

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1 - CIVIC CENTRE ON MONDAY, 9 JUNE
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	R V Smith
D W Cole	J E C Harris	M Thomas
J P Curtice	T J Hennegan	
N J Davies	J W Jones	

Co – opted Member:

D Anderson - Thomas

Officers:

N Havard - Directorate Lawyer

B Madahar – Scrutiny Co-ordinator

J Tinker - Democratic Services Co - ordinator

6 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A J Jones and S Joiner.

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

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interest was declared:-

Councillor M Thomas – personal – Minute No 20 – Scrutiny Letters – 3 Feb, 7 April, 28 April and 12 May – wife works for the authority in adult social services – have dispensation from Standards Committee.

8 **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.

9 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 14 April 2014 and 8 May 2014 be agreed as correct records.

10 **ROLE OF COMMITTEE (INCLUDING TERMS OF REFERENCE).**

The Chair presented a report to ensure understanding about the role of the Scrutiny Programme Committee. The role of the Programme Committee and Scrutiny Conveners was outlined. The terms of reference were attached as an appendix.

Key issues arising for future discussion:

- Developing the relationship between SPC and conveners (in particular Inquiry Panel conveners) and mechanism for reporting progress.
- Developing appropriate and effective training for chairs / conveners / members

It was stated that the Scrutiny Annual Report (which is due to come to the Committee in August) should be scheduled for Council to enable discussion and view from council about activities, effectiveness and impact of scrutiny over the last 12 months.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the committee give further consideration to the issues noted above.
- (2) the Scrutiny Annual Scrutiny Report be submitted to Council following consideration by the committee

11 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15.**

Reflecting on the recent work planning conference the committee reviewed the scrutiny work programme and considered any new work in addition to existing activities.

The Chair presented the report which included a plan for future Committee meetings as well as panels and working groups. A discussion took place regarding proposed topic areas for Inquiry Panels and Working Groups.

The committee agreed that all scrutiny activities must have a focus, and thinking about what impact / difference scrutiny can make should guide choices about what work should be undertaken. It was acknowledged that a clear brief would need to be agreed and provided to Panels / Working Groups before they commence any work.

It was clarified that Working Groups although billed as a 'one-offs' may generate ideas about an in-depth inquiry which can then be considered by the committee as future work.

The committee also asked about the departmental review of Education Inclusion / EOTAS Service as the committee had agreed to suspend its own Scrutiny Inquiry Panel to allow the departmental review to be concluded. The committee awaited the outcome of the review to guide any future scrutiny activity. Members asked to see the Terms of Reference of the departmental review to clarify what review is looking at and to be able to communicate any messages about this topic to those interested to know what's going on with the scrutiny, and the current position.

It was also noted that Planning Services Working Group was meeting on 10 June and depending on the discussion and will consider whether there is a need for further scrutiny of this service.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) further information on the following proposed topics for Inquiry Panels be presented to the committee to aid prioritisation and selection:
 - Governance in Schools
 - Corporate Culture / Cooperative Council
 - Mental Health Services
- (2) the plan for future committee meetings be accepted.
- (3) Cabinet Members be asked to provide a short written report ahead of each committee questions session in relation to portfolio activities and achievements and impact in order to provide a focus for questions.
- (4) a progress report from the convener of the Local Service Board Scrutiny Performance Panel be added to the committee work plan.
- (5) the following Working Group topics be given as priority
 - Corporate Building and Property Services
 - Sustainability
- (6) the chair of the committee meet with the convener of the Wellbeing Scrutiny Performance Panel to discuss issues raised about the remit and workload of the Panel.
- (7) the committee be provided with the Terms of Reference of the departmental review of Education Inclusion / EOTAS Service.

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

The Chair presented a report regarding changes to the membership of the Schools Performance Panel, Wellbeing Performance Panel and Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel. Further verbal amendments were made.

RESOLVED that the following membership changes be approved:-

Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

REMOVE Councillor Jennifer Raynor
ADD Councillor Penny Matthews and Robert Smith

Appoint Fiona Gordon as convener

Following this change the revised Panel membership will be 13 Councillors, as detailed in the report with the addition of Councillor Robert Smith.

Wellbeing Scrutiny Performance Panel

REMOVE Councillor Ann Cook
ADD Councillor David Lewis

Following this change the revised Panel membership will be 16 Councillors, as detailed in the report.

Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

REMOVE Councillors David Lewis and Robert Smith
ADD Councillors Phil Downing, Joe Hale and Jennifer Raynor

Following this change the revised Panel membership will be 13 Councillors, as detailed in the report.

13 **SCRUTINY LETTERS:**

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

- a) Letter to/ from Cabinet Member for Wellbeing (Wellbeing Performance Panel Meeting - 3 February 2014).
- b) Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Wellbeing (Wellbeing Performance Panel Meeting – 17 March 2014).
- c) Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Wellbeing (Wellbeing Performance Panel Meeting – 7 April 2014).
- d) Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Wellbeing (Wellbeing Performance Panel Meeting – 28 April 2014).

The committee picked up on the Panel's concern and interest in a discussion prior to decisions about consultations on the future delivery of Adult Services. The committee were happy for the Panel to undertake any pre-decision scrutiny on this matter.

- e) Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Wellbeing (Wellbeing Performance Panel Meeting – 12 May 2014).

The committee picked up on the Panel's concern about the quality and accuracy of financial information provided to it pertaining to the Community Alarm Service, and need for further detail. The committee will keep an eye on this and if there is still concern the convener should refer this to the committee to consider taking up with the Cabinet Member.

f) Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Place (Committee Meeting – 17 February 2014).

It was agreed to send a further letter to the Cabinet Member given issues relating to waste management, public transport and the Blue Badge Scheme.

g) Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Committee Meeting – 17 March 2014).

RESOLVED that the actions noted above in relation to the letters be agreed.

14 **IMPROVING THE IMPACT OF SCRUTINY.**

The Chair submitted a report which set out proposals on how scrutiny could improve its impact over the next 12 months. An action plan summarising the proposals were detailed in Appendix A of the report. It was stated that a new report template had been developed as shown in Appendix B, which allowed the Cabinet member to show for agreed recommendations what work is already going on and what will be new. A revised follow up report template for Cabinet was attached at Appendix C. Approaches to improving impact were identified in the report. It was proposed that the content for the Council's forward look document be included in the papers for Scrutiny Committee to consider opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny.

The committee agreed that the focus should be on impact and the need for an appropriate methodology to collect evidence about, measure and demonstrate the impact of scrutiny, learning from approaches such as Results Based Accountability and Return on Investment.

The committee agreed that it was important that scrutiny activity considers what we are seeking to change, and relevant measures that can be monitored. Inquiries provided the greatest opportunities for impact so many of the actions focused on the different inquiry stages, scoping, reporting, and follow up.

RESOLVED that the proposals summarised in the action plan be endorsed.

15 **PROTOCOL FOR CO-OPTION.**

The Chair presented a report which sought agreement on a protocol for co – option to ensure a consistent approach across Panels and Working Groups. A proposed protocol that Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups adopt was set out in the report.

The chair stated that it was important to remember that there were different ways of engaging people in the work of scrutiny. He stated that there should be a strong case for co-opting someone, who rather than giving evidence, would work alongside scrutiny members to carry out the scrutiny. It was felt that it was important that the work of scrutiny was advertised well to ensure public were aware of work and opportunities to get involved.

RESOLVED that this protocol be endorsed and shared with conveners to ensure awareness.

16 **SCRUTINY DISPATCHES - JUNE 2014.**

The Chair reported the draft Scrutiny Dispatches for agreement and submission to Council on 15 July 2014. The Chair stated that he was still waiting for a response from the Presiding Member regarding the request to give members the opportunity to ask questions in respect of the Scrutiny Dispatches report for Council.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be agreed and submitted to Council on 15 July 2014.

17 **GOOD SCRUTINY? GOOD QUESTION! - AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES IMPROVEMENT STUDY: SCRUTINY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT.**

The Auditor General for Wales Improvement Study: Scrutiny in Local Government entitled "Good Scrutiny? Good Question!" was submitted for information and awareness at this stage. The chair stated that a report would be brought to a future meeting to discuss the report in detail, identify learning points and consider implications for scrutiny practice in Swansea. It was important to address the recommendations which the report makes.

RESOLVED that this study be noted.

18 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS FOR 2014/15 MUNICIPAL YEAR:**

The dates and times of future meetings for 2014/15 Municipal Year were submitted for information.

The meeting ended at 5.55 p.m.

CHAIR