

Powys County Council
Organisational Development and Partnership Support

Scrutiny and Council Regulators' Recommendations: Response / Action Plan Tracker

Area e.g. Education, Corporate	Ref	Recommendation/Improvement	Document Reference	Date Received	Responsible Portfolio Holder	Responsible Officer	PCP / SIP Start Date BRAG Status	Action Taken (lifted from PCP / SIP monitoring processes)
WAO National Studies								
Scrutiny								
Scrutiny	R1R2	Ensure that scrutiny members, and specifically scrutiny chairs, receive training and support to fully equip them with the skills required to undertake effective scrutiny.	WAO Study - Scrutiny	01/05/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Wyn Richards		<p>Chairs invited to attend INLOGOV training course at Birmingham and 1 Member attended. WLGA training provided to all scrutiny committee members in 2012 at start of new Council. Schools scrutiny - external consultant (ex-Estyn inspector) used to provide guidance and training to the Working Group on understanding performance information and undertaking the scrutiny of schools. There is a continual dialogue between scrutiny officers and Chairs / Members to provide guidance and support on an ongoing basis. There have been 2 new chairs of the People Scrutiny Committee recently, and officers have discussed the role with those new chairs and are providing support at meetings. induction programme post election 2017 training by WLGA to chairs and scrutiny members.</p> <p>2 chairs received training by INLOGOV but no longer hold this role. Further training will be arranged for new chairs. The impact is therefore not assessable.</p> <p>All scrutiny members will be receiving training on the 13 June from WLGA - training will also be provided for chairs and vice chairs</p> <p>in the autumn 2017 work will be conducted to improve the relationships between scrutiny and cabinet.</p>
Scrutiny	R1R3	Further develop scrutiny forward work programming to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a clear rationale for topic selection; • be more outcome focused; • ensure that the method of scrutiny is best suited to the topic area and the outcome desired; and • align scrutiny programmes with the council's performance management, self-evaluation and improvement arrangements. 	WAO Study - Scrutiny	01/05/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Wyn Richards		<p>Pro-forma developed for use by the Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs Steering Group to assess and score the suitability of topics for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme. Regulator reports are used on a regular basis to drive work programmes especially where improvement monitoring is required. The Joint Chairs has recently re-evaluated the scrutiny work programme as there were too many items in the programme. All items were re-prioritised to reduce the numbers of items which were active. It is the intention for this list to be revisited by the Joint chairs at each meeting to ensure that the work programme is manageable.</p> <p>Scrutiny work programme improvement has been a priority and are now focussing on key pieces of work. The WG corporate assessment recommendations to improve the cabinet work programme which will help improve the scrutiny work programme is being taken forward as a matter of priority and should yield improvements.</p> <p>Pro-forma has reduced trivial / local matters being scrutinised. The use of regulator reports has helped focus and prioritise workloads when undertaking improvement monitoring. Re-prioritising the work programme has reduced the number of active items.</p> <p>regular liaison meeting with HOS's will be conducted to highlight items coming to Cabinet which could then be pre scrutinised.</p>
Scrutiny	R1R4	Ensure that scrutiny draws effectively on the work of audit, inspection and regulation and that its activities are complementary with the work of external review bodies.	WAO Study - Scrutiny	01/05/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Wyn Richards		<p>Use of regulator reports to drive work programmes of Working Groups where improvement monitoring is being undertaken. Scrutiny has responded positively to a request by Estyn to undertake the scrutiny of schools.</p> <p>Improvement in inter-action between Audit and Scrutiny Committees required to avoid the duplication of scrutiny work so there is a more holistic view taken of services by one group only. Account is taken of internal and external regulatory reports when undertaking individual scrutiny work. Schools scrutiny - the Council was asked to undertake this by the regulator (Estyn) and scrutiny have worked with an ex-Estyn inspector to establish its schools scrutiny process.</p> <p>Assisted Council make sure that regulator recommendations are being addressed and that improvements are being made. Services which previously had been "adverse" to scrutiny realise the value of the critical friend role of scrutiny and the assistance it can provide in responding to regulator outcomes.</p>
