



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Council Chamber - Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 13 August 2018 at 4.30 pm

**Present:** T J Hennegan (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

C Anderson  
D W Helliwell

**Councillor(s)**

E W Fitzgerald  
P K Jones

**Councillor(s)**

L S Gibbard  
W G Lewis

**Councillor Co-opted Member(s)**

P M Black  
C A Holley

**Officer(s)**

Caritas Adere	Senior Lawyer
Allison Lowe	Democratic Services Officer
Brij Madahar	Scrutiny Team Leader

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): M Durke, B Hopkins, M H Jones, G J Tanner and W G Thomas

Statutory Co-opted Member(s): D Anderson-Thomas and A Roberts

Councillor Co-opted Members: P R Hood-Williams and J W Jones

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**29 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 A S Lewis declared a personal interest in Minute 33 – Director of Swansea Community Energy & Enterprise Scheme (SCEES).

**30 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.

**31 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on the following dates be approved and signed as a correct record:

- 19 June 2018;
- 9 July 2018;
- 20 July 2018.

**32 Public Question Time.**

There were no public questions.

**33 Cabinet Member Question Session: Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy (Councillor Andrea Lewis).**

The Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy accompanied by the Director of Place and the Landlord Services Manager presented a report on the key headlines for the Homes & Energy Portfolio. She provided a verbal address further to the written report circulated which highlighted activities around the following: -

- More Homes Delivery – Parc Yr Helyg and Colliers Way;
- Homes as Power Stations (City Deal);
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS);
- Homelessness Strategy;
- Developing a Green Fleet policy;
- Energy;
- Housing Commissioning Review.

Questions and discussions with the Cabinet Member focussed on the following: -

- Housing - whether the introduction of universal credit had affected those renting via registered social landlords (RSL's) or private rented sector;
- Homelessness Strategy - there would be an opportunity for Scrutiny Programme Committee to discuss the draft the Homelessness Strategy prior to agreement by Cabinet on 15 November. It was noted that the Poverty Policy Development Committee would be discussing prior to decision and it would also go to Council on 20 December for information with a view to implementation on 21 December 2018;
- Affordable Housing - the definition of the term 'Affordable Housing' – discussion around how there were many forms of affordable housing, e.g. council houses, purchase via shared ownership, lower rent or purchase price under market value, viability, etc.;
- Fire Safety - the sprinkler system retrofit had been finalised in Penlan with Clyne Court imminent. 'In-house' staff had been trained resulting in the Authority being able to offer this service to private / external developers; Full external cladding safety testing had been carried out together with external fire door safety testing – all had passed with flying colours;
- Empty Properties – noted that under a national scheme 49 empty properties had been brought back into use, creating an additional 85 units of accommodation. Many empty properties had been brought up to WHQS standard;
- Tudno Place and Heol Emrys - full consultation would take place in relation to the Land Valuation and Viability Study (as part of the Swansea's More Homes Strategy); all options for improvement, including new build, would be considered, however it was still very early in the process; the independent

consultants had commenced door knocking of some of the tenants and ward members would be engaged in the consultation;

- Green Transport / Vehicles - work was ongoing with Swansea University to consider the possibility of retro-fitting hydrogen cells in some of our fleet vehicles, such as our refuse vehicles which will help improve air quality;
- Housing Commissioning Review - the timeline for Commissioning Review of all Housing Services and scoping document of the review would be shared with the Committee. The anticipated completion date would be 2019/20, and the scope of the Review would include District Housing Offices;
- More Homes Strategy - the need for more affordable homes in other areas of Swansea such as the North and West of Swansea, including Gower, not just the Eastside – all sites would be considered and all options, e.g. working with partners;
- Energy Services Company (ESCO) – unclear whether this would be fully renewable energy. Might have to commence with fossil fuel with a view to moving to renewable, e.g. solar or a mixture of fossil and renewable energy, and must be based on a robust business case; combatting fuel poverty was still one of the Authorities key objectives;
- Homes as Power Stations (City Deal project) – discussion about energy sourcing; partnership discussions ongoing with Swansea University in relation to photovoltaic systems and other systems e.g. ground source heating; private homes would be eligible to benefit; it is also anticipated that the Homes as Power Stations project will also make a difference to local businesses by kick starting a construction programme worth £517,050,000 for a City Deal investment of £15 million (3% of the total programme value); all grants and opportunities would be considered in order to fund future schemes.
- Swansea Community Energy & Enterprise Scheme (SCEES) – purpose of scheme and share purchase by the Council;

