term or even one-off basis.

## **What are the Aims of Scrutiny**

- To help to improve the Council's performance
- To help the Council to deliver services which are sensitive to local needs by involving local people
- To ensure that decision making is clear, transparent and accountable
- To engage service users and the wider community in decision making.

## **Why is Scrutiny Important?**

- Holds decision makers to account
- Challenges and improves performance
- Supports the achievement of value for money
- Challenges the way things are done
- Influences decision makers with evidence based recommendations
- Brings in the evidence and views of stakeholders, users and citizens
- Undertakes pre/post scrutiny of Cabinet proposals.

## **Public Involvement in Scrutiny**

All scrutiny meetings are open to the public unless confidential matters are being discussed

Scrutiny provides the opportunity for the public to become involved in the Council's activities. Members of the public, including service users, can be invited to attend Scrutiny Committees to assist Members in their work by giving evidence and taking part in the discussion and consideration of topics.

Scrutiny work also involves the opportunity to engage with those groups of people who may not readily get involved in the work of the Council e.g. young people and minority communities.

To this end members of the public are encouraged to submit requests for consideration and will be advised accordingly of the process if the Scrutiny Committee approves the request. Any member of the public wishing to make a representation at any time to a Scrutiny Committee is requested to complete the relevant proforma which is available on the Council's website <http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk> or to contact the Scrutiny and Committee Services Section or the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee to discuss the matter.

Adverts were also placed in the local Vale Waves newsletter encouraging the public to not only attend Scrutiny meetings but also to submit suggestions of topics for review.

A guide covering public participation in Scrutiny is also available.

## **Witnesses**

Scrutiny Committees can call a range of individuals to their meetings to e.g. explain matters within their remit or discuss matters of mutual concern.

Witnesses can be members of the public, service users and representatives from outside organisations (private, public and voluntary sector).

### **Co-opted Members**

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

### **Scrutiny – Where Are We Now ?**

During the Summer of 2006 the Council carried out a review of its scrutiny arrangements. As a result of the review, improvement areas contained within 15 recommendations were endorsed by the Scrutiny Chairman and Vice-Chairman Group and subsequently by the four Scrutiny Committees. The recommendations are being implemented over a two year period and progress in respect of year 1 so far is set out at Appendix 3.

Also as part of the response to the review, a Scrutiny Development Workshop, to which all non-executive Members were invited, was held. The main objective of the workshop was to provide Members with the opportunity to be involved in influencing the future direction of the Council's Scrutiny function. The agenda for the event was formulated in a way to facilitate discussion on some common issues raised by Scrutiny Members in the past as well as being designed to embrace the 15 specific recommendations arising from the review. The event was interactive, designed to encourage maximum input from Members themselves. Feedback from Members on the day itself, and subsequently, was extremely positive and the workshop is to be repeated later in 2008 as part of the overall Member Induction Programme.

Councillor H.J.W. James, on behalf of the Group, together with J. Wyatt, (Operational Manager - Democratic Services) attended the All-Wales Scrutiny Champions' Network meeting in Llandrindod Wells on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2007. Officers from Scrutiny and Committee Services and the Improvement and Development Team, together with a Member representative, will continue to be afforded the opportunity of attending the Welsh, and South East Wales Regional Network meetings.

### **Tracking Recommendations**

In April 2007 a new format for tracking Scrutiny Committee recommendations was introduced. Members are now able to monitor and question on a quarterly basis progress of recommendations, identify where further action may be

required, ensure the required action is undertaken and confirm that actions are completed. This new reporting structure was introduced as a direct result of a review of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements and has improved transparency of decision making. The Scrutiny Committees have welcomed the new procedure, recognising the importance of tracking and monitoring recommendations effectively.

### **Future Challenges**

All four Committees will continue to explore ways of increasing public involvement in Scrutiny and to continually improve the scrutiny process. The role of the Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group is vital if progress is to be maintained. Similarly, work will continue in maintaining and developing effective relationships between the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.

### **Role of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group**

The role of the Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group is continuing to evolve and develop successfully. The Group acts as an important arena where new initiatives and procedures can be discussed by the 'key players' and, if considered beneficial, then promoted accordingly across the four Scrutiny Committees.

A particular ongoing role of the Group is overseeing the two year Scrutiny Action Plan.

### **Scrutiny Work in 2007/08**

The attached reports highlight the work of the four Scrutiny Committees over the past year and review the progress of each Committee in its scrutiny role.

Agendas and minutes of Scrutiny Committees as well as reports from Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups and Scrutiny Reviews are available by following the links on the Council's website. Hard copies of agendas and reports are also available from public libraries, on request from the Council Scrutiny and Committee Services Section and at meetings of the Committees.

Details of the membership of each of the Scrutiny Committees is included at Appendix 1 of this report.

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND SAFETY)**

The Committee's scope of responsibility covers the following service areas:

- Housing
- Community Safety and
- Social Services.

Scrutiny Committees are also able to appoint sub-committees and Task and Finish Groups to assist in their work. In 2007 the Committee re-appointed its Housing Sub-Committee to consider a range of housing options with the view to reporting back to the Committee with comments and / or recommendations. Two Task and Finish Groups were also established to consider CCTV and the Occupational Therapy Service in the Vale. A brief description of the work undertaken to date by the Sub-committee and the Task and Finish Groups is detailed later in this report.

### **Meetings**

During the municipal year 2007/08 the Committee held 14 meetings, which included 2 extraordinary meetings called to deal with extra items of business and items requested by the Chairman. (On most occasions the Cabinet Members for Housing and Community Safety and Social and Care Services attended the meetings to facilitate questioning on their portfolio service areas.)

### **2007/08 – Work Programme**

The Committee continued to monitor service performance on a quarterly basis and considered in detail performance targets that had not been achieved.

A change in the way management information was presented highlighted for Members key operational issues within Children's and Adult Services which Members and officers needed to be aware of. The information was presented in graphical form which Members considered was more user friendly and easier to read and analyse. The new format enabled a better depiction of trends within the service, enabling both Members and managers to highlight issues of concern.

### **Monitoring of the Social Services Change Plan**

Revenue and Capital financial monitoring occurred on a monthly basis and in view of the issues in relation to the significant overspend on the Social Services budget, Members expressed their concern and requested regular updates on the Change Plan/Action Plan.

As a direct result of the review of the financial position of the Social Services Department a Change Plan was formulated, designed to achieve fundamental

changes in the way in which the Social Services Department operated. The Plan, although a long term document, sought to build on some of the significant strengths of the service and to mark the introduction of a culture characterised by high performance and rigour. The four key themes underlying the Plan were leadership, budget, performance and quality. The service had to be delivered within the budget allocated and the performance of all the services had to be improved, although it was recognised that the Social Services Directorate could not deliver the Plan in total isolation, and as such very close working with other Council services as well as partner organisations had to be achieved in order to reach the required outcomes. As a result of the appointment of the new Director of Social Services in January 2008 a revised Action Plan was agreed which the Scrutiny Committee will continue to monitor and scrutinise in 2008/09.

Members of the Committee have always recognised the need for the Social Services Department to have good working relationships with the Health Service, in particular the need to ensure that care for clients is appropriately discharged. To this end, the Committee supported the proposal for a joint funded post of a Head of Service within the Adult Services department in Social Services and the Local Health Board. The joint appointment had been agreed for one year initially with the view to a commitment to jointly deliver key performance indicators and consider joint action to deal with budget pressures. The Committee will also receive an update report on initial developments of the new arrangements in July 2008.

