

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held in the Committee Room and virtually on Zoom on 17 September, 2025

PRESENT:

Councillor Jeff Evans (Chair)
Councillor Sonia Williams (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Geraint Bebb, Aled M. Jones, R. Llewelyn Jones, Jackie Lewis, Keith Roberts, Ieuan Williams, Alwen Watkin, Arfon Wyn.

Co-opted Members: Mr John Tierney (The Catholic Church), Kathryn Seeney (Parent-Governor- Primary Sector), Christina Williams (Parent-Governor (Secondary Sector and ALN)

Portfolio Members

Councillors Gary Pritchard (Leader), Neville Evans (Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime), Carwyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Corporate Business and Customer Experience), Alun Roberts (Portfolio Member for Adult Services and Community Safety), Nicola Roberts (Portfolio Member for Planning, Public Protection and Climate Change), Robin Williams (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing).

**IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer
Head of Highways, Waste and Property (HP)
Head of Housing Services (NM)
Head of Adult Services (AWO)
Head of Democracy (DS)
Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation (CE)
Senior Primary Education Manager (OTD)
Performance Analyst (AW)
Scrutiny Manager (AGD)
Committee Officer (ATH)
Webcasting Officer (FT)

APOLOGIES:

Councillors John Ifan Jones, Dyfed Wyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Children, Young People and Families), Dafydd Roberts (Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language), Mr Aaron Evans (Director of Education, Skills and Young People), Lynn Ball (Director of Function (Council Business/Monitoring Officer)

**ALSO
PRESENT:**

N/A

The Chair welcomed Kathryn Seeney and Christina Williams to their first meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee as newly appointed co-opted members representing Parent-

Governors in the Primary sector and Secondary and ALN sectors respectively. The committee formally endorsed the appointments.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 17 June 2025 were presented and were confirmed as correct.

3. MONITORING PERFORMANCE: CORPORATE SCORECARD Q1 2025/26

The report of the Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation incorporating the Corporate Scorecard for Quarter 1 of the 2025/26 financial year was presented for the Committee's consideration. The scorecard report details the performance of key indicators in delivering the Council's day to day operations which support the broader objectives of the Council Plan.

Councillor Carwyn Jones, Portfolio Member for Corporate Business and Customer Experience introduced the first corporate scorecard report of the year, highlighting newly added indicators for 2025/26 which were designed to more accurately reflect performance and enhance value. Most indicators (90%) with set targets performed well during the quarter, achieving Green or Yellow RAG status. Notable examples of good performance are detailed in section 2.3 of the report. Councillor Carwyn Jones also drew attention to five indicators currently rated Red or Amber against their targets as outlined in section 2.2 along with the associated mitigation measures. These indicators related to Housing Services (re-letting void properties and delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants), Climate Change (specifically waste recycling), and Whole Council Health (timeliness of responses to FOI requests), all of which are being monitored by the Leadership Team.

The committee reviewed the corporate scorecard in the context of the Council's strategic objectives – Welsh Language, Education, Social Care and Wellbeing, Housing, Economy and Climate Change. During the ensuing discussion the following matters were raised under these thematic areas:

- **Education and Welsh Language**

- The committee welcomed improved pupil attendance in both primary and secondary schools compared to Q1 of the previous year, though figures remain below target. Members requested an explanation for the underperformance and the measures being implemented to address it.

The Senior Primary Education Manager acknowledged that attendance continues to be a national challenge post pandemic. Schools are using attendance data effectively to identify at risk pupils and intervene appropriately. Contributing factors include illness, continuing pandemic related disruptions, social and mental health issues, disengagement with the curriculum, seasonal variation and family pressures such as financial hardship and caring responsibilities. Attendance remains a key priority for the Learning Service due to its strong link with pupils' wellbeing, attainment and long term outcomes. Despite being below target, the trend is improving. Welfare Officers work closely with schools and families to address the root causes of absences with increased use of personalised attendance plans for affected pupils.

In follow-up questions, the committee asked about the relationship between exclusions and absenteeism, and whether excluded pupils or those withdrawn by families are included in the data. The Senior Primary Education Manager clarified that subject to

confirmation, excluded pupils are not counted in the data. Welfare Officers maintain contact with excluded children and support re-entry into education particularly for primary aged pupils.

For children withdrawn from school, the Learning Service and Social Services provide holistic support although it is the service's view that formal education is the most beneficial setting. In response to a question about emotional based school avoidance, the Officer referenced ongoing work with trauma informed schools, pupil inclusion units and family support initiatives.

The Deputy Chief Executive added that all five secondary schools have established programmes now in their third year, to support pupils struggling in mainstream settings. To address exclusions, the Authority has invested in trauma informed approaches, staff training and awareness raising with similar schemes in place to support younger children in primary education. The attendance recording system includes a category for pupils educated at alternative sites, which helps identify home-schooled children and whether they maintain connection with school and the Learning Service.

