



## 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, 19 December 2023

**Time:** 4.00 pm

**Chair:** Councillor Peter Black CBE

#### Membership:

Councillors: A Davis, E W Fitzgerald, V A Holland, M Jones, W G Lewis, P N May, F D O'Brien, S Pritchard 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, L R Jones and S E Keeton

**Watch Online:** <http://tiny.cc/SPC19d>

---

**Webcasting:** This meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet Site. By participating you are consenting to be filmed and the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and / or training purposes.

### Agenda

Page No.

**1 Apologies for Absence.**

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

[www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests](http://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](mailto: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.

6	Report on the Delivery of the Corporate Priority of Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities.	7 - 87
7	Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities - Support for Business (Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism).	88 - 101
8	Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Adult Services (Councillor Sue Jones, Convener).	102 - 107
9	Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.	108 - 109
10	Scrutiny Work Programme.	110 - 139
11	Scrutiny Letters.	140 - 164
12	Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.	165

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, 16 January 2024 at 4.00 pm



**Huw Evans**  
**Head of Democratic Services**  
**Tuesday, 12 December 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 November 2023 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

A Davis  
M Jones  
S Pritchard

**Councillor(s)**

E W Fitzgerald  
W G Lewis  
T M White

**Councillor(s)**

V A Holland  
F D O'Brien

**Statutory Co-opted Member(s)**

Elizabeth Lee

**Councillor Co-opted Member(s)**

C A Holley

P Hood-Williams

S M Jones

**Officer(s)**

Stuart Davies  
Barrie Gilbert  
Julie Gosney  
David Howes  
Simon Jones

Head of Highways & Transportation  
Senior Transport Officer  
Partnership and Involvement Team Manager  
Director of Social Services  
Social Services Strategy and Performance Improvement  
Officer

Brij Madahar  
Debbie Smith  
Mark Wade  
Jane Whitmore  
Samantha Woon

Scrutiny Team Leader  
Deputy Chief Legal Officer  
Director of Place  
Strategic Lead Commissioner  
Democratic Services Officer

**Also present**

Councillor H Gwilliam - Cabinet Member for Community (Support)

Councillor A Anthony - Cabinet Member for Well-Being

Councillor L Gibbard - Cabinet Member for Care Services

Councillor A S Stevens – Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

Councillor T J Hennegan – Convener - Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry Panel

**External Participant**

Bev Fowles – Director of South Wales Transport / Vice-Chair of Coach and Bus Association Cymru

**Apologies for Absence**

Statutory Co-opted Member(s): Beth Allender

Councillor Co-opted Members: L R Jones and S E Keeton

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

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

**36 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.

**37 Minutes.**

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

**38 Public Question Time.**

None.

**39 Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Final Report.**

The Convener of the Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry Panel presented the final report for the Scrutiny Inquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour. The report presented the conclusions and recommendations arising from the Inquiry that sought to answer the following question: *How can the Council ensure that it is working with its partners to appropriately and effectively tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in Swansea?*

The Convener thanked all participants and the Scrutiny Officer for their assistance in preparing the report.

The Chair thanked the Convener and Members of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel for their thorough and informative report and referred to the Panel's request to consider adding into the Scrutiny Work Programme examination of Youth Provision in Swansea, including the provision of current issues like preventative work, funding and the difficulty in recruiting qualified youth workers. The Chair stated that this could be included in discussion of potential Scrutiny Work Programme for 2024/25 perhaps as a possible Working Group or future Committee item.

Subject to Committee agreement, the Inquiry report would be presented to the next available Cabinet meeting for decision, currently 21 December.

**Resolved** that:

- 1) the Inquiry report proceed to Cabinet meeting on 21 December 2023.
- 2) The topic of 'Youth Provision' be included in discussion of future Scrutiny Work Programme.

#### **40 Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Progress Report 2021-2023.**

The Cabinet Member for Community (Support) assisted by the Director of Social Services (Lead Director), Strategic Lead Commissioner and Partnership & Involvement Team Manager, presented the report on the progress of the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme in Swansea 2021-2023.

An overview of the refreshed Children & Young People's Rights Scheme in Swansea, a summary of the Countywide priorities identified by Children & Young People, progress via the "Right Way" five principled approach and recommendations were detailed.

Committee questioning and discussion focussed on the following:

- Whole Council Approach – there have been successes in embedding a whole-Council approach on CYP Rights and the use of the 5 principle approach and the matrix ensured that arrangements were in place to benchmark and measure / monitor performance. The development of a training module would help ensure that all aspects of work being undertaken by the Council were captured and embedded.
- UNCRC Training – the Education Department were currently reviewing School Governor Training with a view to ensuring that UNCRC training is mandatory.
- UNCRC Rights Respecting Schools – whether all schools were now 'rights respecting' and developments following introduction of the new curriculum for Wales.
- Youth Service – The Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry had flagged up issues with Youth Provision in Swansea including funding and the difficulty in recruiting qualified youth workers. This has issue has not impacted on work to embed CYP Rights and Children have been involved in how the Council's outreach model is designed.

The Chair thanked all concerned for the informative report.

**Resolved** that:

- 1) the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member for Community (Support) reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.
- 2) The Committee were content to receive future updates on a two-yearly basis for better alignment with Welsh Government model of reviewing the Children's Rights Scheme.

#### **41 Annual Report - Corporate Safeguarding 2022-23.**

The Cabinet Member for Care Services, assisted by the Director of Social Services and Social Services Strategy & Performance Improvement Officer summarised the work programme of the Corporate Safeguarding Group during 2022-23, and highlighted improvements carried out in support of the Council's corporate safeguarding policy and corporate arrangements for safeguarding across the whole Council, covering seven key areas of activity.

Committee questioning and discussion focussed on the following:

- Working with Contractors and Suppliers – level of compliance / arrangements for monitoring. Noted that challenges still existed, and this was 'work in progress'.
- Mandatory Safeguarding Training – level of promotion across the Authority and take up. New training was 'live' at the moment and the new Oracle system will provide better management information and more effective oversight of training compliance across the Council. With regard to Councillor Training, a step-by-step guide was being developed by the Head of Digital & Customer Services, which will shortly be communicated to Councillors.
- DBS Checks – have been re-examined across a range of staff and categories and have changed over time. The Council is compliant with Welsh Government guidance.

The Chair thanked all concerned for the informative report.

**Resolved** that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member for Care Services reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

#### **42 Follow Up: Scrutiny Working Group - Bus Services.**

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure, assisted by the Director of Place, Head of Highways & Transportation and Team Leader, Public & School Transport, provided an update on issues raised in the previous meetings of the Scrutiny Working Group in July 2021 and March 2022, and developments.

Detailed updates were provided in respect of cleaner fuel buses, bus service network and bus emergency schemes, bus and rail links and bus shelters.

Mr B Fowles, Director of South Wales Transport, was also present to provide an external perspective from a local SME bus service operator, which has been a long-standing local bus service contractor for the Council. He was also Vice-Chair of Coach and Bus Association Cymru which is a trade association representing the interest of smaller bus operators in Wales provided a useful perspective on things, particularly in terms of Welsh Government proposed legislation to franchise local bus services. He referred to issues surrounding the continual reorganisation coupled with decreased budgets and the Welsh Governments efforts to re-create a franchise similar to Transport for London.

Committee questioning and discussion focussed on the following:

- Communication & Engagement - progress made on fostering effective dialogue between the Council and First Cymru (as well as other bus operators) and any barriers. Noted that constant changes in First Cymru senior management / leadership does not help but regular meetings are held to raise / discuss service issues.
- Bus Cuts – Noted that service providers are able to provide a six week notice for change, which provides a real challenge. Despite this, dialogue was continuing.

- Transport Integration & Cross Ticketing – cross ticketing would be part of the franchise and would be rolled out in zones from April 2026. It was anticipated that in 3-5 years there would be improvements in connectivity. Transport for Wales are looking at integration to bring buses into railways stations.
- Travel Initiatives – discussion on encouraging bus use, including Council free bus travel initiative. Noted this would be operational on weekends between now and Christmas and the week after Christmas.
- Transport for London – the success of this network was discussed and comparisons with other areas.

The Chair thanked all concerned for the informative report and discussion, which now concluded formal follow up in the Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group.

**Resolved** that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

**43 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance (Councillor Chris Holley, Convener).**

Councillor Chris Holley provided the Committee with a progress report on the work / activities of the Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel. He thanked all Panel members for their participation and 'teamwork' in carrying out this Scrutiny.

**Resolved** that the Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress report in respect of Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance be noted.

**44 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.**

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

**45 Scrutiny Work Programme.**

The Chair presented the regular report on the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/24 which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.

The main items for the next Committee on 19 December comprised:

- Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities – Support for Businesses.
- Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty.

Members noted that the Scrutiny Training & Development Programme for Swansea Scrutiny Councillors was underway, which was being facilitated by the Improvement Team at the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).

Upcoming Sessions:

- Scrutiny of Performance – to be held on 4 December / 6 December
- Self-Assessment of Scrutiny (two parts) – to be held on 17 January / 23 January

The Chair encouraged all to attend. All Sessions were being held online via MS Teams, with the exception of the final 'Self-Assessment' part 2 session which will be in-person only. As well as benefitting individual Councillors, the Programme will help to inform Scrutiny Improvement Objectives and actions going forward.

**46 Scrutiny Letters.**

The Chair referred to the following letters, reflecting on recent Committee Scrutiny activity:

- Committee - Scrutiny of Active Travel – Letter to Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure.
- Committee - Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Oracle Project Closure Process and Transition to New Operating Model – Letter to Cabinet Member for Service Transformation.
- Procurement Scrutiny Inquiry – Follow Up – Letter to Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance.

**47 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.**

The Chair referred upcoming Panel/Working Group/Regional Scrutiny meetings, for awareness.

The meeting ended at 5.27 pm

**Chair**



# Agenda Item 6



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Well-Being

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 19 December 2023

### Report on the Delivery of the Corporate Priority of Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities 2023

<b>Purpose</b>	To provide a briefing to the Scrutiny Programme Committee on delivery of the Council's Corporate Priority of Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities.
<b>Content</b>	The report provides an overview and context of the 'Report on the delivery of the Corporate Priority of Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities 2023'.
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	Consider the report, to give their views and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member as necessary
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Councillor Alyson Pugh, Cabinet Member for Well-Being.
<b>Lead Officer Report Author</b>	Amy Hawkins, Head of Adult Services and Tackling Poverty Lee Cambule, Tackling Poverty Service Manager
<b>Legal Officer Finance Officer</b>	Debbie Smith Chris Davies

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Swansea Council's Corporate Plan sets out six key council priorities, one of which is 'Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities so that every person in Swansea can achieve their potential'.
- 1.2 Poverty is multi-dimensional, complex, growing and impacting more people and communities in Wales. Evidence from across Wales and in our local communities shows that poverty and the impacts of poverty are continuing to affect our population in many different ways.
- 1.3 Since 2017 – when the Council published 'Working towards prosperity for all in Swansea: A tackling poverty strategy for Swansea' – progress has been made against our ambitions for tackling poverty. There has also been a lot of change, most significantly in the past three years as the COVID-19 pandemic and economic challenges - including the Cost of Living crisis - have not only impacted the people of Swansea but also our efforts to implement our strategy.

1.4 The Council is currently revisiting this strategic approach and a refreshed strategy is due for publication in early 2024. This is an opportunity to reflect back on the progress that has been made in 2023 as we prepare for the next phase in our efforts to tackle poverty and enable communities in Swansea.

## **2. Content**

2.1 The report prepared for the Scrutiny Programme Committee is structured to include:

- Executive Summary
- Context
- Poverty in Swansea
- Corporate Priority
- Corporate Plan Steps
- Corporate Performance Indicators
- Additional Developments
- Way Forward

2.2 The report presents evidence, insights and intelligence that demonstrates the contributions that have been made to achieving the Corporate Plan priority in the last twelve months.

## **3. Context**

3.1 The COVID-19 pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis has disproportionately impacted low income households, pushing more people into poverty and those experiencing it, further into poverty resulting in increasing demand for services including crisis support services and increased complexities for those in need.

3.2 Swansea Council's ongoing response to the Cost of Living Crisis is contributing to mitigating the impact of poverty and increased levels of demand.

3.3 The report outlines the activity from the past 12 months and what is planned in the next 12 months.

## **4. Legal implications**

4.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report other than those set out in the body of the report.

## **5. Finance Implications**

5.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with the initial consideration of this report. The issues raised may lead to the Council taking decisions in the future that will have implications for Council finances. Any such decisions will need to be taken with due regard to the financial circumstances of the Council at the time as well as the latest medium term financial plan.

**Background papers:** *None*

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Report on the delivery of the Corporate Priority of Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities 2023

Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form



## **Tackling Poverty Service**

### **Annual Report on the delivery of the Corporate Priority 'Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities' 2023**

<b>Owner</b>	Amy Hawkins
<b>Author</b>	Lee Cambule
<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Date</b>	11 November 2023

# Contents

<b>1. Executive Summary</b>	3
<b>2. Context</b>	4
2.1. Definition of Poverty	4
2.2. Current position	5
2.3. National Strategic Drivers	5
<b>3. Poverty in Swansea</b>	9
3.1. Impacts of COVID-19 pandemic	9
3.2. Impacts of Cost of Living crisis	9
3.3. Population Needs	10
3.4. Poverty Data	13
<b>4. Corporate Priority</b>	15
4.1. Why this priority is a well-being objective?	15
4.2. The longer-term challenges this well-being objective will help address	15
4.3. The steps we will take to meet this well-being objective	16
4.4. 2023/24 Targets	17
4.5. How we will measure progress	17
<b>5. Corporate Plan Steps</b>	19
5.1. Step 1 – Strategic direction	19
5.2. Step 2 – Cost of Living	21
5.3. Step 3 – Tackling and preventing homelessness	31
5.4. Step 4 – Making more homes available	33
5.5. Step 5 – Improving people’s prosperity	37
5.6. Step 6 – Focus on early intervention	47
5.7. Step 7 – Empowering communities	51
5.8. Step 8 – Keeping communities safe	60
5.9. Step 9 – Building community assets	61
<b>6. Corporate Performance Indicators</b>	65
<b>7. Additional Developments</b>	70
<b>8. Way Forward</b>	73
8.1. 2023/24 Targets	73
8.2. 2024/25 Targets	74
8.3. Next steps	75

## 1. Executive Summary

Swansea Council's Corporate Plan 2023/28 – titled 'Delivering a Successful and Sustainable Swansea' – sets out six key council priorities, one of which is **Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities** so that every person in Swansea can achieve their potential.

In this latest version of the Council's Corporate Plan, this objective was amended to add 'enabling communities' to recognise a strengths-based approach where the strengths of individuals, communities and networks can be capitalised upon to help tackle poverty.

Poverty is multi-dimensional, complex, growing and impacting more people and communities in Wales. Evidence from across Wales and in our local communities shows that poverty and the impacts of poverty are continuing to affect our population in many different ways.

In the last twelve months, the Council has:

- Delivered more grant opportunities for people and organisations to tackle poverty and respond to poverty challenges;
- Raised awareness of poverty and the support that is available for people and communities in Swansea;
- Continued delivering services that deliver help for people and communities impacted by poverty;
- Responded to the unique challenges facing the people and communities of Swansea during the Cost of Living crisis;
- Commenced refreshing our strategic direction and defining our vision for the future of poverty in Swansea.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress made against this Corporate Priority in the last twelve months.

## 2. Context

### 2.1. Definition of Poverty

In 2017, Swansea Council published **Working towards prosperity for all in Swansea: A tackling poverty strategy for Swansea**. This corporate strategy represented the Council's commitment to reducing poverty and the impacts poverty has upon the people of Swansea.

A lot has happened since this iteration of the strategy was published in early 2017 including the global COVID-19 pandemic and the Cost of Living crisis. Poverty is increasing across Wales and there is a clear need for more action to be taken.

While there is no single, universally agreed definition of poverty, in Swansea we defined poverty as:

- Income below the Minimum Income Standard (MIS);
- Inadequate access to necessary services of good quality;
- Inadequate opportunity or resource to join in with social, cultural, leisure and decision-making activities.

The MIS (the amount of income that a person or household needs to meet living standards) is an established and recognised measure of poverty that is reviewed and updated annually in the UK by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It is based on an understanding of what a basket of essential goods and services will cost, based on what the general public defines is essential. The MIS itself is not a measure of poverty but is a measure of the household income deemed by the public to be a sufficient income that allows you to afford a **minimum acceptable standard of living**.

In 2017:	In 2023:
A single person would need to earn at least £17,900 a year before tax.	A single person would need to earn at least £29,500 a year before tax.
A family of two working-age adults with two children would need to earn at least £40,800 a year before tax.	A family of two working-age adults with two children would need to earn at least £50,000 a year before tax.

At this time, the Council has been undergoing a refresh of the Tackling Poverty Strategy. A public survey was conducted between 21 August and 30 September 2023. The findings suggest improvements that could be made to our definition of poverty and we are currently developing the revised draft of the Tackling Poverty Strategy ready for public consultation in the coming months.



## 2.2. Current position

With around 1 in 5 people in Wales<sup>1</sup> in relative income poverty prior to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Cost of Living crisis, those that were already experiencing financial hardship are more likely to have been pushed further into poverty and those that were at risk of poverty have been more likely to experience it.

**2.2.1.** Joseph Rowntree Foundation's report **Destitution in the UK 2023** looked at the accelerating picture of destitution, where someone experiences a lack of access to at least two of six items needed to meet the most basic physical needs to stay warm, dry, clean and fed (shelter, food, heating, lighting, clothing and footwear, and basic toiletries). Key findings of the report<sup>2</sup> are:

- Around 3.8m people in the UK experienced destitution in 2022, of which about 1 million were children;
- Most of these are UK nationals (72%) but people who have migrated to the UK were over-represented among those experiencing destitution;
- Destitution remains high in South Wales along with areas in the North of England, Midlands and West Central Scotland.

The report also highlights strong links between destitution and disability, the disproportionate impacts on Black, Black British, Caribbean or African households, and complications arising when a person is deemed to have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

**2.2.2.** Bevan Foundation's report **A Snapshot of Poverty in Summer 2023** looked at impacts of surging costs and slow income growth for households in Wales. Key findings of the report<sup>3</sup> are:

- Around 15% of households in Wales are struggling to afford essential items;
- Around 26% of people in Wales are eating smaller meals or skipping meals;
- Around 29% of people borrowed money between April and July;
- Around 13% of people were in arrears on at least one bill for at least one month;
- Around 45% of people reported that their financial position had negatively affected their mental health.

The report also highlights that some groups of people have been especially hit hard by the Cost of Living crisis, including people on benefits, renters, disabled people and parents of children under 18 years old.

## 2.3. National Strategic Drivers

**2.3.1.** The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act** is about improving our national social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being. It details ways in which public bodies must work and work together to improve the wellbeing of Wales.

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on Relative Income Poverty: April 2019 to March 2020 report by Welsh Government

<sup>2</sup> Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'Destitution in the UK 2023' published October 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Bevan Foundation 'A snapshot of poverty in Summer 2023' published July 2023.






The Act<sup>4</sup> puts in place a **sustainable development principle** which means that public bodies in Wales must act in a manner that ensures that the needs of the present are met without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



The Act also established the creation of Public Services Boards (PSB) in each Local Authority area, responsible for assessing the state of wellbeing in that area and producing a plan to improve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. The **Swansea Public Services Board** is our local PSB.



**2.3.2.** There are five things that public bodies must do to show that they are applying this principle, and the table below explains how those five Ways of Working apply to this Corporate Priority:

Way of Working	Description	How it applies to this Corporate Priority
<p><b>Collaboration</b></p> 	<p>Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.</p>	<p>Tackling poverty and enabling communities cannot be effectively delivered without strong relationships and close working between people, communities, organisations and service providers.</p>
<p><b>Integration</b></p> 	<p>Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.</p>	<p>We recognise that tackling poverty and enabling communities requires a "One Swansea" approach which aligns the priorities and commitments of multiple public service organisations. This is one of six Wellbeing Objectives for Swansea Council.</p>
<p><b>Involvement</b></p> 	<p>The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.</p>	<p>People with lived experience of poverty are best placed to provide the insight and direction for our tackling poverty and enabling communities services. Embracing the principles of co-production will help us to shape these services while enabling people to become more actively involved in their communities.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Based on information on Acts of the National Assembly for Wales on [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Way of Working	Description	How it applies to this Corporate Priority
<p>Long-term</p> 	<p>The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the long-term needs.</p>	<p>Poverty can impact people in both short and long term ways, including generational poverty spanning multiple generations of the same family. We recognise that helping people in the short-term (such as people in poverty crisis) can only be effective if we consider how to help someone escape poverty in a safe and sustainable way.</p>
<p>Prevention</p> 	<p>How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.</p>	<p>Preventing poverty is a key challenge, as we understand that for many people, experiencing poverty could be preventable with the right information, advice and support in place. Tackling issues like isolation and mental health can improve people's chances of falling into poverty.</p>

**2.3.3.** In 2016, the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act** came into force, which provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. The fundamental principles of the Act<sup>5</sup> are:

- Voice and control – putting the individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and control over reaching the outcomes that help them achieve well-being.
- Prevention and early intervention – increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need.
- Well-being – supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of care and support.
- Co-production – encouraging individuals to become more involved in the design and delivery of services.

**2.3.4.** In 2022 - 2023, Audit Wales completed a series of reviews looking at poverty in Wales and published the following **Audit Wales Review of Poverty** reports of their findings:

- 'Time for Change' Poverty in Wales (November 2022);
- 'A missed opportunity' – Social Enterprises (December 2022);
- 'Together We Can' – Community resilience and self reliance (January 2023);
- Digital Inclusion in Wales (March 2023);

These reports combined showed areas where further work on tackling poverty is recognised across Wales and provides a national strategic driver for change. The following recommendations were highlighted from these reports:

<sup>5</sup> Based on information on Acts of the National Assembly for Wales on [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

<b>Report</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
'Time for Change'	R1 - Welsh Government to update the current Child Poverty in Wales Strategy setting up national targets, actions and performance measures.
'Time for Change'	R2 – Local Authorities to provide a comprehensive focus on tackling poverty through their Wellbeing Plans.
'Time for Change'	R3 – Local Authorities to designate a cabinet member as the council's poverty champion and designate a senior officer accountable for the anti-poverty agenda.
'Time for Change'	R4 – Welsh Government to address weaknesses in the way that funding for tackling poverty programmes is administered and monitored.
'Time for Change'	R5 – Local Authorities to improve their understanding of lived experience of poverty through meaningful involvement and experience mapping, such as the use of Poverty Truth Commissions.
'Time for Change'	R6 – Local Authorities to create a single landing web page on their council websites which provide links and information relating to poverty.
'Time for Change'	R7 – Local Authorities to note the lack of a single gateway into services which means people often have to provide the same data multiple times when applying for similar services.
'Time for Change'	R8 – Local Authorities review their integrated impact assessments or equivalent to ensure that there are effective forms of assessment of socio-economic impact.
'A missed opportunity'	R1 – Local Authorities to conduct a self-evaluation of current Social Enterprise engagement, management, performance and practice, and develop an action plan to address the identified gaps and weaknesses.
'A missed opportunity'	R2 – Local Authorities to implement regular review, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the above action plan.
'Together We Can'	R1 – Local Authorities to conduct a self-evaluation of current engagement, management, performance and practice in relation to strengthening community resilience and self-reliance, and develop an action plan to address the identified gaps and weaknesses.
'Together We Can'	R2 – Local Authorities to implement regular review, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the above action plan.

### **3. Poverty in Swansea**

#### **3.1. Impacts of COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on society since it began in early 2020 until the World Health Organisation (WHO) announced the end of the global pandemic in May 2023. Some industries like hospitality were hit hard, many communities were disproportionately affected and the long-term effects on areas like mental health and life expectancy are still to be understood.

**3.1.1.** In Swansea, we have seen a range of evidence and insights relating to the economic impacts of COVID-19 including:

- Strains on health and care workforces across sectors affecting staff wellbeing, recruitment and retention;
- Increased demand reported by food banks and crisis food support projects reflects an increase in the numbers of people struggling to make ends meet;
- Greater demand for benefits and welfare rights advice linked to people being unable to work or losing their jobs;
- Changes to working practices such as increased waiting times, backlogs and demands for service due to restrictions placed on service delivery;
- Organisations prioritising emergency responses to the pandemic had to pause, cancel or postpone investment into other key initiatives and programmes of work;
- Important sectors such as hospitality being adversely affected by restrictions and changing rules around social distancing;
- Increased arrears in respect of monies owed to the Council across all services.

#### **3.2. Impacts of Cost of Living crisis**

The current crisis – where the cost of everyday essentials (e.g. groceries, household bills, etc.) is rising faster than average household incomes – has been escalating since 2021. This has been impacted by several factors on global and national levels including the energy crisis, labour shortages, supply chain issues and rising rates of inflation. The Bank of England warned that the UK is facing its longest recession since records began a century ago.

**3.2.1.** This means that most people have seen their household income not keeping pace with rising prices of essential goods and services. Families are struggling to make ends meet which is impacting on wellbeing and the ability to provide for loved ones. The Snapshot of Poverty in Summer 2023 report highlights some of the impacts of this crisis including:

- Majority of people cutting back on essential items and services;
- Children are going hungry as families cut back on food costs;
- More people are worried about losing their home in the next three months;
- Physical and mental health is impacted by financial position;
- Many people are not aware of the support and help they are entitled to receive.

**3.2.2.** In Swansea, we have seen evidence of the impacts of the Cost of Living crisis from a range of sources and statistics including:

- An increase in the use of Food Banks and other charitable initiatives<sup>6</sup>;
- The need to develop Warm Hub provision in Swansea due to rising energy costs<sup>7</sup>;
- Continued high numbers of people and families struggling to make ends meet<sup>8</sup>;
- Increase in the availability of poverty-related grants and schemes;
- Changes in jobs as people seek more sustainable employment opportunities;
- Increased demand for crisis related services including from people in employment;
- Increased demand reported by Citizens Advice including for energy advice<sup>9</sup>;
- The Council’s Cost of Living Help webpage has had over 100,000 page views since it was established in early September 2022.

### 3.3. Population Needs

**3.3.1.** The **Census 2021** results were first published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in June 2022 with updated and unrounded data published in November 2022. Current data from the Census shows that a third (33.3%) of households in Swansea are deprived in at least one dimension (employment, education, health and disability, and household overcrowding). Data such as the graph below illustrates the experiences of people during the Cost of Living crisis.



*ONS graph on people taking action in response to Cost of Living crisis*

<sup>6</sup> Statistics available at [www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats](http://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats)

<sup>7</sup> A list of Swansea Spaces is available at [www.swansea.gov.uk/swanseaspaces](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/swanseaspaces)

<sup>8</sup> Source: Bevan Foundation ‘A snapshot of poverty in Summer 2023’ published July 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Citizens Advice ‘Wales: Cost of living briefing’ published July 2022

**3.3.2.** This year, the Swansea Public Services Board produced its **Local Wellbeing Plan 2023 - 2028** which provides a breakdown of the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing in Swansea. As well as providing evidence and data trends relating to poverty in Swansea, it covers the broader definition of the people of Swansea (geographical communities, population density, population characteristics, and so on) and their needs in relation to wellbeing.

The focus for this Wellbeing Plan builds on the PSB's long-term objectives, which are:

- **Early Years** - to ensure that children 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 and resilient communities with a sense of pride and belonging.

**3.3.3.** The **West Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment (PNA)** is a joint exercise undertaken by health and social care partners in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot to gather information on people's wellbeing and the barriers preventing them from achieving a sense of wellbeing.

The chapters published online at [www.westglamorgan.org.uk](http://www.westglamorgan.org.uk) highlight a range of impacts that poverty has on health and wellbeing, including:



**Partneriaeth**  
Ranbarthol  
Gorllewin  
Morgannwg

West  
Glamorgan  
Regional  
**Partnership**

- Suicide rates are two to three times higher in the most deprived neighbourhoods compared to the most affluent;
- 1 in 4 people experiencing a mental health problem is struggling with debt while people with mental health problems are three times more likely to be in financial difficulty;
- In January 2021, 43% of unemployed people reported poor mental health (compared to 27% of people in employment);
- Older people have been impacted financially by the pandemic, and those who wish to remain in the workforce are at higher risk of redundancy or exclusion from developing working practices;
- Deprivation is associated with childhood obesity with 14.2% of children who are obese in the most deprived fifth of areas compared with 8.2% in the least deprived fifth;
- Caring has an impact on participation in the workforce and unpaid carers who give up work to provide care can find themselves living in poverty as a result;
- Disabled people have disproportionately fallen behind with household bills during the COVID-19 pandemic, because of their disadvantaged position in the labour market, poor housing and increased costs associated with being disabled'.

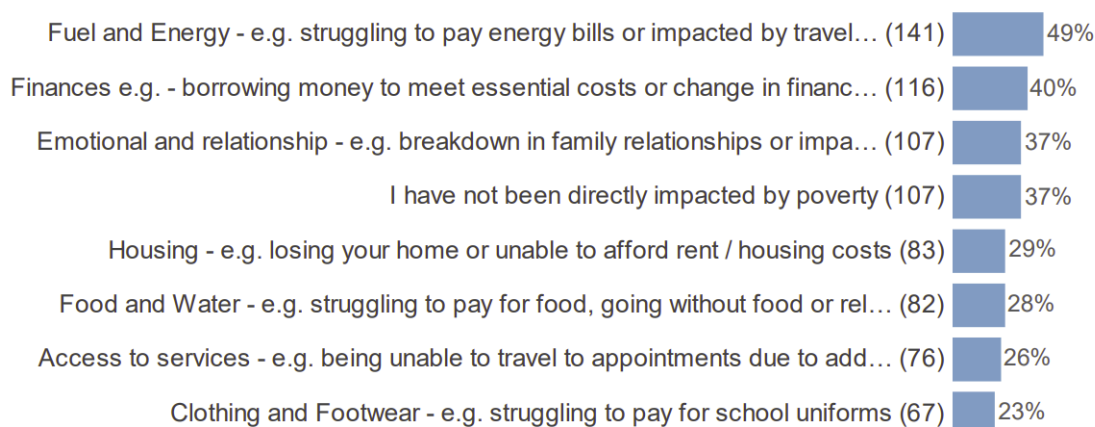
**3.3.4.** The **Tackling Poverty Strategy Survey 2023** ran from 23 August 2023 to 30 September 2023. The survey was online and printed copies in English and Welsh were available at the network of libraries across Swansea as well as delivered to partner organisations across Swansea upon request.