Scrutiny	R1R5	Ensure that the impact of scrutiny is properly evaluated and acted upon to improve the function's effectiveness; including following up on proposed actions and examining outcomes.	WAO Study - Scrutiny	01/05/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Wyn Richards		<p>Continuing discussions amongst scrutiny officers and chairs about committee / working group performance. The Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs Steering Group is used as a discussion forum and a means to drive improvements / changes in scrutiny. The Council also has a periodic review of committee structures, as well as keeping terms of reference under continual review. The Council has utilised the services of an external adviser (ex Estyn inspector) in establishing schools scrutiny. The Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs Steering Group has re-prioritised the scrutiny work programme to focus the work of scrutiny. Scrutiny is also moving to preparing more written comments for consideration by the Cabinet to improve the visibility of scrutiny recommendations to the Cabinet.</p> <p>Continual review of processes and adjustment of processes where necessary. There is a current review of committee structures by the Council due to spending cuts. Schools scrutiny - the Council has used the external adviser to check progress in the scrutiny of schools. Outcomes are still an area of weakness especially the responsiveness of the Cabinet to scrutiny recommendations. This was discussed at a recent meeting of the Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs Steering Group who agreed to discuss any issues / blockages. A deadline for responses by the Cabinet to scrutiny recommendations has been included in the Council's Constitution. Reducing the number of active matters being considered by scrutiny will also assist in focussing scrutiny work.</p> <p>Review of effectiveness does improve processes, but judgement of effectiveness is currently in its infancy.</p> <p>More effective pre scrutiny and scrutiny prioritising</p> <p>pre scrutiny reports going to management team and cabinet to improve the evaluation and focus on key topics and pieces of work</p>

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Scrutiny	R5	Ensure that external review bodies take account of scrutiny work programmes and the outputs of scrutiny activity, where appropriate, in planning and delivering their work.	Good Scrutiny? Good Question! Auditor General for Wales improvement study: Scrutiny in Local Government	29/05/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Wyn Richards		The Council approached WAO, CSSIW, Estyn etc. to meet regularly to ensure external review bodies take account of scrutiny work programmes and the outputs of scrutiny activity, where appropriate, in planning and delivering their work. There was little appetite to this request. The Council have undertaken a lot of work to tie in regular risk and CIP vision and elements into the Scrutiny process. PCC provide reports and updates to auditors along with minutes of meetings when requested to aid inspection when appropriate.
Scrutiny	R1R6	Undertake regular self-evaluation of scrutiny utilising the 'outcomes and characteristics of effective local government overview and scrutiny' developed by the Wales Scrutiny Officers' Network.	WAO Study - Scrutiny	01/05/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Wyn Richards		intention to draft a plan and undertake self evaluation to respond to the national review in Autumn 2018. This will allow time for Purdah, election and post election settlement, member training and appointment of new scrutiny committee members before looking at the self evaluation once the environment is stable.
Education								
Education	R2R5	Ensure that elected members and partners fully understand that councils have a clear responsibility for leading and co-ordinating youth services for 16 to 24 year olds.	WAO Study - NEETS	01/07/2014	Cllr Myfanwy Alexander	Freddy Greaves/Kirsty Pringle		Portfolio Holders for Youth Services and Education briefed on progress in this area. Further redesign of Youth Services in Powys will take place in 2017/18 as part of this process we will further reiterate the councils statutory responsibilities in this area to cabinet members and other stakeholders. Governance for the Youth Engagement Progression Framework is through the Transforming Learning and Skills programme board (chaired by the portfolio holder) this includes the development and coordination for youth support services for 16 -24 year olds. Work is being done on alternative reporting mechanisms, such as the Youth Service quarterly performance review that is presented to councillors. Further funding to support the work with 16-24 year olds is being applied for which will improve the delivery and quality of service being delivered and raise the profile of the work among partners such as housing etc.
Environmental Health								
Environmental Health	R3R1	Revise the best practice standards to: • align the work of environmental health with national strategic priorities; • identify the wider contribution of environmental health in delivering strategic priorities of the Welsh Government; and • identify the benefit and impact of environmental health services on protecting citizens.	WAO Study - Env Health	01/10/2014	Cllr Martin Weale	Ken Yorston		Welsh Heads of Environmental Health Standards have been reviewed and are ready to come to LA's for comment once received we will improve standards as per recommendations of WHOEG review
Environmental Health	R3R5	Improve strategic planning by: • identifying, collecting and analysing financial, performance and demand/need data on environmental health services; • analysing collected data to inform and understand the relationship between 'cost: benefit: impact' and use this intelligence to underpin decisions on the future of council environmental health services; and • agree how digital information can be used to plan and develop environmental health services in the future.	WAO Study - Env Health	01/10/2014	Cllr Martin Weale	Ken Yorston		New ICT system will enable mobile solution. The procurement of this system has been extended until by 31/03/2019. Working with procurement to progress this inline with deadline.
