



VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13



INDEX

CONTENT	PAGE
Foreword	3
Introduction	4
What is Scrutiny ?	4 - 5
Scrutiny Committees	
• Corporate Resources	6 - 9
• Economy and Environment	10 - 12
• Housing and Public Protection	13 - 14
• Lifelong Learning	15 - 16
• Social Care and Health	17 - 19
Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group	20
Wales Audit Office (WAO) Scrutiny Improvement Study	20 - 21
Joint Scrutiny	21
Future Work Programmes	22
Find out More About Scrutiny Meetings	23
Appendix 1 - Statistical Information	24 - 26
Appendix 2 - Scrutiny Committees' Membership	27

FOREWORD

As the Chairman of the Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group I am pleased to introduce the 2012/13 Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report, which provides an account of the progress made in the past year, including some of the key pieces of work undertaken by each of the Committees.

One of the major areas of work this year included undertaking a review of Welfare Reform, which is a challenge facing all Local Authorities, further details for which are contained within this report.

The Council is also facing a challenging time, particularly in relation to the budget and the changes in the way that local services are delivered. Scrutiny Committees will, however, continue to monitor performance and consider ways for improvement in order to maintain, develop and improve services for people in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice - Chairmen Group meets on a regular basis to discuss issues of common interest and areas of challenge and to help the Council shape its Scrutiny arrangements. It also prioritises suggestions for Scrutiny reviews in line with the Council's Corporate Priorities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank residents, local partners, key stakeholders and witnesses who have given their time to assist the Scrutiny process throughout the year. Members are committed to encouraging further public engagement in the Scrutiny process.

Councillor Mark Wilson
Chairman - Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group
and Chairman - Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources)

INTRODUCTION

Each year the Council produces an Annual Scrutiny Report. The document gives a retrospective insight into the work undertaken by each of the Council's five Scrutiny Committees.

The Annual Report details examples of Council policies, functions and activities that have been scrutinised over the past year and what may be looked at during the coming year.

Members of the public wishing to put forward any suggestions for any of the Scrutiny Committees to consider can do so. The form for which can be found at

[\[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/scrutiny/more_about_scrutiny.aspx\]](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/scrutiny/more_about_scrutiny.aspx) or obtained from the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Section, the contact details for which can be found at the end of this report.

WHAT IS SCRUTINY

Most of the decisions in the Council are taken by a small group of (7) Councillors known as the Cabinet (also referred to as the Executive). In terms of the Scrutiny process, Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet are known as Non-Executive Members.

The Scrutiny process is like the Council having its own “watchdog”. It provides a chance to review decisions made by the Cabinet and can also be used to inform and review any of the Council’s plans, policies or strategies or question existing

practices of the Council or certain other public services causing concern.

Scrutiny Committees can make recommendations and scrutinise the policies, decisions and performance of the Cabinet. The Cabinet, in turn, consults with, and responds to, Scrutiny Committee recommendations.

The Scrutiny Committees have various roles:

- They can help develop new policies and hold the Cabinet and its partners to account. They can monitor decisions taken by the Cabinet and examine the provision of services supplied by Council Directorates, contractors and external agencies within the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Scrutiny Committees look to adopt a common-sense approach to informing and reviewing decisions and policies, and considering whether they are right for the area. Not only does it provide a means to review the Council’s own achievements against its priorities, but it also enables issues in relation to services provided by other public organisations which may be causing public concern to be looked at.
- Scrutiny provides Councillors with an opportunity to examine the various functions of the Council, to ask questions about why decisions have been made, to consider whether service improvements can be put in place and make recommendations to this effect. It can also

provide the opportunity for Councillors to “champion” issues of local concern to residents.

- **Scrutiny of the Council’s Performance and Budget.** A core role of each Committee’s work involves the detailed examination of key Performance Indicators and the action plans flowing from Council policies and strategies to assess whether the Council is meeting its targets and objectives. The Committees also monitor the Council’s budgets on a regular basis.

The five Scrutiny Committees in the Vale are:

- **Corporate Resources** - (includes Finance, Human Resources, Democratic Services, Legal Services and Customer Relations and Communications)
- **Economy and Environment** - (includes Planning, Waste Management, Countryside and Environmental Projects and Leisure)
- **Housing and Public Protection** – (includes Public and Private Housing, Community Safety and Regulatory Services)
- **Lifelong Learning** - (includes Schools, Youth Service, Adult Education and Libraries)
- **Social Care and Health** - (includes Adult Services, Children and Young People’s Services and Strategy and Business Innovation).

Membership of the Committees for 2012/13 can be found at Appendix 2 at the end of this report.

