



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Programme Committee

At: Remotely via Microsoft Teams

On: Tuesday, 13 April 2021

Time: 4.00 pm

Chair: Councillor Peter Black CBE

Membership:

Councillors: C Anderson, J E Burtonshaw, M C Child, E W Fitzgerald, J A Hale, D W Helliwell, T J Hennegan, P K Jones, W G Lewis, G J Tanner, W G Thomas and T M White

Statutory Co-opted Members: D Anderson-Thomas and A Roberts

Councillor Co-opted Members: C A Holley, P R Hood-Williams, S M Jones, L R Jones and J W Jones

Watch Online: <http://bit.ly/3bNOUw3>

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Agenda

	Page No.
1 Apologies for Absence.	
2 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest. www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests	
3 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.	
4 Minutes. To approve and sign the Minutes of the previous meeting(s) as a correct record.	1 - 5
5 Public Question Time. Questions must be submitted in writing, no later than noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Questions must relate to items on the agenda. Questions will be dealt with in a 10 minute period.	

6	Scrutiny of Homelessness Strategy.	6 - 54
7	Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Development & Regeneration. (Councillor Jeff Jones, Convener)	55 - 59
8	Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.	60 - 61
9	Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22.	62 - 86
10	Scrutiny Letters.	87 - 98
11	Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.	99

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 18 May 2021 at 4.00 pm

Huw Evans

Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Tuesday, 6 April 2021

Contact: Democratic Services - Tel (01792) 636923

Agenda Item 4



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 16 March 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
E W Fitzgerald
P K Jones
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

J E Burtonshaw
D W Helliwell
W G Lewis
T M White

Councillor(s)

M C Child
T J Hennegan
G J Tanner

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas A Roberts

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley S M Jones J W Jones
P R Hood-Williams L R Jones

Also Present:

Councillor Rob Stewart Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy
Councillor Elliott King Cabinet Member for Children Services

Officer(s)

Julie Gosney Life Stages Partnership Manager
Adam Hill Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Resources
Kate Jones Democratic Services Officer
Brij Madahar Scrutiny Team Leader
Phil Roberts Chief Executive
Debbie Smith Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Katie Spendiff Children's Rights Co-ordinator
Jane Whitmore Strategic Lead Commissioner

45 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 Mark Child declared a Personal & Prejudicial interest in Minute No. 51 "Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Joint Social Services." and withdrew from the meeting prior to its consideration.

46 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.

47 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on the 16 February 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

48 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

49 COVID-19 Update / Recovery Plan.

The Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy, the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive were present for the Committee's consideration of the Council's current response and recovery planning from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Chief Executive provided some updates which included: -

- Positive impact of lockdown on the number of cases which were currently around 34 cases per 100,000 population in Swansea.
- The vaccination programme was progressing well with approximately 128.000 vaccines administered
- Primary school pupils had returned to school, as well as the phased return of secondary school pupils
- Restrictions were still in place and it was important not to be complacent and to continue to follow those restrictions
- The development of new variants of the virus remained a concern
- Epidemiologists had predicted further peaks – the degree of these peaks remained uncertain and difficult to predict as it was dependant on numerous factors such as restrictions, continued vaccine supply, take up and roll out.

The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the following aspects in relation to the recovery plan:-

- There has been a further wave of the virus since the Cabinet report was approved in October 2020
- Governance Review – review and streamlining of governance and creation of a new steering group
- Workstreams and meeting schedule
- Update on actions, which included:
 - Swansea Economic Recovery Action Plan
 - Welsh Housing Quality Standards Capital Programme & Compliance
 - Home Working during Covid-19
 - Staff Survey on home working

- Briefing note to managers on support for staff
- Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy
- Agile Policy
- Delivery Tracker for the Medium Term Financial Plan targets

Questions and discussions with the Leader and Officers focused on the following:

- Impressive organisation by those involved in the vaccination programme
- Recent press regarding the AstraZeneca Vaccine and possible impact
- Opportunities for Member input into the Recovery Plan – decision making process
- Membership of Third Sector Liaison Group within the Community Support Work stream – including whether there was an environmental presence
- Membership of Climate Change Working Group within the Economy and Environment Work Stream
- Challenges of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021– lack of statutory guidance, timescales, resources for performance assessments and peer reviews as well as ensuring joint working is productive and efficient
- Opportunities of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – general power of competence, public participation strategy, ability and opportunities of co-working and corporate joint committees
- Linking work streams and partnership working
- Partnership working on recovery of Swansea

The Committee thanked all staff for their work during the pandemic.

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Leader, reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

50 Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Progress Report 2020.

The Cabinet Member for Children Services, the Strategic Lead Commissioner, the Children's Rights Coordinator and the Life Stages Partnership Manager were present for the report on Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Progress Report 2020. There was also a Bridging Report provided to cover the period of April 2020 – March 2021 and impact of the pandemic. The following key points were highlighted: -

- Impact and issues of Covid-19 and lockdown on children and young people – widening of inequalities
- Lessons learnt through the pandemic including examples of engagement practice during lockdown
- Examples of engagement practice during Covid-19
- Sometimes online meetings could offer greater opportunity for increased engagement
- Restructure of the Council's Life Stages Team
- Proposed revision of the Children's Rights Scheme – developing a 'plan on a page' – this accessible document had been picked up by the Children's Commissioner as an example of good practice to share across Wales

- Restructure and Remodel of Children's Rights work
- Gaps and Recommendations for recovery from Covid-19
- Making information accessible during lockdown without the usual access points such as school and other services being available
- Young people had been involved with the appointments of the Director of Education and the head of Child and Family Services

Questions and discussions focused on the following:-

- Protection of rights
- Consideration of Votes at 16 – how to support the political literacy of children and young people to allow them to make informed choices when voting
- Position of schools not engaged in rights respecting – the way rights respecting was implemented had changed and was being brought into the new curriculum
- Possibility of having a UNCRC champion in every school

The Strategic Lead Commissioner thanked Cabinet Members and Councillors in supporting and taking this work forward, as well as Officers.

The Chair and Cabinet Member thanked Councillor Sam Pritchard, former Cabinet Member for Children Services.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers

Resolved that the report be noted.

**51 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Joint Social Services.
(Councillors Paxton Hood-Williams and Susan Jones, Conveners)**

Councillors Paxton Hood-Williams and Susan Jones, Conveners, presented the Joint Social Services Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report.

Further to the written report, they specifically highlighted that both the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel and the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel had come together to form a Joint Social Services Scrutiny Performance Panel during the pandemic in order to maintain scrutiny, but without placing undue pressure on Officers whilst dealing with the pandemic,

The key concerns were around carers and mental health.

The panels had now split again into their separate Panels and future meetings would be looking at the budget and joint working of Health and Social Services.

The Conveners and Chair thanked staff for all their work during the pandemic.

Resolved that the update be noted.

52 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

The Chair presented a report on the Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups. There were no amendments to report.

Resolved that the report be noted.

53 Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22.

The Chair presented a report on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22.

The next Scrutiny Programme Committee was scheduled for the 13 April 2021. The main item scheduled was the Homelessness Strategy.

The Chair noted that Covid-19 is scheduled bi-monthly on the Committee's work plan, and it was suggested that given the time recovery may take that bi-monthly updates may be too frequent and other items in the plan could be scheduled. The Chair and Scrutiny Team Leader would discuss updating the work plan and report back to the Committee.

Resolved that the report be noted.

54 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair presented a report on 'Scrutiny Letter' for information.

Resolved that the scrutiny letters log be noted.

55 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.

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

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 April 2021

Scrutiny of Homelessness Strategy

Purpose:	The Committee will have the opportunity to discuss progress with the Council's Homelessness Strategy since adoption by Cabinet in November 2018.
Content:	The report of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation, Cllr Andrea Lewis, recently presented to Council, is attached showing progress made. The Cabinet Member and lead officer(s) have been invited to discuss progress with the Committee and address any questions arising. The Committee is also reminded of previous discussion and views contributed by Scrutiny to the development of the Homelessness Strategy during 2018 to facilitate any follow up as necessary.
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions, and make comments and recommendations as necessary.
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)
Lead Officer(s):	Mark Wade, Head of Housing & Public Health Jane Harries, Landlord & Community Housing Services Manager Steve Porter, Operations Manager – Community Housing Services
Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Paul Cridland

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The work of Scrutiny has included a focus on the issue of Homelessness. During 2018, the work of a Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group and meetings of the Scrutiny Programme Committee contributed to the development of the Council's four-year Homelessness Strategy.

- 1.2 The Committee is interested in how the new Strategy, adopted by Cabinet in November 2018, has delivered improvement to services, advice and support, both in preventing homelessness and dealing with it where it exists. The Committee will recognise the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on homelessness in Swansea. At the Strategy's mid-point of implementation, the Committee can give views on the impact and difference made, and achievements against objectives and specific planned actions. It can also raise issues that the Council should consider in the delivery of the Strategy going forward.
- 1.3 The lead Cabinet Member, Cllr Andrea Lewis, and key officers delivering this work have been invited to address the Committee on progress and any questions arising. The Cabinet Member's recent report to Council is **attached** for discussion.

The Cabinet Member's report concludes that:

- the aims and objectives of the Strategy remain robust and fit for purpose. Good progress has been made across all five objectives, with high levels of homelessness prevention being maintained.
 - the pandemic has created significant challenges, led to significant changes in the way services have been delivered with increased demand for homelessness and support services. The Council has been able to adapt to changing priorities and challenges, and effective partnership working has helped to deliver the Strategy.
 - pressures on homelessness and support services are expected to rise, along with increased demand for affordable and secure, social housing. The Strategy ensures that the Council is in a strong position to deal with the forthcoming challenges.
- 1.4 Also appended to this covering report there is a reminder of previous discussion and views contributed by Scrutiny to the development of the Homelessness Strategy during 2018, which the Committee can follow up as required. The following letter correspondence between Scrutiny and the Cabinet Member is **attached**:
- Letter from Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group and Cabinet Member Response (July 2018)
 - Consultation Response from Scrutiny Programme Committee – comments on Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2022 consultation draft (Oct 2018)
 - Letter from Scrutiny Programme Committee – pre-decision scrutiny on Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2022 (Nov 2018)

2. Legal Implications

- 2.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A – Report of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation: 'Homelessness Strategy Progress Report' (March 2021)

Appendix B – Letter from Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group and Cabinet Member Response (July 2018)

Appendix C – Consultation Response from Scrutiny Programme Committee – comments on Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2022 consultation draft (Oct 2018)

Appendix D – Letter from Scrutiny Programme Committee – pre-decision scrutiny on Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2022 (Nov 2018)



Report of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy and Service Transformation

Extraordinary Council - 2 March 2021

Homelessness Strategy Progress Report

Purpose:	To provide an up-date on the progress of Swansea's Homelessness Strategy 2018-22. This is the mid-point review of the Strategy, which will explain the achievements so far, the impact and response of the Homelessness Service and its partners to the COVID pandemic, and the future challenges anticipated.
Report Authors:	Steve Porter/Rosie Jackson
Finance Officer:	Aimee Dyer
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar
For Information	

1. Background

- 1.1 There is a duty on local authorities, under the Homelessness (Wales) Act 2014 to produce a four-year Homelessness Strategy. Swansea's Homelessness Strategy was adopted by Cabinet on 15th November 2018. The Strategy runs from December 2018 to December 2022 and is now at the mid-point of its implementation period.
- 1.2 The Strategy sets out comprehensive and ambitious plans to ensure that every person has access to good quality advice, accommodation and support at the earliest possible opportunity in order to prevent homelessness. It was developed based on a review of homelessness in Swansea carried out in 2017, which established the trends and levels of homelessness and identified areas for service development. It was also influenced through consultation with service users, partners in the voluntary sector, housing and support providers, other public sector bodies and other local authority services. The Scrutiny Programme

Committee and Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee were also consulted during the production of the Strategy.

- 1.3 This report gives a summary of the key achievements of the Strategy during its first two years of implementation and provides information on levels and causes of homelessness in Swansea. It also reflects on the impact that the COVID19 pandemic has had on homelessness in Swansea and considers the challenges going forward.

2. Homelessness Strategy 2018-22 Strategic Aim and Objectives

- 2.1 The aim of Swansea's Homelessness Strategy is to ensure that every person has access to good quality advice, accommodation, and support at the earliest possible opportunity to prevent homelessness. The Strategy is intended to increase the ability of the Council and its partners to prevent homelessness wherever possible. Where it cannot be prevented, the Strategy aims to minimise the distress and negative impact of the experience through rapid and robust service responses. Five objectives have been set to achieve this:

- **Objective 1:** Ensuring service users are at the centre of service delivery
- **Objective 2:** Prioritising early intervention and prevention of homelessness
- **Objective 3:** Ensuring suitable accommodation is available for people who are or may become homeless
- **Objective 4:** Ensuring appropriate support is available for people who are or may become homeless
- **Objective 5:** Providing robust responses to support rough sleepers and eliminating the need for individuals to sleep rough

3. Levels and causes of homelessness in Swansea

- 3.1 The Council is required to provide quarterly and annual statistics to Welsh Government to monitor levels of homelessness. The full suite of statistics can be found on the Welsh Government's website. The following section shows some of the key performance indicators and statistics indicating the level and causes of homelessness in Swansea.
- 3.2 The number of homelessness decisions made in Swansea during the years 2016-2020 is shown below. 2019/20 saw a significant increase in demand on the Homelessness Service.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total Outcomes	2661	2643	2595	3060

- 3.3 Despite increased demands on the service the Council managed to maintain high levels of homelessness prevention with **72%** of households who were threatened with homelessness within 56 days

during 2019/20 having their homelessness prevented, which compares well to the Welsh average of **67%** and is above the Council's target of 70%.

3.4 Full year figures are not yet available for 2020/21 but in the first three quarters of 2020/21 (April-December), which covers the start of the COVID19 pandemic and the various lockdown periods, the target to prevent homelessness in 70% of cases has been achieved. However, homelessness presentations remain high despite the extension of notice periods in private rented accommodation (as a result of Welsh Government legislation to protect tenants during the pandemic) and very low/zero evictions from the social housing sector.

3.5 The main causes of homelessness continue to be:

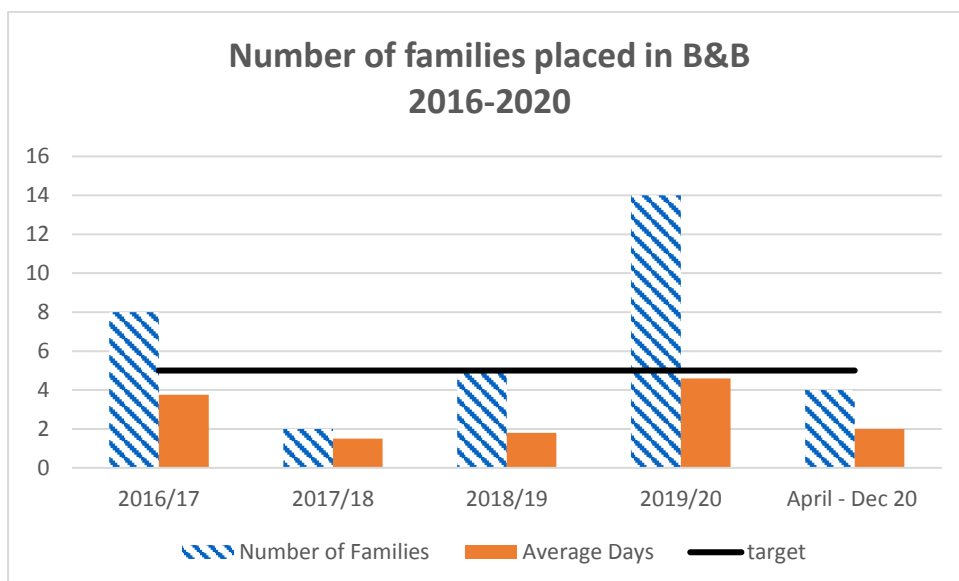
- Loss of rented or tied accommodation
- Parent(s) no longer willing or able to accommodate
- Domestic Abuse
- Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate
- Breakdown of relationship with partner, Non-violent
- Prison leaver
- In institution or care (e.g. hospital, residential home, refugee, army etc.)

