

# CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

## MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA ON  
MONDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2015 AT 4.30 PM

**PRESENT:** Councillor M H Jones (Chair) Presided

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

### **Officers:**

W Parkin	- Senior Lawyer
B Madahar	- Scrutiny Co-ordinator
S Woon	- Democratic Services Officer

### 167 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A J Jones, Mrs S Joiner and Mr D Anderson Thomas.

### 168 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL & PREJUDICIAL INTEREST.**

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

### 169 **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.

### 170 **MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 19 January, 2015, be agreed as a correct record.

### 171 **CRIME & DISORDER SCRUTINY - PROGRESS ON SAFER SWANSEA PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE. QUESTIONS TO CO-CHAIRS.**

Chief Superintendent Phil Davies (South Wales Police) and Chris Sivers (Director of People) attended to provide a progress report on Safer Swansea Partnership Performance and answer questions.

A presentation was given (copy attached) which encompassed:

- Focus on Priorities;
- Safer Swansea Priority;
- Reducing Violent Crime;
- Healthy Nightlife;
- Domestic Abuse;

The Chief Superintendent stated that the manner in which crime is recorded had been changed. Previously, crime was reported and investigated before then being recorded. Now crime is recorded as soon as it is reported. With this ethical crime recording process higher levels of crime can be expected, however there has not been a big increase in recorded crime.

He referred to recent crime figure analysis, and certain hot spots e.g. burglaries around student areas. He referred to the Police's ongoing efforts at education and awareness raising and reiterated that Swansea is a safe place, and different to other parts of the UK.

The committee praised the recent award of a Purple Flag award, recognising the excellent management of the city centre night time economy, and congratulated all involved in this achievement.

In response to Member questions, the Chief Superintendent stated that:

- The Help Point facility based at the Strand has been very successful in promoting a healthy nightlife and similarly the drop off zone has helped enable issues to be dealt with there and then and away from the centre.
- Car theft had reduced – attributable largely to more sophisticated car security systems. Additionally, CCTV in Swansea is very good. Whilst car crime has reduced, growth in other areas of crime, such as cyber crime had increased.
- Although drug trafficking was down significantly (down 24.6%) the Police are never complacent about drugs which underlie a lot of criminality. Organised crime groups are on the Police radar and a proactive approach is taken to dealing with the problem. Drugs will always be prevalent in Swansea. However, the Police are proactive in working with the drugs agencies.
- The Police concentrate on Class A drug usage as this is still a problem area. A recent night-time operation using a drug itemiser machine in the City Centre tested 400 people, 100 of which were positive for Class A Drugs. 25 individuals were caught in possession of cocaine, which tends to be taken as recreational drug.
- In relation to Cumulative Impact, the Policy has been positive and enabled the Authorities to have some control in attracting the right businesses to contribute to the night time economy. It had been very effective and provided the responsible authorities the power to challenge licenced premises coming into the City. He reiterated that the policy was not about being anti-business but trying to prevent an increase in problems associated with the drinking culture.
- Crime in Gower is highest in the summer months but is not a year long issue. It is important that the resources are allocated to the correct areas at the right

times. Whilst statistics have increased, it was small compared to other parts of the City.

- PACT meetings are useful as one form of public engagement and Police Officers are encouraged to get involved, however in order to be successful there must be a collective view on issues.
- All agencies are included in information sharing. Whilst there have been previous difficulties with the Health Authority in respect of patient confidentiality, they are now fully engaged. Early prevention at the front end does ease the pressure on accident and emergency services.
- The purple flag accreditation had been successful. However, the challenge now was to ensure that it is sustained.
- The Police engage in prevention work in relation to community cohesion and race crime and Swansea does not have high levels in this respect. However, tensions can increase on the lead up to an election.

In response to Member questions regarding, domestic abuse, the Director of People stated that:

- She would circulate details of the new one stop shop to all Councillors.
- 5000 cases of domestic violence a year were recorded by the Police, demonstrating a clear problem. There are many more cases which are not reported to the Police. Swansea does have significant challenge (far higher than that recorded with comparable neighbours) with domestic violence as opposed to abuse.
- Some work has been done with Cardiff University indicating a correlation between levels of domestic violence increasing when major sporting events take place.

