

# **Democratic Arrangements and Scrutiny Progress Report**

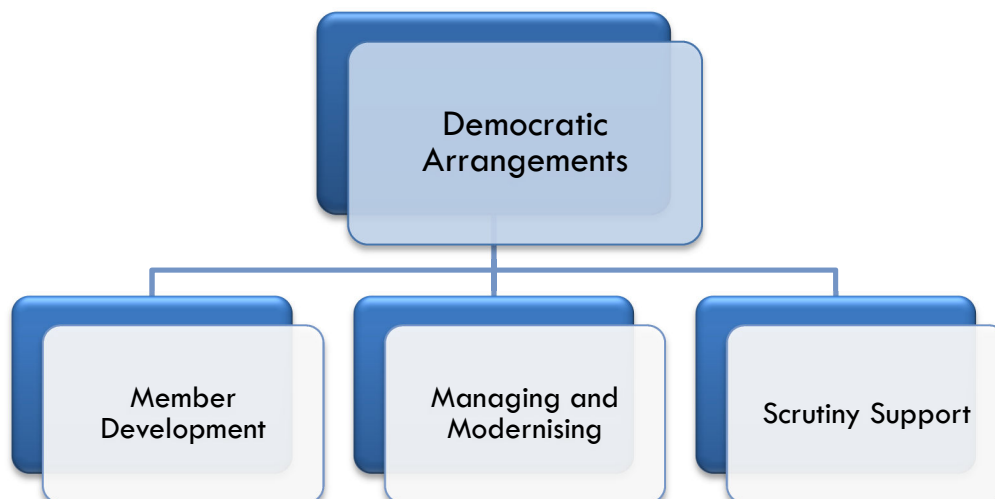
**Period: October 2018 – March 2019**

# Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

## Scope of the Report

This report provides detail on the work carried out to embed Democratic Arrangements and Support for Members, focusing on the development of establishing more effective ways of working. The role of an Elected Member is increasingly complex and therefore appropriate support and guidance is vital.

For this report format support has been categorised into 3 broad areas, as shown below:



### Member Development including:

- Developing and implementing a members training and development framework;
- Personal Development Review (PDR) procedures; and
- Proposals for mentoring framework for members.

### Managing and Modernising:

- Members ICT and Support;
- Chamber infrastructure; and
- Modern.gov.

### Scrutiny Support including:

- Provide advice and guidance to Members and Officers on Scrutiny protocols, procedures, and the effective operation of Scrutiny in meetings and outside of meetings;
- Assist Chairs, Committees and Officers to identify suitable work for the Forward Work Programmes (FWP); and
- Advisor to support each Scrutiny committee.

# Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

## Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to present an overview of progress made to support the Democratic Arrangements including Democratic Support and Scrutiny Support. The reporting period covers October 2018 – March 2019. The report sets out the key activities and measures used to monitor performance against each priority actions and key actions set as part of the business planning arrangements.

## BRAG Rating System

The Council uses a BRAG rating system to assess progress against actions and measures, the definitions are provided in the table below:

Status	Definition
Blue	The project has been completed; all performance factors set by the project board have been achieved (time, quality, financial aspects).
Green	The project is performing to plan; all performance factors are within the acceptable variance levels set by the project board.
Amber	Issues have been identified with the project that will/may negatively impact on performance; the project manager and delivery team are able to resolve the problem or make corrective decisions without assistance; project is at risk of failing on one or more of the performance factors set by the project board.
Red	Significant issues identified with the project that requires corrective action in order to meet business objectives; the project manager requires additional assistance to handle the issues; project is failing on one or more of the performance factors set by the project board.

## Member Development

### Key Activity

**Support for Members Appointed to Outside Bodies:** As previously reported, a full review of appointments to outside bodies has been undertaken and a new framework has been approved by Council to support members in their role as well as developing a system for members to report their learning from these organisations into the work of the Council. Since the introduction of this framework reports relating to Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Aneurin Leisure Trust Board, GAVO and Gwent Police and Crime Panel have been considered by Council throughout the course of the year. Further work is required to promote the new framework following the Annual Meeting of the Council which is scheduled to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019.