3.6 *Temporary accommodation*

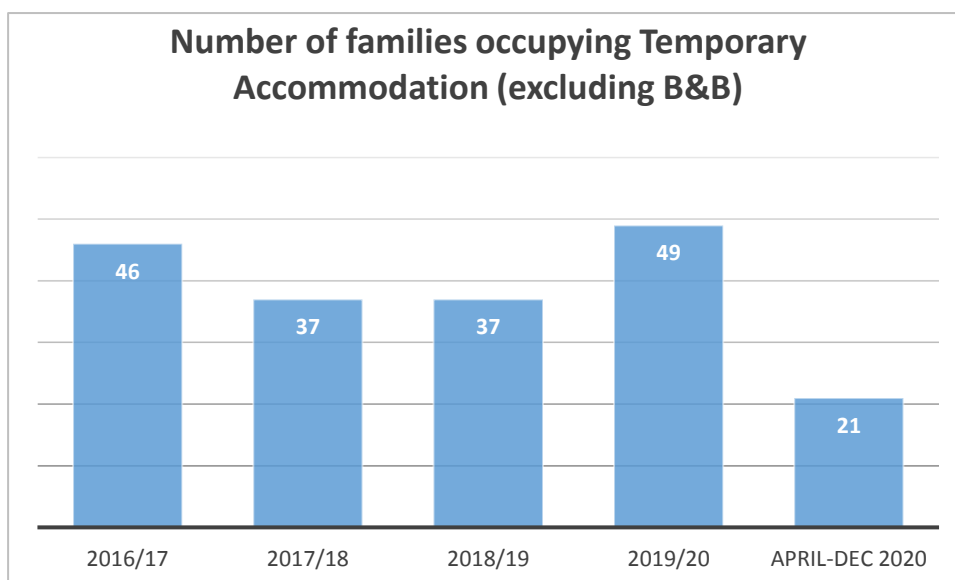
Where homelessness has not been prevented or alternative accommodation has not been found, the Council has a duty to secure temporary accommodation for applicants who are in priority need and unintentionally homeless. 138 households were assessed as in priority need and requiring temporary accommodation in 2019/20, showing an increase from previous years. The reasons that these households were considered to be in priority need were:

- Mental illness / learning disability / learning difficulties **36%**
- Physical disability **21%**
- Domestic abuse **15%**
- Households with dependent child(ren) **10%**
- Other special reasons **10%**
- A former prisoner who is vulnerable due to being held in custody **4%**
- Old age **2%**
- A care leaver or person at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation, 18 years or over but under the age of 21 **>1%**

Services aim to ensure that wherever possible the use of B&B for 16 and 17 year olds is prevented and that families who are placed in B&B accommodation do not remain there for more than five days. Despite the increased pressures caused by the pandemic, this is being maintained. The Council has sufficient, suitable temporary accommodation for families and the BAYS+ Project continues to effectively support and accommodate young people and care leavers who are at risk of homelessness.

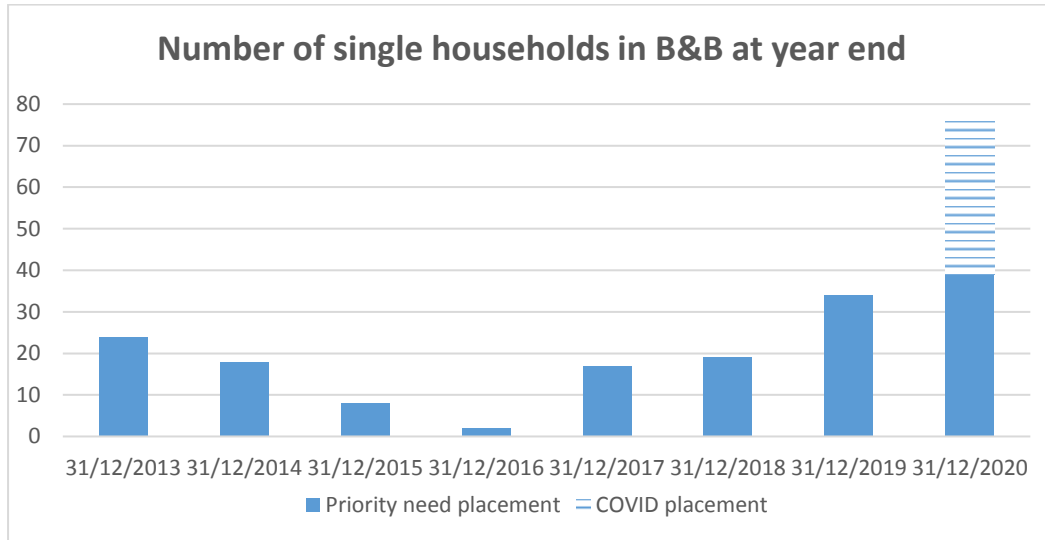


Use of B&B accommodation for families is avoided wherever possible, so the Council has temporary accommodation flats from its own stock that are used to house families, plus access to other types where required, for example women’s refuges. The number of families placed in temporary accommodation during the year has remained fairly consistent, and is showing lower numbers of households placed during the pandemic (April-December 2020, full year figures not yet available for 2020/21). This is largely due to the extension of notice/eviction periods during the pandemic.



Use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for single households
 One of the aims of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce use of B&B accommodation for all households. In recent years, the Council has invested in its ABBA (Alternative to Bed and Breakfast) Project to minimise use of B&B for single, priority need households. As a result of the pandemic and the Welsh Government’s decision to class all

households requiring temporary accommodation as vulnerable (i.e. it has suspended the priority need test required under current homelessness legislation), there has been a significant increase in the number of single households placed in B&B by the end of 2020. As of 31/12/2020, there were an additional 37 people in B&B accommodation, who would not normally qualify for temporary accommodation assistance under existing homelessness legislation.



3.7 *Rough Sleeping*

Since 2015, the Welsh Government has required local authorities to carry out an annual rough sleeping count. The actual counts of rough sleepers are single night snapshots. The estimated count is based on data collected over a two-week period with assistance from the voluntary sector, faith groups, local businesses, residents, health and substance misuse agencies, and the police. Due to the pandemic, the national count was not carried out in 2020 and figures for Wales were not produced. However, Swansea continues to closely monitor rough sleeping numbers so the local data is available. The number of rough sleepers has fallen dramatically since the start of the pandemic and the suspension of the priority need test.

Number of people sleeping rough in Swansea between 2015 and 2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Actual count	5	16	21	18	19	1
Estimated rough sleepers (2 weekly count)	19	23	26	33	37	13

3.8 **Demand for social housing**

Demand for social housing remains high with over 4,000 households currently on the Council’s housing waiting list; approximately 16% of these are households who are homeless or threatened with

homelessness. The highest level of demand is for one-bed properties, with around 76% of homeless households needing this type of accommodation

An analysis of council house lettings between 2016/17 and the first three quarters of 2020/21 shows that the proportion of lettings to homeless households has gradually increased since 2016 from 32% to 46%. However, there has also been a reduction in the number of council properties available to let, for example, there were 1499 lettings in 2018/19 but this reduced to 1341 in 2019/20. There have been less properties available for let during the pandemic due to COVID restrictions preventing/slowing down work to be carried out to make void properties available for let and a reduction in the number of end of tenancies across all tenures.

4. Key achievements of the Strategy so far

- 4.1 The delivery of the Homelessness Strategy aims and objectives is directly linked to the Council's Housing Support Grant Spend Plan, in addition to the core revenue budget for Housing Options. Welsh Government allocates Housing Support Grant to each local authority to spend on projects aimed at preventing homelessness and helping people to live in their own home or supported housing. The level of Housing Support Grant has remained static for a number of years. However, the Welsh Government has recently announced a significant up-lift to the allocation for all local authorities for 2021/22. Swansea's budget has increased from £14m to £18.4m.

The purpose of this is to enable local authorities to transform services to a rapid rehousing approach, to incorporate actions to address the impact of the additional duty to provide temporary accommodation to all households during the pandemic and to bolster existing services by improving third sector partners' staff terms and conditions and training to enhance recruitment and retention.

Specific reference is made to service improvements/enhancements as a result of the increased Housing Support Grant at relevant points in this section.

- 4.2 **Objective 1:** Ensuring service users are at the centre of service delivery

Achievements

Youth Homelessness

- Development of the Youth Homelessness Charter – The BAYS+ Service (i.e., the Youth Homelessness Team) held consultation events during 2019 with children and young people in schools, youth clubs etc., in partnership with SYSHP and End Youth Homelessness Cymru. The Charter was due to be formally launched in April 2020 however, the pandemic has delayed this.

Equalities

- Improvement to equalities monitoring introduced for Housing Options (homelessness assessment and waiting list assessment). Completion of the form is voluntary and anonymous, but the findings will provide additional insight into how well the service is being accessed by people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- Embedded PIE approach (Psychologically Informed Environment) within the Homelessness Service, which has enabled services to be delivered in a trauma informed, person centred way. The Homelessness Service successfully bid to be part of pilot project training from Cymorth Cymru for staff. Staff from Housing Options, the Tenancy Support Unit and the Council's Rents Team have all received this training.

Service Improvements

- Housing Options reception and interview areas upgraded to create more welcoming trauma informed, person-centred environment, taking into account findings from Shelter "Take Notice" mystery shopping exercise.
- Improvements to IT and telephony – a new Homeless IT database has been purchased and will enable service improvements by providing information to service users more quickly and save officer time through better data collection. Housing Options and Tenancy Support Unit staff are now all equipped with laptops/mobiles to enable agile working. This was achieved prior to the pandemic. The changes ensured that the Homelessness Service and Tenancy Support Unit were able to continue to successfully operate during the initial months of the pandemic.
- The Welsh Government's "Homelessness Prevention Pledge" was signed by the Leader, Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy and Service Transformation and Chief Executive in March 2020.

Priorities for 2021/22

- The development of the Homelessness Charter for the wider population has been delayed due to the pandemic. Work was due to commence in 2020, following on from the development of the Youth Homelessness Charter so that lessons could be learnt from the successful approach undertaken. The intention is to continue with this during 2021.
- Installation of Wi-Fi for public use in the Housing Options office and the Council's temporary accommodation.
- Development of a service user satisfaction survey for the Homelessness Service.
- Improvements to the use of Personal Housing Plans will be implemented based on findings from national research and made possible through the introduction of a new, more effective homelessness database.
- Development of key messages promoting housing advice and support services to ensure that the public and landlords are aware of the support the Council can offer.

4.3 **Objective 2:** Prioritising early intervention and prevention of homelessness

Achievements

Prevention

- Continuing to meet targets for Homelessness Prevention – 72% of households were prevented from becoming homeless during 2019/20.
- Bays+ Service prevented homelessness in 80% of youth homelessness cases during 2019/20.
- Homelessness Prevention Fund – The prevention fund plays an essential role in enabling the Homelessness Service to take direct action to prevent people from losing their homes or by providing funds to facilitate moves into alternative accommodation e.g. through payment of rent arrears, rent in advance, removal costs, bond/deposits etc. Going forward into 2021/22 the prevention fund will play an essential role to mitigate some of the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Access to the Private Rented Sector

- Whilst the pandemic has led to challenges in maintaining access to the private rented sector, the Private Rented Access Team, run by the Wallich, remains a high priority for the Council to support due to the success it has had in obtaining and sustaining accommodation in the private rented sector over the past two years.
- The Homelessness Service has provided extra funding to the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Budget (managed by Housing Benefit), due to additional demands on the existing budget caused by welfare reform. DHP remains an essential tool to prevent homelessness and making the private rented sector affordable.

Social Housing

- A commitment to keep Council tenants safe and secure in their homes and ensure no one will be evicted as a result of financial hardship caused by the pandemic has meant that there has been reduction in evictions for rent arrears from Council housing during this period to zero (between April and December 2020). However, prior to the pandemic, due to taking a more psychologically informed approach, there had already been a significant reduction in evictions for rent arrears in 2019/20, with a 37% reduction in evictions from the previous year (57 down from 91 in 2018/19).

Youth Homelessness

- Youth Homelessness Pathway Coordinator now in post to support homelessness prevention for young people aged 13-16.
- Bays+ Service has established three “training flats” in Council accommodation for young people. This scheme is working well and resulting in successfully preparing young people to move onto permanent accommodation. Funding secured to continue the scheme for 2021/22.

- Young Person's Housing First project established with 10 units of accommodation providing permanent accommodation and intensive support for young people with complex needs.
- The Homelessness Service participated in the "Big Conversation" through Housing Options staff giving homelessness presentations during March 2019 to young people aged 11-14 from seven different comprehensive schools in order to raise awareness of housing and homelessness issues amongst young people.

Information

- Improvements to homelessness and housing advice information online has taken place, including creation of an interactive map of housing areas (containing the type and size of housing in each area) to improve people's ability to make informed choices. Changes to layout of housing public webpages have made Homelessness and Housing advice more prominent to the public.

Priorities for 2021/22

- A focus for the up-lift in Housing Support Grant is to ensure that there are sufficient resources to manage increased demand on homelessness and support services, and changing Welsh Government priorities. A review of Housing Options and Tenancy Support Unit staff resources is underway to ensure this. Increased homelessness applications are expected as a result of the pandemic, therefore additional resources will be required to deal with higher caseloads and to ensure high rates of homelessness prevention and low waiting times for support can be maintained.
- Housing Support Grant spend for 2021/22 will also further prioritise homelessness prevention and early intervention by contributing to an increase in the number of Local Area Co-ordinators, with the aim of ensuring the whole of Swansea is covered.
- The Housing Service is strengthening resources in the Council House Rents Team to enable a more proactive, preventative approach. The Team intends to maintain the zero eviction approach for rent arrears wherever possible, building on the experience during COVID and the pre-pandemic work, which involved taking a more psychologically informed approach and focussing on early intervention, prevention and support to council tenants to sustain their tenancies, with eviction as a last resort.
- The Council will work with other providers of social and supported housing to develop pre-eviction protocols to build on the good work and new approaches developed during the pandemic. This will include a review of the eviction data that is collected and monitored from support housing projects and information available from Registered Social Landlords.
- Implementation of the findings and recommendations from the Systems Thinking Review of the Youth Homelessness Service carried out in 2020/21.

4.4 **Objective 3:** Ensuring suitable accommodation is available for people who are or may become homeless

Achievements

Access to Housing

- It is a strategic aim of the Council to increase the provision of affordable housing across Swansea, to enable the delivery of 5000 affordable homes over the next 10 years. To achieve this, the Council's More Homes Delivery Programme has a target to deliver 1000 new Council homes and the Council will continue to support its Registered Social Landlord partners to deliver 4000 affordable homes through its strategic support and the allocation of Welsh Government Grant. The need for homes suitable for people with disabilities/mobility issues is also considered as part of the More Homes Strategy, for example the Council has worked with West Glamorgan Regional Partnership to use ICF (Intermediate Care Fund) funding to increase the number of accessible properties.
- The Council successfully bid for £5.4m from the Welsh Government's Phase 2 Homelessness capital funding to increase the amount of one-bed, permanent, affordable, accommodation. This will be delivered in partnership with local Registered Social Landlords (Pobl, Family Housing and Coastal) through a number of schemes that will provide between 70 to 80 additional units of permanent accommodation during 2021. A further example of how this funding has been used includes improvements to a mental health supported accommodation project to increase the number of self-contained units, which will ensure that they are COVID safe and provide better, more sustainable accommodation for vulnerable people. Full details of the Welsh Government Phase 2 Capital Funding can be found in the Cabinet report on 18/10/20.
- Close partnership working between the Council and Registered Social Landlords to ensure that allocation of social housing is prioritised for people in temporary accommodation during the pandemic.
- Working with the Council's Housing Benefit Section to identify where exemptions to the Shared Room Rate for people under 35 can be applied to individuals who have been in temporary accommodation for over three months. Work is on-going with the DWP to establish if similar exemptions can apply to those in receipt of Universal Credit.

