



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Programme Committee

At: Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

On: Tuesday, 14 March 2023

Time: 4.00 pm

Chair: Councillor Peter Black CBE

Membership:

Councillors: E W Fitzgerald, R Fogarty, T J Hennegan, V A Holland, M Jones, H Lawson, W G Lewis, P N May, F D O'Brien, S Pritchard, M S Tribe and T M White

Statutory Co-opted Members: Beth Allender and Elizabeth Lee

Councillor Co-opted Members: C A Holley, P R Hood-Williams, S M Jones and L R Jones

Watch Online: <http://bit.ly/3ZoeA73>

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Agenda

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2 **Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.**

www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests

3 **Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.**

4 **Minutes.**

To approve and sign the Minutes of the previous meeting(s) as a correct record.

1 - 6

5 **Public Question Time.**

Questions can be submitted in writing to Democratic Services democracy@swansea.gov.uk up until noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Written questions take precedence. Public may attend and ask questions in person if time allows. Questions must relate to

items on the open part of the agenda and will be dealt within a 10 minute period.

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Next Meeting: Monday, 20 March 2023 at 4.00 pm



Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Tuesday, 7 March 2023

Contact: Democratic Services - Tel (01792) 636923

Agenda Item 4



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 14 February 2023 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
V A Holland
W G Lewis
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)

R Fogarty
M Jones
P N May
M S Tribe

Councillor(s)

T J Hennegan
H Lawson
F D O'Brien
T M White

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

Beth Allender Elizabeth Lee

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley S M Jones L R Jones

Officer(s)

Leanne Ahern	PSB Support Officer
Peter Brace	Senior Environmental Health Officer
Ian Davies	Development Manager
Tom Evans	Strategic Planning Team Leader
Paula Livingstone	Divisional EHO, Pollution Control and Private Sector Housing
Brij Madahar	Scrutiny Team Leader
Alice Marks	Senior Environmental Health Officer
Carol Morgan	Head of Housing & Public Health
Suzy Richards	Sustainable Policy Officer
Richard Rowlands	Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager
Debbie Smith	Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Samantha Woon	Democratic Services Officer

Also present

Councillor Andrea Lewis – Chair of PSB Joint Committee
Councillor David Hopkins - Cabinet Member for Corporate Service & Performance
Martyn Evans – Natural Resources Wales
Helen Grey – Natural Resources Wales
Cherrie Bija – Scrutiny Committee PSB Co-optee

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Co-opted Members: P R Hood-Williams

72 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interests were declared:

Councillors T J Hennegan, L R Jones and S Pritchard declared a Personal Interest in Minute No. 76 – Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board, Draft Local Wellbeing Plan.

Councillor R Fogarty declared a Personal Interest in Minute No. 77 – Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities – Councillor David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance.

73 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, no declarations of Whipped Votes or Party Whips were declared.

74 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 17 January, 2023 be signed and approved as a correct record.

75 Public Question Time.

Question(s) received.

1. From Nor Perrott on the link between Airbnb / Short Term Rental properties and HMOs, and question about regulation / Council action and effects.
2. From Mark Row four questions submitted relating to HMO numbers and the Council's assessment of HMO applications.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance stated that a written response would be provided in respect of the question submitted by Nor Perrott.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance stated that he and his Officers would meet with Mark Row to discuss his questions, as well as respond fully in writing.

76 Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board - Draft Local Well-being Plan.

The Cabinet Member for Service Transformation (Deputy Leader and Chair of Swansea PSB Joint Committee) and the Strategic Delivery and Performance Manager presented the Draft PSB Well-being Plan and invited views ahead of Plan approval.

The Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager detailed the consultation which had started on 22 November, 2022 and ended on 13 February, 2023. This was preceded by a statutory 14 week engagement period with the Office of Future Generations Commissioner on which Swansea PSB was commended for a collaborative approach to the development of the Plan. He detailed the variety of methods used to engage with and involve different stakeholders.

He referred to the work undertaken by West Glamorgan Your Voice Advocacy in producing an easy read version of the consultation and reaching out to the various groups to ensure the view of neuro-diverse and people with additional learning needs are represented. Consultation was also promoted through partners and their networks, stakeholder groups around people with protective characteristics through media.

He referred to the responses from the Office of Future Generations Commissioner, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and the Health Board.

It was noted that the response to the online survey was lower than anticipated, although this was not an issue associated solely with Swansea. The initial results suggested overwhelming support for the objectives and steps detailed in Plan. Less support existed around data development, performance arrangements and influencing other organisations.

He detailed the changes to the draft plan during the consultation period which included a summary of the assessment of local well-being and updates to how some of the well-being objectives were defined. He referred to updates to the driver diagrams and the descriptions from the impact from the plan on seven national well-being globes. Changes had also been made to the steps to achieve the objectives and the actions to deliver them.

In conclusion, he referred to the next steps which included finalising the Plan following the end of the consultation and getting approval from the four statutory partners. The Plan would be signed off by the PSB Joint Committee on the 27 April, 2023. Action Plans would be progressed between March and June which would be developed for each objective as well as developing different accessible versions of the plan ready for the launch in May.

The Sustainable Policy Officer stated that the recent changes were more than 90% detailed above and minor tweaks did not change the direction of the plan in any way.

Councillor Lewis thanked Officers and highlighted that the four local well-being objectives remain from the previous Plan however they had been updated in their definitions to be more relevant. A decision had been made to ensure climate change and nature recovery would remain together as an objective as both were intrinsically linked. She stated that the Plan would have a far more robust way of recording outcomes and measures. The Plan makes a concerted effort to focus on one or two particular priorities that the PSB have under those objectives in order that they can be measurable and to ensure they do not crossover any other boards.

Committee questioning and discussion regarding the performance of the PSB focussed on the following:

- 1) Performance measures and targets – noted that these would be determined on specific action plans resulting in clearer links between national well-being indicators and each of the PSB Well-being Plan objectives.
- 2) Financial implications - whilst there was no dedicated budget for the delivery of the of the well-being plan, there was a close synergy between the Council's Corporate Plan (e.g., the achievement of the net zero target by 2030, which was included within the PSB well-being plan). As an example, it was noted that the NRW were developing their Corporate Plan which has three well-being objectives with the intention of aligning with the PSB Well-being Plan, e.g., nature emergency, climate emergency and the pollution prevention. The corporate plans of all the constituent members of the PSB would be aligned, with key leads for each objective delivery group.
- 3) Public engagement - the volume and nature of consultation responses were discussed.

The Chair thanked all Members, Officers and Board Members.

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Public Services Board, reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee on the Draft PSB Well-being Plan.

77 Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities: Houses in Multiple Occupation - Councillor David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Service & Performance, accompanied by the Head of Housing & Public Health, Divisional Environmental Health Officer, Senior Environmental Health Officers, Placemaking & Strategic Planning Manager and Development Manager, reported on the portfolio responsibilities relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Service & Performance referred to the two service areas within the Directorate of Place with key statutory roles to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Although the Committee asked to review the work of the Housing and Public Health Service with regards to HMOs it was important that the role of planning and City Regeneration Service was also covered with regards to planning policy to provide context for issues that cannot be dealt without HMO licensing and housing legislation.

He specifically referred to performance and the issues related to the Covid Pandemic which impacted on the work of the Environmental Health and Housing team and challenges staffing.

Committee questioning and discussions focussed on the following:

- Current performance and trends in relation to processing of HMO Licenses.

- Relevant legislation and challenges associated with managing three different regimes associated with HMO Licensing.
- Activities relating to the health and safety of HMOs and implications of the new Renting Homes Act.
- Budgets and income generation.
- Planning process / identification of HMOs when dealing with applications.
- LDP calculations regarding class order and the categorization of properties in accordance with the Planning Act. (Officers to provide examples of percentage thresholds in relation to the concentration of HMOs being overridden against other relevant factors).
- LDP guidance regarding the 'six-month rule' and its current use (where a property is required to be marketed as a 'family' home for a period before it can be considered for HMO use).
- LDP successes in discouraging planning applications for HMOs where the policy indicates they will not be permitted.
- HMO Licensing in Uplands, Castle, Waterfront and St Thomas.
- Pending HMO licence applications (breakdown by ward to be provided to the Committee).
- Current position regarding addressing the detrimental impact of the proliferation of letting boards in areas with high proportion of rental properties.

The Chair thanked all the Cabinet Member for Corporate Service & Performance and Officers.

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Service and Performance reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

78 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Adult Services (Councillor Sue Jones, Convener)

Resolved that the Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress report in respect of Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel be noted.

79 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

Resolved that the membership of the Panels and Working Groups as reported, be agreed.

80 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Chair presented the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.

As per Committee work plan, the main items scheduled for the next meeting on 14 March:

- Follow Up: Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group.
- Audit / Scrutiny Relationship

It was noted that a Special Scrutiny Programme Committee had been scheduled for Monday, 20 March at 4pm to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on a Cabinet report on the National 20 Mph Default Speed Limit.

81 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair presented a report on 'Scrutiny Letters' for information.

82 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.

The Chair referred to the date and time of upcoming Scrutiny Panel/Working Group Meetings, for information.

The meeting ended at 17:26

Chair

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 March 2023

Follow Up: Scrutiny Working Group – Bus Services

Purpose:	This report provides background and advice to the Committee in following up on the Scrutiny Working Group which looked at issues relating to Bus Services. Lead Cabinet Member / officers have been asked to report on progress since the Working Group, including issues raised by the Working Group.
Content:	<p>The Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure, Councillor Andrew Stevens, has provided a report which is appended for questions and discussion.</p> <p>The Committee is provided with the correspondence between the Working Group and Cabinet Member following its meetings which contain the views / concerns of scrutiny councillors. The Committee should follow up on agreed action taken in response, where the Working Group has made suggestions for improvement.</p>
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the information provided, ask questions, and make comments and recommendations as necessary.
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Andrew Stevens (Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure)
Lead Officers:	Mark Wade, Interim Director of Place Stuart Davies, Head of Highways & Transportation
Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Amanda Thomas

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee has overall responsibility for the Scrutiny Work Programme. Each year, the Work Programme includes several 'one-off' topic-based Scrutiny Working Groups to look at specific issues of concern. These are usually set up as single meetings

to call in relevant Cabinet Member(s), officers, and other relevant persons, to examine the issue and feedback views and recommendations to the Cabinet Member(s). As such the Committee takes responsibility for following up on Working Groups, to check on progress with the topic / issue(s) and response to any specific suggestions / recommendations made and agreed action coming out of the scrutiny session.

2. **Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group**

- 2.1 The Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group originally met on 7 July 2021 to discuss issues including bus network coverage and levels of service, community transport provision and integration with other forms of transport. The Working Group met with the then relevant Cabinet Member, Councillor Mark Thomas, and Senior Officers. Representatives of First Cymru and Cardiff Bus also participated to give their perspective on things. The Working Group was given the opportunity to meet again by the Committee, and a second meeting took place on 14 March 2022 to conclude the Working Group's activity. It has now been 12 months since the Scrutiny Working Group, and therefore appropriate for the Committee to follow up on progress on the issue(s) and action following any suggestions coming out of the scrutiny session and find out how things have progressed / developed.
- 2.2 **Main Findings:** The Working Group highlighted the need for regular bus services to all areas of Swansea to reduce isolation and start a shift away from car use to using public transport. It emphasised the importance of bus companies and public transport more generally contributing to carbon emission reduction. The Working Group recommended that regular meetings are held between Councillors and First Cymru to raise and discuss issues and felt it was very important for the Authority and bus companies to listen to people who currently do not use buses in Swansea, as well as people who do, to help shape current and future bus services. The importance of joining up bus and rail times so services are more coordinated and the introduction of cross ticketing between bus and rail were also issues emphasised. The further meeting in March 2022 enabled discussion on developments including a trial of hydrogen buses, improvements to bus shelters, and the possibility of Council playing a bigger role in providing bus services. Councillors were pleased to hear about various projects and improvements planned, though felt that public dissatisfaction with services and their reliability remained a big issue.
- 2.3 The correspondence between the Working Group and Cabinet Member following these two meetings is **attached**, showing the range of issues that were discussed, feedback and concerns, and Cabinet Member response provided at the time.

2.4 Link to the two Scrutiny Working Group meetings:

7 Jul 2021

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=701&MIId=9507&Ver=4&LLL=0>

14 Mar 2022 -

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=701&MIId=10680&Ver=4&LLL=0>

2.5 Scrutiny Councillors who participated in the Working Group: Lyndon Jones (Convener), Nick Davies, David Helliwell, Chris Holley, Lynda James, Peter Jones, Paul Lloyd, Cheryl Philpott, Gloria Tanner and Mike White.

2.6 By carrying out a follow up the Committee can then close off this Scrutiny activity and work, as appropriate.

3. Cabinet Member Report

3.1 The current lead Cabinet Member, Councillor Andrew Stevens, Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure, has provided a report on progress, in the context of the scrutiny activity, on Bus Services. See ***attached***.

3.2 Lead officer(s) will be present to assist and facilitate the discussion.

3.3 The Committee will hear from the Cabinet Member / officers before questions. At the conclusion of the session the Committee may wish to write to the Cabinet Member with any observations, views and recommendations arising from the follow up discussion.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

- Letter correspondence between the Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group and Cabinet Member: Letters dated 9 August 2021; 17 August 2021; 8 April 2022; and 27 April 2022.
- Cabinet Member Report.



To:

**Councillor Mark Thomas
Cabinet Member for Environment
Enhancement and Infrastructure
Management**

BY EMAIL

CC Cabinet Members

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

Scrutiny

*Scrutiny Office
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Uniongyrchol:*

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scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

*Date
Dyddiad:*

09 August 2021

Summary: This is a letter from the Bus Services Working Group to the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management following the meeting of the Working Group on 07 July 2021. It is about bus services in Swansea.

Dear Cllr Thomas

The Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group met on 07 July 2021 to look at bus network coverage and levels of service, community transport provision and integration with other forms of transport etc.

This letter provides you with feedback from that meeting.

We would like to thank you, Stuart Davies and Cath Swain for attending to present the report and answer questions. We appreciate your engagement and input.

We would also like to thank Jane Reakes-Davies of First Cymru, Cllr Christopher Lay and Cllr Gavin Hill-John of Cardiff Bus for taking the time to attend the meeting and present to the Group. We are very grateful for their engagement and input.

Public Question Time

The following questions were received from members of the public:

QUESTION 1:

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

In the 2011 Census, Swansea had the lowest proportion of short journeys made by public transport in the whole of the UK. We have a bus network that does little more than take people to a shopping mall that has increasingly few shops, which less and less want to go to. It costs £2 to park in the city centre all day yet costs £5 for 1 person to go there by bus. It costs £4 to park in Mumbles for 3 hrs, yet costs £5 for 1 person to go there by bus.

Most of the city does not have direct bus services to the train station or the Liberty Stadium on match days. We need direct bus services that link different parts of the city. We need to move away from the idea that all buses must go to the Quadrant.

Every year since 1978, the Netherlands has carried out a nation travel survey. Citizens are asked to record each journey they take, and this information is used to help ensure viable alternatives to travelling by car are provided.

Rather than focusing on the experience of bus users, the Council should switch its focus to the vast majority who are not bus users, and determine what changes are required for more people to choose public transport. We need the Council to conduct a study to assess what services residents actually need, and to commit to providing competitive alternatives to car travel, whilst setting out targets to increase the number of people using buses (and active travel) and targets to reduce the number of car journeys on our roads.

RESPONSE -

Cabinet Member:

“Bus services into city centre run on a commercial basis. They are not there just to take people into the shops. They are also used for getting to work etc.

The comparison of parking charges is a bit unfair as the prices quoted are because of offers on at the moment with car parking. This is a temporary measure to aid recovery. It is the same for the offer in Mumbles; it is a temporary measure. Therefore, it is not a true comparison to compare with bus journeys.

Buses to the Liberty Stadium – bus companies run buses predominantly where demand is as they are a commercial operation.

With regards the nationwide survey carried out in the Netherlands, I am not saying this is something we cannot or should not do. The current journeys carried out would give us a road map of the type of journeys that people want to make.

Focussing on bus users, we have probably got the most funding of any local authority in Wales, to improve and increase our active travel routes throughout and across Swansea for that very purpose. We need to make a modal shift from total reliance on cars into other forms of transport – active travel and bus services are included in that. It is something we intend to do despite opposition in some quarters. It will future proof us. In order to get people out of cars we need to find the alternative to that.

Eighty percent of bus services in Swansea are run by commercial companies. We as an Authority have continued to maintain a subsidy for bus services to subsidise routes that are not viable on a commercial basis.”

Managing Director, First Cymru:

“The cost in the illustration is not correct. Many incentives are provided. This is the worst case scenario.

Many services go across the City. For example, Service 25 Blaen Y Maes – City, stops at the train station and the Kingsway. Some stops can get congested so we cannot for example, run all buses through the train station.

It would be interesting to understand the concern more from the person who asked the question for specifics about where they are travelling from.

In terms of commuters, we carry a lot of retail workers as well as people in the caring industry. One main service is from Singleton Hospital to Morriston Hospital. There are a number of services that do not directly go into the Quadrant for shopping purposes.

We have very sophisticated software that shows the use of bus stops across the City. Happy to share with the working group more information about where people are travelling in the City, which may help you on that position.

Swansea is one of the most congested cities I have seen in Wales. Given the Welsh Government’s agenda on climate change, we do all need to take responsibility for trying to move people into public transport.

The one challenge we have as an industry, is that it has diminished. The number of people who are now travelling by bus has reduced dramatically. Every decade we see a diminishing market, particularly amongst the younger generation many of whom have their own vehicles.

To deal with the climate change agenda a modal shift is required. We do all we can to contribute by improving our vehicles, getting the most efficient vehicles and using technology on our vehicles to improve the climate agenda, but there is a huge risk in Wales as we haven’t had investment like other places. We need to move forward more progressively in my opinion.”

Head of Highways and Transportation:

“There is a lot of ongoing work as an Authority and regionally looking at the Metro with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales, and there is a strong commitment in terms of modal shift to high quality public transport. There is a lot of development going on to see how we can get proper integration between modes of transport, ticketing etc.

We work with First Cymru to look at challenges on the network on a regular basis.

In terms of active travel, the Authority has got an extremely strong commitment. It is important that everyone gets behind that sort of move. For example, the Pentre Road Bridge and Gowerton, we are trying to provide a safe place for everyone to use but

have had resistance to this. We need to change hearts and minds to get support behind schemes.”

QUESTION 2: (this question was raised by 4 members of the public)

Re Bishopston Bus Service. No14: Pennard to Swansea

This is our ONLY bus with direct link to Swansea.

It is important that it is regular and if late it does not miss coming through Bishopston and Murton. (I was waiting in Bishopston recently No bus appeared, but my friend was able to pick the bus up on the Mayals which was on time. Obviously driver decided NOT to take in the Bishopston loop).

We should have an hourly service which takes in the hospital on all journeys, is reliable and is as punctual as possible.

RESPONSE –

Managing Director, First Cymru:

“We have had a lot of feedback on this route. The basics that should be expected are that it should be on time and would not be expected to miss bits of routes out. Be interesting to have the full details on this question (regarding the bus missing out Bishopston) to fully investigate this concern.

It is one of the services that is not covering its costs of drivers’ time let alone cost of vehicle, fuel and maintenance. That is not even looking at the potential for profit. We either need to look at increasing patronage of the vehicle or look at how we can offer this service in a different way. There are many examples of us being innovative. We would like to look at this service in a little more detail and look at whether the service bus in its current guise is the best solution. We are committed to work with the Local Authority to look at alternative solutions to that particular proposition and see if we can improve the offering for the customer that meets the demand and cost implications to the company.”

Working Group Convener:

“Happy to meet with First Cymru about this outside of the meeting.”

Cabinet Member:

“This is a commercial route so it is not directly to do with us but we will try to meet with First Cymru and try to find a way forward.”

Councillor for Pennard:

“If there are any meetings about Number 14 can I be included.”

“Many people are giving up using the bus because the timetable is confusing. So whatever we use needs to be regular.”

Managing Director, First Cymru:

“We are currently carrying about 130 passengers per day on this service. Over the last 18 months the service has not been regular due to Covid.

We are determined we will improve communication to customers when we come out of this. Growing customer numbers on all our services is important to me.”

Following Public Question time, Jane Reakes-Davies presented an overview of First Cymru to the Working Group. Following this Cllr Christopher Lay and Cllr Gavin Hill-John similarly presented an overview of Cardiff Bus including Who they were, How it works, challenges, benefits and the future.