- The committee enquired about Welsh language training for staff and whether current programmes build sufficient confidence to enable staff to use Welsh in the workplace.

The Head of Democracy explained that the Council works closely with the National Centre for Learning Welsh, regularly engaging one or two tutors to ensure consistency and familiarity. A range of courses – from beginner to advanced – is available and tailored to meet the specific needs of the workforce.

- A committee member asked the Leader what actions he had taken to improve schools on Anglesey.

In response, Councillor Gary Pritchard, Leader, emphasised that pupils with poor attendance are often among the most vulnerable and he highlighted the collaborative efforts between the Learning Service, Youth Service (via welfare Officers), and Social Services through school hubs to support these learners. He referenced a recent event at M-Sparc celebrating the island's progress to becoming trauma informed and noted the exceptional achievement of Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni in being the only secondary school in the UK designated as trauma informed. The Leader acknowledged the complex causes of poor attendance and he stressed the importance of empathy and understanding in addressing the issue. He also noted that Estyn estimates that it may take up to 10 years for attendance levels to return to pre-pandemic norms. Anglesey is seeing an upward trend which is encouraging, supported by ongoing efforts to assist learners.

- The committee asked whether the establishment of new schools had affected the Welsh language, particularly in terms of speaker numbers and usage.

Councillor Gary Pritchard, Leader responded that there was no evidence suggesting a decline in Welsh spoken at schools. The redesignation of schools in Holyhead had increased Welsh usage in Ynys Cybi, thereby boosting the Welsh stream at Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi over the first two years. No other schools have changed designation from bilingual status. When questioned about the impact of small school closures on the Welsh language and communities and whether Scrutiny should investigate further, Councillor Gary Pritchard stressed that all Council decisions including those in education, are made with consideration for the Welsh language.

- The committee also raised a question on the effect of the 2,000 person population decline on the Welsh language and education.

The Chief Executive said that census and population data which have been discussed previously in a members briefing session have broader community impacts beyond

education. He recommended that a new briefing session be held to review updated trends which can vary among communities with immigration currently more prevalent in coastal areas. This would then help Scrutiny identify where to focus any future investigations, including with regard to impact on schools and education.

Councillor Gary Pritchard, Leader also highlighted discussions in the Welsh Language Forum about supporting learners from non-Welsh speaking homes or where only one parent is Welsh speaking as well as newcomers to Wales. He referenced the Welsh Language Immersion Unit which was recently praised at the Eisteddfod for helping Ukrainian refugees gain fluency.

The committee was informed that the Education Scrutiny Panel had visited Ysgol Cybi and Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi to assess Welsh language development. The findings were positive with the new Ysgol Cybi along with staff efforts and enhanced language focus in the secondary school contributing to increased use of Welsh. These successes could guide future scrutiny of other new schools on the island.

- **Social Care and Wellbeing**

- A member raised concerns about limited leisure centre provision outside the standard opening hours which particularly affected adults at work during the daytime including those on exercise referral schemes (e.g. individuals with diabetes). Suggestions were made about improving flexibility, including weekend and early/late sessions. .

The Chief Executive explained that provision depends on demand, space and instructor availability. Councillor Neville Evans, Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime agreed to discuss activity scheduling with the Môn Actif Manager and report back.

- The committee also sought clarification of KPI 11 - the number of visits to Leisure Centres – asking whether it includes exercise referral sessions and activities that are arranged externally.

Councillor Neville Evans, Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime confirmed that the KPI captures all visits to the leisure centres, regardless of purpose. Councillor Gary Pritchard, Leader noted that the indicator reflects the Welsh Government's measurement criteria and excludes Môn Actif activities delivered in community settings. Representations have been made to Welsh Government requesting that the KPI be revised to reflect broader engagement.

- **Economy**

- The committee noted the introduction of KPI 02 – Expenditure (capital and revenue) on large infrastructure, economic development and regeneration projects – and sought clarification of how it differs from the quarterly capital expenditure monitoring reports.

The Chief Executive explained that the KPI is intended to provide assurance that economic regeneration is being prioritised. The KPI also includes revenue expenditure, reflecting the significant revenue grant funding received by the Council. This enables members to monitor trends and assess the Council's ongoing capacity to support the economy. As this is a non-statutory area, any reduction in grant funding would limit the Council's ability to invest and support the economy particularly given the wider financial pressures on the Council. While it is consistent with the capital monitoring reports, the KPI offers broader insight into whether the Council's ability to support economic regeneration is stable or declining.

- The committee referred to KPI 09 – the number of people supported to become prepared for work through SPF interventions and sought clarification of the nature

of the resulting jobs, whether permanent, part time or self-employed. Concern was expressed about the risks and potential impact if SPF funding is reduced or withdrawn.