Temporary Accommodation

- Development of Ty Tom Jones – a new temporary supported accommodation scheme established in partnership with the Council, Pobl, The Wallich and Goleudy (formerly Caer Las) with funding from the Welsh Government's emergency COVID fund to provide an additional 20 units of temporary accommodation to single people during the pandemic.
- Increased provision of adapted temporary accommodation for single people and families.
- Target to ensure that B&B accommodation is only used for families in an emergency and that the average stay is no longer 5 days has been achieved.

- A reduction in the barriers to accessing temporary accommodation including:
 - increased flexibility in some forms of accommodation regarding pets
 - increased availability of temporary accommodation for couples
 - use of the Prevention Fund to support people who are struggling with the high cost of supported housing if they are in work and therefore not entitled to full housing benefit/UC housing costs.

Domestic Abuse

- As a response to the pandemic, the Homelessness Service secured additional temporary domestic abuse accommodation with Swansea University between April and September 2020 to ease accommodation pressure during the first lockdown.

Priorities for 2021/22

- A comprehensive, large-scale review of all supported housing schemes funded via Housing Support Grant (due to commence in April 2021).
- A review of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy will take place following any future legislative changes implemented by Welsh Government in relation to priority need status.
- Continued development of new affordable housing via the Council's More Homes Strategy and Registered Social Landlord investment.
- On-going negotiations with Home Office to agree staggered asylum seeker move on from Home Office accommodation following a positive decision on refugee status, in order to reduce strain on temporary accommodation and allow a planned approach to refugee move on.

4.5 Objective 4: Ensuring appropriate support is available for people who are or may become homeless

Achievements

Tenancy Support

- The work of the Council's Tenancy Support Unit remains essential in preventing homelessness and providing support to households to maintain their tenancies. An aim of the strategy was to reduce waiting list for support to ensure that households are provided with immediate assistance either when moving into a property or to provide "on demand" support to alleviate a crisis situation. This has successfully been achieved with all households now receiving support within two weeks, or more quickly if a crisis situation needs alleviating.
- Specific support for BAME groups continues to be effectively provided via:
 - TSU specialist support worker for BAME households.
 - BASWO floating support in place to support BAME households
 - Specific homelessness caseworker for refugees.
 - TSU staff have been trained to provide assistance to EU Citizens to apply for "Settled Status".
 - TSU has access to a specialist, immigration solicitor to refer people who require additional assistance.

Joint Working

- Working relationships have been strengthened between the Homelessness Service and the Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator, as part of the multi-agency Homelessness Cell set up during the pandemic, which has enabled good communications about BAME groups and issues they are facing during the pandemic and has ensured that information and resources are available to assist these groups.
- Establishment of the “Swansea Together” Food Provision Service, a collaboration of voluntary organisations (led by Matt’s Café and Zak’s Place) to ensure that everybody in B&B, and other forms of temporary accommodation who requires it, receives a substantial meal seven days a week during the pandemic. This has also been made available to people experiencing food poverty.
- Working relationships between Local Area Co-ordinators (LACs) and Housing Options/Tenancy Support Unit have been strengthened and developed, for example links were reinforced during the pandemic as support workers and LACs were liaising to provide food parcels and supporting those shielding.

Training

- Prioritisation of training for homelessness, housing and support staff to understand and incorporate new, improved methods of working, for example training on Psychologically Informed Environments and Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- Development of new training modules by the Homelessness and Mental Health Nurses on supporting people with personality disorders for the homelessness and support sector.

Funding

- Welsh Government Phase 2 revenue funding has increased the support services available to people who are homeless (in addition to the services that were already in place), with a particular focus on people in temporary accommodation. There are clear signs that the new approaches being trialled e.g. rapid rehousing, are having positive outcomes and improving engagement with service users who have previously be hard to reach. These posts include:
 - Four Rapid Rehousing Workers (Wallich and Goleudy)
 - Crisis Critical time Intervention Team
 - Platform Mental Health worker
 - Increase of Mental Health Homelessness nurse from part time to full time post
 - Barod Substance Misuse Worker focusing on people in temporary accommodation
 - Additional Housing Support Gant funding for 2021/22 will ensure the continuation of this support

Priorities for 2021-22

- The long-term economic and social impacts of the pandemic are anticipated to significantly increase demand for housing support

services. Therefore, as part of the assessment of resources in the Homelessness Service and Tenancy Support Unit it is proposed to strengthen the TSU team to include more resources for rapid rehousing and pre-tenancy support.

- The Welsh Government commissioned Homelessness Action Group report (see background papers for link to full report) has given strong recommendations that the rapid rehousing approach is something that all local authorities should develop. Therefore, this will be a strong focus for the additional spend within the Housing Support Grant and the review of Temporary Supported Accommodation.
- The draft Spend Plan for Housing Support Grant 2021/22 has set out proposals for additional funding to enhance support services, some examples include:
 - More resources to support domestic abuse, in particular older victims, male victims of domestic abuse and support for perpetrators
 - Additional support workers specialising in mental health and substance misuse to enhance the multi-disciplinary approach to dealing with clients who have co-occurring diagnoses.
 - Provide resources to expand rapid rehousing approach across the Youth Homelessness Service
 - Increase in specialist welfare rights advice available for support staff and professionals
 - A proportion of the up-lift will also be set aside to increase contract values with support providers in order to bolster terms and conditions for front line workers and assist in recruitment and retention
- Research to be undertaken with BAME groups, as part of the development of the new Local Housing Strategy, to look at the barriers, issues and priorities for housing for these various groups.
- Development of specific information for refugee households, who are moving on from Home Office accommodation following a decision in their immigration status to explain the housing system and how to access it.

4.6 Objective 5: Providing robust responses to support rough sleepers and eliminating the need for individuals to sleep rough

Achievements

- Reduction in the number of people sleeping rough in Swansea to lowest levels ever recorded, as a result of Welsh Government instructions ensure all people who required it are provided with temporary accommodation during the pandemic, including those with no recourse to public funds.
- Housing First Project established providing permanent accommodation giving intensive, wrap around support, provided by The Wallich, for entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs. The scheme is currently supporting 16 households who are actively engaging with the team; 11 settled in their own permanent homes, 5 currently in temporary accommodation. The team continue to work with a small number of other households who are or have a history of sleeping

rough, with the aim of helping them accept accommodation of their own.

- Support for Rough Sleepers extended to weekends, provision is now available seven days a week. This has enabled support and assistance to be provided for every person found to be sleeping rough within 24 hours from first contact.
- Increase in the number of emergency bed spaces in Dinas Fechan and Paxton Street, including provision for couples. Plus an additional Mental Health emergency bed created.
- Improved partnership working with key organisations including the Police, Neath and Port Talbot Council, Environmental Health, Crisis, Barod, Primary Health Care, The Wallich and Goleudy through the creation of the COVID Homelessness Cell. Whilst this has been a requirement from Welsh Government during the pandemic the arrangement is working well and will continue in the future. The Cell enables information sharing and joined up approach to address the needs of rough sleepers and deal with any serious incidents when they arise.
- Review of the Cold Weather Plan has been completed each year and the plan has been renamed “Cold and Extreme Weather Plan” now including actions relating to any adverse weather. The Covid response has significantly changed the plan for 2020 as the Winter Night Shelter provision was suspended, due to COVID safety requirements. However, anyone found to be sleeping rough continues to be provided with temporary accommodation during this period.
- Improved monitoring on the numbers of former armed forces personnel accessing homelessness support services and strong working relationships with veteran support organisations such as SSAFA etc.
- Information leaflet developed for Councillors and the general public on support available for people who are rough sleeping.

Priorities for 2021/22

- Ensure that the individuals who were previously rough sleeping or at risk of doing so, do not return to the streets when the pandemic ends. All households who require it are provided with temporary accommodation and the Council will work with partners and Welsh Government to access funding and develop services to ensure that the support and accommodation required is available.
- Welsh Government is currently considering potential options for the Priority Need test in Wales and it is considered likely that it will be removed in the future, leading to a duty for local authorities to provide temporary accommodation for all households who require it. The Homelessness Service will need to ensure that there are sufficient resources to deal with the increased demand for temporary accommodation, homelessness advice and assistance and tenancy support.
- Expansion of Ty Tom Jones – the new project has shown significant success in adopting a rapid rehousing approach with improved engagement and outcomes. Funding has been identified from Housing

- Support Grant to continue the project during 2021/22, and the project will be increased by an additional four units (bringing the total to 24).
- The need for a solutions centre to provide improved facilities for people who are sleeping rough was identified as an action in the Strategy. However, the pandemic has led to a re-evaluation of what is required, along with the impact of other service developments being undertaken by Health and the voluntary sector in the city centre. In addition, all homeless households are currently placed in temporary accommodation, and services have been enhanced to ensure individualised support is available for all who require it.
 - The development of Ty Tom Jones as a new supported housing project, with its focus on rapid rehousing, will provide the opportunity to look at increasing the amount of services that are delivered at this location. Whilst this cannot take place during the pandemic, the long-term plan is to provide space for either drop in services to be developed here or a more permanent base for services who require it. The drop in service approach, where support is available at set times during the week, has been shown to be effective in increasing engagement with previously hard to reach clients at Ty Tom Jones. In addition, there is the potential to provide additional facilities for those who are in less flexible accommodation such as B&B e.g. access to clothes washing and cooking facilities.
 - As part of the up-lift in Housing Support Grant, plans are being made to increase the number of service users supported by the Housing First Project Team to 25.

5. Homelessness during the COVID Pandemic

- 5.1 The pandemic has led to many challenges, specifically an increase in mental health issues and substance misuse, a rise in domestic abuse and relationship breakdown, in addition to the inevitable economic impacts. This is placing great strain on homelessness, support and accommodation services. During the past 12 months, there has been a reduction in the number of properties available to let in all types of tenure, and therefore it is likely that people will spend longer periods in temporary accommodation over the coming months.
- 5.2 During the pandemic, Welsh Government has issued guidance to local authorities that all homeless households are to be considered vulnerable during the pandemic and therefore in priority need, this includes households with no recourse to public funds. This is to ensure that people who are, or are at risk of, sleeping rough have the support and resources needed to protect themselves and adhere to public health guidance on hygiene or isolation. Whilst there is temporary supported accommodation provision available for non-priority households in Swansea, this provision was insufficient to deal with the increased levels of demand. In addition, there are insufficient permanent, affordable, one-bed properties. This has led to a large increase in the numbers of people in B&B and other temporary accommodation. The additional costs associated with these “COVID”

B&B placements are currently being covered by the Welsh Government's Emergency COVID Fund.

- 5.3 Between April 2020 and December 2020, 300 additional single people have been placed in temporary accommodation, so far 53% have been provided with support and assistance to enable them to move onto suitable alternative accommodation.
- 5.4 The aim of the Welsh Government and the Council is to ensure that there is not a return to rough sleeping post-pandemic. In order to support this, the Welsh Government issued new guidance to local authorities in June 2020 that set a requirement to produce "Phase 2 Transition Plans", with the fundamental aim to ensure that everyone brought into emergency temporary accommodation during the pandemic is supported into long-term, self-contained accommodation. This was underpinned by a fund of £50m across Wales. Swansea successfully bid for £5.6m (£5.4m capital and £250k revenue funding), to increase the amount of permanent, affordable accommodation available for homeless people and to provide additional support, with a particular focus on rapid rehousing, mental health and substance misuse.
- 5.5 In order to deliver this, a strong partnership approach was adopted between the Council's Homelessness Service, Housing Support Grant Team, local Registered Social Landlords (Pobl, Family Housing and Coastal), key homelessness and support organisations including The Wallich, Goleudy, Crisis, Plattform, Health and Barod (substance misuse). Close partnership working is continuing between the organisations who have received Phase 2 funding to ensure that all households in temporary accommodation are able to receive appropriate support and are housed in suitable accommodation as quickly as possible.
- 5.6 Other pressures arising from the pandemic will have an impact on demand for homelessness and support services, including:
- Continuation of the suspension of the Priority Need test, with the expectation that Welsh Government will enact future legislation to abolish it.
 - A lack of affordable, one-bed properties.
 - Reduced turnover of permanent social housing stock due to reduced end of tenancies during the pandemic.
 - An expected increase in evictions when the current extension to notice periods for evictions ends (due to end 31 March 2021).
 - The end of the furlough scheme (currently due to finish end of April 2021), which is expected to lead to increases in unemployment, causing financial difficulties.
 - Increasing levels of domestic abuse and family breakdown.
 - An increase in households requiring assistance following a Home Office decision on their immigration status.

- Increasing demand for mental health support arising from concerns about people's mental health, caused by loneliness and the stresses of the pandemic.
- Impact on staff across the homelessness and support sector, including high stress levels, higher caseloads, more difficult working conditions for front line staff due to managing social distancing and increased health and safety measures with challenging client groups.
- Continued unaffordability of the private rented sector for people under 35 who are limited to shared room rent allowance Housing Benefit/Universal Credit payments.
- An increase in poverty levels following the current planned end of the temporary £20 per week increase to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit. NB This is currently in place until April 2021 and a UK government decision is awaited on whether this will be extended.
- Continued challenge of a small number of hard to reach people. Whilst rough sleeping has significantly reduced with good outcomes for many, there are still people with extremely complex needs who services are struggling to engage with and solutions for this cohort are diminishing.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The aims and objectives of the Strategy remain robust and fit for purpose. Good progress has been made across all five objectives, with high levels of homelessness prevention being maintained.
- 6.2 When the Strategy was developed it was never envisaged that an event as serious as the pandemic would occur, which has led to huge challenges for organisations and the public to overcome. There have been significant changes in the way services are delivered and there is increased demand for homelessness and support services. However, whilst the Strategy has provided a clear focus for the Council and its partners to address homelessness over a four-year period, it has remained a dynamic, flexible document with the ability to adapt to changing priorities and challenges. Existing partnership working arrangements with the voluntary sector, support providers, Registered Social Landlords, Health, Welsh Government and other Council Services have been crucial in ensuring that the challenges of delivering the Strategy have been met.
- 6.3 Looking ahead, it is reasonable to expect that there will be an increase in the numbers of people who require advice and assistance for homelessness and housing related support. It is difficult to predict future demand but there is strong evidence to suggest that pressure on homelessness and support services will significantly rise in coming months, along with increased demand for affordable and secure, social housing. However, the Strategy ensures that the Council is in a strong position to deal with the forthcoming challenges.

7. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 7.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

- 7.2 The Homelessness Strategy was subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment when it was adopted by Cabinet in November 2018. The full Equality Impact Assessment is available in the Cabinet agenda listed in the background papers below. The Equality Impact Assessment indicated that the Strategy would have a positive effect on protected groups. No negative impacts were identified. An action was included in the Action Plan to review Housing Options equalities monitoring systems, which has been completed.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this progress report. The financial implications associated with delivery of the Strategy are covered by revenue budgets within Housing Options and the Housing Support Grant Spend Plan 2021/22.

Background papers:

- *Cabinet Agenda 15th November 2018. Item 8 “Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan”:*
<http://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=124&MId=7941&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- *Cabinet Agenda 18th October 2020. Item 9 “Covid-19 Phase 2 Funding Application – Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Related Support Services and Innovative Housing Programme Funding Phase 4 (IHP4) Applications”.*
<http://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=124&MId=9029&Ver=4&LLL=0> .
- *Welsh Government Homelessness Action Group Report:*
<https://gov.wales/homelessness-action-group>

- *Welsh Government Homelessness Statistics:*
<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Housing/Homelessness>

Appendices: None.



To:
Councillor Andrea Lewis
Cabinet Member for Homes and Energy

Please ask for: Scrutiny
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Date 05 July 2018
Dyddiad:

Summary: This is a letter from the Homelessness Working Group to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Energy following the meeting of the Working Group on 12 June 2018.