As the Cabinet Member, you presented the Bus Services Report and confirmed that the Local Authority is able to consider taking on a route through a subsidised method if a commercial operator is unable to. The Local Authority also supports community transport through subsidised methods. You also confirmed that currently the Local Authority is unable to run its own bus services.

Members of the Working Group raised a number of questions that First Cymru, Cardiff Bus, yourself and officers responded to.

The following main issues were discussed:

We stated the importance of getting a regular bus service to all areas to tackle residents' isolation. People who have given up driving need to be able to access public transport otherwise they become prisoners in their own home.

We felt funding for active travel has been used to make it easier for people to cycle or walk, but not everyone is able to do this and that accessibility has to be the main point, for the elderly etc.

We felt strongly that buses are an important service and that if we are going to have a modal change, public transport has to be the backbone of what we are going to do.

We felt that more dialogue is needed between councillors and bus companies, particularly First Cymru, to discuss where changes can be made for the benefit of residents of Swansea and also help bus companies to increase passenger numbers.

We also felt that there is a need to ask why people are not catching buses and why numbers are diminishing and equally and importantly there is a need to listen to local knowledge. We gave the example that if we are looking to support Council policy we should be looking to support local shopping district centres, for example in Sketty, the Service 29 bus does not go through the local shopping centre. Jane Reakes-Davies of First Cymru confirmed she is keen to talk to relevant councillors and officers about some services, particularly Service 14 and 29 and about growing patronage.

The Chairman of Cardiff Bus, Cllr Christopher Lay stated that we need to publicise to our customers what we are doing right with public transport in Swansea, for example, how quickly you can get into the City Centre by bus in peak times compared to a car.

You agreed that we do not publicise the benefits of taking the bus often enough and added that we also need to change the perceptions of the public.

We queried how First Cymru works out its price when tendering to the Council for open tender subsidised routes. First Cymru confirmed that when submitting a tender to the Local Authority they look at the cost of that particular service, based on the driver, the vehicle, number of driving hours, fuel and maintenance costs etc.

We queried how Cardiff Bus set their fares. It was confirmed that it is done on a commercial basis. They still have to be in the black and have to charge fairly. They look at their competitor's prices and look at their own internal costs and come up with a price. They are the dominant operator in Cardiff but not the only operator. They have a number of competitors who tend to operate on the more profitable routes and Cardiff Bus compares its prices to them.

We raised the issue of air quality. We were pleased to hear that First Cymru is committed to becoming a clean air operator by 2035 and to cease all diesel forms from 2025. We were also impressed to hear that Cardiff Bus has made a significant investment in electric buses and would like to see this in Swansea as soon as possible. First Cymru stated that some electric vehicles, in other parts of Wales, had been funded by a Department of Transport fund for areas defined as clean air zones (including Cardiff). However, there are not any of these areas within First Cymru's operating area, which means they have not been able to bid for such vehicles. Officers stated with regard to the Metro, the Authority is working closely with the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to secure funding for a number of improvements, and that low emission vehicles (whether electric or hydrogen) is very high on the agenda.

We stated that in some places, like Exeter, buses switch off engines when stopping at red traffic lights until lights go green. We queried with First Cymru if this is something they have thought about and are prepared to introduce, as from an emissions point of view it would be a tremendous step in the right direction. First Cymru stated they have a number of vehicles that have stop-start technology, which reduces idling. In terms of switching engines off, they stated they would need to speak to engineering colleagues outside of the meeting, as it takes some time for buses to re-start, and would then provide members with a full response.

We asked First Cymru for examples of ticket incentives that they offer. First Cymru responded that for daily tickets, for example, if you buy five tickets in advance you get discount via a mobile app. They do not currently have off peak offers. We felt incentives should be available via other means not just via the app. First Cymru stated they are open minded to looking at ticketing offers.

We raised the issue of cross-ticketing and queried why tickets cannot be accepted by all operators. First Cymru responded that this is high up the agenda for Welsh Government and Transport for Wales. They stated that there are currently no clear systems that all operators use. Currently all ticket machines are very different so it is not possible to split out the revenue. We heard Transport for Wales are keen to

improve the offering for all bus companies to have consistent ticket machines and be able to have multi-operator and integrated transport ticketing between bus and rail. First Cymru believe this is something that will be introduced as part of bus reform.

We asked First Cymru if they will consider doing circular routes in Swansea. First Cymru responded saying they are keen to understand more about this and it would need to be discussed outside of the meeting. They stated they are happy to hear representations and look at how they can build this into the network if it will deliver an improved patronage.

We queried the difference in journey cost, for the same length of journey, in Cardiff and Swansea. We were informed this is difficult to answer as all areas offer different incentives. However, in terms of the daily ticketing offer, it is 60p cheaper in Swansea than Cardiff.

We felt there are a number of areas where the bus services provided can be maximised, for example patronage. We felt we had made such suggestions to First Cymru in the past but that nothing had been done about it. We also felt that there is no joined up thinking between bus and train times and asked if the Authority can examine where services can be coordinated, for example, transport hubs and cross-ticketing for rail-bus. First Cymru stated that this is a frustration of theirs and that they have worked with train companies to align services but then timetables have changed. They informed the Group that they have 60 buses that go past the main train station in High Street every hour and that many of the smaller stations do not have the infrastructure to turn buses safely. They added that where they had seen transport hubs introduced, for example Port Talbot it had not attracted the volume of people to board or alight the bus that they expected. You added that the Authority has received funding from the Welsh Government for feasibility studies to look at hubs in Pontarddulais and Gowerton to make it more accessible for buses to get down to the station.

First Cymru added that Transport for Wales is committed to having this integrated travel system and First Cymru will do everything it can to work with them on this agenda going forward. You and the Vice Chair of Cardiff Bus agreed that a holistic approach across Wales with Transport for Wales is the way forward and you are hopeful for change. Officers stated that integration is the cornerstone of what the Metro is trying to achieve, to have bikes and walking routes etc at the hubs and all these things will be progressed by the Metro.

Cllr Gavin Hill-John of Cardiff Bus suggested to us that if we really want to see a change to bus services in Swansea, we really need to encourage the Authority to work with First Cymru to move buses around the City as easily as possible and improve the infrastructure, as to grow patronage there is a need to increase reliability. Officers stated that Swansea does have a lane bus system, which is there to give priority through junctions at congestion hot spots and that a lot of money is being invested to improve reliability.

Working Group Members then discussed progress and made the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. We would like to give our thanks to all bus drivers and personnel who have carried on working through the pandemic carrying key workers to their jobs. They have played a vital role.
2. We wish to emphasise the importance of bus companies and public transport more generally contributing to carbon emission reduction. We are expecting our bus companies to move quickly and radically away from fossil fuels. We were told First Cymru would be a clean air operator by 2035. Can they try and move quicker and deliver this by 2030, so they are making a contribution in line with Swansea Council's commitment to being net zero by 2030.
3. We feel that there needs to be a regular bus services to all areas of Swansea. This is particularly important to reduce isolation and start a shift away from car use to using public transport.
4. We recommend that regular meetings are held between Members and First Cymru to raise and discuss issues such as changes to routes, timetables, increasing patronage etc and would ask that this is arranged.
5. If there is going to be a modal change, we feel elected Members need to be involved in discussions on how the Authority is going to do this. We would like your assurance on this.
6. We feel it is very important for the Authority and bus companies to listen to people who currently do not use buses in Swansea, as well as people who do, to help shape current and future bus services.
7. We would like to see bus companies offering more incentives for regular travel and offering incentives in a number of forms not just via mobile apps.
8. We feel that there is no joining up between bus and rail times, and ask that the Authority examine where services can be co-ordinated. We were pleased to hear that two feasibility studies are taking place to look at transport hubs in two areas of Swansea but a lot more needs to be done.
9. We wish to emphasise the importance of cross ticketing being introduced between bus operators and bus and rail for the convenience of the residents of Swansea and to increase patronage. We would like assurance that the Authority is doing all it can to move the travel reform agenda forward with the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales as quickly as possible.
10. We agree with the suggestion by Cardiff Bus that the Authority and First Cymru work together to move buses around the City as easily as possible, to help improve reliability. As there are only a few ways in and out of Swansea,

congestion points are always going to be an issue. We feel to help overcome this that bus lanes will need to be improved.

11. We are concerned that a scrutiny committee produced a report around 2012/13 which went into many of the same problems and came up with the same conclusions as this Working Group but sadly no action was taken. We hope that the Authority will now listen to our concerns and work towards achieving solutions.

12. We will be recommending to the Scrutiny Programme Committee that a follow up meeting of this Working Group is held in six months, to see what changes/improvements have been made and following it decide if the Working Group need to meet again six months after that. We believe that it is vitally important that we see positive changes taking place to benefit Swansea residents.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We are interested in hearing your thoughts about the issues raised and would ask that you respond to the points in our conclusions by 30 August 2021.

Yours sincerely

COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES
CONVENER, BUS SERVICES SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP
CLLR.LYNDON.JONES@SWANSEA.GOV.UK

Cllr. Jones,
Convener of the Bus Services Scrutiny
Working Group

(By email)

Please ask for: Councillor Mark Thomas
Direct Line: 01792 63 6926
E-Mail: cllr.mark.thomas@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: MT/JG
Your Ref:
Date: 17 August 2021

Dear Cllr Jones,

**Re: - Convener's letter to Cabinet Member - Scrutiny Working Group Bus Services
7 July 2021.**

Thank you for your feedback from the Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group on 7 July 2021. I note your recommendations and conclusions and would provide the following comments in response to the points raised.

1. Thank you for recognising the efforts of drivers and personnel, with which we agree and we will be sure to pass that on.
2. First Cymru outlined their intention to be a clean air operator by 2035. The Welsh Government has a target of 2050 for net zero carbon emissions and in the New Wales Transport Strategy (2021) they set out their plans to achieve this which include reducing the need to travel by encouraging home working and the provision of local services, making public transport more attractive and promoting active travel. They also intend to roll out the technology and infrastructure to deliver ultra-low emission buses and to work with bus providers to help deliver these priorities.

As part of First Group, First Cymru's move to low emission vehicles will be part of a wider programme which will be determined by priority decisions made by the Group. However, the Welsh Government has indicated that it intends to work with the bus groups to encourage investment in their Welsh services, with longer-term funding horizons.

Swansea Council submitted a bid to the Welsh Government this year for Local Transport Funding to investigate the possibility of improving a strategic bus corridor as part of the S W Wales Metro programme. This bid was successful and feasibility studies are underway which include the possibility of introducing alternative fuelled vehicles as part of this scheme in conjunction with First Cymru.

The Council is also working with Transport for Wales and the Welsh Government on a scheme which could see the introduction of hydrogen buses on a network of key services in the Swansea Bay area.

3. The current legislation under which bus services operate puts the primary decisions on when and where bus services are provided with the commercial bus companies. Their decisions are primarily based on how profitable they feel the services will be. The Council's role is to identify where there are gaps in the services provided commercially and if it is felt that there is a social need for a service, then it can fund something to meet that need.

Swansea Council funds numerous bus and community transport services and has shown continued commitment to supporting public transport by maintaining its own revenue support of bus routes at £1.1 million over several years, in addition to the £0.5 million contribution from the Welsh Government in Bus Services Support Grant. Due to budget pressures, a number of other local authorities have reduced or removed their revenue support as it is not a statutory duty for Councils to fund these services.

4. The Council has signed a Quality Partnership Agreement with First Cymru which sets out the actions that both parties propose to improve bus services and make them more attractive and reliable in the Swansea area.

The Quality Partnership Board meets quarterly and comprises of Senior Officers from the Council and First Cymru together with the Cabinet Member and other Councillors who have a specific interest in public transport. The QPB considers bus service matters at a strategic level and receives regular updates from Transport for Wales on changes proposed to the national and regional bus service network.

Where bus companies propose significant changes to services locally, officers from the Transport Team ensure that the local ward Councillors are made aware of these. Regular Public Transport Bulletins have been produced throughout the period of the Covid 19 Pandemic and issued electronically to all Councillors to ensure that all are informed of the frequent, short notice changes that have been taking place to bus services in the past year.

5. / 6. / 7. The current legislation puts the Council in a position where it reacts to changes and decisions about bus services that are made by commercial operators and severely restricts the control that the Council has over bus services in the area. The Welsh Government has recognised this and alongside the new Wales Transport Strategy (2021) is intending to bring forward legislation which will give the public sector more control over local bus services. In future it is intended that much of the strategic transport planning of bus services will be undertaken through CJsCs who will prepare Regional Transport plans. In the meantime Council officers are working with Transport for Wales to develop Regional Bus Networks which will form the basis of the bus services that the Welsh Government will recognise and support in future.

8. Where bus services are funded by the Council, we try wherever possible to provide connections with rail and other bus services. In some cases this is not possible where bus routes are for multiple purposes, for example carry school / college pupils and commuters, and therefore need to arrive at these points at fixed times which may not fit with train times. Train operators set their timetables up well in advance but do not consult with commercial bus operators as a part of this process. The integration of bus

and rail services is one of the aspects that TfW and Welsh Government are looking at as part of the Bus Service Reform and Metro development process.

9. The Welsh Government is keen to develop an all Wales ticketing scheme for bus services which will make it easier and more attractive for customers. Transport for Wales and local authorities are looking at possible ways that this can be taken forward so that interchange between services becomes easier and tickets are accepted across the Country by multiple operators.

Locally operators have their own ticket schemes and promotions but there is no ticket inter availability between different bus companies.

10. The Council has been successful in obtaining funding for bus priority improvements on key corridors in the past and constructed a number of bus lanes. Bus priority is also provided at traffic signals. More recently the Council is implementing Latebus technology at busy signalised road junctions which detects whether a bus service is running late and if it is, gives it priority. If the bus is on time, no adjustment is necessary. This avoids the expense of building dedicated bus lanes and provides a more efficient use of road space.

11. The scrutiny report you refer to was presented to Cabinet on November 12th 2013 and put forward 13 recommendations. Having reviewed the report and Action Plan, I do not accept that no action was taken then, and indeed I believe that all of those recommendations which we could influence were positively addressed, and solutions were achieved.

12. I note that a follow up meeting of the Working Group is proposed in 6 months' time and I will be happy to provide an update as and when required.

Yours sincerely



Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Mark Thomas
Aelod Y Cabinet Dros Gwella'r Amgylchedd a Rheoli Isadeiledd/
Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management



To:

Councillor Mark Thomas
Cabinet Member for Environment
Enhancement and Infrastructure
Management

BY EMAIL

CC Cabinet Members

Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:

Scrutiny

Scrutiny Office
Line:
Llinell
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01792 637314

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scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

Date
Dyddiad:

08 April 2022

Summary: This is a letter from the Bus Services Working Group to the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management following the meeting of the Working Group on 14 March 2022. It is about bus services in Swansea.

Dear Cllr Thomas

The Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group first met on 07 July 2021 to look at bus network coverage and levels of service, community transport provision and integration with other forms of transport etc. It was agreed to hold a follow up meeting in around 6 months to see what changes/improvements have been made and this meeting was held on 14 March 2022. This letter provides you with feedback from this follow up meeting.

We would like to thank you, Stuart Davies and Cath Swain for attending to present the report and answer questions. We appreciate your engagement and input. The Working Group found the meeting informative and interesting.

We noted that Welsh Government is keen to introduce cleaner fuel buses and to move ahead with hydrogen buses and Transport for Wales is doing some investigation into bus travel. We felt there were exciting times ahead with the possible introduction of hydrogen buses. We were informed that the use of hydrogen buses would be a trial project in Swansea Bay area and Pembroke area. Welsh Government is leading on this project and there are many issues to consider including the cost of buses, where they would run, how often, who would own them, safety issues and depot facilities etc. We heard that there could potentially be 50 hydrogen buses in Swansea and that

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

hydrogen buses are currently being used in Aberdeen. We noted that in terms of electric vehicles, they are not carbon free.

We felt that there were issues with bus services in Swansea that need to be resolved in order to increase bus usage ie buses are totally unreliable, bus shelters are not weatherproof and more bus stops with real time information are needed. We were informed that with regards to bus shelters, 112 are currently being removed and replaced but there may be a couple of weeks in between where a stop is left without one. We also heard that a funding bid has been submitted through the ERF Board to fund repair and replacement of the remaining bus shelters. Officers confirmed bus services have been very unreliable as there were many problems during covid - the Travel Line travel information system could not keep up with the changes to timetables and information at bus stops was not updated, and this issue is still continuing due to staffing issues. Officers stated that some bus stops have electronic scheduled timetable information but it is not in real time and other ways to provide real time information is being looked at, such as mobile phone apps. We heard that ideally all bus stops would have real time information but there are capital and ongoing costs, however, it is hoped high usage bus stops will have real time information displayed in the future.

We were interested in why people do not use buses and felt it was a problem of attitude towards bus use and the culture of acquiring a car and queried how attitudes towards bus use could be changed. We heard that there are a number of reasons why people do not use buses and there are many perceptions that have to be got over but when the bus fleet becomes green this is a good opportunity to change perception. We were informed that the Authority has learnt from previous experience what attracts people to use buses and increase patronage – frequency of service, quality of service, information provided, ticketing, journey times. There is also a need to promote things people can do when they travel by bus such as use phones and laptops etc.

We stated that there are trials taking place in North Wales around cross-ticketing and it was something Swansea could be looking at. We heard that all trials are being carried out with full involvement of the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales and an integrated ticketing system is something that could be done relatively quickly as the technological systems are in place already, but the Welsh Government would have to legislate to make it happen. We mentioned that cross-ticketing is already used in London with the Oyster card and Bristol is looking to have a similar scheme, so this model is already being used and it works. Officers confirmed this scheme works in London because services are franchised, and Welsh Government is looking at a franchising system under new legislation, control of the whole bus network would then be under public sector control. Welsh Government is also trialling 'tap on, tap off' contactless ticketing which has started to be used in London.

We queried if given the recent court ruling the Local Authority or Welsh Government had given any thought to authority run bus services. You said you believed change is coming, whether through the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales new approach on franchising or the Authority having its own bus services. We heard that municipal bus companies are being looked at as part of a legislation review. At the moment the 1985 Transport Act actively discourages the set up, but Welsh Government is very keen to encourage development of municipal bus companies with local authorities.

We queried what will happen when the Bus Emergency Scheme comes to an end in July 2022 and how transition will be achieved. Officers confirmed that financial support to bus companies will now go beyond July 2022 but no details are available yet.

We were informed that currently network coverage is 80% what it was in 2020; passenger numbers are 60% what they were in 2020; concessionary numbers are 50% what they were in 2020 and a lot less students are travelling by bus than before.

Working Group Members then discussed progress and made the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. We were pleased to hear there are lots of projects and improvements planned for the future. However, despite the Public Transport Scrutiny Inquiry 8 years ago there has not been much improvement in reliability and service that the public want. Reliability is key to encourage more people to use buses.
2. We felt bus usage needs to be made more attractive for current non-users of the service. It is not just the practical problems of bus use, there is the wider issue of public attitude to bus use. With the climate crisis this issue of public perception needs to be addressed.
3. We were concerned that bus companies have a monopoly and will only go after profitable routes, leaving local authorities to tender services on unprofitable routes. Bus operators have got to provide a good service first before anything else can change. Welsh Government needs to change legislation and introduce regulations to be able to hold bus operators to account for provision of services, amongst other things. We encourage the Authority to continue to do all it can to progress changes in legislation to be able to hold bus operators to account, to make the setting up of municipal bus companies easier and to enable cross-ticketing.
4. We felt regular meetings within wards between councillors and bus operators is very important. This was previously recommended and there is a need to ensure this happens.
5. We welcome the replacement and repair of bus shelters. However, we would also like to see regular cleaning of bus shelters, bus stops and signposts.
6. We feel it would be useful to have a system of lockers readily available at bus stations to store shopping etc, so people do not have to carry everything around with them all day and hope that you will give this some consideration.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We are interested in hearing your thoughts about the issues raised and would ask that you respond to the points in our conclusions by 29 April 2022.