This report contains some examples of specific issues addressed by each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees during the municipal year 2012 / 2013. The report also contains details of the work of the Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group, which was a major review that was undertaken by Members of the Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources).

For those with access to the internet further information on the role of Scrutiny in the Vale is available at [\[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/scrutiny/scrutiny.aspx\]](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/scrutiny/scrutiny.aspx). The site also includes information about each Scrutiny Committee and the links to meetings and agenda papers for each Committee.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CORPORATE RESOURCES)

Key Issues Considered

► Welfare Reform

One of the key issues for the Committee arose following the decision of the Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group to prioritise Welfare Reform for a Task and Finish Group review. The impact of the changes introduced by central government were anticipated to be far-reaching for the Council and, as such, the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group were agreed as follows:



- To assess implications of localisation and support to Council Tax payers
- To assess the impact of the Welfare Reform Agenda on Council services, with potential implications for the increase in homelessness, additional pressure on other Council services and a reduction in income as a consequence of rent arrears and Council Tax arrears
- To assess how the Council's current services would interact to ensure that they were strategically aligned to deliver the corporate objectives of the Council
- To assess the potential impact on staff from job losses as a consequence of the implementation of the Universal

Credit and demise of Housing Benefit and the Department of Work and Pensions

- To assess the impact of the Social Fund on receipt of Welsh Government guidance and to safeguard children and young people and vulnerable adults.

Members of the Group consisted of Councillors Mark Wilson, Gwyn Roberts, Keith Geary, Howard Hamilton, Keith Hatton and Jeff James. The Group was supported by officers from within the Council.

Given the significance of the proposed changes, Welfare Reform was classified as a corporate risk and as such included in the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

The changes in April 2013, for which the Council has a direct responsibility for delivery, were assigned the highest priority rating. These changes included the delivery of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, changes to housing benefit relating to up-rating of the local housing allowance, the benefit cap and the benefit reduction for over accommodated tenants. It was noted that changes to the Social Fund and Disability Living Allowance, whilst important, would not be the direct responsibility of the Council although, the changes were likely to have implications for Council services – particularly Social Services. Preparation for future changes including the introduction of the Universal Credit from October 2013 and the changes to Pension Credit from October 2014, whilst having implications for Council services, particularly housing benefits and housing, would be the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Group approved a Communication Plan which covered communications with claimants who would be potentially affected, staff services and other partner organisations. In addition:

- A briefing to all Members of the Council was held on 26th September 2012.
 - A briefing was given to members of the Community Liaison Committee on 29th January 2013.
 - Local Service Board (LSB) and partnership boards were briefed and will continue to be briefed and updated as the Welfare Reform agenda develops.
 - At the Local Service Forum on 5th October 2012, two sessions were held, to provide general information of the Welfare Reforms and to consider some of the more detailed implications for claimants, how the LSB partners will be affected and how organisations may work together. As a result, LSB partners and stakeholders were invited to contact the Corporate Partnerships Team and a Stakeholder Forum has been set up.
 - Council officers participated at the Vale of Glamorgan Citizens Advice Bureau seminar on 13th November 2012.
 - Stakeholders were also invited to attend a meeting of the Task and Finish Group so that it could consider any evidence or issues they wished to raise.
 - Briefings were given to the Social Landlords Forum and the Private Landlords Forum.
 - A number of briefings were also given to internal services and external organisations.
- Up to date information is available on the Council's website, Staffnet and Membernet - http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/our_council/housing_benefits/welfare_reforms.aspx
 - Press releases and press articles have appeared in the local press.
 - A Bro Radio programme on Welfare Reform was broadcast on 15th February 2013– this is available on the Council's website – http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/our_council/housing_benefits/welfare_reforms.aspx
 - Social Media – Facebook and Twitter was included in the welfare reform communications plan, as follows –
 - Links to all press releases were added to Twitter and Facebook;
 - Favourable comments by other Twitter users were re-tweeted by the Council;
 - A link to the recording of a Bro Radio interview on Welfare Reforms was tweeted and added to Facebook (linking back to the Council's Welfare Reforms page on the website);
 - Information on the Welfare Reforms provided on Twitter and Facebook, including a link to the Council's welfare reforms page for further information.
 - Various leaflets have been distributed.
 - Road shows were organised in Barry, Penarth and Llantwit Major as follows:
 - Barry Memorial Hall, Monday 4th March
 - Penarth Paget Rooms, Thursday 21st March

- Llantonian Hall, Llantwit Major, Monday 25th March
- Barry Civic Offices on Thursday 2nd May.