Dear Cllr Lewis

The Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group met on 14 May when two sessions were held to take evidence from representatives of relevant organisations on what the Council can do to help homelessness in Swansea and in particular the Council's activities to manage homelessness, the current position, performance of relevant services, and challenges. The evidence gathered from this meeting was used to prepare questions to put to you and relevant officers at the second meeting of the Working Group on 12 June.

We would like to thank representatives from Swansea Homeless Sanctuary, Shelter Cymru, Crisis, Wallich Dinas Fechan, Caer Las, Zac's Place, Matthew's House, and the homelessness nurse for participating in the first meeting and you, Alex Williams, Jane Harries, Steve Porter, Anita Evans, Peter Fields from the Council and Gareth Bartley and Malcolm Jones of ABMU for attending the second meeting and answering questions. We appreciate everyone's engagement and input.

This letter provides you with feedback from these meetings.

At the meeting on 12 June you gave a short introduction on the Council's work on homelessness, stating that the Council will be working closely with a range of partners to develop the Homelessness Strategy. You informed Members that not all of the issues fall within your portfolio but that you will ensure that any conclusions and recommendations are passed on to the relevant Cabinet Member.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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Whilst the Working Group found the meetings informative and interesting, a number of important issues were raised and discussed. The bullet points are evidence we heard in the first session.

Accommodation

- It is felt that there is a lack of specialist accommodation for people with complex needs (people with multiple conditions such as substance misuse and LD, or substance misuse and mental ill health, Alcohol related brain injury, etc.).
- The Wallich argue that a specialist residential project is needed as a priority for those clients who have become homeless due to the issues surrounding their mental health and/or substance misuse. These individuals are often very chaotic, and their needs deemed too high for a standard hostel.
- There is an increasing number of homeless people with complex/multiple needs including mental health. Many of these individuals don't have basic life skills and need continuous support over a long period of time. Often this support is not available. No one takes responsibility in the council or health board to assess and meet their needs.

We heard the Council has identified there is a need for greater specialist support; however, it is difficult to provide for all circumstances. The Strategy will look at this to try and deal with the most entrenched rough sleepers, and you hope that the development of housing first will start to address this issue. The working group believe that it is important that this lack of specialist accommodation is addressed as part of the work on the strategy and would like more information on what is planned.

- Concern that wet houses are no longer meeting the needs of alcoholics with many becoming incontinent and ending up blocking beds in hospitals. Is this model fit for purpose? Should we be looking at specialist 'wet residential care homes', employing care staff at our current wet projects or opening a Managed Alcohol programme?

We were told that Social Services do not think that this issue causes bed blocking in hospitals and that there are only a small number of people involved but that it can have a large impact on provision. Alcoholics in this group need to have a bespoke package. They are offered provision but do not always accept it. We heard the council is looking at reducing the number of evictions and better recording them so they can look at the causes. We would be grateful for more detail as to what this involves and the timescale for such measures to be put in place.

- Further gaps include hostels that take women, under 18s and under 21s and provision for EU citizens or people with no recourse to public funds. Shelter dealt with 100 of the latter category last year.
- Very little emergency accommodation for homeless couples. Private renting is the only route other than living on the street. Hostels and supported accommodation providers are very reluctant to accommodate couples in the same project.

The Working Group heard that the Homelessness Strategy will try to deal with all gaps in provision with this approach. We would like more information on specific proposals for these groups.

On the issue of 'no recourse to public funds' we were told that this is a real challenge for housing as these people fall outside the criteria for eligibility to council housing. The voluntary sector will be involved to assist with housing people from outside the UK who don't meet the criteria for council housing. This could be a bigger problem when we leave the EU. We would like some reassurance that the housing strategy will seek to address this problem.

- It is important that Swansea learns from any good practice being used by Councils elsewhere in relation to the Housing First approach. Are the witnesses aware of any?

The Working Group heard that Wales is not the first country to use this approach. It is being used in Scandinavia and there are mixed reviews of its success. It has also been introduced in Dublin. Officers have learnt is that it cannot be introduced on a piecemeal basis.

- There is concern that homeless people are not fully benefitting from housing association accommodation.

The Working Group heard that housing associations are part of the 'move on strategy'. They also house people themselves directly. As part of the strategy the Council is looking at strengthening the agreement with them. Housing First will also include private housing. We were reassured on this point.

- Caer Las argue that there are long waiting lists for access to move-on panel. There needs to be options from providers for bespoke packages for individuals.

The witnesses at the meeting did not believe that this was a problem. Nevertheless, as the perception exists we would like a more detailed assurance that Caer Las' concerns have been heard and that a dialogue has been opened up with them to deal with any issues they have identified.

- Concern about potential changes to legislation with the abolition of priority need and intentionality. This will have a major impact on temporary accommodation and provision of supported housing. How will the Council cope with this?

The Working Group heard that it will be very difficult and will come at a cost to Swansea. However, in Swansea we have quite good provision. It was stated that Shelter Cymru is keen to be involved with the abolition of priority need and intentionality.

- The Working Group felt Swansea needs a seamless way for people to access provision following concerns raised with us by some groups that they were unable to direct clients to suitable provision at certain times during the week.

The Working Group was informed that Housing Options is our 'Front Door'. A gap in provision has been identified on weekends and working with Wallich has helped to

close this gap. We heard the Council is looking at providing information to businesses so they know how to direct people to help. The challenging part is getting people to engage. We would like more information on what is planned and how this is being addressed in the draft housing strategy.

- There is concern about support for people with learning difficulties who have moved into housing.

We were informed that if people are assessed to have a social care need then social services could potentially support them. It is looked at on an individual basis. We would like more information as to how this group fit into the housing first project and what further support will be available for them once this is underway.

- Concern that some people who have moved into housing have issues with budgeting.

We heard that there is a tenancy support unit for council house tenants who can help them to manage their finances. We also heard that as part of the homelessness strategy, the Council is looking at providing transitional support and homes being ready for tenants to move in. There is a possibility that this could begin before the strategy is in place. We would like to take you up on your offer to provide more information on what is provided to social housing tenants and would be grateful if this could also encompass tenants of RSLs as well.

- Concern about how we identify the needs of people who do not have mental health issues but have never owned or rented a house before and do not know what to do.

We were informed that there is a procedure in place and that there are a number of ways that issues are picked up. People's needs are assessed and if needed they are referred to tenancy support services. We would like more information on what work is carried out to identify these vulnerable tenants, how that work is recorded and what actions are taken to put support in place. How are those actions monitored and what evaluation takes place of outcomes?

Social Service and safeguarding issues

- The thresholds for homeless and vulnerable adults being accepted for social services involvement are too high. Agencies work with some of the most complex and challenging individuals and yet it is almost impossible to get additional specialist support for them especially if they have not been in the system before.

Social Services stated that the mental health team is a secondary care service so there will be a gap in provision and confirmed that there is difficulty in accessing support for lower level need. We would like details on actions being put in place through the draft housing strategy and housing first, by social services and ABMU to ensure that this group do not miss out on much needed support.

- Dual diagnosis remains an issue. People with mental health needs are unable to access the Community Mental Health Team support because of drug dependency issues.

We heard that Social Services do provide provision but they agree that it may not be enough support. However ABMU confirmed there is going to be a Dual Diagnosis Strategy developed to map need across dual diagnosis as dealing with dual diagnosis is something that has not been done well in the past. We would like more detail on the implementation of this strategy including resources, timescale and proposed support.

ABMU were also asked if they have provision to add value to the Housing First Strategy. They confirmed that housing is key to their approach and strategy. If people have a dual diagnosis there can be a dual approach. They feel the important thing is how services are wrapped around people in Housing First.

- The homelessness nurse has identified that there is an issue with data sharing between health and social care.

We were told by Social Services that there is no issue with the sharing of data as far as they are concerned. Nevertheless, we felt that as the homelessness nurse works in a primary care environment that there may be difficulties in them accessing data on clients. We would like some reassurance that data sharing protocols enable primary care providers to work seamlessly with other agencies including the council and secondary care providers.

Health Service issues

- Hospital social work for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed is extremely limited. Homeless people in hospital should be assessed as quickly as possible to prevent delayed discharges.
- Within Swansea any client who wishes to be scripted must first self-refer to AADAS on either a Monday or Tuesday morning. To a chaotic drug user this is a time where they may be potentially begging etc to fund their first hit of the day. These referral hours need to be made more flexible and dramatically extended as clients who neither make it on a Monday or Tuesday must wait an entire week before the opportunity again arises. Once referred to AADAS there is approximately a six-month waiting list to be scripted. Many clients therefore do not even start the process. There is a 12 month wait to go into rehab.

Witnesses recognised that there is a problem and having more flexibility in the system to deal with people who are chaotic is something that will be explored in the future. We would like more detail as to what actions are being put in place to deal with this issue.

- Caer Las argue that services for people who are unable to access services due to dual diagnosis could be improved by Swansea having a network that brings together stakeholders from health (incl. mental health), D&A services and housing.

Witnesses confirmed that they hope there will be a joint approach taken with the Housing First project. We would like more information as to what that joint approach will entail.

- Concern that ABMU cuts will see the homeless nurse being axed.

ABMU confirmed that the homeless nurse post is secure and that they hope to extend the service. We are happy with that assurance.

Learning Disabilities

- There is an increasing number of homeless people with Borderline Learning Disabilities who have no access to Learning Disability services but are unable to read (or have limited reading and language skills), write, manage money or maintain a tenancy and are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

We would like information as to how this group will be supported as part of the draft housing strategy.

Housing First

- The Wallich argue that without the recruitment of additional experienced staff to provide intensive support then this pilot is doomed to fail. They say that there are still gaps in service provision which requires the full engagement of the health board specifically around mental health. Crisis argued that Housing First cannot be implemented in isolation but that it was not on the health board's agenda.

We were reassured by the health board representatives at the meeting that they are fully engaged with the housing first process but would like more detail on the work that is on-going to deliver a cross-agency service once housing first gets underway.

Ex-Offenders

- People are coming out of prison and have nowhere to go. What advice and support are being given to them before they are discharged? Is probation liaising with housing at appropriate staging points? What work is being carried out to maintain continuity of housing provision for Swansea residents from the start of their prison term to release?

The Working Group was informed that due to legislative changes ex-offenders are no longer priority need. However there is currently a prisoner pathway and there are resettlement teams in prisons in Wales. The challenge is to get ex-offenders into housing on the day of release from prison.

We also heard that Social Services have greater involvement with prisoners now as there is a statutory requirement. If prisoners are found to need social services support they will receive it when they leave prison.

We would like to see detailed statistics on the number of ex-prisoners who are released and return to Swansea. What percentage are referred to housing and social services and how quickly are they resettled and found accommodation?

Day Centre

- The loss of the St Matthew's day centre is felt particularly hard by agencies. Many argue for a one-stop seven-day service shop, opening long hours and which

accommodates all staff including outreach, Big Issue, physical and mental health professionals, Housing Options caseworkers, probation etc and which would benefit from regular drop-in sessions from Citizen's Advice, DWP and job centre coaches. They believe this building would include subsidised food, computers, lounge area, laundry facilities, showers, lockers etc. and could be used to develop suitable social enterprises to assist clients back into work.

We heard that good work is being done by Access Point but that they need better accommodation to provide better services. You implied that as part of the Homelessness Strategy you are looking to bring providers together under one roof and provide some of the day services previously available at St, Matthew's centre. You said that you recognise that there is a gap and the Council, with partners, is looking at what can be done. We would like more detail on these proposals together with some idea of timescale.

Gateway

- All the agencies argued that the Gateway system, which is the single central referral system that operates all the supported (hostel) accommodation in Swansea needs reform. They argue that the system is not being managed or utilised to its full potential. They would like to see an allocated 'Gateway Officer' appointed to oversee all hostel vacancies in Swansea.

Because some hostels allegedly 'cherry pick' clients leaving the most difficult clients to sit on the waiting or declined lists indefinitely, and because many hostels also require their own specialist referral forms to be completed as well as the gateway referral form, this creates a duplication of work and places an extra burden on the limited outreach services.

There was also an assertion that there is a lack of confidence/knowledge from frontline staff in using/managing Gateway effectively. This could be due to the turnover of staff in residential projects and needs to be addressed by training new recruits correctly.

We heard the Council recognises there is a problem and hope to put such an officer in place in the next few months. We would like some indication as to when that officer is likely to take up post.

Evictions from supported accommodation due to rent arrears

- Wallich argue that many of their clients have previously relied on Simple Payment or Post Office accounts for their benefit payments. However due to the closure of these types of accounts all supported accommodation providers are being urged to ensure that residents are being assisted to open bank accounts. Clients are frequently being evicted from supported accommodation due to service charge arrears.

Can the council work with these providers to assist them in setting up Direct Debit payments for these charges? This would assist the most vulnerable, those lacking

budgeting skills, and financially exploited members of our society to avoid losing their accommodation due to these arrears.

The Council is aware that it is an issue but that people have to take responsibility. However, they are looking at the number of evictions and the reasons for them. We would like more detail on the conclusions of this study.

Out-of-hours support

- Matthew's House argue that there does not appear to be any support at weekend and out-of-hours. They say that being open on Sunday evenings they are often caught in a volatile situation with people struggling with nothing. On many occasions they say they have been unable to access anything after 2pm on weekdays. Can the council provide clearer signposting for volunteers and charities to access support out-of-hours?

We were given confirmation that the rough sleeper's team provision has been extended and there is therefore support at the weekend. An offer was made by the operations manager of community housing to meet with Matthew's House to discuss the matter further if they still think that there is a gap. We would appreciate more detail as to the hours this provision now works and how it is being advertised to various third sector agencies working with rough sleepers.

Co-ordination

- There are many small groups that have established themselves on Facebook etc. and want to help homeless people. However, these are not co-ordinated or monitored. Do we have the capacity to try and tackle this?

The Council says that for assistance people should contact Housing Options in the first instance, then Access Point and then the rough sleeper's team. Could the council better publicise these arrangements for these groups?

City Centre

- A number of agencies told us that the City Rangers and Police have acted in an aggressive way towards homeless people and even outreach workers seeking to help them. As well as homeless people, Big Issue sellers have also been moved on by Rangers. Can the council provide training for the Rangers to act in a more sympathetic way? Can they liaise with the police on this issue?

It was confirmed that a City Centre Street Vulnerability Group has been set up by the police. It has only just started but it will look at the issues. We would like some details as to the instructions and training issued to City Rangers as to how to deal with rough sleepers and beggars in the City Centre. We would also like details of any discussions that the council has had with the police on this issue.

Following the meeting, we discussed progress and made the following conclusions:

1. The Working Group appreciates what is being done by everyone involved but feels that the threads need to come together – a clear pathway is needed.
2. The Working Group feels that it is important for the Council to take a strategic viewpoint and that is why Housing First is so important.
3. Scrutiny will need to do pre-decision on the Homelessness Strategy before it goes to Cabinet. The issues highlighted by this Working Group will need to be taken into account when developing the Strategy.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We are interested in hearing your thoughts about the issues raised and would ask that you respond by Thursday 26 July 2018.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Black', written in a cursive style.

COUNCILLOR PETER BLACK
CONVENER, HOMELESSNESS SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP
CLLR.PETER.BLACK@SWANSEA.GOV.UK

Councillor Peter Black
Convener
Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group

Please ask for: Councillor Andrea Lewis
Direct Line: 01792 63 7442
E-Mail: cllr.andrea.lewis@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: AL/CM
Your Ref:
Date: 26 July 2018

BY E MAIL

Dear Councillor Black

HOMELESSNESS SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Thank you for your letter dated the 5th July 2018, following the meeting with the Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group held on 12th June 2018. The following response seeks to address the issues raised in your letter, provide the working group with assurances that Swansea is leading the way in preventing homelessness and sets out how the Council and its partners intend on tackling homelessness over the next few years.