The Chief Executive clarified that the indicator reflects pre-employment support e.g. training but does not track post-support outcomes. The possibility of monitoring the outcomes can be explored and reported back. He confirmed that any reduction in SPF funding would limit the Council's ability to intervene effectively.

- The committee noted that the performance for KPI 07 – the percentage of high risk businesses subject to planned inspections that were inspected to ensure compliance with Food Hygiene legislation – stands at 85% against a target of 90%. Given the public health implications, the committee questioned whether the target should be raised to 100%.

Councillor Nicola Roberts, Portfolio Member for Planning, Public Protection and Climate Change referred to a post pandemic backlog and capacity constraints as factors for the missed target. She confirmed that efforts are being made to address these issues while maintaining current inspection schedules. It was also noted that food risk levels vary depending on the food type and method of preparation meaning that not all businesses are considered high risk.

- **Climate Change**

- A committee member enquired about progress on implementing the Towards Net Zero Plan 2022-2025.

Councillor Gary Pritchard, Leader responded that climate change indicators within the scorecard form an integral part of the Plan, and all Council decisions are made with consideration of climate impacts and the goal of becoming carbon neutral. While the Plan is embedded across the Council's operations, not all climate related activities are measurable through the scorecard.

Given the significance of climate change and public interest in the Council's actions to tackle climate change, a proposal was made that a report on the Council's activities and progress toward achieving net zero targets be included as a standing item on the committee's quarterly meetings agenda.

The Chief Executive acknowledging climate change as one of the Council's strategic priorities, noted that reports are also provided through channels other than Scrutiny e.g. the Improvement Board. As the current Towards Net Zero Plan concludes this year, a review of outcomes, supported by external expertise is underway. These findings, along with a draft of the next five year plan will be presented to the committee and discussed at a members' briefing. An annual report on progress against the Council Plan, which includes climate related objectives, is also produced. He cautioned that due to the complexity and range of climate change issues, a standing item could consume a significant amount of the committee's time. He suggested that the matter be further considered outside the meeting and he referenced the monthly Political Group Leaders meeting and monthly Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs meeting as appropriate forums for discussing how best to enhance engagement and understanding in a way that adds value. He also proposed that he consult the relevant officers to determine the most suitable reporting mechanism.

An alternative suggestion was made that the corporate scorecard could be expanded to include additional climate change indicators to better reflect the Council's progress towards net zero. The Head of Profession (HR) and Transformation advised that any changes to the scorecard should take effect from

2026/27, as changing indicators mid-year could undermine consistency and make the results harder to compare.

Following further discussion, an amended proposal was agreed – that a quarterly report on the Council's climate related activities and progress towards achieving net zero status be included as a standing item on the committee's agenda, subject to the matter being first considered by the Political Group Leaders meeting and feedback received.

- Reference was made to KPI 02 – the percentage of domestic waste reused, recycled or composted and it was noted that the performance remains below target. The scorecard report references a contribution from a Programme Board established to consider any further mitigation measures to be introduced. The committee enquired when the Programme Board would be reporting on progress to this committee.

In response, Councillor Gary Pritchard, Leader acknowledged that the underperformance was disappointing but noted that the Council was not the only authority in Wales to miss the target. The Programme Board has been reviewing the Council's recycling practices and external experts have provided recommendations aimed at improving the recycling rate. Pilot schemes have been conducted in selected communities and the results are being evaluated. The recommendations to the Executive have financial implications and discussions are ongoing. The Leader further advised that he is scheduled to meet with the Welsh Government's Deputy First Minister who is also responsible for climate change next week to discuss the matter. Any decisions arising will follow the Council's statutory processes and progress will be continue to be reported to this committee quarterly.

- The committee discussed KPI 12 under Whole Council Health – the percentage of FOI requests responded to within timescale noting that the performance at 74% remains below the 90% target and that 55 of the 214 FOI requests were late. The committee enquired whether the target should be reviewed.

Councillor Carwyn Jones, Portfolio Member for Corporate Business and Customer Experience explained that the 90% target is set by the Information Commissioner's Office. The regulator typically intervenes when performance consistently falls below 70%. The Council's SIRO considers a compliance rate of 80% to be satisfactory considering the national context. It was noted that over the past 10 years the Council's FOI compliance rate has been above the 70% threshold that would trigger regulatory attention in all but one of those years. Councillor Carwyn Jones said that due to ongoing capacity and recruitment challenges current arrangements are being managed on an interim basis by agency staff. The Interim Officer for Corporate Information, Complaints and Governance will be conducting training sessions with departments to improve FOI response practices. He further advised that the Council aims to implement a new online system for managing FOI requests by Q3 and it is hoped the transition will support improved performance in future.

