

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 5, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON MONDAY,
13 JUNE 2016 AT 4.30 PM**

PRESENT: M H Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
D W Cole
E W Fitzgerald
E J King
G Owens

Councillor(s)

U C Clay
S E Crouch
T J Hennegan
D J Lewis

Councillor(s)

A C S Colburn
N J Davies
J W Jones
P M Meara

Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley

Co-opted Member(s)

P Hood-Williams

Officer(s)

Allison Lowe
Brij Madahar
Sandie Richards

Democratic Services Officer
Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Principal Lawyer

6 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G J Tanner.

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

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interests were declared:

Councillor N J Davies - personal - Minute No. 13 – employed by Graham Evans & Partners LLP which is involved with Child Protection / Legal issues.

Councillor P M Meara - personal - Minute Nos. 12 & 13 - Member of Foster Panel.

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 9 May 2016 and 19 May 2016 be approved as correct records.

10 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME.**

There were no public questions.

11 **ROLE OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE.**

The Chair presented a report which provided a description of the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements and terms of reference of the Scrutiny Programme Committee.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12 **CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE. (COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE RICHARDS)**

Councillor Richards provided opening remarks about her Cabinet portfolio, prior to taking questions from the Committee.

She talked about her regular contact with scrutiny through the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel and praised the valuable work of that Panel which she stated made a significant contribution to service improvement. She also spoke about her meeting with the Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel which covered a number of aspects of her portfolio including the budget.

The Cabinet Member talked about partnership working as one of the main issues and challenges ahead, and area of development despite the likely absence of major local government reorganisation.

Dave Howes, Chief Social Services Officer was also present and assisted the committee as required with their questions.

The question session led to discussion around the following topics:

- The re-establishment of the Children & Young People's Partnership Board;
- The work of Youth Leaders and level of service across Swansea;
- Financial assistance for young people's community sports teams;
- The Cabinet Member's role and involvement in the Public Services Board;
- Children & Young People Strategic Partnership Plan – process of monitoring progress to improve outcomes;
- Progress in relation to Children's Rights;
- The regional Youth Offending Service and availability of reports on performance;
- Early intervention and whether any improvements to outcomes for young offenders had resulted since restorative practice had been introduced;
- The continuity and evaluation of the Flying Start scheme since it had moved into the Education Portfolio;
- The budget for the Children & Young People portfolio;

- The welfare of children being educated at home;
- Safeguarding / Child Protection and training issues.

The Chair thanked Councillor Richards and Dave Howes 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.

13 **CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15 AND ADDENDUM FOR 2015/16.**

The Cabinet Member for Children & Young People and the Chief Social Services Officer presented an overview of the work of the Corporate Safeguarding People Steering Group by providing the Annual Report for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 with an updated addendum to reflect progress as at 31 March 2016.

The report included the Safeguarding Annual Report, an addendum and Action Plan.

The background to the establishment of a Corporate Safeguarding People Steering Group was provided. The Committee recognised that Safeguarding Vulnerable People was one of the Council's 5 Corporate Plan Priorities, and perhaps the most important.

It was noted that the annual report for 2014/15 represented the first year's work of the Steering Group. The committee was informed of work carried out over the past 18 months to promote the idea that safeguarding was everyone's responsibility, and other achievements, including:

- identifying clear safeguarding leads across all Council services
- provision of on-line and face-to-face training
- developing a performance framework to provide adequate assurance that systems are working effectively
- a training event on child sexual exploitation

The committee asked about progress in relation to the effectiveness of arrangements with partners, including contractors, and their engagement with safeguarding standards / issues. The committee was informed that this remained an area of development but actions were identified to extend responsibilities across external organisations carrying out work for the council and ensure that they have a level of safeguarding understanding. The committee was keen to see progress in this area and timescales.

The committee was also interested in how the work of the Corporate Steering Group complemented the work of the Western Bay Safeguarding Board, Public Protection Executive Board, and local operational groups.

The committee noted that approaches in Swansea were attracting interest elsewhere.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Services for Children & Young People, and Chief Social Services Officer note the views of the committee on the report.

14 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17.**

The Chair presented the proposed work programme, including a plan for future committee meetings, which showed the topics that would be examined by scrutiny through various Panels and Working Groups. It include work that needed to be carried over, either because of its importance or because work was incomplete, as well as proposed new topics.

The Committee was invited to identify 2 new inquiry topics, and up to 5 new working group topics, taking into account feedback from the annual scrutiny work planning conference held on 12 May, and discussed a number of options. A number of other issues were identified at the conference, as outlined in Appendix 7 of the report, which could be picked up by relevant Performance Panels. The Chair highlighted the various Commissioning Reviews which would be undergoing pre-decision scrutiny during the course of the year.