The initial findings from the survey have shown:

- The current definition of poverty in Swansea could be improved by making it easier to understand, recognising the impacts of poverty, and more clearly express what it means to be in poverty beyond just financial measures;
- When considering what actions could be taken to tackle poverty, the most agreed responses were:
  - Improve access to affordable, safe and secure homes (97%);
  - Tackle and prevent homelessness (97%);
  - Improve access to services including referring processes, signposting and raising awareness of available support (96%);
  - Use clear early intervention and prevention approaches that help people to avoid falling into poverty (96%).
- There needs to be a clearer picture of the strategic direction, with a well defined and easy to understand vision for the future;
- Key priorities based on the comments made by responders (in no particular order):
  - Child Poverty;
  - Community Support;
  - Digital Inclusion;
  - Health and Wellbeing;
  - Homelessness;
  - Information, advice and guidance;
  - Stigma and Discrimination.

When we asked what characteristics of poverty people in Swansea had experienced the most, the diagram below shows the most agreed responses.

If you have been impacted by poverty, which of these issues have you been most impacted by? Please select more than one if applicable:



We have included a selection of quotes and comments from the survey in this report to provide further evidence of the insights and lived experience of poverty by the people of Swansea (section 5.1.1).

### 3.4. Poverty Data

**3.4.1. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)** is designed to identify the areas of Wales that are most deprived. It ranks small areas according to their relative deprivation levels across eight types of deprivation to produce an overall index. There are 1,909 small areas known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Wales and 148 of them are in Swansea.

The WIMD can be used for:

- Identifying the most deprived small areas;
- Comparing relative deprivation of small areas;
- Exploring the 8 types of deprivation for small areas;
- Comparing the proportion of small areas within a larger area that are very deprived;
- Using indicator data (but not ranks) to compare absolute change over time.

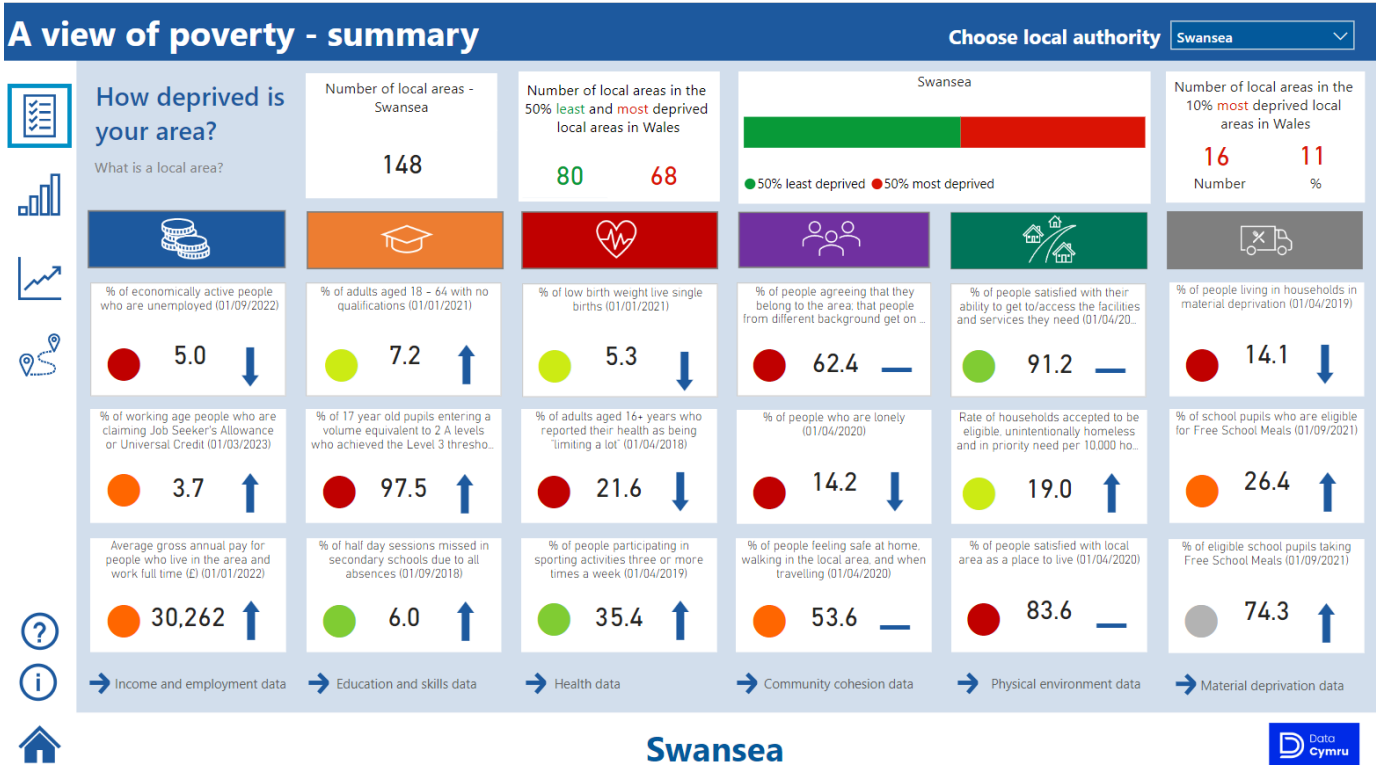
According to the WIMD, 17 of the most deprived LSOAs across Wales are within the Swansea local authority area, which accounts for 0.9% of all LSOAs in Wales:

Name of Area	WIMD Code	Rank in Swansea	Rank in Wales
<a href="#">Townhill 2</a>	W01000863	1	16
<a href="#">Townhill 1</a>	W01000862	2	18
<a href="#">Penderry 3</a>	W01000832	3	22
<a href="#">Castle 1</a>	W01000742	4	23
<a href="#">Penderry 1</a>	W01000830	5	31
<a href="#">Townhill 3</a>	W01000864	6	32
<a href="#">Castle 2 North</a>	W01001955	7	36
<a href="#">Mynyddbach 1</a>	W01000817	8	37
<a href="#">Townhill 5</a>	W01000866	9	41
<a href="#">Penderry 4</a>	W01000833	10	48
<a href="#">Townhill 6</a>	W01000867	11	58
<a href="#">Bonynmaen 1</a>	W01000738	12	81
<a href="#">Morrleston 5</a>	W01000810	13	95
<a href="#">Penderry 2</a>	W01000831	14	147
<a href="#">Morrleston 7</a>	W01000812	15	154
<a href="#">Penderry 6</a>	W01000835	16	157
<a href="#">Llansamlet 8</a>	W01000801	17	179

**3.4.2. The Data Cymru Poverty Dashboard** national online tool collates key data about poverty in Wales which breaks down to a dashboard view of the key statistics at a local authority level. This tool can be accessed for information at <https://www.data.cymru/dashboards/viewofpoverty> .

Below is the latest snapshot which highlights key data sets related to poverty:





**3.4.3. The Audit Wales Data Dashboard** national online tool is designed to support decision making in councils and improve how they target their work. This tool can be accessed for information at <https://www.wao.gov.uk/news/poverty-wales-data-tool-published-today>. Below is the latest snapshot of local data which highlights key data sets related to poverty alongside a local authority and national comparison:

Home	Audit Wales Website		Cymraeg
Overview of local authorities			
It would be impossible to summarise all aspects of poverty on a single page, but we have included some of the key aspects here to give an overview by local authority. Use the drop down boxes to compare up to two local authorities.	Unitary Authority	Select comparator	Wales Average
	Swansea	Cardiff	
Adults (16+) in material deprivation (2020)	14	13	13%
Amount of arrears of council tax outstanding (March 2022)	10801	9114	£3,634k
Children living in relative low income families (2021)	19	21	20%
Employment Rate (2021)	72	75	73%
Number of face to face providers per 100,000 population (2020)	2	6	5
Change in average weekly gross income 2011-2021 (real terms)	1	-1	1%
Median energy costs in 2021(£)	749	677	£832
Median energy efficiency (2020-21)(0=least efficient, 100= most efficient)	65	68	64
Average credit score (2022) (0=lowest, 999=highest)	753	775	767

## 4. Corporate Priority

### 4.1. Why this priority is a well-being objective?

Between 2023 and 2028, the Cost of Living crisis and ongoing economic challenges will continue to impact on individuals, families and communities across Swansea. The Council has an important role to play in helping people to alleviate poverty, improving their personal prosperity through better skills and jobs, and address the key issues influencing poverty such as homelessness.

We also see a role for our communities in supporting people to deliver early interventions, improve the wellbeing of local people and build collaborative relationships with service providers. Our vision for this priority is **to create welcoming, strong, resilient, connected and prosperous communities as part of our response to tackle and alleviate poverty in Swansea.**

This is a wellbeing objective because we need to:

- continue responding to the global economic pressures – including the Cost of Living crisis – that are impacting on our communities;
- target support for people in poverty or at risk of poverty in order to alleviate poverty and tackle the longer-term impacts on our society;
- focus on helping people to avoid the need to access services by promoting early interventions and preventative action;
- embed the lived experience of people in poverty across our services to ensure that we understand and meet those needs;
- create communities that are safe and resilient where people’s rights and needs are respected;
- improve the personal prosperity of individuals through opportunities to develop skills, improve employability, access jobs and look after their own wellbeing.

### 4.2. The longer-term challenges this well-being objective will help address

Levels of poverty which remains persistently high and impacts on life expectancy, health outcomes and adverse effects on the poorest areas.

People’s experiences of poverty covering a range of common issues including access to essential resources such as housing, fuel, energy, clothing, footwear, food, and water, as well as support with finances, exclusion from services, and emotional and relationship issues.

The extra costs that people on low incomes must pay for essentials – such as transport, fuel and food – due to the poverty premium, compounded by the ongoing Cost of Living crisis.

The role our communities play in tackling poverty and preventing people’s needs from escalating to the point where they need services or interventions.

Changes to population and demographics as well as local population needs as our communities have more older people, become more urbanised and require more homes to be built.

Opportunities to work closer with communities to tackle these important challenges, building on the networks, strengths and assets of our local areas.

#### **4.3. The steps we will take to meet this well-being objective**

**Strategic direction** – We will develop methods of working with people with lived experience to co-produce and publish our aligned strategic visions, outcomes and priorities for Tackling Poverty and Community Enablement.

**Cost of Living** – We will reduce levels of poverty and mitigate the impacts of being in poverty by rolling out government grants, providing welfare rights advice and implementing schemes including the ‘free bus ride’ initiative and Swansea Spaces.

**Tackling and preventing homelessness** – We will implement the Housing Support Programme Strategy to support people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

**Making more homes available** – We will offer more energy efficient and affordable homes to help minimise household costs, as well as increasing the availability and quality of social housing, to help more people access accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

**Improving people’s prosperity** – We will deliver programmes of employability, skills development and community enhancements that help people to improve their prospects for the future and volunteer to contribute to their local communities.

**Focus on early intervention** – We will collaborate with communities to help them play a stronger role in preventing escalation of individuals’ needs and integrating with partners / local sources of support to mitigate demands on services.

**Empowering communities** – We will embed the principles of human rights across our work with communities, empowering local people to get more involved in the co-production of services, community cohesion and social value.

**Keeping communities safe** – We will tackle anti-social behaviour through targeted initiatives and support for people who are vulnerable or at risk by improving the presence of enforcement and using events/technologies to protect people & property.

**Building community assets** – We will continue to grow the assets of all communities across Swansea by using a strengths-based approach to increase resilient community-led initiatives (such as social enterprises) and establish integrated community hubs aligned with our Local Library Plan.

#### **4.4. 2023/24 Targets**

By the end of 2023-2024, we will have:

- Published our refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy, working co-productively with our partners and people with lived experience of poverty;
- Developed a Tackling Poverty Performance Framework that aligns objectives, outcomes and performance measures related to tackling poverty;
- Began a review of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy to ensure focus on providing suitable homes for vulnerable people, unintentionally homeless and people who may be struggling with poverty;
- Agreed a strategy to support homeless individuals as the COVID-19 hotel use ends, whilst continuing with our 'always a bed' pledge;
- Supported the establishment of the Swansea Sustainable Food Partnership;
- Published our Corporate Volunteering Policy to develop and manage voluntary action within the organisation.

Further information on our current position against the steps above and our targets for 2023/24 is detailed in Section 5 and Section 7.

#### **4.5. How we will measure progress**

The following measures represent the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to this Corporate Priority:

- Amount (value) of grants allocated to businesses for applying for Cost of Living funds.
- Amount (value) of benefit entitlements claimed through Welfare Rights Advice.
- Time taken (days) to process Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit applications.
- Time taken (days) to process Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit changes of circumstances.
- Number of people who gain employment through Employability Support.
- Number of adults who achieve accredited qualifications through Adult Learning.
- The number of beneficiaries who have attended the Get Swansea Online programme.

Further information on our current position against these KPIs is detailed in Section 6.

## The contribution this well-being objective makes to the national goals

A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of more cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	A healthier Wales	A globally responsible Wales
Direct	Indirect	Direct	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect

## How we will maximise our contribution to the national goals through the way in which we work

**Preventing problems from occurring or from getting worse** – we will use early interventions, strategic partnerships, and community-led initiatives to take a preventative approach to not only poverty but the wider impacts of poverty to ensure that escalating needs are addressed before service interventions are required.

**Addressing long-term challenges** – we will strike a balance between the short term needs of people in poverty (such as the need for housing and essential resources like food and clothes) with helping people to improve their personal prosperity and long-term aspirations for the future.

**Working in partnership with others** – we will work with partners and stakeholders including local communities themselves to reflect the diversity of our population and the opportunities available from collaboration and service integration.

**Avoiding conflicts between public body objectives** – we will develop a framework for linking our national, regional and local outcomes that demonstrates the contributions of our services and transformation programmes to public body strategies, policies and objectives.

**Involving people** – we will embed principles of human rights and coproduction across our tackling poverty and enabling communities programmes and initiatives, mapping the experiences and capturing the voices of people with lived experience of poverty.

## The contribution this well-being objective makes to PSB Well-being Objectives

Early Years	Live well, age well	Climate Change and Nature Recovery	Strong communities
Direct	Direct	Indirect	Direct

## 5. Corporate Plan Steps

### 5.1. Step 1 – Strategic direction

The focus of this step is to improve our strategic direction and approaches to tackling poverty and enabling communities, so that we can develop our strategies and plans to meet the needs of our population.

**5.1.1.** This year, the Council’s Tackling Poverty Development team (part of the Tackling Poverty Service) have been leading on the refresh of the current **Tackling Poverty Strategy**. A lot has changed since the last published version of the strategy in 2017 and during this year, we have been listening to the people of Swansea to find out what they think about poverty. They have shared their ideas and priorities for tackling poverty through a range of activities including:

- Completion of a dedicated survey which was live from August to September 2023 (contributions were made online and through paper forms);
- Face-to-face public engagement events at venues including the Employment Hub in the Quadrant Shopping Centre;
- Presentations through partnership forums, networks and events where we listened to the views of organisations involved in tackling poverty and representing the people of Swansea;
- Conversations with individuals, families and communities through our existing participation and engagement channels.

Our survey received 309 responses including from other 30 organisations. Many of the comments and quotes provided to us through the survey are from real people impacted by poverty in Swansea such as some of the quotes below:

It is all about speaking to people to help them with what they need.

Have often gone days without eating due to financial issues.

As an elderly person I struggle to pay bills, buy food and generally live.

Tackle problems which contribute to people falling into poverty proactively.

Poverty has devastated my life and my family.

Having to fight for everything has made me want to end my life.

At this time, we are drafting the refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy and this will be followed by a public consultation in early 2024 prior to approving and publishing the new strategy.

**5.1.2.** In readiness for the launch of a refreshed strategy, we are planning to increase the involvement of people with lived experience of poverty in our work. This will require more engagement and support for people who have used our services and those of our partners. We want to give more opportunities to listen to the voice of people who have been affected by poverty when we are planning and developing our services, programmes and initiatives.

**5.1.3.** The **Swansea Poverty Truth Commission** (SPTC) was officially launched at the Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea University Singleton Campus in October 2022. This is the first commission of its kind in Wales and brings together community, civic and business commissioners from across Swansea to put people with lived experience of poverty at the heart of policy and decision making.



**5.1.4.** This year, we have continued to develop and coordinate tackling poverty networks and forums including:

- Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum (quarterly, led by Swansea Council);
- Swansea Food Poverty Network (bi-monthly, led by Swansea Council);
- Financial Inclusion Steering Group (quarterly, led by Swansea Council).

We have built positive relationships with and between the partners and stakeholders involved in these groups ensuring improved coordination of information is available to all members and opportunities for collaboration are realised.

**5.1.5.** The Swansea Council Poverty Forum continues to meet monthly and bring together colleagues from across the Council to focus on a range of tackling poverty outcomes and collaborative activities. This year, the forum has:

- Promoted and shared key messages across our partnerships, circulation lists and networks such as encouraging involvement in our Tackling Poverty Strategy Survey exercise;
- Developed internal schemes and poverty-related communications such as new Money Guiders information and training for Council staff;
- Coordinated a range of activities and contributions on key events and activities such as Welsh Government's public consultation on the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales.

## 5.2. Step 2 – Cost of Living

The focus of this step is to improve the help and support we provide people who are impacted by the ongoing Cost of Living crisis. There are a wide range of activities across the Council that contribute to this step due to the complex and often significant impacts that this crisis has had on the people of Swansea.

**5.2.1.** Since September 2022, the Council’s website - which is maintained by the Web Team (Digital and Customer Services) – has included a link on its landing page to a **Cost of Living help page** (<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/costoflivinghelp>). This page provides lots of information, resources and links for people who are struggling with the Cost of Living crisis:

Swansea Home > Residents

### Cost of living help

We have put together these pages to help provide information on the cost of living. We will add more information when we receive it. If you are still struggling with costs, then you can find people to talk to who can give you further advice using our [search for advice and support](#).

<b>Swansea Spaces</b> Places in Swansea that are offering a warm welcome to residents.	<b>Cost of living payments available</b> There are payments available from both the UK and Welsh governments to help with the cost of living.	<b>Energy costs and household bills</b> Support and advice on paying your energy and other household bills.
<b>Swansea Working</b> Looking for work? We can help you.	<b>Debt and money worries</b> The most important thing to consider if you are struggling with money is whether you are receiving all of the benefits you are entitled to.	<b>Food and essential items</b> Find out where you can access free food and other essential items such as period products.
<b>Housing</b> Support is available to help find you somewhere to live, prevent you from becoming homeless and help you with your rent and other bills.	<b>School costs</b> Help is available for everything your child needs for school.	<b>Travel and transport</b> Discounts are available on buses and trains. We also offer free bus travel for everyone during school holidays.

Since it launched in September 2022, the Cost of Living help web page has had 112,545 views and continues to be updated with the most recent information and advice. This includes links to partner websites such as UK Government, Welsh Government, Citizens Advice and the National Waterfront Museum.

**5.2.2.** This year, the Council has continued to administer and coordinate a number of poverty grants aimed at helping people and organisations respond to the Cost of Living crisis and wider impacts of poverty in Swansea. In total, the Council has so far administered over £400,000 in tackling poverty grants to local people and organisations. Recently, a new Enabling Communities Grant was launched which saw the Council add up to £500,000 in available grants this financial year.

Below are some of the key tackling poverty grants we have delivered in 2023:



### 5.2.3. Swansea Spaces (Warm Hubs Grant) 2022/23

<b>Description</b>	Welsh Government funding for organisations to provide warm hub provision in response to the Cost of Living crisis.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £83,831
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 - 70 successful applications
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Enrichment Activities / Resources, Travel Costs, Refreshments and Food, Kitchen Equipment, Volunteer Expenses, Charging Equipment, Overhead Contributions, Internet Access, Furniture
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Tackling Poverty Service



In November 2022, Welsh Government allocated grants to local authorities across Wales to support the creation of Warm Hubs as safe and warm places within the local community that people can go to keep warm during the Winter. With domestic fuel prices increasing rapidly, people struggled to keep their homes at a healthy temperature, particularly people at home all day, the elderly and vulnerable.

We established a Swansea Spaces Directory where organisations, services and community groups could submit information about their spaces. The funds supported Swansea Spaces themselves and the people who attended them, including the provision of hot drinks, snacks or meals, and enrichment activities as well as the additional costs of providing the spaces.

We provided a hot meal twice a week often to people living alone and would not cook for themselves. It has taken the worry away from people who struggled to heat their homes, if only for two days a week.

**Trallwn Community Centre**

The safe space provided has also allowed us as an organisation to gather new members, support these members and build strong working relationships and confidence with members of the community who are lonely and isolated and who haven't previously engaged with services.

**Sadies Butterflies Swansea**

Our intention is to continue maintaining the online Swansea Spaces directory ([www.swansea.gov.uk/swanseaspaces](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/swanseaspaces)) and promoting/enhancing these spaces through alternative grant funding opportunities.

#### 5.2.4. Direct Food Support Grant 2022/23 and 2023/24

<b>Description</b>	Welsh Government funding for organisations tackling food poverty and food insecurity.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £121,213 2023/24 - £87,850
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 - 80 successful applications (2 funding rounds) 2023/24 - 48 successful applications
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Kitchen / Cooking Equipment, Food Supplies, Baby Food Supplies, Volunteer Expenses and Training, Fareshare Membership, Storage Solutions, Community Growing Equipment, Fridges, Freezers, Overhead Contributions, Supermarket Vouchers, Toiletries, Easter Hampers, Cooking Tuition.
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Tackling Poverty Service

The purpose of the Direct Food Support Grant is to support people facing food poverty by strengthening existing community food initiatives including a focus on activity that helps to address the root causes of food poverty.

At this time, the Direct Food Support Grant 2023/24 has been fully allocated. Monitoring and feedback for the 2023/24 grant is scheduled to take place at the end of the financial year.

“It has given the opportunity to support those in financial need to look more closely at their use of utility costs and where they can reduce usage, as well as helping to identify areas where families can budget more effectively in their food shop and by bulk cooking.

**Action for Children**

“Feedback from guests that without this provision they wouldn't have a hot meal. Being able to provide a choice of meals offers dignity and respect.

**Zac's Place**



## 5.2.5. Period Dignity Grants 2022/23 and 2023/24

<b>Description</b>	Welsh Government funding for organisations provide period dignity products in schools.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £147,649 (Total grant £211,853) 2023/24 - £115,372 (Total grant £211,853, administration fee 12.5%)
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 - 77 Primary Schools, 2 Special Schools, 14 Secondary Schools, 1 PRU 2023/24 – 77 Primary Schools, 2 Special Schools, 14 Secondary Schools, 1 PRU
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Period Dignity Products (mainly eco products), Training, Underwear
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Education

<b>Description</b>	Welsh Government funding for organisations provide period dignity products in communities.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £64,204 (Total grant £211,853) 2023/24 - £70,000 (Total grant £211,853, administration fee 12.5%)
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 - 34 successful applications (Communities) 2023/24 - 32 successful applications (Communities)
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Period Dignity Products, Training, Underwear
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Tackling Poverty Service

The purpose of the Period Dignity Grants is to ensure period dignity for all and prioritising people from low-income households, providing products free of charge and accessible in the most practical and dignified way possible. This supports the Swansea Takes On Period Poverty (STOPP) vision to make Swansea a Period Positive city (with the support of [www.periodpositive.com](http://www.periodpositive.com)) where period products are freely available in all public facilities such as schools, libraries (including venues like Swansea Museum), community centres and other private businesses.

At this time, the Period Dignity Grants 2023/24 have been fully allocated for both Schools and Communities. Monitoring and feedback for the 2023/24 grant is scheduled to take place at the end of the financial year.

The reusable products have been beneficial because we know that people will not have to worry month to month about having to get period products.

**Cae Rowland**

This has helped to empower women in our community by giving them the confidence and support they need to manage their periods with ease and comfort.

**Chinese Autism in Wales**

### 5.2.6. Holiday Food Fund – Summer 2023

<b>Description</b>	Levelling Up funding allocated to support the provision of Holiday Food Support targeting school aged children / families with school aged children that are struggling with the cost of food.
<b>Grant Value</b>	£140,080.27
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	43 successful applications
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Food parcels, Food for events and cookery workshops, Food Vouchers, Volunteer Expenses and Coordination.
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Tackling Poverty Service

During the pandemic, Welsh Government temporarily extended the Free School Meals offer to include for payments during school holidays administered by local authorities. This offer was withdrawn on 28 June 2023, shortly before the summer holidays.

The Council allocated funding to provide additional support to help mitigate child food poverty and food insecurity during the school summer holiday 2023. This resulted in an estimated 65,000 meals being provided during the summer holiday 2023.



It enabled us to offer much needed food packs to families who we know are struggling, during a period of time when funding for free school meals was withdrawn and families were already struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis.

**Goleudy Community Fridge**

One asylum seeker mother told us that they went to Tesco to buy food. Her daughter said that it was the only time that they had ever been able to use a big trolley for their food shop.

**Swansea Asylum Seekers Support**

**5.2.7. The Revenues and Benefits Service** (Finance Directorate) is responsible for various and diverse functions worth approximately £370m of transactions in any normal year. Our functions relate to both collection of income and payments to vulnerable citizens and include:

- Administration and payment of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Housing Payments;
- Collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments;
- Determining eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) and Uniform Grants on behalf of the Council's Education Service;
- All aspects of financial assessments and payments for social care and collection of service users' contributions towards the costs of their care - on behalf of the Social Services Department;
- Providing technically specialist front facing customer services for its services - face to face/telephone/e-mail/skype/Microsoft teams.

Below are details of the additional grants we have delivered in 2023:

#### **5.2.8. Fuel Support Scheme 2022/23**

<b>Description</b>	Welsh Government funding for households to receive a £200 payment towards fuel payments.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £5,782,800
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 – 28,914 successful applications
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Contributions towards home energy bills and fuel poverty.
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Revenues and Benefits

#### **5.2.9. Energy Bills Support Schemes Alternative Funding 2022/23**

<b>Description</b>	UK Government funding for households to receive a £200 payment towards fuel payments.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £52,000
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 – 260 successful applications
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Contributions towards home fuel bills.
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Revenues and Benefits

#### **5.2.10. Alternative Fuel Payments Alternative Funds 2022/23**

<b>Description</b>	Welsh Government funding for households to receive a £200 payment towards fuel payments where they use alternative fuels as their main form of heating.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £160,000
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 – 400 successful applications
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Contributions towards home fuel bills
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Revenues and Benefits

**5.2.11.** The Welfare Rights and Financial Inclusion team (Tackling Poverty Service) is responsible for providing specialist advice and guidance on **welfare benefits** and tax credit law. Our remit is to increase benefit knowledge and awareness of those working in Swansea which will increase resources to support residents with their benefit issues. In 2023-24, we introduced a first stage welfare rights service to clients of Social Services. In addition, we provide a welfare rights and financial inclusion service to individuals who are engaged with Communities for Work Plus.

The team currently:

- Runs a dedicated Advice Line three days a week for any service/organisation in Swansea seeking advice or information in relation to their client's benefits;
- Provides appointments for benefits checks, form filling, and dealing with complex cases such as social security appeals and legal issues including benefits decision-making;
- Delivers training to staff on relevant topics such as Universal Credit, aiming to help staff to develop and increase working knowledge of the welfare rights system;
- Produces materials and information relating to welfare benefits such as guidance on completing forms including Personal Independence Payments (PIP);
- Provided targeted advice and support to frontline teams such as Local Area Coordinators and Employability Mentors;
- Undertakes targeted campaigns and collaborative working with partners and colleagues across the Council.

Since April 2023...	
Number of contacts via the Advice Line	726
Number of appointments offered	276
Number of successful appeals	32
Number of training courses delivered	14
Number of people accessing Financial Inclusion support	192

In 2022/23, the team helped to secure £1,379,411 benefits and so far this financial year (2023/24) that number has already reached £1,307,888. This is achieved through providing benefit checks to identify benefits that people are entitled to, but not claiming; assisting with completing complex claim and review forms and challenging decisions. Whilst this can increase individuals' income, it is also about maintaining their income and ensuring that claimants are in the correct work related requirement group and prevent clients from losing their benefit entitlement through sanctions.

In 2022/23, the team helped people to address debt to the value of £219,963 and so far this financial year (2023/24), that number has reached £117,656. This has involved helping people with budgeting advice and financial support to reduce overheads, identifying cheaper providers, entitlement to grants, benefit checks to ensure claimants are receiving their correct entitlement.

**5.2.11.** The Council funds **The Switched On: Energy Awareness Hub** on High Street through our partnership with The Environment Centre in Swansea – further information can be found at ([www.environmentcentre.org.uk](http://www.environmentcentre.org.uk)).

This service offers free and impartial advice on utility bill payment, behaviour change to reduce energy demand and grant availability for invest to save opportunities which deliver greater energy efficiency in private rented and owned properties.



**5.2.8.** The Council's Sport and Health team (Cultural Services) through various streams of external funding has developed a programme of activities at zero or heavily subsidised cost to allow access to sport and physical activity sessions within local communities in a number of settings. Our activities run during school holidays for young people, both at leisure centre sites and in many parks and open spaces. The target "Us Girls" and "Streetgames" sessions attracted over 400 individuals during the summer alone with the annual number of individuals approaching 1,000.

Our subsidised Active Older Adults programme has on average 20 sessions per week throughout the year. Sessions include a variety of safe, supervised activities at leisure centres and a variety of walking routes. Free hot drinks are available to finish as part of the social interaction outcome of the scheme.

**5.2.9.** Like other cultural venues and libraries, the Dylan Thomas Centre (Cultural Services) is a Swansea Space providing a warm social space for people to meet. Free period products are available, and we have a baby change bag with spare nappies and wipes.



We run a year-round programme of free family engagement activities, with our Learning Space open for either self-led or tutor led sessions focused on school holidays. Our Learning Space is also available for people to drop in throughout term time on days it's not booked for a school or community workshop. Tutor-led workshops typically take place on a Friday to tie in with the Free Bus Ride scheme. We also provide digital versions of many activities on our website for those unable to travel to the Dylan Thomas Centre. These activities repurpose used items such as envelopes, so are sustainable and very low cost.



**5.2.10.** Access to Swansea Museum (Cultural Services) is free to families and open every day of the week apart from Mondays. Our family activities are available through the galleries and also include a free activity pack to take home.

During school holidays, extra children's activities are laid out in the education room. Family workshops are provided for free every Thursday in school holidays. Our Education Room was also open as a Swansea Space during the winter.

School visits to the museum are heavily subsidised, with Swansea schools paying only £50 per class for a delivered workshop (there has been no increase in prices for several years). Our autumn Theatre na Nog partnership project is often subsidised by schools applying to the Art Council – Go and See funding programme.

The museum worked in partnership with Storyopolis during Summer Term 2023 on a project funded by Winter of Wellbeing. The project involved nine classes from Dylan Thomas School looking at the Cost of Living crisis.

