

Annual Report 2025-26

Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire

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Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



CONTENTS

Chair's Foreword	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Overview of the Work of the Committee in 2025/26	3
2.1. The Role of Scrutiny.....	3
2.2. The Forward Work Plan	4
2.3. Meetings of the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee ...	5
2.4. Performance Monitoring / Strategic Issues	5
2.5. Revenue & Capital Budgets	7
2.6. Petition – Road Safety Improvements Outside Hendy School –	9
2.7. Pre-Decision Reports	10
3. Other Scrutiny Activity	18
3.1. Task & Finish.....	18
3.2 Site Visits	19
3.3 Development Sessions.....	20
4. Impact -How has Scrutiny Made a Difference This Year?	20
5. Public Engagement	21
6. Challenges	21
7. Future Work	22
8. Support for the Scrutiny Function	22
9. Attendance	23

Chair's Foreword



I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

It's a pleasure to share the Annual Report of the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Over the past year, Committee Members have been busy exploring a wide range of topics from reviewing performance and policies to examining budgets and service delivery. The Committee looked at how sustainability initiatives are working, checked in on public transport changes, were kept informed and helped shape the changes in respect of a broad spectrum of topics including the new waste regime which impacts on every resident throughout the County as well as climate action plans for our community.

One highlight was the Committee's Task and Finish Review, which involved members undertaking a thorough investigation into dog breeding practices within the community. As a result of this focused review and collective effort, tangible recommendations were identified and accepted by Cabinet, the Committee looks forward to receiving a progress update on this in the coming year.

This year also marked a notable milestone for the Committee, as it became the first scrutiny committee to receive a petition from members of the public. This demonstrated an increasing engagement from the community and highlighted the Committee's openness to public concerns and input in its work.

Despite having three vacancies this year, the Committee has worked together as a team to provide constructive feedback through scrutiny.

Above all, this annual report shows the Committee's continued commitment to making a positive difference. Scrutiny plays a vital role in shaping the Council's work, and we are proud to help improve services for everyone in the county.

I wish to express my gratitude to all officers for their diligent efforts in delivering high-quality reports to the Committee. I would like to once again acknowledge Vice Chair Councillor Karen Davies for her unwavering support throughout the year. Finally, I extend my appreciation to every member of the Committee for their dedication and contributions, which have made this year both productive and rewarding.

Councillor Kevin Madge

Chair of the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee 2025/26

1. Introduction

The Scrutiny function is a key element of the County Council's governance arrangements and decision-making process. Although not a decision-making body, Scrutiny is at its most effective when it grasps the potential to influence and inform decisions made by both the Council and partner bodies across the county.

Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution requires all Scrutiny Committees to "*prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committee's activities over the previous year*".

This report highlights the work undertaken by the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee during the 2024/25 municipal year. It aims to provide members with an opportunity to reflect on its achievements, identify areas of best practice and highlight areas for improvement to further enhance the scrutiny function. Additionally, this report may facilitate discussion on items which could be identified for inclusion within future work programmes.

The Committee is chaired by Councillor Kevin Madge and is made up of 13 Elected Members. There were 3 vacancies throughout the entire municipal year of 2025/26. Cabinet Members attend meetings as required in order to address the Committee on areas within their respective portfolios.

Support is provided by the Democratic Services Unit and other Council officers, as and when required.

2. Overview of the Work of the Committee in 2025/26

2.1. The Role of Scrutiny

The following Cabinet Members presented reports/parts of reports that fall within their portfolio that reside within the Scrutiny Committee's remit.

Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability – Councillor Aled Vaughan Owen

Climate Change Strategy	Statutory Nuisance Matters (Noise, pets, Overgrown Gardens)
Decarbonisation	Public Protection
Biodiversity (nature emergency)	Sustainable Development Lead
Licensing Policy	Fly Tipping
Trading Standards	Environmental Enforcement
Unlicensed Waste	Environmental (Wales) Act 2016
Air Quality	Ash Die Back Strategy
Circular Economy	Food Standards
Environmental Health	Emergency Planning
Flooding and Shoreline Management	Public Rights of Way
Coastal Defence	Countryside Access

Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services – Cllr Edward Thomas

Refuse	Passenger and Community Transport
Street Cleansing	Litter Environmental Quality Strategy
Highways and Transport Services	Grass cutting services
Grounds Maintenance	Infrastructure repairs and maintenance
Building Services & Estate Management (excluding housing stock)	Litter and Community Cleansing
Bridges	Regional Transport Policy
Active Travel and Safer Routes	Parks Maintenance
Fleet Management (inc renewal and maintenance)	Regional Collaborations for Transport Highways and Waste
Narberth Crematorium	School Transport
School Transport Appeals	Streetscene
Caretaking and Building Cleaning	Waste Management
Parking Services inc. Policy, Control and Enforcement	Household Waste Recycling Centres
Recycling Services	

Cabinet Member for Resources – Councillor Alun Lenny

Finance Strategy and Budget	Capital Programme
Strategic Finance (Corporate Projects)	Savings Delivery
Financial Services	Community Benefits
Commissioning and Procurement	

2.2. The Forward Work Plan

Scrutiny plays a key role in promoting accountability in the decision-making process of the Local Authority. It is also useful in ensuring that Council policies reflect current priorities, as well as promoting efficiency and encouraging partnership working with external agencies.