Early Departures								
Early Departures	R5R1	Public bodies should use business cases to support all individual early departures. Business cases should identify the cost and service delivery implications of the individual leaving and take account of relevant wider workforce planning.	WAO Study - Early Departures	01/02/2015	Cllr James Evans	Julie Rowles John Bevan		Powys County Council already operates a business case authorisation process as recommended. The revised Management of Change and Redundancy policy specifically requires that for all redundancies (both voluntary and compulsory) a proper business case outlining the cost/benefit to the Council must be retained and held centrally. Although we currently make use of business cases to allow early release, we have ensured that these business cases identify the cost and service delivery implications of the individual leaving and take account of relevant wider workforce planning. Moving forward, the business case will note any strain on the pension fund, the costs of any replacement staff to backfill work, a calculation of payback periods and the impact of the loss of skills and experience.
Early Departures	R5R4	Public bodies should ensure where settlement agreements are used, their records clearly identify whether a package includes an enhancement payment and if so, its value and the reason for the enhancement payment.	WAO Study - Early Departures	01/02/2015	Cllr James Evans	Julie Rowles John Bevan		The Council does not, as a matter of course, provide enhanced payments in settlement agreements and only occasionally makes use of settlement agreements. A centrally-held schedule is held by Legal Services.
Early Departures	R5R5	Public bodies should give due consideration to the equality impact of all early departure arrangements, in particular where a public body is running a specific scheme covering multiple possible departures.	WAO Study - Early Departures	01/02/2015	Cllr James Evans	Julie Rowles John Bevan		The Council has not had an early departure scheme (such as the Voluntary Severance Scheme) since the survey was conducted but will give due consideration to conducting an equality impact assessment of any future schemes. The council must also work to ensure that employees with protected characteristics are not subject to unfair disadvantage or exclusion
Early Departures	R5R6	Public bodies should monitor and report as part of their internal governance arrangements on expected and achieved savings as a result of early departures. This will help inform future cost reduction plans.	WAO Study - Early Departures	01/02/2015	Cllr James Evans	Julie Rowles John Bevan		Monitoring and reporting on performance of previous schemes have been reported to Cabinet and Council. With regard to future voluntary/ early release schemes, Services, supported by HR, will need to monitor and report on expected and achieved savings as a result of early departures.
Early Departures	R5R7	Public bodies should review their record keeping for early departure arrangements, so that they can more readily identify key information including the number of costs of early departures in a given period, payback period information based on salary and employers' National Insurance and pension costs, and settlement agreements.	WAO Study - Early Departures	01/02/2015	Cllr James Evans	Julie Rowles John Bevan		The council needs to ensure that records on early departure are above reproach – this includes number of employees, costs, payback period information based on salary, NI contributions, pension costs and settlement agreements. With this in mind, written instructions were issued to HR practitioners, senior managers and Heads of Service and we have included these in the new Management of Change and Redundancy policy.
Older People								

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Older People	R2	Improve strategic planning and better coordinate activity for services to older people by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring comprehensive action plans are in place that cover the work of all relevant council departments and the work of external stakeholders outside of health and social care; and engaging with residents and partners in the development of plans, and in developing and agreeing priorities. 	Supporting the Independence of Older People: Are Councils Doing Enough?	15/10/2015	Cllr Stephen Hayes	Jen Jeffreys		The Older People's joint commissioning strategy action plan has been reviewed and updated. There has been engagement with the older persons forum in relation to day time activities and accommodation projects. This has been received well by those who participated. Separately there has been extensive engagement throughout the county in respect of gaining views in relation to day time activities. This process has assisted in informing the plans going forward. Individual feedback and engagement is undertaken through the updated integrated assessment tool and reviews of older people. Integration of older people's service with Powys Teaching Health Board continues and evaluation and feedback is being developed as the trial sites progress. Early indicators are that older people are fully involved in the what matters conversation and planning in relation to their future needs.