### **Engaging with the Public**

The Committee itself sought to strengthen the involvement of the public in the scrutiny process and welcomed the introduction of a facility on the Council's website and at Council offices allowing the public to offer suggestions for topics for scrutiny review.

In November, 2007 the Committee issued a press release and invited external experts, the Chief Executive of the Vale of Glamorgan Local Health Board and the Chief Executive of the Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust to attend a meeting to discuss the proposed merger of Swansea and Bro Morgannwg NHS Trusts and the Joint Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy for 2008-2011. In view of the important effect that these two proposals would have on the people of the Vale of Glamorgan, the Committee agreed that it was essential for an extra meeting to be called in order that a full debate could take place.

### **Call-in**

One call-in had been requested for consideration by the Committee, the Social Services Interim Management Structure. The request was to allow for proper scrutiny of such a fundamental change in structure. Having fully considered the report, the Committee agreed that they were aware of the need for the



department to move forward and did not wish to hold up the proceedings but requested that a progress update be presented to the Committee in July 2008 on the effectiveness of the new arrangements.

### **Other aspects of scrutiny work addressed by the Committee throughout the year:-**

In view of the emphasis placed on the need to address the issues in the Social Services Department, the Change Plan had been set as a priority for the Committee and it was accepted as the Committee's main review for 2007/08. The Scrutiny Committee also re-appointed its Housing Sub Committee and set up two Task and Finish Groups in May 2007 to consider CCTV and the Occupational Therapy Service within the Vale of Glamorgan.

#### **1. Housing Sub-Committee**

Given the importance of the Housing Investment Business Plan it was decided that it should be the main focus for the Housing Sub-Committee with regular update reports being received.

The Council commissioned Tribal HCH to undertake a review of the Council Housing Investment Options in order to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) by 2012. The review highlighted that the Council could retain its housing stock rather than follow a stock transfer option. This was dependent upon the Council agreeing to a number of key issues and actions and these were prioritised into implementation plans developed in January 2006. Given the length of time involved and the likely changes, a Project Management Unit was engaged to review the implementation plans. The review took account of additional WAG requirements introduced since the Tribal report along with any new internal priorities. The Savills Stock Condition Survey was included and outcomes drawn into a revised Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. A great deal of work had commenced in respect of partnering arrangements for the main programme (2009-2015) to include contract specification, schedule of rates and procurement arrangements. A revised Business Plan was submitted to WAG by the end of December 2007, which was currently under review although WAG was currently satisfied with progress.

A very useful Member and Officer visit was made to Carmarthenshire Council on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2007. Carmarthenshire had been actively preparing for CHQS (their own version of WHQS following consultation with tenants) since 2005, having established a specialist project team to drive the process. Information gathered during the visit would help inform the process towards the WHQS in the Vale of Glamorgan. Officers from Carmarthenshire Council indicated that they had also found the visit beneficial and were happy to provide further information on future progress towards CHQS.

Other items considered by the Housing Sub-Committee included:

- Environmental Health Housing Enforcement: Housing Act 2004
- Energy Efficiency in Housing
- Social Housing Grant Programme
- Local Housing Strategy
- Adaptations for Housing Association tenants: Consultation Response
- Update on potential new Renewal Areas
- Penarth Heights Progress Report

The recommendations of the Housing Sub-Committee are referred to the Scrutiny Committee for approval and referred to Cabinet if appropriate.

All recommendations in the year were fully supported by the Scrutiny Committee, in some cases; further reports were requested and in other relevant actions agreed. In relation to the recommendation to Cabinet that “an excellent Eco Homes Standard be required for the Penarth Heights Development and any other housing developments”, the Cabinet itself requested that a further report be brought, identifying ways in which developers could be encouraged to design developments to a minimum of a “Good” Eco Homes Standard.

## **2. CCTV**

The Group met five times during 2007/08, visited the CCTV control room in the Civic Offices and received presentations and reports from various sources including the Police. The final report of the Group was presented and approved by the Scrutiny Committee in March 2008 and submitted to the Cabinet for consideration on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2008. The report made twelve recommendations two key ones being as detailed below:

- (i) a lead officer should be designated to take overall responsibility for advice and guidance, in particular for the purchase of equipment for CCTV on Council premises within the Vale, and
- (ii) that the Council continues to publicise the presence and use of CCTV and its successes to assist the Police to deal with crime and disorder in the Vale.

The Group considered that in view of the number of personnel involved in the Vale with CCTV, a co-ordinated approach was required and that as evidence was available to show the success of CCTV provision that the constituents of the Vale be advised as and when appropriate of the benefits.

The recommendations were referred to Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2008 who acknowledged the work of the Committee and called for a further report on the implementation of the recommendations. A copy of the report is available on the Council’s website.

### **3. Occupational Therapy**

The Task and Finish Group had hoped to commence its investigations in 2007 but had postponed its first meeting until the appointment / recruitment of outstanding Occupational Therapists (OT) posts had been completed. The positions had been taken up towards the end of the year, which resulted in the Task and Finish Group holding its first meeting in February 2008. The Group have, to date, considered a report, which had been undertaken in 2005, which compared the Vales OT service with four other local authorities in Wales in respect of their OT services and are undertaking further investigations before preparing a report for consideration.

To this end two Members of the Group have also visited the Vale OT service to undertake research on behalf of the Group and interviewed officers, the manager and witnessed first hand the work of the unit. It is intended that officers from the Local Health Authority and service users will be invited to future meetings of the Group in order that Members can receive further expert knowledge and detailed accounts of service users experiences of OT provision.

It is envisaged that the results of the review will be reported to the Scrutiny Committee by July 2008 for consideration prior to the report, if appropriate, being presented to the Cabinet for approval.

### **4. PACTS**

The Committee had raised concerns on the work of PACTS (Partnerships and Communities Together) within the Vale as it had considered that there were a number of inconsistencies in the way PACTS were working within various wards. A pilot exercise had been agreed by the Safer Vale partnership to be undertaken with four wards entitled "going back to basics" in order to address the areas of concern.

The Committee endorsed the work of the Partnership and considered that duplication of effort was not required. However, it requested a six month progress report, be submitted in July 2008 which it was hoped would also detail the role of elected Members in PACTS.

## **5. Performance Experts - Sub-Group**

In September 2007, the Committee was the first in the Council to set up and pilot a sub group with the remit to conduct detailed examinations of service performance. It is intended that the concept be extended to the other Scrutiny Committees in 2008/09. Members of the Group have indicated they consider it an invaluable tool and a mechanism to increase Members' expertise in certain scrutiny service areas in order to challenge and ensure efficient and effective service provision, including value for money.

### **Outstanding Issues from the 2007/08 Work Programme**

The Committee's only outstanding issue from the 2007/08 Work Programme was in relation to the OT review as outlined in paragraph 3 above.

### **2008/09 Priorities/Work Programme**

In view of the resource implications for both Members and officers and staff within the Scrutiny and Committee Services Section and the Improvement and Development Team in supporting the delivery of the Social Services Change Plan the Committee recognised that the ability for officers to conduct formal reviews during 2008/09 was limited.

