

SUBJECT: Scrutiny Performance Report

MEETING: Audit Committee

DATE: 14th January 2016

DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the Scrutiny Service Plan 2015-2018 (updated for Quarter 2) to the Council's Audit Committee, in order that Members can monitor the performance of the function and assess the fitness of purpose of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Audit Committee considers the robustness of the Scrutiny Service Plan 2015-2016 (Appendix A) together with 'Key Scrutiny Milestones 2014-2015' (Appendix B) in ensuring continuous improvement in the scrutiny function.
- 2.2 That the Audit Committee considers the Council's recent response to the recommendations made to all Welsh Authorities following the WAO Scrutiny Study 2013-2014 (Appendix C).
- 2.3 That the Audit Committee considers the views of the WAO on scrutiny in Monmouthshire during the Council's Annual Improvement Corporate Assessment Report 2014-2015, making recommendations (if appropriate), to address any areas of Member concern (Appendix D).

3 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Wales Audit Office conducted a national study of scrutiny across Wales during 2013. The study involved a learning exchange team belonging to each Council conducting an initial self-evaluation of their scrutiny arrangements, prior to meeting neighbouring authorities at a regional workshop and selecting a partner authority to shadow its scrutiny function. Caerphilly Council was selected the partner Council to shadow Monmouthshire during the study. The Councils met their respective scrutiny teams and observed each other's scrutiny meetings before drawing their conclusions. A second self-evaluation of Monmouthshire's scrutiny arrangements enabled the team to acknowledge progress made and to identify areas for further improvement.
- 3.2 Following completion of the WAO study, each Council was required to produce an Action Plan to enable the WAO to continue to monitor scrutiny's progress as part of their on-going work with the Council. The 'WAO Scrutiny Action Plan' is the Council's Scrutiny Service Plan (2015-2018), which identifies the actions that will be taken over a specified timescale to improve

scrutiny in Monmouthshire. The Scrutiny Service Plan 2015-2018 feeds directly into the Council's performance and improvement framework and is updated on a quarterly basis (Appendix A). The plan is the key document upon which the Wales Audit Office continues to monitor scrutiny's progress.

3.3 The WAO's final report also made a number of recommendations to all Welsh Councils and the Council's most recent response to these recommendations is attached for consideration by the Audit Committee (Appendix C).

3.4 The Scrutiny Manager, Scrutiny Chairs and Scrutiny Champion were interviewed as part of the WAO Annual Improvement Corporate Assessment Report 2014-2015. The conclusions of the WAO on the effectiveness of Monmouthshire's Scrutiny function are attached to enable the Audit Committee to make recommendations to address any areas of concern (Appendix D).

4 REASONS

4.1 Scrutiny is a statutory function and performs a fundamental role in the Council's decision-making process. The Audit Committee is responsible for ensuring the Council's governance arrangements are fit for purpose and that scrutiny delivers its responsibilities effectively.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct implications arising from the report.

6. SAFEGUARDING, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct implications arising from the report.

7. CONSULTEES

Scrutiny Chairs Liaison Group

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Scrutiny Service Plan 2015-2018 at Quarter 2 (Appendix A)
- 'Key Scrutiny Milestones 2014-2015' (Appendix B)
- Response to WAO Scrutiny Study's Recommendations 2013 (Appendix C)
- Extract of the WAO Annual Improvement Report 2014-2015, 2015 (Appendix D)

8. AUTHOR

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