Yours sincerely

COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES
CONVENER, BUS SERVICES SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP
CLLR.LYNDON.JONES@SWANSEA.GOV.UK

Cllr Jones
Convener of the Bus Services Scrutiny
Working Group

(By email)

Please ask for: Councillor Mark Thomas
Direct Line: 01792 63 6926
E-Mail: cllr.mark.thomas@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: MT/JG
Your Ref:
Date: 27 April 2022

Dear Councillor Jones,

**Re: - Convener's letter to Cabinet Member – Scrutiny Working Group Bus Services
14th March 2022**

Thank you for your feedback from the Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group on 14th March 2022. I note your recommendations and conclusions, and would provide the following comments in response to the six points that you have raised:

1. The Council will continue to support the reliability of bus services through Bus Priority Measures and Telematics initiatives. The bus companies also have a key role to play by ensuring that they have sufficient resources in place to provide the services that are advertised and by ensuring that their timetables are realistic. There is a nationwide shortage of bus drivers for various reasons and the Swansea area has not been immune to this. Bus companies are also still feeling the effects of drivers not being able to attend work due to Covid isolation requirements, and this continues to lead to short notice cancellations. On a positive note, two of the major bus companies operating in Swansea are now using agency drivers to improve their staffing levels. There are also signs that some of the bus service frequency reductions introduced by the major bus operator last Autumn in the light of driver shortages are starting to be reversed on the busiest services as passenger demand increases again.
2. There are a number of areas for making bus services more attractive to non-bus users that need consideration. These include simplifying the bus network itself, simplifying ticketing arrangements, speeding up journey times through infrastructure and telematics initiatives, ensuring confidence that timetables remain stable, and ensuring that buses turn up, operate reasonably punctually and when people need them. Unfortunately, bus services have been through a difficult period in the past couple of years due to short notice Covid-lockdowns, frequent timetable change, roadside publicity not being kept updated, passengers having to observe social distancing when travelling and perhaps a general unease amongst some that bus travel is now no longer as safe a mode of transport as prior to the pandemic. The Council has a role to play in restoring

public confidence, and the Free Travel Initiatives during the school holidays are hopefully helping towards this. However, in reality, in view of the commercial freedoms that bus companies have in operating their services, the greater responsibility in building up businesses and restoring customer confidence again must lie with the bus operators themselves. A good example initiated by the bus operators is the move towards contactless payment systems, which have seen a steady rise in popularity, particularly over the last couple of years when cash payments were actively discouraged.

3. The situation that you are describing stems from the Transport Act 1985, which led to local bus service deregulation in England (outside London), Wales and Scotland in 1986. However, the Welsh Government is planning for the whole of Wales to switch to a franchising model, and is currently inviting views on its “One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket” White Paper. Please see the link below:

[One network, one timetable, one ticket, Welsh Government sets out plans to change the way we travel | GOV.WALES](#)

In terms of municipal bus companies, the legislation would remove the restrictions on the creation of new municipal bus companies. Councils would be able to run bus services ‘in house’ or via an arms-length company as part of a franchised network, and Councils would also be able to invest in or acquire existing bus companies.

In terms of ticketing, a One Ticket system is proposed, which would see simple area-wide fares, valid across all bus routes and on all modes of public transport.

In terms of accountability, officers are currently able to hold bus companies to account for the services that operate under contract, though I recognise that the Council’s powers do not extend to the commercial service network, and this falls to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner and Bus Users Cymru. However, indications are that with a franchised network in place, there would be far greater accountability on the part of the bus operators for all the services that they would operate.

4. Your recommendation has merit and I would suggest that in view of the availability of the various parties that would be involved, a structured approach is taken. I would also encourage Local Members to continue to channel comments or concerns about bus services through officers so that they can be taken up with the management of the companies concerned. In the meantime, officers will continue to issue periodic Bus Bulletins to Local Members as services change.
5. The new company that owns the bus shelters fitted with advertising panels is responsible for cleaning them. This leaves approximately 350 shelters throughout the County that are in the Council’s ownership. The Bus Shelters Budget is small and predominantly covers structural and vandalism repairs, though it also funds about £3.5k for a contractor to undertake an annual power wash of each shelter. However, £100k has recently been awarded through the Economic Recovery Fund towards a bus shelter replacement programme. This will replace about 20 shelters, and it is hoped that any economies of scale that can be achieved by replacing old for new can then be channelled towards the further upkeep measures of the Council’s shelter stock, including cleaning.

6. Left luggage lockers are already available at Swansea Mobility Hire, which is located just off the southern end of the Bus Station passenger concourse. Opening hours are 0900 to 1700 Mondays to Saturdays. Please refer to the following link for further information on the number and size of lockers available, and the charges:

www.swansea.gov.uk/bagstorage

Yours sincerely



Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Mark Thomas
Aelod Y Cabinet Dros Gwella'r Amgylchedd a Rheoli Isadeiledd/
Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management



Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

Scrutiny Programme Committee - 14 March 2023

Bus Services Update

Purpose	To provide Councillors with an update on issues raised in the previous meetings of the Working Group in July 2021 and March 2022
Content	This report includes updates on the issues raised by Councillors in the previous meetings of the Working Group
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the information provided • Make recommendations to Cabinet Member as necessary
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Andrew Stevens, Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure
Lead Officer(s)	Mark Wade, Interim Director of Place
Report Author	Barrie Gilbert, Team Leader – Passenger Transport
Legal Officer Finance Officer Access to Services Officer	Debbie Smith Peter Keys Rhian Millar

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group met on 7th July 2021 and 14th March 2022. Following the 2021 meeting the Convener wrote to the then Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management providing feedback, outlining the Group's conclusions and making a number of recommendations. The Cabinet Member responded to these in a letter dated 17 August 2021.

- 1.2 One of the recommendations to the Scrutiny Programme Committee was that a follow up meeting of the Working Group be held in six months to see what changes / improvements had been made.

2.0 Updates

2.1 Cleaner fuel buses

The Welsh Government, through Transport for Wales, is investigating the possibility of implementing a network of hydrogen fuelled buses to operate services on strategic corridors. The initiative is progressing well and Swansea Council is working with both Transport for Wales and other Local Authorities in the region to consider the feasibility of a pilot scheme in the Swansea Bay area. Transport for Wales has already had discussions with bus operators and vehicle manufacturers, and has identified a potential depot site, which would be shared by all bus operators using such vehicles.

2.2 Bus service network and Bus Emergency Scheme (BES)

The current legislative framework which underpins the provision of local bus services was outlined in the report presented to the Committee in March 2022. The Welsh Government has since consulted on new legislation which would lead to the current deregulated model of providing services being replaced by a franchised model. It is anticipated that the new legislation and model will be introduced in 2025 at the earliest.

The report also highlighted the financial assistance that the Welsh Government has provided the Bus Industry both during and subsequent to the Covid pandemic.

Whilst there has been a progressive recovery of passenger numbers post-Covid, bus operators locally are reporting that there is still some resistance to using bus services again. Fare paying passenger numbers are still only about 80% of those carried pre-Covid, and for concessionary pass holders, it is only about 60% (the latter is also being reported across Wales). 'On bus' and concessionary pass holder revenue shortfalls have therefore been covered by the Welsh Government's funding, which has sought to match pre-Covid levels.

The current funding package; Bus Emergency Support 3 (BES 3) is due to continue beyond March 2023. However, recent announcements by the Welsh Government are that the funding level for the new financial year may decrease. This situation is being monitored and the impact of any reductions will be assessed once funding levels have been confirmed by Welsh Government.

2.3 Bus and Rail links

Work is progressing to establish a transport hub at Gowerton following a successful funding bid to Welsh Government. This will establish a new bus stop closer to the railway station for services arriving from Gorseinon and heading towards Waunarlwydd. The project will also see the establishment of a new bus stop closer to Gowerton surgery for the bus service to and from North Gower.

2.4 Bus Shelters

The Council owns approximately 350 bus shelters of various designs and a large number are many years old. The budget to maintain these is only £15,000 per annum, and in the last decade, there has been very little capital investment to replace the oldest shelters and those in the worst condition. However, funding from the Economic Recovery Fund (ERF) has enabled 19 shelters to be replaced in 2022/2023, and a further tranche of funding should allow a similar number to be replaced during 2023.

In 2022, the Council let a new contract for the supply of bus shelters fitted with advertising panels. The shelters are owned and maintained by the successful tenderer, who receives advertising income to offset the costs. The contract has led to 112 shelters owned by the previous supplier being replaced by brand new facilities. Discussions are ongoing with the new supplier to consider supplying shelters at new locations across the County.

3.0 Legal Implications

3.1 There are no legal implications from this report

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report. However, confirmation is still awaited from Welsh Government on its BES 3 Budget for the 2023/2024 Financial Year and the effect that this will have on the Council's network of socially necessary local bus services is therefore not yet known.

5.0 Integrated Assessment Implications

5.1 This is an information only report, with no implications, therefore no IIA required.

Agenda Item 7



Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 March 2023

Governance & Audit Committee / Scrutiny Relationship

Purpose:	This report supports the development of a strong relationship between Scrutiny and Audit, inviting the Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee to talk about the work of the Governance & Audit Committee and discuss the relationship.
Content:	<p>The Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee, Paula O'Connor, will attend the meeting. On the work of the Committee, the following documents are provided which help the Scrutiny Programme Committee to understand the role and function of the Governance & Audit Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22• Governance & Audit Committee Work Plan
Lead Members:	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee Paula O'Connor, Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee
Lead Officers:	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer Ben Smith, Director of Finance / S.151 Officer
Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Amanda Thomas

1. Developing the Relationship between Scrutiny and the Governance & Audit Committee.

1.1 The Council has long recognised the relationship between Scrutiny and Audit and need for:

- mutual awareness and understanding of each other's work
- respective work plans to be coordinated and avoid duplication / gaps

- clear mechanism for referral of issues, if necessary
- 1.2 It is important that there is:
- clarity between the core roles of both functions
 - regular conversation about Committees' work programmes, and responsibilities
 - a way to ensure that issues can be passed between Committees, avoiding duplication
- 1.3 Action already taken as part of this process:
- i) Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee / Convener of Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel copied into Governance & Audit Committee agendas and vice versa, for information.
 - ii) Work Programme / Work Plans published, at least annually, in each other's agenda for information.
 - iii) Respective Chairs speaking, at least annually, at each other's Committee meeting on their work and the relationship between Scrutiny and Audit.
 - iv) Governance & Audit Committee chair invited to participate in the Annual Scrutiny Work Planning Conference.
 - v) Chairs raise any issues re. coordination / duplication on ongoing basis
 - vi) Where matters to be referred from Governance & Audit Committee the chair writes letter to chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee, and vice versa.
 - vii) The Convener of the Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel being invited to participate in any Governance & Audit Committee consideration of performance reports as required by the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act.
- 1.4 The relationship benefits from a number of councillors sitting on both Committees, including the current Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee, which is advantageous.
- 1.5 To facilitate discussion the following papers are provided to the Scrutiny Programme Committee:
- Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report 2021-22 (**Appendix 1**). This was presented to Council on 6 October 2022.
 - Current Governance & Audit Committee Work Plan (**Appendix 2**)
- 1.6 The Chair of Governance & Audit Committee has been invited to attend the meeting to talk about the work of the Committee. The Scrutiny Programme Committee can discuss with the Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee any issues arising concerning the relationship between Scrutiny and Audit.

1.7 Similarly, the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee attended the Governance & Audit Committee meeting on 12 October 2022 to talk about the work of Scrutiny.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

3. Legal Implications

3.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report 2021-22

Appendix 2: Current Governance & Audit Committee Work Plan



Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22

City & County of Swansea

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1. Foreword by Mrs Paula O'Connor, Chair of the Audit Committee

- 1.1 The Council has continued to face significant challenges during 2021/22 with the ongoing impact of the COVID virus. Once again I pay tribute to all staff and officers of the Council in dealing admirably with the challenges brought about by the COVID pandemic. Throughout this year officers of the Council as well as the Council's Partners were fully committed to meeting their responsibilities. I also acknowledge that the Council continued its efforts to maintain continuity of governance.
- 1.2 I am pleased to present this report prepared by the Chief Auditor and Democratic Services that reflects on the work of the Governance & Audit Committee.
- 1.3 This report provides an overview of the Governance & Audit Committee's work in the municipal year 2021/22. On 9th June 2021 the Governance & Audit Committee considered the election of Chair for 2021/22 Municipal Year where it was resolved that I be re-elected as Chair. At the meeting on 13th July 2021 Councillor P R Hood-Williams was elected Vice-Chair for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. In addition, at the September 2021 meeting the Committee considered the requirements of the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021 (the Act) that states that the Governance & Audit Committee shall consist of one third Lay Members. The Committee was asked to consider its new size and the implication that one third would be Lay Members. The recommendation made by Members to Council was to opt for 15 members consisting of 10 Councillors and 5 Lay Members. The Council approved this and in March 2022 progress was made in recruiting for three Lay Members.
- 1.4 As a result of the Act the Governance & Audit Committee Terms of Reference was amended to reflect the new membership plus the additional roles of the Committee. The new Act requires careful coordination between the Governance & Audit Committee and the Scrutiny Committee as both embark on the new co-ordinated responsibilities. It is a benefit at this time that the Scrutiny Committee Chair is also a Member of the Governance & Audit Committee. I have also ensured that the Work Programme of the Scrutiny Committee is appended to every meeting of the Governance & Audit Committee. With regard to the Governance & Audit Committee's responsibility to review the annual Self-Assessment Report and also the Panel Performance Assessment Report, I have liaised with the Chair of the Performance Committee who has agreed to attend the Governance & Audit Committee when these reports are presented.
- 1.5 The Committee's terms of reference form part of each Agenda as an aide to ensure that Members are sighted of the Committee's effectiveness in satisfying its role. I have continually reviewed Committee Agendas in consultation with Democratic Services to ensure they meet the requirements of the Terms of Reference. In addition, I have liaised with the Deputy Chief Executive to establish a formal Training Programme for Members to include the new areas of responsibility plus a clear understanding of the roles of the

Performance Committee and Scrutiny Committees that also consider these subject matters.

- 1.6 Part 5 of the Local Governance and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provided for the establishment through regulations of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs). This resulted in the establishment of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee. At the September 2021 Governance & Audit Committee further insight was given to Members as to the current status and progress of the CJC and then in December 2021 the Governance & Audit Committee were informed of progress and next steps being taken in establishing a formal governance framework. The status and progress of the work of the CJC will be brought back to the Governance & Audit Committee during the early part of 2022 where consideration will be given to any further changes to the Terms of Reference of the Governance & Audit Committee.
- 1.7 Changes were taking place with the Management Structure in February 2021 and these changes remained under consideration and consultation during 2021/22. The Governance & Audit Committee have continued to express concern around the absence of the Workforce Strategy and the challenges placed on resource throughout 2021/22. In February 2022 the Strategic HR&OD Manager confirmed that a proposed Workforce Strategy had been developed for the financial year April 2022-2025. It was also confirmed that the Strategy took into consideration the Council's Corporate Plan "Delivery of a Successful and Sustainable Swansea" as well as the provisions of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Subject to any final changes the Strategy was to be launched in March 2022.
- 1.8 The Committee has previously reported on the shortfall in assurances being received around the Council's Risk Management arrangements. However, I have ensured that the Service Directors have attended the Governance & Audit Committee during the year to provide assurance to the Committee that individual functions are exercised effectively and there is economic, efficient and effective use of resources and effective governance.
- 1.9 The development and roll out of the new electronic risk management system continued into early 2021 and improvement had been made in the reporting format of the Risk Register. However, during the majority of 2021 the content of the Risk Report still required improvement. A Risk Report was presented to the Committee in September 2021, November 2021 and February 2022. It should be noted that additional Training had been undertaken along with Video Training access and towards the end of 2021/22 some improvement was recognised in the February 2022 report.
- 1.10 The new Act has placed responsibility on the Governance & Audit Committee to review the Council's draft response to the Panel Performance Assessment report, any Audit Wales recommendations arising from the Council's performance as well as the Council's draft annual Self-Assessment report. The Governance & Audit Committee Work Programme has been updated to reflect the presentation of these reports in 2022.

- 1.11 The Annual Complaints report was presented to the Governance & Audit Committee in December 2021. The Committee welcomed the report but noted that it was important not to overlap the work of Scrutiny Committee. The Chair of Scrutiny Committee confirmed that the Complaints report was due to be considered by Scrutiny in March 2022 but this meeting was cancelled.
- 1.12 The Committee has reviewed the work programme at each meeting, taking account of risks and priorities and in particular pandemic issues and Internal Audit Moderate Assurance reports issued.
- 1.13 I attended a further meeting of the All Wales Audit Committee Chairs network in September 2021 where there was opportunity to network, share ideas and problem solve with peers performing similar roles. The event was dedicated to understanding Governance and Audit Committee 'performance' responsibilities resulting from the Local Government Elections (Wales) Act 2021, to support us to discharge our new responsibilities effectively. Presentations were given by the Welsh Local Government Association and also the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales. An interactive section was also facilitated by Audit Wales to consolidate some of the learning from the Act.
- 1.14 The Governance & Audit Committee terms of reference states that the Committee “oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place”.
- 1.15 The Committee received the 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan and Charter on 20th April 2021 and has received reports regularly during the year from the Chief Internal Auditor. I expressed my gratitude to the Chief Auditor in progressing with the plan alongside the pressures of the pandemic and also for responding to a request to enhance the detail in the reports to provide further understanding of the work undertaken and the risks identified. During 2021/22 the Chief Auditor reported a number of Moderate Assurance audit reports that resulted in those responsible attending Governance & Audit Committee to give assurance that appropriate action was being taken where significant weaknesses in control were identified. During the year the Chief Internal Auditor updated the Governance & Audit Committee of those audit assignments that had to be deferred as a result of the pandemic impacts. The final Chief Internal Auditor opinion was presented to the Audit Committee in May 2021.
- 1.16 In March 2021 the Chief Internal Auditor presented the Draft Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22 and methodology applied. The Committee was able to support approval of the Plan to Council with the caveat that assurances had been obtained from the Chief Internal Auditor that the Plan was risk based and complied with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The Committee would seek to gain further understanding of the scope of the reviews during 2021/22.

- 1.17 Audit Wales presented their 2021 Audit Plan to the Governance & Audit Committee on 20th April 2021, and has provided the Committee with regular updates to their work. The most recent update to the Quarter ending 31 December 2021 was presented on 8th March 2022. In 2017/18 and continuing to date the committee suggested that consideration be given to developing a tracker to give focus to improved completion of external audit recommendations. This work is yet to be completed, but I acknowledge the attempts being made to develop an electronic system to track action against recommendations. However in the interim the Scrutiny Committee has the opportunity to challenge non implementation of recommendations as well as the Governance & Audit Committee.
- 1.18 I have met during the period with the Deputy Chief Executive, S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Chief Internal Auditor and Audit Wales. When necessary during the year I have been in communication with the Chief Executive.
- 1.19 On 20th April 2021 the Committee received the 2021/22 Fraud Function Annual Plan. The 2020/21 Anti-Fraud Annual Report was received at the meeting in July 2021.
- 1.20 An additional report was presented to provide the Governance & Audit Committee with an update against progress being made against recommendations in the Audit Wales report 'Raising our Game - Tackling Fraud in Wales', in March 2021 with an update on progress in November 2021. The Committee noted that some further work was required to address all those recommendations.
- 1.21 Cllr Lesley Walton is the Governance & Audit Committee Representative on the Council's Governance Group. The Governance Group was established to review the production of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) during the year. The Group met in March 2022 to discuss the draft AGS for 2021/22. The draft AGS was presented to Corporate Management Team before being presented to the Governance & Audit Committee on the 31st May 2022.
- 1.22 I attended the Scrutiny Panel Conference 12th October 2021. The Governance & Audit Committee also received the Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report and Work Programme.

2. Role of the Governance and Audit Committee

- 2.1 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act became law in January 2021. The Act has amended the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. The Act also extended the remit of the Governance and Audit committee, with Members now having additional responsibility to review and assess the Council's performance management and complaints handling procedures.
- 2.2 The Measure requires the Governance and Audit Committee to:
- Review and scrutinise the Council's financial affairs.

- Make reports and recommendations in relation to the Authority's financial affairs.
 - Review and assess the risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements of the Authority.
 - Make reports and recommendations to the Authority on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements.
 - Oversee the Council's internal and external audit arrangements and review the financial statements prepared by the Authority.
 - Review the Council's draft response to the Panel Performance Assessment Report, and make any appropriate recommendations for changes.
 - Review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively and to make any associated reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively.
- 2.3 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 also stipulates that at least one third of the Governance and Audit Committee must be Lay Members. The current Chair of the Committee is a Lay Member and a second Lay Member was appointed to the Committee in November 2020. The Council is currently in the process of recruiting additional Lay Members to ensure the requirements of the Act are met for the new Municipal Year.
- 2.4 The work of the Governance and Audit Committee is structured so that the Committee can gain assurance over the areas identified above and to comply with its terms of reference as amended to reflect the changes introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Terms of Reference of the Committee can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.5 This draft report describes the assurance that has been gained by the Governance and Audit Committee from various sources during 2021/22 and also outlines a number of other areas where briefings have been provided to the Committee.
- 2.6 The draft Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22 was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in May 2022 to provide Members with the opportunity to give their views on the assurances received and to identify the key messages arising from the work of the Committee during the year which should be reported to full Council.