In order for Scrutiny Committees to take on greater ownership of their own Forward Work Plans, a pre-decision method of scrutiny was introduced in September 2022 which allows Scrutiny Committees to decide which reports from the Cabinet Forward Work Plan they wish to come before them. As per normal process, Committees are also able to identify their own topics and Cabinet are still able to invite a Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise a decision which was in the pipeline.

The Forward Work Plan for 2025/26 included performance monitoring, revenue and capital budget monitoring, policy and strategy development reports, service reviews, update reports and Task and Finish activity. The Plan remained a flexible document and was amended during the year to reflect changes to report timetables, non-submission of reports and requests by the Committee for additional items to be brought forward for scrutiny.

In line with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Gateway Framework, the Committee determined which reports would be considered at formal meetings and which would be circulated to Members outside the formal meeting cycle, supporting effective use of meeting time while maintaining oversight of key issues.

2.3. Meetings of the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee

Meetings are scheduled on a 6-8 weekly basis to consider issues and reports included in its FWP. The Committee held 6 formal meetings during the 2025/26 municipal year and all meetings were conducted in accordance with the provisions set out within Section 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

To complement the work undertaken during formal meetings, the Committee also undertakes other scrutiny functions such as Task and Finish, Member Development sessions and site visits falling within its remit.

2.4. Performance Monitoring / Strategic Issues

One of the principal roles of the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee is to monitor the performance of services and functions within its remit. Accordingly, the Committee reviews performance monitoring reports and various strategies and plans to provide a balanced assessment of performance across the relevant service areas.

2.4.1. Carmarthenshire County Council Annual Report 2024/25

October 2025, the Committee considered the Carmarthenshire County Council Annual Report 2024/25, which set out the Authority's progress against its Well-being Objectives and corporate priorities during the reporting year. The report was presented to enable scrutiny of performance and outcomes relevant to the Committee's remit prior to Cabinet consideration.

Members examined:

- progress against the Well-being Objectives relevant to Place, Sustainability and Climate Change;
- performance information relating to highways, environmental services and climate change activity;
- how performance data was presented and used to demonstrate progress and areas for improvement; and
- the importance of the Annual Report in supporting transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.

Members raised questions and comments on the content of the report, which were responded to by officers, enabling clarification of performance and progress within service areas under the Committee's remit.

Outcome:

The Committee received the report and resolved to recommend the Carmarthenshire County Council Annual Report 2024/25 to Cabinet for consideration.

2.4.2. Draft Divisional Business Plans 2026/27

In January 2026, The Committee received the draft Business Plans for 2026/27 relating to service areas within its remit, namely:

- Healthy Communities and Public Protection
- Environmental Infrastructure
- Place and Sustainability

The Business Plans set out the proposed actions and measures for the forthcoming municipal year and were presented to enable scrutiny of how services would deliver against the Council's Corporate Strategy and maintain key statutory and operational functions.

Members discussed:

- progress on existing initiatives, including the Bwyd Sir Gâr programme and the Future Generations Menu, which promotes the use of local produce in school catering;
- opportunities for income generation, including the potential for overnight parking charges for motorhomes and HGVs, and the need to work with Welsh Government and commercial partners;
- the phased implementation of the new kerbside waste collection system, including which areas would be included in the initial rollout; and
- the importance of workforce engagement, with officers confirming that staff consultation was underway prior to wider engagement with Members.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved that the Business Plans relevant to this Scrutiny Committee for 2026/27 be endorsed.

2.4.3 2025/26 Performance Reports relevant to the Committee

Quarterly performance monitoring reports relevant to the Committee were circulated to Members during the year, enabling ongoing oversight of service performance and alignment with the Corporate Strategy.

