

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA ON
MONDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2014 AT 4.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A M Day (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)
R A Clay	J P Curtice	J W Jones
A M Cook	N J Davies	P M Meara
A C S Colburn	E W Fitzgerald	R V Smith
D W Cole	T J Hennegan	G J Tanner

Co-opted Members

D Anderson-Thomas

Also present:

Councillor M H Jones, Convenor, Convenor of the Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

Officers:

N Havard - Directorate Lawyer
B Madahar - Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator
S Woon - Democratic Services Officer

96 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S E Crouch, P Downing, A J Jones and Mrs S Joiner.

97 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL & PREJUDICIAL INTEREST**

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

98 **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.

99 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 27 October, 2014 and Special Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 13 November, 2014 be agreed as correct records.

Committee members commented positively on the experience of undertaking pre-decision scrutiny at the meeting on 13 November and the Chair stated that it provided a good template for future sessions.

100 **CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION - LEADER / CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE & STRATEGY**

The Committee took the opportunity to question Councillor R C Stewart on his work having responsibility and accountability as Leader/Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy.

The Leader referred to the continued reduction in funding which had resulted in a requirement for further saving of £22m this year. Cabinet Members were considering proposals for further savings with £81m savings required in future years. The approach taken was not to stop providing certain services but examine areas that may be delivered differently.

The Leader stated that momentum was picking up for redevelopment of the City Centre. Sir Terry Matthews had visited Swansea and the messages from him were positive in so far as having a viable plan with commercial and business support.

The Leader referred to the first meeting of the Development Advisory Group which had met that morning. The meeting comprised potential investors, developers and designers all of whom, contrary to rumours, had given their time free of charge.

In respect of City Regions, Sir Terry Matthews had endorsed the Council's proposals however, Sir Terry Matthews stated that we were not being bold enough in terms of plans and our ability to identify and access funding opportunities. He referred to 'Project Horizon' which was a funding stream available to all of the UK. To date, funding had been used in English capital schemes as Welsh Authorities had not been prepared with fully worked up schemes for investors.

Key issues arising for discussions included:

- The report of the Inward investment Scrutiny Panel highlighted some of the issues raised by Sir Terry Matthews. This information was contained in the City Centre brief.
- The development of a toolkit to ensure the future resilience and due diligence of third sector and community development trusts when the Council considers using different models of providing services.
- Advising on the sale of capital assets and how the Council intend using the receipts.
- The commitment of Sir Terry Matthews and his business partners in making themselves available to the City Region.
- The need to ensure a robust IT infrastructure to support the redevelopment of the City and support businesses.

- Disposal of the Civic Centre site and the need to increase the density of people living and working in City Centre to make it viable.
- Retaining successful University graduates and encourage them to grow their business in Swansea and expand, which will add to the vibrancy of City Centre.
- In response to the comments made by Leighton Andrews, AM, Minister for Public Services In Wales, the possibility of a merger with Neath Port Talbot. Border issues and number of local representatives would need to be resolved.
- The proposal in relation to Hubs would be to retain within the community and rationalise what is there. Separate services do not require separate buildings.
- The proposal to regenerate the City Centre and link St Davids, the Quadrant and Market. It is anticipated that there will be a mix of leisure and retail. An opportunity existed to larger scale development in terms of housing.
- The Civic Centre Site would be marketed just after Christmas with the appointment of developers before the Summer 2015. Plans would be shared as they emerge.
- As well as engagement in the budget scrutiny involvement would be helpful in the scheme for the City Centre when it becomes public.

With regard to the challenges faced by the Authority, reorganisation of Authorities was critical. In relation to energy needs, the tidal lagoon should have benefit. Sir Terry Matthews expressed his view that the Scheme was not big or bold enough. He referred to a possible bridge to link Swansea to South West England. Swansea Bay has a reliable source of power regeneration as the tidal flow is the second largest in world and could reach 10% of UK's energy needs. The clear message was to push the model and move ambition. It was felt that the Authority had a great opportunity to tackle problems.

The Chair referred to the two questions from members of the public in relation to the Swansea Palace Theatre and the Library in the Civic Centre.

The Leader stated that the Swansea Palace Theatre had benefited from £75k to undertake emergency work in order to stabilise the building. In addition there was CADW funding. Nothing further could be offered from the Council. Significant investment would be required to bring the building back into use. Negotiations were ongoing with the owner.

In response to the Library, the Leader expressed his wish to see library relocated back into City Centre which would increase footfall. The relocation costs and facilities support the move back to the City Centre.

The Chair thanked the Leader/Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy for his attendance and response to questions.

RESOLVED that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee writes to the Leader reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

Councillor M H Jones, Convenor, Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel, provided a progress update on the work of the Panel.

