

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA. ON
MONDAY, 14 APRIL 2014 AT 4.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A M Day (Chair) presided

Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)
A M Cook	P Downing	P M Meara
A C S Colburn	E W Fitzgerald	M Thomas
D W Cole	J E C Harris	
J P Curtice	A J Jones	
N J Davies	J W Jones	

Co-opted Members:

D Anderson-Thomas

Also Present:

Councillor D Phillips – Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Anti-Poverty

Officers:

N Havard – Directorate Lawyer
B Madahar – Scrutiny Co-ordinator
J Parkhouse – Democratic Services Officer

126 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R V Smith.

127 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL & PREJUDICIAL INTEREST.**

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

128 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 17 March, 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

Minute No.112 – Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14

The Chair outlined that the co-option of the Deputy Chief Executive of Age Cymru onto the Social Care at Home Scrutiny Panel would not proceed owing to Age Cymru having an on-going contract with the Authority. The Deputy Chief Executive will therefore provide input as an expert witness.

The Chair requested that the Scrutiny Co-ordinator formulates a co-optee protocol.

129 **PROHIBITION OF WHIPPED VOTES AND DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS.**

None.

130 **CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION - COUNCILLOR DAVID PHILLIPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR ANTI-POVERTY.**

The Committee took the opportunity to question Councillor D Phillips, Leader of the Council, on his work relating to his responsibility and accountability as Cabinet Member for Anti-Poverty.

The Cabinet Member detailed the areas covered by his portfolio and work he had carried out in his role as Cabinet Member for Anti-Poverty. He also detailed areas of joint working with Cabinet Member colleagues in relation to poverty and prevention. He outlined priorities and developments to date in respect of:

- Social Inclusion;
- Community Regeneration / Communities First;
- Child Poverty;
- Providing every child with the best start in life / readiness for school;
- Supporting families by prevention;
- Developing target areas;
- Developing youth services;
- The impact of welfare reform;
- Providing community based solutions to local problems;
- NEETs.

The Committee asked questions in relation to how progress is measured; the difficulty in measuring progress in relation to anti-poverty; on-going problems being generational; the impact on children of living in non-working households; the need to develop parenting skills; feedback from the Poverty Forum; expectations of Flying Start and how it will be measured; partnership working; target areas, particularly their size; achievements of the Local Service Board. The Cabinet Member responded accordingly. He also circulated a document to committee members which provided further information about the development of a Swansea Poverty Reduction Strategy.

RESOLVED that: -

- 1) the Chair of the Committee writes a letter to the Cabinet Member reflecting on the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee;
- 2) the Leader circulates performance information in relation to the poverty and prevention programme, when available; and
- 3) The Committee follow up in issues relating to Target Areas with Councillor Ryland Doyle, in relation to the vision and objectives.

131 **SCRUTINY LETTERS:**

The Chair referred to the scrutiny letters log and referred to recent correspondence between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members:

- a) Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Wellbeing (Social Housing Working Group Meeting – 12 February).
- b) Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Learning & Skills (Wellbeing Performance Panel Meeting – 3 March).
- c) Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Wellbeing (Wellbeing Performance Panel Meeting – 3 March).

RESOLVED that the above letters be noted.

132 **MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY PANELS AND WORKING GROUPS.**

The Chair reported changes to the membership of the Streetscene Inquiry Panel and the Inward Investment Inquiry Panel.

Councillor M Thomas requested that he be removed from the Streetscene Inquiry Panel. Councillor P Downing stated that he wished to remain on the Panel.

RESOLVED that the following membership changes be approved:-

Streetscene Performance Panel

Remove Councillor C Lloyd & M Thomas

Inward Investment Performance Panel

Remove Councillor A Jones

133 **ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW 2013/14.**

The Chair reported the Annual Work Programme Review 2013/14 in order to help the Committee to take stock of the work completed this year and to reflect on progress. A full summary of the work undertaken was provided, including details of the work of the Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

It was added that the key achievements from the scrutiny work carried out over the past year will be featured in the Scrutiny Annual Report which will be published during the next Municipal year.

It was noted that the Education Inclusion Inquiry was being suspended pending outcome of a departmental review into the Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) service.

The Chair stated that he will write to the Leader to request that Scrutiny Dispatches is removed as a 'for information only' item and included as an item for discussion in order to allow time at council for any questions to the Chair.

The Chair referred to the self-evaluation workshop held earlier in the year and suggested improvements for the coming year in relation to:

- scrutiny work programme
- preparing for meetings
- outcomes from scrutiny (this was highlighted as the priority for the coming year)
- following up on scrutiny recommendations
- public engagement

In addition comments were made about:

- scheduling of meetings
- access to research / background information

It was added that there was an error in the draft Council Diary 2014-2015 whereby Scrutiny Programme Committee was listed as commencing at 5pm. This will be amended to 4.30pm at Council.

The Chair expressed thanks to all those councillors who have acted as conveners over the past year and to the work of the various Panels and Working Groups. He also thanked the scrutiny team for the support provided.

The Chair announced that the next meeting (subject to agreement of the council diary) was scheduled for 9 June. Ahead of that he informed the committee that the Scrutiny Work Planning Conference would be taking place on 12 May (for all scrutiny councillors) to gather ideas and prioritise topics for scrutiny.

134 **SCRUTINY DISPATCHES - MAY 2014.**

The Chair reported the draft Scrutiny Dispatches for agreement and submission to Council in June 2014.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be agreed and submitted to Council in June 2014.

The meeting ended at 5.40 pm

CHAIR