With this in mind, the Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008, agreed to continue to undertake the Social Services Change Plan as a formal review for 2008/09 and consider the use of Task and Finish Groups to undertake any ad hoc minor reviews that may be suggested during the year, or any issues it may wish to address in light of the Cabinet's Forward Work Programme.

At its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2008, the Committee also agreed to add the issue of Achieving the WHQ Standard to its work programme.

The Committee will therefore include the following as part of its work programme for 2008 /09:

- Quarterly Service Performance Monitoring
- Revenue and Capital Expenditure Monitoring
- Budget Proposals
- Service Planning
- Proposals from the Housing Sub-Committee
- Receive progress reports on various Committee recommendations
- Receive other reports as determined by the Committee as and when appropriate, for example, Safer Vale Annual Report
- Emerging strategies from the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy

- Decision tracking of recommendations in order to evaluate and monitor scrutiny performance
- Consideration of the Cabinet's Forward Work Programme
- Occupational Therapists Task and Finish Group review.
- Establishment of Task and Finish Groups to deal with any other issues that arise as and when appropriate and consideration of any recommendations of the Group
- Social Services Change Plan
- WHQS (Welsh Housing Quality Standards).

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CORPORATE RESOURCES)**

The Committee's scope of responsibility covers the following service areas:

- Chief Executives' (including the Contact Centre)
- Democratic Services (including Corporate Support Services, Registrars and Scrutiny and Committee Services)
- Human Resources and Equalities
- Finance, ICT and Property
- Legal Services and
- Regulatory Services.

Similarly to the other Scrutiny Committees the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee also appoints Task and Finish Groups to assist in their work and details of the work of the group (s) established are contained later in this report.

### **Meetings**

During the municipal year 2007/08, the Committee met 15 times, including holding 3 extraordinary meetings, given the Committee's responsibility for considering and monitoring a total of nine of Service Plans. Monthly revenue and capital financial monitoring continued during the year and the Committee also took the lead in dealing with the Council's budget proposals and making recommendations to the Council's Budget Working Group/Cabinet on behalf of the three other Scrutiny Committees.

### **2007/08 Work Programme**

In 2007/08, the following progress was achieved in respect of the current Work Programme:

#### **1. Monitoring of the Social Services Budget 2007/08 -**

The Committee as a result of its decision taken on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2007 became actively involved in monitoring the Social Services budget proposals and the risk implications for the Council associated with the Social Services Change Plan. The Change Plan had been established as a direct result of the review of the financial position of the Social Services Department and was designed to achieve fundamental changes in the way in which the Department operated.

The Committee has taken a significant interest in the overall risk implications for the Council, which were not just limited to those connected with the Change Plan. It has considered and made the Cabinet aware of its concerns regarding the reduction in external funding coupled with existing use of reserves to support the base budget and its view that additional cost pressures facing other key services would place the Council in a position where the number and level of

competing demands could not be met irrespective of the work done to identify cost and efficiency savings. To this end, it supported the current status of the Council's risk management strategy provided by the Director of Finance, ICT and Property which classified this situation as high in terms of both magnitude and likelihood.

In acknowledging the importance of Social Services the Committee, did, however, consider that it was incumbent on the service budget holders to manage their budgets within margins set and this issue was raised with the Corporate Management Team. As monitoring of the changing budgetary position of this service occurred throughout the year, the opportunity was taken to re-emphasise to Cabinet the Committee's concern regarding its proposals relating to the ongoing use of capital reserves, the need to un-earmark reserves to fund the Social Services overspend and the consequential risk implications to the Council's general ability to deliver services to the community in the future.

**2. Efficiency Savings** – Regular reports have been submitted to this Committee on this subject linked to the ongoing Social Services Change Plan. As a consequence, a number of recommendations have been made calling for further information from officers with regard to details of efficiency savings achieved, unforeseen budgetary pressures, contingency arrangements, and the provision of a risk assessment relating to the implications for the Council not achieving those savings identified in the Plan in the current financial year 2007/08. In addition, the resulting implications if the Council had to un-earmark reserves were raised and the Cabinet's attention was drawn to the Committee's concern regarding the ongoing overspend and the consequential risk implications for the Council's general ability to deliver services.

More general efficiency savings unrelated to this subject have been, and will continue to be, reported to the four Scrutiny Committees on an ongoing monthly basis.

**3. Local Service Boards (LSB's)** – The Vale LSB has been established and is chaired by the Leader of the Council, and includes the Council's Chief Executive and representatives from appropriate external stakeholders including, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Local Health Board, and two NHS Trusts covering the Vale of Glamorgan and various other organisations.

The LSB has met three times since October 2007 and will meet bi – monthly with discussions initially focusing on establishing the structure of the LSB and supporting groups. The priority of the LSB is currently drawing up a work programme and agreeing joint projects.

Given this situation, it has not been practical to pursue this matter at this time. However, officers within the Scrutiny and Committee Services Section and Improvement and Development Team have met to discuss what arrangements will need to be put in place to enable effective scrutiny of the LSB. At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Chairman/ Vice Chairmen Group on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2008

consideration was given to options for scrutinising the LSB and its activities. The Group subsequently agreed that the views of the four Scrutiny Committees be sought in due course, whilst acknowledging that the introduction and format of arrangements for scrutiny of the LSB would be a matter for Full Council to determine.

**4 Making the Connections** – “Making the Connections / Delivering Beyond Boundaries: Transforming Public Services in Wales” was the Welsh Assembly Government’s (WAG) response to an earlier review of local service delivery in Wales by Sir Jeremy Beecham. WAG’s response included a number of actions to be taken over the next 5 years designed to transform public service delivery with a citizen-centered approach.

The inclusion of this issue within the work programme in hindsight has been particularly difficult to deliver given the breadth of the subject area, cross-cutting nature of issues and that various initiatives are currently being progressed by the Council and reported as appropriate to relevant Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

Clearly one of Beecham's key proposals involved the establishment of LSB's in all local authority areas; they can be seen as a continuation and strengthening of the Local Strategic Partnerships set up to oversee Community Strategies. Other examples of joint working initiatives has seen the Council closely working with other local authorities and participating in Prosiect Gwyrdd - a partnership approach to procuring a regional waste management solution between this Council Cardiff, Newport and Monmouthshire and the Connecting South East Wales Board shared services project.

### ***Task and Finish Group***

**Ward Member Consultation** – The Task and Finish Group met on a number of occasions between November 2007, and March 2008 to discuss issues identified by the Group in connection with officer’s proposals, which impact on elected Member wards and were the subject of reports to the Cabinet, Committee and Council.

Specific consultation issues were identified by the Group, which typically related to highway works (whether undertaken by the Council or private utility companies), traffic-calming measures associated with safe routes to schools and programmed maintenance. Existing reporting procedures adopted by the Council, which included seeking the views of officers, were taken into account.

Other service area issues indirectly linked to the above were considered, for example, housing stock availability within Members’ wards. As a consequence of the Group’s recommendations this type of information and other certain ward specific service delivery issues are now available on the Member Net facility.

As a result of the Group’s consideration of the issues and the views of officers a new draft protocol was requested to be prepared to encompass reporting



arrangements for consultation with ward Members on draft reports to Cabinet and / or Council and other Committees (including Scrutiny Committees) The Group acknowledged that existing reporting procedures in relation to the Planning and Licensing Committees were sufficiently robust given the statutory consultation requirements and would therefore be exempt from the proposed revised arrangements The Group also requested that prior to any submission of a draft protocol to the Group, the views of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and other elected members be obtained on the proposals and any comments simultaneously submitted to the Group.