Older People	R3	Improve engagement with, and dissemination of, information to older people by ensuring advice and information services are appropriately configured and meet the needs of the recipients.	Supporting the Independence of Older People: Are Councils Doing Enough?	15/10/2015	Cllr Stephen Hayes	Jen Jeffreys		The introduction of Powys People Direct and a single number approach has assisted in the collation of information and provision of information and advice to individuals, their families and agencies who make enquiries. The third sector have been crucial to this development and the introduction of community connectors have assisted both within Powys People Direct and within the localities where they are based. By engaging directly with individuals within their communities and the development of contingency plans will ensure that appropriate support is given in a timely manner.
Older People	R4	Ensure effective management of performance for the range of services that support older people to live independently by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> setting appropriate measures to enable members, officers and the public to judge progress in delivering actions for all council services; ensuring performance information covers the work of all relevant agencies and especially those outside of health and social services; and establishing measures to judge inputs, outputs and impact to be able to understand the effect of budget cuts and support oversight and scrutiny. 	Supporting the Independence of Older People: Are Councils Doing Enough?	15/10/2015	Cllr Stephen Hayes	Jen Jeffreys		The implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act has seen a shift in the requirements to report to Welsh Government. These reports are being refined and will ensure that information is captured at a service, team and individual level. The introduction of "sprint" enabled managers to access information which was live thus informing the performance of the service area. This is now being rebuilt as a result of the move to WCCIS. Measures are in place in relation to the integrated terms and evaluations underway. Team plans are in place and link directly to the directorate plan which reports to DMT and ultimately to execs and members. As we move forward with continuous improvement trends and commitments will be available to team managers on a monthly basis as a measurement going forward which will assist with planning.
Finance								
Finance	R1	Councils need clear strategies and plans, showing what they want to achieve and how they intend to achieve it Effective strategy and planning are crucial tools to help councils develop well-considered and sustainable responses to financial pressures. And services need to work out the most cost-effective ways of using the resources at their disposal to deliver their goals.	Meeting the Financial Challenges Facing Local Government in Wales	28/01/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		Medium Term Financial Strategy in place which covers a 3 year period, this coupled with the 3 year Financial Resource Model has improved the medium term planning. This enables the Council to focus and react to the longer term, forecasting the impact of further reductions in funding, pay and price pressures and the development of savings that will be required. The MTFs draws on the statement of Intent, One Powys Plan and other strategies to ensure alignment of the councils priorities and objectives. The development of FRM and Financial Strategy for each Directorate is now being put in place which will detail the demand, impact and mitigation being put in place, these plans will provide more detail of these areas for consideration at an overall council level, this will enable better planning and prioritisation of resources. Alignment of Revenue, Capital and reserves has progressed but continues to be developed. A report presented to Management Team explores the development of a 5 year Corporate Plan which sets out the Councils Vision and priorities for the full term of the Council this presents an opportunity for further significant improvement and much stronger alignment of the Councils' financial and corporate planning arrangements. The development of this approach has been agreed and is being progressed, together with different models of budgeting which move away from the traditional incremental budgeting approach and look to better align budgeting to priorities and outcomes.
Finance	R2	Effective planning, based on good information is an efficient and effective way of supporting tough choices and developing clear priorities Councils need robust information to support the detailed analysis needed to link their vision and objectives to their delivery plans. Councils often do not have a clear understanding of the demand for their services and the quality of their services from the users' perspective.	Meeting the Financial Challenges Facing Local Government in Wales	28/01/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		
Finance	R3	Council plans and strategies need closer links to longer-term financial plans Councils need to strengthen the links between their strategies and plans for services and their medium- and long-term financial plans. Too many financial plans are focused on short-term pressures, and do not look further ahead to the medium- and long-term to support the achievement of broader strategic goals. And, too many councils base their budgets on small, incremental annual changes, rather than fundamentally assessing the service delivery arrangements needed to deliver the desired results – and the cost of delivering those services.	Meeting the Financial Challenges Facing Local Government in Wales	28/01/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		
Finance	R4	Councils need to explore more opportunities to work together and with other public services, to reduce costs and deliver improved outcomes for citizens Collaboration is important because individual public services cannot deliver the desired improvements to the economy, health, environment and community life of Wales on their own. When public services do not work together effectively, the outcome is invariably extra costs and poorer services for service users and citizens.	Meeting the Financial Challenges Facing Local Government in Wales	28/01/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		Community Delivery Model in place that explores the transfer of functions to town and community councils. Corporate services exploring areas for collaboration, success already achieved with provision of DBS service to other Authorities, joint working with PtHB on IT services and a number of other Section 33 agreements in place for the joint delivery of services within Adult Social Care. Internal Audit arrangements will be delivered with the South and West Wales Audit Partnership Ltd from April 2017, they also provide services for a number of Local Authorities. Further opportunities continue to be explored and we are currently collaborating with other Welsh Authorities in exploring the procurement of a Financial System.