The full review report of the Group can be found on the website [http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/scrutiny/scrutiny_review.aspx]

The report contained 21 recommendations, including that the Scrutiny Committee receives a report on the **impact** of Welfare Reform, initially on a six-monthly basis. The Committee, whilst endorsing the report, also from the knowledge gained through the work done in developing the plan, expressed serious concerns regarding the potential impact on vulnerable members of society.

Following consideration by the Cabinet the recommendations and the work of the Committee, which is ongoing, were endorsed.

► **Former St. Cyres Site, Dinas Powys**

In March 2013 the Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the future of the former St. Cyres site in Dinas Powys. Following the consultation that was undertaken between 12th November and 18th January 2013 the Committee considered the results and conclusions of the consultation report. It was



noted that the consultation received a very encouraging response with 477 Vale residents responding and expressing a wide range of views. As a result the conclusions reached are outlined below:

- local residents would like to see mixed development on the site
- infrastructure concerns were raised, particularly the strain on the road network
- there was clear demand for improved sports facilities in the area
- housing was the second most popular suggestion for the site
- there is demand for some form of communal green space to be provided on the development
- a wish for a new health centre for the area
- consideration of a permanent home for the Dinas Powys Baptist Church.

Members agreed that, in light of the number of proposals, a “wish list” for the development of this site could be drawn up and consideration given to the methodology for implementation of the same. Officers were instructed to approach key partners identified in the conclusions of the consultation process to gain an urgent understanding of the viability of their plans for the site and Cabinet was requested to also approve a further piece of work to assess the viability of accommodating the favoured options identified in the conclusions of the consultation report. The request for such information was made to ensure the needs of local residents were catered for in the development of the site and to ensure that the views of local stakeholders obtained

during the consultation are used to inform any plans for development of the site.

The Cabinet subsequently resolved that a Working Group be established as soon as possible to consider the various options available for the former St. Cyres site.

► **Sickness Absence Monitoring**

The Committee continued to monitor absence information and recognised that sickness trends deeply increased during the winter months. Full details were provided of the individual service areas, with Members being reminded that two thirds of the current absence rates related to long-term absence, the top two reasons for absence being related to muscular skeletal problems and stress. The Committee will continue to monitor the impact of sickness absence corporately for the Council and refer any recommendations to Cabinet for consideration.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT)

Key Issues Considered

► Requests for Consideration

A number of Requests for Consideration from Members were received which included:

- **Banning of Dogs on Vale Play Areas - 16th April, 2013**

This request was made in view of the fact that the Council could now make its own Dog Control Orders. The request was supported by the Committee who recommended to Cabinet that a more detailed report on the options available and the proper introduction of such Dog Control Orders in the future be prepared. Cabinet in turn agreed with the issues that had been raised and agreed that a further report on the various options be presented in due course.

- **Gypsy and Traveller Provision in the Vale of Glamorgan - 9th October 2012**

Members of the public were invited to address the Committee. The question raised was "When was the Authority proceeding with the permanent travellers' camp, shortlisted as Llangan, thus complying with the Westminster Parliament legislation recommendations of 2005?". The reason for the request being noted that in Sully, where an illegal travellers' camp had been

established in December 2011, Local Members had been advised that the occupants may not be relocated or evicted until the Authority had established a permanent travellers' site in the Vale of Glamorgan. Having debated the issue, the Scrutiny Committee recommended that the report be referred to Cabinet for consideration with the request that Cabinet establish a permanent travellers' site for the Vale of Glamorgan as soon as possible.

Cabinet is currently in the process of determining its Local Development Plan (LDP), which will include consideration of such issues.

- **Olympic and Paralympic Legacy in the Vale of Glamorgan – 9th October 2012**

The request was made to allow the Committee to investigate whether the Council could build on the success of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and achieve the goal to inspire a generation. A significant amount of work had already been carried out in the Vale of Glamorgan to increase physical activity and participation and the Committee recommended that this be circulated as widely as possible as public information. It was also recommended that Sports Development report be presented on an annual basis, detailing physical activity statistics in the Vale of Glamorgan. Cabinet was also requested to carry out an audit of the school facilities for the general public to also include details of whether the



school was appropriate for outside activities. It was further suggested that an area of St. Cyres School should be used as a Centre of Excellence and referred to Sports Wales. Cabinet subsequently agreed to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee.

