

**Minutes of the Meeting of OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE  
held at the Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron / remotely via video  
conference on Monday, 18 May 2026**

**Present:** Councillor Keith Evans (Chairman), Councillor Marc Davies (Vice Chairman), Councillors Caryl Roberts, Amanda Edwards, Wyn Evans, Gareth Lloyd, Elaine Evans.

**Also in attendance:** Councillor Chris James.

**Cabinet Members present:** Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy and Performance and People and Organisation; Councillor Alun Williams, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Through Age and Wellbeing. Councillor Matthew Vaux, for Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection.

**Officers in attendance:** Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services; Elin Pryor, Corporate Lead Officer, Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer; Diana Davies, Corporate Manager, Partnerships and Performance; Nia Jones, Corporate Manager, Democratic Services; Elizabeth Upcott, Corporate Manager - Quality Assurance & Safeguarding; Timothy Bray, Partnerships & Civil Contingencies Manager; Katy Sinnet-Jones, Governance Officer, Internal Audit; Dwynwen Jones, Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer; Translators.

**Also in attendance:** Hazel Lloyd-Lubran, Chair of the Public Services Board, Ceredigion and Chief Executive of CAVO.

(10.00 - 11.10 am)

**5 Apologies**

Councillors who apologised for their absence were:

- Councillor Ceris Jones.
- Councillor Gwyn Wigley Evans, who was attending other Council business.

**6 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)**

**Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.**

There were no disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests (including whipping declarations).

## 7 **Chair Announcements**

Councillor Keith Evans welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was his first as Chair of the Committee. He thanked Councillor Wyn Evans for his leadership of the Coordinating Committee over the previous two years and congratulated him on his appointment as Vice-Chair of the Council at the Annual General Meeting held on Friday.

## 8 **Cysur/Cwmpas**

Councillor Alun Williams, Cabinet Member for Through Age Wellbeing presented the report to the Committee supported by Elizabeth Upcott, Corporate Manager - Quality Assurance & Safeguarding.

Key points were as follows:

- There has been increase, in this quarter, of the number of reports/referrals that have proceeded to Child Protection Procedures (230) compared to 167 in Quarter 2 and 164 in Quarter 1.
- In Quarter 3, there was 1358 contacts and referrals compared to 1176 in Quarter 2. Of the 1358 contacts/referrals, 16.9% went to a Strategy Discussion stage (this related to 318 children as there are sibling groups discussed in one strategy discussion). Of the 16.9%, 8.4% proceeded then to a Section 47 Enquiry and then 1% proceeded to an Initial Child Protection Conference (this relates to 29 children).
- The reason for the significant increase in this quarter is that there was an increase in actual referrals/contacts and then there were several families with large sibling groups who were the subject of the initial Strategy Discussion process. There were also referrals for 17 children relating to concerns connected with a professional concerns process.
- There were 29 children/young people who were the subject of an Initial Child Protection Conference in this quarter compared to 16 in Quarter 2. 25 children were registered on the child protection register in this quarter.
- There were 26 children who were the subject of a Review Child Protection Conference in this quarter and 10 of those children were removed from the register in the quarter.
- There were 114 Section 47 Enquiries undertaken in the quarter, 91 of which were undertaken jointly with the Police.
- The main concerns that led to completing child protection enquiries in this quarter were physical abuse, sexual abuse/exploitation and neglect.
- 53.6% of Initial Child Protection Conferences were completed within 15 working days in this quarter, which is down from 86.7% in the last quarter and the range of reasons were due to either family, police or social work availability and one conference had to be suspended due to poor internet connection, and the family could not participate fully.
- 95.8% of core groups were held in timescale and 96.2% of Review Child Protection conferences were held in timescale.
- At the end of the quarter, there were 45 children on the Child Protection Register compared to 31 at the end of Quarter 2.

- The main risk factors for children/young people being on the register were domestic abuse and parental substance misuse.
- Neglect was the main category of abuse for children needing to be registered in this quarter.
- There were 16 individuals subject to the Section 5-Safeguarding allegations/concerns about practitioners and those in positions of trust as this relates to working with children. There were 20 Strategy Meetings held in relation to this process in all, this quarter.

#### ADULT SAFEGUARDING

- There were 237 (289 reports/referrals) adults suspected of being at risk of abuse or neglect, reported this quarter which is an increase from Quarter 2 at 205 adults, (258 reports/referrals) and 194 adults (240 reports/referrals) in Quarter 1.
- Local Authority Staff were the highest source of referrers again this quarter.
- Emotional/psychological abuse was the highest category of abuse reported, followed by neglect, then financial, physical and then sexual abuse
- A person's own home is where the highest of location of abuse occurred, followed by a care home setting. In this quarter, there were 2 residential care settings in the Escalating Concerns process, and the safeguarding referrals reflect this issue.
- Relatives and friends were the highest reported people responsible for abuse or neglect in this quarter followed by paid employees.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions. The main points raised were as follows:

- In response to a question, it was confirmed that the 16 individuals referred to in Section 5 of the report (those subject to safeguarding allegations or concerns about practitioners and others in positions of trust working with children) were separate cases and not repeat cases.
- In response to a question, it was confirmed that Aberystwyth had the highest number of child protection referrals, followed by Lampeter and Cardigan. The graph on page 7 of 52 of the report shows referrals by postal area and confirms that Aberystwyth consistently records the highest number.
- A Member asked what the *Other* category shown on the graph on page 7 of 52 referred to. It was confirmed that this related to children who reside outside the County.
- It was noted that increasing pressures across the public sector are making it more difficult to arrange multi-agency meetings within certain timescales. It was acknowledged that professionals are often required to attend a high number of such meetings, which can sometimes result in delays. However, safeguarding measures are put in place immediately while arrangements for meetings are being made.
- In response to a question about the increase in school contacts, it was confirmed that there was no specific reason for the rise.

