



2023/2024

**‘Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet
(Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub
Committee Annual Report’**

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1. Chair's Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present the Annual Report for Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub Committee for the period May 2023 to April 2024.

This report provides the opportunity to reflect on the work that has been undertaken by the committee and its attempts to ensure that any decisions taken are in the best interests of the citizens of Neath Port Talbot.

You may be aware that this Committee has within its remit the scrutiny of the Council's budget, the Corporate Plan and the risk register.

We as a Scrutiny Committee are under no illusions that the difficulties facing this Council will continue for the foreseeable future and it is important the Scrutiny continues to develop as the Council responds to the national guidelines etc.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Vice Chair Councillor Carl Jordan for his continued support along with the Cabinet Members who have been present at the meetings to listen to and consider the views of the Committee prior to making any decisions.

Finally, I would like to thank the officers for their invaluable support and guidance through the year and I look forward to working with you again during the next civic year.

Councillor, Chairman. Phil Rogers
Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

2. Introduction to Scrutiny

The Centre for Public Scrutiny suggests that there are four key principles to effective Scrutiny and they are:

1. provides ‘critical friend’ challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
2. enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
3. is carried out by ‘independent minded governors’ who lead and own the Scrutiny process
4. drives improvement in public services

Scrutiny is an integral part of the Council’s political structure and in many ways it plays a key role in assisting the Cabinet. Scrutiny Committees in the Council have met regularly through the year and have considered a wide range of issues. A number of the Scrutiny Committees have undertaken some in depth work as part of their forward work programmes, and this is highlighted within the respective annual reports.

The Scrutiny Committees within the Council are:

- Cabinet
 - Policy & Resources Sub
- Education, Skills and Wellbeing
- Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
- Environment, Regeneration & Streetscene Services

Each of the Committees includes a mix of non-Executive Councillors that is politically balanced to reflect the political balance of the Council. The Chairs and Vice Chairs plus the Committee Membership are decided annually by Full Council. Each Committee meets at least 8 times during a Civic Year.

3. Purpose of Annual Report

3.1 The main aim of this report is to highlight the work that has been undertaken by the Cabinet Scrutiny and Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub-Committee 2023/2024.

3.2 The document may also facilitate discussions on additional items that could be included within the work programme for 2024/2025.

4. Overview of the work of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee during 2023/2024

4.1 Number of Meetings

The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee met on 14 occasions during 2023/2024.

Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub-Committee met on 6 occasions during 2023/2024 and held one Forward Work Programme session.

4.2 The Work Programme 2023/2024

Generally, the agendas for the scrutiny meetings have been consistent with those outlined in the forward work programme. The Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Sub Committee agreed its Scrutiny work programme during their Forward Work Programme Workshop 13.06.23.

When developing the work programme, it was essential to consider the key plans and strategies of the Council. The work programme also includes the results of any external inspections that had been undertaken within a specific service area or on a corporate level.

The review of the work of the Committees are included in the following pages and has been structured to reflect the key roles of the Committee: Pre-Decision Scrutiny (which included policy development and review) and any items they wished to look at as part of their remit (usually for information purposes).

4.3 Key Issues considered during 2023/2024

Throughout the civic year the Committee is consulted on a number of areas that require decision. These range from routine general issues to the larger more complex decisions. Cabinet Members are in attendance during

discussions and any views of the Committee are taken on board prior to making a decision.

The Scrutiny Committee also undertakes the performance monitoring role by considering a wide range of reports. Members challenge the information that is included which enables them to understand the issues facing the service. These reports are monitored on a quarterly basis.

As well as scrutinising key decisions, the Committee identifies topics within their remit in which they wish to look at in more detail. These items are usually for information purposes e.g. updating Members on specific projects of work.

The Council is well placed to demonstrate the improvements it has made to the scrutiny function, and it is essential that we continue to build on these developments, and I look forward to the next year as we take forward the priorities of the Council.

5. Issues considered Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

May 2023 -May 2024.

See appendix 2 attached for full list.

Passenger Transport Review - Appointment of Consultants (Exempt under Paragraph 14)

Members were presented with information relating to the Passenger Transport Review – Appointment of Consultants.

Following discussion, the following amendment to the recommendations contained within the circulated report was proposed and seconded: “To put a time-limit in place and a parallel action to look at enhancing skills of the team and growing the team.”

Following scrutiny, members were supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet, with the amendment included.

The proposed amendment was accepted by Cabinet.

Pontardawe Swimming Pool

Members were presented with information relating to Pontardawe Swimming Pool.

The report provided an overview to members on the current condition of Pontardawe Swimming Pool and set out proposals to agree the planned closure of the Pontardawe Swimming Pool facility at the end of August 2024. The report also set out proposals, in terms of a feasibility report into a future facility mix, location and external funding options for a replacement pool.

Following scrutiny, the following amendment was put forward for consideration by Cabinet in relation to recommendation 4 of the report: "Grant delegated authority to the Head of Leisure, Tourism, Heritage and Culture in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Nature, Tourism & Wellbeing to commission a feasibility study to investigate options for a future site and potential funding for a replacement facility and to make a commitment when resources allow, that a pool which serves the whole of the upper Swansea, Amman and Llinfell Valleys will be built."

Members were supportive of the recommendations for Cabinet with the above amendment included.

The proposed amendment was not accepted by Cabinet.

5.1 Issues considered Cabinet (Policy and Resources) Scrutiny Sub Committee

May 2023- April 2024.

See appendix 3 attached for full list.

6.Scrutiny Contact Information

The Scrutiny Team are located in the Chief Executive's Legal and Democratic Services section and their contact details follows:

Name	Position	Contact Details
Alison Thomas	Senior Scrutiny Officer	E-mail a.thomas6@npt.gov.uk
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Alternatively, if you think Scrutiny should consider a certain area or issue as part of their work programme then please e-mail democratic.services@npt.gov.uk