**5.2.11.** Being able to travel across Swansea in an easy and affordable way is an important consideration for people experiencing poverty, whether that is to visit family and friends or to access essential services. This year, the Highways and Transport team offered **free bus travel** on all local bus services for journeys made wholly in Swansea on selected dates during the following periods:

- Easter school holidays;
- Whitsun school half-term holidays;
- Summer school holidays;
- Mid November and the month of December - including the Sunday of the Christmas Lights Event in the city centre – and during the Christmas school holidays.





**5.2.12.** Parking in the city centre is an important consideration for people accessing services and support in Swansea. At this time, the Council's **City Centre Parking** service (Highways and Transport) is running the 1,2,3,4,5 offer currently which means that people can park in the city centre for £5.00 all day or £2.00 on Sundays. The Park and Ride scheme also allows up to four people per car to park for £1.00 all day.

**5.2.13.** Our **Passport to Leisure** (PtL) scheme is administered by the Revenue and Benefits team (Finance Directorate) and offers discounts on a wide range of sports and leisure venues throughout Swansea, along with various discounts in private companies. At this time, there are 1,446 live PtL cards in Swansea.

### 5.3. Step 3 – Tackling and preventing homelessness

The focus of this step is to improve the outcomes for people who are or at risk of homelessness, in terms of both preventing people from becoming homeless and helping individuals and families who do become homeless to find suitable accommodation solutions. Someone could be homeless if they:

- are sleeping rough or do not have 'a roof over their head';
- are at risk of violence or abuse where they are living, from a partner, ex-partner or family member, or someone near where they live;
- cannot afford to stay where they are living;
- are in very temporary accommodation;
- are staying with friends or 'sofa surfing';
- have been illegally evicted;
- are in accommodation that is in very poor condition or is dangerous;
- have nowhere to put your houseboat or caravan.

Our aim is that homelessness in Swansea is rare, brief and unrepeated.

**5.3.1.** This year has been a very challenging in terms of preventing homelessness. We have seen an increase in both homeless presentations and the numbers of households applying on the Council's Waiting List. The Council's Community Housing Services and Strategic Housing teams (Housing and Public Health) are leading on tackling this issue.

Consequently, we have seen an increase in the number of people being placed in temporary accommodation and people occupying temporary accommodation for longer periods of time. Key reasons for this increase include a change in housing legislation, the Cost of Living crisis, a rise in the numbers of refugee cases, and the lack of affordable housing options particular with finding accommodation in the private rented sector.

**5.3.2.** To meet the increased need during 2022/23, we have delivered additional units of permanent and temporary accommodation via our **More Homes Programme**. As an example of this, we have recently converted former office accommodation in Penlan into 6 temporary accommodation flats suitable for families and this will help reduce the need for us to place families into Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation. In addition, we are currently working with partners and exploring further units of temporary supported accommodation as part of our strategy to move away from a reliance on B&B for single persons.

**5.3.3.** Prevention is getting more difficult as households are struggling to afford their mortgages or rent payments and private landlords are leaving the sector. In order to mitigate against this, so far this year we have committed £410k of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to preventing homelessness, as well as a further £230k in the Housing Options Prevention Fund.

**5.3.4.** The **Housing Rents Management Strategy 2022-2026** aims to effectively prevent rent arrears to ensure that Council tenancies are sustained. The strategy includes a specific objective and subsequent actions in respect of minimising rent

arrears when they occur and supporting Council tenants to sustain tenancies and prevent eviction which further embeds the approach of eviction being a last resort. As a result of this strategy, we have been able to ensure that evictions have been kept extremely low.

**5.3.5.** We have developed a rapid rehousing approach to provide additional support to those needing to move on from temporary and supported accommodation. This approach has enabled us to move people on from temporary accommodation into more permanent accommodation and sustain their tenancies. The Council's **Housing First Scheme** is part of this rapid rehousing approach and as a result, rough sleeping in the City has been kept to a minimum.

**5.3.6.** There are high levels of need for social housing and the supply is not currently meeting demand. To ensure all available units of accommodation are maximised and that offers of accommodation reach those most in housing need, we have commenced a review of the **Housing Allocations Policy**. The new policy is likely to be implemented in 2024/25.

We understand that, to tackle poverty, there has to be a multi-agency approach. We have continued to work closely with our partners such as Registered Social Landlords (RSL), the voluntary sector and the Housing Justice system to ensure priorities are aligned to respond to the current housing and homelessness pressures and help those most in need.

## 5.4. Step 4 – Making more homes available

The focus of this step is to improve the amount and quality of homes that are available for people to make it easier and more affordable for people to live safely and independently. Affordable homes include social rented housing owned by local authorities and RSLs as well as intermediate housing where prices or rents are above social rents but below market housing prices or rents.

**5.4.1.** The Council's **More Homes Programme** has set a ten-year delivery ambition of 1,000 additional affordable homes to be delivered by the Council's Strategic Housing Division (Housing and Public Health). This includes a mix of new builds, acquisitions (via Section 106 agreements and a buy-back programme of former right to buy properties) and conversions of existing buildings into new units of accommodation. This is alongside an estimated further 4,000 properties delivered by RSLs in Swansea over the same period.

New build	88
Acquisitions	140
Conversions	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>

The table opposite shows the number of properties (units) delivered through the More Homes Programme since its inception in 2018/19 up to October 2023:

**5.4.2.** The Council has developed a high specification for the properties it is building - the **Swansea Standard** – to ensure that new build properties are built to Welsh Government [Welsh Development Quality Requirements](#) (WDQR) standards and Homes as Power Stations, providing highly energy efficient (SAP rating A), low carbon homes with ground or air source heat pumps, photovoltaics (PV) panels, storage batteries and Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery (MVHR) units.

The homes will reduce operating energy and Co2 emissions over the building's lifetime. The construction form is a 'fabric first' approach which consists of a highly insulated timber-frame with high-performance doors and windows, ensuring homes retain heat in the winter and help keep people cool in the summer. Providing homes that are comfortable, highly energy efficient and cost-effective to operate, while making a positive contribution towards health and well-being, is part of our commitment to providing a positive contribution towards the drive to tackle fuel poverty.

**5.4.3.** A Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Budget review is currently underway to identify the future budgets required and funding available to achieve the 1,000 home target in light of recent increases in construction/material costs and competing demands on capital budgets in light of new Welsh Government decarbonisation targets in the **Welsh Housing Quality Standards** (WHQS 2023).

**5.4.4.** The first phase of WHQS was completed in December 2021 with a total investment to the existing housing stock of £546m. Investment in energy efficiency measures improved the thermal performance of properties to an average SAP score of 68 across the 13,700 stockholding.



The pending introduction of WHQS2023 increases social landlords obligations to improve existing stock to deliver further thermal upgrades to building fabric, decarbonise properties and provide residents with affordable heat and energy. The Council approved a four-year capital programme to reflect revised WHQS2023 duties on 2 March.

**5.4.5.** Last year, our WHQS programme included almost 80 project schemes as part of the £30m capital investment in the stock which contributes to tackling poverty in social housing.

**5.4.6.** The capital programme for WHQS2023 for 2023/24 is £37m and further £140m investment up to 2027/28 is to maintain existing standard and develop decarbonisation programmes, including the use of renewable technologies, to meet future WHQS2023 policy objectives.

The immediate statutory WHQS2023 target is ensure every property in our stock portfolio achieves an SAP score of 75 by 2029. This will be followed by upgrading all existing properties to a target standard of EPC Band A, SAP 92 and EIR 92 during the 2030's. The exact date of final programme delivery will be decided upon in negotiation with Welsh Government, based upon the profile and size of the council's housing stock, scope of work to undertaken and finance available to deliver programme.

In practical terms, Welsh Government and Swansea Council's policy objective is to undertake deep retrofit work to all its properties to insulate them to the very highest target levels which will reduce heat loss that will result in lower heating energy usage by the resident. The use of renewable technology to provide PV solar energy panels and battery storage will reduce the demand for grid electric power and light. Solar panels in pilot schemes have provided approximately 50% of the householders' electric energy needs which has significantly reduced utility suppliers costs. On completion of thermal upgrade work and solar power installation, future capital programmes will concentrate on further decarbonising properties by replacing existing gas boilers with either a green gas solution such as hydrogen or bio methane or install heat pumps.

In addition to the HRA funding outlined, Welsh Government provide additional grant aid to fund programmes. Presently, Major Repairs Allowance Grant (MRA) provides an additional £9.2m funding each year Optimised Retrofit Programme of £3m to support decarbonisation until 2024/25.



**5.4.6.** Our progress during the last twelve months includes:

- Completion of six 2 bed new build low-carbon bungalows in West Cross in March.
- Conversion of a former social services property in Gorseinon into two 3 bed homes completed in May.
- Conversion of the decommissioned District Housing Officers in Penlan and Eastside completed in October. Penlan has been converted in to five 2 bed flats and one 1 bed flat and will be used as temporary accommodation for families.

- Eastside DHO has been converted into four 1 bed flats and will be allocated a general needs accommodation to permanently rehouse people on the waiting list.
- An on-going acquisition programme which has focused on purchasing ex-council properties to rapidly increase the social housing stock. So far during 2023/24, 28 properties have been purchased and the original budget of £3m has been extended to enable the programme to continue to year end with the aiming of adding an additional 10-15 units. Overall, since the acquisition programme began in 2018 and including purchases during 2023, 140 ex-council properties – which were sold via the right to buy – have been purchased and returned to the Council’s housing stock.
  - Plans are well underway for a number of new build schemes to commence in 2024/25 including:
    - Creswell Road – 9 units;
    - Brondeg Housing – 13 units;
    - Heol Dynys – 22 units.
  - The Council is working with architectural design consultants BDP to develop plans for sites at Brokesby Road, Bonymaen. A public consultation exercise took place in January which provided residents with the opportunity to comment on the draft plans. A planning application was submitted in October. The delivery timetable of these sites will be agreed following the completion of the HRA budget review.
  - In addition, the More Homes Programme contains a number of smaller sites including:
    - land at Gower Road, Sketty;
    - Penrhos Place, Gendros;
    - Gorseinon Business Park;
    - the former Gorseinon Junior School, which will be brought forward for development in future years.

Future plans include preparing for development of land at Milford Way Blaenymaes, where the Council will seek a development partner to assist bringing them forward.

**5.4.7.** In addition to the Council’s own building programme, we continue to work closely with RSL partners to ensure we maximise delivery of affordable housing through the allocation of Welsh Government Social Housing Grant (SHG) and through the Programme Development Plan. In the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP), Swansea’s allocation of SHG from Welsh Government was £23.7m for 2022/23.

**5.4.8.** Work also continues in conjunction with the Planning Department to maximise the number of planning applications approved by the Council that achieve the stated % threshold of mixed-use tenure affordable homes on residential development sites in accordance with planning policy.

**5.4.9.** The UK Government **ECO4 Grant Scheme** allows people to claim up to £50,000 grants towards home energy efficient upgrade, including cavity wall insulations, boiler upgrades and solar panels. In Swansea, the ECO Flex scheme is coordinated by the Energy Efficiency Coordinator (Housing and Public Health) in line with the Electricity and Gas (Energy Company Obligation) Order 2022 (ECO4 Order).

The scheme supports households who are most likely to experience fuel poverty and those vulnerable to the effects of a cold home.

The Council have actively sought energy related funding and advice for private sector householders including landlords, procuring three energy partners to deliver the ECO Flex programme. This is a household referral mechanism within the wider The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) an obligation on energy suppliers aimed at helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions. There have been several tranches of ECO and we are currently on ECO4.

**5.4.9.** We have been successful in obtaining **Warm Homes Funding**. Since the beginning of 2023, we have delivered through our energy partners over 230 separate measures to 93 households which has included solid wall insulation, first time central heating, air source heat pumps and PV using local contractors, equating to over £1,100,000 on inward investment. This does not include our joint efforts with Nest, Welsh Government's initiative which offers similar measures to the more vulnerable. The Council has also facilitated a mail shot for Nest every year, which has helped hundreds of Swansea's private sector families.

## 5.5. Step 5 – Improving people’s prosperity

The focus of this step is to improve the way we help people to develop their skills, qualifications and employment prospects so that they can find well-paid, meaningful jobs and improve prospects for their future. We can consider this journey as “lifelong” covering education for children (up to age 16) and education for young people and adults (over the age of 16).

Poverty can have detrimental impacts on people’s ability to complete education, access essential skills training and gain meaningful employment. The impact of poverty on early years (i.e. the development of children from birth up to five years old) is significant as studies show that about 1 in 3 children in the UK are living in poverty<sup>10</sup>. This can impact on the child’s health, social, emotional and cognitive development as well as their behaviours and educational outcomes.

**5.5.1.** Children born into poverty are more likely to experience a wide range of issues from poor nutrition to mental health problems. The Council’s **Education Service** has taken a range of actions to help those in school who are affected by poverty including:

- Delivering the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) at school level to ensure it is narrowing the gap between those on free school meals and those who are not by focusing on:
  - high-quality learning and teaching;
  - Community Focused Schools;
  - early childhood play, learning and care;
  - high aspirations supported by strong relationships;
  - health and wellbeing;
  - leadership;
  - Curriculum for Wales and qualifications;
  - supporting post-16 progression.
- Rolling out free school meals in line with Welsh Government targets for all primary pupils by 2024, which so far has been rolled out to Year pupils across Swansea (with plans to rollout to Years 4, 5 and 6 as soon as possible in 2024);
- Making changes to menus, kitchen equipment and catering arrangements in order to meet the needs of schools and pupils whilst ensuring that healthy and nutritious meals continue to be served;
- Delivering a presentation to Cross Phase Headteacher meeting in June 2023 focused around considering the cost of the school day for parents and carers (plans are in place for another headteacher session on poverty in Spring 2024);
- Offering training to schools through our regional school improvement service, Partneriaeth, on costing the school day, which encourages schools to consider factors such as the cost of school trips, access to technology for homework and pressures on pupils to keep up with styles and trends.

The Council provide a range of services and support for children and families including those in or at risk of poverty.

---

<sup>10</sup> Report from the End Child Poverty Coalition published July 2022.



### 5.5.2. Free School Meals Holiday Payments Grant 2022/23 & 2023/24

<b>Description</b>	Welsh Government funding to help families with school age children entitled to free school meals to access food during school holiday periods.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £2,606,689.80 2023/24 - £243,796.80 to date
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 – 53,491 successful applications 2023/24 – 5,602 successful applications to date
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Direct bank payments
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Education

Welsh Government withdrew the Free School Meals Holiday Payments scheme in the Summer of 2023. The Council stepped in to establish the Holiday Food Fund to provide opportunities for families of school age children entitled to free school meals to be able to access food during the summer holiday period.

### 5.5.3. School Uniform Grant 2022/23 & School Essentials Grant 2023/24

<b>Description</b>	Welsh Government funding to help families with school age children to afford essential resources such as school uniforms and equipment.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £1,837,537.04 2023/24 - £848,328.90 to date
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 – 5,476 successful applications 2023/24 – 4,600 successful applications to date
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Direct bank payments to allow the purchase of school uniform, sports kits / outdoor learning equipment, IT equipment, equipment (such as bags and stationery), specialist equipment (such as design and technology resources).
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Education

School uniform grant continues to be promoted with parents/carers and payments are made by bank transfer to make the process as easy as possible for parents. Schools work with the parents/carers of learners who do not have a bank account to ensure they get their entitlement.

In partnership with the charity GROW Cymru, the Council have established the **ABC123 Project** to accept donated uniforms that are no longer required, launder them and then re-sell them at a fraction of the cost of new uniforms. This has helped make school uniforms more affordable for parents struggling with the Cost of Living crisis.

**5.5.4. Flying Start** is a Welsh Government funded programme that aims to give 0-4 year olds in Swansea a “flying start” in life. The original scheme aimed to provide intensive support services for children aged 0-4 years old and their families. The focus of the programme is on promoting language, cognitive, social and emotional skills, physical development, and the early identification of high needs.

This is achieved through the delivery of health support and guidance, parenting groups and support, early language groups and support and funded part-time childcare for up to 12.5 hours per week term time only in 18 school based settings.

In addition, we have recently launched our Welsh Government funded Flying Start childcare only expansion programme. This has required a change to our current model of service provision for childcare. In addition to our 18 school-based settings we now also engage with privately operated childcare and are providing further reach to newly eligible addresses in Swansea. Areas for this phase of the roll-out are based on the WIMD data as provided by Welsh Government.

**5.5.5. Families First** is a Welsh Government funded programme that can provide families with help, advice and support to prevent any issues or problems from getting worse. It is designed to improve outcomes for children, young people and families, helping families to decide what help they need for the family to thrive.

Families First places an emphasis on early intervention, prevention and providing support for whole families rather than individuals. The programme promotes greater multi-agency working to ensure families receive joined-up support when they need it. Areas of support provided through this programme include:

- Preventative Family Support;
- Additional Learning Needs (ALN);
- Contextual safeguarding support for young people;
- Family Centre based provision.

**5.5.6.** Our libraries remain a key asset in our local communities to help encourage and promote learning and skills development. This year, Swansea Libraries (Cultural Services) has worked in partnership with the Fusion Programme – a Welsh Government initiative supporting cultural opportunities to help improve lives – to deliver a number of key projects:

**5.5.7.** The **Digital Art for Health and Wellbeing Workshops** were delivered in partnership with the Council's Lifelong Learning Service and with Digital Communities Wales as an accredited course aimed at both volunteers and individuals currently out of work. It was targeted for people looking to enter sectors such as Health and Social Care, Learning/Education and a range of Community Support roles. The result of which to allow participants to both acquire/cascade and use these new skills within their own and future roles. Eighteen participants were put forward for digital learning accreditation as part of the optional accreditation build into the workshops.

**5.5.8.** The **Participating in Museum, Heritage and/or Cultural** activities were delivered in partnership with the Dylan Thomas Centre, Your Voice Advocacy, Gower College Swansea (GCS) and supported by our Lifelong Learning Service. This was a new accredited course specifically aimed at ALN/Neurodiverse individuals and groups. The aim was to use creative activities for skills development and accreditation. The first of the courses from the initial pilot project is now underway with students from GCS attending with another course due to start in November.

**5.5.9. The Creative Volunteering (Digital) Project** was delivered in partnership with Itec Digital Training at Swansea Central Library. The aim of the project was to support young people via digital creative activities and workshops, as well as developing transferable work-related skills that young people could take into the world of work. Some of the skills they developed included:

- Film making / photography training;
- Digitisation archive of vinyl records;
- Project development / problem solving;
- Sound and audio recording workshop;
- Podcast and interviewing techniques;
- Research and interview skills.

Extremely beneficial in a number of ways. Not only by allowing them to have an active role in a live project, learning skills that will help them in future job opportunities, but largely in confidence building and allowing them to take pride in the work they put towards the role. I found that the sessions were something that they really looked forward to attending each week, with them even now asking me if we can come back!.

**Itec Digital Training**

**5.5.10.** Education and skills development is part of the journey towards achieving good, well-paid employment. **Employability support** involves a wide range of services to help people improve their chances at finding suitable, meaningful and well-paid work. Applying a person-centred approach to employability support puts the focus of our service teams on supporting people to achieve their aspirations and tailoring solutions to their needs and unique circumstances. This is a principle embedded in our employability services and the way our teams engage with people looking to achieve employment.



**5.5.11.** The **Communities for Work Plus (CfW+)** programme was relaunched in April 2022 because of Welsh Government merging the following employability programmes into one scheme; Communities for Work and Young Person's Guarantee (YPG). This programme is delivered in Swansea by the Employability & Skills Team (Tackling Poverty Service).



The relaunched programme provides a mentoring service for eligible young people (aged between 16 and 24) and eligible adults (aged 25 and over). Eligibility is focused on helping people who are not currently employed or may experience barriers to finding work. Through a triage process, clients are assigned to mentors who help them with building confidence, learning new skills, gaining work experience, writing Curriculum Vitae (CV) and so on.

We have been looking at your stats and wanted to share with you the good news that the CfW+ Swansea team have hit the milestone of achieving over 1,000 Job Entries... This is a fantastic achievement.

**Welsh Government CfW+ Programme Officer**

We work with many organisations to target our support at people or communities who need extra help to overcome the barriers to employment. This includes prison leavers, young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETS) and people who have experienced difficulties in accessing services.

There is also an employer engagement team within this programme that builds positive relationships with local employers and businesses. This can help to bridge the gap between people looking for work and organisations looking for staff. We run employer engagement events across our community hubs as well as within employer premises.

**5.5.12.** Some of the actions we have taken in the last twelve months include:

- Supported 308 people into work by the end of September 2023, the highest level of 'into works' since the beginning of the programme (the current total since April 2023 is now 360);
- Continued our mentor support and triage service around the principle of person-centred employability support for all residents who request this support;
- Participating in community park events in collaboration with Safer Swansea Partnership to bring employability information closer to people in their communities.
- Enrolled 558 residents into the programme through our Engagement Team including through employment sessions and mini job fayres;
- Engaged with the public at events, hubs, library drop-ins and in offices (these opportunities have been referred to mentors, who have provided the best support possible to enable their participants to progress and move into work);
- Delivered Community Hub activities such as Interview, CV, wellbeing, IT and 'Meet the Team' sessions, helping to increase footfall at our local hubs;
- Developed and maintained excellent working relationships with local employers, some still only come to us for their recruitment needs due to our friendly, reliable and professional approach;
- Continued to work in all Job Centres across Swansea and increase our partnership working with DWP;
- Worked closely with Lifelong Learning Services team to support participants learning needs.



The Quadrant Hub in the City Centre continues to be an effective provision for attracting perspective participants, with over 160 referrals a month supported.

The Monitoring team triage referrals to mentors, as well as to other partner organisations, when deemed necessary. They also oversee the database, audit participants' online folders and collect case studies from the team, which highlight the excellent work being carried out. The Monitoring team also process DBS applications and they provide relevant stats for reports including reporting to Welsh Government.

**5.5.13.** During this year, the Employability & Skills team have:

- worked with 553 people accessing employment support since April 2023;
- achieved 477 sustainable Employment Opportunities, sourced via the Employer Engagement Officers, since April 2023;
- loaned Chromebooks to 119 employability programme participants up to the end of February, which have proved very effective in helping users to access training, complete job applications and find employment;
- helped 61 clients have find employment following the use of a Chromebook since the programme commenced in Swansea on 16 February 2021.

**CASE STUDY: Helping a young client find work after university.**

A young graduate from Swansea University contacted the CfW+ team after struggling to find employment after completing her studies. The triage team asked Sarah, our Employability Mentor, to meet with her.

The client was beginning to have difficulties covering her basic costs with no income and was finding it difficult to cope with receiving rejections, often not hearing back from employers. She was beginning to become anxious about how she could continue to support herself. She had a qualification in Human Resources but was facing barriers around a lack of work experience and paid employment.

Sarah helped her to revise her CV and coached her on strategies for applying for work including using recruitment agencies. They also discussed and practiced interview skills together. With this support, the client was successful in applying for an administrative post in the HR Department at Cardiff Council.

While the client was waiting for personnel checks and a start date, her financial circumstances worsened. Sarah was able to offer support through a Foodbank and to explore other options available to support her. When the client finally received a start date, the team were able to purchase tickets for commuting on the train and on the buses within Cardiff for the three weeks of her induction. This made it possible for her to accept the job and commute to work.

The client has since obtained full time employment with Cardiff Council, which would be the starting point for her career in HR.

**5.5.14.** In Swansea, **Pathways to Work** – funded by the UK Government and delivered by Economic Regeneration team (Planning and City Regeneration) – is open to local residents who are either long-term unemployed or aged 16-plus and economically inactive. It offers employability support, support for improving skills (including digital skills), volunteering and paid placements. Since April 2023, this scheme has helped 91 people into work.

**5.5.15.** In addition to our internal paid placements scheme and corporate apprenticeship programme, **Beyond Bricks and Mortar (BB+M)** is an important initiative and delivered by the Economic Regeneration team (Planning and City Regeneration) to secure community benefits from all suitable council activities in Swansea. It involves introducing community benefit clauses – such as targeted recruitment and training – into Council contracts to ensure that members of our communities (especially young people and those who have been out of the job market for some time) are given opportunities of meaningful training and employment.

During 2022/23, the BB+M team delivered 4,034 targeted recruitment and training weeks made up of the following outputs:

- 49 new jobs;
- 16 new apprenticeship opportunities;
- 8 paid work placements;
- 7 non-paid work experience placements.

**5.5.16.** Once someone achieves a good, well-paid job, the learning and skills development journey continues through lifelong learning. **Lifelong learning** is about a person's ongoing, voluntary and self-motivated pursuit of learning for either personal or professional reasons.



**5.5.17.** The Council's **Lifelong Learning Service (LLS)** team (Tackling Poverty Service) is responsible for delivering a wide variety of adult learning in the community in a range of subjects, including music, art, craft, photography, engineering and yoga. Our Tutors bring a diverse set of experiences, qualifications and skills to help develop people's confidence and capabilities.

**5.5.18.** Our LLS academic year 2022/23 included learning for 1,129 unique learners across 239 courses. This involved a range of courses, taster sessions and learning opportunities while looking after the wellbeing and prosperity of our learners. 136 accreditations were achieved during 2022/23 across the following key areas:

- Family Learning – supporting parents and carers to help their children in school;
- Essential Skills – accredited literacy and numeracy classes;
- Digital Literacy (15 different ICT classes as well as daily telephone support);
- Adult Community Learning (ACL) – a broad range of learning opportunities from gardening to calligraphy, from cookery to hair design, and so on.

Statistics from ACL courses	Statistics from Family Learning & Essential Skills (FLES) courses
99% of learners improved their skills. 100% increased their confidence. 43% improved employability prospects. 64% improved their mental health and wellbeing. 76% improved digital skills. 75% increased social interaction and contact.	77% of learners intend to progress to further learning either within LLS or with other providers.  49% of learners achieved 2 or more awards on our accredited ES/EMP programmes.

**5.5.19.** Partnership working is key to the success of lifelong learning in Swansea. The Council is a member of the **Adult Learning Partnership Swansea (ALPS)** with colleagues from further and higher education institutions as well as voluntary sector representatives.

Last year, adult community learning in Swansea underwent an Estyn Inspection and the findings were published earlier this year. There were some valuable findings and positive mentions about our work such as how we established and supported a group of minority ethnic women learners which improved their wellbeing and opened up their lives to new opportunities.



This course has encouraged me to feel that I can contribute meaningfully to the class and develop skills I was unaware of. An excellent thought-provoking brain expanding course.

**Learner, Creative Writing Course**

The ALPS partnership has recently launched a new website showcasing all of the lifelong learning courses across all partner organisations. This new website – [www.learningswansea.wales](http://www.learningswansea.wales) or [www.dysguabertawe.cymru](http://www.dysguabertawe.cymru) – showcases course information and directs potential learners to online enrolment and registration systems.



**5.5.20.** In September 2015, Swansea Bay City Region received the **UNESCO Learning City** Award for building a learning city, the first in the UK. This has been a continuing commitment of the Council and its partners as it aims to support people and organisations to foster a culture of lifelong learning to improve the prosperity of Swansea. This year, a new multi-organisational Steering Group has been established to begin planning for the next Festival of Learning ahead of the upcoming ten-year anniversary of this achievement in 2025.

**5.5.21.** During the last twelve months, the LLS team has:

- Utilised external funding to widen the breadth of the LLS curriculum offer to meet demand of individuals and provide accessible engagement opportunities.
- Collaborated with ALPS partners to create a website of learning opportunities on offer across Swansea; this website will support individuals to enter adult learning provision at an entry point which is accessible/meets their needs.
- Worked alongside CfW+ colleagues to deliver self-employment and other courses to improve participants skills, qualifications and employment prospects.
- Continued to support partner organisations by offering accredited programmes – through programme development, delivery, quality control and IQA support – such as the Paul Popham Foundation.
- Developed and delivered bespoke programmes designed to meet the needs of learners and/or partners.





### **CASE STUDY: Floristry for Work – a floral journey.**

A young person from Swansea enrolled on the Council's Floristry for Work course to learn more about the industry, meet like-minded people and grow her confidence and skills around everything to do with the flower world.

With the support of her Tutor (who is a 5 times Gold Medal Winner at the Chelsea Flower Show), she wanted to develop her passion for floral arranging which began by providing flower arrangements for her local church and winning a novice award at the Gower Show.

During her courses, the learner (who had recently finished school) managed to get work providing flowers for funerals and a wedding, using the support and skills she gained from the courses. She got a job as a trainee florist and recently started a new placement at another local florist while continuing her learning with the Council.



## 5.6. Step 6 – Focus on early intervention

The focus of this step is to improve how we identify the early signs that someone is at risk of poverty or other escalating needs, so that we can help them early and prevent needs from escalating or reaching a point where they need more intensive support.

**5.6.1. Early Help Hubs** across Swansea are the main point of contact for those seeking advice and support where they have worries about the wellbeing of children, young people and their families. The Early Help Hubs bring together community resources from the Council's Early Help service (Child and Family Services) under one roof to provide guidance, signposting or support based on the need. The Hubs have multi-agency partnership links to assist with ensuring the correct support for the family is accessed at the right time.

There are five Early Help Hubs across Swansea in a locality-based model covering East, Penderry, Townhill, Valley and West. Their work is focused on ensuring that children, young people and families in Swansea can be supported to live happy, healthy and safe lives with help from the right support, at the right time if and when they need it.



**5.6.2.** Since 2015, the Council has implemented **Local Area Co-ordination** as a strategic community-based approach. The shared vision for this approach is that all people live in welcoming communities that provide friendship, mutual support, equity and opportunities for everyone. Since 2021, we have had full coverage across Swansea with a team of 23 dedicated, locally-based Coordinators (Tackling Poverty Service).

Local Area Co-ordination recognises the power of taking time to get to know people, families and the connections, resources and opportunities within communities. Walking alongside individuals enables them to stay stronger, confident and interdependent for longer, delaying – or even removing – their need for formal service support. It is a connected, integrated, preventative and strength-based role which provides a valuable bridge between community and Local Authority.



Local Area Co-ordination is part of a person-centred, strengths-based approach to tackling poverty. Coordinators have the trust, connections and local knowledge to support individuals struggling with poverty and the associated impacts.

Each Coordinator works with around 50 individuals, some of them more regularly than others, meaning a total of approximately 1,150 individuals in Swansea with a Coordinator walking alongside. In the last twelve months, the team have produced over eighty stories describing positive changes in peoples lives as a result of introduction with Local Area Coordinators. Over 1,800 individual informal contacts have been made and 2,000 contacts with people attending groups so far this year.

### **CASE STUDY: Sara's story of Local Area Coordination.**

Sara was introduced to Bri, the Local Area Coordinator, by an Occupational Therapy Technician. Sara has a degenerative spinal condition which necessitates wheelchair use and is supported by a carer, her partner. Sara's 25 year old son, Lee, also lives with them and Lee has schizoaffective disorder.