- October 2025 – Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring (01/04/25 – 30/06/25)
- January 2026 – Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring (01/04/25 – 30/09/25) – by e-mail
- March 2026 – Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring (01/04/2025-31/12/2025)

The reports enabled members to monitor performance in respect of the Well-being Objectives relevant to the Committee's remit and aligned to the Authority's Corporate Strategy. The information provided a self-evaluation of performance in accordance with the reformed legislative framework enshrined within Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Members were afforded the opportunity to raise any concerns or matters which required further consideration at the Committee's formal meeting, in accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

During the consideration of the 2025/26 End of Quarter 3 Performance Report, covering the period 1 April 2025 to 31 December 2025, Members focused in particular on off target performance measures within the report. Discussion centred on:

- the reasons for under performance against specific measures, particularly those relating to Food Standards and Public Protection;
- resource pressures affecting service delivery and the ability to meet targets;
- the need for national support and engagement with external bodies, including the Food Standards Agency; and
- actions being taken to address workforce capacity, including longer-term staff development and engagement with higher-education institutions to support future recruitment.

Members expressed concern regarding the continued off-target position of specific measures and sought assurance that appropriate recovery actions were being progressed.

Outcome:

October 2025 – End of Quarter 1 Performance Report

Resolved that the 2025/26 End of Quarter 1 Performance Report be approved

January 2026 – End of Quarter 1 Performance Report – Scrutiny by e-mail

No comments received

March 2026 – End of Quarter 3 Performance Report

The Committee resolved:

- that the End of Quarter 3 Performance Report be received; and
- that the Committee's concerns regarding the off-target measures (PP/FOOD/001, PP/FOOD/002 and PPN/001i) be referred to Cabinet, with a request for a detailed report to be considered.

2.5. Revenue & Capital Budgets

2.5.1. Budget Monitoring Reports

In accordance with the Committee's Forward Work plan, quarterly reports on the departmental and corporate revenue and capital budgets were considered both in an formal meeting or circulated to members for scrutiny by e-mail as follows:-

- October 2025 - in respect of the budgetary position as at 30th June 2025.
- October 2025 – Outturn Report 2024/25 end of year financial position.
- November 2025 - in respect of the budgetary position as at 31st August 2025.

To manage the number of scrutiny items on the January 2025 formal agenda, the following budget monitoring report was distributed for review via e-mail.

- June 2025 - in respect of the budgetary position as at 28th February 2025.

The reports enabled members to monitor expenditure in each service area and the progress made in connection with any capital works. Members were afforded the opportunity to raise any concerns or matters which required further consideration at the Committee's formal meeting, in accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

During the consideration of the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Reports, Members examined forecast overspends within services falling under the Committee's remit and sought assurance regarding the causes of variances and the mitigating actions in place. Particular attention was given to capital programme slippage, pressures associated with highways and infrastructure, and the funding and longer-term implications of decarbonisation and climate change measures.

2.5.2. Revenue Budget Strategy 2026/27 to 2028/29

In addition to monitoring the current revenue and capital budgets, the Committee was also consulted on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2026/27 to 2028/29 at its meeting in January 2026. The report provided the Committee with the proposed Revenue Budget Strategy for 2026/27, together with indicative figures for the 2027/2028 and 2028/29 financial years.

When considering the Revenue Budget Strategy for 2026/27 to 2028/29, Members examined the potential impact of the proposals on services within the Committee's remit and sought assurance regarding the deliverability of proposed savings and efficiency measures. Particular attention was given to the effect of inflationary pressures, longer-term financial risks, and the alignment of the Strategy with climate change and decarbonisation commitments. Members emphasised the importance of ongoing monitoring and early scrutiny engagement as part of the wider budget consultation process.

Outcome:

Following scrutiny of the Revenue Budget Strategy for 2026/27 to 2028/29, the Committee resolved to receive the Strategy and to submit its comments as part of the Authority's wider budget consultation process.

2.6. Petition – Road Safety Improvements Outside Hendy School –

All petitions received and reaching the threshold under CPR 10.11 is to be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committee and considered under Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4.5 of the Constitution) and in accordance with the Authority's Petition Scheme.

A petition was received from a member of the Public and the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee was requested to discuss the issue and determine what steps to take as a result

In July 2025, the petition was presented to the Committee requesting road safety improvements outside Hendy School, reflecting community concerns regarding traffic speeds and pedestrian safety.

Members discussed the safety risks identified by the petitioners and noted the local Member's comments that plans and designs for improvements were due to go out to consultation. The Committee emphasised that safety was the primary consideration and considered how the matter should be progressed within existing highways and road safety arrangements.

In accordance with the Authority's Petition Scheme, the Committee resolved that it be referred to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services for a response.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved that:
the petition be referred to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services, and a written response be requested to both the Scrutiny Committee and the Lead Petitioner.

The Cabinet Member responded accordingly, notifying the petitioner that safety improvements outside Hendy School had been implemented. They expressed their hope that the new crossing has brought a meaningful and positive change to the community, particularly for those attending Ysgol Hendy. The Petitioner was grateful and thanked everyone involved for their support and efforts.