**Review of the Mentoring Framework:** Following a review of the Member Mentoring Framework 3 Elected Members have undergone mentoring training and a further 3 requests from Members to become mentors have been received as part of the Personal Development Review (PDR) process.

**Member Support and Development Programme:** The Member Support and Development Programme have been on-going throughout the course of the year with a further 36 sessions being held between October 2018 and March 2019. The 2019/2020 Member Development Programme will be developed in line with the forward work programmes of the committees. Training needs identified via the Personal Development Review (PDR) process will also be incorporated as part of the programme.

**Development of a central database of information for Members:** Work is nearing completion on establishing this dedicated resource on the intranet and Members will be notified once this resource has gone 'live'. The database includes key documentation and information and will be further developed to include resources from the Member Development and Training sessions.

**Elected Member Personal Development Review (PDR) and Competency Framework Procedures:** Have been developed and adopted by Council on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2018. Personal Development Reviews for Senior Salary Holders conducted by an external party have now concluded and action plans for each individual SRA holder have been developed. Early indications are that the PDR process for Senior Salary Holders will be repeated in November 2019.

Discussions will also take place with Group Leaders following the Annual Meeting of the Council regarding offering PDR's to non-Senior Salary Holders.

**Member Support and Development Programme:** A proposal for improvement from the recent Wales Audit Office study, '*Overview and Scrutiny: Fit for the Future?*' highlighted one proposal for improvement in relation to training and development for members. In response the Council has:

- Provided further training on the Well-being of Future Generations Act for scrutiny members to improve their understanding and consideration of the Act when undertaking scrutiny activity which included member questioning skills to improve member questioning and constructive challenge. This session was held on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.
- Identified individual development needs of members and as part of the Personal Development Review (PDR) process.

# Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

## Future Area of Focus

The future focus for this area of work is:

- Continue to review, develop and embed processes for Democratic Arrangements;
- Further work and support to be provide in respect of the Appointments to Outside Bodies Framework;
- Development of a central database of information for Members;
- Continued support to members in respect of the PDR process; and
- Provide support to members as part the Mentoring Framework Arrangements.

## Progress against Priorities

DA.1	Facilitating the Democratic Process	Green
DA.2	Implementing Member Development	Green
DA.3	Managing and Modernising	Green
DA.4	Support to Members	Green

## Key Performance Measures

Member Briefing Sessions – October 2018 to March 2019			
Name of Event	Portfolio	Date of Event	Number of Members Attending
Communities for Work/Communities for Work Plus	Regeneration	2 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2018	13
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Update	Education	3 <sup>rd</sup> October, 2018	12
Education Directorate Briefing Update & Education Reform	Education	8 <sup>th</sup> October, 2018	19
Universal Credit in Blaenau Gwent	Corporate Services	9 <sup>th</sup> October, 2018	24
Environment Act Duty	Environment	11 <sup>th</sup> October, 2018	13
Schools Progress – Ebbw Fawr Learning Community	Education	11 <sup>th</sup> October, 2018	5
LGES New ESTYN Inspection Framework for Local Government Education Services	Education	17 <sup>th</sup> October, 2018	13
Engagement Strategy	Corporate Services	31 <sup>st</sup> October, 2018	10
Families First	Social Services	30 <sup>th</sup> October, 2018	10
Violence & Aggression	Corporate Services	13 <sup>th</sup> November, 2018	18
Revised Local Development Plan	Economic Development	13 <sup>th</sup> November, 2018	19
Social Media	Corporate Services	14 <sup>th</sup> November, 2018	17
Care Closer to Home	Social Services	19 <sup>th</sup> November, 2018	15
Elective Home Education	Education	21 <sup>st</sup> November, 2018	12
Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone	Education	22 <sup>nd</sup> November, 2018	10
Social Services Directorate Briefing Update	Social Services	28 <sup>th</sup> November, 2018	14
Dewis Cymru	External Facilitated	27 <sup>th</sup> November, 2018	12
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	External Facilitated	28 <sup>th</sup> November, 2018	15
Public Health Wales	External Facilitated	10 <sup>th</sup> December, 2018	12
Gwent Police – Front Office Counter Provision	Externally Facilitated	11 <sup>th</sup> December, 2018	14