A draft protocol was prepared taking account best practice in Wales, England and Scotland and submitted to the Group for consideration on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The Group recommended that the draft protocol, subject to minor modification on the terms proposed by the Director of Legal, Public Protection and Housing Services, be referred to the Cabinet for approval and adoption. The Scrutiny Committee endorsed the recommendation with the addition that a review of the protocol be undertaken within twelve months of its implementation.

Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2008 subsequently resolved that :

- the draft protocol be accepted and a report be submitted to Cabinet on its implementation in 12 months and
- consideration be given by the Director of Environmental and Economic Regeneration to developing a protocol to publicise the type, duration and body responsible for works within communities likely to cause local disruption/inconvenience.

### **Other aspects of Scrutiny work addressed by the Committee throughout the year:**

#### **Publishing of Food Hygiene Information (Scores on the Doors)**

The proposal by the Cabinet in July 2007 to publish a food hygiene information document entitled Scores on the Doors resulted in a call in with the Committee identifying its concerns at the likely impact of the scheme if implemented on those business premises that were likely to receive a low rating, particularly given that any proposals would be applied retrospectively and that there was no right of appeal against any award. It was also found from evidence submitted by the business and industry sector representatives, who supported the spirit of the initiative, that consultation on the Councils proposals had not been suitably extensive.

There was evidence to suggest that there had been haste in progressing the pilot scheme and a lack of wider consultation with those likely to be affected. In addition to the above specific points, there was a general consensus that information had come to light at the meeting which had not been available at the

time Cabinet had considered this matter and which, in turn, was adding to Members' general concerns regarding the scheme. Accordingly, the Cabinet was requested to postpone the launch of the scheme, review the matter in the light of the considerable amount of additional evidence submitted at the meeting but the Council continue with its involvement in the pilot scheme and in doing so, ensure that all issues / concerns raised are fully incorporated in feedback regarding the scheme following the undertaking of a Vale-wide consultation exercise to establish more fully the position in the area.

The Cabinet in considering the above issues decided that the Council should not take part in the pilot scheme and in the event of a further pilot scheme being initiated, a comprehensive consultation exercise be undertaken by officers prior to any further consideration on the matter by the Cabinet.

### **Penarth Headland Link -**

The Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007 considered Councillor P. Church's call in regarding clarification on the availability of funding from other sources, the involvement of the relevant A.M and the justification to terminate the project.

In considering this matter the Committee received additional information that, during the course of the project, there had been regular examination of alternative sources of funding for the scheme. However, it had become apparent when pursuing such alternative sources that funding could not be easily achieved from alternative bodies. The possibility of other sources of funding being available, either from the Welsh Assembly Government or from Central Government or elsewhere had also been discussed but no proposals had been suggested or progressed.

The number of competing priorities, which currently faced the Council was recognised by the Committee, however, the Committee considered that the work already undertaken regarding planning / design work should not be wasted and should be capable of being utilised in the event of any future scheme being considered.

The Cabinet was requested to pursue the possibility, as part of the progression by WAG of its proposals for an all-Wales coastal path, with other neighbouring local authorities, relevant organisations, Sustrans, the possibility of including within such a link provision around the Penarth Headland of a footpath and cycle path. The views of the Committee were subsequently noted by Cabinet which reaffirmed its original decision, but in doing so, requested Cardiff Harbour Authority to transfer the funding earmarked for the project to be transferred to the proposed Ely River Bridge scheme.

Cardiff County Council has since reallocated the funding previously allocated towards the walkway towards the cost of the Olympic canoe/slalom course at Cardiff Bay.

### **Dyffryn Gardens: Land Exchange -**

A call-in by Councillor M.R. Harvey was discussed in June with a view to considering the benefits originally identified deriving from the proposed land exchange, established in the late 1990s and in a more recent report to the Cabinet of 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 and the subsequent decision not to proceed.

In discussing this and acknowledging the Cabinet's decision to withdraw from the land exchange as a result of additional costs, the Committee was informed that the other parties involved in this matter were still prepared to negotiate a way forward. The Committee discussed the future benefits of acquiring the land concerned, and requested the Cabinet to reconsider its decision not to proceed with the land exchange and continue to negotiate with the parties concerned to identify a more mutual solution at a lower cost including giving consideration to the scheme being held in abeyance until such time as a capital bid could be submitted.

The Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> July re-affirmed its decision to withdraw from the land exchange.

### **Barry Town Hall - Exhibition Area -**

This decision was called in by Councillor Mrs. M. Kelly Owen "to allow a thorough examination of the damage the inevitable downgrading of this newly completed superb art space, part of the impressive major development in the Barry revitalisation project, will have on this County's reputation to effectively plan, execute and bring to fruition its original vision for major projects without being deterred in that vision, for an asset that has been gained comparatively economically to the rate-payers due to external funds, and so maintain the confidence of others with responsibility / interest in attracting / bringing major funds to the County in the future to the advantage of its residents and rate-payers.

Additionally, to be assured that Cabinet has been made fully aware of the enormous advantage to be enjoyed by any private venture setting up as a coffee selling outlet in this superb new building, in such a prime location, and that, having established their commercial venture they would, inevitably, feel the need to expand it to ensure maximum commercial advantage."

Councillor Kelly Owen asked Committee to resist the Cabinet proposals and request Cabinet to reconsider its decision.

The Director of Environmental and Economic Regeneration explained that part of the rationale behind the current Cabinet proposals was to have regard to the response engendered by a public opinion survey undertaken a year or so ago that a coffee shop would be welcome in the building and to ascertain the effect that might have on footfall not only in the building itself and immediate area, but in the town centre generally. Those visitors might then be further encouraged to view the other facilities within the former Town Hall and the refurbished King Square and Central Park, another reason behind the proposal being to increase access to the arts.

Contributions to the debate came from Mr. Paul Haley on behalf of Pride in Barry and Mr. David Newland, Regional Director, Arts Council for Wales. Discussion focussed on the current proposals to site the coffee shop within the exhibition area and whether they should be scaled down or even relocated to another area within the building.

Concern was expressed at the lack of revenue funding for staffing, advertising and the development of the space given the prestigious regeneration scheme, which has transformed the former, Town Hall and its environs. The Committee was reminded that no decision on the proposals had been taken, but that it had been proposed that an evaluation process be conducted following the completion of the marketing exercise.

Cabinet was made aware of this Scrutiny Committee's objection to the establishment of a coffee shop facility, with an assurance sought that a professional and a dedicated art space be preserved on the basis of the existing exhibition area.

### **Wales Audit Office Report: Sickness Absence Management -**

The Committee received of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) to present its report on sickness absence management arrangements within the Council.

The report made recommendations which can summarised as improving management information on which to measure, monitor, review and report progress by developing new HR systems, by refining reports to Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Members to ensure that key issues relating to attendance were clearly identified and summarised, by developing the following:

- Develop robust target setting processes and by comparing performance with other local authorities through benchmarking clubs and other technical groups,
- Further action to develop an appropriate policy framework which would comprise co-ordinated and complementary policies to improve attendance

- By developing a suite of policies which encompassed the Council's aspiration to create a positive attendance culture and by developing an action plan,
- Revise the current attendance management policy, apply further roles and responsibilities of CMT,
- HR and the Management of Attendance Group to become more strategic, and
- To ensure that the Council had appropriate and targeted Occupational Health support services.

