

**SUBJECT: SCRUTINY SELF-EVALUATION 2026 AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**MEETING: Cabinet**

**DATE: 14<sup>TH</sup> October 2026**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All**

**1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1** To present the 2025–2026 Scrutiny Self-Evaluation for Monmouthshire County Council, along with the four Scrutiny Committee Reports.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1** That Cabinet receives the Scrutiny Self-Evaluation 2025–2026 and the four Scrutiny Committee Reports and provides any feedback for future consideration by the Scrutiny Chairs Group.

**3. KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1** The Scrutiny Self-Evaluation for 2025–2026 concludes that Scrutiny at Monmouthshire County Council is operating effectively, independently and apolitically, and continues to add clear value to governance, decision-making and service improvement and helps ensure that services and policies are shaped in a way that delivers better outcomes for Monmouthshire residents.
- 3.2** It highlights strong committee culture, effective chairing and constructive relationships with Cabinet Members, officers and external partners. It also demonstrates that meaningful public engagement takes place in the development of policy and services and that decision-makers are being held to account effectively on issues of importance to residents.
- 3.3** The Scrutiny Self-evaluation has provided an opportunity to review the Council's scrutiny arrangements ahead of the May 2027 elections. The Scrutiny Self-Evaluation is based on the recognised "Characteristics of Good Scrutiny", developed by the National Scrutiny Officers Network as a performance framework for evaluating the effectiveness of scrutiny and reflected in the WLGA Framework for Self-Evaluation. The framework considers three components: the scrutiny environment, scrutiny practice and scrutiny's impact.
- 3.4** The Scrutiny Chairs Group undertook the annual review using the WLGA framework. Scrutiny Chairs completed the Scrutiny Self-Evaluation Survey, considered the evidence collectively, drew conclusions on current performance and identified areas

where continued improvement would strengthen scrutiny's effectiveness, transparency and impact.

- 3.5** Self-evaluation is a beneficial process which supports reflection, shared learning and continuous improvement and enables the scrutiny function to identify its strengths and priorities for development. However, a rounded assessment of the performance of the scrutiny function also requires external challenge and peer assessment, so that internal conclusions can be tested against independent evidence and recognised good practice.
- 3.6** This wider external oversight includes the Panel Performance Assessment, reported to Council in June 2026, which highlighted areas for consideration, and an Audit Wales review of the scrutiny function scheduled for Autumn 2026. The improvement actions arising from this Self-Evaluation will therefore need to take account of the findings and recommendations from these external reviews, ensuring that the future improvement programme is coherent, evidence-based and informed by both internal reflection and independent assessment.
- 3.7** The Scrutiny Self-Evaluation is being tabled to Cabinet to provide assurance that the scrutiny function is performing effectively in its role, is outcome-focused and has a clear understanding of the areas for continued improvement. The review identifies targeted opportunities to strengthen impact further, particularly by improving Cabinet engagement with Scrutiny feedback and enhancing forward planning and transparency. It highlights the need to reduce duplication of effort in providing external accountability, enabling the relevant scrutiny committee to take the lead. Other key improvement areas identified are the need to better evidence Scrutiny's influence and impact and to continue to invest in Member and Chair development.
- 3.8** The Scrutiny Committee Reports are being brought to Cabinet for information. They highlight the outcomes of the scrutiny undertaken and the breadth of subject matters that have been scrutinised, demonstrating the added value of the scrutiny function and its overall role in ensuring good governance and accountability. Scrutiny Committees also provide regular written feedback to Cabinet through a standing item on Cabinet agendas on matters they have scrutinised. This ensures that the Committees' key conclusions, observations and recommendations are formally brought to Cabinet's attention, supports transparent consideration of Scrutiny's contribution and enables its views to inform onward decision-making.
- 3.9** The next stage will be the Audit Wales review of the scrutiny function in the Autumn. Its findings, together with those of the Panel Performance Assessment and the Scrutiny Self-Evaluation, will inform a programme of improvement for immediate implementation, supporting a robust and effective scrutiny function in preparation for the new Council term in May 2027.

#### **4.0 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

- 4.1 Through the examination of policies, strategies and service performance, scrutiny provides independent challenge and assurance that decisions have considered the needs of people with protected characteristics, helped identify any unintended adverse impacts, and promoted fair and equitable access to services. Scrutiny also supports the sustainable development principle by challenging report authors, and therefore decision-makers, to take a longer-term view and involve communities in shaping services in line with the council's commitment to work with and alongside communities. As a result, scrutiny strengthens transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision-making.

#### **5. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

#### **6. REASONS:**

- 6.1 To provide Cabinet with assurance that the scrutiny function is performing effectively in its role, to demonstrate the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees and the added value of the scrutiny undertaken, and to invite feedback for future consideration by the Scrutiny Chairs Group.

#### **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 7.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

#### **8. CONSULTEES:**

Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships  
Departmental Management Team  
Cabinet Member for Equalities & Engagement  
Cabinet  
Senior Leadership Team

#### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

- 9.1 [Monmouthshire Scrutiny Self Evaluation 2025-2026 Full Report.pdf](#)  
9.2 [Report of Monmouthshire's People Scrutiny Committee 2025 - 2026.docx](#)  
9.3 [Report of Monmouthshire's P&O Scrutiny Committee 2025 - 2026.docx](#)  
9.4 [Report of Monmouthshire's Place Scrutiny Committee 2025 - 2026.docx](#)  
9.5 [Report of Monmouthshire's Public Services Scrutiny Committee 2025 - 2026.docx](#)

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