2.7. Pre-Decision Reports

During the 2025/26 municipal year, the Committee identified a number of pre-decision reports from the Cabinet Forward Work Plan for scrutiny. Members scrutinised these reports at an early stage, examining the evidence base, service and community impacts, and alignment with wider policy objectives. The Committee's observations and questions informed subsequent decision-making prior to Cabinet consideration

2.7.1. Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)

October 2025 - The Committee requested that the Highways Asset Management Plan be brought forward for scrutiny to provide assurance regarding the condition of the highway network and the prioritisation of maintenance investment.

Members examined:

- the condition of rural roads, including potholes and road edging;
- the prioritisation methodology for maintenance works;
- the relationship between asset condition, safety and available funding; and
- how the Plan aligned with longer-term financial and capital planning.

Outcome:

The Committee scrutinised the draft Plan prior to Cabinet consideration, highlighting areas of concern relating to rural road condition and affordability. The discussion informed subsequent reporting and decision-making.

2.7.2. Carmarthenshire County Council Environment Act Forward Plan January 2023 – December 2025

October 2025, the Committee received a report providing an update on progress against the Environment Act Forward Plan for January 2023 to December 2025, which set out the actions undertaken by the Council to meet its Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The report enabled Members to review delivery over the three-year plan period prior to Cabinet consideration.

Members acknowledged the scale of work undertaken across the plan period and expressed appreciation to officers for their efforts in protecting biodiversity during a period of increasing climate and nature pressures. Discussion highlighted:

- the importance of continuing action to protect species and habitats;
- recognition that the Council's ambition around decarbonisation had increased over time; and
- concerns regarding the placement of pollinator planting on roadside verges, particularly on trunk roads, and potential risks to pollinating insects.

Officers clarified that trunk roads fall under the responsibility of the South Wales Trunk Road Agency and that specific data relating to pollinator impacts on trunk roads was not held by the Council.

Outcome:

The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that the Carmarthenshire County Council Environment Act Forward Plan 2023–2025 be approved.

2.7.3. Carmarthenshire County Council Environment Act Forward Plan January 2026 – December 2028

October 2025, the Committee considered a report outlining the scope and opportunities for the Council's next three year Environment Act Forward Plan (January 2026 to December 2028). This plan represented the third Environment Act Forward Plan and set out how the Council intended to continue meeting its statutory duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience.

Members discussed initiatives aimed at addressing the nature emergency, with specific focus on biodiversity enhancement measures. Discussion included:

- progress in supporting declining species, particularly swift populations;
- collaborative work with external partners, including the Carmarthen Bird Club and Housing Services, to identify suitable locations for swift nesting boxes; and
- the importance of careful site selection to ensure long term colony sustainability, especially where buildings were subject to redevelopment.

Officers explained how monitoring data and site visits informed decisions on nesting box placement.

Outcome:

The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that the Carmarthenshire County Council Environment Act Forward Plan 2026–2028 be approved.

2.7.4. Waste and Recycling Service Updates / Waste Review

Waste related reports were identified from the Cabinet Forward Work Plan to allow Members to scrutinise service performance, policy direction and future service planning.

Members discussed:

- service performance and operational challenges;
- the impact of policy changes on residents;
- fly-tipping and enforcement activity; and
- alignment with environmental and sustainability objectives.

Outcome:

The Committee considered the reports at a formative stage, enabling Members to raise issues and seek clarification before Cabinet decision. The reports were received, with issues noted for ongoing monitoring.

2.7.5. Air Quality Management Report

March 2026 - The Air Quality Management Report was selected for pre-decision scrutiny given its relevance to public health, environmental protection and statutory obligations.

Members focused on:

- air quality monitoring data and trends;
- progress against statutory requirements;
- links between air quality, transport policy and climate change objectives; and
- implications for future policy development.

Outcome:

The Committee scrutinised the report prior to Cabinet consideration, noting progress and areas requiring continued focus. The report was received, with Members' comments informing subsequent consideration.

2.7.6. Transport related Policy and Strategy Updates

Transport related reports, including strategic and operational updates, were brought forward from the Cabinet Forward Work Plan for pre-decision scrutiny.

Members examined:

- the alignment of transport policy with sustainability and decarbonisation objectives;
- impacts on communities and accessibility;
- funding and delivery risks; and
- links with wider regional and national transport strategies.

The Committee scrutinised the reports at an early stage, providing challenge and seeking assurance prior to Cabinet decision-making

Outcome:

The Committee scrutinised the reports at an early stage, providing challenge and seeking assurance prior to Cabinet decision making

2.8. Reports requested by the Committee - Forward Work Plan

In accordance with the Committee's Forward Work Plan 2025/26, reports were presented by the relevant Cabinet Member. In the rare occasion of a non-submission, the Committee received a report stating the reason and re-entered it onto the FWP accordingly.