**Period: October 2018 – March 2019**

# Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

## Member Briefing Sessions – October 2018 to March 2019

Name of Event	Portfolio	Date of Event	Number of Members Attending
Business Support Available from the Council's Economic Development Unit	Economic Development	8 <sup>th</sup> January, 2019	18
Brexit	Externally Facilitated	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2019	17
School to School Working	Education	21 <sup>st</sup> January, 2019	18
Scams	Environment	22 <sup>nd</sup> January, 2019	16
Flexibilities Grant	Social Services	30 <sup>th</sup> January, 2019	11
Well-Being of Future Generations Act	Corporate Services	4 <sup>th</sup> February, 2019	9
National Performance Data	Corporate Services	12 <sup>th</sup> February, 2019	9
Scrutinising School Performance	Education	12 <sup>th</sup> February, 2019	10
Street Lighting	Environment	19 <sup>th</sup> February, 2019	23
Universal Credit Update	Corporate Services	20 <sup>th</sup> February, 2019	16
Delivering Community Safety in Blaenau Gwent	Corporate Services	5 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019	14
Self-Evaluation Report	Education	6 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019	12
Social Services Directorate Update	Social Services	11 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019	13
Additional Learning Needs Reform	Education	14 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019	9
Development of a Local Toilet Strategy	Environment	18 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019	20
Community Benefits	Economic Development	28 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019	To be confirmed

## Managing and Modernising

### Key Activity

**ICT for Members:** Following discussions within political groups and to provide additional support for Members, an 'Essential Skills' ICT Session was developed which focussed on the use of Microsoft Outlook and provided a basic understanding of Word. Three sessions were delivered in-house by the Council's Digital Inclusion Officer and Democratic Services. In total, 14 Members attended and the sessions were well received. A second tranche of sessions will be arranged for Members later in year.

**Modern.gov:** As part of the modernising agenda, approval has been received from Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) to procure and introduce a new electronic agenda management system that will be used Council wide. The Modern.gov System offers broader functionality and will be more user friendly for Officers, Members and the public to access and view on-line information. The new system will 'go live' on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2019. All Members will be set up on the new system in order that minutes and agendas can be accessed electronically.

**Freedom of the Borough:** Council at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 unanimously agreed to hold an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on Mr. Mark Williams in recognition of his sporting achievements and recently winning the World Snooker Championship for the third time.

The Extraordinary Meeting of the Council to bestow the Freedom of the Borough was held on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2019. This event received both local and national media coverage and was televised on BBC Wales News.

### Future Area of Focus:

The future focus of the Democratic Services team will be to:

- Provision of Webcasting (subject to approval at CLT of Office 365);
- Continue to provide ICT support to members;
- The infrastructure of the Council Chamber; and
- Implementation of the Modern.gov Agenda Management System.

### Progress against Priorities

DA.2	Implement the findings of the Head of Democratic Services Review as agreed by Council	Amber
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# Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

## Scrutiny Support

### Key Activity

**Annual Scrutiny Report:** The Annual Scrutiny report has been developed and will be submitted for approval at the Annual General Meeting in May 2019. The report has been reviewed and a new format has been agreed, the report will detail how Scrutiny has engaged with the wider community, for example, holding scrutiny committee meetings in alternative venues to the Civic Centre and promoting scrutiny meetings via Social Media to encourage public engagement. The report will include a number of new sections, one new section “What Our Members had to say”, will detail comments extracted from a members’ questionnaire circulated in order to seek members’ views on Scrutiny during 2018/19; another new section will detail member attendance at individual scrutiny committee meetings.