The Working Group I know are fully aware that homelessness can be a challenging environment and that external factors, such as welfare reform, can have a direct impact on the levels of homelessness. In addition, it is important to note that those faced with homelessness can often suffer with mental health or substance misuse issues and therefore we need to take a multi-agency approach if we are going to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable in the City are met.

For ease of reference I have addressed each of the comments in the order they have been raised in your letter.

Accommodation

The working group believe that it is important that the lack of specialist accommodation [for people with complex needs] is addressed as part of the work on the strategy and would like more information on what is planned.

Swansea already provides a wide variety of supported accommodation through its Supported Housing Programme. However it is recognised that for the more entrenched rough sleepers a more innovative approach needs to be taken. The review of homelessness supports the need for a *Housing First Project* to be introduced in Swansea and officers from Housing and Supporting People are currently working to develop this project. *Housing First* in Swansea should be implemented towards the end of 2018/19.

We heard the council is looking at reducing the number of evictions and better recording them so they can look at the causes. We would be grateful for more detail as to what this involves and the timescale for such measures to be put in place.

As you are aware officers are currently developing the Homelessness Strategy and within the review of homelessness it has been identified that we need to work with all our partners in reducing the number of evictions from all types of tenures. The draft Strategy has included this in its action plan and through the recruitment of a Gateway Officer in 18/19 we aim to improve the way we collate and monitor this information.

In your letter you have identified that there are gaps in the provision of supported accommodation, particularly for women, under 21's and for those with no recourse to public funds. The Working Group heard that the Homelessness Strategy will try to deal with all gaps in provision with this approach. We would like more information on specific proposals for these groups.

As stated there is a wide variety of supported housing projects that meet the needs of the most vulnerable households. These include a number of Direct Access Hostels, a Cross Borders Women's Project, as well as a number of homeless projects for young persons under the age of 21 and therefore there is no clear evidence that there is a gap in this type of hostel accommodation.

We do recognise that couples can sometimes be limited in accessing certain types of accommodation. The *Housing First Project* will be able to address this issue and, in addition, the Council is currently working with the Voluntary Sector to extend the number of emergency bed spaces which will be suitable for couples who are sleeping rough.

On the issue of 'no recourse to public funds' we were told that this is a real challenge for housing as these people fall outside the criteria for eligibility to council housing. The voluntary sector will be involved to assist with housing people from outside the UK who don't meet the criteria for council housing. This could be a bigger problem when we leave the EU. We would like some reassurance that the housing strategy will seek to address this problem.

Despite the restrictions that the Council faces to assist households with no recourse to public funds, the Homelessness Strategy will seek to ensure that there is a clear understanding within the sector of the resources available to assist non-eligible households, which will be predominately from the third sector or Social Services for households with children. For example, it is intended to develop a training plan for housing and support providers and "no recourse to public funds" has been identified as one of the topics that should be covered. The Council will seek to work in partnership with key third sector organisations on this matters such as the Welsh Refugee Council.

In addition, the draft Strategy has also identified a need to prepare for the implications of the Immigration Act 2014 and Britain's exit from the EU, in order to ensure that appropriate advice is in place for housing and support providers.

In your letter you state that Caerlas have concerns about the long waiting lists for access to move-on panel. The witnesses at the meeting did not believe that this was a problem. Nevertheless, as the perception exists we would like a more

detailed assurance that Caerlas' concerns have been heard and that a dialogue has been opened up with them to deal with any issues they have identified.

I am pleased to be able to confirm that the Chair of the Move-On panel has spoken directly with Caerlas on this matter and no major issues have been identified. However, an action within the Homelessness Strategy will be to review the Move-On process as a whole so we can ensure that waiting lists are kept to a minimum.

The Working Group was informed that Housing Options is our 'Front Door'. A gap in provision has been identified on weekends and working with Wallich has helped to close this gap. We heard the Council is looking at providing information to businesses so they know how to direct people to help. The challenging part is getting people to engage. We would like more information on what is planned and how this is being addressed in the draft housing strategy.

The Council has been working closely with the Rough Sleeper Intervention Team to ensure that the needs of rough sleepers and those vulnerably housed are met. Recently we have extended this service to include a weekend provision. In addition to this the Homelessness Strategy will have a clear objective of ensuring service users are at the centre of service delivery. As part of this objective a Homelessness Charter will be co-produced, and this will focus on trying to ensure that we have engagement from service users, the general public, businesses and the community as a whole.

In your letter you state that there is concern about support for people with learning difficulties who have moved into housing. We were informed that if people are assessed to have a social care need then social services could potentially support them. It is looked at on an individual basis. We would like more information as to how this group fit into the housing first project and what further support will be available for them once this is underway.

Housing First is designed to assist those service users who are long term entrenched rough sleepers and/or find it difficult to reside in a hostel type environment. This may include some service users who have a social care need and in these circumstances bespoke, intensive support will be available for as long as is required. However, it is important to remember that for many with a social care need they may only require generic tenancy support and be able to live independently, without the need to be referred through the *Housing First Project*.

In your letter you state that you would like to have more information on the tenancy support service and how support needs are identified and monitored in terms of outcomes.

The Council's Tenancy Support Unit (TSU) offers housing related support to all residents of Swansea. The TSU supports households in all forms of accommodation, including council tenants, housing association tenants, private rented tenants as well as owner occupiers. There is no upper or lower age limit on the housing support. The majority of referrals are made by the individual, however professionals from many different sectors and organisations will also seek help on behalf of the household.

The TSU in-house team provides support to approximately 150 households at any one time and a further 600 are supported through more specialist commissioned services with partner agencies. The initial assessment of support needs for every case is completed at the TSU offices.

The referrals, assessments and outcomes are collated by the TSU for the cases supported in-house team as well as by the partner TSU agencies. The outcomes and data are returned to the Supporting People Team to be included in the annual Homelessness Review which feeds into the annual spending priorities for the Supporting People Plan.

Social Service and safeguarding issues

In your letter you comment that the thresholds for homeless and vulnerable adults being accepted for social services involvement are too high. Agencies work with some of the most complex and challenging individuals and yet it is almost impossible to get additional specialist support for them especially if they have not been in the system before. Social Services stated that the mental health team is a secondary care service so there will be a gap in provision and confirmed that there is difficulty in accessing support for lower level need. We would like details on actions being put in place through the draft housing strategy and housing first, by social services and ABMU to ensure that this group do not miss out on much needed support.

Officers from our Adult Social Services team have confirmed that if someone feels they may have care and support need or know someone they feel may have care and support needs they can refer to the Common Access Point for Health and Social Care.

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/commonaccesspoint>

When a person is assessed as having care and support needs it will be identified whether each need can be met through signposting to preventative services, or met in another way, OR whether a Care and Support Plan is required. If the identified need can be met through signposting the need will NOT be eligible. If the identified need can only be met through a Care and Support Plan the identified need will be eligible.

Where this relates to needs around Mental Health, the General Practitioner (GP) within primary health care services is the initial assessment and access point to specialist mental health services. Where the GP considers the needs are such that an assessment by the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) is required, within secondary mental health services, a referral will be made. The CMHT is an integrated health and Social care assessment and support service. Further information can be found here

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/3941/Mental-Health>

Adult Social Services does not currently provide any services to those who are not care managed by the CMHT. These are provided or commissioned by ABMU Primary Health Services. However the Council does commission some specialist mental health services within Tier 1 of the Adult Services Model from the third sector e.g. specialist mental health housing related support services within the Tenancy Support Unit, Connect Day service and carers respite service, and counselling service for young people. Individuals can self-refer to these services and do not require a care manager.

These services along with Tier 2 and 3 commissioned services are part of the Adult Service Commissioning review.

The ABMU fund SCVS to support and promote the range of Mental Health Services in Swansea. Information on this can be found here; <https://www.scvs.org.uk/mhsupport>

The review of homelessness undertaken in drafting the new Homelessness Strategy has identified Mental Health as a significant care & support need amongst homeless people both as a cause and as a result of.

An action will be to improve the engagement between agencies working with homeless people and the Mental Health Services provided and commissioned in primary care and secondary mental health services.

In your letter you comment that dual diagnosis remains an issue and that people with mental health needs are unable to access the Community Mental Health Team support because of drug dependency issues. We heard that Social Services do provide provision but they agree that it may not be enough support. However ABMU confirmed there is going to be a Dual Diagnosis Strategy developed to map need across dual diagnosis as dealing with dual diagnosis is something that has not been done well in the past. We would like more detail on the implementation of this strategy including resources, timescale and proposed support.

The Council does not provide or commission specialist services to individuals around their Alcohol or Drug dependency as these are commissioned by the Area Planning Board for substance misuse. However, we are required to provide care and support to individuals whom may have these dependencies which can be very complex and challenging. This is particularly so where individuals do not engage in abstinence or harm reduction. An action for the Strategy will be to engage with the Substance Misuse Area Planning Board to focus on this group who are low in number but challenge health, homeless and social care service existing models of provision.

The action to develop a *Housing First* service in Swansea will need specialist input from both primary and secondary health and social services as well as substance misuse services.

In your letter you state that the homelessness nurse has identified that there is an issue with data sharing between health and social care. We were told by Social Services that there is no issue with the sharing of data as far as they are concerned. Nevertheless, we felt that as the homelessness nurse works in a primary care environment that there may be difficulties in them accessing data on clients. We would like some reassurance that data sharing protocols enable primary care providers to work seamlessly with other agencies including the council and secondary care providers.

The Homeless & Mental Health Outreach Nurses are based within Primary health services and currently are outside the Council's information sharing agreements with secondary health services that exist. Therefore, at present the identified ABMU staff are unable to have lawful access to the Social Services Paris IT system where we hold personal and sensitive information.

The Council has sought advice and clarity on the specific requirement and need for this access from the NHS Information Governance Unit to progress this issue without compromising privacy laws.

However, Social Services officers have confirmed that they do not feel this lack of access to the Paris IT system itself impedes seamless work between the Council Homelessness and Social Services and Health and commissioned providers.

Information is already shared as required between professionals when it is necessary to support an individual to achieve their outcomes.

Health Service issues

In your letter you stated that the Working Group would like to see increased flexibility to services provided to those who suffer with substance misuse issues. Witnesses recognised that there is a problem and having more flexibility in the system to deal with people who are chaotic is something that will be explored in the future. We would like more detail as to what actions are being put in place to deal with this issue.

I have requested that the appropriate officers take these issues forward and raise your concerns with the ABMU.

Witnesses confirmed that they hope there will be a joint approach taken with the Housing First project. We would like more information as to what that joint approach will entail.

Housing First will provide a bespoke package of support for each client. To be successful this will require a flexible and responsive approach from all relevant agencies, which will include Housing, Social Services, Health, Police and Probation.

Learning Disabilities

In your letter you state that there is an increasing number of homeless people with borderline Learning Disabilities who have no access to Learning Disability services but are unable to read (or have limited reading and language skills), write, manage money or maintain a tenancy and are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. We would like information as to how this group will be supported as part of the draft housing strategy.

The Council commissions a range of generic/multidisciplinary floating support services all of which would be able to offer housing related support to those with border line learning disabilities, having difficulties with literacy and numeracy. In addition it commissions a self-referral day service. Additionally there are specialist learning disability supported accommodation and floating support service for those supported in secondary care.

Homeless and Supporting People commissioners are continuously working to raise awareness of these services, to facilitate early referral and intervention and prevention. An action of the draft Homelessness Strategy is the development of a pre eviction and abandonment protocol with general needs and supported housing providers. Additionally it will look at pre-tenancy preparation, and different ways of engagement with individuals to further reduce evictions.

Housing First

We were reassured by the health board representatives at the meeting that they are fully engaged with the housing first process but would like more detail on the work that is on-going to deliver a cross-agency service once housing first gets underway.

As stated earlier, officers from a range of services are in the process of developing the *Housing First Project* and it will be essential that when the project is up and running that all agencies work together to ensure that every service user has a bespoke and intensive range of support.

Ex-Offenders

We would like to see detailed statistics on the number of ex-prisoners who are released and return to Swansea. What percentage are referred to housing and social services and how quickly are they resettled and found accommodation?

I have been advised that the Council would not be informed of the total number of ex-offenders who are returned to Swansea. We do work however work closely with the relevant resettlement teams from various prisons, in line with the Prisoner Pathway. In 17/18, 196 ex-offenders were either referred from prison or presented themselves to Housing Options. We were able to directly accommodate 50 of these cases into supported accommodation, social housing accommodation and private rented accommodation.

A number of the ex-offenders referred to the Council did not contact us for assistance on their release from custody, or subsequently lost contact with us during the application process, or were able to find accommodation themselves. We are aware that 12 out of the 196 referrals returned to custody.

Day Centre

We heard that good work is being done by Access Point but that they need better accommodation to provide better services. You implied that as part of the Homelessness Strategy you are looking to bring providers together under one roof and provide some of the day services previously available at St, Matthew's centre. You said that you recognise that there is a gap and the Council, with partners, is looking at what can be done. We would like more detail on these proposals together with some idea of timescale.

We are currently in the early stages of developing proposals for a multi-agency solutions centre and this will be an action within the Homelessness Strategy. As part of the development of this we will involve all relevant agencies to ensure that a collaborative approach is taken.

Gateway

In your letter you comment that the homelessness service would benefit from an improved and effective Gateway referral system. We heard the Council recognises there is a problem and hope to put such an officer in place in the next few months. We would like some indication as to when that officer is likely to take up post.

As previously stated, the Housing Service recognises that this needs to be prioritised and we are hopeful that the Gateway Officer will be in post by October 2018.

Evictions from supported accommodation due to rent arrears

In your letter you comment that there are a number of evictions from supported accommodation due to rent arrears, particularly as a result of budgeting difficulties.

The Council is aware that it is an issue but that people have to take responsibility. However, they are looking at the number of evictions and the reasons for them. We would like more detail on the conclusions of this study.

The Homelessness Strategy will ensure that evictions from supported accommodation due to rent arrears will be reviewed. The appointment of a Gateway Officer will also assist in ensuring that evictions are kept to a minimum.

Out-of-hours support

We were given confirmation that the rough sleeper's team provision has been extended and there is therefore support at the weekend. An offer was made by the Operations Manager of Community Housing to meet with Matthew's House to discuss the matter further if they still think that there is a gap. We would appreciate more detail as to the hours this provision now works and how it is being advertised to various third sector agencies working with rough sleepers.

The Rough Sleeper Intervention Team are available between 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. from Monday to Friday and 8 a.m. – 12 on weekends. We are currently in the process of updating our Rough Sleeper resource cards and we are also looking at improving how we communicate to third sector organisations and it is hoped that the co-production of the Homelessness Charter, which will include all the relevant agencies, will improve channels of communication. In the meantime, as stated the Operations Manager for Community Housing will discuss these issues further with a representative from Matthew House.

Co-ordination

In your letter you comment that there are many small groups that have established themselves on Facebook etc. and want to help homeless people. The Council says that for assistance people should contact Housing Options in the first instance, then Access Point and then the rough sleeper's team. Could the council better publicise these arrangements for these groups?

As previously stated we are always looking at ways to improve our communication with members of the public. Recently, I met with some volunteers who wanted to find out more about ways they could help with those who are faced with homelessness and we found this particularly useful in terms of sharing information about what outreach services are already available.

Despite our best efforts however, it is sometimes difficult for the Council to influence volunteers who are looking to assist homeless households; we will of course continue to ensure that the Housing Service is there to provide whatever advice and assistance we can to any volunteer(s) to ensure a coordinated and joined approach to tackle homelessness.

City Centre

It was confirmed that a City Centre Street Vulnerability Group has been set up by the police. It has only just started but it will look at the issues. We would like some details as to the instructions and training issued to City Rangers as to how to deal with rough sleepers and beggars in the City Centre. We would also like details of any discussions that the council has had with the police on this issue.