- **Barry to Dinas Powys Cycleway - 4th September 2013**

Following a feasibility study that had been carried out, the request sought approval for the scheme to be agreed as a priority. Members were advised that resources for the development of the route network were severely limited and completion would, by necessity, be gradual, with design and implementation being secured as and when available. There were land ownership issues and also funding issues, with the next stage in progressing any scheme needing to gain acceptance from SEWTA (South East Wales Transport Alliance) for inclusion in a five year programme of works and for a detailed development of the scheme. It was subsequently recommended to Cabinet that the necessary resources be made available to progress a bid to SEWTA in order that the Barry to Dinas Powys Cycleway project could be included in the Regional Transport Plan 5 year programme. Cabinet resolved that the scheme would be encompassed within other sustainable transport schemes submitted by the Council for consideration to SEWTA.



- ▶ **Leisure Centres**

The Committee undertook site visits to Leisure Centres managed by the Parkwood Organisation, who had taken over management of the Council's Leisure Centres in 2012. Regular update reports on progress advised that the Council had funded a major investment of £1million in Barry and Penarth Leisure Centres, which Parkwood Leisure would use to further develop facilities. In addition, Parkwood had also provided new gym equipment and created a new catering service in Penarth and work had been completed on a new fitness suite for Llantwit Major Leisure Centre.

Members also visited the Colcot Sports Centre, which although not part of the Parkwood programme had been recommended for a visit in view of the state of the facilities. On 12th March, 2013 the Committee recommended to Cabinet that a bid be submitted to the Barry Regeneration Partnership Project Development Fund for £20,000 for a feasibility study to identify a range of possible future uses for the Centre in consultation with the local community. Members considered that it was important that consultation took place with the view to improving current facilities for users. The Committee have requested a progress report in 12 months time on the issue.

Regular progress reports will also be submitted to the Committee in respect of the Centres managed by Parkwood.

► **The Business Community**

In April 2013 the Committee continued its ongoing annual discussions with businesses with regard to the local economy with a number of groups being invited to a meeting to present evidence in relation to two key specific questions:

- Can you describe how your business or sector is coping with the very difficult trading conditions and whether you feel that we are indeed seeing the 'green shoots' of recovery?
- Can you indicate whether there is anything that the Vale of Glamorgan Council can do to help your business and / or sector?

A full report of this meeting's discussions is to be presented to the Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment), Cabinet and copied to the businesses present at the meeting in due course.

► **Section 106 Legal Agreements – These are agreements that seek contributions from developers for amenities in the locality.**

Monitoring of the Council's Section 106 Legal Agreements is an ongoing priority for the Committee to ensure that agreements are entered into and the necessary works undertaken as quickly as possible. The Committee have requested that Cabinet ensure that all Directors come forward with proposals as soon as possible in order to reduce the exceptionally large Section 106

Legal Agreements outstanding balance waiting for appropriate schemes. The Cabinet are to receive a further report to a future meeting outlining the protocol and how the Council can release Section 106 monies.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION)

Key Issues Considered

► Housing Improvement Programme

In response to Members' concerns at a meeting on 17th April 2013, the Committee received a report regarding the progress made in delivering the Council's Housing Improvement Programme. The Housing Improvement Programme (HIP) represents significant refurbishments across the county in which all 3,946 Council homes will be upgraded to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) April 2017. In order that the programme is delivered in a timely manner, a number of key performance indicators have been established to monitor the performance of all contractors. External contractors were appointed to deal with the programme and the Council's Building Services department appointed to refurbish the Council's void housing stock.

In March 2013 Members noted that the first quarterly results had highlighted that contractors were not meeting the agreed 15 day turnaround time, there was a need for improved communication to be undertaken and there were issues with certain contractors in relation to health and safety



matters. The turnover with tradesmen had also created delays in the completion of works. Performance in the area of void properties had also been less than satisfactory.

It was subsequently agreed that future reports required the inclusion of accumulated performance information to be reported on a quarterly basis to allow the Committee to monitor and review progress against each key performance indicator. Detailed financial information relating to the value of all additional repair works not identified at the validation survey stage for all properties, where work had been undertaken, was also required. In addition the reports are to also include a comprehensive breakdown of additional costs the Council incurred as a consequence of the underperformance in the delivery of void properties. All contractors were requested to attend the April meeting in order to respond to Members' questions regarding their current performance. (Full details of which can be accessed via the minutes of the meeting [http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/minutes_agendas_and_reports/minutes/scrutiny_hpp/2013_minutes/13-04-17.aspx#HousingImprovementProgrammeProgress])

Following the meeting, Members were advised that a full review would be undertaken of the current contract management and communication with all the stakeholders, which would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee. Members suggested that officers also investigate the feasibility of introducing respite provisions for those tenants who were significantly affected by works on their properties.



The Scrutiny Committee will continue to monitor and question all issues in relation to the Programme and refer matters to Cabinet if appropriate.