2.8.1. 20mph Speed Limit Review

In June 2025, the Committee considered a report providing an overview of the revised Welsh Government 20mph Speed Limit Guidance and the Council's risk-assessment-based approach to reviewing speed limits following the Welsh Government's listening programme. The report outlined submissions received, the assessment methodology, outcomes, and recommended next steps to ensure a safe and cohesive highway network.

Members discussed:

- the process for reviewing and assessing roads for potential reversion to 30mph;
- the forthcoming consultation process, including engagement with statutory consultees and properties directly affected by proposed changes;
- the use of vehicle composition data to inform assessments;
- funding arrangements, with officers confirming the review was funded through Welsh Government grant support;
- enforcement responsibilities, including the role of Go Safe and the Police; and
- evidence showing a reduction in road traffic collisions, deaths and injuries since the introduction of the 20mph speed limit, despite concerns regarding the original implementation.

Members also noted planned future phases of review covering 'C' class and unclassified roads and the appropriateness of buffer speed limits.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved that the report be endorsed.

2.8.2. Private or Unadopted Roads Guide

June 2025 - The Committee considered a report presenting supplementary guidance to the Highways Design Guide, setting out the process and requirements for private or unadopted roads to become public highway maintainable at public expense. The guide detailed application procedures, assessment criteria, associated fees, and commuted sums for future maintenance where applicable.

Members discussed:

- the number and distribution of unadopted roads across the county and how this compared to neighbouring authorities;
- the development of a comprehensive register of unadopted roads, based on a risk-assessment approach to prioritisation;
- clarification of fees relating to the vetting and approval of applications; and
- confirmation that there is no general right to park on private or unadopted roads except for the owner.

Officers also noted a minor typographical error within the document, which would be corrected.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved that the report be endorsed.

2.8.3. Extension of Public Space Protection Order (Carmarthenshire Dog Orders)

June 2025 - The Committee considered a report on the proposed extension of the existing Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) 2016 for Carmarthenshire, which imposes requirements on dog owners to reduce nuisance and protect public spaces. The report set out the rationale for a further three-year extension and summarised the findings of the targeted consultation exercise.

Members discussed:

- the effectiveness of the existing PSPO in addressing dog-related nuisance;
- consultation feedback supporting the proposed extension;
- the potential for introducing additional, location-specific PSPOs where evidence justified further controls;
- clarification of enforcement powers and authorised officers; and
- existing seasonal dog exclusions on certain beaches and the scope for extending controls where appropriate evidence existed.

Officers confirmed that enforcement activity could be targeted in specific areas and that a toolkit had been developed to support local applications for additional PSPOs.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved that the report be received with the following recommendations:-

- a) That the duration of the Carmarthenshire County Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order 2016 be extended for a further period of 3 years with effect from the 1st of July 2025
- b) That the Council makes an Extension Order to give effect to the above extension and endorses the 2016 Order with suitable wording to reflect the fact that the duration of the 2016 order has been further extended.

2.8.4. Carmarthenshire Equestrian Access Strategy

July 2025 - The Committee considered the Carmarthenshire Equestrian Access Strategy, developed in line with the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2019–2029. The Strategy, the first of its kind in Wales, set out a framework to promote and develop a safe, accessible equestrian network across the county, prior to Cabinet consideration.

Members discussed:

- the limited extent of equestrian access within the existing Public Rights of Way network and the safety challenges faced by equestrians, particularly on-road;
- the importance of improving off-road provision and signage to support equestrian access alongside other users;
- the balance between actions deliverable within existing resources and more aspirational actions requiring external funding;
- the contribution improved equestrian access could make to health and well-being, sustainable tourism, active travel objectives and carbon reduction; and
- evidence and feedback provided by representatives of the British Horse Society, who welcomed the Strategy and highlighted its pioneering nature and potential to unlock future investment.

Members recognised that while the Strategy was robust and well evidenced, funding availability would be critical to its effective delivery.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved:

**to recommend to Cabinet that the Carmarthenshire Equestrian Access Strategy be received; and
that a letter be sent on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee to Welsh Government seeking funding to support delivery of the Strategy.**

Following the meeting, the Chair of the Committee wrote to the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs requesting specific funding support to enable delivery of all twelve actions within the Strategy, particularly those identified as aspirational and resource-dependent.

In response, Welsh Government acknowledged the value of the Strategy and confirmed that it aligned with national objectives to promote countryside access, health and well-being, and non-motorised recreation. The response highlighted the Welsh Government Access Improvement Grant, a £4 million programme for 2025–2027, and confirmed that Carmarthenshire County Council would receive £232,000 over this period, noting that planned projects for 2026–27 included bridleway improvements.