I have liaised with the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism in relation to this issue and offices have confirmed that key Performance Indicators show that the team of three Rangers deal on average with over 2,000 separate incidents each month in the City Centre with homelessness being one of a broad range of activities that they are involved with. This research shows that customer service is at the heart of the Rangers job role which is ambassadorial led. Nevertheless, the Ranger team, who each have more than a decade experience in the job, have over this time developed an understanding of the personal and complex issues associated with those who make up the homeless community in the City Centre. This has been achieved through a combination of formal training and working closely with the local Rough Sleepers Co-ordinator and the various outreach services that offer support to the homeless. For example, the Rangers have had specialist drugs training to understand the issues around drugs and substance misuse together with training on Equalities and Human Rights, Customer Service Skills and Emotional Intelligence.

As a result of working closely with the Rough Sleeper Intervention Team and colleagues in Housing, the Rangers are also very knowledgeable of the support services that are available to homeless households and will often advise and direct vulnerable individuals to access suitable support as well as highlight those at risk of harm to members of the Rough Sleepers Intervention Team so that the appropriate intervention can be arranged.

There are also occasions where the Rangers take a more direct role. For example, one of the Rangers recently assisted a long term homeless couple to obtain a birth certificate to enable them to open a bank account and access benefits. The Rangers have also accompanied the NHS Outreach Nurse on several occasions to engage with those on the street who may be suffering health issues. The Rangers were also integral to the establishment of the *Have a Heart- Give Smart* initiative in the City Centre. This diverted giving scheme, which forms part of a national initiative lead by the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) has been running locally for approximately 6 months and nearly 50 businesses in the City Centre, across both day and evening economies, have signed up. The main objective of the scheme is to encourage the public to donate within the designated premises rather than give directly to those begging on the street. The funds raised are then matched by Santander and awarded to a designated homeless charity to fund support services.

Historically the Rangers have enjoyed a productive working relationship with Big Issue Cymru and have engaged with them over many years to help manage the designated Big Issue pitches across the City Centre. There is no longer a Big Issue office located in Swansea which impedes the proactive on-site management of local vendors by Big Issue and communication with the Rangers although regular contact with the Head

Office is undertaken and the Rangers are often called upon, for example by businesses, to arbitrate conflict regarding the use of sites popular among vendors and other users e.g. charitable collectors, buskers, canvassers etc. The Rangers also continue to help enforce the terms of the Big Issue badge. For example, if a vendor is deemed to be under the influence of alcohol, to ensure the reputation of Big Issue and to minimise complaints, the Rangers have the authority of Big Issue to instruct them to leave the pitch and return when sober.

Whilst these examples show the Rangers to be empathetic to those who are homeless and supportive of those in genuine need, many of the individuals that the Rangers deal with on the streets are in fact housed and choose to frequent the City Centre to either socialise and source drink/ drugs with like-minded people and/ or beg for funds from the public.

The subsequent anti-social behaviour of some of these individuals, including those that are homeless, can unfortunately at times escalate. On such occasions, the Rangers will take proactive action to manage this behaviour and mitigate any potential alarm, distress or intimidation caused to the parties involved as well as to users of the City Centre. City Centre Management, which is the Service that is responsible for the City Centre Rangers team, has within the previous 12 months received only one complaint from a member of the public regarding the alleged treatment of a persistent and prolific beggar in the City Centre by the Rangers— an individual who is not known to be homeless. De-escalation techniques, engaging with the Police and sign posting individuals to outreach services are among the measures that are taken by the Rangers. The team have also referred over 30 individuals to the new Street Vulnerability MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) since March 2018.

I trust that my response addresses all the comments and issues raised in your letter on behalf of the Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group. Can I thank you for the opportunity to talk to the group, and for the positive comments and acknowledgment of the efforts being made by all partners to tackle homelessness and the causes of homelessness in the City. I will ensure that the issues raised by the Working Group are taken into account when finalising the Homelessness Strategy and action plan for 2018-2022.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR ANDREA LEWIS
CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES & ENERGY

Consultation Response from Scrutiny Programme Committee

Draft Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2022

The Committee appreciates the opportunity to discuss the draft Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022 on 1 October 2018 with the Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy and key officers involved in developing this work, Steve Porter and Rosie Jackson. We credit those involved in the production of the Strategy and extensive Action Plan.

With the benefit of this discussion this document contains the views of the Committee on the draft Strategy and Action Plan to feed into the consultation process which we hope will help inform the preparation of the cabinet report and final Strategy in November.

We will be arranging a pre-decision scrutiny meeting to look at the cabinet report and to hear how the views of the Committee that follow have been considered, and response to issues raised.

We noted that although there is legislative requirement for Strategy is to be implemented by the end of 2018, any agreed Strategy will be open to amendment at any time i.e. flexibility is a given and over time the Strategy and actions may need to be modified, adapting to changing circumstances / environment, to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Specific Comments:

Objective 1: Ensuring service users are at the centre of service delivery

Key Priorities Section 11.6 (Service User Involvement) - We welcome that there will be a focus on ensuring that the principles of co-production are incorporated into the design and delivery of services, and that the development of a Homelessness Charter and Service Standards will be co-produced. This should enable people with experience of homelessness to be meaningfully involved in planning services. Better service user involvement and equalities monitoring is necessary, to ensure services are accessible to all. There is a need to ensure however that there are robust methods in place for doing this so we ensure it is not just a tick-box exercise.

Objective 2: Prioritising early intervention and prevention of homelessness

We welcome the plan to develop an education programme to increase knowledge of housing and homelessness issues in partnership with young people to improve homelessness prevention services for young people. It is not clear however how this will be developed – it could be good opportunity for co-production with our schools and colleges and other organisations, who we would expect to want to be part of this, as well as of course service users.

We welcome the development of pre- eviction protocols with all housing providers and work to understand reasons for abandoned tenancies.

Noted:

- Whilst every effort would be made to avoid evictions, including supporting tenants with rent arrears from the Prevention Fund, the safety of staff, people and communities will be paramount.

It is noted that in **Objective 2.1** of the Action Plan it is the intention to monitor evictions accurately across all forms of housing and to have this in place by March 2020. We would ask what resource is envisaged as being needed to deliver this action. Also, whether regular statistics be published by the council and where will they be available.

Section 9.3: Profile of Homelessness / Objective 2.6 (Monitor reasons for loss of rented accommodation in order to better understand the drivers behind this cause of homelessness) - The loss of rented accommodation remains the biggest single cause of homelessness (18%) both in Swansea and across Wales. It is not clear how activities to improve understanding of impact of welfare reform on tenancy sustainability, and monitoring to fully understand and evaluate other reasons for loss of accommodation, are going to reduce evictions from private rented accommodation when landlords cannot be compelled to provide accommodation.

There is some concern about a lack of one-bedroom properties across Swansea available for rent that would help increase supply of suitable accommodation.

Noted:

- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 presents a fundamental challenge as it expects a greater use of private rented sector to discharge statutory homelessness duties.
- Many private rented sector properties are being used, and we want to get more landlords on board, for example through increased advice and support, to facilitate greater access to the sector to alleviate homelessness. There is much that can be done to reduce evictions.
- The Housing into Homes Loan Scheme (for empty properties) is helping to increase the supply of private rented accommodation, where landlords can access loans to bring properties up to standard with agreement to then let to a Council tenant for 48 months
- The Council will be looking at all Council land – East or West – for future house building projects. The increasing demand for 1 or 2 bedroom properties is acknowledged.
- The Council does talk to other house builders, including RSLs about the need for more smaller properties, and talks to neighbouring Councils about what they could do to help each other and support efforts to tackle homelessness across the region e.g. Neath Port Talbot Council has recently increased its supply of temporary accommodation flats which may have a positive effect on rough sleeping in Swansea.

In **Objective 2.11** it is envisaged that the council carry out a mapping exercise on existing mediation provision by October 2019, including how they are accessed, availability funding arrangements and good practise here and elsewhere. We would ask what mediation is currently available in Swansea, and whether the council envisages having to set up a stand-alone service to meet the demand for this service.

Objective 3: Ensuring suitable accommodation is available for people who are or may become homeless

Key Priority Section 11.4 (Access to Permanent Accommodation) / Objective 3.1 - This identifies a need to increase access to the private rented sector and work closely with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to set out and agree expectations to identify how the social housing sector will work together to alleviate homelessness. However, in the action plan the timescale for written agreement with RSLs seems too long (April 2021), given that we have already been working closely with housing associations for some time – why such a long run-in time to deliver on this aspiration? Also, is it now time to develop a common waiting list with RSLs that will incorporate the allocation of housing by need across the sector?

Universal Credit has made access to housing for people more difficult. It is not clear how the Council will work around this issue.

Noted:

- It may take time to get this work embedded and requires 3 RSL partners to be signed up to this.
- Action plan timescales are affected by other priorities e.g. developing Housing First approach.
- A common waiting list has been discussed previously and is problematic and too simple an answer to a complicated issue, but better relationship with RSLs and working together will help deliver improvement.

Objective 3.4 (Reduce the use and length of time spent in temporary accommodation for homeless households with complex needs [i.e. Mental Health issues & Learning Disabilities, substance misuse] spend in temporary accommodation) - It is not clear what specialist supported accommodation is envisaged, and whether Social Housing Grant has been earmarked for such developments.

Noted:

- More supported housing is not necessarily the answer here
- The Housing First approach, with wrap around support, may be more successful in getting people out of temporary accommodation more quickly
- Stopping evictions is perhaps more important than developing more supported housing projects

In **Objective 3.7** the plan is to reduce barriers for accessing temporary accommodation and supported temporary accommodation, such as pets, storage of belongings and work / finance. In the case of pets this should be straightforward, so would question why it is envisaged to take 18 months to put measures in place to achieve this.

Objective 3.12 (Consider feasibility of establishing social lettings agency for private sector properties) – the Strategy would benefit from some more detail about what this means in practice.

Objective 4: Ensuring appropriate support is available for people who are or may become homeless

Key Priorities Section: 11.3 (Support) - There is concern that the Action Plan seems to be vague about specific proposals and timescales to meet the increased need for support for people with mental health / complex needs, and provide a more flexible and responsive support service to ensure that people receive the right support at the right time.

Noted that:

- Some actions can only be delivered with the help of our partners such as the local health board.
- Some actions are aspirational, some cautious, and in some cases actual delivery may exceed plan and timescales.
- The development of a Housing First approach will involve us procuring mental health expertise to improve upon current position, and will focus on accommodation of people with complex needs, to reduce levels of rough sleeping.

Objective 4.9 – We welcome recognition of the need to map the provision in place to assist and advise individuals who are ineligible for homelessness and housing assistance due to immigration status. We fear an increase in the numbers of rough sleepers because of such ineligibility.

Noted:

- The Council is not legally able to provide assistance however there are third sector organisations (e.g. Crisis and Welsh Refugee Council) that could help, and we can work with them to ensure those in this situation can be directed to resources available to help them.

We would ask whether there ought to be action to improve support for basic tenancy management such as managing finances, shopping and maintaining a property.

Objective 5: Providing robust responses to support rough sleepers and eliminating the need for individuals to sleep rough

Objective 5.1 – We welcome the plan to carry out a feasibility study to look at developing a holistic “solutions centre” for services for rough sleepers, to improve facilities for those who are vulnerably housed and sleeping rough. We would suggest this would benefit from being co-produced. Our Scrutiny Working Group on Homelessness also found the need for such a centre, with overwhelming support across the third sector following the closure of the Cyrenian’s project at St. Matthews. Although we recognise this would be an ambitious project is it not more pressing than the 2 ½ years identified to carry out feasibility study alone. We feel that in the interim there could be actions (small steps) that could help to build up to such an outcome – rather than the apparent all or nothing approach. The objective should be carefully worded so as not to be misleading about what we are trying to achieve.

Noted:

- The Strategy will represent a starting point, and is ambitious in many respects through a desire to achieve excellence, but can be modified if it is felt that this project is no longer the best option, and resources committed to other solutions that best fit the objectives. The Strategy highlights the need and gaps – how we address these is still up for discussion.

In **Objective 5.2** you outline the council's intention to develop a Housing First approach, which was also supported by the Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group and is very welcome. However, we would want to see specific performance measures that will be put in place to monitor the success of this project.

In **Objective 5.6** you say that the council will be developing an information leaflet for the general public and local authority councillors on support available to assist rough sleepers. It would be beneficial for this to be supplemented by on-line information, and if possible by developing or utilising existing apps for this purpose.

In **Objective 5.9** you say that a review with social services and ABMU on the need for rough sleepers and vulnerable households to have better access to health, including mental health services will take two years to be completed. Given the identified need and the urgency in resolving this matter, it is not clear why this will take so long.

Rights of the Child / Dependent Children

Whilst there are references to children in the Strategy there is little about dealing with and supporting children affected by homelessness by virtue of dependency on parent(s). We would like to see inclusion of clear statements about how their voice will be heard, or advocacy services that will be available, partnership working with education e.g. to ensure that education is maintained, and how the Strategy generally supports the UNCRC.

Noted:

- There has been consultation with young people through relevant organisations
- Efforts are made to ensure least disruption for children – e.g. unnecessary school moves
- Safeguarding is an underlying principle running through the Strategy

Section 6.3: Links to local strategies

It is important that all strategies are compatible with the Homelessness Strategy.

Section 9.2: Housing Market in Swansea

Section 9.2 of the strategy refers to the Local Housing Market Assessment, which was updated in 2015 and which has identified a requirement between 2010 and 2025 for an additional 17,100 new dwellings in Swansea, of which 7,400 need to be a mix of affordable rent or sale. The Committee would question how many of these

have been delivered in the last eight years, and what the current position is in relation to meeting this target.

Section 10: Future Levels of Homelessness

Welfare Reform - We would ask what additional measures are being put in place to meet a growing demand for advice and support as welfare reform continues to be rolled out.

Housing Costs for Supported Accommodation - The intention of the UK Government to change the way it funds housing costs such as rent and eligible service charges for short term accommodation by devolving this to the Welsh Government from April 2020 is noted. We would ask what discussions have taken place with the Welsh Government as to the likely model it will adopt to distribute this funding to supported accommodation schemes, and whether the amount passed to the Welsh Government will be frozen at current levels leading any growth in demand to be funded from existing Welsh budgets.

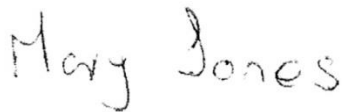
Section 13: Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

It is helpful to know where the monitoring, evaluation and review will be reported. Whether it will be reported to Council annually etc.

Noted:

- In addition to regular internal monitoring (quarterly) there will be an annual Cabinet progress report, which will be visible to all councillors and the public.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Mary Jones

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

cllr.mary.jones@swansea.gov.uk

9 October 2018



**To/
Councillor Andrea Lewis
Cabinet Member for Homes &
Energy**

BY EMAIL

cc: Cabinet Members

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Linell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Our Ref
Ein Cyf:*

*Your Ref
Eich Cyf:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Scrutiny

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SPC/2018-19/6

14 November 2018

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy following the meeting of the Committee on 12 November 2018. It is about a proposed cabinet decision on the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022.

Dear Councillor Lewis,

**Pre-decision Scrutiny of Cabinet Report:
Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022**

The Scrutiny Programme Committee met on 12 November to consider the report that you are presenting to Cabinet on 15 November, and give a view on the proposed decision.

Homelessness is an issue which has been a big feature of our scrutiny work programme and we thank you and relevant officers for engaging with scrutiny councillors over the last year about services and activities to manage homelessness, performance, challenges and of course the way forward for the next four years.

The Committee was very pleased to see that the final Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan documents, that you are recommending Cabinet to approve, have taken on board views already provided both through the Scrutiny Working Group, which met in May & June, and the Committee's consideration of the consultation draft in early October.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU
SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE
GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE
www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

We are very happy to have been able to make a positive contribution and impact on the Strategy. As such, the Committee welcomes the proposed Strategy and Action Plan and its implementation, and well done to all involved in carrying out this important work. Indeed this shows the value of early engagement with scrutiny which we hope Cabinet can facilitate for future decisions that merit scrutiny, so that our input can be more meaningful.