► **Police and Communities Together (PACT) Meetings**

Following concerns expressed by residents at PACT meetings regarding cuts in the operation of CCTV in the area, the Committee received a report which included discussions on the potential options for the future operational provision to be undertaken by South Wales Police. The Committee requested that Cabinet seek a report from the Operational Manager for Customer Relations on an appropriate business case and options for the future operating provision of CCTV in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Having received a progress update it was noted that the South Wales Police had confirmed that they did not have sufficient resources to dedicate to monitoring activities and the cost of providing a monitoring station at Barry Police Station would be circa £12,000. However, in order to improve service resilience, South Wales Police force proposed the use of appropriately vetted police volunteers to undertake monitoring activities and four volunteers had been identified. To this end vetted and trained police volunteers would be rostered to work alongside CCTV operators and provide the service with greater resilience to cope with unplanned staff absence and holidays.

The provision of CCTV will continue to be monitored as part of the Committee's ongoing work schedule.

► **Community Safety**

Having considered the information / data that is used to set targets, Members felt that the success of achieving reduced anti-social behaviour had not been given sufficient prominence in the local media and that appropriate media coverage could, in fact, assist in reducing the fear of crime. The Committee also continued to monitor the use of TREV – the reassurance engagement vehicle – which is a mobile resource to promote community safety messages across the county and to target community safety priority areas. TREV has been used to date in 130 community activities since April 2011. It has provided a highly successful method of promoting the community safety message.



- **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (LIFELONG LEARNING)**

Key Issues Considered

- ▶ **Pupil Attainment Levels**

Having considered a series of reports describing the attainment of pupils attending schools in the Vale, Cabinet had sought to adopt an approach that would seek to increase the accountability of schools for pupil attainment. The Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish Scrutiny panels to ensure that work to tackle weak performance is supported and that schools are challenged to make accelerated progress.

The meetings are intended to enable a school to demonstrate through the democratic process ambitions, capacity and commitment to rapid and sustained progress and to identify any barriers the school may face which could be resolved by action of the Council. Meetings will be undertaken by three Members of the Scrutiny Committee taken from a Panel of 14 Members (i.e. 10 Elected Members and 4 Co-opted Members with voting rights). The first meeting of its type took place at Llantwit Major School in April 2013 and a report was presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 24th June 2013. The Panel are to revisit the school in October 2013 following the exam results of the school.



- ▶ **Central South Consortium Joint Education Service**

Local authorities across Wales have agreed to establish consortium arrangements for the delivery of education services and the Central South Consortium comprises Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils. Regular update reports on progress in relation to the establishment of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (JES) were received by the Committee. The Committee will also continue to monitor the work of the JES and consider suggestions for Joint Scrutiny arrangements.

- ▶ **School Surplus Places Review Task and Finish Group**

In 2012 the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) established a Schools Surplus Places Project Group to review school provision in the Vale, taking into account the need to reduce surplus capacity. The Group built on the work of a previous Member Working Group by considering pupil and school data and considered if the current configuration of schools met the educational needs to children in the Vale in the 21st century.

On 21st January, 2013 the report of the Group was approved by the Committee and subsequently referred to Cabinet for consideration. Following public expressions of concern Cabinet subsequently noted the report and are yet to consider the matter in detail.

► **Other Aspects**

During the year the Scrutiny Committee also:

- received a presentation on school reading tests
- received regular progress reports on schools throughout the Vale
- continued to monitor the school investment programme
- welcomed the arrival of the newly appointed Chief Learning and Skills Officer, Ms. Jennifer Hill
- continued to receive progress reports on the recommendations of the Committee's Youth Service Provision Task and Finish Group.

Consultation has been undertaken with young people to help inform the Youth Forum of the Council's decision-making process with a view to annual elections being held to elect a Youth Mayor to represent the views of an elected body and of young people in the Vale. Cabinet are due to consider a report on the proposal for a Youth Mayor shortly.

During the year a number of Members took part in the Estyn Inspection of Education Services in the Vale. (The full report of which is expected in September 2013.)

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH)

Key Issues Considered

► Social Services Change Plan 2011 – 2014

The Council's second 3-year Social Services Change Plan is now in its final year. The Change Plan:

- replaced the three year Plan successfully completed in 2010, and
- set out formally the long-term strategic plan for Social Services with key actions, responsible officers for delivering those actions and timescales for completion.



The Change Plan was developed to provide an overarching framework for sustained service improvement and a coherent direction for Social Services in the period 2011-2014.