2.8.5. Climate Action Sir Gar – Addressing the Climate Change & Nature Emergencies

July 2025 - The Committee received a report and presentation outlining the Authority's progress on Climate Action Sir Gar, focusing on actions taken to address the climate change and nature emergencies.

Members considered progress at the mid-point of the programme, including the reduction in emissions since the baseline year and the tools developed to support delivery, such as carbon trajectory and costing models. Discussion also focused on staff engagement, the uptake of electric vehicles, and the role of internal communications in supporting behavioural change. Members noted that a Deep Dive Review had been undertaken by the Nature and Climate Change Advisory Panel.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved:

1. that the report and presentation be received; and
2. that the Deep Dive Review by the Nature and Climate Change Advisory Panel be included on the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

The Deep Dive Review was considered by the Committee in November 2025.

2.8.6. Carmarthenshire County Council's Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy – Revised 2025

July 2025 - The Committee considered the revised Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy, which set out the Council's statutory approach to identifying, prioritising and managing contaminated land.

Members discussed the risk-based approach adopted within the Strategy, statutory responsibilities under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and the resources available to manage contaminated land issues. Questions were raised regarding staffing capacity and the pressures associated with responding to enquiries and complaints.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved that the report be received

2.8.7 Waste Strategy – Update

July 2025 - An update was provided on the Waste Strategy, outlining progress and developments in waste management and policy direction.

Members examined the proposed rollout, including phasing, operational models, infrastructure requirements, funding arrangements, and implications for residents. Discussion also covered access and safety issues at Nantycaws, contingency planning should funding be delayed, accessibility for residents with disabilities or digital exclusion, and the importance of public engagement to reduce contamination rates

The discussion was extensive in respect of the content of the report including the phasing, Blueprint rollout, Nantycaws access, funding risk, accessibility, contamination rates, and public engagement.

Outcome:

The Committee unanimously resolved that the report be received

2.8.8 Truecall© update and progress report

In October 2025, Members received a progress update on the **Truecall system**, focusing on:

- system performance,
- progress against expected outcomes, and
- how the system supported service delivery within the Committee's remit.

Members discussed system performance and reliability, how the system supported service delivery, and the importance of continued monitoring to ensure it met operational needs.

Members sought reassurance regarding continued monitoring.

Outcome:

The update was **received**.

2.8.9. Planning Enforcement – update

March 2026, Members considered an update on Planning Enforcement activity, focusing on:

- workload pressures and prioritisation,
- enforcement capacity, and
- impacts on communities.

Members discussed:

- the role of effective planning enforcement in supporting the wider Development Management function and protecting public amenity;
- performance data included in the report, particularly the percentage of cases where positive action was taken within 180 days;
- the overall improvement in planning enforcement performance over time, despite some recent variation in specific indicators;
- whether additional information provided by complainants after a case is closed could be reconsidered; and
- the importance of transparency around enforcement processes to manage public expectations.

Officers explained that further information could be resubmitted as a new complaint where appropriate, and that additional statistical reporting was available through other scrutiny routes and quarterly updates.

Outcome:

The Committee received the report, with Members noting the improvements made within the Planning Enforcement service.

2.8.10. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy – update

In March 2026, Members discussed progress on the **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy**, including:

- rollout progress,
- geographic coverage,
- funding considerations, and
- alignment with decarbonisation objectives.

Outcome:

The update was received, with Members' comments noted to inform ongoing work.

2.8.11. Deep Dive Review – Transport (Climate Change and Nature Emergency Advisory Panel)

November 2025 - The Committee considered the Deep Dive Review undertaken by the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Advisory Panel (CCNEAP), which examined the Authority's approach to decarbonising fleet and business transport emissions. The review provided a strategic analysis of existing policies, programmes and interventions aimed at reducing carbon emissions from transport activities within the Council's direct control.

The report highlighted that transport remained one of the most significant contributors to the Council's carbon footprint and set out the statutory expectations placed on the Authority by Welsh Government to transition towards ultra-low emission vehicles.

Members discussed:

- the scale of transport emissions within the Council's overall carbon footprint and the need for continued focus on fleet decarbonisation;
- the financial and operational benefits of transitioning to electric and ultra-low emission vehicles, including reduced fuel and maintenance costs;
- the importance of addressing misinformation relating to electric vehicles and ensuring decisions were informed by credible data and evidence; and
- contingency planning for fleet operations, including concerns regarding resilience in the event of electricity outages affecting vehicle charging.

In response, the Cabinet Member explained that the fleet policy would adopt ultra-low emission vehicles as the default option for renewal, with a Technical, Economic, Environmental and Practical (TEEP) assessment used to justify any exceptions based on service-specific requirements.

Outcome:

Committee received the Deep Dive Review, with Members' comments noted.