3. Work of the Governance and Audit Committee in 2021/22

- 3.1 The Governance and Audit Committee has received regular reports in relation to standard agenda themes and received reports of interest based on risk, governance and internal control. Each aspect is reported on below.

Standard Items

Internal Audit Assurance

- 3.2 The Governance and Audit Committee approved the Internal Audit Charter 2021/22 as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- 3.3 The Committee also approved the Internal Audit Annual Plan 2022/23 and has received quarterly monitoring reports from the Chief Auditor showing progress against the 2021/22 Audit Plan.
- 3.4 The quarterly monitoring reports identified any audits that received a moderate or limited level of assurance along with an outline of the issues which led to the audit receiving the negative assurance level. A second quarterly report has also been presented to the Committee to allow members to review and monitor the implementation of the recommendations made in the internal audit reports that had been issued.
- 3.5 From April 2018 the relevant Head of Service and Service Manager (or Headteacher and Chair of Governors) have been required to attend the Governance and Audit Committee following a moderate or limited audit report being issued in order to provide an update to members as to what action is being taken to address the issues that have been highlighted by the audit.
- 3.6 The Internal Audit Annual Report for 2020/21 was reported to the Committee in May 2021. The report included a review of actual work completed compared to the Annual Plan.
- 3.7 The Internal Audit Annual Report for 2020/21 also included the Chief Auditor's opinion on the internal control environment which stated that, based on the audit testing carried out, reasonable assurance could be given that the systems of internal control were operating effectively and that no significant weaknesses were identified which would have a material impact on the Council's financial affairs.
- 3.8 However, it should be noted that the Committee has continued to raise concerns in relation to risk management arrangements across the Council. In addition, the Committee has also commented upon the weaknesses in internal control that are continuing to emerge as a result of staff resource pressures and reductions.
- 3.9 The Internal Audit Annual Report of School Audits 2020/21 was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in July 2021. This report summarised the findings of the thematic audits and a small number of school

audits undertaken during the year and identified some common themes across the schools that had been included in the audits undertaken.

Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 and 2021/22

- 3.10 The draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 was presented to the Committee in May 2021 and the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 was presented to the Committee in May 2022, prior to the statements being reported to Council for approval.
- 3.11 A Governance Group was established by the Council in 2018/19 comprising of the Deputy Chief Executive, the Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Strategic Delivery and Performance Manager and the Chief Auditor (in an advisory capacity). A member of the Governance and Audit Committee is also a member of the Group. The Group is tasked with overarching responsibility for ensuring existing corporate governance arrangements are effective across the Council.
- 3.12 The presentation of the draft Annual Governance Statements gave the Committee the opportunity to review and comment upon the Statements to ensure they properly reflected the assurances provided to the Committee.

Annual Statement of Accounts 2020/21

- 3.13 The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer presented the draft Statement of Accounts 2020/21 for the Council in August 2021. Officers answered a number of queries raised by members of the Committee.
- 3.14 Following completion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts 2020/21, Audit Wales presented its ISA 260 reports on the audit of financial statements of the Council to the Governance and Audit Committee prior to the report going to full Council. The report presented the detailed findings of the audit and stated that Audit Wales's view was that the accounts gave a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council.

External Audit Assurance

- 3.15 As well as the Audit of the Statement of Accounts (ISA 260) reports mentioned above, Audit Wales also provided an update report at a number of the scheduled meetings. The reports outlined the progress being made in financial and performance audit work to the Committee.
- 3.16 Audit Wales also provided assurance to the Governance and Audit Committee by presenting the following reports:
- Audit Wales - ISA 260 Report - City and County of Swansea.
 - Audit Wales - Financial Sustainability Assessment - City and County of Swansea Council.
 - Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – City and County of Swansea Council – December 2021.
 - Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – City & County of Swansea Council – March 2022.

- Audit Wales Report – City & County of Swansea Annual Audit Summary 2021.

3.17 The Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2021 Report (ISA 260) was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in August 2021. The report summarised the work undertaken by Audit Wales as part of their annual audit of the financial statements for 2020/21, which also highlighted the high quality of the draft statement of accounts. The auditors gave a qualified opinion on the Council's financial statements on 2nd September 2021, in line with the statutory deadline.

3.18 The report also outlined the findings of the additional financial sustainability assessment that Audit Wales completed in 2020/21. The review examined the financial sustainability of each Council in Wales, and concluded that the Council was well placed to maintain its financial sustainability and had a plan in place to strengthen some aspects of its financial management.

Implementation of Audit Recommendations

3.19 An important role undertaken by the Governance and Audit Committee is monitoring the implementation of agreed audit recommendations arising from both internal and external audit.

3.20 The implementation of any Internal Audit recommendations arising from fundamental audits is reported to the Governance and Audit Committee in the Recommendations Tracker Report. For 2020/21, the results of the tracker exercise showed that 76% of agreed recommendations had been implemented by September 2021.

3.21 The implementation of any high or medium risk recommendations arising from non-fundamental audits that received a moderate or limited level of assurance are subject to follow up visits by Internal Audit to confirm they have been implemented. The results of the follow up audits are reported to the Governance and Audit Committee in the Quarterly Internal Audit Monitoring Reports.

3.22 The Internal Controls Report presented to the Governance and Audit Committee by the external auditors includes any recommendations made as a result of their work and the action taken by management to implement the recommendations.

Governance and Risk Management

3.23 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 makes the overview of risk management a function of the Governance and Audit Committee

3.24 The Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager provided regular updates to the Committee in relation to Risk Management throughout the year via the Quarterly Overall Status of Risk Reports.

3.25 A new Risk Management System was introduced in December 2019. Following the introduction of the new system, work was undertaken to

embed the new risk management processes across the Council. The Strategic Delivery and Performance Manager began presenting reports outlining the contents of the new Risk Management System from February 2021 and work has continued in year to enhance the reporting functionality of the system. Members have also highlighted concerns in relation to the lack of assurance that could be taken from some of the control measures that were recorded against the risks on the new system. Whilst progress has been made in this area in year, further improvements would be welcomed. This remains one of the key areas of focus for the Governance and Audit Committee in 2022/23.

Relationship with Scrutiny Function

3.26 The Governance and Audit Committee has continued to develop a relationship with the Scrutiny function. The relationship is intended to ensure the following:

- Mutual awareness and understanding of the work of Scrutiny and the Governance and Audit Committee.
- Respective workplans are coordinated to avoid duplication / gaps.
- Clear mechanism for referral of issues if necessary.

3.27 The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee last attended the Governance and Audit Committee to provide an update on the work of Scrutiny in October 2021. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Cllr. Peter Black, is also a member of the Governance and Audit Committee and it is proposed that Cllr. Black will update the Committee on the work of Scrutiny in the new Municipal year.

3.28 The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee has also attended the Scrutiny Programme Committee and provided an update on the work of the Committee in October 2021. The Chair will also attend one of the Scrutiny Committee meetings in the new Municipal Year.

Anti-Fraud

3.29 A Corporate Fraud Function was established during 2015/16 within the Internal Audit Section. The Corporate Fraud Annual Plan 2021/22 was presented to the Committee in April 2021. The Corporate Fraud Function Annual Report 2020/21 was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in July 2021. The Fraud Function Annual Report for 2021/22 is due to be presented later in the 2022/23 Municipal Year. The Governance and Audit Committee also received a new Mid-Year Fraud Function Update Report in November 2021.

Governance and Audit Committee Briefings

3.30 The Governance and Audit Committee received a number of briefings during 2021/22 as noted below:

- Fraud Function Annual Report 2020/21
- Draft Governance and Audit Committee Training Programme

- Follow Up Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements - Children in Swansea Council
- Corporate Risk Overview 2021/22 – Quarter 1
- Education Directorate: Internal Control Environment 2021/2022.
- Update Report South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.
- Absence Management Audit Report 20/21.
- Service Centre – Accounts Receivable Update.
- Lay Members on the Governance & Audit Committee.
- Employment of Agency Staff Audit Report 2019/20 - 2021 Update.
- Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21 & Scrutiny Work Programme.
- Auditor General for Wales Review of Town Centre Regeneration.
- Corporate Risk Overview 2021/22 – Quarter 2.
- (Directorate): Internal Social Services Department Control Environment 2021/22.
- Annual Report Corporate Safeguarding 2020-21.
- Update on Swansea Achieving Better Together.
- Impact of the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020.
- Annual Complaints Report 2020-21.
- City and County of Swansea Administered Trust Funds.
- Update Report South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee – January 2022.
- Service Centre – Accounts Receivable Update.
- Corporate Risk Overview – Quarter 3 2021/22.
- Place: Internal Control Environment 2021/22.
- Workforce Strategy.
- Draft Internal Audit Annual Plan 2022/23.
- Internal Audit Annual Plan Methodology.
- Absence Management Audit Report 20/21.
- Draft Internal Audit Charter 2022/23.
- Internal Audit Strategy & Annual Plan 2022/23.
- Corporate Risk Overview – Quarter 4 2021/22.
- Achieving Better Together – Recovery Plan.
- Governance and Audit Committee Training Programme.

Governance and Audit Committee Training

- 3.31 Following discussions with Democratic Services, it was agreed that repeated annual training in core areas was no longer necessary. Instead, Members agreed that specific training should be arranged based on training needs. The Governance & Audit Committee Training Plan 2022/23 was approved by the Committee on 12 April 2022.

4. Looking Forward

- 4.1 Looking ahead to 2022/23 the Governance & Audit Committee's membership and responsibilities will need to have careful consideration and support. The Deputy Chief Executive has confirmed that following the May 2022 local elections it will be his intention to enact the Training Programme to support the work of the Committee in all new areas of responsibility. Also, this programme will reflect the needs of all new Councillor and Lay Members.

4.2 The Committee’s concerns expressed during the 2021/22 Municipal year will be appropriately reflected in the Annual Governance Statement and will include the absence of the Workforce Strategy, the further improvements to embedding the risk management arrangements and enhanced reporting and the Moderate or Limited Assurance Internal Audit reports where audit recommendations remain outstanding.

5. Committee Membership & Attendance

5.1 The membership of the Governance & Audit Committee at the start of the 2021/22 Municipal Year consisted of two Lay Members and 12 Non Executive and 1 Executive Councillor elected by Council. Independent Members are appointed for no more than two administrative terms with Council Members reappointed annually.

5.2 The Committee is serviced by Council Officers, principally the Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer, Chief Legal Officer, Strategic Delivery & Performance Officer, Chief Auditor and Democratic Services. Representatives from Audit Wales also attend Committee meetings.

5.3 During 2021/22 the Committee has followed a structured workplan which covered all areas of the Committee’s responsibilities with the aim of obtaining assurance over the areas included in its terms of reference. The Committee includes 2 Lay Members and will have to amend its membership in 2022 as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. One Lay Member is also the Chair of the Committee.

5.4 The Governance and Audit Committee met on 11 occasions throughout the Municipal period 2021/22 on the following dates: 9th June 2021, 13th July 2021, 24th August 2021, 14th September 2021, 12th October 2021, 9th November 2021, 14th December 2021, 12th January 2022, 8th February 2022, 8th March 2022 and 12th April 2022. The meeting agendas, minutes and recordings can be located at:

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

5.5 Committee Member attendance in 2021/22 is shown in the following table:

Attendance 2021/22	Possible	Actual
Independent Lay Members		
Mrs Paula O’Connor (Chair)	11	11
Julie Davies	11	11
Non-Executive Councillors		

Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams (Vice Chair)	11	9
Councillor Cyril Anderson	11	10
Councillor Peter Black	11	10
Councillor David Helliwell	11	9
Councillor Terry Hennegan	11	4
Councillor Oliver James	10	7
Councillor Jeff Jones	11	8
Councillor Hannah Lawson	1	0
Councillor Mike Lewis	11	10
Councillor Clive Lloyd	11	6
Councillor Sam Pritchard	11	11
Councillor Jen Raynor	11	8
Councillor Lesley Walton	11	10
Councillor Mike White	11	10

6. Future Governance and Audit Committee Meetings

- 6.1 As agreed by the Head of Democratic Services, the Council Diary for the current municipal year includes Governance and Audit Committee meetings on a monthly basis.
- 6.2 Additional/special meetings may need to be held at certain times of the year to ensure the smooth delivery of the Committee's work programme. The Committee also has the ability to call additional meetings when required.

7. Governance and Audit Committee Contact Details

Paula O'Connor Chair of Governance and Audit Committee	Chair.Audit@swansea.gov.uk
Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams Vice Chair of Governance and Audit Committee	Cllr.Paxton.Hood-Williams@swansea.gov.uk 01792 872038
Ben Smith Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer	Ben.Smith@swansea.gov.uk 01792 636409
Jeff Dong Deputy Chief Finance & Section 151 Officer	Jeffrey.Dong@swansea.gov.uk 07810438119/ 07811847582

Simon Cockings Chief Auditor	Simon.Cockings@swansea.gov.uk 01792 636479
Gillian Gillett Audit Wales	Gillian.Gillett@audit.wales
Tracey Meredith Monitoring Officer & Chief Legal Officer	Tracey.Meredith@swansea.gov.uk 01792 637521
Richard Rowlands Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager	Richard.Rowlands@swansea.gov.uk 01792 637570

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix A - Governance and Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Governance & Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Governance & Audit Committee

Statement of Purpose

The Governance and Audit Committee is a key component of the City and County of Swansea's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.

The purpose of the Governance and Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the performance assessment of the Council. It provides an independent review of the governance, performance assessment, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

Membership

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 provides that two thirds of the members of the Committee are to be members of the council and one third must be lay members. Only one member of the Cabinet or Assistant to the Cabinet may sit on the Committee, and that person must not be the Leader. The Chair must be a lay member and the vice chair must not be a member of the Cabinet or an Assistant to the Cabinet.

Governance, Performance, Risk and Control

- a) To review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework and consider annual governance reports and assurances.
- b) To review the Council's draft annual Self-Assessment Report, and make any appropriate recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions the Council intends to make.
- c) To review the Council's draft response to the Panel Performance Assessment Report, and make any appropriate recommendations for changes.
- d) To review the Council's draft response to any Auditor General's recommendations arising from a special inspection in respect of the Council's performance requirements and to make any appropriate recommendations for changes.
- e) To review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively and to make any associated reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively.

- f) To review the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances.
- g) To consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- h) To consider the Council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the council.
- i) To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council.
- j) To monitor progress in addressing risk related issues reported to the Committee.
- k) To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
- l) To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption.
- m) To monitor the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources.
- n) To review any proposals in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations.
- o) To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.

Internal Audit

- p) To approve the internal audit charter and resources.
- q) To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, containing internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurances and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
- r) To approve significant interim changes to the risk based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
- s) To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the Chief Internal Auditor to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
- t) To consider the Chief Internal Auditor's annual report and opinion, and a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over the Council's corporate governance arrangements.
- u) To consider the Chief Internal Auditor's annual report.

- v) To consider reports from the Chief Internal Auditor on Internal Audit's performance during the year including the performance of external providers of internal audit services.
- w) To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the Annual Governance Statement, where required to do so by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- x) To consider any impairments to independence or objectivity arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing of the Chief Internal Auditor. To approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
- y) To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
- z) To receive reports outlining the action taken where the Chief Internal Auditor has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
- aa) To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of the providers of internal audit services.
- bb) To consider a report from internal audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale.
- cc) To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.
- dd) To contribute to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and in particular the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.
- ee) To provide free and unfettered access to the Governance and Audit Committee Chair for the Chief Internal Auditor, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the Committee.

External Audit

- ff) To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and to those charged with governance.
- gg) To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
- hh) To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- ii) To commission work from external audit.

- jj) To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external audit and other inspector agencies or relevant bodies

Financial Reporting

- kk) To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- ll) To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Accountability Arrangements

- mm) To report to full Council on a regular basis on the Committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose.
- nn) To report to Council on an annual basis and to publish an annual report on the Committee's work, its performance in relation to the Terms of Reference, and its effectiveness in meeting its purpose.
- oo) To raise the profile of probity generally within the Council and to report on matters of concern to the individual Cabinet Member, relevant Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet or to Council as necessary and appropriate.
- pp) To work in synergy with the Scrutiny Committees of the Council and liaise with other Council Committees as and when appropriate to avoid duplication in work programmes.
- qq) To report to those charged with governance on the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the Appendix 1 adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements, and internal and external audit functions
- rr) To publish an annual report on the work of the committee.

Training and Development

- ss) To attend relevant training sessions including specialist training tailored for Members of the Governance and Audit Committee.

Governance & Audit Committee Workplan 2022/23

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference	31 May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023
Training	Governance and Audit Committee Induction Training	Organisational Knowledge / Committee Role & Function / Financial management & accounting / External audit / Values of good governance	Corporate complaints / Governance / Performance management & monitoring					Counter fraud	Corporate complaints Update / Cyber Security	Understanding Financial Statements			
Governance & Assurance	Election of Chair & Vice Chair Appointment of Committee Member on Annual Governance Group Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 Draft Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report		Local Code of Corporate Governance: Framework of Assurance Overview of Governance & Assurance arrangements - Partnerships & Collaborations Workforce Strategy Update Update Report – South West Wales CJC		Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual letter to the Council for the period 2020-21	Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22.	The Annual Review of Performance 2021-22 (including Self-Assessment Report)	Transformation Goals & Strategy Review	Annual Complaints Report		Council partnerships (Governance) Public Participation Strategy Update on the Council's transformation programme, including governance		Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 Draft Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report
Internal Audit	Internal Audit Annual Report	IA Quarter 4 Monitoring Report Service Centre – Accounts Receivable Update. FOI/SAR/EIR Audit Update IA Recommendation Tracking Report – 24	Annual Report of School Audits 2021-22 Internal Audit Report - Accounts Receivable Action Plan.		IA Recommendation Tracking Report – IA Q1 Recommendations Tracker IA Quarter 1 Monitoring Report Management of Absence Update Employment of Agency Staff		IA Q 2 Monitoring Report Moderate Report – Destination Lettings	IA Recommendation Follow-up Report – Q2 Fundamental Audits – Recommendation Tracker Report Rechargeable Works Western Bay Adoption Services & Adoption Allowances	Accounts Receivable	IA Recommendation Tracking Report – Q3 IA Q 3 Monitoring Report Management of Absence Update Employment of Agency Staff	IA Annual Plan Methodology Report 2023/24 Draft IA Annual Plan 2023/24	IA Charter 2023/24 IA Strategy & Annual Plan 2023/24 Update - Moderate Report – Destination Lettings	
Risk Management & Performance					Q1 Risk Monitoring Report		Q2 Risk Monitoring Report	The Annual Review of Performance 2021-22 (including Self-Assessment Report)		Q3 Risk Monitoring Report		Q4 Risk Monitoring Report	

Governance & Audit Committee Workplan 2022/23

Appendix 1

Counter Fraud			Internal Audit Section – Fraud Function Annual Report 2021/2022 Internal Audit Section – Fraud Function Anti-Fraud Plan for 2022/23					Corporate Fraud – Six Month Update					
Operational matters / key risks			Complaints Report – 6 Month Update.		Update on Internal Control Environment – Director of Education		Update on Internal Control Environment - Director of Social Services / Director of Finance		Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty	Update on Internal Control Environment – Director of Place		Update on Internal Control Environment – Director of Corporate Services	
External Audit		Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – City and County of Swansea Council. Audit Wales – 2022 Audit Plan			Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – City and County of Swansea Council. Assurance Risk Assessment (ARA) progress update letter	Joint Presentation - Audit of the Council's coming out of COVID activities		Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – City and County of Swansea Council.		Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030 & Assurance and Risk work - carbon reduction - C&C Swansea	Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable – City and County of Swansea Council.	Audit Wales Annual Summary	
Financial Reporting											Statement of Accounts		

Additional Work programme Governance and Audit Committee
As a result of the Local Government And Elections Act.

Across all areas of the work programme, consideration and acknowledgement will be given to the views, feedback and assurance from the scrutiny and performance committees that robust overview and scrutiny has taken place of decisions, policies and proposals and the assurance then given to Audit committee when they are reviewing the area of work in relation to Assurance, risk environment, Regulatory compliance and overall governance.