It is anticipated that implementation of the Plan will help to achieve the following overall aims:

- making best use of the fact that Social Services is an integral part of local government
- providing sustainable, flexible and innovative services

- increasing user and carer satisfaction with a range of services (with the emphasis on recovery, restoration and reablement)
- providing service users and carers with a strong voice and real control over their services
- developing further a competent and confident workforce
- facilitating more collaborative working
- securing better value in the use of scarce resources, promoting independence and reducing demand for intensive support services by focus on prevention.

In receiving regular monitoring reports, Members noted good progress had been made and the work being done to expedite delivery to areas of concern where implementation of particular actions had been delayed. The Committee will continue to monitor progress.

► Social Services' Budget

The Social Services' Directorate has had another exceedingly challenging year in regard to the management of its budget. As increasing demand for services, combined with diminishing resources, as in the Council generally, mean continual challenges for staff.

The Committee has received a detailed monthly analysis of capital and revenue expenditure, together with savings targets. Members have devoted considerable time and thought to these difficult issues, providing constructive challenge and support. The volatile nature of the 'Children's Placement Budget' and

'Community Care Packages budget' has resulted in significant additional pressures and challenges. Nevertheless, a balanced budget was achieved.

▶ **Managing Allegations of Professional Abuse - Compliance With Part IV of the All-Wales Child Protection Procedures - Six Monthly Update**

The Vale of Glamorgan Council takes seriously its responsibility for complying with Part IV of the All-Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008, which deal specifically with the handling of professional abuse cases. The Council was able to demonstrate that allegations involving professionals are pursued rigorously.

▶ **Director's Annual Report 2011/2012 - Challenge Version**

The Director of Social Services is required by Welsh Government to produce an Annual Report on the effectiveness of Social Care Services in the Vale of Glamorgan and on the Council's plans for improvement. This provided an opportunity for the Director to provide people in the Vale with a rounded picture of Social Services based on evidence such as what users and carers say, key performance indicators and measurements of progress against the overall goals of the Council.

▶ **Extra Care Housing**

Committee has received regular updates on the progress made in the development of Extra Care Housing in the Vale of Glamorgan.



Extra Care Housing is the term used to describe purpose-built housing, which includes access to flexible support and personal care, including waking night support.

Having looked at a number of options, the Council had agreed that the Theatre Royal site was the appropriate setting for the development. Progress in relation to purchasing the site, demolition and re-building was the responsibility of Hafod.

A key element with the development was the provision of social care within the home. Work has commenced to define the domiciliary care requirements of potential residents as the service will be commissioned via a tendering process.

▶ **The Future of the Bryneithin Care Home Site**

Bryneithin Care Home closed and the future of the site is under consideration.

The Scrutiny Committee has requested that progress reports be brought before each future meeting of the Committee, to include the issue of security of the site. Public consultation is currently taking place for future options for the site.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN GROUP

The Group continues to act as a valuable means of discussing emerging issues in the field of Scrutiny, particularly those arising out of the provisions of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Members of the Group are also afforded the opportunity of attending all-Wales Member Scrutiny Networks and provide feedback to the Group itself on the issues discussed.

As in the previous year, the Group also considered, and prioritised, the undertaking of Task and Finish Review work and have received a number of reports regarding the Council's involvement in a Wales Audit Office Scrutiny Improvement Study. Further details of the Study are set out below.

The Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group is keen to ensure that the Council's scrutiny function is promoted and developed and the Head of Democratic Services will be increasing the profile of scrutiny on the Council's website and developing a protocol to provide for increased public engagement in the scrutiny process, including the right to address Scrutiny Committees.

WALES AUDIT OFFICE (WAO) SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT STUDY

The Auditor General in his letter to Chief Executives on 13th March, 2012 stated his intent to conduct a number of all-Wales Improvement Studies each year. The WAO programme for 2012 / 13 included a Scrutiny Improvement Study. The WAO was looking to work with the local government sector in a way that provided an opportunity for all involved to further improve scrutiny in a sustainable manner. The Study aimed to help achieve this through "facilitating the gaining of insight, sharing knowledge, developing skills, building and strengthening relationships, and identifying new opportunities for working together with other councils and partners."

In addition to the above, it was also intended that the Study would support councils in responding to the Welsh Government's programme for scrutiny over the next three years and to shape proposed key Characteristics of Effective Overview and Scrutiny.

The Study differed from a traditional audit approach in that it involved real-time shared activity and working together, self-evaluation and peer learning exchange opportunities.

The Study was split into a number of phases.

- Initial Self-Evaluation – each council was asked to complete, and submit to the WAO by 31st October, 2012, a self-evaluation questionnaire. Information was shared with other councils during later phases of the Study in order to assist learning, development and continuous improvement.