The Panel was continuing with its usual work or regularly scrutinising quarterly performance and budget monitoring reports, which also included the Policy Commitment Tracker and Budget Savings Tracker. The Panel had also considered the Councils End of Year Performance reports. These had assisted in identifying key areas that require on-going and in-depth performance monitoring.

The Panel also identified some key areas which prompted them to drill down further into performance. An example of this was the Flying Start Programme. The decision to look at Flying Start in more detail arose as part of the Panel's on-going performance monitoring. The Panel noted from the End of Year Performance report that a number of the targets relating to this area had not been set due to new data gathering methods and they were also made aware of a number of risks identified with the expansion of the programme that were highlighted in Corporate Improvement Plan. Therefore a service briefing was requested to enable the Panel to understand the performance issues around the Programme in more detail.

The Panel has also initiated additional activities outside standard meetings, including a visit to the Flying Start project in Mayhill and a development session on effective use of performance data with the Local Government Data Unit, which has been opened up to all scrutiny councillors.

The Convenor highlighted achievements/impact and future work programme items.

The Chairman thanked the Convenor for the progress update and the Panel for their good work. He added that any work and/or correspondence of the Service Improvement & Finance Panel that may be of relevance to other Performance Panels should be shared with other conveners.

The Chair also stated that he had arranged to meet with the Chair of the Audit Committee and Cllr Mary Jones in order to develop the relationship between scrutiny and the Audit Committee and ensure coordination of work programmes.

RESOLVED that the progress report be noted.

102 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014 - 15**

The Chair presented the Scrutiny Work Programme 2014/15. The report explained the background and purpose of the Scrutiny Work Programme and the current position of all scrutiny activities. The Work Programme referred to the work currently active, showing progress and the established Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups. The Work Plan timetable for future Committee meetings was also provided.

The Chairman referred to the summary of the work being undertaken by the Transformation of Adult Social Services Panel and the update of the work of the panels. He also informed the committee that, with the conclusion of some pieces of work, there was capacity for further inquiries to be undertaken and invited the committee to identify topics, reflecting on previously identified priorities.

RESOLVED that:

- a. The proposed activities in relation to the Transformation of Adult Social Services be endorsed; and
- b. School Governance and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services be the next topics for potential scrutiny inquiry panels.

103 **MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY PANELS AND WORKING GROUPS**

The Chair presented a report which advised of changes required to the membership of the various Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

RESOLVED that the following be agreed:

- a. Cllr Andrew Jones appointed as convener for the Corporate Culture Panel
- b. Cllr Terry Hennegan appointed as convener for the Corporate Building & Property Services Working Group
- c. Cllr Gordon Walker joining the Local Floor Risk Management Working Group
- d. Membership for the Sustainability Working Group as follows:

Anthony Colburn	Wendy Fitzgerald	Hazel Morris
David Cole	Mary Jones (CONVENER)	Ioan Richard
Sybil Crouch		

- e. Councillor David Cole appointed as Convenor for the Planning Services Working Group.

104 **SCRUTINY LETTERS**

The Chair reported the updated Scrutiny Letters Log and referred to the recent correspondence between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members. He reiterated the importance of letters showing how scrutiny is making a difference and capturing impact.

The Chair advised that the request for Cabinet Members to respond to scrutiny letters within 21 working days is being reported to Council on 2 December for agreement.

RESOLVED that:

- a. The letters and action log be **NOTED**; and
- b. The Planning Services Working Group be authorised to reconvene for a further meeting in order to follow up on performance issues raised.

105 **SCRUTINY DISPATCHES - FUTURE REPORTING**

The Chair reported that the Leader of Council had agreed a change to the monthly reporting of Scrutiny Dispatches at Council meetings and replace it with a new trial

system whereby the Scrutiny Dispatches report will be presented to Council on a quarterly basis with full discussion allowed on the report. The chair made proposals for the future reporting of Scrutiny Dispatches, which would now focus on impact and how scrutiny is making a difference, containing a small number of 'significant stories' to show specific achievements and outcomes. He proposed that the first of the new Dispatches report be prepared for the December committee for agreement.

RESOLVED that the approach proposed by the Chair and future reporting arrangements be agreed.

106 **SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENT SESSION: MAKING THE BEST USE OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

The Chair referred to the Scrutiny Development Session 'Making the Best Use of Performance Information' taking place on 25 November.

107 **SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENT SESSION: MAKING SCRUTINY MORE EFFECTIVE**

The Chair referred to the forthcoming Scrutiny Development Session, 'Making Scrutiny More Effective', that will be held on 29 January 2015.

108 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2014/15 MUNICIPAL YEAR (ALL AT 4.30 P.M. EXCEPT WHERE NOTED)**

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

109 **DATE AND TIME OF UPCOMING PANEL / WORKING GROUP MEETINGS**

The date and time of upcoming Panel/Working Group meetings were submitted for information.

The meeting ended at 5.50 pm.

CHAIR