Area of work	Owner	Frequency <i>The frequencies are a guide and additional reviews may take place as and when the committee feel necessary.</i>	Month to present to committee
To review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework	Ness Young / Richard Rowlands	Every 2 years	See Annual Governance Statement
To review the Council's draft annual Self-Assessment Report,	Richard Rowlands	Annual	December
To review the Council's draft response to the Panel Performance Assessment Report	Richard Rowlands	Once every 4 years	TBC
To review the Council's draft response to any Auditor General's recommendations arising from a special inspection in respect of the Council's performance requirements	Ness Young	As and When required	TBC
To review the programme of work from regulators	Richard Rowlands	Annually	TBC

Appendix 2

To review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively	Sarah Lackenby	Annual	
To review the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval	Richard Rowlands	Annual	May
To consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.	Richard Rowlands / Ness Young	Annual	Possibly covered to a degree in the self-assessment report but too early to say.
To consider the Council's framework of assurance	Richard Rowlands / Ness Young	Annual	See Internal Audit Assurance Map
To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management	Richard Rowlands	Each meeting	Quarterly Overview of Risk Reports
To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions	Simon Cockings	As and when required	Quarterly Monitoring Reports throughout the year.
To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption	Simon Cockings	Every 6 months	Fraud Function Annual Plan – March Fraud Function Annual Report – July Fraud Function Half-Year Update Report - December
To monitor the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources	Simon Cockings	Every 6 Months	Fraud Function Annual Plan – March Fraud Function Annual Report – July

Appendix 2

			Fraud Function Half-Year Update Report - December
To Receive proposals in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations	Simon Cockings	as and when	n/a
To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations	Deputy Chief Executive / Richard Rowlands / Relevant Director	Annual / as and when new Partnerships or collaborations are established	June/July
To approve the internal audit charter and resources	Simon Cockings	Annual	Internal Audit Charter Report – April
To consider the Chief Internal Auditor’s annual report and opinion, and a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over the Council’s corporate governance arrangements	Simon Cockings	Annual	Internal Audit Annual Report – May
To consider reports from the Chief Internal Auditor on Internal Audit’s performance during the year including the performance of external providers of internal audit services	Simon Cockings	Every 6 months	Quarterly Monitoring Reports throughout the year.
To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the Annual Governance Statement, where required to do so by the Accounts and Audit Regulations	Simon Cockings	Annual	Internal Audit Annual Report – May

To consider any impairments to independence or objectivity arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing of the Chief Internal Auditor. To approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments	Simon Cockings	Annual	Internal Audit Charter Report – April
To receive reports outlining the action taken where the Chief Internal Auditor has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions	Simon Cockings	As and when	Quarterly Monitoring Reports throughout the year.
To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of the providers of internal audit services	Simon Cockings	As and when required	Quarterly Monitoring Reports throughout the year.
To consider a report from internal audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale.	Simon Cockings	Quarterly	Quarterly Monitoring Reports throughout the year.
To contribute to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and in particular the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five year	Simon Cockings	Every 5 Years	Internal Audit Annual Report – May
To consider the external auditor’s annual letter, relevant reports, and to those charged with governance.	Ben Smith	Annual	External Auditor’s annual letter – July

Appendix 2

To review the annual statement of accounts.	Ben Smith	Annual	Report of S151 officer including Statement of Accounts – July
To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts	Ben Smith	Annual	External Audit Annual Report - July
To publish an annual report on the work of the committee.	Paula O'Connor	Annual	Draft Audit Committee Annual Report – May

Agenda Item 8



Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 March 2023

Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report

Purpose	The Committee is responsible for managing the overall work of scrutiny and its effectiveness. Performance Panel conveners will regularly provide a progress report, updating the Committee on headlines from their Panel's work and impact.
Content	This report focuses on the following Performance Panel: a) Child & Family Services
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure awareness and understanding of the work of the Panels• Consider their effectiveness and impact• Consider any issues arising and action required
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams (Child & Family Services Panel Convener)
Lead Officers & Report Author	Liz Jordan E-mail: scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Amanda Thomas

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There are six Performance Panels which have been established by the Committee. Whilst the work of an Inquiry Panel leads to the production of a final report with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet based on evidence gathered on a specific issue, the work of a Performance Panel represents regular monitoring of, and challenge to, particular services / service areas and issues.
- 1.2 Performance Panels are expected to have on-going correspondence with relevant cabinet / lead members in order to share views and recommendations, arising from monitoring activities, about the performance of services and service delivery.
- 1.3 The Committee is responsible for managing the overall work of scrutiny and its effectiveness. Performance Panels Conveners will therefore provide a regular progress report to the Committee to enable:

- a discussion on the work of each Panel, achievements, effectiveness and impact
- the Committee to consider any issues arising from Panel activities which may have an impact on the overall scrutiny work programme
- awareness amongst the Committee as well as visibility across the council and public.

1.4 This report is about the following Performance Panels:

- a) Child & Family Services – this is an update on work carried out over the past year.

To focus the discussion a short, written report has been provided by the Convener and is **attached**. This includes a summary of Panel activities, correspondence between the Panel and relevant Cabinet Members, recommendations and impact.

1.5 The Child & Family Services Panel involves the following members:

Labour Councillors: 3

Yvonne Jardine	Wendy Lewis
Erika Kirchner	

Liberal Democrat/Independent Councillors: 4

Mike Day	Susan Jones
Kevin Griffiths	Cheryl Philpott

Conservative Councillors: 1

Paxton Hood-Williams (CONVENER)	
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2. Legal Implications

2.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Performance Panel Update

Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel Update

1. Remit of the Panel

The overarching purpose of the Panel is to provide ongoing challenge to performance in Child and Family Social Services and to ensure that as the Service is undergoing major change, performance is maintained and that further improvements are made across all areas of the Service.

2. Key Activities

The Panel is currently meeting on a six-weekly basis and since the beginning of this municipal year the Panel has looked at the following:

Meeting	Topic(s)
11 October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of the Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel • Overview of Child and Family Services in Swansea (including key priorities and challenges and performance monitoring report) • Draft Work Programme 2022-23
1 November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Care Services (including Ty Nant) • Corporate Parenting Board Update
5 December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Child and Family Improvement Programme and Performance Monitoring • Update from Regional Safeguarding Board • Safeguarding Quality Unit Annual Report
24 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on progress with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) • Update on Child Disability Services
13 February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Budget Proposals for Child and Family Services / Adult Services (Joint Social Services Panel)

3. Achievements / Impact

We have sent 4 letters to the Cabinet Member for Care Services since our first meeting of the Council term in October 2022, in order to give our views, raise concerns and make recommendations, for example:

Positives:

- Overview of Child and Family Services in Swansea – Panel pleased to hear that at the six-monthly catch up with the local lead inspector he was very pleased with the progress of the performance report and pleased to see the Department had taken on board findings from the last inspection a couple of

years ago. Panel heard the performance report continues to evolve and was pleased with this report and thought it a big improvement.

- Corporate Parenting Board Update – Panel mentioned it previously had concerns about the difference in performance of looked after children between year 6 and year 11 and heard the Virtual School will allow the Service to interrogate this in a more joined up way which is good for attainment and progression. Also heard Welsh Government has offered to pilot the Virtual School and Swansea is part of the pilot. Effectiveness of the virtual school will be judged using data on attendance, progress, exclusions, progression and feedback from children and young people about meeting their aspirations. Panel interested to see how these outcomes are reported.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services – Panel queried how CAMHS measures up against the original Scrutiny Inquiry recommendations and was pleased to see the Inquiry's recommendation that CAMHS should come in house was now being taken forward. The Inquiry had also raised the issue of transition from children to adults and how children felt that one minute they had access to CAMHS and then when they reached 18, especially young boys/men, they were left without the support they needed. Informed transition is one of the key areas that CAMHS has been exploring but needs to do more on and that they see the transfer of CAMHS back into Swansea Bay as one of the key drivers for this. Panel pleased to hear CAMHS are looking at recruiting a transitional nurse and have a new regional transitional policy.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services – Panel queried what support mechanisms would be available to a youngster in crisis and if they would be referred through to CAMHS in the first instance or if there would other mechanisms to pick up the young person and heard CAMHS has a crisis service which operates between 9am and 9pm and is accessed via the single point of access number. Panel pleased to hear the plan is to increase this service to 24-7 by June 2023 at the latest.

Issues / Concerns:

- Overview of Child and Family Services in Swansea – Panel queried if privately run homes in Swansea are causing any concern and heard it does create a level of demand within the Service and with Police and Health. Also heard the Service in Swansea would not choose to place some of its children in these homes for various reasons.
- Residential Care Services – Panel noted the Statement of Purpose was for 12 weeks and queried what this meant as far as CIW is concerned and more importantly for the young people involved and their feelings of surety and further abandonment at being moved on again. Panel informed this is an arbitrary figure and depends on if there is a more appropriate transition for the young person to move on to more stable provision within the 12 weeks. If there is not, the Service will use the evidence it has to delay it until it is the right time. Also heard the Service is working closely with the CIW regulations and inspections team on this, and they are fully aware of the challenges. Panel noted the main point of having a timeline stipulated is not for it to drift if it is best for the young person to move on.
- Corporate Parenting Board Update – Panel queried how many children are currently living in bed and breakfasts and was informed that currently there are none but over a period of three months there have been between two and five. Children have regular contact from a personal advisor and are supported

by other agencies. The Service tries to keep their stay there as short as possible, but the challenge is move on options as there is a lack of availability in Swansea of independent accommodation. They are mainly people aged 18+ so the Authority does not have as many rights to intrude on their lives, so it is their choice if they want to see officers from the Authority or not.

- Performance Monitoring - Officers confirmed that of 479 looked after children, 112 are living in neighbouring authorities, 52 are living in other authorities in Wales, 20 living in England and 1 in Scotland with extended family members. Panel noted the number of looked after children living outside Wales is rising and that one of the reasons is lack of suitable placements in Wales, partly due to Welsh Government's 'Eliminate' Programme, making some providers nervous about their future in Wales.
- Performance Monitoring – Panel noted the Department has approximately 159 vacancies at the time and 12 agency staff. Panel is concerned with the number of vacancies across the Service, about coming back to the situation in the past with staff shortages and agency staff who do not fully understand situations. Cabinet Member commented it is important to see the strategies that are being taken, for example the Academy, to try and help with the vacancies. Panel agreed it is not a quick fix but will hopefully create the home-grown workforce and longevity needed so the Department won't need to have agency backup. Panel feels with the Academy being set up, the Department is making a big effort in respect of this issue.

Action Recommended / Agreed:

- Panel mentioned referrals and that it would expect the Health Service and Police to be fully aware of what needs to happen if they come across any cases of concern but queried if there was any scope for doing something with foodbank volunteers, many of whom do not have a background in health or social care and would appreciate guidance in terms of what to do if they come across a family where they have concern. Cabinet Member stated that SCVS offer safeguarding training to volunteers and that there may be value in enhancing this offer through SCVS by offering a conversation to help them understand the Service's continuum of need, which may help them to understand what to refer into Social Services. Officers offered to take this away and have a follow up with SCVS colleagues. Panel added that whilst volunteers may be aware of training on safeguarding, what do they do if they have a question or concern or may be fearful of raising something which turns out to be nothing, it's giving them the assurance that it's more important to raise the issue. Panel informed the Service can also connect them to its Early Help Hubs and that it has Early Help Hub locality meetings, which would be a good place to have this sort of conversation, not about individual families but helping with understanding and assurance.
- Panel wanted to know why staff keep getting admissions paperwork wrong at Ty Nant, as there are so few people it must be completed for. Informed it seems simple, but the guidance is quite complicated and there is a lot of information that needs to be on the admissions paperwork that has to be correct. Panel heard that the Service is working with CIW to identify the best models to use so paperwork is not as complicated to complete and that it is a work in progress and Service hopes to see improvement when the further inspection of Ty Nant is carried out in December 2022. Panel very interested

to see the outcome following this further focused inspection and it has been added to the future work programme.

4. Future Work Programme

The programme for the remainder of this municipal year is as follows:

Meeting date	Item to be discussed
7 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on Support for Carers (including assessments)• Performance Monitoring• Briefing on Youth Offending Service
25 April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of Corporate Priorities in relation to Child and Family Services• Update on Regional Adoption Service• Child and Family Complaints Annual Report 2021/22• End of Year Review

5. Action for the Scrutiny Programme Committee

None.

Agenda Item 9



Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 March 2023

Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

Purpose:	The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for appointing members and conveners to the various Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups that are established. This report advises of relevant matters that need to be considered.
Content:	This report is provided to facilitate any changes that need to be made.
Councillors are being asked to:	agree the membership of Panels and Working Groups reported, and any other changes necessary.
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Amanda Thomas

1. Introduction

1.1 In accordance with Council report 18 October 2012, when current scrutiny arrangements were agreed, the Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for appointing members and conveners to the various Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups that are established.

2. Proposed Revision to Current Scrutiny Panel / Working Group Membership

2.1 None.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 When determining membership / conveners or agreeing any changes there are some key considerations for the Committee:

- It is necessary for more than one political group to be represented on each Panel / Working Group.
- These bodies also need to be of a manageable size in terms of team working and effective questioning.
- To ensure that all political groups have opportunities and are engaged.
- Good scrutiny practice places emphasis on respect for minority party wishes around both chairing of such bodies and the work programme.
- Being fair and balanced in the appointment of conveners, when there is interest from more than one councillor, e.g. giving opportunity to those who have not acted as convener previously.
- The Committee should reflect on the existing 'balance' of conveners to help inform future appointments.
- A minimum of three members should be present at all Panel / Working Group meetings.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None

Agenda Item 10



Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 March 2023

Scrutiny Work Programme

Purpose	This report presents the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23, which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.
Content	The agreed work programme is attached, which shows the topics that will be examined by scrutiny through various Panels and Working Groups. A plan for future Committee meetings is also attached.
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• plan for the Committee meetings ahead• consider opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny• review the Scrutiny Work Programme (including progress of current Panels and Working Groups)
Lead Councillor	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
Report Author	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Amanda Thomas

1. Introduction

1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for developing the Council's Scrutiny Work Programme and managing the overall work of scrutiny to ensure that it is as effective as possible.

1.2 A report is provided to each meeting to enable the Committee to maintain an overview of agreed scrutiny activities, monitor progress, and coordinate work as necessary.

1.3 The broad aim of the scrutiny function is to engage non-executive councillors in activities to:

- provide an effective challenge to the executive
- help improve services, policies, and performance

- engage the public in its work
- 1.4 The Scrutiny Work Programme is guided by the overriding principle that the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant, focussed on issues of concern, and represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources.

It also needs to be:

- manageable, realistic and achievable given resources available to support activities
 - relevant to council priorities
 - adding value and having maximum impact
 - coordinated and avoids duplication
- 1.5 The work of scrutiny is undertaken primarily in three ways – through the Committee itself, by establishing informal Panels (for in-depth activities) or via one-off Working Groups. Panels and Working Groups would be open to all non-executive councillors - the Committee will determine membership and conveners following expressions of interest.
- 1.6 Scrutiny will regularly send letters to Cabinet Members communicating findings, views and recommendations for improvement and, where appropriate, by producing reports. Inquiry panels will always produce a final report at the end of the inquiry with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers), informed by the evidence gathered. Inquiry panels will reconvene to follow up on the implementation of agreed recommendations and the impact of their work – usually 6-12 months following cabinet decision.
- 1.7 Although much of the work of scrutiny is carried out by informal Panels and Working Groups these meetings are accessible to the public. Agendas, reports and letters relating to all such scrutiny activities are published, in the same manner as the committee, on the Council's modern.gov online platform:
<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

2. Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

- 2.1.1 The agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.1.2 The following paragraphs break down the work programme by specific ways of working to provide a brief overview.
- 2.2 Scrutiny Programme Committee:
- 2.2.1 The Committee work plan for the year ahead is attached as **Appendix 2**. This should be kept under constant review to ensure it represents a robust, manageable, and effective plan.

2.2.2 Committee members should always review and confirm items for the next and future meetings considering who should attend and confirm expectations so that meetings are always well planned and prepared for, e.g., information required and key questions that the Committee wishes to ask.

2.2.3 The main item(s) scheduled for the next Committee meetings are:

20 March (special):

- Pre-decision Scrutiny of Cabinet Report - National 20 Mph Default Speed Limit Including Consideration of the Exemptions Process.

18 April:

- Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Session - Safer Swansea Community Safety Partnership.

2.2.4 The Committee will have the opportunity to review priorities and introduce issues of concern as and when they arise, e.g., pre-decision scrutiny or call-in which may require extra meetings.

2.2.5 Pre-decision scrutiny – this is carried out by the Committee unless delegated elsewhere. The Committee is invited to consider the available information on future Cabinet business and any opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny, taking into account strategic impact, public interest, and financial implications (see Cabinet Forward Plan attached as **Appendix 3**). Any requests will require discussion with relevant Cabinet Member(s) to confirm timescales and window of opportunity for scrutiny involvement. Pre-decision scrutiny enables scrutiny to develop understanding about and ask questions on proposed Cabinet reports to provide ‘critical friend’ challenge and influence decision-making. It is intended to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the Cabinet report FPR7 Redevelopment of 277-278 Oxford Street - Community Hub Project, currently listed for 18 May Cabinet Meeting. This can be considered at the scheduled Committee meeting on 16 May.

2.3 Inquiry Panels:

2.3.1 Once membership and a convener have been appointed the first task of an Inquiry Panel will be to have a briefing on the issue and then determine the key question and terms of reference for the inquiry. Once the planning stage is complete, the inquiry will be evidence gathering, with the last stage being to develop the final report.

In Progress / Planned	Completed (follow up stage)
1. Anti-Social Behaviour (currently evidence gathering – next sessions on 9 Mar; 13 Apr)	1. Procurement (Follow up tba June / July 2023)

2.4 Performance Panels:

2.4.1 The following Performance Panels, which enable regular and structured monitoring of performance within these key areas, have been agreed and will meet on an ongoing basis until otherwise agreed by the Committee (frequency of meetings in brackets):

Performance Panel	Convener
1. Service Improvement & Finance (monthly)	Cllr. Chris Holley
2. Education (monthly)	Cllr. Lyndon Jones
3. Adult Services (every six weeks)	Cllr. Susan Jones
4. Child & Family Services (every six weeks)	Cllr. Paxton Hood-Williams
5. Development & Regeneration (every two months)	Cllr. Chris Holley
6. Climate Change & Nature (every two months)	Cllr. Hannah Lawson

2.4.2 Performance Panel conveners are scheduled to provide a regular update to the Committee to enable discussion on key activities and impact.

2.5 Working Groups:

2.5.1 The following Working Groups will be convened during the year ahead, in the order shown (date where known in brackets):

1. Road Safety (7 Dec)	3. Customer Contact
2. Co-production (9 Mar)	4. Healthy City

2.6 Joint / Regional Scrutiny:

2.6.1 **Partneriaeth** – A Joint Scrutiny Councillor Group, comprising of Education Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs, or equivalent, across Swansea Council, Carmarthenshire Council and Pembrokeshire Councils scrutinises the work of the new regional education partnership which will support the delivery of school improvement, and ensure greater public accountability over decisions made. Scrutiny will seek reassurance and consider if the Partnership is operating according to the Joint Committee Agreement, and its Business Plan, and is being managed effectively. The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and Convener of the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel are participating in the Scrutiny of Partneriaeth. The Partneriaeth Joint Committee, comprises the Leaders of the three Councils, as the strategic decision-making body. The Swansea Scrutiny Team manages support for the Scrutiny of Partneriaeth.

- 2.6.2 **Swansea Bay City Region City Deal** – Swansea Scrutiny is also involved in the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee, approved by Council in July 2018. This arrangement involves three councillor representatives from each of the four Councils involved in the City Region, meeting to scrutinise the work of the Joint Committee responsible for delivering the City Deal programme. As per the Joint Committee Agreement, the Scrutiny Committee is serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council. Swansea Scrutiny Councillor representatives are currently: Jan Curtice, Victoria Holland & Chris Holley.
- 2.6.3 **South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee** – The Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) involves Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire Councils, as well as Brecon Beacons and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities, and will exercise functions relating to strategic land use planning, regional transport planning and the exercise of economic well-being powers. The Committee has set up a CJC Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee which consists of three elected members from each Council and will meet at least quarterly. The Joint Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee will scrutinise the decisions / actions of the CJC as it discharges its functions and performance in relation to policy objectives and targets. The Joint Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee is being serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council. Swansea Scrutiny Councillor representatives are currently: Peter Black, Wendy Lewis & Mike White.
- 2.6.4 The Scrutiny Programme Committee will need to ensure that there is no duplication between local and regional scrutiny. A regular update on regional scrutiny activity will be provided to Committee members to ensure awareness. Regional scrutiny arrangements will not, however, preclude Councillors within constituent Councils discussing the impact of the regional body on their Council and locality, and holding Cabinet Members to account for their involvement / Council's involvement and engagement in regional bodies, and relevant local decision-making.