- The Council nominated a Scrutiny Learning Exchange Team who, in turn, attended two regional workshops (where information was presented / shared) and visited a partners council (Swansea) on two occasions to observe their scrutiny arrangements. Neath and Port Talbot Council undertook the equivalent exercise in respect of this the Vale of Glamorgan Council's scrutiny arrangements.

The WAO will be preparing a national summary report and providing local feedback to individual councils issuing Good Practice Exchange Case Studies.

JOINT SCRUTINY

With the Welsh Government encouraging local authorities to establish joint scrutiny arrangements to support best governance, during the year it was considered opportune to look at establishing such arrangements in respect of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service. In addition to facilitating the scrutiny of the service, it was also considered that this was an opportunity for both Members and officers to learn how to scrutinise a regional consortium and to develop practices and procedures that could be applied to other future partnership arrangements that the Council might enter into. Once in place, the arrangements will provide for scrutiny of education services, allowing strategic issues affecting all five authorities to be scrutinised at a regional level, whilst still allowing issues pertinent to any one authority to be scrutinised at a single council level.

The Council has appointed two Members to sit on the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

The constituent authorities' Scrutiny Officers have commissioned the Centre of Public Scrutiny to facilitate the development of a joint bid to the Welsh Government Scrutiny Development Fund for a co-ordinator post to support the work of the Joint Committee.

FUTURE WORK PROGRAMMES

Key issues for all Scrutiny Committees throughout the forthcoming year will include:

- continued monitoring of the Council's budget,
- to further consider ways to engage the public in the decision-making process as required under the Local Government Measure 2011,
- to continue to consider and develop collaborative opportunities
- to continue to monitor performance of Council service areas
- to monitor the ability to further develop joint scrutiny arrangements and processes.

The Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment) will also be undertaking an in-depth Task and Finish Review on Traffic Management – the impact of traffic flows within the County, including sustainable travel (as agreed by the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group following suggestions for a topic for review by all five Scrutiny Committees).

Copies of the scheduled work programmes for each Committee which details the dates, times and venues for meetings can be found at [\[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/scrutiny/scrutiny_committees.aspx\]](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/scrutiny/scrutiny_committees.aspx).

An additional post (to be appointed in next few months) has also been established within the Democratic and Scrutiny Services section, to further support the Scrutiny role within the Authority.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SCRUTINY AND SCRUTINY MEETINGS?

Should you wish to find out more about the work of Scrutiny, you can do so at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk where you can look at the reports the Committees have considered, the minutes of the meetings and future work programme schedules for each of the five Scrutiny Committees.

Scrutiny meetings are open to the public (unless there are items of a confidential nature to be considered). Most meetings are also held in the Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry.

Please look at our website to see the dates, times and venues of forthcoming Scrutiny meetings
[\[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/minutes_agendas_and_reports/minutes_agendas_and_reports.aspx\]](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/minutes_agendas_and_reports/minutes_agendas_and_reports.aspx).

Alternatively you can contact Democratic and Scrutiny Services at the address below:

**Democratic and Scrutiny Services
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Civic Offices
Holton Road
Barry, CF63 4RU**

Tel no : (01446) 709413

**Email: democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
Website: www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk**

Call-In Statistics: May 2012 – April 2013

Total Number of Call-Ins

Scrutiny Committees	No. of Call-Ins				Cabinet Call-In Decisions Noted / Accepted / Endorsed by Scrutiny Committee	Recommendations Referred to Cabinet	Cabinet Final – Rejected / Noted / Endorsed
	Received	Withdrawn	Refused	Approved for Call-in Purposes			
Corporate Resources							
(i) Timetable of Meetings 2012-13	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
(ii) Council Chamber Access Improvements	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Economy and Environment							
(i) Proposed Events Programme 2013/14	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
(ii) Innovation Quarter – Updated Indicative IQ Master Plan and Consolidation Paper	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
TOTAL	4	0	0	4	4	0	0