Progress has been queried on the development of new policies in light of the WAO findings with it being disclosed that a draft policy containing the new sickness absence management arrangements which would have greater emphasis on "case intervention" in relation to the management of ill health has been approved by the Corporate Management Team for extensive consultation with the various stakeholders. The WAO has also been providing assistance in relation to the enhancement of the current Occupational Health service provided by the Council.

Committee has expressed its concern to the Corporate Management Team that the target completion dates attached to the Sickness Absence Management Action Plan had slipped significantly and has asked that a revised Sickness Absence Management Action Plan be submitted to the Committee and the Cabinet for consideration. The Corporate Management Team was also requested to submit to the Committee for consideration the new / revised Sickness Absence Management Policy. The Committee at this time awaits the submission of these matters.

### **Sustainability -**

The Committee has considered a request for consideration from Councillor M.R. Wilson to examine sustainability and to make sure that it is considered as part of every report considered by the Council, with sustainability implications incorporated into reports to elected Members as a corporate standard. The Committee has been made aware of the various initiatives underway within the Council in particular, the establishment of a senior officer Sustainable Development Working Group with representatives from all Directorates. Its purpose was to provide a strategic focus for sustainable development within the Council; co-ordinate the work necessary to embed sustainable development across the Council; build an understanding and awareness of the importance of doing things in sustainable ways and achieving sustainable outcomes; identify and share examples of good practice from within the Council and from other organisations and establish ambitions and aspirations for sustainability within the Council.

The Council's Corporate Management Team has considered that the existing arrangements for reporting to committees were sufficiently robust and as such sustainability issues should be addressed under "Resource Implications".

The Committee will receive six monthly progress reports in respect of this subject.

### **Outstanding issues from the 2007/08 Work Programme**

**Job Evaluation** – This review was due to be undertaken by the Committee in 2006/07 to ascertain the effectiveness of the Council's current process, how it would be successfully implemented in the Council and its impact on staff. However, to date, the Job Evaluation process has not been completed and as such the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee has not been able to undertake its review and as a consequence this will be slipped in to the Work Programme for 2008/09. The Committee has however received updates on progress as part of the Human Resources Service Plan quarterly performance monitoring arrangements.

### **2008/09 – Priorities/Work Programme**

The Committee has agreed that the Work Programme for 2008/09 will continue to include the following:

- Quarterly Service Performance Monitoring
- Revenue and Capital Expenditure Monitoring
- Budget Proposals
- Service Planning
- Monitoring progress of Year 2 actions, contained in the Scrutiny Review Action Plan.
- Progress reports on various Committee recommendations
- Emerging strategies from the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy
- Decision tracking of recommendations in order to evaluate and monitor scrutiny performance
- Consideration of the Cabinet's Forward Work Programme
- Establishment of Task and Finish Groups to deal with any other issues that arise as and when appropriate and consideration of any recommendations of the Group
- Social Services Change Plan /budget/ efficiency savings.

In respect of any reviews of service during the year due to the resource implications for both Members and officers within the Scrutiny and Committee Services Section and the Improvement and Development Team in support of the delivery of the Social Services Change Plan the Committee has recognised that the ability for officers to conduct formal reviews during 2008/09 is limited.

However, the Committee was advised that for itself and the Economy and Environment and Lifelong Learning Committees the Improvement and Development Team would fully support one formal review in 2008/9 with the Community Wellbeing and Safety review being the Social Services Change Plan

To date, the Committee has requested that a review of the Council's current procurement arrangements be undertaken on the basis of the Task and Finish process, the scope of which has yet to be determined.

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT)**

The Committee's scope of responsibility covers the following service areas:

- Economic Development,
- Leisure and Tourism Services and 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, and
- Building and Visible Services.

### **Meetings**

11 meetings of the Committee were held, excluding 4 extraordinary meetings and 3 site visits. The meeting scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> November to consider primarily the initial capital and revenue budgets was in fact adjourned in order for additional information to inform consideration of the initial capital proposals more fully. The Committee reconvened on 4<sup>th</sup> December when specific recommendations were forwarded to Corporate Resources in respect of "the £650k. cuts required by Cabinet", drawing attention to the inevitable reduction in service and the false economy of not undertaking the necessary works which would place further pressures on the service in the new financial year.

Particular public interest in matters within the remit of the Committee, either through the media or by attendance at meetings, was shown in respect of Barry Town Hall – exhibition area; flooding in the Vale on 20<sup>th</sup> July; and the proposed relocation of the Quarella Street multi use games area. Both Lifelong Learning and Corporate Resources took on board the views of this Committee in respect of the proposed use of up to one third of the exhibition space at the County Library being utilised as a coffee shop, and Cabinet has yet to take the final decision. Approximately 40 members of the public attended the Committee to participate in the discussion in relation to flooding, Cabinet having already agreed to the provision of sandbags and requiring further reports in respect of the Committee's other recommendations.

As regards the 3 site visits,

- a tour of the newly built and refurbished facilities at Dyffryn opened in March as part of the ongoing restoration programme for the Grade 1 registered gardens preceded the meeting of the Committee held in the Cory Education Centre in July 2007.
- Members toured the Barry Leisure Centre in March 2008 following a decision of Committee to visit one of the Leisure Centres in order to see at first hand possible areas for expansion and potential investment and to



identify threats/opportunities (discussions having taken place at that meeting on ways to improve and expand services and thereby mitigate the impact of potential external leisure providers).

- Prior to consideration of a call-in regarding the proposed removal and resiting of a multi-use games area, Members of both this and the Corporate Resources Committee visited the areas in question.

On 8<sup>th</sup> April 2008, the Committee considered/debated the issues in relation to the Cabinet's decision to remove the MUGA. This Committee made the following recommendation, that  
"Cabinet seek Regulation 3 Planning Application Temporary Consent for a Multi Use Games Area on the site at Quarella Street and any conditions to the consent be left for the Planning Committee to decide."

The recommendation will be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008, which will be after the publication of this document.

## **2007/08 – Work Programme**

The following Task and Finish Groups were reappointed. In addition, a politically balanced Task and Finish Group was appointed to undertake a work programme item on Sustainable Integrated Public Transport. A summary of the work of the Groups is shown below together with the way forward as agreed by this Committee in March 2008:

### **1. Recycling and Waste Management**

The Committee had accepted the invitation from Cardiff and Newport Councils for this Council to join the Joint Scrutiny Committee investigating the possibility of a partnership for residual waste treatment and disposal. The recommendations of the subsequent joint report (which included a continuing commitment to partnership working to secure a regional waste management solution and the identification of resources to allow prompt practical progress and sound project management) were endorsed by this Committee and, subsequently, Cabinet. Since that time, ongoing reports have been made to this Committee in respect of Prosiect Gwyrdd - a partnership approach to procuring a regional waste treatment solution. Given the stringent timetable (and penalties for failure to comply with European Landfill targets), all local authorities in the partnership are fully committed to waste minimisation and maximising the amount of waste to be recycled and composted.

In March 2008 the Committee decided that no further consideration be given to completing the outstanding issues contained in the scope of the Group, it being noted that the Committee itself might yet have a role to play in Prosiect Gwyrdd.