It was suggested that the Safer Swansea Partnership could work with the Economic & Social Research Council in order to better understand the problem and incidence of domestic violence/abuse in Swansea and get some detailed analysis on why it is relatively high in Swansea compared to other cities.

Looking ahead the Chief Superintendent informed the committee of a restructure / review of policing in Swansea and stated that he would be happy to provide a presentation to Councillors on the current service and structure in the area in order to gather views to enable the best service to be provided. The Chair suggested that the Chief Superintendent could utilise the opportunity to make a presentation to Council at the appropriate time.

The Chair thanked Chief Superintendent Phil Davies and Chris Sivers for the informative presentation and was pleased to see progress in a number of key areas.

**RESOLVED** that the Director of People circulate details of the Domestic Violence 'One Stop Shop' to all Councillors.

172 **CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION - CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT**

The Committee took the opportunity to question Councillor M Thomas, Cabinet Member Environment and Transport.

Members' noted the short report on 'headlines' provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.

The Cabinet Member stated that since his appointment in October 2014 his activities had been dominated by the budget, examining efficiencies and savings.

In response to Member questions, the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Environment and Transport stated that:

- The target for this year in relation to measuring recycling rates was 56%, which the Council are on track to achieve. The 3 black bag limit had been a big success and the public should be praised for their efforts in assisting with this initiative.
- For every tonne over the target, the Council receives a £200 fine less the cost of land fill. This was a substantial amount of money, possibly £250,000.
- Cabinet approved a report to submit a planning application in relation to Garngoch amenity site. The planning application had been delayed pending the budget proposals. There were plans to extend the site, however, no budget had been allocated.
- The Council did not have control in relation to collecting waste from a majority of commercial establishments. However, the Council had become more competitive in this market and had, over the last 8 months, 140 customers and increased commercial food waste by 500 tonnes, which was half a percent of recycling. It was a growing business and the Council had offered to work with the private operators. There are issues associated with the collection of food waste as it must be segregated from general waste.
- There were no definitive plans in respect of the development of houses at Penllergaer and the knock on effect at Junction 47. The LDP consultation had raised awareness of impact on other services. Junction 47 required substantial modification in order to manage the traffic. Despite the development being identified in the LDP, this does not necessarily mean that the houses will be developed.
- Whilst the issue of Section 106 was in a fellow Cabinet Members' portfolio, it was agreed that a rigorous process was required in relation to dealing with developers who were not willing to pay.
- Whilst City Centre regeneration was the responsibility of a fellow Cabinet Member, there is confidence in the project. There appeared to be two problems with what was offered in the City Centre and the ability to get there and park, walk or cycle. There was no point in fixing the first issue if the routes were not connected to make them accessible
- Over last two years, several Committees had scrutinised public transport and provided reports which had not been progressed. The majority of residents in

Swansea were not satisfied with public transport and there was a need to work in partnership with Bus Companies.

- A monitoring process was required to assess the success of initiatives designed to improve walking and cycling to school. [The Cabinet Member stated that he would provide a written answer]
- Officers of the Authority do open black bin bags which have been dumped to identify individuals and prosecute. Members of the public are not encouraged to do so.
- Two wards were trialling the use of pink hessian sacks, as opposed to pink plastic bags. However, should the trials be successful there would be a cost to the Authority and no budget has been identified for this purpose. [The Cabinet Member stated that he would provide a written response in relation to a question in respect of the disposal of plastic recycling bags].

In conclusion the Cabinet Member stated that he would be publishing a programme of repairs to all Councillors indicating when resurfacing or patch programs would be undertaken. However, Officers could not guarantee that the timetable would be adhered to as the patch process was weather reliant and subject to change as a result of circumstances beyond their control.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for attending.

**RESOLVED** that the Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

173 **SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL PROGRESS REPORT - SERVICE IMPROVEMENT & FINANCE SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL.**

The Convenor of the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Mary Jones, provided a further update to the committee on the work of the Panel and its effectiveness. She referred to the key activities and achievements/impact.

She commented on the amount of work carried out over the last quarter, including scrutiny of the budget, and questioning a number of Cabinet Member on specific service areas and on progress against savings targets. The Panel has also written to the Chair of the Education through Regional Working (ERW) Partnership over the level of in-year education grant cuts recently made.