Scrutiny Committee Requests for Consideration May 2012 - April 2013

Total Number of Requests - 15

Scrutiny Committee	Requests for further report	Requests noted / accepted by Committee	Date recommendations referred to Cabinet	Recommendations noted/ accepted / agreed by Cabinet
Corporate Resources (1) (i) Vacancies in Corporate Policy and Communications		(i) Noted		
Economy & Environment (8) (i) Barry Docks Link Road (update on bid to SEWTA re safety improvements) (ii) Barry to Dinas Powys Cycleway (to consider giving the scheme priority following a feasibility study) (iii) Permanent Travellers' Camp (when is the Authority proceeding with a permanent travellers' camp) (iv) How can the Vale of Glamorgan build on the success of the Olympics (v) Information on flooding works carried out since July 2007 (vi) Consideration to ban dogs from Vale play areas	(v) Report in 12 months	(i) Noted	(ii) 01/10/12 (iii) 05/11/12 (iv) 05/11/12 (v) 08/04/13 (vi) 20/05/13	(ii) Noted as the scheme would be encompassed within sustainable transport schemes for consideration by SEWTA (iii) Noted, it being agreed that the matter would be best dealt with under the LDP process (iv) Agreed (v) Noted and agreed that details of the flood drainage works be placed on the Council's website (vi) Agreed

Scrutiny Committee	Requests for further report	Requests noted / accepted by Committee	Date recommendations referred to Cabinet	Recommendations noted/ accepted / agreed by Cabinet
(vii) Blue plaque on Butlins site (viii) Closure of the Bike Centre, Barry		(viii) Noted	(vii) 09/09/13	(vii) Awaiting decision
Housing & Public Protection (2)				
(i) Update on use of CCTV in the Vale of Glamorgan	(i) Further report		(i) 05/11/12	(i) Accepted
(ii) Emergency Planning in the Vale of Glamorgan	(ii) Further report and workshop to be arranged	(ii) Noted		
Lifelong Learning (1)				
(i) Part II restriction on School Surplus Places report		(i) Agreed to release report in Jan 2014, Cabinet informed	(i) 29/07/13	(i) Noted
Social Care & Health (3)				
(i) Standard rate for contracting places in the independent sector	(i) Further information	(i) Noted		
(ii) The future of Bryneithin Care Home	(ii) Report to every meeting	(ii) Noted / Agreed	(ii) 08/05/13	(ii) Noted
(iii) Standard rate for contracting places in the independent sector	(iii) Regular updates	(iii) Agreed		

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES' MEMBERSHIP

Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources)

Councillor M.R. Wilson (Chairman);
Councillor Mrs. P. Drake (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors J.C. Bird, K.J. Geary, H.C. Hamilton, K. Hatton,
H.J.W. James, P.G. King, R.A. Penrose and G. Roberts.

Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment)

Councillor R.L. Traherne (Chairman);
Councillor Mrs. A.J. Moore (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors P.J. Clarke, G.A. Cox, Mrs. C.L. Curtis, Mrs. P. Drake,
E. Hacker, P.G. King, A.G. Powell and C.J. Williams.

Scrutiny Committee (Housing and Public Protection)

Councillor Mrs. M.R. Wilkinson (Chairman);
Councillor Mrs. C.L. Curtis (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors **Ms. M.E. Alexander (deceased 26.05.12),
R.J. Bertin, J. Drysdale, Mrs. V.M. Hartrey, **Mrs. A.J. Moore
(26.09.12 - 15.05.13), Ms. R.F. Probert, R.P. Thomas,
A.C. Williams and E. Williams.

1 representative, in a co-opted non-voting capacity, of each of
the following organisations:

Shelter Cymru
Vale Housing Federation
Vale Housing and Homelessness Forum
plus 4 Representatives from Tenant Working Group /
Panel

**** Denotes changes in membership during the municipal year**

Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning)

Councillor N.P. Hodges (Chairman);
Councillor Ms. R. Birch (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors Mrs. M.E.J. Birch, Ms. K. E. Edmunds,
H.C. Hamilton, T.H. Jarvie, F.T. Johnson, **Mrs. M. Kelly Owen
(23.05.12 - 06.12.12 and 18.03.13 - 15.05.13), R.A. Penrose,
**J.W. Thomas (06.12.12 - 17.03.13) and E. Williams.

Co-opted Members - 1 representative each from:

Roman Catholic Church
Church in Wales
Parent Governor - Secondary Sector
Parent Governor - Primary Sector.

Non-voting Observers - 1 representative each from:

Primary, Secondary and Special Schools,
Headteachers, Free Churches and Welsh Medium
Education.

Scrutiny Committee (Social Care and Health)

Councillor R.J. Bertin (Chairman);
Councillor Mrs. M.E.J. Birch (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors Ms. R. Birch, Ms. K.E. Edmunds, K.J. Geary,
**Dr. I.J. Johnson (26.09.12 - 15.05.13), **Mrs. A.J. Moore
(23.05.12 - 26.09.12), A. Parker, **Mrs. A.J. Preston (23.05.12 -
31.10.12), Ms. R.F. Probert, **J.W. Thomas (01.11.12 -
15.05.13) and S.T. Wiliam.