Finance	R6	Councils need to strengthen their arrangements for evaluating the impact of their financial decisions – on service standards and on citizens Informed decision making requires good management information and effective feedback arrangements. Councils that understand the impact of the actions they take are more likely to respond effectively to emerging issues and make better decisions. This is more likely to lead to better, more efficient services, and more satisfied citizens.	Meeting the Financial Challenges Facing Local Government in Wales	28/01/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		Impact Assessments in place for all proposals. Consultation and engagement in place with citizens with the development of the Delib software to inform and engage with the electorate. The Cabinet formed a sub-committee to review the completed assessments for quality and where necessary asked for improvements or omissions to be rectified from some service areas. This has strengthened the process and quality of assessments being completed.

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Finance	R1	Local authorities should strengthen their financial-planning arrangements by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing more explicit links between the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and its corporate priorities and service plans; aligning other key strategies such as workforce and asset management plans with the MTFP; developing comprehensive multi-year fully-costed savings plans which underpin and cover the period of the MTFP, not just the forthcoming annual budget; categorise savings proposals so that the shift from traditional type savings to transformational savings can be monitored over the period of the MTFP; and ensuring timescales for the delivery of specific savings proposals are realistic and accountability for delivery is properly assigned. 	Financial resilience of local authorities in Wales 2015-16	18/08/2016	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		Medium Term Financial Strategy in place which covers a 3 year period, this coupled with the 3 year Financial Resource Model has improved the medium term planning. This enable the Council to focus and react to the longer term, forecasting the impact of further reductions in funding, pay and price pressures and the development of savings that will be required. The MTFP draws on the statement of Intent, One Powys Plan and other strategies to ensure alignment of the councils priorities and objectives. Savings plans are profiled in order to understand timescales, Resource Plan developed which identifies the support required to deliver projects across the Council. There is opportunity for further improvement and a much stronger alignment of the Councils financial and and corporate planning arrangements, an approach is being progressed to develop a 5 year corporate plan over the term of the Council. The benefits of this approach are:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The political intent and ambition of the newly elected Cabinet is described and provides policy direction for a 5 year period. The priorities identified in '2025: Powys Transformed' can be fully resourced and aligned with service planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving Health and Care Creating a Vibrant Economy Improving Learner Outcomes and Aspiration for All Enabler 1 - Developing the Workforce Enabler 2 - Remodelling Council Services Key enabling strategies (Workforce, ICT, Property, Finance and Commissioning) can be developed alongside to support these priorities. Longer term planning will improve option development and lead to better informed decision making and more robust financial outcomes. Alignment and consistency with all other plans. Better Governance and Programme Management Discipline. Improved financial alignment and planning for both revenue and Capital.
Finance	R4	Local authorities should develop Key Performance Indicators to monitor the MTFP.	Financial resilience of local authorities in Wales 2015-16	18/08/2016	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		To be progressed. Comparisons of assumptions included for forward projections around funding levels, inflation, pressures etc. against and the actual position. This would be introduced for the next financial year.
Finance	R6 R8	Local authorities should ensure that corporate capacity and capability are at a level that can effectively support the delivery of savings plans in the MTFP at the pace required.	Financial resilience of local authorities in Wales 2015-16 The financial resilience of councils in Wales	18/08/2016 02/04/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		A review of financial services was carried out in April 2016 an action plan is in place to get the recommendations from the review to develop capacity and training in the skills required to ensure that finance can effectively support all the financial requirements for the council. Financial Services Restructure nearing completion and will be implemented in 2017. Externally commissioned support brought in as required with skills transfer included in arrangements.