It was felt that the work of Performance Panels needed greater visibility amongst committee members and it was agreed that future letters to / from Performance Panels should be circulated to committee members for their information.

The committee noted that the Cabinet Member response to the School Governance Scrutiny Inquiry was being reported to the Cabinet meeting on 16 June. Concern was expressed about the proposed response, which led to a discussion about the process and possible improvements e.g. enabling a dialogue between Inquiry Panel Conveners / Members and Cabinet Members over their response prior to any decision.

Committee Members also discussed the pre-decision scrutiny process and progress in relation to the issues raised at the meeting in May. The chair stated that she had met with the Cllr Clive Lloyd, Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance, to share concerns and discuss possible improvements. A written note is being prepared for the Cabinet Member, for consideration of approaches, e.g. reports being available prior to cabinet agenda publication, discussion between chair / convener and cabinet member prior to cabinet meeting, deferral of cabinet reports where possible etc.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The scrutiny work programme as outlined in the report be accepted.
- 2) The following new Inquiry Panels be set up:
 - a. Partnerships & Collaboration;
 - b. Preparedness for School.

- 3) The following Working Groups be set up:
 - a. Planning & S.106 Agreements;
 - b. Roads & Highway Maintenance;
 - c. Corporate Building Services;
 - d. Digital Inclusion;
 - e. Dog Fouling.
- 4) Council be asked to amend Scrutiny Procedural Rules to require discussion between Cabinet Members and Inquiry Panel conveners / members prior to the publication of Cabinet Member response reports to Cabinet; and
- 5) Letters from Performance Panels to Cabinet Members and responses are emailed to the members of the Scrutiny Programme Committee for information.

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

The Chair presented a report outlining proposed revisions to the Scrutiny Panel / Working Group Membership.

RESOLVED that the Membership of the Schools Performance Panel be revised as follows:

- 1) Councillors Cyril Anderson and Susan Jones be added.
- 2) Councillors Robert Smith and Cheryl Philpott be removed.

16 **SCRUTINY LETTERS.**

The Chair reported the Scrutiny Letters Log and referred to the recent correspondence between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members. This included the letter from the Committee to the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration and the response. In addition, the letter from the Tree Preservation Working Group to the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration and the response was provided.

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

17 **FEEDBACK FROM RECENT SCRUTINY EVENTS.**

None.

18 **UPCOMING SCRUTINY EVENTS.**

The Chair referred to the National Municipal Journal Achievement Awards Ceremony on 16 June 2016 which she, Councillor Terry Hennegan and Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams would be attending. This was in relation to the short listing of Swansea Scrutiny in the Excellence in Governance & Scrutiny category.

19 **AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN. (FOR INFORMATION)**

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

20 **DATE AND TIME OF UPCOMING PANEL / WORKING GROUP MEETINGS.**

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

There was one amendment as follows: The Building Sustainable Communities Inquiry Panel would be held on 30 June 2016.

21 **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE.**

The Chair reported the guidance on pre-decision scrutiny ahead of consideration of the Cabinet report on 'Castle Square – Development & Public Realm Opportunity'.

The report focussed on the role of the committee in undertaking pre-decision scrutiny. Members were asked to consider the Cabinet report and proposals and agree any views on the proposed decision that were to be submitted to Cabinet.

22 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC.**

The Committee were requested to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the item(s) of business identified in the recommendations to the report(s) on the grounds that it / they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the exclusion paragraph of Schedule 14 of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007 relevant to the items of business set out in the report(s).

The Committee considered the Public Interest Test in deciding whether to exclude the public from the meeting for the item of business where the Public Interest Test was relevant as set out in the report.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded for the following item(s) of business.

(CLOSED SESSION)

23 **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY: CASTLE SQUARE - DEVELOPMENT & PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITY - REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENTERPRISE, DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION.**

Councillor Rob Stewart, Leader (on behalf of Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration), Huw Mowbray, Property Development Manager and Katy Evans, Senior City Development Surveyor presented the report on Castle Square ahead of decision at Cabinet on 16 June 2016.

Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee (13.06.2016)
Cont'd

The report sought authority to consider options for redevelopment opportunities at Castle Square.

The committee had the opportunity to ask questions and give views on the proposed decision.

The Committee highlighted a number of issues contained in the report.

RESOLVED that Councillor Holley, on behalf of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee, present the views of the committee on the report to the Cabinet meeting on 16 June 2016 prior to the Cabinet decision.

The meeting ended at 6.36 pm

CHAIR