Bri found Sara to be isolated, not going anywhere or doing anything. She described herself as 'being down and depressed', always arguing, particularly with her son. Whilst Sara lived without purpose, Lee was fixated for large chunks of each day to his PlayStation, which was leading to increasing tension in the house. Sara and Lee have no roots in their area and had little idea of what was happening in the community, and more importantly, were clueless about how and where to start connecting.

Bri did an exercise identifying where Sara's possible interest areas might be (social, physical, musical, spiritual, entertainment and so on). He encouraged Sara to feel that there was much going on locally and citywide. Bri introduced Sara to social events in the village, where she has forged friendships, enjoys a break from home and enjoys the adult discussion of other women.

Whilst Sara and Bri discussed Good Life opportunities, Lee was mostly a silent but interested observer across the room. Bri felt to get Lee motivated and mobilised would also be a key jigsaw piece in improving both Sara and Lee's own mental health.

Bri initially accompanied Lee to the start of a new men's group, then to the Community Farm and to the Jac Lewis Foundation, a preventative wellbeing and mental health project. Lee contributed confidently to discussions in the men's group. On his first visit to the farm, Lee began to come out of his shell, demonstrated various practical skills including wall building. Lee now rarely misses Thursdays on the farm, often cycling to get there.

At the Jac Lewis Foundation, Bri introduced Lee to personal counselling and physical fitness opportunities that he has benefited from. Furthermore, Sara began to accompany Lee there and has now taken advantage of the counselling opportunities for herself.

Sara feels part of her community and is exploring other activities and connections. She has also become eager to explore helping others by involvement with training for the Samaritans. Some family challenges lie ahead but Sara and Lee are increasingly confident that their experience with Local Area Coordination over the last 11 months has stood them in good stead to help navigate those challenges.

The work the Local Area Coordinator has done with me and Lee has been life changing for the better.

**Sara**

**5.6.3.** The Council's Sport and Health team (Cultural Services) delivers training in **Physical Literacy** sessions for Swansea schools, childcare and community settings. Physical Literacy is about developmentally appropriate activities that best support children's physical development inclusive of children who may have motor development delays or a disability.

Our qualified tutors deliver projects that benefit specific target groups including areas of poverty, ethnically diverse groups, early years, parental engagement and disability groups.

The Swansea Physical Literacy Partnership project provides:

- Early years Physical Literacy sessions for children in the foundation phase;
- Twilight Physical Literacy Course for Teachers and Practitioners at their school or community setting;
- Promotion of and sign posting to UWTSD Developing and Supporting Physical Development in Early Childhood Courses (Level 3 and Level 4);
- Mentoring for staff on the courses in their own settings;
- Physical Literacy Equipment and Resource bags;
- Ongoing support and communication to create 'a whole setting approach' to deliver Physical Literacy sessions;
- Feedback for continuous improvement of training and practice. The results showed increases in fundamental movement skills, ability levels, confidence and enjoyment of sports activities for children.

Pupil attention and behaviour in class showed an improvement as well as development of fine motor skills and gross motor skills. Teachers and practitioners gained confidence to deliver physical activity sessions and they felt supported and that they were being listened to. This created strong relationships between schools, private childcare settings, flying start settings and the Sport and Health team.

Those involved understand the fundamentals of delivering physical literacy and the legacy this creates to provide a platform for children to be active throughout their whole lives. This project considers the holistic development of both children and adults to create healthier, happier communities within Swansea putting an emphasis on fundamental movement skills for life improving the health and well-being of those involved.

**5.7.5.** In September, the Council teamed up with the National Waterfront Museum for a one year pilot project to create a new hub involving more than 20 organisations coming together to offer advice, support, guidance and networking opportunities. Residents are free to stop by and speak with members of staff present at the **Collaboration Station** who in turn offer tea, coffee, and an opportunity to be signposted to the services they need or events that may be of interest to them.



The Council's Partnerships and Involvement team (Partnerships & Commissioning) are coordinating the use of this new, intimate office space for drop in sessions including a monthly One Stop Information Shop service.

This is a partnership event held on the first Monday of every month, which started in October 2023 and enables up to 40 partner organisations and services to provide an information stall in the colonnade of the National Waterfront Museum. Partners can offer advice and support across a range of areas such as health, well-being, employment, poverty and housing. It's a free event and community members are welcome to turn-up anytime between 11am and 2pm so no appointments are necessary. This is a great way for people to access support on all kinds of issues that are important to them.

The new One Stop Shop will be an opportunity for lots of partners and charities to network and support the community with advice ranging from health to money issues, career support to bereavement. The service will be free to all to take part and attend and we hope it should be a great way to share information.

**Zoe Gealy, National Waterfront Museum**

**5.7.6. Isolation and loneliness** are two key impacts of poverty that can have a detrimental effect of people's wellbeing. Approaches like Local Area Coordination play a key role in helping people to explore their strengths and discover ways to get out of their homes and into their communities. We provide many opportunities to support people who are isolated and feeling lonely, such as volunteering and connecting people to others in their area with shared interests.

**5.7.7.** One of the most significant impacts of poverty is the impact on a person's emotional health and wellbeing. Our teams have been involved in the development of the **Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Strategy** developed by the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership in April 2023. Approaches like Local Area Coordination play a key role in identifying and supporting people with their emotional and mental wellbeing so we will continue to engage in this regional collaborative work.

## 5.7. Step 7 – Empowering communities

The focus of this step is to improve the support provided to communities help them to become more resilient, self-reliant and involved in making their local areas more engaging, prosperous and welcoming places.

Communities themselves face challenges that are preventing them from making a more significant contribution to tackling poverty. There are many organisations play key roles in the prosperity of our local regions and areas, such as Social Enterprises (businesses which trade for a social or environmental purpose). The Council’s focus over time is to ensure that we take a more “influencing” approach rather than “doing” things to communities.

**5.7.1.** In response to the Audit Wales report ‘**Together We Can**’, the Enabling Communities Group has started development of a focused action plan to take forward the recommendations and actions of this review. The actions include:

- Defining community resilience and self-reliance that will inform our strategic direction;
- Co-producing a corporate approach and ways of working to influencing community resilience and self-reliance;
- Developing our community partnerships, networks and knowledge of community assets, leaders and organisations;
- Commencing a co-productive approach to improving council services that interface with the communities of Swansea.

***Communities** can refer to groups of people connected by location (such as people living in a certain area), characteristics (such as people from ethnic backgrounds) or shared interests (such as a volunteering community).*

**5.7.2.** In response to the Audit Wales report ‘**A missed opportunity**’, the Enabling Communities Group has started development of a focused action plan to take forward the recommendations and actions of this review. The actions include:

- Defining the regional vision and approach to Social Enterprises in Swansea;
- Improving our knowledge and data about Social Enterprises operating in Swansea;
- Developing approaches to promoting, monitoring and reporting on the work of Social Enterprises;
- Working on ways to improve information sharing, skills and training opportunities relating to Social Enterprises.

This year, the Council has delivered a wide range of services, projects and initiatives that have targeted specific communities or actions which help communities respond to specific challenges.

**5.7.3.** On 1 November, the Council launched a new **Enabling Communities Fund** to provide activities, school holiday food and warm welcoming places in Swansea this winter. This new grant scheme combines three previous funding initiatives, allowing applicants to apply for one or more of these schemes by completing one form:

- COAST (Creating Opportunities Across Swansea Together);
- Swansea Spaces (Warm Hubs);
- Holiday Food Fund.

**5.7.4. Creating Opportunities Across Swansea Together (COAST)**

<b>Description</b>	UK Shared Prosperity funding for organisations to provide fun, enjoyable activities aimed at improving wellbeing for children, young people and families and 50+.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £581,765.76
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 - 140 successful applications
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Range of sport and health, cultural, environmental, ICT and social activities across the Summer for children, young people and families and 50+.
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Partnership and Commissioning

This year, the Creating Opportunities Across Swansea Together (COAST) programme – which supersedes the Summer of Fun programme led by the Council’s Partnerships and Commissioning Team in previous years – ran its Summer 2023 grant initiative.

Funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, this grant received 140 successful applications for a range of sport and health, cultural, environmental, technology and social activities for children, young people and families, and for older people aged 50 and over.



Without the COAST funding we would not have been able to deliver the activities across the summer holidays and I know many of the young people and families that attended would not have been able to participate in other activities due to accessibility or other issues.

**COAST Grant Recipient**

Many parents don't speak the Welsh language at home, so this activity funded by Coast is seen as not only keeping the children fit and active and introducing new friendships; but also helping them with their language during the school holidays so when they returned to school in September it wasn't so much of a shock.

**COAST Grant Recipient**

Some of the fun, enjoyable activities aimed at improving wellbeing delivered during July and August included:

- National Play Day (2 August) events at venues such as the National Waterfront Museum;
- Graffiti Workshop for young people with Foster Wales Swansea;
- Air Assault Games in the community at Ravenhill Park;
- Days out and walking trips with Action for Elders and the Ageing Well Partnership;
- Fun activities for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) groups including rock climbing, surfing and outdoor sensory sessions.



**5.7.6.** The Participation and Involvement team (Partnerships & Commissioning) are working towards achieving **Age Friendly City recognition** as part of our coordination and facilitation of the Ageing Well Steering Group. Upholding the Human Rights Principles for Older People is very much part of the foundations of this work, along with providing weekly face to face engagement opportunities to reduce loneliness and isolation, reconnect community members and services and ensure older adults aged 50+ are listened to and involved in shaping fit for purpose services.

Some of the community activities that are delivered through the Ageing Well Steering Group include:

- Movie & Cuppa Afternoon in the Waterfront Museum every Monday from 12-2pm and currently participant numbers range from 45 – 80+ each week;
- LGBTQ Cuppa & Chat in the Coast Café every Wednesday from 10.30 – 12.30 with 30+ participants;



- TenPin Bowling, 4 lanes booked each week and able to accommodate 20 participants each week;
- Marina Engagement Walk & Cuppa every Thursday from 10.30am until 1pm, which are structured into 3 varied distances/difficulty routes to support a mix of abilities. Participant numbers range from 70-100 each week. All officers, a number of partners and several community members are now “Guided Walking Leader” trained by “Sight Life UK” (12 trained) to support the participation of community members with visual impairment or sight loss;
- Cuppa & Chat at the Swigg in Swansea Maina every Friday, which incorporates opportunities to engage in local, regional and National consultations. Sessions include opportunities to engage with partners such as Age Cymru, Tend & Mend, South Wales Police, Welfare Benefits & Financial Inclusion team, and so on.

**5.7.6.** Swansea Libraries (Cultural Services) have long standing community presence and they remain “go to” places for information about local communities. Staff are happy to continue using these valuable community-based assets as disseminators of council information, consultations and engagement.

#### **CASE STUDY: Community response to Murrison Gas Explosion**

On 13 March, the community in Murrison experienced a tragedy when a gas eruption at a residential address resulted in a devastating and fatal explosion. This impacted dozens of homes around Clydach Road, with over 50 homes evacuated and many experiencing significant damage to their properties.

The Council took the lead on coordinating the emergency response and many partners were involved in the immediate response to the crisis, including organisations such as Wales and West Utilities. Teams from Housing, Highways and Transport worked to deal with the immediate issues of ensuring the site was safe and secure while works and investigations continued.

The Community Response was coordinated by a multi-organisation group established by the Tackling Poverty Service and Swansea Council for Voluntary Service. Local were already coming forward with offers of food, clothing and essential items for displaced residents, with The Dingle on Field Close acting as a hub for donations and support. Local people showed incredible compassion and charity during this difficult time.

A Community Support Point was established at Murrison Library to listen to local people, find out what they need and put in place the support to help them. This can include advice and guidance on various subjects like financial support, as well as wellbeing support and any other services that may help individuals and families affected. Library staff and others were on hand to help any residents but particularly those who could not return to their homes right away.

The response from the local community was incredible and SCVS organised a fundraising effort to coordinate the many donations and charitable activities that raised thousands of pounds for impacted people. Emotional support came from many sources including Helping Hands and The Jac Lewis Foundation, as well as SCVS organising opportunities for residents to meet up and support each other. The Local Area Coordinator – Byron – spent many hours visiting local residents to share information and offer support. Local schools, churches and businesses all contributed to the community response.

**5.7.7.** The Council's Sport and Health team (Cultural Services) has a key service aim of developing stronger communities through using sport and physical activity as a tool within holistic community development, to improve individual and community quality of life. We aim to engage with, set up and sustain community clubs and organisations to build capacity in providing local opportunities for sport and physical activity. The key aspects include recruiting and training volunteers, accessing external funding, linking school activity to community activity, improving access to facilities and promoting benefits of a healthy lifestyle.



During the first 6 months of 2023/24, over 250k of additional funding has been secured for community clubs and associations in Swansea from the national **Be Active Wales Fund**, which is aimed directly at local capacity building and aiding sustainability.

Success and evaluation of the levels of community activity and levels of inequality of participation are measured and evaluated through the Welsh Government funded School Sport Survey and Adult Sports & Physical Activity survey, which is facilitated Partnership with Sport Wales on alternate years.

**5.7.8.** The Dylan Thomas Centre (Cultural Services) and Your Voice Advocacy are continuing their co-production work. Your Voice Advocacy have recently trialled and worked with us to develop an Agored Cymru qualification. The **Participating in Museum, Heritage and Cultural Activities unit** is the first qualification of its kind for adults with a learning disability. Accreditation was supported by Fusion and Lifelong Learning Services. The qualification is being rolled out to young adults studying in GCS visiting the Dylan Thomas Centre and Central Library to complete the unit.

**5.7.9.** The Dylan Thomas Centre and Swansea Museum are partners in House of Memories Cymru, a dual-language dementia awareness programme. It includes a bilingual app – **My House of Memories** – as well as training, workshops, and activities. Its aim is to enable families and caregivers to support people living with dementia through person-centred care.

Fourteen museum partners across the country have worked together to create the Welsh Government funded app, populated with digital objects chosen by our museum partners for their significance to Welsh heritage as well as their potential to stimulate memories and conversation. By representing Welsh heritage, we aim to connect elders to traditions and events that may spark memories from the past. This is part of Liverpool Museums' wider House of Memories programme, which features museum objects from across the UK as well as the USA and Singapore.

**5.7.10. Museum Community Project** work is undertaken with targeted groups who are more likely to face inequality. Recent examples of work through Swansea Museum (Cultural Services) include video heritage with Mixtup – a youth club for young people with mixed abilities based in Swansea – and a separate video project with YMCA Swansea which included young people from a few different groups including Young Carers and Good Vibes, the LGBT+ youth forum.

**5.7.11.** The Council's Community Development Team (Cultural Services) support community centre volunteer management committees and groups throughout Swansea by providing local people with the skills, advice and guidance. This helps those **groups and committees** to become involved in providing a service ensuring that they remain vibrant, inclusive and responsive to the needs of their community.

The examples below are just some of the community groups and committees we have helped to get set-up, established and grow:

#### Rosehill Community FC (RHC FC)

This organisation engages hundreds of children from the Townhill ward, many of whom have additional needs. We supported RHC FC through completion of the Community Asset Transfer process (approved in principle by Cabinet in October) with the lease of Pentyla Playing Fields.

In delivering weekly football sessions and free family fun activities, RHC FC are providing much needed support for hyper-local families (without transport) who live in walking distance of these fields. Officers have signposted RHC FC to funding sources to maximise the wider support they can offer in terms of addressing poverty. Cultural Services Officers have also encouraged RHC FC to engage with other avenues of support via South Wales Police, Community Safety, Sports Development, Local Area Coordinators, Environmental Health, Parks and Nature Recovery Officers.

#### Friends of Coed Gwilym Park (FoCGP)

The FoCGP is a community-led initiative that fundraised and worked in partnership with the Council to agree a lease and build a Community Pavilion within Coed Gwilym Park. FoCGP run a community café 7 days a week, deliver a weekly photography club/afternoon tea for senior citizens (as well as other activities such as Chess and Sudoku), engage with local schools, and hold free family fun days in the park.



#### Friends of Brynmelyn Park (FoBMP)

The FoBMP have brought an abandoned community garden in Brynmelyn Park back to life. The group are planning to run community gardening sessions, to share knowledge and skills and foster community cohesion in the area. FoBMP have also transformed the community garden outside Dyfatty Community Centre. They are a new group, but so far have been awarded funding via their Local Ward Members Community budget, SCVS and Local Places for Nature/ Keep Wales Tidy.

#### Friends of Pontlliw Park (FoPP)

FoPP deliver weekly gardening sessions and community sessions in Pontlliw Park Pavilion, which were established using Swansea Spaces funding. They are working with the community to continue combating social isolation and promoting wellbeing. The group have recently been awarded Mynydd Y Gwair Windfarm funding to make further improvements and additions to the pavilion, benefiting the wider community.

### Birchgrove Community Centre:

The Food Bank at Birchgrove Community Centre takes place weekly and is provided by local donations. The food bank is a real benefit to the community, providing vital food supplies to the people who need it most.

Holiday Food Parcels also took place during the summer school holidays and was provided funding through the Local Councillor. These food parcels were specifically delivered to members of the community who needed them the most during the holiday period where children would not receive free school meals.

### Manselton Community Centre:

The community centre has received the follow funding this year:

- Magic Little Grants – £500 for an Over 50's one off event;
- Austin Bailey Foundation Funding – Monthly Community Lunches;
- Holiday Food Fund & COAST Fund – food and activities during school holidays;
- Street Games (Pears Foundation Funding) – food and activities for children during the school holidays;
- Direct food support from Swansea council – provides meals during term-time;
- Brownies – community coronation parties;
- Awards4ALL – buffet and disco for community;
- Awards4ALL – Halloween disco provided by the community.



### Port Tennant Community Centre

Local Councillors provided help and funding to the centre for a weekly parent and toddler group run by people of the local community. The benefit is that it allows an important session such as this to take place on the doorstep of the community and means travelling is not needed. The social element of the session for parents to speak with other parents is invaluable.

### Mayhill Community Centre

Mayhill Community Centre run a youth club (Evolve) funded by the Council weekly on a Monday night, which has continued throughout 2023. They also hold a foodbank and Warm Hub café.

The LifePoint Church link with Swansea Foodbank and also access various pots of funding (supermarkets, etc.) for their Thursday afternoon foodbank. They give food, household items and clothes / uniforms to the local community. They also had Swansea Spaces funding to become a community café and now provide tea, coffee and cakes for free.

**5.7.11.** Helping people to overcome **digital exclusion** (the challenges people face when they do not have access, skills or confidence to use the internet) is an important way that we can support people who are in or at risk of poverty. Being digitally included means being willing and able to use digital tools or services independently (such as job searches or completing online skills training).

Our Lifelong Learning Service (Tackling Poverty Service) deliver Digital Basic Skills courses such as IT Classes for Absolute Beginners as well as a telephone support service for people seeking help with basic tasks such as using smartphones and tablets. Since May 2023, this has reached and supported 370 people both face-to-face and via telephone support.

Swansea Libraries (Cultural Services) deliver and host a range of courses and training opportunities in libraries across Swansea, including Learn Direct Courses. This included hosting a SCVS Digital Volunteer at the Swansea Central Library, which has so far helped 28 people in 5 sessions this year.

**5.7.12.** As our communities face continuing challenges such as poverty, **community cohesion** is about encouraging everyone in a geographical area to live alongside each other with mutual understanding and respect. A cohesive community is an area where those from different backgrounds share positive relationships, feel safe in their neighbourhood and have a sense of mutual respect and shared values.

The Council hosts our Community Cohesion team (Partnerships and Commissioning) which includes a Regional Coordinator that covers the areas of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

#### **CASE STUDY: Funding for Music Art Digital (MAD) Swansea.**

With support from the Community Cohesion fund, MAD Swansea were able to deliver activities for community members, with support from Youth and Community Workers; including digital inclusion, cost of living support, campaigns and creative activities; addressing isolation and loneliness and supporting connected and cohesive communities.

The safe space has been accessed by people marginalised by systemic oppression and discrimination including Black and non-Black people of Colour, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, young people and people who are unemployed/in insecure work.

Some of the help that this funding was able to provide included:

- Cost of living support - free toiletries and food; information and support (Youth/Community Workers and established local networks) including support to access fuel payments, recognise and avoid scams (building resilience).
- Digital inclusion - access to learning (including Learn My Way, supporting English language skills/digital literacy/progression to ESOL courses); promoting connected/digitally connected and cohesive communities.
- Enrichment activities (eg. music/creative arts) - group workshops supporting wellbeing, positive relationships, cohesive communities, belonging and providing opportunities for people to express their identity, culture, language and heritage
- Campaigns/activities including LGBT+ History Month; promoting access to information, rights, community voice and cohesion.

### 5.7.13. Community Cohesion Small Grant Fund 2022/23

<b>Description</b>	Regional funding to help community groups to create inclusive spaces in their local area.
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £10,000 (£8,524 was awarded in Swansea)
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 - 19 successful applications
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Community events and activities
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Community Cohesion

The Community Cohesion team launched a Small Grants Fund in 2022/23. Grants were awarded to community groups that met the key cohesion objectives of creating inclusive spaces, promote events for important social and cultural times of year, groups that help identify and mitigate tensions and provide support to communities during changes to the current social and political climate.

#### **CASE STUDY: Funding for Sunflowers Wales - Swansea.**

Funding from the Community Cohesion grant fund supported Sunflowers Swansea to deliver several activities for the Ukrainian community. This included weekly dancing classes in the Swansea Multicultural Hub. These classes have been a great success and are a really popular activity run by the group. Weekly English classes for children take place alongside these dance classes.

The funding has allowed the group to commemorate significant social and cultural times of year including:

- Art class of making Welsh daffodils;
- Marking the anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine;
- Croeso festival in Swansea;
- Taras Shevchenko Readings (the national Ukrainian poet).



## 5.8. Step 8 – Keeping communities safe

The focus of this step is to improve communities so that they feel like safe places to live and work. We recognise that people who are vulnerable or at risk will be particularly affected by issues like Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) so communities want to ensure that their people and properties are protected and supported to develop safely and securely.

**5.8.1. The Safer Swansea Partnership** ([www.safer Swansea.org.uk](http://www.safer Swansea.org.uk)) is working together to make Swansea a safer, more cohesive and confident place to live, work and visit. Reducing Neighbourhood Crime and ASB is one of six key Safer Swansea Partnership priorities. The partnership is coordinated by the Council's Community Integration and Partnership team (Partnerships and Commissioning).

Membership of this partnership include the following statutory members:

- South Wales Police;
- Swansea Council;
- Swansea Bay University Health Board;
- National Probation Service;
- Wales Community Rehabilitation Company;
- Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service;
- Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service.



**5.8.2. The outcomes that the partnership are working to achieve are:**

- Seek to reduce the number of repeat victims to incidents of ASB and neighbourhood crime;
- Comprehensive ASB profile for Swansea to inform operational tactics;
- Evening & Night Time Economy strategy links to Safer Swansea priorities and works to reduce the impact of ASB;
- Aim to promote and raise awareness of the correct procedures to report ASB;
- Improve the way issues and concerns are and escalated to Problem Solving Groups and outcomes monitored;
- Seek to reduce the number of deliberate fire incidents/ off road biking incidents.



## 5.9. Step 9 – Building community assets

The focus of this step is to improve the strengths and assets within communities so that they are able to lead on and develop their own solutions to the challenges faced by local people.

Community assets can refer to buildings or lands which are of value to a community, such as green spaces or community centres. But it is really about any resource that can be used to improve the quality of community life. This requires a strong relationship between communities, the Council and other organisations to gain the greatest value from the resources that are at the disposal of the community, whether they are physical, human, social, financial, environment or cultural assets.

### 5.9.1. Men’s Sheds Grant 2022/23 and 2023/24

<b>Description</b>	Swansea Council funding to support and develop Men’s Sheds projects in Swansea
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £25,000 2023/24 - £25,000
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 - 8 successful applications 2023/24 - 15 successful applications
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Growing Supplies, Overhead Contributions, Tools and Equipment, Building Improvements, Volunteer Expenses, Refreshments, Storage Solutions, Training.
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Tackling Poverty Service

In recognition of the wealth of skills and experience which exists within communities, and of the positive impact of Men’s Sheds on health, well-being and in reducing social isolation, this year the Council continued to make funding available for the development of existing and new Men’s Sheds in Swansea.

The network of Men’s Sheds in Swansea continues to grow, attracting wider audiences and providing opportunities for people to socialise, engage in activities, learn new skills and improve their wellbeing. People of all ages, genders and abilities are welcome to any of these groups.

It has been fundamental to the successful function & running of the group.  
Provided us with tools & equipment for longer term.

**Summit Good**

Seeing our lovely flowers & plants has encouraged people to call in for a chat and they have returned week after week. Calling in to chat about flowers, extending the chat and having someone to listen has literally saved lives.

**The Old Blacksmiths**



### 5.9.2. Allotment Support Grant 2022/23

<b>Description</b>	Welsh Government funding to help establish Allotment Associations (community-led organisations who lease Council land for allotments).
<b>Grant Value</b>	2022/23 - £45,995.15
<b>Grants Awarded</b>	2022/23 - 13 successful applications (from 16 sites)
<b>Grant Spend</b>	Acquiring leasehold of Council land, establishing allotments.
<b>Grant Administrator</b>	Cultural Services

This grant enables communities to increase their community-led assets and increase the number of plots available across Swansea, encouraging and engaging new members in our communities. The scheme contributes to improving bio-diversity and sustainable practices in local areas.

The Council own sixteen allotment sites, which are all leased to allotments associations through a Community Asset Transfer policy and are signed up with the National Allotment Society. Under the Allotments Act 1925, local authorities are required to establish “statutory” allotments as part of its commitment to increase the availability of good quality allotment plots.

**5.9.3.** Following the completion of a Corporate Volunteering Policy, work will commence on the development of the Council’s Volunteering Strategy, being coordinated by the Tackling Poverty Development team (Tackling Poverty Service). This strategy is being developed based on existing Council-led volunteering opportunities in departments like Social Services and Cultural Services (for example,



Swansea Museum offers placements and volunteering opportunities including school work experience). However, there is an opportunity to enhance the potential of volunteering to support people and communities to reduce poverty, improve prosperity and mitigate the risk to service delivery.

We see an opportunity to using the implementation of volunteering across the Council to tackle poverty by:

- Delivering volunteering tasks and activities that address the impacts of poverty, such as improving wellbeing;
- Helping people to develop skills and experience that can lead to future job opportunities;
- Improving the strengths and assets of local communities through social enterprises, community interest groups and volunteer-based initiatives.

**5.9.4.** Local Area Coordination (Tackling Poverty Service) plays an important role in all the local communities of Swansea, helping to implement local and hyper-local support in partnership with communities, businesses and volunteers – building on local strengths and assets – can become a sustainable approach to not only reducing poverty but improving prosperity and wellbeing of our population.

**CASE STUDY: Our Local Area Coordinator helps the community.**

Joe – our Local Area Coordinator for Pontardullais, Pontlliw, Tircoed, Garnswllt, Felindre and Waun-gron – has developed strong working relationships with the men and woman working and volunteering at Canolfan Y Bont on Dullais Road, Pontardullais. He made himself known within the community, meeting hundreds of individuals.

Having the food bank located in the Canolfan has been a great benefit to Joe, helping him to meet those often most at need. The individuals receiving food parcels are at times struggling with many other aspects of their lives. Local Councillors would often help whether it be with the foodbank or upcoming events thus creating opportunities to build positive working relationships with them.

Joe was kindly given space at Canolfan to work as and when required, helping him to meet new people. He would regularly promote events, talk with community members about what they wanted from their communities and discuss ways in which we could look for funding to start new groups and so on.

Joe often interacts with people who come into the onsite ‘Bec the Bake Café’, where some customers would sit in the corner, often with their backs to everyone as they had become so isolated and would confide that they felt they had no purpose to their life anymore. Joe’s presence helped to make this a safe space and through his support, these people developed their confidence, skills and became a thriving part of their community.

Together with the team at Canolfan and local volunteers, Joe helped to organise several successful litter picks, with close to 100 people turning out. They set up new community-led groups, sourced funding for projects and so much more.

Although staff and volunteers at Canolfan have a vast breadth of knowledge and experience, there are individuals that required a different approach. Canolfan has become a great way to receive new introductions, and in some situations safeguard the most vulnerable of individuals. The team reported that, with the backing of Local Area Co-ordination, more vulnerable people were able to get the appropriate level of support as they often felt they weren't listened to as a service, they also reported a rise in number of visitors, increased group attendance and overall improvement of community resources.

I do not believe that Canolfan Y Bont would have the presence in the community that it does if it hadn't been for the intervention of Local Area Co-ordination. As a Partnership we feel privileged to have the expertise and support of our Local Area Co-ordinator to guide us in our work to support the local community.

**Catherine Harris, Canolfan Y Bont Manager**

**5.9.5. Social Enterprises** are businesses which trade for a social or environmental purpose. Across sectors, these businesses are different in terms of how they operate, who they employ, where they work and how they make a difference in their local community. In response to the Audit Wales Report 'A missed opportunity' – Social Enterprises, we conducted a self-evaluation of the Council's current approach to get the best from our work with and funding of Social Enterprises. An Action Plan is in development and will align with our planning and reporting for 2024.