## **2. Rhoose Point and the impact thereon of development north of the railway line, Rhoose**

The Task and Finish Group met on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 when the Monitoring Officer detailed the parameters within which Scrutiny Reviews were recommended to operate and to outline / propose a scope. Those parameters included a reminder that Scrutiny Reviews were intended primarily to focus on strategic issues and not on analysis of individual decisions taken by quasi-judicial committees. Given the complexities of the issues, the need to develop a tightly focused scope was accepted. At the same time, attention was drawn to the Council's limited resources in terms of undertaking a comprehensive review. The Group on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2007 further deferred consideration of the matter given the multiplicity of the potential issues which could be incorporated into a scope and the lack of any real practical support to undertake both that scoping exercise and the subsequent "review" and subsequently agreed in light of the above that consideration be given to the scoping exercise commencing once the resourcing issue had been clarified.

In March 2008 the Committee decided that no further consideration to progressing the matter be given since insufficient resources would be available to conduct a comprehensive review.

## **3. Sustainable Integrated Public Transport**

The Group, appointed in May 2007, had identified the following 4 areas for consideration with the timescales indicated

- Concessionary Travel to include ways of promoting and increasing the uptake of concessionary travel – Summer 2008;
- Bus/Rail Integration - interim report March 2008;
- Travel Plan to include the possibility of drafting a Travel Plan for Members - interim report March 2008;
- Home Zones - Summer 2008.

The purpose and objectives of the Group were "to consider greater integration of transport within the Vale and, in both the existing and proposed new development, locally and regionally".

In respect of Bus / Rail Integration, a site visit was made to Blackwood and Caerphilly by means of car-share from the Civic Offices for the majority of Members thereby illustrating a practical example of sustainability. The attendance at the visit of Caerphilly Council's Principal Passenger Transport Officer, together with the information he provided, was much appreciated and shows the value of good working relations with professional officers from other Councils.

As regards the Council's Travel Plan the suggestion that a Members' Protocol / Travel Plan would be a ground-breaking innovative project was unanimously accepted. Officers reported that this Council was far more advanced than any other Council in Wales as regards travel planning but that, whilst progress had been made, targets were not being met nor resistance to change being overcome. It was fully recognised that a balanced approach using practical and reasonable ways in effecting what was necessarily a culture change was the only way to achieve success. Initial proposals from the Group, having received the endorsement of the Corporate Working Group established to implement the Plan, were then further refined and an interim report submitted to the Group.

The remaining topics already identified in the scope have already been included in the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

### **Reviews Completed**

The final report of the Town Centre Task and Finish Group, details of which had been contained in the Annual Report for 2006/07 and its 15 recommendations, which included issues pertaining to the regeneration and rebranding of the town centre were endorsed by Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2008.

### **Other aspects of scrutiny work addressed by the Committee throughout the year:-**

During the period, Committee received, amongst others:

- Mr. P. Haley, Pride in Barry and Ms. G. Price, Women's Arts Association to facilitate discussion on a call-in in respect of Barry Town Hall - Exhibition Area
- representatives from the Environment Agency, Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water, WAG, and South Wales Fire Service to discuss matters pertaining to the flooding incidents in the Vale on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2007
- Mr. C. Couper, Deputy Port Manager, South Wales Ports, and Mr. B. Lewis from ABP to discuss matters pertaining to the Port of Barry
- Mr. R. Keogh from Persimmon Homes representing the Consortium, Mr. B. Lewis, ABP and Mr. P. Williams, WAG, to discuss the Waterfront development
- Mr. J. Viney, Cadoxton Millennium Playground Association, and local residents to discuss a call-in in relation to the Quarella Street Multi Use Games Area.

The first example of collaboration / information exchange in the year took place on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2007. Steve Latham and Jeff Wyatt facilitated / hosted a visit by Newport Council's Culture and Recreation Scrutiny Forum (and officers) to Cosmeston Country Park. The purpose of the visit was as part of information gathering by Newport to facilitate a review of existing / potential uses of Tredegar House Lake.

The Committee also referred several matters to bodies other than the Cabinet in order to engage more widely.

### **Outstanding Issues from the 2007/08 Work Programme**

The completion of the work of the Sustainable Integrated Public Transport Task and Finish Group.

### **2008/2009 – Priorities/Work Programmes**

The Committee will continue consideration of the following as part of its work programme for 2008 / 2009:

- Quarterly service performance monitoring
- Revenue and capital expenditure monitoring
- Budget proposals
- Service planning
- Consider proposals from any Task and Finish Groups that might be established
- Receiving progress reports on various Committee recommendations
- Other reports required by Committee as and when Appropriate e.g. Local Development Plan
- Emerging strategies from the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy
- Decision tracking of recommendations in order to evaluate and monitor scrutiny performance
- The Cabinet Forward Work Programme
- Concessionary travel and home zones – continuation of the ongoing proposed programme set by the Sustainable Integrated Public Transport Task and Finish Group
- The regeneration/revitalisation of the town centre of Penarth
- The use of excess packaging and the need to reduce the same in the interests of the environment.

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (LIFELONG LEARNING)**

The Committee's scope of responsibility covers the following service areas:

- Schools (Pupil Support, School Improvement and School Support).
- Post 16 Education and Training
- Libraries
- Community Education and Youth Service.

Although Scrutiny Committees are able to appoint Sub-Committees and Task and Finish Groups to assist in their work, none were established by this Committee.

### **Meetings**

During the municipal year 2007/08, the Committee met 11 times. Of these, 8 were held in schools within the Vale of Glamorgan. The meetings were normally attended by the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.

### **2007/08 Work Programme**

The Committee continued consideration of the following as part of its work programme for 2007/2008:

- Quarterly Service Performance
- Monthly Revenue and Capital Monitoring
- Initial Revenue Budget proposals
- Initial Capital Programme proposals
- Estyn Inspection Reports
- Improvement Plan
- Service Planning
- Emerging Strategies from the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy.

Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2007, were requested to endorse the suspension of Scrutiny Reviews that would normally be undertaken by the Improvement and Development Team from the Forward Work Programme in order to support the actions for which the team members had a role in the Social Services Change Plan.

Although fully aware of the urgent need to reduce the overspend on the Social Services Budget, the Committee felt that endorsement of the recommendation would have a detrimental effect on scrutiny itself, and recommended that the proposal to suspend Scrutiny Reviews until May 2008 be not accepted.

Notwithstanding the recommendation of the Committee, Cabinet agreed to implement its earlier decision.

## **Call-ins**

One call-in was considered, of Cabinet Minute C3198 relating to Barry Town Hall Exhibition Area. The Committee, on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2007 recommended that Cabinet be asked to reconsider its decision with a view to the proposals being withdrawn. The call-in was also considered by Scrutiny Committees (Economy and Environment) and (Corporate Resources).

Having considered the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet resolved that consideration of the matters relating to the Barry Town Hall be deferred for a further comprehensive report, to encompass the views of each of the Scrutiny Committees.

## **Requests for Consideration**

Two requests for consideration were considered by the Committee:

- Essential Works to Sully Primary School – the Committee noted the responses made.
- Graffiti – the committee considered the best methods of preventing and managing graffiti. Whilst endorsing the principle of the use of technical solutions for the removal of graffiti, it was considered that the devotion of additional monies into the Youth Service for the provision of more activities for young people may assist in tackling the cause of graffiti and recommended as such to Cabinet. Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2008, noted the recommendation and resolved to consider the recommendation at a later date.