The Chair thanked Councillor Alun Williams for presenting the report, with support from Elizabeth Upcott.

**Recommendation:**

Following discussion, Committee Members **AGREED** that they had considered the recommendations and that no further recommendations were made by the Committee for Cabinet to consider.

**9 Public Service Board Minutes**

Hazel Lloyd-Lubran, Chair of the PSB and Chief Executive Officer of CAVO, presented the minutes and highlighted the key updates and outstanding actions from the previous meeting, supported by Diana Davies, Corporate Manager, Partnerships and Performance, and Timothy Bray, Partnerships and Civil Contingencies Manager. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bryan Davies, and Cabinet Member, was also present.

**Key Updates:**

- The PSB's Terms of Reference were due to be reviewed before the September meeting. This work has now been taken forward by the Merger Governance Task and Finish Group, which has prepared draft Terms of Reference for the merged PSB. The drafts have been circulated to the Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire PSBs for comment, and final approval will rest with the merged PSB at its first meeting on 15 September 2026.
- The action to identify office and building requirements, and to explore co-location opportunities in Aberystwyth, remains ongoing.
- *Age-Friendly Strategy*: An update will be included on the agenda for the PSB meeting on 22 June 2026.
- *Local Well-being Plan reporting*: The activity tracker in the agenda papers had been updated with current projects and is helping to prepare the 2025–2026 annual Local Well-being Plan report and the joint interim Local Well-being Plan. An outline framework for the annual report has also been developed, and the support team will provide suggested chapter content based on work undertaken over the previous 12 months.
- *Merger Governance Task and Finish Group*: The group met successfully on 18 March with representatives from most member organisations. Its main purpose is to review governance arrangements and develop draft Terms of Reference for the merged PSB, drawing on examples from other merged PSBs.
- Feedback from Councillor Wyn Evans, former Chair of the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee, noted previous concerns about consistent Welsh Government representation. It was confirmed that representatives have now been appointed for both Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. This arrangement will remain in place for at least 12 months to ensure both PSBs are appropriately represented.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions. The main points raised were as follows:

- Members expressed disappointment that Pembrokeshire were not formally merging with Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. The invitation for them to join stands so they could still do so in future. Members were pleased that Pembrokeshire are included in discussions, for example, the preparation of the Assessment of Local Well-being and Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and PSB joint officer meetings.
- It was noted that Pembrokeshire County Council have a newly appointed Leader.

#### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

Committee Members agreed to receive the draft minutes of the Ceredigion Public Services Board on 13 April 2026.

The Leader of the Council thanked Officers in both Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire Authorities for their excellent collaborative working during the merger process.

#### **10 Whistleblowing Policy**

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection presented the Whistleblowing report supported by Elin Prysor, Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance, and Katie Sinnet-Jones, Governance Officer, Internal Audit.

The Committee last considered an update on Whistleblowing on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2025. Councillor Vaux advised Committee Members of the proposed amendments in the policy. From 6 April 2026, the Employment Rights Act 2025 will make sexual harassment a "qualifying disclosure" under whistleblowing law. This ensures workers reporting sexual harassment receive protection against dismissal and detriment, alongside stricter requirements for employers to handle such cases.

#### **Recommendation(s):**

Committee Members agreed to recommend the Whistleblowing Policy for approval by Cabinet.

#### **11 Scrutiny Self-Assessment Report**

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation presented the Scrutiny Self-Assessment report supported by Nia Jones, Corporate Manager: Democratic Services.

In 2018 it was agreed that the Scrutiny Officers would undertake a review of the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny in Ceredigion County Council, and that this would be undertaken annually thereafter. The process was reviewed in 2026, adopting the Welsh Local Government Association Self-Evaluation Framework. Separate workshops were held with Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Members to capture their views, which captured both the positive contribution by scrutiny as well as areas for strengthening the effectiveness and impact, and an action plan was developed to address any issues identified.

**Recommendation(s):**

1. To consider the responses to the Overview and Scrutiny Self-Evaluation report; and;
2. To consider the proposed action plan and determine whether scrutiny would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations on the proposed action plan.

Committee Members agreed they had:

1. considered the responses to the Overview and Scrutiny Self-Evaluation report, and,
2. had no further comments, observations or recommendations on the proposed action plan.

Committee Members thanked Nia Jones, Corporate Manager, Democratic Services, for arranging the workshops, collating the comments, and for providing a comprehensive report of discussions.

**12 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report**

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation presented the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report, supported by Nia Jones, Corporate Manager: Democratic Services.

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report highlights the key issues that have been considered by the five Overview and Scrutiny Committees during 2025/26.

**Recommendation(s):** The Committee is requested to note the information contained within the report and the volume of work undertaken during 2025/26.

Committee Members agreed to note the information contained within the report and the volume of work undertaken during 2025/26.

**13 Draft Forward Work Programme**

Each Chair/Vice Chairman in turn provided a brief overview of their respective Forward Work Programmes.

Councillor Gareth Lloyd, Chair of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reminded its members that there will be a Drone display prior to the Committee meeting scheduled for the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2026. This display will commence at 9:30am outside the main reception area at Penmorfa.

It was agreed to include the following to the Work Programme:

**Healthier Communities:**

Receive a report to include information as follows: outline the process of supporting children in care by Porth Gofal, to supporting the children who leave care at the age of 25.

**14 To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting 5 March and 19 March 2026 and consider any matters arising from the minutes**

It was agreed to confirm the minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2026 as a true record of proceedings.

It was agreed to confirm the minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2026 as a true record of proceedings.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**15 Any other matter that the Chairman decides is for the urgent attention of the Committee**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and contributing to the meeting.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 6 July 2026**

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_