We reviewed the key changes made to the Strategy informed by the consultation process. We found the consultation analysis (Appendix C of your report) to be very clear and helpful in showing how responses from various sources, not just from scrutiny, were considered. Turning to specifics, we particularly welcome:

- Recognition of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and children's voice, and plan to develop a separate Homelessness Charter for children and young people.
- That timescales for the development of a holistic 'solutions centre' have been revised and are clearer about what will be achieved e.g. the feasibility study will be carried out within a period of six months.
- That there will be an annual Cabinet progress report on the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan – something that we felt should be accessible to all councillors and the public.

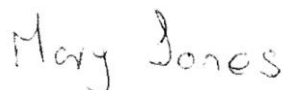
Finally we stressed the importance of engaging with the general public, who see homelessness but may not be sure how best they can help, in order to focus the good will that there is across the city, which will help our efforts as a Council.

Please note that I am unable to attend the Cabinet meeting on Thursday to feedback the Committee's views as contained in this letter. However, the vice-chair, Councillor Terry Hennegan, will attend in my absence.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter useful and would welcome any comments however we do not expect you to provide a formal response, unless there is any variation from the recommendations in your report in the decision taken by Cabinet on Thursday.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR MARY JONES

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

✉ cllr.mary.jones@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 7



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 April 2021

Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report

Purpose	The Committee is responsible for managing the overall work of scrutiny and its effectiveness. Performance Panel conveners will regularly provide a progress report, updating the Committee on headlines from their Panel's work and impact.
Content	This report focuses on the following Performance Panel: a) Development & Regeneration
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure awareness and understanding of the work of the Panel• Consider its effectiveness and impact• Consider any issues arising and action required
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Jeff Jones (convener, Development & Regeneration Performance Panel)
Lead Officer & Report Author	Emily-Jayne Davies Tel: 01792 636292 E-mail: scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Paul Cridland

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There are six Performance Panels which have been established by the Committee. Whilst the work of an Inquiry Panel leads to the production of a final report with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet based on evidence gathered on a specific issue, the work of a Performance Panel represents regular monitoring of, and challenge to, particular services / service areas and issues.
- 1.2 Performance Panels are expected to have on-going correspondence with relevant cabinet / lead members in order to share views and recommendations, arising from monitoring activities, about the performance of services and service delivery.

1.3 The Committee is responsible for managing the overall work of scrutiny and its effectiveness. Performance Panels Conveners will therefore provide a regular progress report to the Committee to enable:

- a discussion on the work of each Panel, achievements, effectiveness and impact
- the Committee to consider any issues arising from Panel activities which may have an impact on the overall scrutiny work programme
- awareness amongst the Committee as well as visibility across the council and public.

1.4 This report is about the following Performance Panel:

- a) Development & Regeneration – this updates on work carried out since the start of the municipal year.

To focus the discussion a short written report has been provided by the convener, and is **attached**. This includes a summary of Panel activities, correspondence between the Panel and relevant Cabinet Members, recommendations and impact.

1.5 The Development & Regeneration Panel involves the following members:

Labour Councillors: 4

Phil Downing	Peter Jones
Terry Hennegan	Mike White

Liberal Democrat/Independent Councillors: 7

Peter Black	Jeff Jones (CONVENER)
Wendy Fitzgerald	Mary Jones
Chris Holley	Susan Jones
Lynda James	

Conservative Councillors: 4

Steve Gallagher	Paxton Hood-Williams
David Helliwell	Will Thomas

2. Legal Implications

2.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Performance Panel – SPC Update

Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel Update

1. Remit of the Panel

The overarching remit of the Panel is to be responsible for ongoing monitoring of council performance in relation to development and regeneration, including the ‘health’ of the city centre, wider economic development across Swansea and discussion about progress on the Swansea Bay City Deal.

2. Introduction

The Panel is focused on contributing to the ongoing development and regeneration of Swansea by acting as a critical friend for the Cabinet, and helping to ensure accountability.

3. Key Activities

The Panel has held four meetings since November 2020, the next being due in May. Panel Members also attended the *Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel* meeting in February to contribute to discussion on budget proposals. Meetings so far have resulted in six Convener’s letters sent to the Cabinet Member(s). The issues covered were as follows:

Meeting date	Topics
3 November 2020	Dashboard Project Update
	Transportation Works
12 January 2021	Dashboard Project Update
	Commercial Opportunities in Rural Areas
25 January 2021	Arena Development – Contract with The Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG)
2 March 2021	ATG Arena progress
	Dashboard Project Update

4. Achievements / Impact

The ‘Dashboard’ Project Update

As a way of providing a regular ‘health check’ of the development projects, the Panel receives the departmental update report at each meeting. This works well and allows a run through from relevant officers of all of the regeneration projects and provides a quick risk check of each one, highlighting major issues/delays or successes.

Individual Project Updates

In order to provide an in-depth level of scrutiny for the Panel, the second part of each meeting focuses on a specific project in Swansea. The Panel discussed and decided on the topics for the year 2020/21, which range from Swansea Arena to Commercial Opportunities in Rural Areas. This allows for a more intense exploration of a project and strikes the balance between checking progress of development and regeneration in general and contributing in a more detailed manner on a specific project.

Letters

The Panel has written six letters to Cabinet Members this year. A reflection on some of the observations the Panel Members have made as follows:

- *We were concerned that ATG venues around the world were currently closed due to Covid-19 and what possible impact this could have on the Swansea development. We heard that ATG had laid off some staff, (mostly on furlough), across their company. However, officers confirmed that they have protected the core business and received equity investments, and there are no concerns about ATG's Swansea project at this time. It was also explained that ATG are currently looking to recruit a manager for the Swansea Arena.*
- *Active Travel Programme – We asked about the research and evidence that justified some new cycle tracks, and whether demand was high enough to warrant the costs. We discussed the Mayals Road cycle track that is scheduled for construction soon.*
- *The Panel heard that Swansea Rural Development Partnership (RDP) is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) until 2023. It was pleasing to hear that the programme aims to promote strong, sustainable rural economic growth in Wales and encourage greater community-led local development. Members raised concerns over available funding now that the UK has left the European Union. Officers explained that the European funding already secured will be available to spend until 2023. Other funding streams are being explored, namely the 'Shared Prosperity Fund'.*
- *The Panel heard that the Council is looking at the core areas of the city centre to ensure Swansea is moving forward to put the right interventions in place to help recovery, taking into account the difficult economic situation across the UK. A design masterplan remains in the early stages, with more announcements on plans expected over the coming months. The Panel queried if there will be opportunities for member input as it would like involvement in this important work. Officers explained that workshops are likely during this process, although this is time limited and needs to be finished by the end of this financial year. The Panel looks forward to hearing further updates regarding this work.*

Work Programme for remainder of 2020/21

11 May 2021	Swansea Business Improvement District Update from Russell Greenslade, Chief Executive Swansea BID, regarding City Centre developments
	Update on City Centre Travel Plan Cllr Mark Thomas – Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Stuart Davies – Head of Highways and Transportation
	Work planning 2021-22

Agenda Item 8



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 April 2021

Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

Purpose:	The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for appointing members and conveners to the various Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups that are established. This report advises of relevant matters that need to be considered.
Content:	This report is provided to facilitate any changes that need to be made.
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• agree the membership of Panels and Working Groups reported, and any other changes necessary.
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Paul Cridland

1. Introduction

1.1 In accordance with Council report 18 October 2012, when current scrutiny arrangements were agreed, the Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for appointing members and conveners to the various Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups that it establishes.

2. Proposed Revision to Current Scrutiny Panel / Working Group Membership

2.1 None.

3. Performance Panel Conveners

- 3.1 In accordance with the Committee's wishes, Performance Panels are expected to confirm / appoint conveners at their first meeting of the municipal year, and report this to the Committee. The Committee should note that the Natural Environment Performance Panel met on 22 March and confirmed Councillor Peter Jones as Panel convener for the 2020/21 municipal year.

4. Guiding Principles

- 4.1 When determining membership / conveners or agreeing any changes there are some key considerations for the Committee:
- It is necessary for more than one political group to be represented on each Panel / Working Group.
 - These bodies also need to be of a manageable size in terms of team working and effective questioning.
 - To ensure that all political groups have opportunities and are engaged.
 - Good scrutiny practice places emphasis on respect for minority party wishes around both chairing of such bodies and the work programme.
 - Being fair and balanced in the appointment of conveners, when there is interest from more than one councillor, e.g. giving opportunity to those who have not acted as convener previously.
 - The Committee should reflect on the existing 'balance' of conveners to help inform future appointments.
 - A minimum of three members should be present at all Panel / Working Group meetings.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None

Agenda Item 9



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 April 2021

Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22

Purpose	This report presents the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2020/22, which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.
Content	The agreed work programme is attached, which shows the topics that will be examined by scrutiny through various Panels and Working Groups. A plan for future Committee meetings is also attached. Progress against the agreed work programme is shown.
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• plan for the committee meetings ahead• consider opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny• review the scrutiny work programme (including progress of current Panels and Working Groups)
Lead Councillor	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
Report Author	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Paul Cridland

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for developing the Council's scrutiny work programme, and managing the overall work of scrutiny to ensure that it is as effective as possible.
- 1.2 A report is provided to each meeting to enable the Committee to maintain an overview of agreed scrutiny activities, monitor progress, and coordinate work as necessary.
- 1.3 The broad aim of the scrutiny function is to engage non-executive councillors in activities to:

- provide an effective challenge to the executive
- help improve services, policies, and performance
- engage the public in its work

1.4 The Scrutiny Work Programme is guided by the overriding principle that the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant, focussed on issues of concern, and represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources.

It also needs to be:

- manageable, realistic and achievable given resources available to support activities
- relevant to council priorities
- adding value and having maximum impact
- coordinated and avoids duplication

1.5 The work of scrutiny is undertaken primarily in three ways – through the Committee itself, by establishing informal Panels (for in-depth activities) or via one-off Working Groups. Panels and Working Groups would be open to all non-executive councillors - the Committee will determine membership and conveners following expressions of interest.

1.6 Scrutiny will regularly send letters to Cabinet Members communicating findings, views and recommendations for improvement and, where appropriate, by producing reports. Inquiry panels will always produce a final report at the end of the inquiry with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers), informed by the evidence gathered. Inquiry panels will reconvene to follow up on the implementation of agreed recommendations and the impact of their work – usually 6-12 months following cabinet decision.

1.7 Although much of the work of scrutiny is carried out by informal Panels and Working Groups these meetings are accessible to the public. Agendas, reports and letters relating to all such scrutiny activities are published, in the same manner as the committee, on the Council's modern.gov online platform:

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

2. Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22

2.1.1 The agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2020/22 is set out in **Appendix 1**.

2.1.2. The following paragraphs break down the work programme by specific ways of working to provide a brief overview.

2.2 Scrutiny Programme Committee:

- 2.2.1 The Committee's own work plan is attached as **Appendix 2**. This should be kept under review to ensure it represents a robust, manageable, and effective plan. The Committee plan covers a broad range of policy and service topics and aims to ensure coverage of scrutiny across all cabinet portfolios and address any gaps in the overall work programme. The Committee is also the designated Committee for scrutiny of the Public Services Board, and Crime & Disorder Scrutiny.
- 2.2.2 Committee members should review and confirm items for the next and future meetings giving specific consideration to who should attend so that meetings are always well planned and prepared for, e.g. information required and key questions that the Committee wishes to ask.
- 2.2.3 The main item(s) scheduled for the next Committee meeting on 18 May are:
- Crime & Disorder Scrutiny (Safer Swansea Partnership) - Joint Chairs of Safer Swansea Partnership will attend to provide information and take questions on the performance of the Partnership to enable committee to explore plans / objectives, achievements, impact, challenges etc.
- 2.2.4 The Committee will have the opportunity to review priorities and introduce issues of concern as and when they arise, e.g. pre-decision scrutiny or call-in which may require extra meetings.
- 2.2.5 Whilst the initial set of Committee meeting dates, and possible topics, for 2021/22 are shown in Appendix 2 the Committee work plan for the whole of the new municipal year is being developed for agreement. A draft Committee work plan for 2021/22 will be presented to the Committee in due course.
- 2.2.6 Pre-decision scrutiny – this is carried out by the Committee unless delegated elsewhere. The Committee is invited to consider the available information on future cabinet business and any opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny, taking into account strategic impact, public interest, and financial implications (see Cabinet Forward Plan attached as **Appendix 3**). Any requests will require discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) to confirm timescales and window of opportunity for scrutiny involvement. Pre-decision scrutiny enables scrutiny to develop understanding about and ask questions on proposed Cabinet reports to provide 'critical friend' challenge and influence decision-making. The future cabinet report on 'Business Case for the Relocation of the Civic Centre' has already been identified for pre-decision scrutiny and will be scheduled for Committee discussion in accordance with cabinet decision-making timetable.

2.3 Inquiry Panels:

- 2.3.1 Once membership and a convener have been appointed the first task of an Inquiry Panel will be to have a briefing on the issue and then determine the key question and terms of reference for the inquiry. Once the planning stage is complete, the inquiry will be evidence gathering, with the last stage being to develop the final report.

In Progress / Planned	Completed (follow up stage)
1. Procurement (initial meeting of re-convened Panel to be arranged – planned for 24 June 2021)	1. Equalities (followed up 28 Jan & further follow up tba Nov 2021)

2.4 Performance Panels:

- 2.4.1 The following Performance Panels, which will enable regular and structured monitoring of performance within these key areas, have been agreed and will meet on an ongoing basis until otherwise agreed by the Committee (frequency of meetings in brackets):

Performance Panel	Convener
1. Service Improvement & Finance (monthly)	Cllr. Chris Holley
2. Education (monthly)	Cllr. Lyndon Jones
3. Adult Services (every six weeks)	Cllr. Susan Jones
4. Child & Family Services (every six weeks)	Cllr. Paxton Hood-Williams
5. Development & Regeneration (every two months)	Cllr. Jeff Jones
6. Natural Environment (every two months)	Cllr. Peter Jones

- 2.4.2 Performance Panel conveners are scheduled to provide a regular update to the Committee to enable discussion on key activities and impact.

- 2.4.3 The Committee is aware that current COVID-19 pressures on the Council have impacted on Panel meetings, and adjustments will continue to be made to Panel work plans as necessary to reduce burden and alleviate pressures on the organisation at this time as it deals with the pandemic.

2.5 Working Groups:

- 2.5.1 The following Working Groups will be convened during the year ahead, in the order shown:

1. Workforce (29 March)	3. Bus Services
2. Digital Inclusion (11 May)	4. Healthy City

2.6 Regional Scrutiny:

2.6.1 **Education Through Regional Working** - Swansea scrutiny is involved in an informal regional scrutiny arrangement with the six councils participating in the 'Education Through Regional Working' (ERW) school improvement consortium. A Scrutiny Councillor Group has been in existence since 2016 in order to provide challenge to ERW, coordinate scrutiny work across the region and ensure a consistent approach. The Swansea Scrutiny Team is providing support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW via Service Level Agreement. Swansea is represented by the chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and convener of the Education Performance Panel.

2.6.2 **Swansea Bay City Region City Deal** – Swansea scrutiny is also involved in the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee established during 2018/19. This formal arrangement involves three councillor representatives from each of the four Councils involved in the City Deal, meeting to scrutinise the work of the Joint Committee responsible for delivering the City Deal programme. As per Joint Committee Agreement, the Joint Scrutiny Committee is serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council.

3. **Monitoring the Work Programme**

3.1 The Committee is responsible for monitoring progress against the agreed work programme and this includes work undertaken by the informal Panels and Working Groups and findings, to ensure that this work is effective and has the required visibility.

3.2 **Appendix 4a** provides a timetable of all scrutiny activities (projected or actual where dates are known). Lead councillors and officers are also noted within.

3.3 **Appendix 4b** provides a snapshot of progress with all of the Panels and Working Groups established by the Committee and their current position.

3.4 The work programme is kept under constant review by the Committee, with changes made as necessary. The Committee will always retain the flexibility to adapt and re-prioritise the work of scrutiny, to ensure the continued relevance of the programme.