## **Other aspects of scrutiny work addressed by the Committee throughout the year:-**

In addition to the scheduled work programme matters considered a significant number of additional issues were scrutinised by the Committee, including:

### **Level of Nursery Provision in the Vale of Glamorgan**

The completion of a review, commenced in the previous year, to evaluate the levels of nursery provision in the Vale of Glamorgan. The review focused on establishing a clear picture of the current situation in terms of nursery provision within the Vale, and examined the levels of provision in the nurseries provided by the Council and in those which are privately owned. The review also considered issues around how geographical location impacts upon the ability to access nursery provision and how it affects demands for services.

Eight recommendations were made to Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2008 and which were subsequently endorsed.

### **School Investment Strategy**

The School Investment Strategy was identified as a standing item for the agenda for every Scrutiny Committee meeting. The Strategy incorporates the rebuild/redevelopment of the three secondary schools, Cowbridge, St. Cyres and Llantwit Major as well as building improvements in all other Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools.

Davis Langdon were appointed as the authority's Design Team/External Consultants in September, following the appropriate tendering processes undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation.

Work is currently ongoing to identify the necessary required resources to support delivery of the Strategy. Resources already identified include existing capital receipts, Welsh Assembly Government grant and element's of the Council's supported borrowing programme. However, there is still a significant shortfall to be addressed. The Committee will in 2008/09 continue to receive regular reports which will monitor the delivery of the Strategy.

### **School Flooding**

Arising from the flooding of Bryn Hafren, St. Richard Gwyn, Oakfield and Gwaun y Nant Schools following the heavy rainfall on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2007, Committee requested updates on actions taken in response to the flooding, and the progress made to reinstate the schools. To assist in this process, the Headteachers of the affected schools were invited to attend the meeting of the Committee. Committee congratulated the staff of the Council and schools for their efforts in bringing the schools back to beneficial use.

### **School Budgets**

Following consideration of the schools budgets for 2007/08, Committee invited the WAG Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to attend a meeting of the Committee to explain to the Committee the Welsh Assembly Government funding methodology.

A response was received from the WAG Minister for Social Justice and Local Government who stated that 'given individual authorities discretion to allocate resources between services for which they are responsible, I do not think that my attendance at the Committee would be helpful.'

### **Catering Services Budget**

Committee has investigated the reasons for the originally projected deficit of £120,000 (subsequently reduced to £30,000) on the Catering Services Budget. The positive steps being taken to achieve a balanced budget in 2008/09 were acknowledged.

### **14-19 Learning Pathways Programme**

In response to a request from Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) the implementation of the 14-19 Learning Pathways Programme within the Vale was scrutinised. Committee accepted the actions undertaken by officers to date in this matter.

### **Children Educated Other Than at School**

Arrangements applying for children educated other than in school within the Vale of Glamorgan were scrutinised. Whilst accepting the principle of Home Education for Children, the Committee expressed the view that a child's right to a satisfactory education may not be adequately satisfied at present in view of the lack of continuous assessment. A particularly significant issue was the LEA's lack of knowledge of a child.

A request was made to Cabinet to make representations to WAG to ensure the right of LEA's to better assess the performance of children educated at home, and a decision of Cabinet is awaited.

### **Delivering the School Investment Strategy**

The School Investment Strategy was established as a standing item for all Scrutiny Committee meetings. Whilst good progress has been achieved as acknowledged by the Committee, this will continue to be a key item for the Committee for the foreseeable future.

### **Education Budget**

The Scrutiny received representations from the School Budget Forum detailing the financial challenges facing schools. The Directorate budget proposals for schools were submitted following Scrutiny consideration.

### **Outstanding issues from the 2007/08 Work Programme**

The Committee had intended to scrutinise the investment strategy and education budget in more detail but this was not possible within the time and resources available. Similarly, whilst the draft Children's Plan has been welcomed, detailed consideration of the required action plan will be a matter for the future. The Youth Service Action Plan will also need to be addressed once the final Estyn Report on Youth Support Service within the Vale of Glamorgan is published.



## **2008/09 Priorities / Work Programme**

It has been agreed that the work programme for 2008/09 will continue to include the following:

- Quarterly Service Performance Monitoring
- Revenue and Capital Expenditure Monitoring
- School Investment Monitoring
- Budget Proposals
- Service Planning
- Other reports required by the Committee as and when appropriate
- Emerging strategies from the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy
- Decision tracking of recommendations in order to evaluate and monitor scrutiny performance
- The Cabinet Forward Work Programme

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING OUTSIDE REPRESENTATIVES**

**(a) Scrutiny (Community Wellbeing and Safety) -**

Councillor Mrs. M.E.J. Birch (Chairman); Councillor K.R. Stockdale (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Mrs. S. Bagstaff, R.J. Bertin, Ms. R.M. Birch, Ms. L. Burnett, P. Church, J. Clifford, N.P. Hodges, H.J.W. James, G.C. Kemp, Mrs. A.J. Moore, A.G. Powell, Mrs. A.J. Preston, B.I. Shaw, J.W. Thomas and W.C. Vaughan.

Also invited to attend as non-voting co-opted members one representative of each of the following organisations:

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

**(b) Scrutiny (Corporate Resources) -**

Councillor H.J.W. James (Chairman); Councillor Mrs. C.V.L. Clay (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Mrs. S.M. Bagstaff, Ms. L. Burnett, Mrs. J.E. Charles, Miss J. Cole, M.R. Harvey, N.P. Hodges, T.H. Jarvie, F.T. Johnson, Mrs. M. Kelly Owen, Mrs. A.J. Moore, C.L. Osborne, A.G. Powell, B.I. Shaw, K.R. Stockdale and M.R. Wilson.

**(c) Scrutiny (Economy and Environment) -**

Councillor N.P. Hodges (Chairman); Councillor S.T. Wiliam (Vice-Chairman); Councillors R.J. Bertin, Ms. L. Burnett, J Clifford, Miss J. Cole, G.A. Cox, A.D. Dobbinson, C.P. Franks, E. Hacker, Mrs. M. Kelly Owen, Mrs. A.J. Moore, Mrs. A. J. Preston, Mrs. S.I. Sharpe, W. C. Vaughan, A.J. Williams and M.R. Wilson.

**(d) Scrutiny (Lifelong Learning) -**

Councillor A.D. Hampton (Chairman); Councillor E. Hacker (Vice-Chairman);  
Councillors Mrs. M.E.J. Birch, Ms. R.M. Birch, P. Church, J. Clifford,  
Miss J. Cole, A.D. Dobbinson, A.M. Ernest, C.P. Franks, F.T. Johnson,  
G.C. Kemp, A.G. Powell, Mrs. S.I. Sharpe, B.I. Shaw, S.T. Wiliam and  
E.T. Williams.

Also invited to attend as co-opted members:

Mr. A. Ballard, Penarth (Roman Catholic Church).  
Father E. Counsell, Pendoylan (Church in Wales).  
Mr. S. James - (Parent Governor - Secondary Sector).  
Ms. C. Baggett (Parent Governor - Primary Sector).

Also invited to attend as non-voting observers:

Mr. G. Beaudette	(Primary).
Mr. T. Cox	(Secondary).
Mr. G. Roberts	(Special).
Mr. D. Griffiths	(Headteachers).
Vacant	(Free Churches).