- **Housing**

The Housing KPIs were considered in conjunction with **item 4 on the agenda – Recommendations from the Corporate Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Housing Voids and Allocations**. The report by the Head of Housing Services provided a progress update on the Housing Services Void Action Plan and was presented by Councillor Robin Williams, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing.

Councillor Robin Williams reported that the KPI measuring the number of days taken to re-let units of accommodation has been revised for 2025/26. The indicator now reflects only the re-letting of existing properties, excluding new properties and is consistent with practices adopted by regional partners and housing providers across North Wales. The

target timescale for re-letting void properties has been adjusted to 51 calendar days. At the end of September 2024 the number of void properties stood at over 100; by mid-August 2025 the figure had been reduced to 57. Performance data for the period from 1 April to 18 August 2025 as detailed in the table in the report indicates an improvement in the turnover times. This has been achieved with a significant amount of work including the appointment of a Voids Supervisor, in-house painters and the deployment of external contractors under a newly implemented contractor framework.

The committee welcomed the report as a sign of progress. However, it was suggested that in cases of delay due to workload pressures or scheduling slippage, the contractor framework might allow contractors to undertake full property turnovers rather than on a trade by trade basis.

The Chair acknowledged the assurances provided but raised concerns regarding council owned properties he was aware of that have remained empty for over two years and have since deteriorated. He noted that empty properties represent a loss of revenue to the Council and a missed opportunity to house a prospective tenant.

In response, Councillor Robin Williams urged the Chair and any member aware of long-term empty properties to share specific details with either himself or the Head of Housing Services so that ownership of the properties can be verified, the delay in their re-letting investigated and any required remedial work identified. He emphasised that without concrete information, it is not possible to take action. The Head of Housing Services confirmed that he was not aware of any reported addresses to which he had failed to respond and he reiterated his willingness to address any queries provided the relevant information is presented.

Councillor Gary Pritchard, Leader said that the figures presented reflect the current position. Should there be any concerns regarding their accuracy, these should be raised with the Portfolio Member and the Head of Housing Services in the first instance.

The committee also discussed the homelessness indicators. While members welcomed the reduction in homelessness applications (KPI10), they noted a decline in the percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless (KPI 09) compared to Q4 of the previous year and queried the reasons behind the downturn. The Head of Housing Services provided reassurance that the outcome reflected the nature of cases dealt with in quarter 1 and did not currently indicate any cause for concern.

Having reviewed the Corporate Scorecard for Q1 2025/26 (item 3) and having considered the update on the Housing Service's Voids Action Plan (Item 4), it was resolved -

- **To note the Corporate Scorecard report for Q1 2025/26 including the areas which the Leadership Team is exploring and investigating to manage and secure further improvements into the future. These were in relation to areas under Housing (re-letting of void properties and delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants) Climate Change (Domestic Waste recycling) and Whole Council Health (responses to FOI requests within timescale).**
- **To recommend the scorecard report and mitigating measures outlined therein to the Executive.**
- **To note the update since the last report to the committee on 19 February 2025 on the conclusions of the Voids Task and Finish Work Group.**

Additional actions:

- **That updated data regarding population trends be presented to a future members' briefing session. This would then help Scrutiny identify where to**

focus any future investigations, including with regard to impact on schools and education.

- The Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime to discuss activity scheduling with the Môn Actif Manager including the feasibility of weekend and early/late sessions and report back.
- That a quarterly report on the Council's climate related activities and progress towards achieving net zero status be included as a standing item on the committee's agenda, subject to the matter being first considered by the Political Group Leaders meeting and feedback received.

5 MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY PANELS

The report of the Scrutiny Manager requesting the committee to endorse a revised process for membership of the three scrutiny panels based on the Council's current political balance arrangements was presented for consideration. Details of the scope and remit of each of the three scrutiny panels were appended to the report along with the terms of reference of the newly established Welsh Language and Equality Steering group to which the committee was asked to nominate a member. It was noted that the Political Group Leaders recently agreed to amend the membership of scrutiny panels to be subject to political balance principles and rules.

It was resolved –

- To agree a revised process for membership of the three scrutiny panels based on the current political balance of the Council.
- To agree the terms of reference for each of the three scrutiny panels as detailed in the appendices to the report.
- To nominate Councillor Ieuan Williams to serve on the Welsh Language and Equality Steering Group.

6 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report of the Scrutiny Manager incorporating the Committee's Forward Work Programme to April, 2026 was presented for consideration.

It was resolved –

- To agree the current version of the Forward Work Programme for 2025/26 subject to the feedback from the Political Group Leaders meeting regarding the inclusion on the committee's agenda of a standing item on climate related activities and progress towards net zero.
- To note progress thus far in implementing the Forward Work Programme.

**Councillor Jeff Evans
Chair**