Finance	R1	Councils should ensure that their corporate plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is the core driver for the service plans and other supporting strategies including workforce, information technology and capital expenditure; maintains at least a three to five year forward view and is aligned with the medium term financial plan and other supporting strategies; and should clearly articulate the desired role of the council in five years - the model for delivering priority services and the infrastructure and resources needed to deliver future priorities within available finances. 	The financial resilience of councils in Wales	02/04/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		Medium Term Financial Strategy in place which covers a 3 year period, this coupled with the 3 year Financial Resource Model has improved the medium term planning. This enable the Council to focus and react to the longer term, forecasting the impact of further reductions in funding, pay and price pressures and the development of savings that will be required. The MTFP draws on the statement of Intent, One Powys Plan and other strategies to ensure alignment of the councils priorities and objectives. There is opportunity for further improvement and a much stronger alignment of the Councils financial and and corporate planning arrangements, an approach is being progressed to develop a 5 year corporate plan over the term of the Council. The benefits of this approach are:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The political intent and ambition of the newly elected Cabinet is described and provides policy direction for a 5 year period. The priorities identified in '2025: Powys Transformed' can be fully resourced and aligned with service planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving Health and Care Creating a Vibrant Economy Improving Learner Outcomes and Aspiration for All Enabler 1 - Developing the Workforce Enabler 2 - Remodelling Council Services Key enabling strategies (Workforce, ICT, Property, Finance and Commissioning) can be developed alongside to support these priorities. Longer term planning will improve option development and lead to better informed decision making and more robust financial outcomes. Alignment and consistency with all other plans. Better Governance and Programme Management Discipline. Improved financial alignment and planning for both revenue and Capital.
Finance	R3	Councils need to ensure that funding deficits are accurately projected and fully reconciled to detailed savings plans for each year over the life of the medium term financial plan.	The financial resilience of councils in Wales	02/04/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		The financial position and projected forecast is reported to Cabinet on a monthly basis, the delivery of savings are monitored and reported within these reports, this includes outstanding savings from previous years as well the current. Heads of service are challenged at budget challenge events during the year to ensure that the delivery of savings and service financial position are within budget or what plans they have to redress the position. The introduction and development of Directorate FRM's will identify cost pressures, thier impact and resolution on an ongoing basis and will better inform the overarching corporate financial planning process.
Finance	R4	Councils should regularly review the adequacy of the financial assurance arrangements that underpin the delivery of annual savings plans, including the level of scrutiny and challenge provided by councillors.	The financial resilience of councils in Wales	02/04/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		Financial monitoring reports presented and discussed at Finance Scrutiny Panel, Panel identified areas for further scrutiny challenge with Portfolio Holders and Heads of Service. Joint working groups from FSP and Directorate scrutiny groups put in place to challenge specific areas of concern, e.g Joint Audit and People Scrutiny working group. A review of the impact of the Finance Scrutiny Panel will be undertaken to ensure that the scrutiny role and the outcomes from the panel meet expectations.
Finance	R7	Councils should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen budget setting and monitoring arrangements to ensure financial resilience; and review the coverage and effectiveness of their internal and external assurance financial systems and controls to ensure they are fit for purpose and provide early warning of weaknesses in key systems. 	The financial resilience of councils in Wales	02/04/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		Budget setting commences earlier and is a continual process throughout the year. Budget monitoring and forecasting provided monthly, budget challenge events to test the delivery of service budgets and savings held. Finance Scrutiny Panel review the financial position throughout the year and challenge Cabinet, Portfolio holders and Heads of Service on areas of concern.

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Finance	R9	Council officers need to equip councillors with the knowledge and skills they need to deliver effective governance and challenge by extending training opportunities and producing high quality management information.	The financial resilience of councils in Wales	02/04/2014	Cllr Aled Davies	Jane Thomas		Budget Seminars held for all Members, general budget and financial planning sessions as well as specific annual budget seminars on the specific proposals as part of budget setting. Financial Scrutiny Panel developed and put in place supported by Institute for Public Scrutiny. Cabinet budget workshops developed and improved the knowledge and input from Cabinet members. Information for decision making being improved, more detailed seminars held around the savings proposals last year which assisted members in their understanding of the proposals and enable them to scrutinise and challenge. Elections in May resulted in new members for the Council, training will be undertaken to develop members understanding of the financial aspects of the Council.