3. Other Scrutiny Activity

3.1. Task & Finish

The Committee completed a Task and Finish Review entitled 'A Review of the Dog Breeding Licensing Function of the Consumer and Business Affairs Animal Health Team'. The review was undertaken by a politically balanced Task and Finish Group and involved extensive evidence-gathering, including stakeholder engagement and public consultation.

The Committee at its meeting in July 2025, considered the final report of the Task and Finish Group established to review the Dog Breeding Licensing Function of the Consumer and Business Affairs Animal Health Team. The review examined the effectiveness of current arrangements, compliance with legal requirements, and challenges facing the service, particularly in relation to unlicensed dog breeders.

Members discussed:

- the background to the review and the methodology undertaken by the Task and Finish Group over a series of meetings held between February 2024 and March 2025;
- the sensitive nature of the subject matter and the need for proportionate and robust enforcement;
- challenges associated with illegal and unlicensed dog breeders, which were identified as the primary area of concern rather than licensed operators;
- resource pressures within the service and the impact this had on the ability to address illegal activity;
- the importance of raising standards consistently across licensed breeders; and
- the need to review internal cost-recovery arrangements and to engage with Welsh Government on the fee-setting process.

Members expressed appreciation to officers for their professionalism and commitment to animal health and welfare.

Outcome:

The review concluded with five local and seven national recommendations. The report was unanimously endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee in July 2025 and subsequently presented to Cabinet in October 2025, where it was also unanimously endorsed.

As a further outcome of the review, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability wrote to the Welsh Government in February 2026 seeking consideration of the national recommendations. Welsh Government responded in March 2026, acknowledging the findings and confirming that the recommendations would inform future consideration of revisions to dog breeding legislation, while reaffirming support for Animal Licensing Wales.

3.2 Site Visits

3.2.1 Committee Site Visit: Tarmac Reinstatement Demonstration

At the request of the Committee during the Forward Work Programme Development Session, members participated in an organised site visit designed to offer practical insight into tarmac reinstatement processes. The visit provided an opportunity to observe a live demonstration utilising the JCB Pothole Pro machine.

The Scrutiny Committee convened at Cillefwr Depot, located in Johnstown, Carmarthen, on 10th October 2025. Prior to the demonstration, attendees received a brief Toolbox talk, ensuring everyone was informed about safety procedures and technical aspects of the equipment.

The event was well received, generating considerable interest among Committee members. The demonstration lasted just under one hour and was also attended by Councillor Edward Thomas. Feedback from the members indicated a general consensus that, whilst impressive, the JCB Pothole Pro machine was not ideally suited to the local highway network or the specific requirements for pothole repairs. Instead, the machine appeared more appropriate for larger patching repair works.

Additionally, members expressed enthusiasm for exploring alternative pothole repair technology, particularly machines capable of recycling tarmac during the repair process.

3.3 Development Sessions

During the 2025/26 municipal year, Committee Members were invited to the following development sessions/seminars facilitated by the Authority:-

Date	Development Session / Seminar
19/06/25	Planning Enforcement Training
09/07/25	Planning Publicity Process
17/07/25	Wales Pension Partnership
23/07/25	AI Awareness & Strategy Session
01/08/25	Clinical Services Plan Consultation – Hywel Dda University HB
10/09/25 & 12/11/25	Thinqi e-learning system drop-in sessions
12/11/25	Town Centre Placemaking Plans
03/12/25	Clinical Services Plan Update – Hywel Dda University HB
10/12/25	Annual Update from Mid & West Wales Fire Service Ahead of Budget Setting
07/01/26	Fire Training
05/02/26 & 11/02/26	Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
20/02/26	Development of National Significance (DNS) Briefing
04/03/26	Armed Forces Day
09/03/26	Gwellianau A48 Improvements
16/03/26	Ask & Act Training

At its meeting held on 15 July 2026, Committee Members recommended that engagement with WRAP Cymru officials would be beneficial to enhance understanding of the support extended to the Authority during the waste service transition. Officers undertook to arrange such a meeting, which subsequently occurred following the main scrutiny meeting in January 2026. WRAP Cymru representatives delivered a comprehensive presentation, followed by an interactive question and answer session. Members who participated reported the session was highly informative and engaging.

4. Impact -How has Scrutiny Made a Difference This Year?

The majority of decisions made by the Authority are made by the Cabinet. Scrutiny offers the other 65 non-executive Councillors an opportunity to influence those decisions and act as a “critical friend”. Pre-decision Scrutiny is particularly influential in this regard as it provides Scrutiny Committees with the opportunity to consider and comment upon policies and emerging issues before they are considered by Cabinet. Scrutiny also assists in ensuring that Council policies reflect current priorities, as well as promoting efficiency and encouraging effective partnership working with external bodies.