**RESOLVED** that the progress update be **NOTED**.

174 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014 - 15.**

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

The Chair referred to correspondence received from a member of the public asking for action regarding the sale of land at Parkland Primary School, specifically on the

carrying out of a childrens' rights impact assessment. The chair proposed a way forward in dealing with this request.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator updated the committee on the work of the Education Inclusion Panel, which has met earlier in the day. The committee noted that the Panel had agreed to proceed with an in-depth inquiry into this topic as there had been a number of significant concerns about aspect of the Education Other Than At School service, Terms of Reference will now be drawn up for this work.

The chair referred to the various topics for future Working Groups that had been identified by the Committee over the course of the year. She asked the committee to provide a steer on priority so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

The committee was also informed that the Transformation of Adult Social Services Panel had made contact with the Welsh Government Minister for Health & Social Services, Mark Drakeford, and that he had agreed in-principle to attend a scrutiny seminar in Swansea on the Social Services and Wellbeing Act. There was still work to be done in terms of the exact format of the event and detailed arrangements but it take place after the general election and would be open to scrutiny councillors from other councils. The committee welcomed this development and agreed that specific proposals for the seminar be reported to the committee in due course.

**RESOLVED** that:

- a. The committee write to the Cabinet Member for Education about the public correspondence received, for a response to the issues contained within; and
- b. The work of future Working Groups be prioritised as followed: Roads / Highway Maintenance; Young Carers; Target Areas; Civic Events and Welsh Quality Housing Standard;

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

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

**RESOLVED** that:

- a. **School Governance Pre-Inquiry Working Group** – Councillor F M Gordon be appointed as Convenor;
- b. **Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services Pre-Inquiry Working Group** – Councillor H M Morris be appointed as Convenor and Councillors U Clay, F M Gordon, T H Hennegan, Y Jardine, E T Kirchner, D Lewis, C L Philpott, P M Meara, M J Jones and S Jones be added to the Membership;
- c. **Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel** – Councillor D W W Thomas and Councillor J N Newbury be appointed as Members;
- d. **Corporate Culture** – Councillor N J Davies to be removed.

176 **SCRUTINY LETTERS:**

The Chair reported the updated Scrutiny Letters Log and referred to the recent correspondence between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members.

It was noted that a response from the Cabinet Member for Education was still awaited on the various issues discussed at the 22 December Committee meeting, including the question raised about the timescales for completion of the review of EMLAS review (Ethnic Minority Learning & Achievement Service).

**RESOLVED** that the Scrutiny Letters Log be **NOTED**.

177 **REPORT BACK - SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENT SESSION: MAKING SCRUTINY MORE EFFECTIVE.**

The Chair referred to the Scrutiny Development Session: Making Scrutiny More Effective which was held on 29 January, 2015 and facilitated by Ian Bottrill from the Centre for Public Scrutiny in Wales.

The chair stated that the level of attendance was disappointing however it was a very good session, and summarised learning points and proposals as a result of the development session.

It was noted that co-opted Members from the Standards and Audit Committees were also present and had made a positive contribution to the session and were able to provide a different perspective on the work of scrutiny.

Amongst the issues raised by members was the importance of scrutiny reports being discussed at Council in order to give the scrutiny process more status.

The need to take into account the recently published consultation on the White Paper 'Reforming Local Government – Power to Local People' as part of improvement plans was highlighted by the committee. The White Paper, launched by Public Services, Leighton Andrew, contains the Welsh Government's statement of intent about the future of Local Government in Wales, and set out proposals for reform including scrutiny. It was agreed that the issues for scrutiny within the White Paper should also help inform discussion about how we can improve practice in Swansea. Members were advised an improvement workshop was currently being arranged as part of the annual work plan review process that will enable reflection and debate about how scrutiny can be further developed.

**RESOLVED** that the feedback report be circulated to all councillors.

178 **FOR INFORMATION: AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN.**

**RESOLVED** that the Audit Committee Work Plan be **NOTED**.

179 **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 2014/15 Municipal Year were submitted for information.

180 **DATE AND TIME OF UPCOMING PANEL / WORKING GROUP MEETINGS:**

The date and time of upcoming Panel/Working Groups meetings were submitted for information to help increase the visibility of this work and encourage participation.

The meeting ended at 6.10 pm

**CHAIR**