**Chair and Vice Chair Meeting:** The Chairs and Vice Chairs have met and discussed the WAO’s view that the post evaluation session of scrutiny is a positive process but it could be strengthened by making it more structured. Meetings with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs were held and it was agreed that the evaluation session would be tailored to each individual scrutiny committee. Three committees now have a paper evaluation questionnaire that is completed at the end of each meeting, alongside a general committee discussion; one Chair has opted to use prompt questions to pose to members at the evaluation session to encourage verbal feedback from members. Members welcomed the changes to the evaluation session and engagement has been good to date.

**Annual Scrutiny Evaluation:** An annual evaluation of Scrutiny is undertaken following the end of the cycle. The Annual Evaluation for 2018/19 is currently in progress and the evaluation questionnaires received from Members will be used to inform the Annual Scrutiny report, the deadline for submitting questionnaires has now passed and out of 34 questionnaires circulated only 9 were returned, also a joint discussion on the annual scrutiny evaluation was undertaken at a Chairs and Vice-Chairs meeting. Any learning from the evaluation will be incorporated into the democratic arrangements action plan.

The Council is actively involved in the **Joint Scrutiny Committee of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCDD)**. Each of the 10 Local Authorities is represented on the Committee. Currently the Chair of our Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee is represented on the Committee. Two meetings have taken place so far; with one more planned this cycle. For year one of the Joint Committee, Blaenau Gwent’s Member representative is the Committee Chair.

### Future Area of Focus

**Development of Processes to Further Engage the Public in Scrutiny:** Work has progressed in this area, at Agenda Preparation meetings we identify with the Chair and Vice items that may be of interest to the public, these items are then promoted on Social Media; continuing to do this we hope to encourage questions from the public that could be raised at scrutiny committee meetings and then responses from the Committee fed back to the public via Social Media. To try and make Scrutiny more visible to the community a scrutiny committee meeting has been held outside of the Civic Centre at Coleg Gwent, Members had the opportunity to have a tour of the campus. It is also intended to explore promoting scrutiny via other forums, e.g. Youth Forum, Older Peoples Forum and GAVO.

**Measuring the Impact of Scrutiny:** The Corporate Reporting Template that was approved at Council during May 2018, includes a section ‘Expected outcome for the public’, this is a mandatory section and report authors should detail how the topic is expected to impact the public. Within the Scrutiny Annual Report there will be a section on ‘Scrutiny Activity’ which will endeavour to show any impact that recommendations from Scrutiny made to the Executive may have had an impact on the local community.

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# Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

**Forward Work Programme Development:** Work has commenced on the development of the Forward Work Programmes (FWPs) for 2019/20. Topics have been identified from Agenda Management discussions and common items; Directorate Business Plans have also been considered. This information has been used to develop the Draft FWPs which have been circulated to Directorates along with a FWP criteria and new item template for consideration and completion. The team will meet with Service Areas during April 2019 to discuss the draft FWPs. Following the AGM the Team will meet with Executive Members and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs to sign off all the FWPs prior to final approval at the Executive and Scrutiny Committee meetings in July 2019.

## Progress against Priorities

SAP.1	Evaluate the impact that the Council's scrutiny function has on improving outcomes for local people.	Amber
SAP.2	Evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny function in engaging with the public.	Green
SAP.3	Further develop scrutiny support processes	Green
SAP.4	Encourage use of the Well-being of Future Generations Act via the Corporate Report with both members and officers to support implementation of the Act.	Green
SAP.5	Undertake a review of the post evaluation session to support constructive learning	Green
SAP.6	Consider development of a scrutiny research function for members	Green
SAP.7	Annual Evaluation of Scrutiny 2	Green

## Key Performance Measures

Indicator Description	Annual 2017-18	Q1 2018-19	Q2 2018-19	Q3 2018-19	Q4 2018-19	Performance Trend
Number of Formal Scrutiny Committees held	42	8	10	14	14	↔
% of Member Attendance at Formal Scrutiny Committees	67.5%	77.9%	69.2%	65.1%	72.8%	↑
Number of members of the public attending scrutiny meetings	1	0	0	2	2	↔
Number of recommendations amended by scrutiny	7	5	0	5	0	↓
Number of recommendations amended by scrutiny accepted by Executive committee	7	3	0	4	0	↓
Number of reports requesting amendments following Quality Assurance by Scrutiny Officer	19	1	2	1	2	↑

# Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

## Member Attendance at Scrutiny Committees Period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018

	Agreed Committee Membership	Number of Meetings Held	Total Members Due to Attend	Actual Members in Attendance	% of Members in attendance at Scrutiny Committees	% of Members in attendance at Scrutiny Committees during same period 2017/18 Cycle
Corporate Overview	15	3	45	33	73.3%	86.7%
Social Services	15	4	60	45	75.0%	86.7%
Education and Learning	15	4	60	48	80.0%	80.0%
Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development	15	5	75	49	65.3%	85.0%
<b>Scrutiny Committees</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>72.9%</b>	<b>84.6%</b>
Joint Safeguarding	26	1	26	21	80.8%	66.7%
Joint Finance	37	1	37	25	67.6%	67.6%
PSB	18	-	-	-	-	77.8%
<b>Joint Committees</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>73.0%</b>	<b>77.7%</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>72.9%</b>	<b>80.1%</b>

↑ Denotes performance trend of attendance when compared to the same period in the previous year.

## Member Attendance at Scrutiny Committees Period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019

	Agreed Committee Membership	Number of Meetings Held	Total Members Due to Attend	Actual Members in Attendance	% of Members in attendance at Scrutiny Committees	*% of Members in attendance at Scrutiny Committees during same period 2017/18 Cycle
Corporate Overview	15	4	60	42	70%	86.3%
Social Services	15	3	45	35	77.7%	75.5%
Education and Learning	15	6	90	61	67.7%	73.3%
Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development	15	5	75	53	70.6%	69.5%
<b>Scrutiny Committees</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>70.7%</b>	<b>71.2%</b>
Joint Safeguarding	25	2	50	29	58%	-
Joint Finance	34	3	102	72	70.5%	43.2%
PSB	18	1	18	11	61.1%	61.1%
<b>Joint Committees</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>65.8%</b>	<b>44.8%</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>68.8%</b>	<b>57.9%</b>

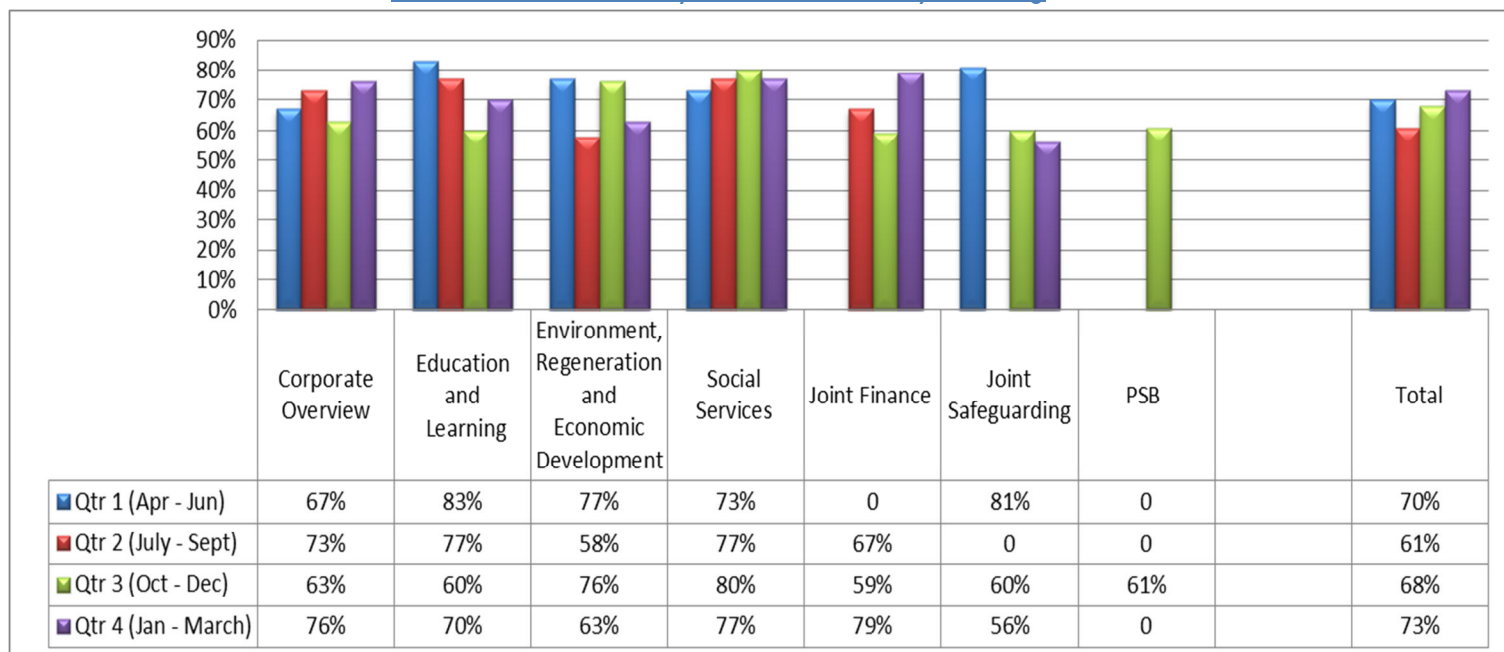
\*To note – the number of committee meetings held in 2018/19 may differ from the number held in the same period during 2017/18