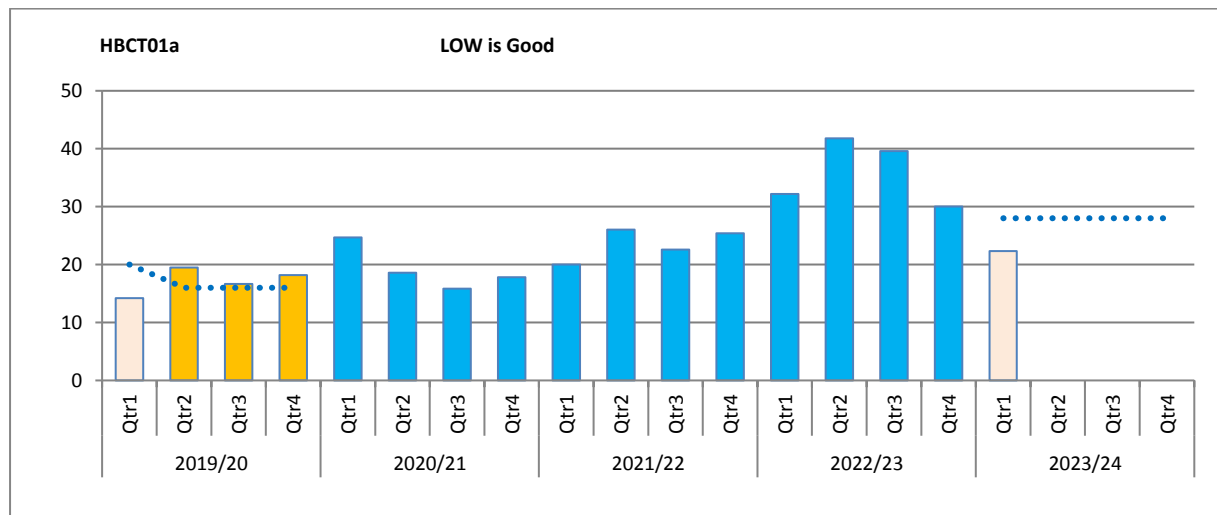
## 6. Corporate Performance Indicators

### 6.1.1. Indicator – Time taken (days) to process Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit applications

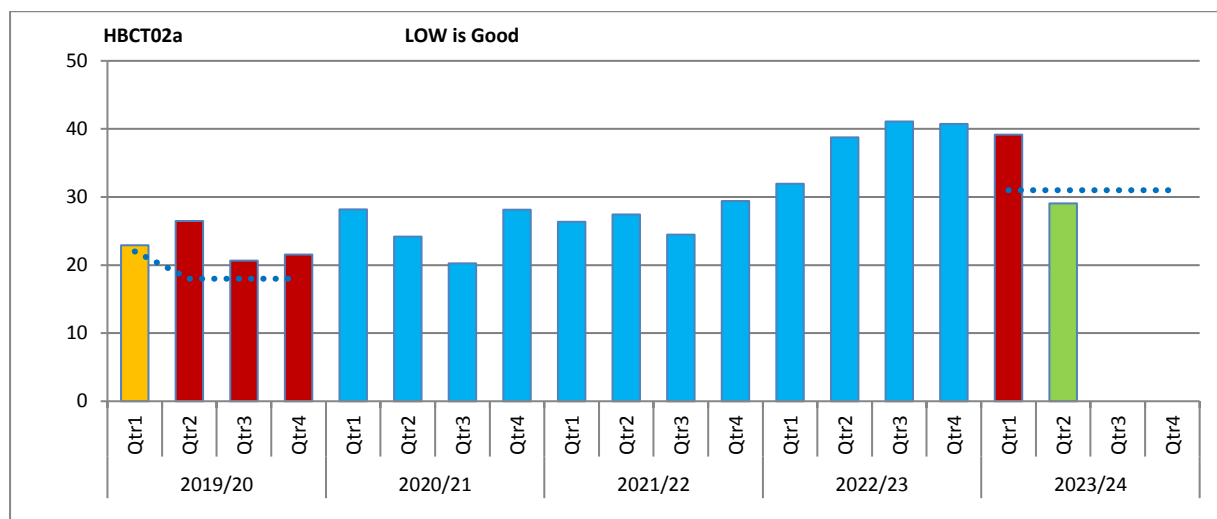
Our aim is to help people to access the benefit entitlements that will support them in being able to afford a place to live. Housing Benefits (HB) are designed to support eligible people who are unemployed, on low income or claiming benefits to pay rent (where they are not claiming Universal Credit). The Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme is designed to support eligible people who are on low income or claiming benefits to pay some or all of their Council Tax.

The data collected indicates how long customers are waiting before their applications for these benefits are processed. The Council provides HB data to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) on whose behalf we administer the scheme locally.

So far this reporting year, we are processing CTR applications in 23 days and HB applications in 22 days.



*HBCT01a - HB speed of processing: Average time for processing new claims*



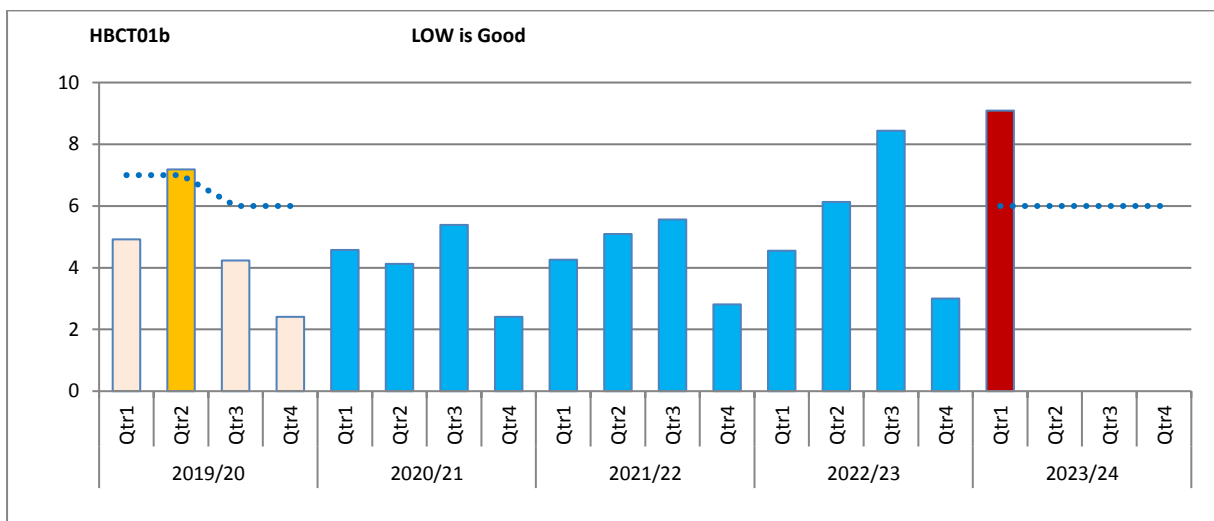
*HBCT02a - CTR speed of processing: Average time for processing new claims*

### 6.1.2. Indicator – Time taken (days) to process Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit changes of circumstances

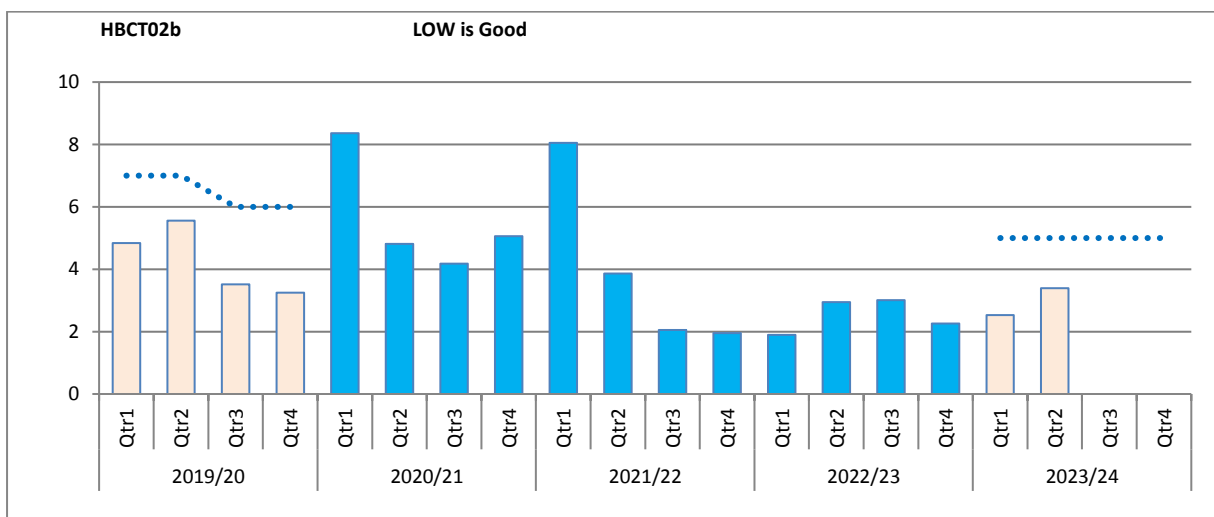
Our aim is to help people already in receipt of CTR and HB benefits to quickly change details relating to their circumstances, so as to avoid any delays or disruptions in them receiving their benefits.

The data collected indicates how long customers are waiting before their requests to change circumstances relating to CTR and HB benefits (including personal details such as addresses) are processed.

So far this reporting year, we are processing CTR changes of circumstances in 2 days and HB changes of circumstances in 9 days.



*HBCT01b - HB speed of processing: Average time for processing notifications of change in circumstances*

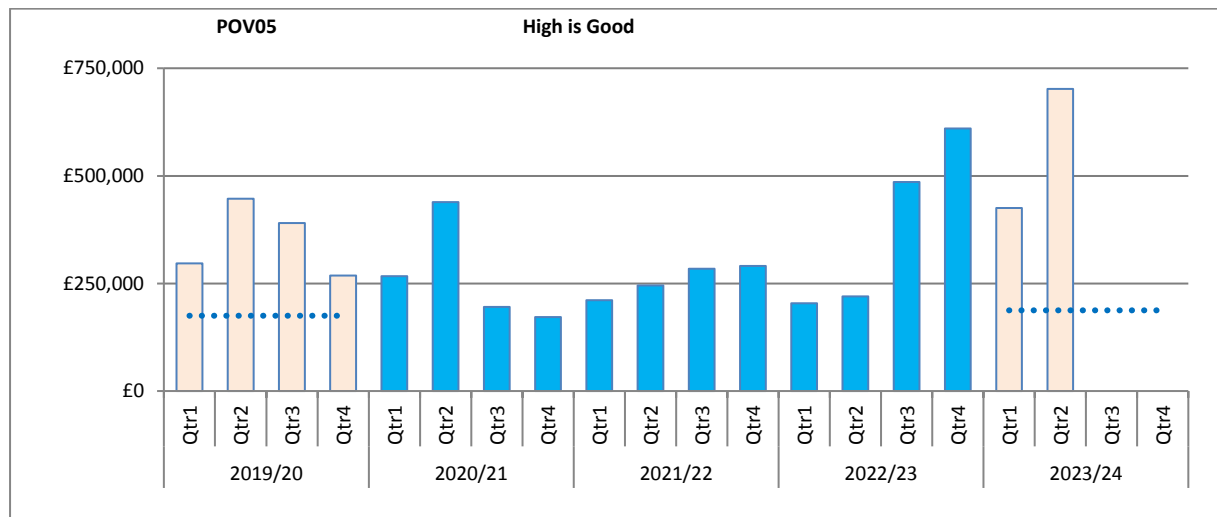


*HBCT02b - CTR speed of processing: Average time for processing notification of change in circumstances*

### 6.1.3. Indicator – Amount (value) of benefit entitlements claimed through Welfare Rights Advice

Our aim is to provide specialist advice and support to help people understanding their welfare rights and access the benefits which they are entitled to receive.

So far this reporting year, we have raised £1,091,134.10 in welfare entitlements including a peak of over £350,000 in one month (September).



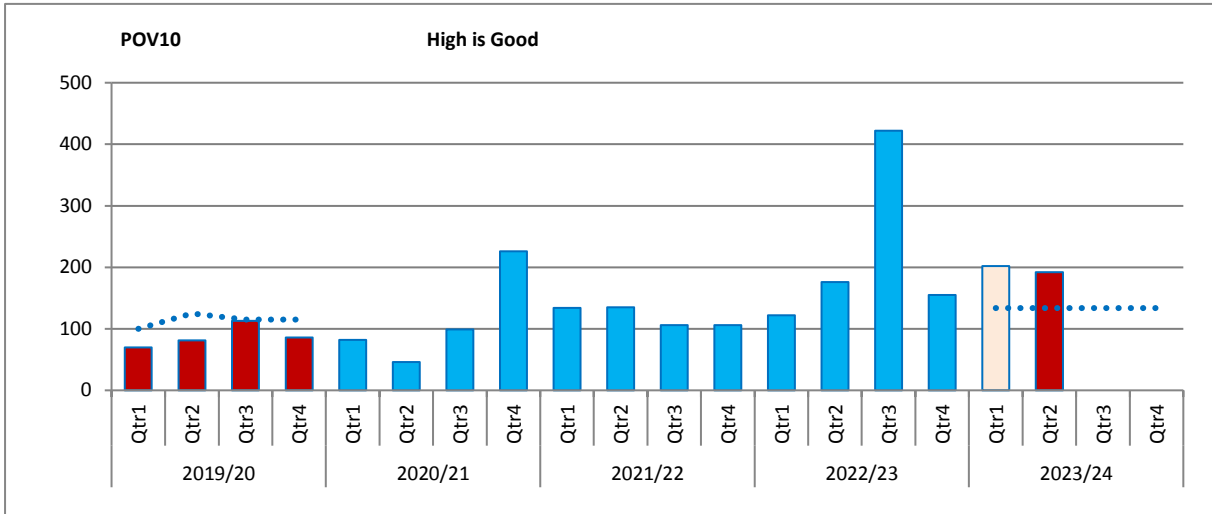
*POV05 - The amount of welfare benefits raised through securing rights and entitlements by the Welfare Rights Team*

### 6.1.4. Indicator – Number of people who gain employment through Employability Support

Our aim is to help people to overcome social, cultural, economic barriers enabling individuals to access employment opportunities.

The data collected indicates how many people have been helped by our teams to gain employment through mentoring and support. This covers the outputs of our employability support programme CfW+ and Pathways into Work (it no longer includes Workways STU and Workways Plus as both schemes ended in July).

So far this reporting year, we have supported 451 people into work.



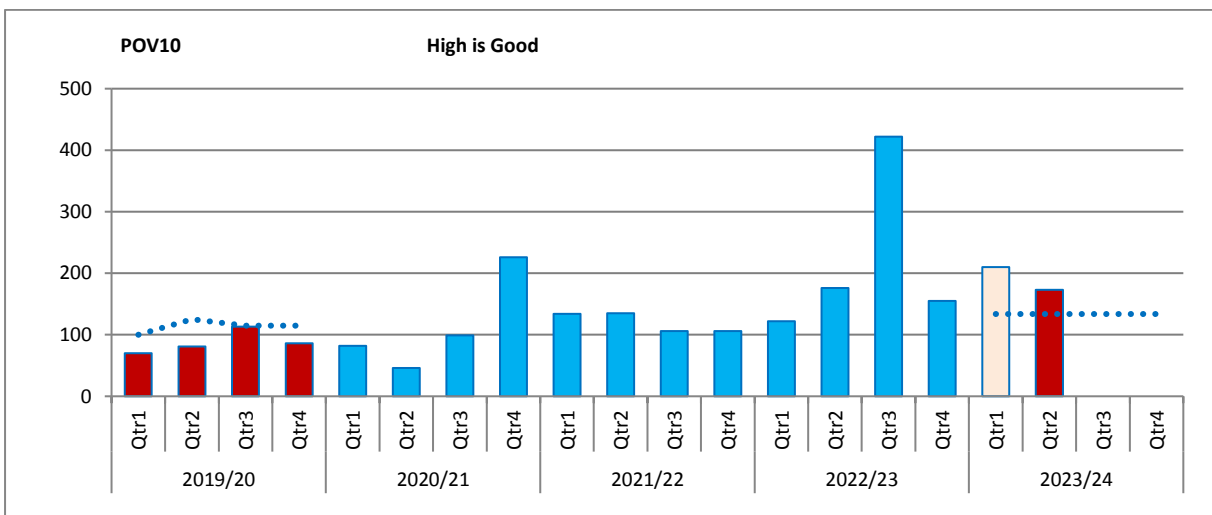
*POV10 - The number of people gaining employment through Employability Support*

### 6.1.5. Indicator – Number of adults who achieve accredited qualifications through Adult Learning

Our aim is to help working age adults to achieve the qualifications required to achieve suitable, meaningful employment.

The data collected indicates how many people have been helped by our teams to successfully complete accredited training programmes and courses. This covers the outputs of our employability support programme CfW+ and Lifelong Learning Service.

So far this reporting year, we have supported 318 people to achieve accredited qualifications.



*POV11 - The number of accredited qualifications achieved by adults with local authority support*

#### **6.1.6. Indicator – Amount (value) of grants support organisations and services to tackle poverty**

Our aim is to provide grant funds to organisations and services which directly support people in poverty, in order to get the money to where it is most needed by leveraging the existing relationships, networks and connections of those organisations.

This is a new indicator starting from April this year and we are measuring the amount of money that comes (via grants and awards to the Council) which are then disseminated to organisations and services across Swansea via our Tackling Poverty Development Team (Tackling Poverty Service).

So far this reporting year, we have received £432,380 through the grants defined in Section 5 above, with all funds having been either allocated or in the process of allocation.

#### **6.1.7. Indicator – Number of beneficiaries who have attended the “Get Swansea online” programme**

Our aim is to provide support and training to people to improve their basic digital skills, following on from the successful ‘Get Swansea Online’ initiative.

This is a new indicator starting from April this year and we are the number of people who access either our training courses or our telephone support for Digital Skills via our Lifelong Learning Service team (Tackling Poverty Service).

So far this reporting year, we have helped 370 people to get involved in improving their Digital Basic Skills through training and support.



## 7. Additional Developments

### 7.1. Human Rights City

**7.1.1.** Swansea Council and our PSB partners declared Swansea a **Human Rights City** (HRC) in December 2022. Following this declaration and after 18 months of foundation work, the Council with PSB partners hosted an engagement event. People with lived experience, young people, businesses and third sector leaders as well as community members were invited to have their say on what are the main issues and potential actions Swansea could make against each of the HRC priorities.

The HRC priorities are:

- 1) Tackling Poverty;
- 2) Vulnerable Children & Families;
- 3) Tackling Discrimination;
- 4) Domestic Abuse and Violence;
- 5) Human Rights Awareness.



The report from this engagement event will feed directly into any new strategies, policies, programmes and initiatives that are being developed by the Council and PSB partners relating to any of the priorities, whilst also feeding directly into our HRC action plans.

**7.1.2.** Simultaneously, the Council is developing a plan to put Human Rights at the heart of its decision-making. This is using a Human Rights principled approach of participation, empowering, embedding, accountability and non-discrimination.

**7.1.3.** We worked with The British Institute of Human Rights to develop a training programme on a Human Rights based approach. To date, over 80 Cabinet Members, Councillors, Directors, policy officers and senior management across the council and PSB partners have taken part. We worked with Swansea University and the HRC Steering Group to produce two guides – one for residents and visitors (detailing what your Human Rights are and why they are important) and one for organisations and public bodies (guiding them on how to embed a Human Rights based approach in their organisations).

Swansea Council's two action plans for HRC priorities and the plan to put Human Rights at the heart of the Council's decisions will be published in early December to mark one year since declaring Human Rights City status, Human Rights Day and 75 years since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

**7.1.3.** In September 2013, the Council agreed that children’s rights should be embedded within the Council policy framework, and that a duty be placed on the Council’s Cabinet to have ‘due regard’ to the UNCRC when making decisions. This means that when Swansea Council develop new policies or strategies, review or change existing policies and strategies, or develop or change Council services, thought must be given to how those decisions affect the rights of children in Swansea.

Swansea Council has a **Children’s Rights Scheme** which sets out the actions required to achieve this. This approach is now being replicated within the Human Rights City work in Swansea, which will allow for a clear benchmark on rights based practice across all Council services and across all ages. Participation is one of the principles of this approach and there are multiple mechanisms co-ordinated/facilitated across the work of the Council to hear the voice of children and young people, as well as ensuring that they are involved in decision that impact their lives.

## 7.2. Shared Prosperity Fund

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government’s Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment. Swansea Council has been nominated to act as the lead authority on behalf of the South West Wales region.



The programme in the region has been designed to ensure that funding is directed to projects that make sense to people and businesses. This will be achieved through four modes of delivery:



- Anchor Projects – major in-house projects focusing on core Levelling Up themes:
  - Communities and Place;
  - Supporting Local Business;
  - People and Skills.
- Grant Schemes – thematic grant initiatives integrated into Anchor Projects or as stand along schemes.
- Standalone Projects – projects established through rounds of competitive bidding which deliver outcomes that are gaps emerging from Anchor Projects and Grant Schemes.
- Procured Projects – projects delivering specified activities to a set scope.

At this time, a number of departments and teams have taken advantage of SPF opportunities to contribute to this investment opportunity, which is detailed as part of the **South West Wales Regional Investment Plan**.

Some of our initiatives are planned for 2023/24 and 2024/25 including:

- Further iterations of the COAST Programme holiday events schemes;
- Continued development of the Council’s volunteering strategy and approach;
- Piloting new initiatives such as Community Growing;

- More resources providing holistic support for people in poverty crisis such as Financial Inclusion support;
- Investment in partnership working and collaboration with people with lived experience.

## 8. Way Forward

### 8.1. 2023/24 Targets

Target	RAG	Latest Position
Published our refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy	Green	On course to publish by March 2024 subject to public consultation and approvals.
Developed a Tackling Poverty Performance Framework	Green	On course to complete draft by March 2024 with further work to align with refreshed strategy.
Review the Council's Housing Allocations Policy	Orange	Work has commenced, completion pushed back to 2024/25.
Agree strategy to support homeless individuals	Red	Work is ongoing but delays are a result of increased demand on homelessness services. This action has been rescheduled for 2024/25.
Establish the Swansea Sustainable Food Partnership	Blue	Completed.
Published our Corporate Volunteering Policy	Green	On course to complete by March 2024 subject to final approvals.

**8.1.1.** Our target to publish a refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy is on track for completion in 2023/24. At this time, we have completed the engagement phase of strategy development and a draft strategy is under review with officers prior to approval to proceed for public consultation. Our revised timescale for publication and launch of the strategy is March 2024, pending final approvals and turnaround times.

**8.1.2.** Our target to develop a Tackling Poverty & Enabling Communities Performance Framework is on track for completion to coincide with the launch of the refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy in March 2024. This performance framework will align the key themes, outcomes, indicators and performance measures across the scope of the Corporate Priority, so that all parties involved in contributing to Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities (as well as the refreshed strategy) can understand how their performance contributes to delivering our aims and objectives.

**8.1.3.** Our target to review the Council's Housing Allocation Policy has been pushed back to 2024/25 following replanning. A review has commenced but will require additional development and consultation prior to publishing the refreshed policy.

**8.1.4.** Our target to develop an agreed strategy to support homeless individuals has been impacted by prioritising our efforts to supporting an increase in the number of people presenting as homeless this year. While we are continuing to respond to this challenge and make strategic decisions about our approaches to homelessness, work to develop and agree a strategy remains ongoing.

**8.1.5.** Our target to support the establishment of a Swansea Sustainable Food Partnership has been met through the award of Welsh Government's Sustainable Food Partnerships Grant in August, of £97,000 allocated to the Council. We have allocated this funding to The Environment Centre as the host organisation and the partnership has been established in line with the grant conditions.

**8.1.6.** Our target to publish a Corporate Volunteering Policy is on track for completion in 2023/24. While the draft policy has been developed and reviewed, work is currently progressing on supplemental documentation including a Volunteer Managers Toolkit and Handbook. These documents are essential to align the policy with best practice so once they have been finalised, the policy can be approved and work will commence on a corporate strategy for implementing the policy across the Council.

## **8.2. 2024/25 Targets**

In preparation for our corporate reporting requirements, we are proposing the following targets for this Corporate Priority in 2024/25:

**8.2.1.** Co-produce a Tackling Poverty Action Plan involving people with lived experience of poverty, aligning our commitments to action including responding to Audit Wales' review of poverty in Wales.

**8.2.2.** Increase the Council's promotion of tackling poverty, championing our actions and accomplishments as well as raising awareness of the themes and opportunities for tackling poverty.

**8.2.3.** Review the Council's role and approach to supporting communities through its transformation programmes, locally-based services such as Local Area Coordination and commitment to enabling communities to become more resilient and self-reliant.

**8.2.4.** Deliver our Shared Prosperity Fund commitments including our Anchor Project initiatives that contribute to tackling poverty and enabling communities.

**8.2.5.** Prepare for launching and promoting our UNESCO City of Learning 2025 programme in partnership with lifelong learning organisations and institutions.

As a result of replanning activities, we are proposing the following 2023/24 targets for this Corporate Priority roll over into 2024/25:

**8.2.6.** Complete a review of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy to ensure focus on providing suitable homes for vulnerable people, unintentionally homeless and people who may be struggling with poverty.

**8.2.7.** Agreed a strategy to support homeless individuals as the COVID-19 hotel use ends, whilst continuing with our 'always a bed' pledge.

### 8.3. Next steps

In addition to our targets for next reporting year, we are proposing the next steps to allow us to progress with our aims and ambitions for this Corporate Priority, some of which are directly linked to our emerging priorities for the refreshed Tackling Poverty Strategy:

- Enhance existing processes for engaging with people with lived experience of poverty that supports those people to become more actively involved in contributing to this Corporate Priority;
- Develop more communication outputs, formats and opportunities to support our efforts for tackling poverty and enabling communities, including a focused campaign raising awareness of stigma and discrimination around poverty.

# Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form

**Which service area and directorate are you from?**

Service Area: Tackling Poverty Service

Directorate: Adult Social Services

**Q1 (a) What are you screening for relevance?**

- New and revised policies, practices or procedures
- Service review, re-organisation or service changes/reductions, which affect the wider community, service users and/or staff
- Efficiency or saving proposals
- Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning
- New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, e.g., new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, changing location
- Large Scale Public Events
- Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation
- Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Services Board, which impact on a public bodies functions
- Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)
- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)
- Major procurement and commissioning decisions
- Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services
- Other

**(b) Please name and fully describe initiative here:**

This is an IIA Screening for the Report on the delivery of the Corporate Priority of Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities. The report provides a briefing to the Scrutiny Programme Committee on the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priority in 2023.

The Scrutiny Programme Committee is being asked to consider the report and give its views / make recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Member.

There is no impact for the report itself. Recommendations made by the committee to inform future activity may require further investigation through the full IIA process which would be actioned at the appropriate time.

**Q2 What is the potential impact on the following: the impacts below could be positive (+) or negative (-)**

	High Impact		Medium Impact		Low Impact		Needs further Investigation	No Impact
	+	-	+	-	+	-		
Children/young people (0-18)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older people (50+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other age group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Future Generations (yet to be born)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race (including refugees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asylum seekers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gypsies & travellers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or (non-)belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty/social exclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form

Carers (inc. young carers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community cohesion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q3 What involvement has taken place/will you undertake e.g. engagement/consultation/co-productive approaches?**  
**Please provide details below – either of your activities or your reasons for not undertaking involvement**

Co-productive approaches with stakeholders including internal and external partners and people with lived experience of poverty will continue to shape our strategic delivery going forward in relation to Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities. This will include our continuing work with the Swansea Poverty Truth Commission, ensuring the voice of lived experience informs and shapes our priorities and activities. Our current efforts to refresh the Council’s Tackling Poverty – which has been developed with engagement and insight from the public and will shortly be going for public consultation - will also establish our future plans to embed the principles of co-production in our long-term commitments to tackling poverty and enabling communities.

**Q4 Have you considered the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 in the development of this initiative:**

- a) Overall does the initiative support our Corporate Plan’s Well-being Objectives when considered together?  
 Yes  No
- b) Does the initiative consider maximising contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals?  
 Yes  No
- c) Does the initiative apply each of the five ways of working?  
 Yes  No
- d) Does the initiative meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?  
 Yes  No

**Q5 What is the potential risk of the initiative? (Consider the following impacts – equality, socio-economic, environmental, cultural, legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)**

High risk

Medium risk

Low risk

**Q6 Will this initiative have an impact (however minor) on any other Council service?**

Yes       No      **If yes, please provide details below**

Tackling Poverty is a Corporate Priority and is implemented by an ‘everybody’s business approach’. Recommendations made by the committee could potentially impact other departments / services.



## Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form

**Q7 Will this initiative result in any changes needed to the external or internal website?**

Yes  No **If yes, please provide details below**

**Q8 What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on people and/or communities when considering all the impacts identified within the screening and any other key decisions affecting similar groups/ service users made by the organisation?**

There is no impact for the report itself.

Recommendations made by the committee to inform future activity may require further investigation through the IIA process which would be actioned at the appropriate time.

We recognise that current delivery and the next steps impact on people, families and communities across Swansea with the aim of addressing or mitigating the impact of poverty.

### Outcome of Screening

**Q9 Please describe the outcome of your screening using the headings below:**

- **Summary of impacts identified and mitigation needed (Q2)**
- **Summary of involvement (Q3)**
- **WFG considerations (Q4)**
- **Any risks identified (Q5)**
- **Cumulative impact (Q7)**

This is an IIA Screening for the Report on the delivery of the Corporate Priority of Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities. The report provides a briefing to the Scrutiny Programme Committee on the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priority during 2023.

The Scrutiny Programme Committee is being asked to consider the report and give its views / make recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Member.

Full IIA to be completed

Do not complete IIA – please ensure you have provided the relevant information above to support this outcome

<b>Screening completed by:</b>
<b>Name: Lee Cambule</b>
<b>Job title: Tackling Poverty Service Manager</b>
<b>Date: 30/11/23</b>
<b>Approval by Head of Service:</b>
<b>Name: Amy Hawkins</b>
<b>Position: Head of Adult Services and Tackling Poverty</b>
<b>Date: 30/11/23</b>

# Agenda Item 7



## Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 19 December 2023

### Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities

<b>Purpose:</b>	To enable the Committee to question Cabinet Members on their work. The Committee's questions will broadly explore Cabinet Members' priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to specific areas of responsibility.
<b>Content:</b>	<p>The following Cabinet Member will appear before the Committee:</p> <p>a) Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events &amp; Tourism</p> <p>The specific areas of responsibility being discussed are:</p> <p>a) Support for Business</p>
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Question the relevant Cabinet Member on the specific portfolio responsibilities.</li><li>• Make comments and recommendations as necessary.</li></ul>
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
<b>Report Author:</b>	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: <a href="mailto:brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk">brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk</a>
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Amanda Thomas

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 One of the most important roles that Scrutiny carries out is holding the Council's Cabinet to account. The Cabinet (also known as the Executive) is made up of the Leader and other Councillors, appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific portfolio responsibilities.

1.2 There are 10 Cabinet portfolios:

	<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	<b>Cabinet Member</b>
1	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader of the Council)	Cllr Rob Stewart
2	Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)	Cllr Andrea Lewis
3	Corporate Services & Performance (Deputy Leader)	Cllr David Hopkins
4	Education & Learning	Cllr Robert Smith
5	Care Services	Cllr Louise Gibbard
6	Wellbeing	Cllr Alyson Pugh
7	Environment & Infrastructure	Cllr Andrew Stevens
8	Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism	Cllr Robert Francis-Davies
9	Culture, Human Rights & Equalities	Cllr Elliott King
10	Community (Services) Community (Support)	Cllr Cyril Anderson Cllr Hayley Gwilliam

NOTE:

- The Community Portfolio operates under a job-sharing arrangement
- Detailed breakdown of Cabinet Portfolio Responsibilities are **attached** to this report.