3. Monitoring the Work Programme

- 3.1 The Committee is responsible for monitoring progress against the agreed work programme and this includes work undertaken by the informal Panels and Working Groups and findings, to ensure that this work is effective and has the required visibility.
- 3.2 A timetable of all scrutiny activities (projected or actual where dates are known) is attached as **Appendix 4a**. Lead councillors and officers are also noted within. Also provided as **Appendix 4b** is a snapshot of progress with all Panels and Working Groups established by the Committee, as well as Regional Scrutiny, and their current position. These will be updated and provided to every Committee meeting.

- 3.3 The Committee will also be kept abreast of work plans of the individual Performance Panels to improve Committee oversight of topics being examined, check coverage across cabinet portfolios, and help avoid duplication of effort between the Committee and Panels and between Panels etc.
- 3.4 The Scrutiny Work Programme will be kept under constant review by the Committee, with changes made as necessary. The Committee will always retain the flexibility to adapt and re-prioritise the work of scrutiny in response to changing circumstances and/or urgent issues which may arise in-year, to ensure the continued relevance of the programme.
- 3.5 To ensure awareness and avoidance of any issue of duplication it is beneficial for the Committee to receive information about the work plans of relevant Council bodies. This includes the Governance & Audit Committee and the Council's Corporate Delivery Committees. Any issues regarding possible overlap / duplication will be discussed between the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and relevant Chairs.

4. Public Requests for Scrutiny / Councillor Calls for Action

- 4.1 Members of the public are able to make requests for scrutiny by contacting the Chair or Scrutiny Team in writing detailing the issue of concern, its impact, and suggested action. This can be via the Council's website: www.swansea.gov.uk/raiseanissuetoscrutiny or email to scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk. In accordance with agreed protocol the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee will consider any requests received and bring about proposals to deal with these to the Committee for consideration. Taking into account relevant advice, any such issues may merit inclusion in the work programme, referral elsewhere, or no action.
- 4.2 None received.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Any costs that arise out of work plan activities, for example expenses for witnesses or transport costs, are not envisaged to be significant and will be contained within the existing Scrutiny Budget.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Agreed Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Programme Committee Work Plan 2022/23

Appendix 3: Cabinet Forward Plan

Appendix 4a: Scrutiny Work Programme – Projected Timetable of Activity

Appendix 4b: Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels, Working Groups,
Regional Scrutiny

Appendix 1 - AGREED Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

New Inquiry Panel (time-limited in-depth scrutiny – six months)	New Working Groups (light-touch scrutiny / one-off meetings)	Performance Panels (ongoing in-depth performance / financial monitoring & challenge)	Issues for Scrutiny Programme Committee (overall work programme management; discussion of broad range of policy and service issues)
<p>1. Anti-Social Behaviour (Terms of Reference / Key Question to be agreed by Panel, but could focus on the effectiveness of partnership working in tackling anti-social behaviour in our communities; look at factors behind rising anti-social behaviour; powers & resources; reporting and response; current approaches; good practice elsewhere; the role of elected members, etc.)</p> <p>Reserve / Alternate Topic:</p> <p>2. Domestic Abuse (Terms of Reference / Key Question to be agreed – but would concern the quality of support for victims and what could be done better, taking internal & external evidence)</p>	<p>1. Road Safety (enabling focussed questioning & discussion on hot spots; work to improve safety; preventative measures; speed controls – use of signs / humps / cameras; proposed new 20mph limits; condition of roads; safety of cyclists & pedestrians; partnership working, etc.)</p> <p>2. Co-production (enabling focussed questioning & discussion on the development of Co-production in the Council and progress, helping to improve involvement and engagement with service users, partners and the public in the design & delivery of services & decision-making, etc.)</p> <p>3. Healthy City (enabling focussed questioning & discussion exploration of the Healthy City Partnership, key activities and achievements, work in relation to health promotion, particularly physical activities, including provision of outdoor sport and activities and opportunities for young people, etc.)</p> <p>4. Customer Contact (enabling focussed questioning & discussion on user experience when contacting the Council /</p>	<p>1. Service Improvement & Finance (monthly)</p> <p>2. Education (monthly)</p> <p>3. Adult Services (every six weeks)</p> <p>4. Child & Family Services (every six weeks)</p> <p>5. Development & Regeneration (every two months)</p> <p>6. Climate Change & Nature (every two months)</p> <p>Specific issues to consider including within wider Panel work plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Improvement & Finance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Plan - Scrutiny of Budget Proposals - Overall Performance Management - Welsh Housing Quality Standard - Planning Services - Waste & Street Cleansing - Recycling of Business Waste • Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achievement against Corporate Priorities / Objectives / Policy Commitments - Follow up post Education Estyn LEA inspection - Quality in Education (QEd) / Sustainable Communities for Learning - Additional Learning Needs (ALN) - School New Curriculum - Outdoor Learning in Primary Schools - Music Provision in Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific annual reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children & Young People’s Rights Scheme - Corporate Safeguarding - Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty • Leader Q & A Session(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Achieving Better Together’ Recovery / Transformation Plan - Policy Commitments / Council Priorities • Other Cabinet Member Q & As (issues to pick up): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Archives / Community Hub - Fly Tipping - Homelessness - Houses of Multiple Occupation - Parks - Community Growing - Community Groups, Engagement & Development • Public Services Board • Crime & Disorder (Community Safety) • Follow Up on Previous Working Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bus Services - Workforce (including discussion on Workforce Development Strategy)

Appendix 1 - AGREED Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

<p>Follow Up of Previous Inquiries:</p> <p>1. Procurement</p>	<p>accessing services whether by telephone or on-line / though digital means; provision for off line and on-line contact; effectiveness of Council Contact Centre; on-going actions to improve digital inclusion / access; quality of website, etc.)</p> <p>Reserve List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Travel (enabling focussed questioning & discussion on the Council's Active Travel Plans and outcomes; current & future developments; improvements to community consultation; how well we are meeting obligations of Welsh Government Active Travel Act; usage - impact on numbers cycling / walking; and relevant issues) • Racism in Schools (enabling focussed questioning & discussion on the extent of the issue; how schools deal with suspected racist incidents; reporting arrangements, rates etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achievement against Corporate Priorities / Objectives / Policy Commitments - Relationship between Health & Social Care • Child & Family Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achievement against Corporate Priorities / Objectives / Policy Commitments - Supported Living for Young People - Quality Assurance Framework • Development & Regeneration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achievement against Corporate Priorities / Objectives / Policy Commitments - City Deal 'Swansea specific' Projects - City Centre Retail / Development - New Build Housing Towers (e.g., student accommodation) - Historic / Listed Buildings - SA1 development & supporting infrastructure / services • Climate Change & Nature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achievement against Corporate Priorities / Objectives / Policy Commitments - Progress against Net Zero 2030 - Use of Glyphosate - Air Pollution - Green Vehicle Adoption & Provision for public / residential EV Charging - Flooding / Local Flood Risk Management 	
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Joint / Regional Scrutiny

- **Partneriaeth** (Education / School Improvement – Joint Scrutiny Councillor Group)
- **City Deal** (Development / Regeneration - Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee)
- **South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee** (Land Use Planning; Regional Transport; Economic Well-being – Joint Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee)

Scrutiny Programme Committee – Work Plan 2022/23

ACTIVITY	19 Jul 2022	16 Aug 2022	13 Sep 2022 CANCELLED	18 Oct 2022	15 Nov 2022	13 Dec 2022
Scrutiny Work Programme	Agreement of Scrutiny Work Programme	Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22				
Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibility Q & A Sessions		Archives / Community Hub (CM for Equalities & Culture)	Fly Tipping (CM for Community Services)	Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board	Fly Tipping (CM for Community Services)	Homelessness (CM for Service Transformation)
Other Cabinet Member / Officer Reports					Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report (CM for Care Services / Director of Social Services)	
Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Reports						
Pre-decision Scrutiny				Oracle Project Investment Update		
Final Scrutiny Inquiry Reports / Follow Up on Scrutiny Recs.					Follow Up: Scrutiny Working Group - Workforce (CM for Corporate Service & Performance)	

ACTIVITY	17 Jan 2023	14 Feb 2023	14 Mar 2023	20 Mar 2023 (special)	18 Apr 2023	16 May 2023
Scrutiny Work Programme			Audit / Scrutiny Relationship – Discussion w/ Chair of Governance & Audit Committee			Work Programme Review
Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibility Q & A Sessions	Leader / Economy, Finance & Strategy (incl. focus on Policy Commitments / Council Priorities; Recovery & Transformation Plan; Council Budget)	Houses in Multiple Occupation (CM for Corporate Service & Performance)				Parks (CM for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism)
Other Cabinet Member / Officer Reports	Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty (annual item) (Leader / CM for Wellbeing)	Scrutiny of Public Services Board (Draft Local Well-being Plan)			Crime & Disorder Scrutiny - Safer Swansea Community Safety Partnership	
Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Improvement & Finance • Education 	Adult Services	Child & Family Services		Development & Regeneration	Climate Change & Nature
Pre-decision Scrutiny				National 20 Mph Default Speed Limit		FPR7 Redevelopment of 277-278 Oxford Street - Community Hub Project
Final Scrutiny Inquiry Reports / Follow Up on Scrutiny Recs.			Follow Up on Bus Services Working Group recommendations (CM for Environment & Infrastructure)			

Other topics to schedule:

- Children & Young People's Rights Scheme (annual report) (Cabinet Members for Care Services / Education & Learning) – Sep 2023?
- Cabinet Member Q & A: Community Growing (Cabinet Member for Community Support); Community Groups, Engagement & Development (Cabinet Member for Community Support)

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2022-23

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
Updated FPR7 for Palace Theatre Refurbishment.	We will be submitting an updated FPR7 report to summarise the current situation regarding the Palace Theatre project and its expenditure and funding. This report will provide detail of the progress so far and the requirements to complete.	Tracy Nichols, Elliott Williams	Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open
National 20 Mph Default Speed Limit Including Consideration of the Exemptions Process.	This report has been prepared to advise members on the proposal to make the national default speed limit on restricted roads 20mph and detail those roads which will be exempt and remain at 30mph.	Alan Ferris	Cabinet Member - Environment & Infrastructure	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open
Quarter 3 2022/23 Performance Monitoring Report.	To report the performance indicator results and summarise the Council's performance meetings its priorities for the third quarter period October 2022 – December 2022	Richard Rowlands	Cabinet Member - Corporate Service & Performance (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2022-23

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant Programme 2023/24.	To provide details of Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant Programme and to seek approval to include schemes in the 2023/24 Capital Programme.	Darren Williams	Cabinet Member - Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open
Building Capital Maintenance Programme 2023/24.	This report sets out the way in which the Capital Maintenance resources for 2023/24 will be deployed.	Nigel Williams	Cabinet Member - Economy, Finance and Strategy (Leader)	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open
Capital Allocation to Highway Infrastructure Assets 2023-24.	To confirm the Capital work programmes for highway infrastructure assets	Bob Fenwick, Stuart Davies	Cabinet Member - Environment & Infrastructure	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open
Third Sector Compact Agreement Update.	The report updates on Swansea's Third Sector Compact Agreement and the work to date of the Third Sector Liaison Group who were formed as part of the updated Swansea Compact Agreement with the Voluntary Sector in 2018	Spencer Martin	Cabinet Member - Well-being	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open
Swansea Public Toilet Strategy – Revised January 2023.	A revision of Swansea's Public Toilet Strategy, in line with Welsh Government guidance.	Andy Edwards	Cabinet Members - Community	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2022-23

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
National Empty Homes Scheme 2023 – 2025.	To provide details of the National Empty Homes Scheme and to seek approval to participate in the scheme including match funding requirements.	Darren Williams	Cabinet Member - Corporate Service & Performance (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open
FPR7 Report - The Welsh Government Transforming Towns - Placemaking Grant.	Report seeking cabinet approval for the proposed Placemaking grant scheme under the Welsh Government Transforming Towns (TT) Programme, the associated Financial Implications and add these schemes to the capital programme.	Richard Horlock	Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open
Business Rates – Temporary Rate Relief Scheme (Wales) 2023/24.	This report provides details of a temporary business rate relief scheme and a recommendation on whether to accept grant funding from Welsh Government to support the expenditure incurred in providing relief under the scheme, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.	Julian Morgans	Cabinet Member - Economy, Finance and Strategy (Leader)	Cabinet	23 Mar 2023	Open

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Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2022-23

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
Tabernacle Morrison Community Resilience Hub.	Grade 1 listed Tabernacle Chapel renovation & improvements, to widen community / business usage. 3rd Sector asset. Council's role purely to manage the capital construction project and associated funding sources.	Jacquelyn Box	Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cabinet	20 Apr 2023	Open
Digital Strategy 2022-27 and the Digital Transformation Programme.	This is the updated Digital Strategy for the Council 2022-27, and Digital Transformation Programme for the next five years.	Sarah Lackenby	Cabinet Member - Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	20 Apr 2023	Open
Leisure Partnership Annual Report 2021/2022.	To advise Cabinet of the partnership operations of key facilities within the Cultural Services portfolio.	Jamie Rewbridge	Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cabinet	20 Apr 2023	Open

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Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2022-23

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board Area Plan 2023-2027.	<p>The Area Plan sets out how the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board will respond to the findings of the West Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment published on the 1st April 2022, which captured the health and social care needs of people across the West Glamorgan Region.</p> <p>The report asks members to endorse the West Glamorgan Area Plan 2023/2027 for consideration by the Health Board at the end of March and onward submission to Welsh Government.</p>	Kelly Gillings	Cabinet Member - Care Services	Cabinet	20 Apr 2023	Open
Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy.	<p>Report outlines the Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy and details priorities, actions and intended impact.</p>	Kate Phillips	Cabinet Member - Education & Learning	Cabinet	18 May 2023	Open

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Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2022-23

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
Asset Management Plan 2021-25 – Update.	Progress update for members on the initiatives outlined in the 2021-25 asset management plan.	David Turner	Cabinet Member - Corporate Service & Performance (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	18 May 2023	Open
FPR7 Redevelopment of 277-278 Oxford Street -Community Hub Project.	Update on the final costs for the refurbishment of the community hub.	Geoff Bacon	Cabinet Member - Corporate Service & Performance (Deputy Leader), Cabinet Member - Culture & Equalities	Cabinet	18 May 2023	Fully exempt

Appendix 4a

Activity / Month	JUN 2022	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2023	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
PERFORMANCE PANELS:												
Service Improvement & Finance (monthly) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Chris Holley Lead Scrutiny Officer: Rachel Percival Lead Cabinet Member: Rob Stewart / David Hopkins Lead CMT: Ness Young / Ben Smith Lead Head of Service: Lee Wenham				6	4	8	6	17	14	14	18	9
Education (monthly) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Lyndon Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Michelle Roberts Lead Cabinet Member: Robert Smith Lead CMT: Helen Morgan-Rees Lead Head of Service: cross-cutting					27	17	15	19	13	16**	20	11
Adult Services (every 6 weeks) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Sue Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Liz Jordan Lead Cabinet Member: Louise Gibbard Lead CMT: Dave Howes Lead Head of Service: Amy Hawkins / Helen St John				27		8		31	13 Joint SS	21		2
Child & Family Services (every 6 weeks) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Paxton Hood-Williams Lead Scrutiny Officer: Liz Jordan Lead Cabinet Member: Louise Gibbard Lead CMT: Dave Howes Lead Head of Service: Julie Davies					11	1	5	24	13 Joint SS	7	25	

Activity / Month	JUN 2022	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2023	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Development & Regeneration (every 2 months) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Chris Holley Lead Scrutiny Officer: Rachel Percival Lead Cabinet Member: Rob Stewart / Robert Francis-Davies Lead CMT: Mark Wade Lead Head of Service: Phil Holmes				5		14		30		20		15
Climate Change & Nature (every 2 months) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Hannah Lawson Lead Scrutiny Officer: Liz Jordan Lead Cabinet Member: Andrea Lewis Lead CMT: Mark Wade Lead Head of Service: cross-cutting						9		10		8		2
WORKING GROUPS:												
Topic 1 – Road Safety Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Hazel Morris Lead Scrutiny Officer: Rachel Percival Lead Cabinet Member: Andrew Stevens Lead CMT: Mark Wade Lead Head of Service: Stuart Davies							7					
Topic 2 – Co-production Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Lyndon Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Rachel Percival Lead Cabinet Member: Hayley Gwilliam Lead CMT: cross-cutting / Ness Young Lead Head of Service: cross-cutting / Marlyn Dickson										9		

Activity / Month	JUN 2022	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2023	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Topic 3 – Healthy City Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Mary Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Rachel Percival Lead Cabinet Member: Elliot King Lead CMT: Dave Howes Lead Head of Service: cross-cutting												
Topic 4 – Customer Contact Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Rebecca Fogarty Lead Scrutiny Officer: Rachel Percival Lead Cabinet Member: Andrea Lewis Lead CMT: Ness Young Lead Head of Service: Sarah Lackenby												
REGIONAL SCRUTINY:												
Partneriaeth Regional Scrutiny Councillor Group (Education / School Improvement) (quarterly) Swansea Scrutiny Councillors: Lyndon Jones (chair) / Peter Black Lead Scrutiny Officer: Michelle Roberts Lead Partneriaeth: Ian Altman / Gareth Morgans Lead Cabinet Member: Robert Smith Lead CMT: Helen Morgan-Rees Regional Lead: Martin Nicholls (Lead Director for Partneriaeth)					24				13			

Appendix 4a

Activity / Month	JUN 2022	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2023	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee (every 2 months) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Rob James (Carmarthenshire Council) Swansea Scrutiny Councillors: Jan Curtice, Victoria Holland, Chris Holley Lead Scrutiny Officer: Charlotte John, Neath Port Talbot Council Lead Cabinet Member: Rob Stewart Lead CMT: Martin Nicholls / Mark Wade Lead Head of Service: Phil Holmes		5		6			6		28			2
South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee - Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee (quarterly) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Russell Sparks (Carmarthenshire Council) Swansea Scrutiny Councillors: Peter Black, Wendy Lewis, Mike White Lead Scrutiny Officer: Charlotte John, Neath Port Talbot Council Lead Cabinet Member: Rob Stewart Lead CMT: Martin Nicholls / Mark Wade Lead Head of Service: Phil Holmes						8		27	23		20	

* denotes extra meeting

** not public

Information correct as of 07/03/23 12:02

Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups / Regional Scrutiny

1. Inquiry Panels:

These will undertake in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis and will be expected to take around six months to complete to enable wide-ranging evidence gathering, and production of a final report with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers).

a) **Anti-Social Behaviour** (convener: Cllr Terry Hennegan)

Key Question: *How can the Council ensure that it is working with its partners to appropriately and effectively tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in Swansea?*

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Panel had two meetings in February, firstly, they spoke with South Wales Police and then the Education Department. In March, they will also meet twice to look at Social Services including Youth Justice Team, Evolve and the Missing Trafficked and Exploited Team. Later in the month they will discuss Council Housing, Public Protection and Fly-tipping.

(NB - Inquiries may take up to six months to complete, as they will call for wide ranging evidence, and will lead to a report with conclusions and recommendations that will be presented to Cabinet)

2. Follow Up on Completed Inquiries:

Follow-ups of inquiries will consider both the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and wider impact / difference made. Inquiry Panels are reconvened between 6-12 months after cabinet decision on Inquiry reports.

Inquiry	Cabinet Decision	Recommendations			Follow Up Panel Meeting
		Agreed	Partly	Rejected	
Procurement	20 Oct 2022	14	0	0	Tba July 2023

3. Performance Panels:

Performance Panels enable regular and structured in-depth monitoring of performance and challenge within these key areas:

a) **Service Improvement & Finance** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

This Panel meets every month. On 14 February this Panel carried out pre-decision scrutiny on the budget papers in advance of Cabinet on 16 February.

The next meeting on 14 March will look at the Planning Annual Performance Report and Annual Complaints Report.

b) **Education** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

This Panel meets every month. At their meeting in February, they carried out pre-decision scrutiny on the annual budget as it relates to education matters.

In March, they will take a visit to Maes Derw Pupil Referral Unit and also receive an update on the Education Other Than At School Services (EOTAS).

c) **Adult Services** (convener: Cllr Susan Jones)

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At its meeting on 31 January the Panel discussed the Performance Monitoring Report for November 2022, received an update on the Adult Services Transformation Programme and the Options Appraisal for Community Alarms and Assistive Technology.

At the next meeting on 21 March, the Panel will receive an update on the West Glamorgan Transformation Programme, discuss the latest Performance Monitoring Report, receive a briefing on the Annual Review of Charges (Social Services) 2021/22 and an update on Local Area Coordination.

d) **Child & Family Services** (convener: Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams)

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. A progress report appears in the agenda under Item 8.

e) **Development & Regeneration** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

This Panel meets every two months. On 30 January this Panel reviewed the Regeneration Programme/Project Monitoring Report as well as a focussed look on the Tourism Destination Management Plan.