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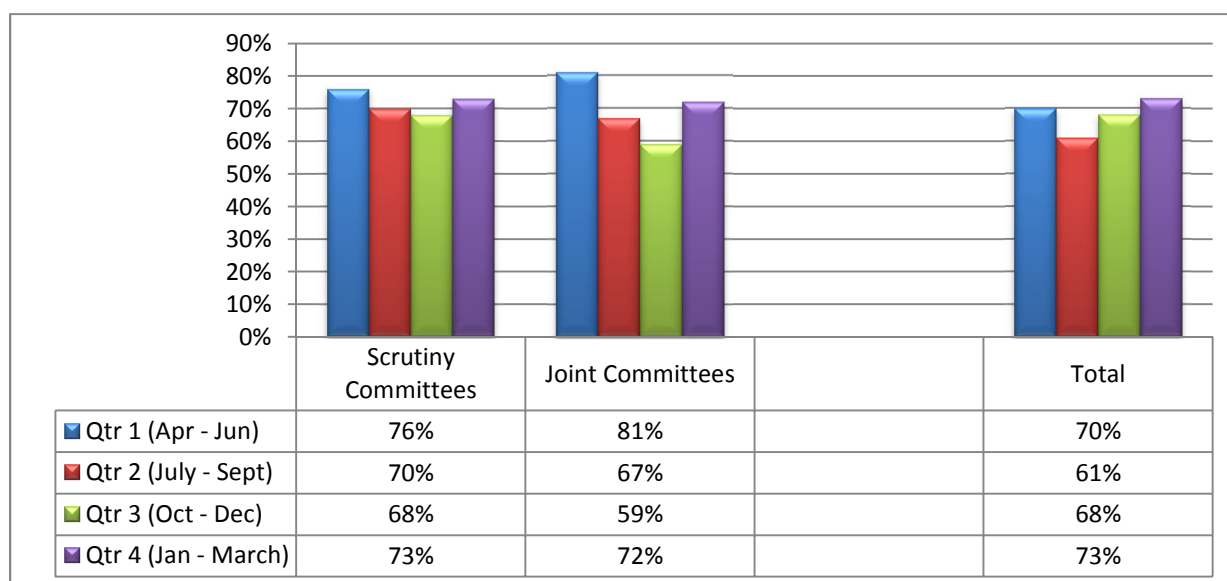
# Democratic Arrangements Progress Report

## Member Attendance at Formal Scrutiny Committees

Member Attendance by individual Scrutiny Meeting



Members Attendance by Meeting Type



- **Scrutiny Committees** include Corporate Overview, Social Services, Education and Learning, and Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development
- **Joint Committees** include Joint Safeguarding, Joint Finance and Public Services Board Scrutiny