- 1.3 By acting as a 'critical friend' Scrutiny has the opportunity to challenge the Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members on their actions and performance in relation to their areas of responsibilities.
- 1.4 Rather than a look at overall responsibilities, the Committee has agreed to focus on specific areas of interest / concern, taking into account any gaps in the overall Scrutiny Work Programme and ensuring good coverage of Scrutiny across all Cabinet portfolios.
- 1.5 The Committee should be mindful to avoid duplication of any issue(s) which are being examined elsewhere in the Scrutiny Work Programme e.g., within Performance Panels.

## **2. Discussion on Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities**

- 2.1 The following Cabinet Member will appear before the Committee:
- a) Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism
- 2.2 The Cabinet portfolio responsibilities that the Committee will focus on are:
- a) Support for Business

- 2.3 The Cabinet Member, will attend, along with lead officers who can assist the Committee, to report on aims / objectives, plans, and the delivery of work related to this portfolio responsibility. Cabinet Members will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the Committee.
- 2.4 The Cabinet Member has provided a report on the portfolio responsibility under discussion to help the Committee focus the discussion and questions - see **Appendix 1**.

### **3. Approach to Questions**

- 3.1 The session should provide Committee members with a greater understanding of what the specific responsibilities and work entails and why we do this, priorities / objectives / commitments, resources (incl. budget), key activities & headlines / achievements (incl. notable practice), relevant performance measures, data / trends, and overall assessment of service health (including, for example, how we compare with others, current or future pressures or issues, challenges / opportunities, risks) and improvement/impact/difference made. This will give the Committee the chance to ask focused questions and provide challenge on actions and performance and the delivery of work in relation to these areas of responsibility, as well as future thinking.
- 3.2 In terms of themes that cut across all Cabinet portfolios, the Committee can ask Cabinet Members about:
- Well-being of Future Generations Act – impact on their work / decisions e.g., what they are doing to achieve the well-being goals and ways of working, e.g., focus on long-term thinking, collaboration / involvement etc. (including regional / collaborative working, service user / public engagement)
  - Links to poverty reduction, reducing inequalities, including socio-economic disadvantage
  - Links to the Council's Recovery and Transformation Plan, 'Swansea Achieving Better Together'
  - Links to Swansea Public Services Board (PSB)
- 3.3 Previous Scrutiny - the Committee previously held a discussion on Business & City Promotion in August 2021. Extract from the Committee letter, sent to the Cabinet Member following this meeting, is attached for information and any follow up as necessary, for example asking about developments in relation to the provision of advice and support to businesses; improvement activities in relation to city centre business.
- 3.4 The Committee also invites members of the public and other Scrutiny Councillors (not on the Committee) to suggest questions that the Committee should ask. It is up to the Committee how to deal with any suggested questions within the session.

- 3.5 Following each session the Chair will write to Cabinet Members in order to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the Committee, and any actions for the Cabinet Member to consider.
- 3.6 If the Committee wishes to conduct more detailed Scrutiny of any of the issues raised during the session, then this should be agreed through the normal work planning process and planned for a future meeting. This will also allow proper time for preparation.
- 3.7 The Committee should note that Councillor Robert Francis-Davies has already been engaged in Scrutiny, or is planned, of the following other matters:
- Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel (Regeneration Programme / Projects; Tourism; City Centre Retail)
  - Swansea Bay City Region City Deal (regional scrutiny)
  - SWW Corporate Joint Committee (regional scrutiny)

#### **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:**

Appendix 1: Cabinet Member Report

Appendix 2: Extract from Committee Letter to Cabinet Member dated 30 September 2021

Appendix 3: Cabinet Portfolio Responsibility Listing



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration Events and Tourism

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### Support for Business

<b>Purpose</b>	To brief the Scrutiny Committee on the work being undertaken to provide support to local business in Swansea
<b>Content</b>	The report sets out the activities being undertaken to support business
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	Consider the information provided and give views
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Councillor Robert Francis- Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism
<b>Lead Officer Report Author</b>	Phillip Holmes, Head of Planning and City Regeneration Matt Callaghan Tel: 07920 560193 E-mail: matt.callaghan@swansea.gov.uk
<b>Legal Officer Finance Officer</b>	Debbie Smith Ben Smith

#### 1. Overview

- 1.1 A thriving local economy is reliant upon a strong and resilient business base. In recent years there have been significant challenges to this, most notably through the Covid pandemic, war in Ukraine and more recently the cost-of-living crisis. As such, access to and provision of business support has been critically important and furthermore, it was recognised that Swansea Council has a vital role to play in developing and enhancing this offer.

In delivering a business support service, it is recognised that it should seek to contribute to several overarching objectives.

- To improve the number of, but more importantly the survival rates of new businesses, previously amongst the lowest in South Wales
- Growth of the indigenous business base
- Improved resilience of local business
- Attracting Inward Investment into the local economy
- Upskilling local businesses and their workforce

- 1.2 In response to this, in April 2021, the Economic Regeneration Team developed and launched 'Business Swansea'. This is a dedicated support service with the objective of improving the quality and uptake of business support in Swansea.
- 1.3 The Business Swansea programme delivers a combination of 'in-house' support as well as promoting the offer of partner organisations. This service being delivered through Swansea Council enables an 'honest broker' approach to businesses seeking support services.
- 1.4 Business Swansea seeks to address the issues of:
- Businesses being confused/overwhelmed by the changing programmes of business support available from a variety of sources
  - An assumption that business support was not available to them and/or was not appropriate to their needs
  - Businesses and business owners having insufficient resource available to research support available meaning often freely available support was bypassed.

## **2. Key Areas of Work**

2.1 To address these issues, a broad range of activities that support local business have been introduced. These include:

### **2.2 Communication:**

- Regular eNewsletters distributed to local contacts containing details of funding opportunities, upcoming events, business support and partners' updates
- Dedicated social media feeds on Twitter/X, Facebook and LinkedIn
- Attendance at local business networks and events at which details of locally available business support can be communicated
- Enable feedback from local businesses via business support needs surveys and case studies
- Distribution of the Swansea Business Guide to showcase local economic strengths, growth opportunities and business support availability.

### **2.3 Events:**

- 'Power Hour' briefing events aimed at established businesses. Topics include Marketing, Employment Law, Accounting and Funding. Delivered through a hybrid, online/in-person programme format
- Introduction to Self-employment events offer a day-long workshop session covering the basic elements of starting and running a successful business. Topics covered include business planning, financial management and marketing
- Start-up Enterprise Club events aimed at pre-start and new businesses. Topics include Legal Issues, Social Media, Leasing Premises and Marketing. Online sessions for Power Hour and Start-up Club are recorded and uploaded to a dedicated Business Swansea YouTube Channel
- Drop-in Business Surgery allowing businesses to access advice and support on areas including business grants, business support (Business Wales),

training (Gower College Swansea) and finance (Development Bank of Wales)

- Net Zero training for businesses wishing to learn how to reduce their environmental footprint and associated energy costs
- Introduction of business to business networking events aimed specifically at food related business and tendering support events for businesses seeking improved access to public and/or larger scale contracts

#### 2.4 Grant Support:

- Start-up and Pre-start support. Funded through a variety of sources including, UK Steel, Community Renewal Fund and more recently, the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund. These grants have provided seed funding to entrepreneurs who may have otherwise seen finance as a barrier to starting their own enterprise
- Business Growth Grant. Targeted at business offering a distinct new product/service where jobs are being created and/or safeguarded directly as a result.
- Website Development Fund. Available to businesses either launching a website for the first time or making enhancements (e.g. eCommerce) to a company website which already exists
- Carbon Reduction Grant. Available to businesses seeking to reduce the environmental impact of their premises and associated cost. May include energy generation (e.g. solar), energy conservation (e.g. LED lighting) or changes to business operations (replacing old, inefficient equipment)
- Supplier Development Grant. Available to businesses wishing to tender for public sector and/or larger scale contracts. Funds can provide training and/or sector accreditation to match tender requirements.

#### 2.5 Partner Engagement

- In recognition that the Business Swansea service does not operate in isolation, enhanced relationships have been developed to reduce duplication/overlap and better coordinate business support activities. This has included regular partner liaison meetings of organisations operating locally.
- By working closely with local businesses and partner organisations, the Business Swansea Team is able to collect and relay important economic intelligence to inform future funding applications and delivery of business support.

### **3. Management and Resources**

3.1 Business Swansea activities are delivered through the Planning and City Regeneration Service area's Economic Regeneration team, which is part of the Place Directorate.

3.2 The majority of activity currently being undertaken is now funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through the Business Swansea Anchor project . The creation of a dedicated Business Support Anchor project within the UK Shared Prosperity Fund has significantly improved the scope and scale of business support through the Business Swansea service.



## 4. Improvements and Impact

4.1 Through the UK SPF Business Swansea Anchor and the programmes within, the following outcomes are projected to be delivered by December 2024:

- 65 new enterprises created (Pre-start Grant)
- 65 enterprises adopting new technologies (Website Grant)
- 95 jobs created; 95 jobs safeguarded (Growth Grant)
- 92 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup> reduction (Carbon Grant)
- 30 individuals receiving assistance to be enterprise ready (Introduction to Self-employment workshops)
- 258 enterprises receiving non-financial assistance. Including access to training, business to business networking etc.

In the majority of cases, it is anticipated that these figures will be exceeded.

### 4.2 Communication:

The introduction of fortnightly business eNewsletters has been successful in raising awareness of support available locally. The distribution list has been steadily built throughout the past two years and is now close to 4000 local business contacts. In addition to promotion of Business Swansea activities, the newsletter has played an important role in raising awareness of locally available support from partners.

### 4.3 Business Grants:

Across the Community Renewal Fund and Shared Prosperity Grant Funds alone, 82 business grants have been issued to date across all funding programmes. It is noted however that the Shared Prosperity Grant Programme is still at a relatively early stage, and it is anticipated this number will increase substantially throughout 2024.

4.4 It is important to note that in addition to the grant funds awarded, these schemes have been instrumental in engaging businesses into existing support programmes which they may not have otherwise accessed without funding; this is particularly the case of the Pre-start Grant programme. Signposting pre-start grant applicants to start-up support in many cases significantly improves the quality of overall business planning, financial forecasting and business resilience as a result.

4.5 There have been several instances, particularly under the Shared Prosperity Fund where businesses funded for growth grants have previously been successful in applying for start-up funding. This graduation highlights the strong platform which these funds can provide, enabling future business growth, increased employment and development of local supply chains.

### 4.6 Business Events:

Since the inception of the Power Hour and Start-up Enterprise Club events, over 600 individual places have been booked to attend either in person or online via Teams. The Business Swansea YouTube channel has seen approximately 1800 views meaning that individual beneficiaries of these sessions either live or recorded is close to 2500.

## **5 Future Programme:**

- 5.1 The Covid pandemic meant that the initial events programme was carried out online via Teams. However, throughout 2023 there has been a move toward a hybrid approach. It is anticipated that throughout 2024 and beyond, there will be an increased proportion of in-person events enabling improved interaction and networking opportunities.
- 5.2 In developing this programme of in-person events, there will be a focus on moving the location of these throughout the County. This will provide all businesses with a proportion of events/workshops which are geographically close to them.
- 5.3 Delivery of the SPF Business Growth Grant has identified the requirement for an additional Innovation Grant. Launching in early 2024, this will support existing businesses seeking to undertake prototyping, product testing and patenting.

## **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **7. Finance Implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct additional financial implications arising from this report on Council core budgets. Core economic regeneration activity is funded from existing core budgets, supplemented by temporary use of the Shared Prosperity Fund and by way of leveraged access to a range of government grants and support mechanisms

**Appendices:** None



**To/  
Councillor Robert Francis-Davies  
Cabinet Member for Investment,  
Regeneration & Tourism  
BY EMAIL**

cc: Cabinet Members

*Please ask for:  
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:  
Linell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail  
e-Bost:*

*Our Ref  
Ein Cyf:*

*Your Ref  
Eich Cyf:*

*Date  
Dyddiad:*

Scrutiny

01792 637257

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

SPC/2021-22/3

30 September 2021

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member following the meeting of the Committee on 17 August 2021. It is about Tourism, Destination Management & Marketing and Business & City Promotion.

Dear Councillor Francis-Davies,

### **Scrutiny Programme Committee – 17 August**

We are writing to you following our Scrutiny session, which focussed on specific aspects of your wide-ranging cabinet portfolio, namely Tourism, Destination Management & Marketing and Business & City Promotion.

We wanted to gain a greater understanding of what these specific responsibilities entail, your priorities, resources, performance measures, key headlines / achievements and progress against objectives, and overall assessment (including how we compare with others, challenges / risks) and impact / difference made.

We thank you and officers for attending the meeting and providing a written report on these responsibilities and the Council's work. The Committee asked questions in order to explore this work and provide challenge on actions and performance in relation to these areas of responsibility, as well as future thinking.

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU**  
**SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE**  
GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE  
[www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk) / [www.abertawe.gov.uk](http://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

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 - main issues summarised below.

**The following is extracted from the original Letter:**

**Business & City Promotion**

Your paper focused on work carried out within the Council's Planning & City Regeneration Service delivered through the Economic Development and External Funding team who undertake business engagement and inward investment, and the Development and Physical Regeneration team, dealing with business investment and city promotion within the scope of large development schemes.

One of our main points of concern was the availability of advice and support for business, whether about starting-up, council services, funding, learning and improvement, and how easy it was to access. We heard that there had been a reliance on signposting local businesses / individuals to the Welsh Government's Business Wales information, but a new dedicated resource within the Council had recently been established which would see the launch of new Business Swansea business advice web pages and contact details on the Council website. This was coupled with an increase in social media activity to promote the service. We welcomed this news, and this was particularly useful for councillors to be able to signpost to.

We asked about progress with the Parc Felindre site in attracting new businesses. We heard that the last 18 months had been difficult but the economy was now improving and there has been renewed interest in the site with three live discussions with businesses currently ongoing. It was encouraging to hear about this interest, as the site is sizeable, offering good links to the motorway and should be an attractive proposition for companies big and small.

Focusing on the City Centre, we are well aware of the difficulties faced because of not only the pandemic, but also the impact of growth in on-line retail as well as competition from out of town retail parks. The loss of Debenhams, and other big names from our city centre is a concern and we asked about what we are doing as a Council in response. We know that this has affected other cities across the UK and heard that Swansea has not suffered as much as others have, but of course it remained a concern and focus for recovery.

You told us that Cabinet would be considering a City Centre Repurposing Strategy' report, which will identify key interventions and actions to make Swansea fit for the future. The ongoing major investment across the city, such as the Arena development, has improved Swansea's position and ability to

retain and attract business and retail compared with other cities. We noted significant press and public relations work being done to promote the city and its story, and attract investment. We heard that work was ongoing with the owners of the Quadrant about the occupation of empty units and new lettings were due to come on board. We were also told that all of the commercial units outside of the Arena were under offer with good quality local businesses and with the Arena expected to generate 200 plus events per year from around year 3 onwards, this would mean significant footfall, and improve the night-time economy. We noted first year target of around 100 events.

A Swansea less reliant on national chain stores will make Swansea unique and add to its appeal. We acknowledged the importance of a mixed-use city centre in sustaining the city centre, as a place to live, work, shop and enjoy. You felt there was reason to be cautiously optimistic and confident that Swansea was better placed than other comparable cities to thrive post-pandemic. We were pleased to hear the positivity, although felt a solution to the significant unit vacated by Debenhams was urgently needed. The impact of student accommodation on the city centre was also discussed. We agreed that Swansea needed to be a distinctive multi-purpose city, not dependent on the big chain stores or only retail, and plans to improve the green infrastructure and city centre environment were important to that.

We also referred to the good news about the protected status given to Gower Salt Marsh Lamb, helping to put the area on the map, and asked about our work in the promotion of other distinctive local food and produce. We noted that the Economic Recovery Fund would support more work on this with relevant businesses.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR PETER BLACK**

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

✉ [cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk)

## Appendix - CABINET PORTFOLIOS (2023)

<b>Economy, Finance &amp; Strategy (Leader) (Cllr Rob Stewart)</b>	<b>Service Transformation (Cllr Andrea Lewis (Deputy Leader)</b>	<b>Corporate Services &amp; Performance (Cllr David Hopkins) (Deputy Leader)</b>	<b>Education &amp; Learning (Cllr Robert Smith)</b>	<b>Care Services (Cllr Louise Gibbard)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery Plan</li> <li>• Capital Programme</li> <li>• City Centre Strategic Redevelopment</li> <li>• City Deal</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Community Leadership</li> <li>• Constitutional Changes</li> <li>• Finance Strategy, Budget &amp; Saving Delivery</li> <li>• Financial Services</li> <li>• Legal Services</li> <li>• Local and Regional Investment Strategy</li> <li>• Planning Policy (Regional)</li> <li>• Poverty Reduction corporate lead</li> <li>• Public Services Board (PSB)</li> <li>• Major Projects</li> <li>• Regional Working Lead (All Bodies)</li> <li>• Strategic Partnerships</li> <li>• Risk &amp; Resilience Management</li> <li>• Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) - Chair</li> <li>• Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee - Chair</li> <li>• Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) – Deputy Leader</li> <li>• WLGA Lead on Economy &amp; Inward investment, Europe &amp; Energy</li> <li>• WLGA representative to LGA</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategic Transformation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post covid service stabilisation &amp; transformation</li> <li>• Corporate ICT &amp; Digital Transformation</li> <li>• Contact centre</li> <li>• Public Services Board (PSB) Leader’s Representative</li> <li>• Homes as Power Stations (City Deal)</li> <li>• APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence)</li> <li>• Climate change action plan</li> </ul> <p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Programme</li> <li>• Building Services</li> <li>• Housing Adaptations &amp; Renewal Schemes</li> <li>• Housing Policy, Affordable Housing and Housing Options</li> <li>• More Homes Delivery</li> <li>• Penderry redevelopment board</li> <li>• Climate &amp; nature recovery board chair</li> <li>• Sheltered Housing</li> <li>• Co-operative Housing</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Housing support grant</li> <li>• Council House Management &amp; Repairs</li> <li>• Lettings policy &amp; Tenancy Enforcement</li> </ul> <p><b>Transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fleet Renewal &amp; Maintenance inc Green fleet strategy</li> <li>• CJC (Corporate Joint Committee) representative for regional Energy</li> <li>• Green Vehicle Adoption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Delivery of Priorities</li> <li>• Performance monitoring</li> <li>• Commercial Services, Procurement &amp; Frameworks</li> <li>• Food sustainability</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Mayoral &amp; Civic Functions</li> <li>• Member Development</li> <li>• Outside Bodies participation oversight</li> <li>• Council Champions</li> <li>• Petitions</li> <li>• Scrutiny liaison</li> <li>• Democratic Services</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety</li> <li>• Planning Policy</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• Landlord Licensing</li> <li>• Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO)</li> <li>• Licensing Policy</li> <li>• Building Control</li> <li>• Public Protection</li> <li>• Environmental Health</li> <li>• Trading Standards</li> <li>• Strategic Estates &amp; Property Management</li> <li>• Trade Union Engagement and JCC (Joint Consultative Committee)</li> <li>• Agile Rollout Programme Lead</li> <li>• Western Gateway Leader’s Representative</li> <li>• Audit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21st Century Schools Programme inc. School Building Upgrade</li> <li>• Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Catchment Review</li> <li>• Education Services from 3 to 19</li> <li>• Further Education</li> <li>• Inclusion &amp; Learner Support</li> <li>• NEETS (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) Prevention &amp; vocational opportunities</li> <li>• Quality in Education (QEd) Programme</li> <li>• Readiness for Work</li> <li>• UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)</li> <li>• Regional Workforce Planning &amp; Skills Development</li> <li>• School Improvement</li> <li>• Schools Estate Planning &amp; Resources Planning</li> <li>• Schools’ Organisation &amp; Performance</li> <li>• Flying start (schools settings &amp; transitions)</li> <li>• Partneriaith (regional working) Leaders Representative</li> <li>• City of Learning (COL) - Member of UNESCO COL (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Steering Group (Cllr EK to support)</li> <li>• Corporate parenting Board member</li> <li>• Skills &amp; Talent Project (City Deal)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Social Services Modernisation</li> <li>• Strategic Health &amp; Social Care Collaboration Opportunities</li> <li>• Mental Health including CAHMS</li> <li>• Assessment / Care Management</li> <li>• Elderly Care</li> <li>• Supporting People</li> <li>• Joint Equipment</li> <li>• Learning Disability</li> <li>• Local Area Coordination (support)</li> <li>• Physical &amp; Sensory Impairments</li> <li>• Safeguarding lead</li> <li>• Wellbeing lead</li> <li>• Preventing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse &amp; Sexual Violence (Support)</li> <li>• Child &amp; Family Services</li> <li>• Children &amp; communities grant</li> <li>• Continuum of Care</li> <li>• Regional Adoption Service</li> <li>• Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy</li> <li>• YOS (Youth Offending Service)</li> <li>• Leaders Representative on West Glamorgan RPB</li> <li>• Corporate Parenting chair</li> <li>• UNCRC (support) (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)</li> <li>• Human Rights city accreditation</li> </ul>

# Appendix - CABINET PORTFOLIOS (2023)

<b>Wellbeing (Cllr Alyson Anthony)</b>	<b>Environment &amp; Infrastructure (Cllr Andrew Stevens)</b>	<b>Investment, Regeneration, Events &amp; Tourism (Cllr Robert Francis-Davies)</b>	<b>Culture, Human Rights &amp; Equalities (Cllr Elliott King)</b>	<b>Community (Services: Cllr Cyril Anderson &amp; Support: Cllr Hayley Gwilliam)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty Reduction</li> <li>• 3rd Sector Services</li> <li>• Drugs and substance misuse reduction</li> <li>• Sexual exploitation reduction</li> <li>• Preventing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse &amp; Sexual Violence</li> <li>• Flying start (all settings)</li> <li>• UNCRC (support) (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)</li> <li>• Refugees &amp; Asylum</li> <li>• Community Cohesion</li> <li>• Life long learning support</li> <li>• Vulnerable people support</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> <li>• NGETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training)</li> <li>• Employability</li> <li>• Financial Inclusion</li> <li>• Prevention and intervention initiatives</li> <li>• Swansea Working</li> <li>• Welfare Reform</li> <li>• Welfare Rights</li> <li>• Public Space protection orders</li> <li>• Safer Swansea Partnership member</li> <li>• Public Service Board Representative</li> <li>• RPB (Regional Partnership Board) representative</li> <li>• CCTV operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highways maintenance &amp; improvements</li> <li>• Infrastructure repairs &amp; Maintenance</li> <li>• Pothole Task Force</li> <li>• Patch services Parking Policy, Control and Enforcement</li> <li>• Road safety</li> <li>• Operational Public Transport Services</li> <li>• Coastal Defences</li> <li>• Flood prevention</li> <li>• Marina, Foreshore &amp; Beach Maintenance</li> <li>• Active travel &amp; cycleways</li> <li>• Estates Maintenance Management (Non HRA (Housing Revenue Account))</li> <li>• Members Community Budget Scheme delivery</li> <li>• Play upgrade programme delivery (in collaboration with IRT)</li> <li>• Green infrastructure</li> <li>• Corporate &amp; Community digital connectivity (inc hybrid facilities, free community WiFi &amp; next gen CCTV technical delivery)</li> <li>• Rural development</li> <li>• Rural economy including sustainable farming</li> <li>• Leaders' representative for regional collaborations for Transport, and Waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business &amp; City Promotion</li> <li>• City Centre Management</li> <li>• City Projects delivery</li> <li>• Future Development Opportunities</li> <li>• Inward Investment Opportunities</li> <li>• Suburban Centres &amp; Community Regeneration Initiatives</li> <li>• New Local &amp; Regional Business Opportunities</li> <li>• Economic recovery local business grant delivery</li> <li>• River Corridor Development</li> <li>• Events and attractions</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Purple Flag</li> <li>• Destination Management &amp; Marketing</li> <li>• Parks investment, maintenance and usage</li> <li>• Play investment (links to play sufficiency)</li> <li>• ERF (Economic Resilience Funds) grants for play enhancement lead</li> <li>• Sports Facilities development and maintenance</li> <li>• Universities Collaboration (Development)</li> <li>• Business engagement</li> <li>• Western Gateway Leader's Representative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equalities</li> <li>• Access to Services</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Age Friendly City</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> <li>• Recognition</li> <li>• Creative City</li> <li>• The Arts</li> <li>• Galleries &amp; Museums</li> <li>• Floating exhibits</li> <li>• Street Art</li> <li>• Healthy City Partnership</li> <li>• Healthy Night Life</li> <li>• Heritage protection and restoration</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Archives</li> <li>• Community Centres</li> <li>• Community hubs</li> <li>• Veterans support fund</li> <li>• Science City</li> </ul>	<p><b>Services (Cllr Cyril Anderson):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Caretakers</li> <li>• Grass Cutting Services</li> <li>• Weed control</li> <li>• Tree services</li> <li>• Wildflower planting</li> <li>• Fly Tipping</li> <li>• Litter &amp; Community Cleansing</li> <li>• Street scene improvements</li> <li>• Local Waste Management services</li> <li>• Recycling</li> <li>• Community operatives (new)</li> <li>• Regreening in communities</li> <li>• Bin services</li> <li>• Public Toilets</li> <li>• Community Growing (inc. Allotments)</li> </ul> <p><b>Support (Cllr Hayley Gwilliam):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live well Age well</li> <li>• Mental Health awareness</li> <li>• Community Groups, Engagement &amp; Development</li> <li>• Community Support Services</li> <li>• LAC (Local Area Coordinators) Services in Communities</li> <li>• Co-production champion</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Working</li> <li>• Early years</li> <li>• Corporate parenting board member</li> <li>• Promoting Youth Inclusion &amp; Youth Citizenships</li> <li>• Youth Services</li> <li>• Opportunities for play</li> <li>• Play sufficiency</li> <li>• Community based events</li> <li>• Community safety</li> <li>• Community Wellbeing</li> <li>• Digital inclusion</li> <li>• Local policing</li> <li>• Dementia Champion</li> </ul>

# Agenda Item 8



## Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 19 December 2023

### Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report

<b>Purpose</b>	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.
<b>Content</b>	This report focuses on the following Performance Panel: a) Adult Services
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure awareness and understanding of the work of the Panels</li><li>• Consider their effectiveness and impact</li><li>• Consider any issues arising and action required</li></ul>
<b>Lead Councillor(s)</b>	Councillor Sue Jones (Panel Convener)
<b>Lead Officers &amp; Report Author</b>	Liz Jordan E-mail: <a href="mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk">scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk</a>
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Amanda Thomas

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 There are five 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 Panel:

- Adult Services

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 This Panel involves the following 12 Members:

**Labour Councillors: 3**

Victoria Holland	Erika Kirchner
Yvonne Jardine	

**Liberal Democrat/Independent Councillors: 6**

Chris Holley	Michael Locke
Jeff Jones	Cheryl Philpott
<b>Susan Jones (CONVENER)</b>	Mark Tribe

**Conservative Councillors: 1**

Paxton Hood-Williams	
----------------------	--

**Uplands Councillor: 1**

Allan Jeffery	
---------------	--

**Co-optee: 1**

Tony Beddow	
-------------	--

## 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

## Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel Update

### 1. Remit of the Panel

The overarching purpose of the Panel is to provide ongoing challenge to performance in Adult Social Services 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)
28 June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Monitoring</li> <li>• Briefing on Recent CIW Care Home Inspection Reports</li> <li>• Draft Work Plan 2023-24</li> </ul>
7 August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WAO Report 'Together we Can' – Community Resilience and Self-reliance</li> <li>• Tackling Poverty Service Grants 2022-23: Impact Report</li> <li>• Additional Direct Payments Information</li> </ul>
5 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Monitoring</li> <li>• Wales Audit Office Report 'A Missed Opportunity' Social Enterprises</li> </ul>
31 October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022/23</li> <li>• Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards</li> </ul>

### 3. Achievements / Impact

We have sent 4 letters to the Cabinet Members for Care Services, Wellbeing, and Community Support since the start of the municipal year, in order to give our views, raise concerns and make recommendations, for example:

Positives:

- CIW Care Home Inspection Reports - There were unscheduled inspections on two Care Homes, Rose Cross and Ty Waunarlyydd. Panel pleased to hear feedback from residents, families, professionals and staff themselves was very positive with only one recommendation made for Ty Waunarlyydd regarding timely completion of annual appraisals, which was already being followed up by the management team.

- WAO Report 'Together We Can' Community Resilience and Self-Reliance – Panel asked how poverty is defined and measured, and queried how it is going to work in terms of identifying people to take on some of the work the Authority carried out in the past. Panel informed it is difficult to measure things like this and the definition the Authority currently uses is from the 2017 Tackling Poverty Strategy - Income below the minimum income standard; inadequate access to necessary services of good quality; inadequate opportunity or resource to join in with social/cultural decision-making activities. Heard the Tackling Poverty Strategy is currently being refreshed to ensure the right definitions and measures are in place and that a big part of this will be talking to communities about the role they have to play, with co-production being really important to this approach going forward.
- Direct Payments – Panel queried how the Authority monitors or stops direct payments being used for the wrong purpose and was informed that any opportunity to use a direct payment, where it increases individual resilience, reduces reliance on services, or leads to either volunteering, education or employment, is a valid use of direct payments, and that in terms of monitoring, every spend is closely monitored, people either have managed accounts or pay cards, so there is oversight.
- Performance Monitoring – Panel discussed mental health and wellbeing of staff and heard the Directorate supports staff wellbeing and that each team is having a wellbeing assessment and then individual action plans drawn up as different teams have different challenges.

#### Issues / Concerns:

- Performance Monitoring – Panel concerned about staffing and recruitment issues and heard it is a challenge for all five social work teams as there is a deficit of social workers across Wales. Panel informed that there are not enough people coming through the system, so the Authority has workforce strategies for developing its own staff internally, including alternatively qualified staff, and working more with universities to host those students on courses locally.
- Performance Monitoring - In terms of safeguarding, Panel noted the increasing number of referrals and asked for examples of what some of the issues have been. Heard the Directorate receives a breakdown of the type of referral and agreed this information be included in future performance monitoring reports. Panel also expressed concern about the high number of professional referrals and heard the Authority's safeguarding function is dealing with professional concerns in terms of care and support for all organisations.
- Performance Monitoring – Panel asked about legal support and how the Department is outsourcing part of it and the cost is increasing. Heard there had been a vacancy in legal which has now been filled but there is also increased demand and there are complex cases where external specialist support has been needed. Informed there is a grant for some of this but there has been increased demand and increased cost. All agreed the need to keep an eye on this.
- Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022-23 – Panel noted high levels of sickness and queried if it is due to the conditions they are working under and asked how wellbeing of the workforce can be improved going forward. Informed it is due to a combination of working conditions, demographics of the workforce and staff in many areas of the Service being unable to work with

certain illnesses. Panel was pleased to hear strategies are in place to try and keep staff well and in work and that the Service is compliant with sickness procedures and noted it will always have above average levels of sickness in social services. Panel requested a briefing on the strategies being used for wellbeing of staff be brought to a future meeting.

- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards - Panel informed the volume and capacity of casework has increased and there is currently a backlog of applications, the Service is looking at the introduction of revised application forms to screen and prioritise cases more effectively. Panel also heard the introduction of new legislation 'Liberty Protection Safeguards' has been delayed by a number of years. Panel queried if there is any pattern to the variations in numbers of referrals across timespans and was informed there is an increase in winter months as more people are admitted to care homes at that time. Panel heard the challenge going forward is to identify trends and be more proactive.

Action Recommended / Agreed:

- WAO report 'Together We Can' Community Resilience and Self-Reliance – Panel feels any committee responsible for development of, what effectively are different networks, would be wise to get an expert who understands network working and the training that comes with it. Panel pleased to hear the network element will be one of the approaches and that officers will take the feedback the Panel has given on board going forward as forecasting is an important element of the anticipatory approach to building networks.
- Performance Monitoring - Panel queried if the new location for the Common Access Point was fit for purpose as there are problems with acoustics, due to the Guildhall being an old building with high ceilings. Panel heard that staff are being issued with better sound proofing headsets to help with this. Panel suggested using sound boarding structures to help mitigate noise, officers confirmed these are not currently being used and they will look into it.
- Performance Monitoring – Panel discussed how more third-party charges for external care provision are being picked up by the Authority. Panel feels the Authority should make representations to the Welsh Government to review these charges. Cllr Gibbard stated the Authority does not currently have a policy around this but is looking to develop one. However, it is difficult as they are private organisations, and the Authority cannot dictate what they can and cannot charge.
- WAO report 'A Missed Opportunity' Social Enterprises – Panel requested a list of social enterprises be provided to the Panel and heard that one of the first steps, as part of the action plan being developed, will be to carry out a mapping exercise to improve the data the Authority holds about social enterprises and micro enterprises. Panel requested an update on progress to be brought to a future meeting when an action plan is in place and mapping exercise completed.

#### 4. Future Work Programme

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

<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Item to be discussed</b>
12 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Performance Monitoring</li><li>• Briefing on Dementia (including case studies)</li></ul>
30 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update on Adult Services Transformation and Improvement Programme</li><li>• Local Area Coordination Update</li><li>• Update on Progress with WAO Report 'A Missed Opportunity' Social Enterprises</li><li>• Presentation on Llais TBC</li></ul>
12 February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draft Budget Proposals for Adult Services / Child and Family Services</li></ul>
20 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update on West Glamorgan Transformation Programme</li><li>• Performance Monitoring</li><li>• Briefing on Annual Review of Charges (Social Services) 2022-23</li></ul>
7 May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update on how Council's policy commitments translate to Adult Services</li><li>• Update on Adult Services Transformation and Improvement Programme – including progress on Reviews</li><li>• End of Year Review</li></ul>

#### 5. Action for the Scrutiny Programme Committee

None.

# Agenda Item 9



## Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 19 December 2023

### Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

<b>Purpose:</b>	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.
<b>Content:</b>	This report is provided to facilitate any changes that need to be made.
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	agree the membership of Panels and Working Groups reported, and any other changes necessary.
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
<b>Lead Officer &amp; Report Author:</b>	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: <a href="mailto:brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk">brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk</a>
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	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. Revision to Existing Scrutiny Panel / Working Group Membership

- 2.1 Community Assets Inquiry Panel - REMOVE Cllr Sandra Joy

#### 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 – 19 December 2023

### Scrutiny Work Programme

<b>Purpose</b>	This report shows the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/24, which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.
<b>Content</b>	The agreed work programme is attached, which shows the topics being examined by Scrutiny through various Panels and Working Groups. A plan for future Committee meetings is also attached.
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• plan for the Committee meetings ahead</li><li>• consider opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny</li><li>• review the Scrutiny Work Programme (including progress of current Panels and Working Groups)</li></ul>
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
<b>Report Author</b>	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: <a href="mailto:brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk">brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk</a>
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	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 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 2023/24**

- 2.1.1 The Committee agreed the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/24 on 18 July. This Work Programme 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 meeting are:

16 January:

- **Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities: Q & A with Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy.** Councillor Rob Stewart will attend along with relevant officer(s) to report to the Committee and answer questions.
- **Follow Up - Road Safety Scrutiny Working Group** - As the standalone topic-based Working Groups are one-off Scrutiny sessions, the Scrutiny Programme Committee takes responsibility for following up on progress on the issues and action following any suggestions coming out of these Working Groups. Councillor Andrew Stevens, Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure, will attend along with relevant officer(s) to report on progress in the context of the previous Scrutiny on Road Safety, on actions, delivery of work and achievements / performance.

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.

### 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.

<b>In Progress / Planned</b>	<b>Completed (follow up stage)</b>
<p>1. <b>Anti-Social Behaviour</b> (Panel has agreed its final report. The Committee endorsed its submission to Cabinet for decision. The report is being presented to Cabinet on 21 December)</p> <p>2. <b>Community Assets</b> (membership has been agreed; Inquiry will commence following completion of Anti-Social Behaviour Inquiry)</p>	<p>1. <b>Procurement</b> (Follow up carried out 24 Oct 2023 – monitoring now complete)</p>

#### 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. <b>Service Improvement, Regeneration &amp; Finance</b> (monthly)	Cllr. Chris Holley
2. <b>Education</b> (monthly)	Cllr. Lyndon Jones
3. <b>Adult Services</b> (every six weeks)	Cllr. Susan Jones
4. <b>Child &amp; Family Services</b> (every six weeks)	Cllr. Paxton Hood-Williams
5. <b>Climate Change &amp; Nature</b> (every two months)	Cllr. Sara Keeton

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, (date where known in brackets):

<p>1. <b>Public Rights of Way</b> (22 Nov)</p> <p>2. <b>Customer Contact</b> (26 Jan)</p>	<p>3. <b>Community Growing</b></p>
---	------------------------------------

Reserve List:

- Public Consultation
- 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 The Committee should be mindful of the work plans of other Council bodies, such as the Governance & Audit Committee and the Council's Service Transformation 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](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/raiseanissuetoscrutiny) or email to [scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk](mailto: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. Scrutiny Training & Development Programme**

5.1 A Scrutiny Training & Development Programme for Swansea Scrutiny Councillors is underway, which is being facilitated by the Improvement Team at the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). The following Sessions have now been held:

- Introduction to Scrutiny – held on 5 October
- Scrutiny Chairing Skills – held on 9 October / 10 October
- Questioning Skills for Scrutiny – held on 31 October / 1 November
- Scrutiny of Performance – held on 4 December / 6 December

5.2 Upcoming Sessions:

- Self-Assessment of Scrutiny (two parts) – to be held on 17 January / 23 January

All Sessions are being held online via MS Teams, with the exception of the final 'Self-Assessment' part 2 session which will be in-person only. As well as benefitting individual Councillors, the Programme will help to inform Scrutiny Improvement Objectives and actions going forward.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 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.

## **7. Legal Implications**

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

**Background papers:** None

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Agreed Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Programme Committee Work Plan 2023/24

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 2023/24

<b>Inquiry Panel</b> (time-limited in-depth scrutiny – six months)	<b>Working Groups</b> (light-touch scrutiny / one-off meetings)	<b>Performance Panels</b> (ongoing in-depth performance / financial monitoring & challenge)	<b>Issues for Scrutiny Programme Committee</b> (overall work programme management; discussion of broad range of policy and service issues)
<p>1. <b>Anti-Social Behaviour</b> (to complete from 2022/23)</p> <p>2. <b>Community Assets</b>                      (Terms of Reference / Key Question to be agreed by Panel, but could focus on how effective the process of Community Asset Transfer has been and benefits, looking at relevant examples such as Parks &amp; Community Centres, and lessons)</p> <p>Follow Up of Previous Inquiries:</p> <p>1. <b>Procurement</b></p>	<p>1. <b>Customer Contact</b>                      (carry over from 2022/23 - enabling focussed discussion &amp; questioning on user experience when contacting the Council / accessing services whether by telephone or on-line / though digital means; response rates; provision for offline and on-line contact; effectiveness of Council Contact Centre; on-going actions to improve digital inclusion / access; quality of website, etc.)</p> <p>2. <b>Public Rights of Way</b>                      (enabling focussed questioning &amp; discussion on overview of Public Rights of Way across Swansea (mapping / numbers) and issues; impact on PRoW from developments; effect on communities, etc.)</p> <p>3. <b>Community Growing</b>                      (enabling focussed questioning &amp; discussion around Council activity / support to Community Growing, with examples (e.g., allotments) and experience; benefits / success; including focus on schools / children &amp; young people; and its contribution to health &amp; well-being, etc.)</p>	<p>1. <b>Service Improvement, Regeneration &amp; Finance</b> (monthly)</p> <p>2. <b>Education</b> (monthly)</p> <p>3. <b>Adult Services</b> (every six weeks)</p> <p>4. <b>Child &amp; Family Services</b> (every six weeks)</p> <p>5. <b>Climate Change &amp; Nature</b> (every two months)</p> <p>Specific issues to incorporate within wider Panel work plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Improvement, Regeneration &amp; Finance:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Panel to refocus work plan, taking into account previous work – to create capacity some items to be picked up by Scrutiny Programme Committee</li> <li>- Delivery against Corporate Plan / Transformation Plan</li> <li>- Performance Management</li> <li>- Pre-decision Scrutiny of Budget Proposals</li> <li>- Economic Regeneration Actions / Delivery</li> <li>- City Deal 'Swansea Specific' Projects</li> <li>- Planning Policy &amp; Service (incl. Call-in Process &amp; dealing with 5G Masts)</li> <li>- Recycling, particularly Commercial Waste</li> <li>- Highways / Infrastructure Maintenance</li> <li>- Listed Buildings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Education:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivery against Corporate Plan / Transformation Plan (as relevant to Education)</li> <li>- Delivery against Education Estyn Inspection actions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific annual reports:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Children &amp; Young People's Rights Scheme</b></li> <li>- <b>Corporate Safeguarding</b></li> <li>- <b>Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty</b></li> <li>- <b>Complaints</b></li> <li>- <b>Welsh Language Standards</b></li> <li>- <b>Welsh Housing Quality Standard</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Leader Q &amp; A Session(s): incl.                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Corporate Transformation / Recovery Plan</b></li> <li>- <b>Councillor / Officer Relations</b> (communications)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other Cabinet Member Q &amp; As (issues to pick up):                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Active Travel</b></li> <li>- <b>Oracle Fusion Project Implementation</b></li> <li>- <b>Delivery against Workforce Development Strategy</b> (incl. use of agency staff / Council structures)</li> <li>- <b>Support for Businesses</b></li> <li>- <b>Homelessness</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Public Services Board</b></li> <li>• <b>Crime &amp; Disorder (Community Safety):</b> incl. Domestic Abuse; Community Cohesion; Tackling Extremism; Substance Misuse; Electric Scooters</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1 - AGREED Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24

	<p>Reserve List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Public Consultation</b> (enabling focussed questioning and discussion on the Council's approaches to public consultation and effectiveness; relevant learning and development, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>Healthy City</b> (carry over from 2022/23 - enabling focussed questioning &amp; discussion 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.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme</li> <li>- Additional Learning Needs (ALN)</li> <li>- Post-covid Cost implications for Schools</li> <li>- Reading / Literacy</li> <li>- School Attendance</li> <li>- School Meals service: impact of changes</li> <li>• <b>Adult Services:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivery against Corporate Plan / Transformation Plan (as relevant to Adult Services)</li> <li>- Safeguarding</li> <li>- Local Area Coordination</li> <li>- Partnership between Health and Social Care Services</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Child &amp; Family Services:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivery against Corporate Plan / Transformation Plan (as relevant to Child &amp; Family Services)</li> <li>- Safeguarding</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Climate Change &amp; Nature:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivery against Corporate Plan / Transformation Plan (as relevant to Climate Change &amp; Nature) – e.g., Progress against Net Zero 2030 Action Plan</li> <li>- Flood Prevention / Drainage Services</li> <li>- Natural Environment / Biodiversity</li> <li>- Impact of Housing Developments on Environment</li> <li>- Public Electric Vehicle Charging Provision</li> <li>- Grounds Maintenance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow Up on Previous Working Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Bus Services</b></li> <li>- <b>Road Safety</b></li> <li>- <b>Co-production</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Joint / Regional Scrutiny</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Partneriaeth</b> (Education / School Improvement – Joint Scrutiny Councillor Group)</li> <li>• <b>City Deal</b> (Development / Regeneration - Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee)</li> <li>• <b>South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee</b> (Land Use Planning; Regional Transport; Economic Well-being – Joint Overview &amp; Scrutiny Sub-Committee)</li> </ul>			



Scrutiny Programme Committee – Work Plan 2023/24

ACTIVITY	18 Jul 2023	19 Sep 2023	17 Oct 2023	14 Nov 2023	19 Dec 2023	16 Jan 2024
<b>Scrutiny Work Programme</b>	Agreement of Scrutiny Work Programme	Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23				
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibility Q &amp; A Sessions</b>		Active Travel (CM for Environment & Infrastructure)			Support for Business (CM for Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism)	Leader / Economy, Finance & Strategy
<b>Other Cabinet Member / Officer Reports</b>  Page 119			Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board (PSB Chair – Cllr Andrea Lewis)	- Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report (CM for Care Services / Director of Social Services) - Children & Young People's Rights Scheme (annual report) (CM for Community – Support)	Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty (annual item) (Leader / CM for Wellbeing)	
<b>Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Reports</b>			Education	Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance	Adult Services	Child & Family Services
<b>Pre-decision Scrutiny</b>	FPR7 Redevelopment of 277-278 Oxford Street - Community Hub Project		Oracle Fusion Project Implementation / Project Closure Report (Leader / CM for Service Transformation)			
<b>Final Scrutiny Inquiry Reports / Follow Up on Scrutiny Recs.</b>				- Follow Up on Bus Services Working Group (CM for Environment & Infrastructure) - Anti-Social Behaviour Inquiry Final Report		Follow Up on Road Safety Working Group (CM for Environ. & Infrastructure)

ACTIVITY	13 Feb 2024	19 Mar 2024	16 Apr 2024	14 May 2024		
<b>Scrutiny Work Programme</b>				End of Year Review		
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibility Q &amp; A Sessions</b>	Delivery against Workforce Development Strategy (CM for Corporate Services & Performance)					
<b>Other Cabinet Member / Officer Reports</b>		- Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board (PSB Chair – Cllr Andrea Lewis) - Annual Complaints Report 2022-23 (CM for Service Transformation / CM for Care Services)	Crime & Disorder Scrutiny - Safer Swansea Community Safety Partnership (Joint Chairs of Safer Swansea Partnership)			
<b>Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Reports</b>	Climate Change & Nature	Education	Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance			
<b>Pre-decision Scrutiny</b>						
<b>Final Scrutiny Inquiry Reports / Follow Up on Scrutiny Recs.</b>				Follow Up on Co-production Working Group (CM for Community - Support)		

To be scheduled:

- Audit / Scrutiny Relationship – Discussion w/ Chair of Governance & Audit Committee
- Welsh Language Standards (annual report) (CMs for Education & Learning / Culture, Human Rights & Equalities)

### Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2023-24

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
<b>Quarter 2 2023/24 Performance Monitoring Report.</b>	To report the performance indicator results and summarise the Council's performance meetings its priorities for the first quarter period July 2023 – September 2023.	Richard Rowlands	Cabinet Member - Corporate Services & Performance (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	21 Dec 2023	Open
<b>Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2nd Quarter 2023/24.</b>	To note any significant variations from the agreed budget 2023/24 and savings plan and the actions planned to achieve a balanced budget.	Ben Smith	Cabinet Member - Economy, Finance and Strategy (Leader)	Cabinet	21 Dec 2023	Open
<b>Regional Education Consortium Amendment to Legal Agreement on Voting Within Joint Committee.</b>	Amendment to Legal Agreement for Partneriaeth requiring Cabinet Member for Education and Learning to be Swansea's voting Member at Partneriaeth joint committees.	Helen Morgan-Rees	Cabinet Member - Education & Learning	Cabinet	21 Dec 2023	Open
<b>Scrutiny Inquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour.</b>	Conclusions and recommendations resulting from a scrutiny inquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour.	Michelle Roberts	Cabinet Member - Well-being, Terry Hennegan	Cabinet	21 Dec 2023	Open

Page 12

### Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2023-24

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
<b>Financial Procedure Rule 7 – Local Transport Fund SBWW and Regional Bus Core Allocation 2023/24 and 2024/25.</b>	To approve the additional funding for Local Transport Fund (LTF) and seek approval to add the capital expenditure to the delivery programme for Local Transport Fund projects in 2023/24 and 2024/25.	Matthew Bowyer	Cabinet Member - Environment & Infrastructure	Cabinet	21 Dec 2023	Open
<b>Budget Proposals 2024/25 – 2027/28.</b>	To consider budget proposals for 2024/25 to 2027/28 as part of the Council's Budget Strategy within the Achieving Better Together Framework. To enable consultation to take place with residents, employees, partners and other interested parties	Ben Smith	Cabinet Member - Corporate Services & Performance (Deputy Leader), Cabinet Member - Economy, Finance and Strategy (Leader)	Cabinet	12 Jan 2024	Open
<b>Co-production Policy.</b>	To approve the Coproduction policy for Swansea Council	Rhian Millar	Cabinet Members - Community	Cabinet	18 Jan 2024	Open
<b>Annual Equality Review 2022/23.</b>	To publish the Council's Annual Equality Review for 2022/23 in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty and reporting regulations for Wales.	Richard Rowlands	Cabinet Member - Culture, Human Rights & Equalities	Cabinet	18 Jan 2024	Open

Page 122

### Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2023-24

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
<b>Maximising EOTAS Provision for Vulnerable Learners in Swansea Follow Up Report.</b>	Following a period of stakeholder engagement the reports seeks to share findings of this activity and propose a solutions to better meet the needs of learners in Swansea who require access to EOTAS provision.	Kate Phillips	Cabinet Member - Education & Learning	Cabinet	18 Jan 2024	Open
<b>Customer Charter and Service Standards.</b>	The Service Transformation Committee has developed this new Customer Charter and revised Service Standards for approval by Cabinet.	Sarah Lackenby	Cabinet Member - Service Transformation (Deputy Leader), Mandy Evans	Cabinet	18 Jan 2024	Open
<b>Possible Sale of all or Part of Strategic Development Area SD H. - Land at Waunarlwydd and Fforestfach.</b>	Swansea Council owns LDP Housing land at this location. There is purchaser interest from National house builders. The purchase price will be, "Market Value", at an unspecified future date, (once planning is approved, site investigations are completed, along with final flood mapping, SUDS approval etc.). It is possible that the sale price will exceed delegated limits.	Richard John	Cabinet Member - Corporate Services & Performance (Deputy Leader), Cabinet Member - Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	18 Jan 2024	Open

Page 123

### Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2023-24

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
<b>Future Plans for Special Schools in Swansea.</b>	The report seeks approval to go to statutory notice on a proposal to amalgamate Ysgol Pen-y-Bryn and Ysgol Crug Glas into one Special School on 1 September 2025 on existing sites and relocate the new school on 1 April 2028 to a purpose-built accommodation whilst increasing the number of planned places.	Michelle Thomas	Cabinet Member - Education & Learning	Cabinet	18 Jan 2024	Open
<b>Damp &amp; Mould Policy for Council Properties.</b>	This report provides details regarding a new proposed damp and mould policy for council properties. It is now a Welsh Government requirement that all social housing providers have such a policy. The policy outlines how the Authority prevents the occurrence of damp and mould, how it responds to reported cases and the timeframes for inspecting and treating it.	Peter Williams	Cabinet Member - Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	18 Jan 2024	Open

Page 124

### Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2023-24

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
<b>Neutral Host Agreements.</b>	Cabinet is asked to approve this City Deal initiative to sign neutral host agreements, enabling small cells on lamp posts and other street furniture. This project will target network congestion during busy periods and events, and support better connectivity for residents.	Laura Jenkins	Cabinet Member - Environment & Infrastructure, Cabinet Member - Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	18 Jan 2024	Open
<b>New Dining Facilities to Support the Universal Free School Meals Programme Together with an All-Weather Pitch and Community Facilities for Townhill Community Primary School.</b>	To seek authorisation to commit to the capital programme £3,257,070 for new dining facilities to support the Universal Free School Meals (uFSM) programme together with an all-weather pitch and community facilities for Townhill Community Primary School, funded by uFSM and Community Focussed Schools funding plus other smaller funding streams.	Louise Herbert-Evans	Cabinet Member - Education & Learning	Cabinet	15 Feb 2024	Open

### Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2023-24

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
<b>Update on Swansea Council's Progress Towards Achieving Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030.</b>	The third annual report to Cabinet, providing an update on the most recent emissions data, the delivery plan activity and the challenges facing the council if it is to achieve its ambition of being net zero by 2030.	Rachel Lewis	Cabinet Member - Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	15 Feb 2024	Open
<b>Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 3rd Quarter 2023/24.</b>	To note any significant variations from the agreed budget 2023/24 and savings plan and the actions planned to achieve a balanced budget.	Ben Smith	Cabinet Member - Economy, Finance and Strategy (Leader)	Cabinet	15 Feb 2024	Open
<b>Green Infrastructure Strategy's Swansea Central Area: Regenerating our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife Action Plan.</b>	This Action Plan is designed to deliver the strategic objectives of the Swansea Central Area: Regenerating our City for Wellbeing and Wildlife Green Infrastructure Strategy in the short, medium and long term. It helps deliver the Council's well-being objective on Nature Recovery and Climate Change.	Penny Gruffydd	Cabinet Member - Corporate Services & Performance (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	15 Feb 2024	Open

Page 120



### Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2023-24

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
<b>Annual Review of Charges (Social Services) 2023/24.</b>	This report sets out the annual review of Swansea Council's charges (social services), providing a transparent framework for the setting of charges and the application of allowances to citizens who receive managed care and support, provided or arranged by the council.	Simon Jones	Cabinet Member - Care Services	Cabinet	15 Feb 2024	Open

### Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2023-24

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
<p><b>Quality In Education (Qed) – Emerging Proposals And Investment Priorities For The Sustainable Communities For Learning Strategic Outline Programme.</b></p>	<p>The purpose of this paper is to consider and endorse the continuing and future proposals and investment priorities for the council's rolling Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, for submission to the Welsh Government. Band B of the Programme, formerly known as the 21st Century Schools Programme, is due to end on 31 March 2024, by which time authorities must submit a nine-year capital programme, including an indicative funding forecast for the 9 years, for consideration towards providing a commitment and support for the first 3 years along with in-principle support for years 4, 5 and 6. Years 7 to 9 are intended to reflect the longer-term project pipeline. The remaining Band B projects will be included in the first three years of the nine-year capital programme.</p>	<p>Louise Herbert-Evans</p>	<p>Cabinet Member - Education &amp; Learning</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>15 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>

## Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24 – Projected Timetable of Meetings (actual dates shown)

Activity / Month	MAY /JUN 2023	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2024	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
<b>SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE</b> Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Peter Black Lead Scrutiny Officer: Brij Madahar Lead Cabinet Member: cross-cutting Lead CMT: cross-cutting Lead Head of Service: cross-cutting	13 June Work Planning Conf.	18		19	17	14	19	16	13	19	16	14
<b>INQUIRY PANELS:</b>												
	Findings				Final report							
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour</b> Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Terry Hennegan Lead Scrutiny Officer: Michelle Roberts Lead Cabinet Member: cross-cutting Lead CMT: cross-cutting Lead Head of Service: cross-cutting	29 June			12	18							
									Planning	Evidence gathering		
<b>Community Assets</b> Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Stuart Rice Lead Scrutiny Officer: Michelle Roberts Lead Cabinet Member: Hayley Gwilliam / Elliot King Lead CMT: Mark Wade Lead Head of Service: Geoff Bacon									1	11 25	22	20
<b>Procurement Follow Up *COMPLETE*</b> (Cabinet decision: 20 Oct 2022) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Chris Holley Lead Scrutiny Officer: Michelle Roberts Lead Cabinet Member: David Hopkins Lead CMT: Ben Smith Lead Head of Service: Chris Williams					24							

Activity / Month	MAY /JUN 2023	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2024	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
<b>PERFORMANCE PANELS:</b>												
<b>Service Improvement &amp; Finance</b> (monthly) <b>*ENDED*</b> 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	27 June											
<b>Service Improvement, Regeneration &amp; Finance</b> (monthly) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Chris Holley Lead Scrutiny Officer: Rachel Percival Lead Cabinet Member: Rob Stewart / David Hopkins / Robert Francis Davies Lead CMT: Ness Young / Ben Smith / Mark Wade Lead Head of Service: Phillip Holmes / Lee Wenham				5 26	17	14	12	16	13 Budget	12	9	7
<b>Education</b> (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	15 June	13		14	19	23	14	18	12 (Budget) 22	14	18	9

## Appendix 4a

Activity / Month	MAY /JUN 2023	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2024	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
<b>Adult Services</b> (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	28 June		7	5	31		12	30	12 Budget (Joint Social Services Panel)	20		7
<b>Child &amp; Family Services</b> (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	22 May 20 June		2	13	24		5	23	12 Budget (Joint Social Services Panel)	12		1
<b>Development &amp; Regeneration</b> (every 2 months) <b>*ENDED*</b> 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: Phillip Holmes		11										
<b>Climate Change &amp; Nature</b> (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		4			3	28		30		19		14

Activity / Month	MAY /JUN 2023	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2024	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
<b>WORKING GROUPS:</b>												
<b>Topic 1 – Public Rights of Way</b> Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Mike White Lead Scrutiny Officer: Rachel Percival Lead Cabinet Member: Andrew Stevens Lead CMT: Mark Wade Lead Head of Service: Phillip Holmes						22						
<b>Topic 1 – Customer Contact</b> Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Joe Hale Lead Scrutiny Officer: Rachel Percival Lead Cabinet Member: Andrea Lewis Lead CMT: Ness Young Lead Head of Service: Sarah Lackenby								26				
<b>Topic 3 – Community Growing</b> Lead Scrutiny Councillor: tbc Lead Scrutiny Officer: Rachel Percival Lead Cabinet Member: Hayley Gwilliam Lead CMT: Mark Wade Lead Head of Service:												

Activity / Month	MAY /JUN 2023	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN 2024	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
<b>REGIONAL SCRUTINY:</b>												
<b>Partneriaeth Regional Scrutiny Councillor Group</b> (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)	19 June				23				26			
<b>Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee</b> (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		4			24				13		16	

<p><b>South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee - Overview &amp; Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b> (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</p>						2		16		12		
--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--	----	--	----	--	--

\* denotes extra meeting

\*\* not public

Information correct as of 12/12/23 08:28



## 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 Scrutiny Programme Committee agreed to submit the final report to Cabinet at their meeting on the 14 November. Cllr Terry Hennegan will now present the final report to Cabinet on the 21 December 2023.

(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	24 Oct 2023 (MONITORING COMPLETE)

### 3. Performance Panels:

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

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

This Panel meets every month. At their meeting on 14 November the Panel discussed the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24 for the first quarter. They also received a regeneration report which focussed on an update on Skyline and Copr Bay.

On 12 December they will look at the Mid Term Budget Statement 2023/24, Review of Revenue Reserves, Recycling and Landfill - Annual Performance Monitoring Report and the Councils response to an Audit Wales Report on the Digital Strategy Review.

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

This Panel meets every month. At their meeting on 23 November, they discussed reducing disadvantage in school including the use of the pupil development grant in Swansea. They also received briefings on Cookery in Schools and the School Improvement Service.

The Panel will next meet on the 14 December where they will look at the Annual Education Performance against identified priorities and as part of this will have a Cabinet Member Q&A.

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

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

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At its meeting on 5 December the Panel discussed the latest Performance Monitoring report including a session on Qualitative Auditing, received an update on the Child and Family Improvement Programme and an update on Contextual Missing Exploited and Trafficked.

The next meeting on 23 January will receive an update on progress with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and an update on the Corporate Parenting Board.

e) **Climate Change & Nature** (convener: Cllr Sara Keeton)

This Panel meets every two months. At its meeting on 28 November the Panel discussed Environmental Tourism.

The next meeting on 30 January will receive an update on Nature and Biodiversity including monitoring delivery of Corporate Priority/Objective – Maintain and Enhance Nature and Biodiversity in Swansea. The Panel will also discuss Public Electric Vehicle Charging Provision.

#### **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 Councillor Group met on the 23 October, where they looked at progress with the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales, the Risk Assessment Profile and received an update on the performance of Partneriaeth Priority 2 – Embed principles and processes which underpin educational equity in all schools and educational settings. This included an example of practice happening on the ground from the Headteacher from Birchgrove Comprehensive School.

They will next meet on the 26 February 2024 where they have scheduled to discuss the Partneriaeth financial affairs, risk management and governance arrangements. They will all look at progress with Partneriaeth Priority 3 – Support schools and educational settings to develop of research and enquiry schools as a key part of their own professional learning. This will include looking at an example of a National and Professional Enquiry Project (NPEP).

##### **b) Swansea Bay City Region City Deal**

The Joint Scrutiny Committee usually meets every two months. As well as overall programme / project monitoring including the latest financial position, the meeting on 24 October focussed on specific regional Project(s), with updates on 'Skills & Talent' and 'Digital Infrastructure'. The Committee was also informed of the findings and actions of the 2022-23 Internal Audit review into the Swansea Bay City Deal Portfolio.

The next meeting takes place on 13 February 2024 and is expected to include a report on the Carbon Reduction Assessment of the Swansea Bay City Deal Portfolio.

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. The last meeting held on 2 November focussed on the Audit Wales' findings follow their review of Corporate Joint Committees. The purpose of the review was to gain early assurance about the CJC's progress as newly established bodies, and provide some early feedback to help CJC's as they continue to develop. The Committee was also updated on the Regional Transport Plan Implementation Plan which is to be submitted to Welsh Government.

The next meeting is due to take place on 16 January 2024, expected to include budget monitoring.

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?CommitteeId=499>

## 5. **Working Groups:**

A number of 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) **Public Rights of Way** (convener: Councillor Mike White)

This Working Group was held on 22 November receiving an overview on Public Rights of Way across Swansea (mapping / numbers) and issues; impact on Public Rights of Way from developments; effect on communities, etc.

### b) **Customer Contact** (convener: Councillor Joe Hale)

This Working Group has been arranged for 26 January 2024. 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 offline and on-line contact; effectiveness of Council Contact Centre; on-going actions to improve digital inclusion / access; quality of website, etc.