**Resolved that**

- 1) The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member, reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee;
- 2) A written response be supplied on the following: -
  - The impact of universal credit on housing in relation to the private rented sector;
  - Timetable for the sprinkler system retrofit;
  - The actual number of empty properties in the private sector across Swansea;
  - Further information on the timeline of the Commissioning Review of all Housing services;
  - Clarification about the figures quoted regarding the impact of the Homes as Power Stations City Deal Project

The Vice Chair thanked Councillor Lewis and the officers for their attendance.

### **34 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report.**

Chris Holley, Convener of the Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel provided an update on the work of the Panel to date.

In particular he highlighted the following:

- The additional budget meeting held in February 2018 and expressed concern at the very compressed timescale for scrutiny;
- Charges – large piece of work with over 260 charges and 350 fees;
- Highways & Transportation Commissioning Review – another large piece of work, which he felt, could have been split into 2 separate reviews;
- Cultural Services Final Bidder Options Commissioning Review – contained very delicate / sensitive information – some concern over whether there was adequate communication to staff and Councillors.

He added that the Panel would be keen to revisit the Commissioning Reviews considered by the Panel to look at the achievements, impact and difference made.

**Resolved** that the update be **noted**.

### **35 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.**

The Chair presented a report outlining the membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups. It was noted that Cllr Peter Jones had been co-opted to the Public Services Board Scrutiny Performance Panel, for the duration of the Natural Environment Scrutiny Inquiry which he is convening.

Having invited expressions of interest from all non-executive councillors the Chair provided a proposed membership list for the new Inquiry and Working Group topics.

**Resolved** that:

- 1) The membership of the new Inquiry Panel and Working Groups as shown in Appendix 1 of the report be agreed; and
- 2) Councillor Louise Gibbard be appointed as Convener of the Welfare Reform Working Group.

### **36 Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19.**

The Scrutiny Team Leader presented the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018/19.

He highlighted the following:

- The next meeting scheduled for 10 September 2018 would include the Cabinet Member Question Session: Cabinet Member for Business Transformation & Performance (Deputy Leader) – Councillor Clive Lloyd;
- Call-in Procedure – Council on 26 July adopted new call-in arrangements which places scrutiny at the centre of the process;

- A Joint Scrutiny Committee has been established as a result of the Swansea Bay City Deal Joint Working Agreement. Swansea's representatives had been confirmed by Council as Councillors Jan Curtice, Phil Downing and Mary Jones. The first meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Committee, supported by Neath Port Talbot Council, was anticipated to take place around October;
- Policy Development Committee work plans were provided to ensure awareness;
- The report from the Wales Audit Office arising from their review of scrutiny - 'Overview and Scrutiny - Fit for the Future?' had been received and circulated to Councillors via email. It would be considered at the next Scrutiny Programme Committee meeting on 10 September 2018.

**Resolved that:**

- 1) The Work Programme 2018/19 be **noted**;
- 2) Arrangements be made for the Committee to discuss the draft Homelessness Strategy at an early stage prior to decision, e.g. during public consultation.

**37 Scrutiny Letters.**

The letter to / from the Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy relating to the work of the Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group was reported.

Convener of the Working Group, Councillor Peter Black, spoke briefly about this scrutiny activity and highlighted its contribution to the developing Homelessness Strategy.

The Scrutiny Letters and Cabinet Members responses were **noted**.

**38 Audit Committee Work Plan (For Information).**

The Audit Committee Work Plan for 2018-2019 was **noted**.

**39 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.**

The dates and times of the upcoming Panel / Working Group meetings were **noted**.

The meeting ended at 5.37 pm

**Chair**