## Statistical Information

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

### Total Number of Scrutiny Committee Meetings held between May 2007 – April 2008

Scrutiny Committee	Extraordinary	Scheduled	Workshops
Community Wellbeing and Safety	2	12	*
Corporate Resources	3	12	*
Economy and Environment *	3	11	*
Lifelong Learning	-	11	*

\* 1 General Scrutiny Workshop held in June 2007 for all members of Scrutiny

\* EE 3 site visits were also undertaken by the committee during the year.

### Call-In Statistics

#### May 2007 – April 2008

Scrutiny Committees	Community Wellbeing and Safety	Corporate Resources	Economy and Environment	Lifelong Learning
No of call-ins Received	1	* 6	3	1
Withdrawn				-
Refused				-
Approved for call-in purposes	1	* 6	2	1
Cabinet decisions endorsed by SC	* 1			-
Recommendations referred to Cabinet		8	1 *	1
Cabinet Final Rejected Decisions - Noted - Endorsed -		1 5		-
Decisions Pending		2 (Coffee Shop -Barry Town Hall)		1
Referred to Full Council				-
Recommendations referred to other Committees			1	-

**Total number of Call-Ins Received – 11**

- \*CWS - committee requested to receive a six monthly progress report on Pacts in July 2008.
- \*CR - Cowbridge Leisure Centre Access – Call in will be considered by Scrutiny on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2008
- \*EE - Muga – to be considered by Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008

**Requests for Consideration of Matter  
May 2007 – April 2008**

Scrutiny Committee	*No. of requests received	Requests withdrawn	Pending	No. of requests for further info.	No. of requests noted by Committee	No. of recs referred to Cabinet	No. of requests referred to other Committees
Community Wellbeing and Safety	2			1	1		
Corporate Resources	1				1		
Economy and Environment	4			2	2	6	
Lifelong Learning	2	-	-	-	1	1	-

**Total Number of Requests Received - 9**

**References from Cabinet to Scrutiny Committee (Consultation)  
May 2007 – April 2008**

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	4	2	1	1*		
Corporate Resources	6	1	1	7	6	1 (a)
Economy and Environment	7	7	2			
Lifelong Learning	3	3	-	-	-	-

**Total Number of References Received - 20**

- \* CWS to be referred to Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008

**References from Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet  
May 2007 – April 2008**

Scrutiny Committee	Total No. of References Made	No. of recs Noted by Cabinet	No. of recs (a)accepted/ (e) endorsed	No. of recs pending	No. rejected by Cabinet	No. partially agreed	Referred to other Committees/ Working Groups
Community Wellbeing and Safety	5 (totalling 17 recs)	1	2	14*			
Corporate Resources	7 (totalling 12 recs)	10	2(a)				9
Economy and Environment	17 (totalling 50 recs)	2	39	8*	1		
Lifelong Learning	6 (13 recs.)	1	8	3	1	-	-

**Total Number of References received – 35 (totalling 87 recommendations)**

NB - CWS - \* Further reports requested by Cabinet  
EE - \* Further reports requested by Cabinet

**References received from Scrutiny Committee to Scrutiny Committee  
May 2007 – April 2008**

Scrutiny Committee	No. of references received	No. of Scrutiny Committee recs Noted / Endorsed	No. Recs referred to Cabinet/ or referred back to committee	No. Recs Noted by Cabinet	No. of Recs accepted (a) / rejected (r) by Cabinet and referred on
Community Wellbeing and Safety	5 ( Totalling 16 recs)	14	1 (i) *	-	1(ii) *
Corporate Resources	4	9	-	-	-
Economy and Environment	1		1		1(iii) *
Lifelong Learning	-	-	-	-	-

**Total Number of References received – 10**

NB CWS      \*(i) referred back to CR for further consideration  
                  \*(ii) rec referred to Cabinet who requested a further report be presented  
                  \*(iii) further report requested by Cabinet

## Year 1 Scrutiny Review Action Plan

## APPENDIX 3

Priority Action No.	Ref to Other Action Plans	Action	Success Criteria	High, Medium or Low Priority	Officer Responsible	Start Date	Finish Date	Resources & Budget Bids	Progress
1.	R1	Organise a Scrutiny event for non-executive members to explore Scrutiny powers.	Members feel confident in their role and are able to develop specialist skills.	M	IDT/DS	May 07	June 07	Within existing budget	<b>Completed.</b> A further event will be run as part of the Member Induction programme following the 2008 elections.
2.	R2	Develop a pre-work programme evaluation to assess the suitability of potential work programme items.	Members focus on specific issues that are appropriate to the work programme.	H	IDT DS	Sept 07	Nov 07	Within existing budget	<b>Completed.</b>
3.	R6	Further develop website content to enable the public to engage with the Scrutiny process.	The public are able to interact with and influence Scrutiny.	H	IDT DS	May 07	Mar 08	Within existing budget	Work ongoing. Series of Scrutiny Guides nearing completion. These will be made available on the website. Some changes made to content.

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4.	R4	Agenda conferences are used to decide whether to invite the relevant executive member to committee meetings.	Improved executive member co-operation and participation in the Scrutiny process.	H	DS	Sept 07	Oct 07	Within existing budget	<b>Completed.</b> All Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen have been reminded of the value of agenda conferences and the need to ensure, as far as practicable, a uniform approach across all four Committees to agenda / workload planning.
5.	R10	Explore the feasibility of reducing the size of committee membership.	Meetings are held more frequently involving fewer members, so that work programme issues are resolved quickly.	H	DS	Sept 07	Jan 08	Within existing budget	To be discussed further at Democratic Renewal Working Group. No meeting yet arranged.
6.	R14	Annually produce a consultation summary to feed consultation outcomes into yearly work programme.	Consultation outcomes are communicated to members to better inform topics for the annual work programme.	H	IDT	Oct 07	Jan 08	Within existing budget	<b>Completed.</b> Members provided copies of the consultation outcomes as part of the process for identifying potential topics for review.



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7.	R11	Investigate the feasibility of member development of specialist functions within Scrutiny enabling members to become experts in certain subjects.	Members feel confident in their role and are able to develop specialist skills portfolio. Increased focus on specific issues.	M	DS IDT	Oct 07	Jan 08	Within existing budget	On going. Pilot group established to look at performance data related to CWS function. Arrangements agreed at last meeting re "roll out" of process across the other Scrutiny Committees. SC/ CR & E/E will be subject to training post elections.
8.	R13	Revise the format of Scrutiny meetings through restructuring the content of meetings and developing themed agenda items of public interest.	Increased public attendance at meetings. Shorter more focused agendas.	H	DS	Jan 08	Mar 08	Within existing budget	Incremental progress being made. The 2008/09 work programmes will be assessed in terms of developing themed agendas. As agreed at the last meeting, Scrutiny Committees' cycle will be reduced. More frequent meetings should assist re workload planning / themed agendas.

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9.	R15	Implement a series of quarterly meetings for each Scrutiny committee involving relevant Scrutiny Chairmen/Vice Chairmen, officers and Executive Members to discuss work programme items and any other matters of concern.	Scrutiny work programme issues are resolved quickly and effectively. Reduction in the number of call-ins. Improved communication and information sharing between officers and members.	M	DS	Sept 07	Nov 08	Within existing budget	<b>Completed.</b> The Democratic Renewal Working Group on 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2007 agreed that any format for liaison meetings between Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Scrutiny and the respective Cabinet Members should not be too prescriptive given that Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees were considered to be generally working in a constructive manner.