This Working Group was carried forward from 2022/23.

c) **Community Growing** (convener: TBC)

This will enable information, focussed questioning & discussion around Council activity / support to Community Growing, with examples (e.g., allotments) and experience; benefits / success; including focus on schools / children & young people; and its contribution to health & well-being, etc.

# Agenda Item 11



## Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 19 December 2023

### Scrutiny Letters

<b>Purpose:</b>	To ensure the Committee is aware of the Scrutiny Letters produced following various Scrutiny activities, and to track responses to date.
<b>Content:</b>	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.
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the Scrutiny Letters and responses</li><li>• Make comments, observations and recommendations as necessary</li></ul>
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
<b>Report Author:</b>	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: <a href="mailto:brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk">brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk</a>
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	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 (2022/23) 58 letters were sent to Cabinet Members, of which 20 required a written response. The average time taken to respond was 21 days, with 65% responded to within the 21 days target.
- 3.2 The following letter(s), not already reported back to the Committee, are **attached** for discussion, as necessary:

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>
a	Committee – Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board	17 Oct	Letter to Chair of Swansea Public Services Board (Cabinet Member for Service Transformation)
b	Committee – Scrutiny of Children & Young People’s Rights Scheme Progress Report 2021-23	14 Nov	Letter to Cabinet Member for Community (Support)

c	Committee – Scrutiny of Annual Report – Corporate Safeguarding 2022/23	14 Nov	Letter to Cabinet Member for Care Services
d	Committee – Follow Up of Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group	14 Nov	Letter to Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

#### **4. Legal Implications**

4.1 There are no legal implications.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications.

**Background Papers:** None

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Letters Log – 2023-24

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Letters / Responses



## Scrutiny Letters Log (2023-2024)

Ave. Response Time (days):

18 (target within 21 days)

% responses within target:

75

No.	Committee / Panel / Working Group	Meeting Date	Main Issue(s)	Cabinet Portfolio	Letter Sent	Response Received
1	Adult Services Performance Panel	02-May	Adult Services Complaints; Policy Commitments; Review of the Year	Care Services	23-May	n/a
2	Committee	16-May	Crime & Disorder Scrutiny - Safer Swansea Partnership	Joint Chairs of Safer Swansea Partnership	08-Jun	n/a
3	Education Performance Panel	15-Jun	ALN, Estyn inspection outcomes, new curriculum and work plan agreement	Education & Learning	26-Jun	n/a
4	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	27-Jun	Road Repairs	Environment & Infrastructure	10-Jul	n/a
5	Partnersiaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group	19-Jun	Regional Education Scrutiny	Education & Learning	10-Jul	n/a
6	Child & Family Services Performance Panel	20-Jun	Performance Monitoring; Regional Adoption Service	Care Services	12-Jul	n/a
7	Adult Services Performance Panel	28-Jun	Performance Monitoring; CIW Care Home Inspections	Care Services	19-Jul	n/a
8	Committee	18-Jul	Pre-decision Scrutiny - FPR7 Redevelopment of 277-278 Oxford Street - Community Hub Project	Joint Corporate Services & Performance and Culture, Human Rights & Equalities	19-Jul	n/a
9	Education Performance Panel	13-Jul	School Attendance and School Exclusions	Education & Learning	24-Jul	04-Aug

10	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	11-Jul	Swansea Arena and Regeneration Monitoring Report	Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism	26-Jul	n/a
11	Child & Family Services Performance Panel	02-Aug	Annual wellbeing report; Residential Care Services	Care Services	29-Aug	n/a
12	Adult Services Performance Panel	07-Aug	WAO Report 'Together We Can'; Tackling Poverty Grants Impact Report; Direct Payments Case Studies		29-Aug	n/a
13	Education Performance Panel	14-Sep	Looked after children education support and 10 education recommendations as referred by previous CDC	Education & Learning	26-Sep	n/a
14	Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel	05-Sep	Revenue and HRA Outturns 22-23	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	28-Sep	n/a
15	Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel	05-Sep	Annual Performance Monitoring Report and Annual Review of Performance 22/23	Corporate Services & Performance	28-Sep	n/a
16	Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel	05-Sep	Copr Bay	Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism	28-Sep	n/a
17	Adult Services Performance Panel	05-Sep	Performance Monitoring; WAO Report 'A Missed Opportunity'	Care Services	02-Oct	n/a
18	Child & Family Services Performance Panel	13-Sep	Presentation by Young Carers; Adolescent Strategy	Care Services	02-Oct	24-Oct

19	Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel	26-Sep	Q1 Performance Monitoring Report	Corporate Services & Performance	19-Oct	n/a
20	Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel	26-Sep	Capital Outturn and Financing 22/23	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	19-Oct	n/a
21	Committee	18-Oct	Pre-decision Scrutiny - Oracle Project Closure Process and Transition to New Operating System	Service Transformation	19-Oct	n/a
22	Climate Change & Nature Performance Panel	03-Oct	Water Quality; Planning Enforcement: Nature and Biodiversity	Corporate Services & Performance	26-Oct	15-Nov
23	Education Performance Panel	19-Oct	Gorseinon Primary School looking at School Development Plan	Education & Learning	31-Oct	n/a
23	Committee	19-Sep	Active Travel	Environment & Infrastructure	26-Oct	n/a
24	Inquiry Panel	24-Oct	Procurement Impact / Follow up on progress	Corporate Services & Performance	31-Oct	n/a
25	Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel	17-Oct	Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Report	Culture, Human Rights & Equalities	31-Oct	20-Nov
26	Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel	17-Oct	Audit Wales Report - Setting Well-being Objectives	Corporate Services & Performance	31-Oct	n/a
27	Committee	17-Oct	Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board	Chair of Public Services Board	09-Nov	n/a
28	Child & Family Services Performance Panel	24-Oct	Regional Safeguarding Board, Service Quality Unit, Commissioning	Care Services	14-Nov	n/a

29	Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group	23-Oct	Priority 2, risk profile and Curriculum for Wales	Education & Learning	15-Nov	n/a
29	Adult Services Performance Panel	31-Oct	Director's Annual Report; Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards	Care Services	27-Nov	
30	Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel	14-Nov	Q1 Budget Monitoring Report	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	04-Dec	n/a
31	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	14-Nov	Skyline and Copr Bay	Investment, Regeneration, Events & Tourism	04-Dec	n/a
32	Committee	14-Nov	Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Progress Report 2021-23	Community (Support)	06-Dec	n/a
33	Committee	14-Nov	Annual Report – Corporate Safeguarding 2022/23	Care Services	06-Dec	n/a
34	Committee	14-Nov	Follow Up - Bus Services Working Group	Environment & Infrastructure	07-Dec	n/a
35						
36						
37						
38						
39						
40						
41						
42						
43						
44						
45						
46						
47						
48						



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

**BY EMAIL**

cc: Vice-Chair of Swansea PSB

*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

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

SPC/2023-24/4

09 November 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Chair of Swansea Public Services Board following the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 17 October 2023. It contains feedback on the performance of the Public Services Board. A formal written response is not required.

Dear Councillor Lewis,

### **Scrutiny Programme Committee – 17 October Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board**

We are writing to you following our Scrutiny session with our views, reflecting on information presented, questions and discussion, on the performance of Swansea Public Services Board (PSB), and difference that it is making. This follows on from the previous Scrutiny session held in February, as part of ongoing Scrutiny of Swansea PSB, when we commented on the PSB's Draft Local Well-being Plan, which was subsequently published by the PSB in May.

At the end of that meeting in February, the Committee looked forward to seeing detail on the performance framework and measurable outcomes, i.e., action plans for each Well-being Objective alongside the identification of responsibilities, outputs, and performance arrangements, with clarity about leads and actions for individual partners, etc. The Committee appreciates the written information that was provided on this, at the meeting in October.

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU**  
**SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE**  
GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE  
[www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk) / [www.abertawe.gov.uk](http://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

We thank you and the Vice-Chair for attending the meeting, and appreciated the input provided by Richard Rowlands, Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager, Swansea Council, along with other participants, to help the Committee understand progress and developments on the PSB's performance framework and action plan to deliver Local Well-being Plan Objectives / Steps. There was quite a lot of material to digest which you explained, and helpfully clarified the purpose of the draft population measures that were shown.

You told us that the Action Plan is being reviewed and monitored for progress at the Swansea PSB Committee, which meets quarterly. We note your encouragement to Committee members to observe these discussions. We'll make sure the recordings of future PSB meeting are circulated.

### **Scrutiny Views**

From our discussion, the Committee would highlight the following:

#### **1) New Performance Framework**

The Committee was pleased to see the progress that has been made by the PSB in developing a framework, taking on board our views from previous sessions, which will improve our ability to measure and monitor performance, and evidencing the tangible difference the PSB is making and added value. We thanked all concerned for this work.

We welcomed sight of the Action Plan for 2023/24 following agreement earlier this year of a new PSB Well-being Plan. This is important in countering anyone who thinks the PSB is just being a 'talking shop'. That said, we acknowledged the challenges you face with this work, where outcomes are delivered collectively by partnerships to whole populations over a longer period, as well as resource demands associated with the development, collection, processing and reporting of data that must come from the public bodies that make up the PSB.

We noted that whilst the Well-being Plan is a plan for 2023-28, with objectives taking us up to 2040, the Action Plan is for 2023/24 and contains actions for each of the 8 Well-being Steps, intended outcomes, milestones, and success measures, with named strategic and operational leads from across the partnership, not just the Council. In addition, the framework will consist of population level outcome measures, and work to research and map potential population measures against well-being objectives and drivers has commenced, with a view to being in place ready for 2024/25.

The Action Plan provided showed progress / status at Quarter 2 of this year. We noted that most of the actions for 2023/24 are mostly 'Green' for each of the 8 Well-being Plan Steps, in terms of progress / performance – mindful that 'Green' does not necessarily mean 'complete' but shows progress as 'on track'. We sought assurance that actions are sufficiently challenging, inviting your comments on areas which present the most challenge, which we noted as actions around Early Years and Climate Change Strategy activities, which had far-reaching implications around culture and practice, and required significant long-term commitment from partners, working within existing resources. You told us that the Action Plan featured a mix of actions, some focussed on things that could make an immediate impact, some about starting bigger pieces of work that will go beyond this year, with all contributing to the PSBs long term objectives.

## **2) Developments In Partnership / Collaborative Working**

The Scrutiny Committee has previously urged the PSB to reflect on its visibility and increase efforts on public / community engagement, and we were pleased to hear about initiatives that have been taken, for example work under Well-being Step 4 – Making Swansea Safer, More Cohesive, and Prosperous, which is led by the Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service. These included events arranged to broaden the awareness of partners' work and improve networks, particularly amongst those who engage directly with our communities, providing opportunities for collaborative working. One of these, a 'Walking in Our Shoes' Event, arranged by the Fire & Rescue Service, was held on 17 October. We noted a further event on 17 November will focus on 'Safeguarding Swansea - Building safer and stronger communities, together', to bring together a diverse range of organisations to discuss ways to improve safeguarding across Swansea. Thank you for including Scrutiny Committee Members in invitations.

We asked about the success of the pop-up Community Village held in June in Castle Square, which you reported was very well attended by members of the public, and the future development of this type of initiative across Swansea, including the potential for utilisation of community buildings. We noted that this community safety village event was 'piggy-backed' on the Welsh Firefighters Fitness Challenge, which helped to attract footfall. It was good to hear that many partner organisations were represented at the event, and that it resulted in the referral of around 55 Home Fire Safety visit requests, and around 130 engagements with families on the day, with positive feedback received from both partners and the public. We welcome efforts being made to find ways to promote this and other future events. We acknowledged that increasing public engagement is challenging. You felt the City Centre was suited for this event, but the model could be replicated elsewhere to support community engagement across other parts of Swansea.

## 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 be aware of and consider our views. Please report our letter to the next available PSB meeting. The Committee will follow up on progress / developments in six months. We have currently scheduled this for Committee meeting on 19 March 2024.

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](mailto:cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk)





**To/  
Councillor Hayley Gwilliam  
Cabinet Member for Community  
(Support)**

**BY EMAIL**

cc: Cabinet Members

*Please ask for:  
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:  
Linell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail  
e-Bost:*

*Our Ref  
Ein Cyf:*

*Your Ref  
Eich Cyf:*

*Date  
Dyddiad:*

Scrutiny

01792 637257

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

SPC/2023-24/5

06 December 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member following the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 14 November 2023. It is about delivery of the Council's Children & Young People's Rights Scheme. A formal written response is not required.

Dear Councillor Gwilliam,

### **Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Progress Report 2021-23**

Thank you for attending the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 14 November, in which we considered progress with the implementation of the Children & Young People's (CYP) Rights Scheme.

Since adoption and launch of the Scheme by Cabinet in 2014, representing a formal public commitment to Children's Rights, the Committee has been regularly reviewing progress. Our Scrutiny ensures monitoring and challenge to work undertaken, compliance with the Council's duty to have due regard to the UNCRC, the way the CYP Rights Scheme is being implemented and embedded across the Council, and assessing its impact on children and young people. This letter reflects on what we learnt from the discussion, shares comments and views of the Committee on how well the Rights Scheme is being put into action and the embedding of Children's Rights across the Council, and highlights any outstanding issues / actions for your response.

We last discussed progress in March 2021. At that meeting we considered the impact of the pandemic on this work, lessons learned, the restructuring and

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU**  
**SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE**  
GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE  
[www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk) / [www.abertawe.gov.uk](http://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

remodelling of Children's Rights work, and planned revision to the Rights Scheme, which we note was subsequently published in 2021 complimenting the 'Right Way' principled approach that is being embedded nationally and led by the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

The Committee reviewed the latest progress report which reflected on the period September 2021 – September 2023. We heard that the 'Right Way' approach is framed around five Human Rights principles: Participation, Empowerment, Embedding, Accountability, and Non-Discrimination. The progress report was structured around these principles and priorities identified by Children & Young People, highlighting activities and achievements across the Council in upholding the Children's Rights commitment, as well as containing recommendations relating to areas for development to take things further. It was reported that alignment to the national process means opportunity to provide clear guidance, and tangible benchmarks for Council departments to embed a whole Council approach and evidence outcomes.

We are grateful to the lead officers, Jane Whitmore and Julie Gosney, for their contribution to the session, who in addition to the written material provided spoke in detail about the progress, achievements, and impact made, as well as issues and challenges. Amongst the highlights mentioned to the Committee, included:

- Work to ensure young people aged 14+ years were aware that laws had changed in Wales enabling young people aged 16+ years to vote in Welsh elections.
- Looking at play sufficiency and making Play Area improvements across Swansea
- Delivering 'Children's Rights and Participation' workshops across Primary & Secondary Schools allowing Children & Young People to expand their knowledge of Children's Rights and take part in discussions about what rights mean to them, how rights are embedded through school, home and community life, how we ensure they have a voice on issues that impact their lives and what can be done if they feel their rights are not being upheld.
- Incorporating the commitment to the UNCRC within the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment process, with a designated section which fully examines the impact of the proposed decisions on Children and Young People. Officers have access to support and advice on how to engage with young people to seek their views on new initiatives, etc.
- Providing Children's Rights Training for Early Years Practitioners with workshops helping practitioners to learn about rights and gather ideas on how they can embed rights into their settings.
- Establishing a Children's Rights & Participation cross-directorate Working Group, to support the Children's Rights commitment & contribute to a Children's Rights Scheme with focus on promoting and facilitating opportunities for Children and Young People to be heard, and ensure feedback.

## **Whole Council Approach**

Although we heard many positives about progress that the Council has made, which would indicate a shift in understanding across departments about Children & Young People's Rights, the Committee is keen to see clear arrangements for benchmarking, measuring, and monitoring performance to better evidence how successful we are in embedding a whole-Council approach on Children & Young People's Rights. Recognising that the Council has adopted a new approach we acknowledged that this is 'work in progress', and welcome developments. The Children & Young People's Rights Scheme 'Plan on a Page,' which you reported has been recognised as best practice by the Children's Commissioner for Wales, is very helpful in setting out what this Council will do. It would be good to see as many measurables as possible against these objectives / commitments which will help us to capture, monitor and assess progress.

## **UNCRC Training in Schools**

We noted that there is training provided to teachers around the rights of Children & Young People, supporting the overarching aim of helping Schools to promote the UNCRC and Children's Rights effectively. We suggested that appropriate training should be extended to School Governors. Officers agreed and stated they would discuss with the Education Department to ensure this can be incorporated into School Governor Training as a mandatory topic.

We also discussed the current position with regard to the UNICEF 'Rights Respecting Schools' journey and award. We noted that the original Council contract with UNICEF ran for five years and has now ended, and that things have been overtaken with the introduction of a new Curriculum for Wales. We heard that this has changed the focus as Children & Young People's Rights are embedded into the new Curriculum and closely aligned to the UNCRC articles, therefore integrated into teaching. You clarified that individual Schools can still engage with UNICEF for accreditation, but this would be at their own cost.

## **Youth Service**

The recently concluded Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry has flagged up issues with Youth Provision in Swansea including funding and the difficulty in recruiting qualified youth workers. We asked whether this has impacted on work to embed Children & Young People's Rights, for example outreach services, but were informed that there has been no direct impact on Children & Young People's Rights related activities. However, the topic of 'Youth Provision' will be included in discussion of future Scrutiny Work Programme, as a possible Working Group or future Committee item.

## **Future Progress Reporting**

With the alignment to a national model and process, this would mean moving away from annual reporting to reviewing the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme (which would be based on a 5-year cycle) every two years. The Committee was content to receive future updates on a two-yearly basis for better alignment with Welsh Government model of reviewing the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme.

## **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 will follow up on the issues within when progress is next reported to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



## **COUNCILLOR PETER BLACK**

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

✉ [cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk)



**To/  
Councillor Louise Gibbard  
Cabinet Member for Care Services**

**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

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

SPC/2023-24/6

06 December 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member following the meeting of the Committee on 14 November 2023. It is about the Annual Report on Corporate Safeguarding. A formal written response is not required.

Dear Councillor Gibbard,

### **Annual Report – Corporate Safeguarding 2022/23**

We are writing to you following our Scrutiny session to monitor and challenge Council action in relation to Corporate Safeguarding. The Annual Report is a standing item within the Committee work plan given Safeguarding is the Council's top priority, so we can comment on progress, achievements, and implementation of policy.

We thank you and officers for attending the Committee to present the Annual Report which reflected on activities during 2022/23. You highlighted improvements carried out in support of the Council's corporate safeguarding policy and corporate arrangements for Safeguarding across the whole Council, covering six key areas of activity, making sure that safeguarding remains 'everyone's business'.

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 summarised below.

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU**  
**SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE**  
GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE  
[www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk) / [www.abertawe.gov.uk](http://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

We noted that the Council's Corporate Safeguarding policy has been updated, now with a greater focus on prevention and duty to report placed on all public service officers. The policy aims to make sure our work covers the full extent of potential, contextual safeguarding risks and concerns posed to vulnerable people, such as child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, radicalisation, etc. The new Policy incorporates All Wales Safeguarding Procedures introduced by the Welsh Government.

We took the opportunity to follow up on our previous discussion last November, which focussed on compliance by those carrying out work for the Council with the Council's Safeguarding Policies; Mandatory Training Compliance; Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks; and Advocacy.

### **Working with Suppliers and Contractors**

Corporate Safeguarding extends to how we work with suppliers and contractors to ensure safety of vulnerable children and adults. We expect that all staff employed by suppliers and contractors carrying out work on the Council's behalf are fully aware of their broader responsibilities and duties. The Committee is aware that there are different levels of conditions and monitoring, depending on the nature of services contracted.

We acknowledged that this is an aspect which you have been focusing on and working to strengthen, and sought assurance around the level of compliance / arrangements for checking, so that we can be certain that suppliers and contractors do understand their responsibilities and duties in relation to safeguarding. We noted that contract monitoring arrangements are in place and checks are carried out, for example through suitability questionnaires to ensure that all expectations are fully understood, and where necessary staff are given safeguarding awareness training. We were informed that there is better evidence of compliance in the more obvious areas of practice where safeguarding is at the forefront of this work, e.g., in Care settings, but concluded that challenges still exist in being able to evidence compliance across other areas, and this remains 'work in progress. You stated that this was in the Corporate Safeguarding Group's work plan, and it was indicated that efforts would be made to provide further information to Scrutiny about this, during the year, to provide assurance.

### **Mandatory Safeguarding Training**

You stated that new mandatory Group A Safeguarding eLearning has recently been launched for all Council employees, which combines the previous eLearning's for both Children and Adults Safeguarding into one module. It also incorporates the new Social Care Wales National Safeguarding Training, Learning and Development Standards. Recognising there is a hierarchy of training depending on the individual's role within the Council, Group A is the basic level, which covers the core safeguarding principle and aims to increase awareness of safeguarding, i.e.:

- I know what the term safeguarding means.
- I know what to look out for.
- I know who to report to.

You told us that this is strongly promoted across the Authority however it was remarked that the new eLearning has not yet been rolled out to all Councillors. As the new eLearning uses the new Oracle Fusion system, which would be less familiar to Councillors than employees, we noted that a step-by-step guide was being developed by the Head of Digital & Customer Services, which will shortly be communicated to Councillors. We noted that training is to be completed by 31 March 2024. Of course, staff and Councillors have had previous versions of Safeguarding Training over the years, and it has always been disappointing that the Authority has been unable to accurately report the level of take up / compliance with what is mandatory training. We were pleased to hear that the new Oracle system will now provide us with better management information and more effective oversight of training compliance across the Council. We look forward to this being reported in the future.

### **DBS Checks**

We understood that the Council must ensure DBS checks are undertaken for all roles that have identified as needing one. You reported that the DBS Policy has been reviewed and updated. Alongside policy development, work is underway reviewing the procedure guide to assist Council managers, School Governors, Head teachers in making safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

We queried whether Councillors should be subject to DBS Checks. We noted that there have been changes over time in relation to national guidance, expectations and eligibility requirements, and things have been reviewed locally to ensure there are no obvious omissions. Whilst you acknowledged it may make sense, you confirmed that the Council is compliant with Welsh Government Guidance. We would appreciate any update on developments in this regard.

### **Work for the Year Ahead**

We look forward to next year's Annual Report when we can follow up on these issues. We can also follow up on work you have identified within this year's report for the year ahead:

#### *Safe Governance & Performance:*

- *To continue the annual review of performance, quarterly performance monitoring of key indicators, performance reporting at service level (to P&FM and scrutiny performance panels) and annual reporting on corporate safeguarding.*

### *Safe Employment*

- *To publish, communicate and implement revised HR policies relating to recruitment and selection, DBS reflecting national procedures.*
- *To ensure council-wide volunteering policy currently in development led by Tackling Poverty Service and to reflect wider safeguarding responsibilities expectations and training offer.*

### *Safe Workforce*

- *Continue roll out of new blended programme of mandatory and progression training courses across Council available to meet diverse needs of service areas, employees learning needs and responsibilities.*
- *Managers to work within Oracle Fusion to ensure safe and accurate reporting on staff learning records, keeping records updated and tracking compliance.*

### *Safe Practice*

- *To continue to implement quality assurance frameworks within child and family and adult services.*
- *To continue to refresh the work programme using self-assessment and involving leads from all Council Departments within the Corporate Safeguarding Operational group.*

### *Safe Partnerships*

- *To continue to embed corporate safeguarding policy procedures into how we work with suppliers in carrying out checks, specifying contracts, building awareness in the wider workforce and contract monitoring.*

### *Safe Voice*

- *Working within families, communities, and schools to promote safeguarding awareness.*
- *Continue to develop language and communication guidance and training opportunities for Council employees to support ACE awareness, promote inclusivity and embed trauma informed practice.*
- *Continuing to improve our advocacy offer, best interest decisions, equalities, inclusion and promote human rights.*

## **Your Response**

Overall, the Committee thanked you and lead officers for the report and were pleased to see the continuing efforts of the Corporate Safeguarding Group which is jointly chaired by yourself and the Director of Social Services. We hope that you find the contents of this letter helpful and would welcome comments, however we do not expect you to provide a formal response. However, we will follow up on the issues within when we next discuss.



We will make sure that consideration of the next Annual Report is scheduled into the Scrutiny Programme Committee's work plan for 2024/25, presumably for November 2024.

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](mailto:cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk)



**To/  
Councillor Andrew Stevens  
Cabinet Member for Environment &  
Infrastructure**

**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

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

SPC/2023-24/7

07 December 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member following the meeting of the Committee on 14 November 2023. It is about the follow up on the Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group. A formal written response is not required.

Dear Councillor Stevens,

### **Follow up – Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group**

The Committee takes responsibility for following up on previous Scrutiny Working Groups, to check on progress with the topic / issue(s) and response to any specific suggestions or recommendations made and agreed action coming out of the Scrutiny session.

At our Committee meeting in November, we followed up on the Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group, which conclude in March 2022, having originally met in July 2021. The Working Group had met to discuss issues including bus network coverage and levels of service, community transport provision and integration with other forms of transport. The Scrutiny Councillors involved in this activity 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. They 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

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU**

**SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE**

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

[www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk) / [www.abertawe.gov.uk](http://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

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.

Key issues for follow up was progress on:

- working with operators to improve network / service coverage, reliability, and public satisfaction
- fostering effective dialogue between Councillors and bus operators, as well as public feedback, to raise / discuss service issues
- integration / cross ticketing between bus and rail so services are more coordinated
- any developments in terms of Council playing greater role in provision of bus services
- carbon emission reduction / trial of hydrogen buses
- improvements to bus shelters

Thank you for providing an update report on progress since the Working Group, including update on issues raised by the Working Group and actions taken. This included reference to developments in relation to cleaner fuel buses, the bus service network and bus emergency schemes, bus and rail links and bus shelters. We thank lead officers for attending the meeting along with yourself to answer questions. We also appreciated the contributions made by Bev Fowles, Director of South Wales Transport / Vice-Chair of Coach and Bus Association Cymru, giving the Committee a perspective on things from a local SME bus service operator, particularly in terms of Welsh Government proposed reform / legislation on how bus services are provided in the future, including franchising local bus services. We noted that South Wales Transport has been a long-standing local bus service contractor for the Council.

### **Bus Service Cuts**

We noted that there are planned changes to the legislative framework which underpins the provision of local bus services, with Welsh Government looking at new legislation which would lead to the current deregulated model of providing services, introduced in 1986, being replaced by a franchised model. You reported that it was anticipated that the new legislation and model will be introduced in 2025 at the earliest.

We heard that whilst there has been a progressive recovery of passenger numbers post-Covid, bus operators locally are reporting that there is still a degree of resistance to using bus services again, with passenger numbers only about 80% of those carried pre-Covid, and for concessionary pass holders it varies between 60% and 75% on individual services. Revenue shortfalls were covered by the Welsh Government's Bus Emergency Scheme (BES), however BES was replaced from July 2023 by the Bus Transition Fund (BTF), though the level of funding made available for the 2023/2024 Financial Year has reduced. As a consequence, bus operators have made cuts resulting in a reduction in the frequency of most services. Under the BTF, the Council, like all others across Wales, is now required to tender contracts for all of services that will continue to require funding from 1st April 2024. This will include the services which are not commercially viable but are deemed to be socially necessary, and for which the Council has traditionally provided funding. The available funding for 2024/25 is unlikely to increase.

This is clearly a difficult period for bus services impacting those who rely most on buses, and we recognised this is not just a local problem. From the point of view of operators, we heard that dealing with a fall in passenger numbers and bus service reorganisation across Wales was a double whammy, which required more funding for transition not less. It was noted that the Welsh Government model for bus franchising was along the same lines as how Transport for London operates, and potentially a positive change but it is important that there is a sustainable budget to make this a success. The view of the Director of South Wales Transport was that bus operators were not optimistic at this point, but hoped to be proved wrong. There was some concern raised as to whether the Transport for London franchising model could be applied to Wales given differences – the sheer volume of people moving around London compared with smaller urban and many rural areas here - and the risk that the new model would benefit larger operators, at the expense of SMEs.

### **Communication & Engagement**

Whilst not being responsible for bus services, we asked about what dialogue there been with service providers over their cuts to services and what influence the Council has exerted on this issue. You reported that the Council has worked with bus operators (most of the commercial network is operated by First Cymru) to try to ensure that most areas retain a basic bus service. We were assured that dialogue between the Council and service providers continues, with regular meetings to discuss service issues, consistent with the existing Quality Bus Partnership agreement. Although it cannot help seeing frequent changes in senior management within First Cymru. Nevertheless, you stated that there is a good relationship.

One of the challenges we noted was that bus operators are free to change services or stop a route by giving 56 days' notice, and there is no requirement to formally consult users, which is not only difficult for passengers and communities, but leaves the Council with little time or room to react.

### **Transport Integration & Cross Ticketing**

We asked about progress on joining up bus and rail times to improve co-ordination between services and cross ticketing. This is something that appears to be taking considerable time to implement.

We noted that cross ticketing would be part of the new franchise agreement and was expected to be rolled out in zones from April 2026 – similar to how the Oyster Card works in London. It was anticipated that in 3-5 years there would be significant improvements in connectivity between bus and rail transport. Transport for Wales were looking at integration to bring buses into railways stations. We heard some concerns around disproportionate national funding for rail versus bus transport, in view of relative passenger numbers.

We also discussed issues around the provision of Real Time Bus Information and would like to see this as part of future improvements.

### **Encouraging Bus Travel**

We discussed the concerns around passenger numbers and ways to encourage bus usage.

We were pleased to hear that the Council's free travel initiative is making a difference, and hopefully funding will continue to support this. We were encouraged to hear that passenger numbers, whilst still below pre-Covid levels, were going up and the Council's action was giving people an incentive to try the bus and hopefully use again. It was noted that the Free Bus offer would be operational on weekends between now and Christmas and the week after Christmas.

We heard that fare caps have made a difference in England, but this is currently not available in Wales. We also heard that a Welsh Government led promotional campaign would also help to support bus recovery – something that was apparently planned but yet to materialise.

### **Your Response**

We thank all concerned for the informative report and discussion, which now concludes our formal follow up of the Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group.

We hope that you find the contents of this letter helpful and would welcome comments, however we do not expect you to provide a formal response.

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](mailto:cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk)

# Agenda Item 12



## Scrutiny Programme Committee – 19 December 2023

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

**a) 16 January at 10.00am – Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel**

- Budget Proposals 2024/25 – 2027/28
- Q2 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24
- Q2 Performance Monitoring Report 2023/24
- Tourism Destination Management Plan Update

**b) 16 January at 2.00pm – South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee**  
(managed by Neath Port Talbot Council)

- Budget Monitoring
- Private Sector Advisory Board – Update

**c) 16 January at 4.00pm – Scrutiny Programme Committee**

- Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities: Q & A with Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy
- Follow Up - Road Safety Scrutiny Working Group

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