The next meeting on 20 March will focus on the Council's response to an Audit Wales Report regarding Town Centre Regeneration and continue reviewing progress on the Regeneration Programme/Projects.

f) Climate Change & Nature (convener: Cllr Hannah Lawson)

This Panel meets every two months. The Panel met on 10 January and received an update on Climate Change including the response to Audit Wales report on Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030. The Panel also discussed Green Vehicle Adoption and Public/Residential Electric Vehicle Charging and received a briefing on Weed Management/Use of Glyphosate.

At the next meeting on 8 March the Panel will discuss Nature Conservation - Project Updates and Air Quality Management and receive its annual update on Local Flood Risk Management.

4. Regional Scrutiny:

This is collaborative scrutiny with other Local Authorities for topics / issues of shared interest or concern, and models of regional working.

a) Partneriaeth - Regional Education Partnership

Partneriaeth Scrutiny is expected to take place every school term, mirroring meetings of the Partneriaeth Joint Committee.

The Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group met on the 13 February where they looked at the Joint Committee's risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements. They also received an update on the progress and performance of Partneriaeth Priority 1 - Curriculum & Assessment.

They will next meet on the 19 June, where they will meet with all three Directors of Education and the Chair of the Joint Committee, as it is stipulated in the Joint Agreement that this happens annually. With the purpose of seeking reassurance and to consider if the Partneriaeth is operating according to the Legal Agreement, its Business Plan and that its timetable is being managed effectively. They will also receive an update on Partneriaeth Priority 2 - Developing a high-quality education profession.

b) Swansea Bay City Region City Deal

The Joint Scrutiny Committee meets every two months. As well as overall programme / project monitoring including the latest financial position, the meeting on 28 February focussed on progress with the 'Swansea City and Waterfront Digital District' and 'Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth' projects. The Committee also considered issues around increasing construction costs and carbon reduction as they relate to the delivery of the City Deal programme.

The next meeting takes place on 2 May.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee is supported by Scrutiny Officers in Neath Port Talbot Council and agendas / minutes of meetings can be found on-line:

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=417>

c) **South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

The CJC Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee will meet at least quarterly. At the last meeting held on 23 February the Committee discussed the CJC Draft Corporate Plan, South West Wales Economic Delivery Plan, and Regional Transport Plan 2025-30.

The next meeting on 20 April will focus on CJC activity in relation to Energy and Strategic Development.

The Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee is supported by Scrutiny Officers in Neath Port Talbot Council and agendas / minutes of meetings can be found on-line:

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=499>

5. **Working Groups:**

A number of new topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Working Groups. These enable a 'light-touch' approach to specific topics of concern and will be planned as a one-off meeting (in the order shown below) primarily involving discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) / officer(s), and any other persons called, to gather information, ask questions, and give views / raise any concerns.

a) **Road Safety** (convener: Cllr Hazel Morris)

This Working Group met on 7 December to enable information, focussed questioning & discussion to understand the Council's role and responsibilities on road safety, e.g., asking about hot spots; work to improve safety; preventative measures; speed controls – use of signs / humps / cameras; proposed new 20mph limits; condition of roads; safety of cyclists & pedestrians; partnership working, etc. A letter with the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations was sent to the Cabinet Member and response received. This was reported to the Committee on 14 February and the Committee will be responsible for follow up in the next 12 months.

b) **Co-production** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

This Working Group has been arranged for 9 March 2023. It will enable information, focussed questioning & discussion on the development of Co-production in the Council and progress, helping to improve involvement and engagement with service users, partners, and the public in the design & delivery of services & decision-making, etc.

c) **Customer Contact** (convener: Cllr Rebecca Fogarty)

This will enable information, focussed questioning & discussion on the user experience when contacting the Council / accessing services whether by telephone or on-line / through digital means; provision for off line and on-line contact; effectiveness of Council Contact Centre; on-going actions to improve digital inclusion / access; quality of website, etc.

d) **Healthy City** (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

This will enable information, focussed questioning & discussion exploring the Healthy City Partnership, key activities and achievements, work in relation to health promotion, particularly physical activities, including provision of outdoor sport and activities and opportunities for young people, etc.

This has been carried over from previous work programme.

Agenda Item 11



Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 March 2023

Scrutiny Letters

Purpose:	To ensure the Committee is aware of the scrutiny letters produced following various scrutiny activities, and to track responses to date.
Content:	The report includes a log of scrutiny letters produced this municipal year and provides a copy of correspondence between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members for discussion as required.
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the scrutiny letters and responses• Make comments, observations and recommendations as necessary
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer:	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Amanda Thomas

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The production of scrutiny letters has become an established part of the way scrutiny operates in Swansea. Letters from the chair (or conveners) allow scrutiny to communicate directly and quickly with relevant Cabinet Members.
- 1.2 These letters are used to convey views and conclusions about particular issues discussed, and provide the opportunity to raise concerns, ask for further information, and make recommendations. This enables scrutiny to engage with Cabinet Members on a regular and structured basis.

2. Reporting of Letters

- 2.1 All scrutiny letters, whether they are written by the Scrutiny Programme Committee or conveners of Panels / Working Groups, are published to ensure visibility, of the outcomes from meetings, across the Council and public.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee agenda also includes a copy of letters to/from Cabinet Members for its attention and discussion as required, e.g., letters relating to the work of the Committee, Working Groups, and Inquiry Panel follow ups. Letters are included when Cabinet Member responses that were awaited are received or where a scrutiny letter did not require a response.
- 2.3 Where requested Cabinet Members are expected to respond in writing to scrutiny letters within 21 calendar days. The response should indicate what action (if any) they intend to take, or have taken, as a result of the views and recommendations made.
- 2.4 Letters relating to the work of Performance Panels are part of an ongoing dialogue with Cabinet Members and are therefore reported back and monitored by each Panel. However, all Performance Panel Conveners will provide a progress report to the Committee, including summary of correspondence with Cabinet Members and outcomes.

3. Letters Log

- 3.1 This report contains a log of scrutiny letters produced to enable the Committee to maintain an overview of letters activity over the current municipal year – see **Appendix 1**. The letters log will show the average time taken by Cabinet Members to respond to scrutiny letters, and the percentage of letters responded to within timescale. For comparison, during the previous year (2021/22) 66 letters were sent to Cabinet Members, of which 24 required a written response. The average time taken to respond was 18 days, with 71% responded to within the 21 days target.
- 3.2 The following letter(s), not already reported back to the Committee, are **attached** for discussion:

	Activity	Meeting Date	Correspondence
a	Committee (Scrutiny of Homelessness)	13 Dec	Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Services Transformation (Deputy Leader)
b	Committee (Leader Q & A Session)	17 Jan	Letter to Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

c	Committee (PSB Scrutiny – Draft Local Well-being Plan)	14 Feb	Letter to Chair of PSB Joint Committee
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3. Legal Implications

3.1 There are no legal implications.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Letters Log – 2022-23

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Letters / Responses

Scrutiny Letters Log (2022-2023)

Ave. Response Time (days):

19 (target within 21 days)

% responses within target:

77

No.	Committee / Panel / Working Group	Meeting Date	Main Issue(s)	Cabinet Portfolio	Letter Sent	Response Received
1	Committee	16-Aug	Community Hubs / Archives	Equalities & Culture	12-Sep	n/a
2	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	05-Sep	Regeneration Programme / Project Monitoring	Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	17-Oct	n/a
3	Committee	18-Oct	Pre-decision Scrutiny - Oracle Project Investment Update	Joint Economy, Finance & Strategy and Service Transformation	19-Oct	n/a
4	Adult Services Performance Panel	27-Sep	Service Overview	Care Services	24-Oct	n/a
5	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	04-Oct	Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report 22/23	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	27-Oct	28-Nov
6	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	04-Oct	Annual Performance Monitoring Report 21/22	Corporate Services & Performance	27-Oct	n/a
7	Education Performance Panel	27-Oct	Service Overview, Partneriaeth, Pupil Manifesto	Education & Learning	07-Nov	n/a
8	Child & Family Services Performance Panel	11-Oct	Overview of Child & Family Services, Draft work programme	Care Services	08-Nov	01-Dec
9	Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group	24-Oct	Legal Agreement, Joint Committee on 7 Oct, work programme	Chair of Partneriaeth Joint Committee	10-Nov	n/a

10	Education Performance Panel	17-Nov	Additional Learning Needs Reform, Curriculum for Wales update, Pupils Development Grant spend, School Improvement Service	Education & Learning	25-Nov	n/a
11	Child & Family Services Performance Panel	01-Nov	Residential Services; Corporate Parenting Board	Care Services	28-Nov	n/a
12	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	08-Nov	Welsh Housing Quality Standards Annual Update	Service Transformation	29-Nov	n/a
13	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	08-Nov	Annual Review of Performance 2021/22	Corporate Services & Performance	29-Nov	n/a
14	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	08-Nov	Welsh Public Libraries Standards Annual Performance Report	Equalities & Culture	29-Nov	n/a
15	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	08-Nov	Review of Revenue Reserves	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	29-Nov	n/a
16	Committee	18-Oct	PSB Scrutiny	Chair of Public Services Board Joint Committee	29-Nov	n/a
17	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	14-Nov	City Centre Retail and Regeneration Programme / Project Monitoring	Joint Economy, Finance & Strategy; Investment, Regeneration & Tourism; and Corporate Services & Performance	01-Dec	n/a
18	Adult Services Performance Panel	08-Nov	Audit Wales report on Direct Payments; CIW Inspections, Director of Social Services Annual	Care Services	05-Dec	23-Dec
19	Committee	15-Nov	Follow Up - Workforce Scrutiny Working Group	Corporate Services & Performance	16-Dec	04-Jan
20	Education Performance Panel	15-Dec	Annual Performance; and the Music Service	Education & Learning	29-Dec	19-Jan

21	Climate Change & Nature Performance Panel	09-Nov	Water Quality/Management; Overview of Climate Change & Nature in Swansea	Service Transformation	22-Dec	n/a
22	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	06-Dec	Mid Term Budget Statement 22/23	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	04-Jan	n/a
23	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	06-Dec	Recycling and Landfill - Annual Performance Monitoring 2021/22 and Recycling of Business Waste Briefing	Community (Services)	04-Jan	n/a
24	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	06-Dec	Audit Wales Report – “Making Equality Impact Assessments more than just a tick box exercise”	Equalities & Culture	04-Jan	n/a
25	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	06-Dec	Quarter 1 2022/23 Performance Monitoring Report	Corporate Services & Performance	04-Jan	n/a
26	Working Group	07-Dec	Road Safety	Environment & Infrastructure	04-Jan	26-Jan
27	Committee	15-Nov	Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report	Care Services	04-Jan	06-Jan
28	Committee	15-Nov	Fly Tipping	Community (Services)	10-Jan	24-Jan
29	Child & Family Services Performance Panel	05-Dec	CFS Improvement Programme and Performance Monitoring; Regional Safeguarding Board update; Safeguarding Quality Unit Annual Report	Care Services	11-Jan	n/a
29	Committee	13-Dec	Homelessness	Service Transformation	30-Jan	20-Feb

30	Education Performance Panel	19-Jan	New Curriculum for Wales, Pontarddulais School cluster	Education & Learning	01-Feb	17-Feb
31	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	17-Jan	Draft Budget Proposals 2022/23 – 2025/26 and Q2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23.	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	02-Feb	20-Feb
32	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	17-Jan	Q2 Performance Monitoring Report 22/23	Corporate Services & Performance	02-Feb	23-Feb
33	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	17-Jan	Sustainable Swansea	Service Transformation	02-Feb	21-Feb
34	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	14-Feb	Pre-decision Scrutiny - Annual Budget	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	15-Feb	n/a
35	Climate Change & Nature Performance Panel	10-Jan	Weed management / use of glyphosate	Environment & Infrastructure	16-Feb	n/a
36	Climate Change & Nature Performance Panel	10-Jan	Climate Change; Green vehicle adoption; Electric vehicle charging	Service Transformation	16-Feb	n/a
37	Committee	17-Jan	Tackling Poverty	Joint Economy, Finance & Strategy and Well-being	16-Feb	
38	Child & Family Services Performance Panel	24-Jan	CAMHS; Child Disability Services	Care Services	17-Feb	n/a
39	Committee	17-Jan	Leader Q & A Session	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	17-Feb	n/a
40	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	30-Jan	Tourism Management Plan and project monitoring report	Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	23-Feb	
41	Committee	14-Feb	PSB Scrutiny - Draft Well-being Plan	Chair of Public Services Board Joint Committee	28-Feb	n/a

42	Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group	13-Feb	Financial and risk assurance, new curriculum for Wales	Chair of Partneriaeth Joint Committee	01-Mar	n/a
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**To/
Councillor Andrea Lewis
Cabinet Member for Service
Transformation**

BY EMAIL

cc: Cabinet Members

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Our Ref
Ein Cyf:*

*Your Ref
Eich Cyf:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Scrutiny

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SPC/2022-23/7

30 January 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member following the meeting of the Committee on 13 December 2022. It is about Homelessness. A formal written response is required by 20 February.

Dear Councillor Lewis,

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 December Scrutiny of Homelessness

We are writing to you following our Scrutiny session, which focussed on a specific aspect of your cabinet portfolio responsibilities, namely homelessness. This has been an area of interest over the past few years, with Scrutiny Councillors taking the opportunity to influence the development of the Homelessness Strategy during 2018 and scrutinise its delivery. The last Committee session on 13 April 2021 considered progress in the delivery of that Strategy.

On this occasion the Committee was interested in how homelessness is being managed, as we emerge from the pandemic, and the support that is provided, what has changed over the last 18 months in that regard, current performance and trends, notable practice and outcomes, current pressures / challenges / risks, and the outlook and overall assessment of things.

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We thank you for attending the meeting and providing a written report covering this, and thank Steve Porter, Operations Manager – Community Housing Services, for taking us through the detail. The report helped us to understand progress and current activities in tackling homelessness, including proactive and preventative measures.

Your report set out how the Council is tackling homelessness, what the key priorities and objectives are through the introduction of a Housing Support Programme Strategy, and achievements. The report also provided an update on what impact the pandemic has had on homelessness and the current challenges that are currently being faced. The report looked at some of the reasons for homelessness and how the levels of demand have increased, particularly around the need for temporary accommodation through the Welsh Government's 'no-one left out approach' and showed some key trends:

- Swansea is currently experiencing the highest number of homelessness presentations, not expected to decrease in the short to medium term, with demand outstripping supply and a lack of suitable / affordable move-on options.
- Demand for social housing has rapidly increased since March 2016.
- Preventing homelessness is becoming more difficult at present due to a lack of permanent accommodation.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation is at the highest level on record.
- People are in temporary accommodation for longer with fewer options to move on.
- The private rented sector is becoming increasingly difficult to accommodate people in.
- Added issues such as the Ukrainian crisis, and current cost of living crisis is causing further pressures on the system.
- The greatest demand is for one bed accommodation.

You were keen to stress that that homelessness has increased across Wales, not just in Swansea, and referred to the Council's 'Always a Bed' pledge for anyone that needs one. We echoed your thanks to both Council staff and external partners who are working flat out to help people at their time of need, noting that much has been achieved in tackling homelessness, despite the challenging environment. This included:

- Since March 2020, moving 1,100 households from temporary accommodation into more suitable accommodation.
- Increasing permanent and temporary accommodation stock, including self-contained accommodation for both single persons and families. For example, the development of Bryn House, a new build site which combined 4 permanent flats with 4 'pods' used to provide temporary accommodation as an alternative to bed and breakfast.
- Increasing capacity at Ty Tom Jones – a model to move people out of homelessness by taking a rapid rehousing approach.

- Reducing evictions, managing issues including rent arrears to sustain tenancies, with targeted support.

The Committee was able to explore priorities / objectives, the delivery of this work and provide challenge on actions and performance, as well as future thinking. This letter reflects on what we learnt from the information presented, questions, and discussion. It shares the views of the Committee and highlights any outstanding issues / actions for your response - key issues are summarised below.

Homelessness Strategy

We noted that the Council's Homelessness Strategy, previously discussed by the Committee, has been incorporated within a new [Housing Support Programme Strategy and Action Plan](#) which sets out the single, strategic direction of the Local Authority for homelessness prevention and housing related support services for the next four years (2022 – 2026). It identifies that it's not just a Housing issue but one that requires a range of statutory partners, such as the Health Board, Social Care, Probation as well as and other third sector and not-for-profit organisations including Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), to cooperate to provide treatment and support for the most vulnerable people who are homeless to access and maintain a stable home.

We asked whether there been any revision to previously stated homelessness priorities in the new Strategy and/or refocussing considering experience over the year or so. We heard that the objectives have been carried forward but with an increased focus on rapid rehousing and increasing the number of properties.

In the previous Homelessness Strategy, you set out a number of areas for development, specifically: simplifying access to refuge accommodation and providing temporary supported accommodation for households experiencing domestic abuse; better working with the RSL sector; and improving outcomes for households with complex needs including mental health and learning disabilities. We asked about progress made with such issues. We noted that access to refuge accommodation remains difficult, essentially a 'one in / one out' situation at present. We heard praise for the major RSLs operating in Swansea, and their partnership working with the Council, with RSLs taking a flexible approach with how they have allocated properties and been supportive in meeting the increasing need of rising numbers in temporary accommodation. Mental health support also remains a difficult area generally, though improved provision at Ty Tom Jones, on Alexandra Road, with specialist support is making a difference, and increased resources in Housing First.

Causes of Homelessness

You reported that the reasons for homelessness have remained constant and the main reasons why people are homeless are:

- Relationship breakdown with family
- Relationship breakdown with partner (both violent and non-violent)
- Loss of private rented accommodation
- Leaving prison

We noted that more and more landlords are leaving the market and rents are very high, reducing affordable options in the private rented sector, resulting in a sharp rise in the number of people being asked to leave private rented accommodation, and less properties becoming available or having high rents. One of the reasons for the fall in supply may be landlords looking at more lucrative options such as Airbnb / holiday lets. Can you comment on the reasons for the reduction in the supply of affordable housing within the private rented sector?

We talked about ongoing initiatives to deal with the causes of homelessness, including prison leavers. We know there have been projects / schemes to help Councils support prison leavers into housing, but heard this remains a challenge locally, as they are currently not categorised as 'priority need'. You stated, however, there are good links with the Prison and relevant agencies such as Crisis UK to help prison leavers.

We also asked that any help available such as Mortgages Rescue Schemes (or similar in operation) and access to Social Housing Grant, be made more visible to the public as part of proactive efforts to prevent homelessness, particularly as the cost-of-living crisis bites further.

Homeless Presentations

The report provided to the Committee showed the total number of homeless presentations, and the graph clearly showed that it is increasing. In 2021/22, there were over 3,500 presentations compared to under 3,000 in 2011/12. We noted the greater concern that in the present year if the numbers continue to grow at the same rate there is likely to be well over 4,000 presentations. There is no evidence to suggest that the numbers are likely to subside anytime soon, and is being exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis.

We talked about the number of people sleeping rough. Currently the nightly average of people sleeping rough is 9 - approximately half of the rough sleeper numbers between 2017 – 2019. We noted reasons behind why some of those sleeping rough are doing so despite having a tenancy they could return to. It was noted that in recent years a relatively high number of those sleeping rough have come from out of the area, and heard that these cases can be difficult to deal with as there are often limited solutions.

We noted that the Housing First project will continue to be developed with resources being targeted through the Housing Support Grant to increase the number of people with complex needs being supported and housed via Housing First. We heard that currently around 25 people can be supported at any one time, with some resources being targeted at rough sleeping.

We were interested in comparative figures across Local Authorities regarding the numbers of rough sleepers. You undertook to provide relevant data, though indicated that as a city, Swansea and Cardiff will be comparatively higher than rural Council areas, and it should be noted that approaches to tackling homelessness, and facilities available, would vary across different authorities.

Temporary Accommodation

We know that during the pandemic the Welsh Government took a 'no-one left out approach' which meant that the 'priority need test' for homelessness was suspended. This placed enormous pressure on temporary accommodation. As we move out of the pandemic, whilst the 'priority need test' is now starting to be applied again, we heard that there is an expectation for Local Authorities across Wales to continue to support those currently in temporary accommodation until they can secure long term settled accommodation. Should the Welsh Government remove the priority need test it will have a big impact on homelessness numbers.

