

### January to May 2014 ~ Improvements made to our governance/scrutiny arrangements:

- ✓ **Ensured all Forward work programmes are publicly accessible on MCC website.** Every ordinary select committee agenda tables the work programmes of Select Committees, Cabinet and Council, also considered at Coordinating Board. Cabinet Forward Planner now emailed regularly to all Members.
- ✓ **Reduced agenda size for Select Committees** - reduced number of items per scrutiny meeting to ensure there is sufficient opportunity for in-depth scrutiny, agendas comprising typically a policy review, a performance report, pre-decision scrutiny or statutory report.
- ✓ **Expanded the use of Special meetings** - to manage workload. These provide flexibility and ensure that scrutiny is undertaken at the optimum point - early enough to shape direction, not too late to make an impact.
- ✓ **Introduced Pre-meetings** for all Select Committees - these have proven highly effective in agreeing a focus and ensuring outcomes and has evidenced more constructive challenge across all the committees.
- ✓ **Improved the quality, timeliness, relevance of information** being brought to scrutiny to ensure a consistent picture of performance.
- ✓ **Introduced a more focussed scrutiny approach** - policy development work undertaken through task and finish group delivered high quality reports, but the timeliness of the activity meant scrutiny sometimes missed the boat in terms of impact. We now conduct shorter and sharper pieces of work as a full committee, which is proving effective as follows:
  - Scrutiny activity is aligned to delivering the corporate priorities in line with the Medium Term Financial plan
  - We have increased our levels of challenge and our ability to hold to account
  - We have a better balance of scrutiny activity - testing decisions through pre-decision scrutiny and holding cabinet and officers to account for performance.
  - Additional Select Committee meetings enable public attendance and participation in scrutiny work.

**April/May 2014** ~ submitted a "Good Scrutiny Award" to the Centre for Public Scrutiny based on the work of the Economy and Development Select Committee's impact on the Council's final budget.

**May 2014** ~ delivered a "Scrutiny Handbook" to provide a useful reference guide for Members, officers and the public on the role and value of scrutiny.

**June 2014** ~ delivered the "Gwent Scrutiny Challenge Conference" which brought key regulators together to agree to develop a set of Scrutiny Characteristics to form a framework upon which to evaluate scrutiny across Wales.

**July 2014** ~ delivered a comprehensive half day scrutiny training session for Members (repeated)

- The Scrutiny Challenge - Raising the Bar
- Performance Management - The Jigsaw - the strategic alignment of priorities
- Financial Scrutiny and Performance Management

**September 2014** ~ delivered a training session for CYP Members on "Financial Scrutiny of Education"

**October 2014** ~ agreed a strategic approach for the scrutiny of partnerships ~ the priorities to be divided amongst the 4 Select Committees and the future establishment of an LSB Scrutiny Panel to hold the LSB/evolving Public Service Board to account for its performance.

**October 2014** ~ established an EAS Joint Audit Committee ~ to hold the company to account for governance, delivery of objectives and financial management. The CYP Select Committee holds officers and the EAS to account for performance on the delivery of local outcomes.

**October 2014** ~ delivered 2 separate half day Member training sessions through an external trainer on Questioning and Listening and Chairing Scrutiny meetings

**October/November 2014** ~ introduced Live Streaming via YouTube for Cabinet, Council, Select Committees, Planning and Licensing Committees

**January 2015** ~ Scrutiny Chairs Liaison Group ensured corporate consideration of 'safeguarding' by recommending amendments to the Council's report template (subsequently agreed by Council).

**January 2015** ~ launched the Scrutiny Webpages ~ [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/scrutiny)

**January 2015** ~ undertook scrutiny training took place with senior management on how best to support scrutiny activity (Members agreed).

**January 2015** ~ delivered training through an external trainer to Members on "Presentation and Challenge in a modern Council Environment"

**January 2015** ~ Scrutiny Members added value to the Council's self-evaluation, performance management and improvement arrangements, making recommendations in relation to the Strategic Risk Assessment process, re-drafting and re-prioritising key risks.

**March 2015** ~ delivered a "Toolkit for practitioners on Collaborative Scrutiny" in conjunction with Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Councils and launched the guide at a scrutiny conference attended by all Welsh Authorities, regulators and partners.