Scrutiny plays a key role in improving the services used by the people and children of Carmarthenshire. The scrutiny function is also useful in ensuring that Council policies reflect current priorities, as well as promoting efficiency and encouraging effective partnership working with external bodies. The involvement of local residents, community organisations and partners is an important part of the scrutiny process and Councillors are committed to responding to the views and concerns of residents.

Pre-decision Scrutiny affords all Scrutiny Committees the opportunity of providing input before the reports are considered by Cabinet and this is the voice of the people. During the 2025/26 municipal year, the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee has made a positive impact in many ways, including:-

- Completion of task and finish review on dog breeding – despite challenges in respect of staff resources;
- Scrutinising and challenging issues in respect of budget issues, off target performance and matters in respect of climate change.
- Pertinent matters that impact residents including the roll out of the waste regime and local transport.

5. Public Engagement

The Scrutiny function provides the opportunity for public participation in the Authority's activities whereby members of the public can request items to be placed on the Committee's meeting agenda. Carmarthenshire residents, or those who own a business or are employed within the county are also permitted to ask questions at meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.

Whilst the Committee did not receive any suggestions of possible topics from members of the public during 2025/26, the Committee's Forward Work Plan included a range of topics which required public consultation/participation.

In order to promote public awareness of Scrutiny Committees and the ability of the public to put forward topics for discussion, the Forward Work Plans of the Authority's Scrutiny Committees and details of how the public can become involved, are published on the Authority's website:-

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/committees-meetings/scrutiny/#.Xp7Am6aQxMs>

During the municipal year, the Authority's Communications division provided digital marketing support to the Scrutiny function and proactively promoted details of forthcoming items which may be of interest to the public in an attempt to raise public awareness and participation. The public are invited, via a number of different avenues, to get involved in the Scrutiny process and to highlight any issues of concern.

6. Challenges

Despite the Committee being underrepresented by carrying 3 vacancies throughout the year, Committee Members continued to operate within a challenging environment, balancing effective scrutiny with pressures on service resources and officer capacity.

The Committee has continued to be constructive in its role in scrutinising performance which has facilitated the department and positively contributed to policies and decisions. It has been a balancing act for the Committee in undertaking its scrutiny duty without impacting on the resourcing of front-line services.

7. Future Work

The Committee has made significant progress during the municipal year and will continue to concentrate on topics where members' input will result in positive outcomes to drive forward service improvement. To ensure that the best use is being made of meeting time, the Committee is keen to continue implementing the principles of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny in order to achieve a streamlined and focused scrutiny process.

The work of the Committee during the 2026/27 municipal year will be considered by the Committee at a development planning session on 24th April 2026 and will be regularly reviewed as part of the monitoring of the Forward Work Plan during the course of the year.

In order to enhance the Authority's Scrutiny function, members will continue to attend development sessions, seek officers' advice where appropriate and make full use of informal pre-meeting discussion.

8. Support for the Scrutiny Function

Support for Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny function is provided by the Democratic Services Unit, based within the Law, Governance and Civil Services Division of the Chief Executive's Department. Support for the scrutiny function includes:-

- formulating and despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings in accordance with the Forward Work Plans;
- providing support and constitutional advice to the Scrutiny Committees and to members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring any issues arising from those meetings are actioned;
- giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to members of the Council and its officers;
- managing the strategic development of Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire by engaging in national and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum and meetings of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny with the Cabinet;
- advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021, as and when guidance is published;
- managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny Committees' Forward Work Plans in conjunction with Scrutiny Committee members;

- managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the administration of scrutiny Task and Finish Groups, assisting in writing reports in conjunction with the Groups and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews.
- Assisting with the Scrutiny Member Development Programme.

For more information on Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire including Forward Work Plans, Task & Finish reports and Annual Reports, please visit the County Council's website at: www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny.

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or e-mail scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk.

9. Attendance

Attendance by Members of the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee during the 2025/26 municipal year is set out below. A total of six formal meetings were held during the year. The scheduled April meeting was cancelled due to pre-election period.

Member	Meetings Attended	%
Sue Allen	6	100%
Arwel Davies	6	100%
Karen Davies (Vice Chair)	6	100%
Lewis Davies	6	100%
Colin Evans	4	67%
Tina Higgins	5	83%
Neil Lewis	4	67%
Kevin Madge (Chair)	5	83%
Dorian Phillips	6	100%
Gareth Thomas	4	67%

Cabinet Member	Meetings Attended	%
Linda Evans	1	17%
Carys Jones	3	50%
Alun Lenny	2	33%
Edward Thomas	6	100%
Aled Vaughan Owen	6	100%

Substitute Member	Meetings Attended	%
Kim Broom	1	17%
Deryk Cundy	1	17%