We noted there are currently 200 households in temporary accommodation, 75% of which are single persons and 25% of which are families. You reported that more families are having had to be placed into B&B and those families are spending a longer period in this form of accommodation. Whilst accepting B&B is there as a temporary solution, it is concerning that numbers are continuing to rise despite increasing the number of family sized temporary accommodation units in the last 2 years. We asked whether this trend likely to be reversed any time soon, as B&B accommodation is wholly unsuitable for children. We were told that B&B is only used as a last resort but in these challenging times use has been necessary, but every effort is made to keep families out of B&B. It was stated that there were only 2 families currently in B&B, both with older children.

Housing for Single Persons

It was noted in the report that there are many single homeless people needing accommodation. You stated that this is the area of greatest demand and being focussed on. We asked how many new 1-bedroom flats / self-contained properties are we building presently and how many have we got 'in stock'. We heard that there are around 1800 1 bed properties in stock, making up 20% of housing stock. The Council has acquired around 99 properties since 2018, 31 of which are 1-bedroom flats, and supply is being increased

further this year, with an additional 9 1-bed flats in the pipeline. We noted that the Council's More Homes Programme includes a percentage of 1-bed units as part of each development – currently 8 to 10 1-bed units within existing schemes, and a further 20 planned across the next 3 developments.

We asked about work being done to bring voids (empty Council properties) back into use. You reported approval of £229,108 funding to deliver kitchen and bathroom works to 34 major void properties which will increase capacity for the in-house team and enable void properties to be prepared for letting more quickly. We asked about the scope to convert properties to provide more single-person accommodation, as well as other investment in property – whether new build or acquisitions - to increase the amount of affordable housing. As part of that we asked whether more could be done given the number of private sector empty properties in the area, lobbying Welsh Government if necessary for more powers and resources, and look at prefabricated home options, if cost effective, which may provide a quicker solution to increasing stock.

We heard that the Council was struggling to keep up with demand but continues to lobby for more resources to help create extra housing capacity, for example from the Welsh Government's Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme launched in May 2022. Funding from this Programme has enabled work on the conversion of Eastside and Penlan District Housing Offices which should result in another 10 1-bed flats.

We noted that the challenge to increase the supply of social housing was a collective one, between Councils and RSLs, and developers and the Council will try to exert as much influence possible to increase affordable housing capacity.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter helpful and would welcome comments on any of the issues raised within. Specifically, we would appreciate your response to the following, as described in the letter:

- a) Information on comparative figures across Local Authorities regarding the numbers of rough sleepers
- b) Ensuring that help available such as Mortgage Rescue Schemes (or similar in operation) and access to Social Housing Grant, is made more visible to the public as part of proactive efforts to prevent homelessness, particularly as the cost-of-living crisis bites further; and
- c) Comment on reasons for the reduction in the supply of affordable housing within the private rented sector

Please provide your response to these, and any other comments about our letter by 20 February. We will then publish both letters in the agenda of the next available Committee meeting.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Black', written in a cursive style.

COUNCILLOR PETER BLACK
Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee
✉ cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk

COUNCILLOR PETER BLACK
Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee
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(By Email)

Please ask for: Councillor Andrea Lewis
Direct Line: 01792 63 7442
E-Mail: cllr.andrea.lewis@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: AL/JG
Your Ref:
Date:

20 February 2023

Dear Councillor Black,

Re: - Scrutiny Letter to Cabinet Member for Service Transformation dated 30 Jan (SPC 13 Dec - Homelessness)

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Scrutiny Programme Committee that was received on 30 January 2023.

In your letter you have asked for further information on three areas:

a) Information on comparative figures across Local Authorities regarding the numbers of rough sleepers.

As stated in the report, as of December 2022, Swansea was averaging 9 people sleeping rough per night.

Since the pandemic the collation of rough sleeping figures has changed across Wales as there is no longer a requirement for LA's to carry out an annual rough sleeping count. In addition, it is always difficult to compare LA's across Wales with regard to levels of rough sleeping as there will always be variations depending on a number of factors, such as size of Authority, density of population, services available etc.

In October 2022, it was reported that 5 LA's had over 10 rough sleepers in their area, these were Newport, Cardiff, Gwynedd, Pembrokeshire and Caerphilly. Newport reported the highest figure with 33 rough sleepers.

b) Ensuring that help available such as Mortgage Rescue Schemes (or similar in operation) and access to Social Housing Grant, is made more visible to the public as part of proactive efforts to prevent homelessness, particularly as the cost-of-living crisis bites further.

The Mortgage Rescue Scheme funded by the Welsh Government was stopped in about 2010/2011. Since then, there hasn't been a formal scheme running but the RSL's can access grants on a case-by-case basis to purchase properties in order to keep people in their homes and thereby prevent homelessness. This has been done in exceptional cases and we have worked with one RSL this year whereby the needs of the family were such that keeping the family in their home was the best option.

There are other ways of course to assist people who are having difficulties with their mortgage. Housing Options operate a dedicated money advice service, which provides

budgeting advice and negotiates with Lenders to prevent mortgage repossessions wherever possible. On occasions, we have been able to access prevention funds to assist with mortgage payments. However, with the cost of living and a rise in interest rates and repossessions, there is growing concern in this area. Currently, organisations such as Shelter Cymru are lobbying the Welsh Government to re-introduce the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. Whilst the landscape has changed since 2011, particularly around house prices, as a Local Authority we would be supportive of the development of a new Mortgage Rescue Scheme provided it was appropriately funded. I will ensure that the views of the Committee are shared with the Welsh Government as this is something that they are having early discussions on.

c) Comment on reasons for the reduction in the supply of affordable housing within the private rented sector.

There are a number of factors which have contributed to the reduction of supply of affordable housing in the private rented sector in Wales. In recent surveys carried out with Landlords they have cited a number of reasons for leaving the market. These have included:

- The ability to sell their property at a relatively high price
- The pandemic and the difficulties they had with being able to evict tenants who were in arrears
- Implications of the Renting Home Act
- Moving from long-term renting into Air B&B market

Consequently, with less properties available, demand is outstripping supply leading to an increase in rent being charged, often not in line with Local Housing Allowance rates. As stated in the Scrutiny report, we are mitigating against this by increasing the number of Social housing properties and working with landlords in the private rented sector to develop innovative solutions. We will continue to consider ways to increase the supply of affordable housing, particularly one bed properties.

The meeting on 13 December 2022 with the Scrutiny Policy Committee allowed us to reflect on what has been achieved in Swansea since the pandemic in 2020. It also gave us the opportunity to look at the challenges that lie ahead, both for the Local Authority and Wales as a whole, with regards to the ongoing housing crisis.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Y Cynghorydd Andrea Lewis / Councillor Andrea Lewis
Dirprwy Arweinydd / Aelod y Cabinet dros Drawsnewid Gwasanaethau
Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Service Transformation



**To/
Councillor Rob Stewart
Cabinet Member for Economy,
Finance & Strategy (Leader)**

BY EMAIL

cc: Cabinet Members

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Our Ref
Ein Cyf:*

*Your Ref
Eich Cyf:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Scrutiny

01792 637257

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SPC/2022-23/9

17 February 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member following the meeting of the Committee on 17 January 2023. It reflects on the Q & A Session on the Leader' portfolio responsibilities as Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy. It mainly concerns development and regeneration activity, including the City Deal. A formal written response is not required.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

Cabinet Member Question Session – 17 January

Thank you for attending the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 17 January 2023 and answering questions on your work as Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy.

The Q & A session gave us an opportunity to explore priorities and achievements in relation to your areas of responsibility. We appreciate you providing a written paper in support of your appearance at the meeting, which focused on the key headlines and issues of interest and concern to the Committee. This included copy of your recent report to Council on action / achievement against Policy Commitments (The First 100 Days). Your report focused on three key areas of significance: cost of living and budgetary impacts; regional work; and progress on major projects.

Thank you for supplementing the written report with a presentation which highlighted progress and provided a 'forward look' in relation to development and regeneration activity, one of the areas of Committee questioning whether through the City Deal Programme, Council projects, or private investment.

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I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

This included information on:

- Hafod Copperworks / Penderyn Distillery & Visitor Attraction – anticipated opening during 2023.
- Skyline Park on Kilvey Hill – anticipated to be a major tourist attraction.
- River Tawe Corridor 2022-2025 - the Council is committed to progressing the development and reopening of the River Tawe corridor, including new pontoons, to capitalise on the site's heritage.
- City Centre:
 - 71/72 Kingsway (City Deal Project) – anticipated completion during 2023 providing space for jobs in sectors like tech, digital and the creative industries.
 - 'Living Building' Scheme – redevelopment around the former Woolworths Store on Oxford Street in partnership with Welsh Government, Swansea University and Pobl Housing Group. This would be the first Biophilic building in Wales.
 - Community Hub in the former BHS Building on Oxford Street – will be home to new library and Archives Service as well as other public services providing for a 'one-stop shop'. Main contractor now appointed.
 - Castle Square Gardens – plan to revitalise the public space. The RIBA Stage 3 design is underway, and a planning application has been submitted. Anticipated that work will start on site during Q4 of 2022/23 and will feature two commercial units and increase in green space.
 - Princess Way / Princess House – private sector investment will see refurbishment of the area and further development. The same company has acquired the McDonalds building and property along Oxford Street signalling private sector confidence in the city, following Council investment.
 - Copr Bay – Phase 2 will include demolition of the St Davids Car Park during 2023 making space for development of a new Public Sector Hub.
- Palace Theatre - Tramshed Tech has signed a heads of terms agreement with Swansea Council for the development of the 133-year-old building.
- Albert Hall - acquired by a private sector partner. Work has commenced to convert this building into an 800-seat music and entertainment venue, with office space. Completion anticipated by Oct 2023.
- Civic Centre – working with appointed development partner, Urban Splash. Envisaged that the Civic Centre will not be demolished, and re-design will be based on an existing development in Portsmouth called 'Royal William Yard'. The site will be mixed use, including hotels, retail, residential and leisure, including an aquarium.
- Transport – planned improvement to rail and bus links / connections across the Region (Swansea Bay Metro); trialling hydrogen powered buses with support from Welsh Government
- Blue Eden and Mega Energy Hub – consortium of firms working on the Blue Eden proposal at SA1. Anticipating a planning application coming forward this year. Markedly different scheme from the former Tidal Lagoon

project, including significant on-land development. aims in the long term to deliver an electric battery manufacturing plant and battery storage facility, hundreds of waterfront homes, a tidal energy lagoon and floating solar farm within it, a data storage centre, a green hydrogen production facility, and an oceanic and climate change research centre.

This letter reflects on what we gained from the information presented, questions, and discussion.

We asked about the Swansea Bay City Deal Programme. We know that the Programme is an investment of up to £1.3 billion in a portfolio of nine major projects across the Swansea Bay City region, but is reliant on around £625m from the private sector. We were interested in the extent to which that private sector funding has been realised and what impact this contribution has on achieving the full benefits of the Programme, e.g., in terms of economic boost / job creation, improving services, boosting skills, and creating well-paid employment opportunities. You stated that whilst the Programme dates from 2016, it has taken time to gain necessary financial approvals from Government therefore it is still relatively early in terms of delivery, but we noted that that the nine major projects under the City Deal had now been fully approved and some private finance has been realised in terms of the smaller projects. Further investment would be gradually forthcoming over the life of the 15-year Programme. We noted that projects, including financial monitoring, are regularly reviewed through the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee / Overview & Scrutiny Committee. A benefits tracker is in place which is recording the benefits delivered and this is maintained through the project to completion and beyond and published as part of the City Deal steering group public papers.

We discussed progress with 71/72 The Kingsway, which is part of the Swansea Waterfront & Digital District Project within the City Deal Programme. The office development is now under construction. We asked about the level of interest the Council has received from companies looking to occupy what is reported as around 100,000 sq. ft. of flexible office space and amenities for tech and digital businesses, with conference and meeting facilities – space for around 600 jobs. You stated that, despite being a year ahead of completion, agreement for the letting of a quarter of the space has been reached, and confidence is high about achieving full capacity in time. We noted project assurance being high following recent City Deal reviews, endorsing our letting strategy and bearing out that there is demand for that area.

As we focus on recovery from the pandemic and the impact it has had on the retail / hospitality sector and others, the Committee asked about potential interest from new businesses / developers wanting to move into the City Centre. We were interested in whether the Council was seeing a response from retailers and other business to the various City Centre development and regeneration given the expectation that these developments will increase footfall. Furthermore, many businesses are re-evaluating their operations,

taking into account amongst other things changes to consumer behaviour / demand from the pandemic, and we were keen to see the Council engaging with them in terms of promoting a City Centre presence, for example where a business may have a presence in other parts of Swansea that they may be looking to change. You stated that it is still a difficult period nationally and across the UK, however four new businesses have opened in the Quadrant and M&S have been investing in the store on Oxford Street with refurbishments. You told us that Swansea Business Improvement District has reported that a strong Christmas / New Year, evidence that the City Centre, despite the challenges, is performing well, including the night-time economy. We noted there are a variety of monitoring activities measuring footfall and evaluating the use of the City Centre. You assured the Committee that every effort is being made to attract business and increase footfall and whilst the former Debenhams unit remains a big gap, work is continuing to find a solution to address this. The new units at Copr Bay by the Arena would be operational soon, which should help. We noted one of the challenges is that many city centre buildings are in private ownership limiting the control and influence the Council can have on things. You hoped that the planned Public Sector Hub at St Davids, which may attract Government departments as they look to re-locate out of Whitehall, will provide further stimulus to businesses interest and activity in the City Centre. We noted that the advice the Council has received from its long-term regeneration partner, Urban Splash, whose involvement includes the development of Swansea Central North and the Civic Centre Site, provides a positive outlook for the City Centre.

Given that it has been several years since the agreement of the City Deal and launch of current regeneration and development plans, we wanted to know whether advice from our development partners has changed over time, particularly given the impact of the pandemic on businesses, some of whom are pursuing new ways of working or downsizing operations, and what effect might this have on existing plans. You stated that there is constant dialogue with partners on the issues and how these may present a challenge plans, and consultants have assisted the Council over recent years. You told us that the Council remained confident it had the right strategy and plan, which allows an element of flexibility. You told us that whilst there are more flexible ways of working there is demand for quality office space in Swansea, unlike places like Cardiff, Birmingham, and London where there is over supply. This is why there has been private sector investment along Princess Way, with Princess House being fully let. You assured the Committee that strategy and plans are based on a mixed-use City Centre – residential, office, retail and leisure which will sustain City Centre growth and development. Key to this was getting the right mix for the right location. You referred to the Arena, which is almost a year into operation, as already making a significant contribution to the city.

Committee Views, including any outstanding issues / actions:

The Committee appreciates the information shared with us at the meeting, both verbally and in writing. It was a particularly useful and helpful session.

The Committee felt there would be benefit in hearing directly from Urban Splash to hear first-hand about their research and intelligence about the development of our city, and better understand their role, forward thinking and business plans. This would be best undertaken by our Development & Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel, and will be a matter for the Convener of the Panel to progress.

The Development & Regeneration Panel is also keen to follow up on projects, and will do so 12 months after completion, to consider their effectiveness and success, and has planned a session around July 2023 for reflection on the Swansea Arena. It will also be interested in the delivery of local City Deal projects and will co-ordinate any activity taking into account the work of the regional Swansea Bay City Region Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter useful and would welcome any comments on any of the issues raised within; however, we do not expect you to provide a formal response. We will plan a further portfolio Q & A with you for around January 2024 at which we can follow up on the matters within this letter.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR PETER BLACK

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

✉ cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk



**To/
Councillor Andrea Lewis,
Chair of Swansea Public Services
Board Joint Committee**

BY EMAIL

cc: Vice-Chair of Swansea PSB Joint
Committee

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Scrutiny

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SPC/2022-23/10

28 February 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Chair of Swansea Public Services Board Joint Committee following the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 14 February 2023. It contains feedback on the Public Services Board Draft Local Well-Plan. A formal written response is not required.

Dear Councillor Lewis,

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 February Draft PSB Local Well-being Plan

We are writing to you following our Scrutiny session with our views, reflecting on information presented, questions and discussion, on the Draft PSB Local Well-being Plan. This follows on from the previous Scrutiny session held in October 2022, as part of ongoing Scrutiny of Swansea PSB.

We noted that the PSB's new Local Well-being Plan must be in place by May 2023, and is subject to a consultation process, which started in November 2022. We thank you for attending the meeting, and appreciated the input provided by Richard Rowlands, Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager, Swansea Council, and Suzy Richards, Policy Officer, Swansea Council, who have been integral in developing the Plan on behalf of the PSB.

The Committee acknowledged that changes have been made to the Plan, and continue to be made, in response to the consultation, and you highlighted some key potential areas of amendment. We noted however that the headings of the four Local Well-being Objectives continue to be supported and remain, but their definitions have been updated. In particular, the Climate

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

Change and Nature Recovery objective focuses explicitly on biodiversity and the causes and impacts of climate change to better reflect both adaptation and mitigation:

- **Early Years:** To ensure that children in Swansea have the best start in life to be the best they can be.
- **Live Well, Age Well:** To make Swansea a great place to live at every stage of life.
- **Climate Change and Nature Recovery:** To restore and enhance biodiversity, tackle the causes and reduce the impact of climate change.
- **Strong Communities:** To build cohesive communities with a sense of pride and belonging.

We noted that formal sign off of the Plan by the PSB Joint Committee is expected 27 April 2023, enabling publication / launch in May. Ahead of that, we also noted the Plan is also being reported to 30 March Council meeting for organisation approval, with other statutory partners doing similar.

Scrutiny Views

From our discussion, the Committee would bring the following to your attention as feedback on the Draft Well-being Plan:

1) Public Engagement

We discussed the extent of public engagement in the development of the Plan. The Committee was keen to see the PSB engaging effectively with the public, through accessible means to maximise reach, including use of social media as well as face-to opportunities, and having 'executive summaries' and / or easy read documents to facilitate public awareness and feedback. We noted the engagement activity carried out, as set out in the report provided to the Committee. This indicated that a range of efforts have been made to communicate with stakeholders including the wider public, raise awareness of the PSB and Well-being Plan, and invite views. You reported that following Joint Committee approval of the final Plan a 'Plan on a Page', Screen Reader, Easy Read and digital video versions of the Plan will be produced to communicate the Plan at launch in May 2023, which we welcome. Whilst acknowledging the challenges, and possible reasons for it, we remain concerned about the low level of survey responses and would suggest you evaluate the approach taken and methods of engagement for the future. As such, we would challenge whether there is overwhelming public support.

2) Performance Measures

We understand that the Plan is the overarching strategic document setting out priorities, and had no significant concerns about the direction, however, are keen to see detail on the performance framework and measurable outcomes. The Committee was told that action plans will sit behind each of the Well-

being Objectives, and are currently subject of development. We recommended there be a clear link between national well-being indicators and each of the Well-being Plan objectives, so that it is clear what indicators are driving the Plan and helping to track progress. You reported that between March and June 2023, action plans will be produced for each objective alongside the identification of responsibilities, outputs, and performance arrangements. There will be clarity about leads and will show actions for individual partners. We look forward to seeing the action plan(s) at the next Scrutiny session in around six months. This is important for public accountability and making sure the PSB is making a difference.

3) Financial Implications

The delivery of the Plan will of course require resources from the Council and partners, something that is not quantified within the draft Plan, to achieve against objectives and steps described within. We noted that there is no dedicated budget to deliver PSB objectives, but each organisation is contributing from their resources to the delivery of shared objectives. You emphasised that organisational plans and the PSB Well-being Plan were aligned, ensuring that collectively resources are focusing on tackling these objectives, and able to stretch further with collaboration, more efficiency and avoiding duplication. It is important to see this 'golden thread' between the PSB and individual partner Plans, clearly set out in the Well-being Plan.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter helpful and would welcome any comments, however we do not expect you to provide a formal response. However, we do expect the PSB to consider our views ahead of Plan approval. Please report our letter to the PSB Joint Committee. The Committee will follow up on the development of the Well-being Plan at our next PSB Scrutiny session, around August 2023, when we hope to be able to see the associated action plan and how performance against the Plan will be measured.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR PETER BLACK

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

✉ cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 12



Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 March 2023

Date and Time of Upcoming Scrutiny Panel / Working Group / Regional Meetings

14 March – 18 April

- a) 14 March at 10.00am – Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel
- b) 16 March at 4.00pm – Education Performance Panel (closed meeting / visit)
- c) 20 March at 10.00am – Development & Regeneration Performance Panel
- d) 21 March at 4.00pm – Adult Services Performance Panel
- e) 13 April at 10.30am – Anti-Social Behaviour Inquiry Panel
- f) 18 April at 10.00am – Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel

Scrutiny Meetings will be multi-location meetings, held in the Gloucester Room, Guildhall as well as accessed remotely via MS Teams, unless otherwise stated.