4. **Public Requests for Scrutiny / Councillor Calls for Action**

4.1 None.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Any costs that arise out of work plan activities, for example expenses for witnesses or transport costs, are not envisaged to be significant and will be contained within the existing Scrutiny Budget.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Agreed Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Programme Committee Work Plan 2020/22

Appendix 3: Cabinet Forward Plan

Appendix 4a: Scrutiny Work Programme – Projected Timetable of Activity

Appendix 4b: Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

Appendix 1 – Agreed Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22

New Inquiry Panel (time-limited in-depth scrutiny – six months)	New Working Groups (light-touch scrutiny / one-off meetings)	Performance Panels (ongoing in-depth performance / financial monitoring & challenge)	Issues for Scrutiny Programme Committee (Overall work programme management; discussion of broad range of policy and service issues)
<p>1. Procurement (previous Terms of Reference / Key Question to be reviewed / updated - What is the Council doing to ensure it procures locally, ethically, and greenly while being cost effective and transparent in its practices?)</p> <p>2. Anti-Social Behaviour (Terms of Reference to be agreed by Panel but would focus on how we can reduce anti-social behaviour in our communities, look at factors behind rising anti-social behaviour; inter-agency working, the role of elected members, reporting, etc.)</p> <p>Follow Up of Previous Inquiries:</p> <p>1. Equalities</p>	<p>1. Workforce (how the Council supports health & well-being of staff; issues around home working; staff sickness; staff turnover; use of agency staff, pressures, etc.)</p> <p>2. Digital Inclusion (follow up on previous discussion around digital transformation, the Council's digital inclusion strategy, and how well prepared both the Council and the public is to use and communicate / engage via digital technology to avoid exclusion / poor access, etc.)</p> <p>3. Bus Services (discussion about bus network coverage and levels of service; community transport provision; integration with other forms of transport, etc.)</p> <p>4. Healthy City (exploration of activities, promotion, particularly physical activities, including provision of outdoor sport and activities and opportunities for young people, etc.)</p>	<p>1. Service Improvement & Finance (monthly)</p> <p>2. Education (monthly)</p> <p>3. Adult Services (every 6 weeks)</p> <p>4. Child & Family Services (every 6 weeks)</p> <p>5. Development & Regeneration (every two months)</p> <p>6. Natural Environment (every two months)</p> <p>Specific issues to cover within wider work plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Improvement & Finance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Plan – Review / Progress - Council Byelaws - Budget Scrutiny - Performance Management - Waste Management & Recycling – incl. questioning on fly-tipping experiences & council activity - Welsh Housing Quality Standard • Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 21st Century Schools - Additional Learning Needs - Children Educated at Home - Delivery of Corporate Priorities - Remodelled Education Other Than at School Provision • Adult Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COVID-19 and Community Mental Health - Delivery of Corporate Priorities - Domestic Abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Council response and Recovery Plan / Transformation • Brexit Preparedness • Specific reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children & Young People's Rights Scheme - Corporate Safeguarding - Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty Homelessness Strategy – progress (incl. discussion on Young People's Supported Housing Provision) • Leader Q & A Session(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brexit - Partnership Working - Great Western Gateway • Other Cabinet Member Q & As (issues to pick up): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tbc • Public Services Board • Crime & Disorder (Community Safety) Scrutiny: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incl. Community Cohesion / Hate Crime • Wales Audit Office Reports • Follow Up on Previous Working Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism

Appendix 1 – Agreed Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22

	<p>Reserve List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety (hot spots; work to improve safety; preventative measures; speed controls; safety of cycling routes; partnership working, etc.) • Active Travel (are we meeting obligations of Welsh Government Active Travel Act; encouragement of cycling / walking; particular focus on cycling given experience during pandemic – are we making the most of opportunities to embed increased cycling, etc.) • Accessibility for the Disabled / Elderly (to look into concerns around mobility around city centre and access, e.g. and whether there is sufficient curb dropping to help mobility scooters, and other facilities to improve access and wellbeing, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child & Family Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery of Corporate Priorities - Forced Marriages – Safeguarding issues • Development & Regeneration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Deal and effects of COVID-19 - Delivery of Corporate Priorities - Economic Regeneration Strategy - Foreshore Developments - Historic / Listed Buildings • Natural Environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate Change - Delivery of Corporate Priorities - Environment Bill 2020 Implications - Nature Conservation – regular monitoring of activity and performance 	
<p>Regional Scrutiny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERW (Education through Regional Working) Specific issues to pick up: ERW Replacement organisation – post April 2021 • City Deal (Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee) 			

Scrutiny Programme Committee – Work Plan

ACTIVITY	17 November 2020	15 December 2020	19 January 2021	16 February 2021	16 March 2021	13 April 2021
Scrutiny Work Programme	Draft Work Programme for Agreement					
Cabinet Member Q & A Sessions			Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy (incl. discussion on COVID, Budget, Brexit, Partnership Working)			
Specific Cabinet Member / Officer Reports	COVID-19 Update on Response / Recovery Plan	Public Services Board Annual Report		Active Travel Consultation Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Update / Recovery Plan Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Progress Report 	Scrutiny of Homelessness Strategy
Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Reports		Education		Service Improvement & Finance	Joint Social Services	Development & Regeneration
Pre-decision Scrutiny			Proposed Lease to Mumbles Community Council under the Community Asset Transfer Policy			
Final Scrutiny Inquiry Reports / Follow Up on Scrutiny Recommendations						
Scrutiny Reports to Council				Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20		

ACTIVITY	18 May 2021	15 June 2021	20 July 2021	17 August 2021	21 September 2021	19 October 2021
		New		Municipal		Year
Scrutiny Work Programme	Work Programme Review					
Cabinet Member Q & A Sessions						
Specific Cabinet Member / Officer Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime & Disorder Scrutiny - Safer Swansea Community Safety Partnership 	Scrutiny of Public Services Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business and City Promotion Highways & Engineering, Infrastructure Repairs and Maintenance 	Tourism, Destination Management, and Marketing (incl. Working Group follow up)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID / Recovery & Transformation Plan Progress Update Energy Policy (incl. Generation, Supply & District Heating) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report Litter and Community Cleansing
Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Reports	Natural Environment		Education	Service Improvement & Finance	Adult Services	Child & Family Services
Pre-decision Scrutiny						
Final Scrutiny Inquiry Reports / Follow Up on Scrutiny Recommendations						
Scrutiny Reports to Council	Scrutiny Dispatches Impact Report		Scrutiny Dispatches Impact Report	Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21		Scrutiny Dispatches Impact Report

* denotes extra meeting

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2021 – 2022

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
Leisure Partnerships Annual Report 2019/2020.	To advise Cabinet of the partnership operations of key facilities within the Cultural Services portfolio.	Jamie Rewbridge	Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cabinet	15 Apr 2021	Open
FPR 7 – Local Transport Fund, Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transformation Fund and Active Travel Fund Grants 2021/22.	To confirm the bid for Local Transport Fund, Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transformation Fund and Active Travel Fund Capital Grants and seek approval for expenditure on the proposed schemes and projects in 2021/22.	Chloe Lewis	Cabinet Member - Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management	Cabinet	15 Apr 2021	Open
71 and 72 The Kingsway – Contract Award Report and Business Case (FPR7).	The report sets out the commercial business case and recommendations for contract award	Gareth Hughes	Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cabinet	15 Apr 2021	Fully exempt

Page 72

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2021 – 2022

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
<p>Further Rental Concessions to Support Council Commercial Tenants during the COVID-19 Lockdown.</p>	<p>This report follows a previous Cabinet dated 19th November 2020 which authorised Officers to apply further rent concessions to qualifying Council tenants in order to support them financially during these extended periods of lockdown. To date, qualifying tenants have received support for the following periods:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) 25th March – 24th June - Delegated decision report under FPR19) 2.) 25th June – 2nd August (hospitality only) - Cabinet 3.) 24th October – 8th November ('Firebreak') - Cabinet <p>This report now seeks further authority to extend the rent concessions to cover the period 25th December 2020 to 24th March 2021. This additional financial support will help to mitigate against long term revenue losses & potential 'void' costs, whilst also trying to minimise job losses.</p>	<p>Geoff Bacon</p>	<p>Cabinet Member - Delivery & Operations (Deputy Leader)</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>15 Apr 2021</p>	<p>Fully exempt</p>

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2021 – 2022

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
Dylan Thomas House Scheme.	To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No.7 (Capital Programming and Appraisals) - to authorise and commit the proposed scheme to the Capital Programme.	Elliott Williams	Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cabinet	15 Apr 2021	Fully exempt
Financial Procedure Rule 7 – Local Transport Network Fund Capital Grant 2020/21.	To confirm the revised funding award for Local Transport Network Fund 2020/21 Capital Grant and seek approval for expenditure on the proposed schemes and projects in 2020/21.	Chloe Lewis	Cabinet Member - Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management	Cabinet	15 Apr 2021	Open
Financial Procedure Rule 7 – Local Transport Fund Capital Grant 2020/21.	To confirm the additional funding award for Local Transport Fund 2020/21 Capital Grant and seek approval for expenditure on the proposed schemes and projects in 2020/21.	Chloe Lewis	Cabinet Member - Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management	Cabinet	15 Apr 2021	Fully exempt

Page 74

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2021 – 2022

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
Welsh Government Children & Communities Grant Delivery Plan 21/22.	This report details the delivery and spend plan for Children & Communities Grant 21/22 outlining how services are commissioned to ensure service provision is sustainable, creates efficiencies and improves outcomes for people that use services.	Jane Whitmore	Cabinet Members - Supporting Communities	Cabinet	20 May 2021	Open
Welsh Government Housing Support Grant Delivery Plan 21/22.	This report details the delivery and spend plan for Housing Support Grant 21/22 outlining how services are commissioned to ensure service provision is sustainable, creates efficiencies and improves outcomes for people that use services.	Peter Field	Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care & Community Health Services, Cabinet Member - Homes, Energy & Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	20 May 2021	Open
Copr Bay St. David's Temporary Public Realm.	This report is to agree the temporality and associated conditions of the interim public realm, including the parklet, which will be installed in the St. David's area as part of the Copr Bay programme.	Emma Dakin	Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cabinet	20 May 2021	Open

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2021 – 2022

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
Highway Refurbishment Grant 2021-22.	To confirm the Capital work programme for the Welsh Government Highways Refurbishment Grant	Bob Fenwick	Cabinet Member - Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management	Cabinet	20 May 2021	Open
FPR7 Report - Hafod Copperworks Powerhouse Redevelopment Project Update Report.	To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No.7 (Capital Programming and Appraisals) - to commit and authorise the addition of schemes to the Capital Programme.	Richard Horlock	Cabinet Member - Business Improvement & Performance, Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cabinet	20 May 2021	Fully exempt
Capital Programme Authorisation for the Cefn Hengoed Community Hub Project.	The report will update on the; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress of the project, • Revised timescales, • Current cost plan, and • Updated and approved application for funding to Welsh Government in respect of community learning centres / community hubs capital grant programme, and updated funding strategy. 	Louise Herbert-Evans, Jamie Rewbridge	Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cabinet	20 May 2021	Open

Page 70

Appendix 3 – Cabinet Forward Plan 2021 – 2022

Report Title	Report Summary	Report Author	Portfolio	Decision to be taken by	Date of Expected Decision	Exempt Details
Acquisition of Four Counties, Fabian Way, Port Tennant, for Baldwin’s Bridge Highway Interchange Scheme.	The report seeks approval of the provisionally agreed terms for acquisition of the Four Counties property on Fabian way. The property is acquired on the instruction of the Highways client, and is required as part of the site assembly for the Baldwin’s bridge highway interchange scheme, Fabian Way.	David Turner	Cabinet Member - Delivery & Operations (Deputy Leader)	Cabinet	20 May 2021	Fully exempt

Appendix 4a

Activity / Month	OCT 2020	NOV	DEC	JAN 2021	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
	New municipal year											
PERFORMANCE PANELS:												
Service Improvement & Finance (monthly) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Chris Holley Lead Scrutiny Officer: Michelle Roberts / Emily Davies Lead Cabinet Member: Rob Stewart / Andrew Stevens Lead CMT: Adam Hill / Ben Smith Lead Head of Service: cross-cutting		9	14	20	17 Budget	8	12	10	23	20	24	14
Education (monthly) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Lyndon Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Michelle Roberts Lead Cabinet Member: Jennifer Raynor Lead CMT: Helen Morgan-Rees Lead Head of Service: cross-cutting	22	19	17	21	16 Budget	18	22	13	24	15		1 30
Adult Services (every 6 weeks) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Sue Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Liz Jordan Lead Cabinet Member: Clive Lloyd Lead CMT: Dave Howes Lead Head of Service: Amy Hawkins / Helen St John	20		16 Joint with CFS	26 Joint with CFS	15 Budget Joint with CFS	9	20		2	14		8
Child & Family Services (every 6 weeks) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Paxton Hood-Williams Lead Scrutiny Officer: Liz Jordan Lead Cabinet Member: Elliot King Lead CMT: Dave Howes Lead Head of Service: Julie Davies	28		16 Joint with Adult	26 Joint with Adult	15 Budget Joint with Adult	24		25	22		11	22

Appendix 4a

Activity / Month	OCT 2020	NOV	DEC	JAN 2021	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
	New municipal year											
Development & Regeneration (every 2 months) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Jeff Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Liz Jordan / Emily Davies Lead Cabinet Member: Rob Stewart / Robert Francis-Davies Lead CMT: Martin Nicholls Lead Head of Service: Phil Holmes		3		12 25*		2		11		1		7
Natural Environment (every 2 months) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Peter Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Brij Madahar / Emily Davies Lead Cabinet Member: David Hopkins Lead CMT: Martin Nicholls Lead Head of Service: cross-cutting						22		19	29		31	
WORKING GROUPS:												
Topic 1 - Workforce Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Cyril Anderson Lead Scrutiny Officer: Liz Jordan Lead Cabinet Member: David Hopkins / Clive Lloyd / Andrew Stevens Lead CMT: Adam Hill Lead Head of Service: Sarah Lackenby						29						
Topic 2 – Digital Inclusion Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Lesley Walton Lead Scrutiny Officer: Michelle Roberts Lead Cabinet Member: Andrew Stevens Lead CMT: Adam Hill Lead Head of Service: Sarah Lackenby								11				

Activity / Month	OCT 2020	NOV	DEC	JAN 2021	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
	New municipal year											
Topic 3 – Bus Services Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Lyndon Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Liz Jordan Lead Cabinet Member: Mark Thomas Lead CMT: Martin Nicholls Lead Head of Service: Stuart Davies												
Topic 4 – Healthy City Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Mary Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Liz Jordan Lead Cabinet Member: Clive Lloyd / Robert Francis-Davies Lead CMT: Martin Nicholls? Dave Howes? Lead Head of Service: Tracey McNulty												
REGIONAL SCRUTINY:												
ERW - Education through Regional Working (quarterly) Lead Scrutiny Councillors: Lyndon Jones / Peter Black Lead Scrutiny Officer: Michelle Roberts Lead ERW: Ian Altman / Greg Morgan /Gareth Morgans Lead Cabinet Member: Jennifer Raynor Lead CMT: Helen Morgan-Rees Lead Head of Service: Regional Lead: Phil Roberts (Lead Director for ERW)		26				1			28			

Appendix 4a

Activity / Month	OCT 2020	NOV	DEC	JAN 2021	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
	New municipal year											
Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee (every 2 months) Lead Scrutiny Councillor: Rob James (Carmarthenshire Council) Swansea Scrutiny Councillors: Jan Curtice / Phil Downing / Jeff Jones Lead Scrutiny Officer: Stacy Curran, Neath Port Talbot Council Lead Cabinet Member: Rob Stewart Lead CMT: Phil Roberts / Martin Nicholls Lead Head of Service: Phil Holmes	12				2			25		20		14

* denotes extra meeting

Information correct as of 06/04/21 13:20

Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

1. Inquiry Panels:

These will undertake in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis, and will be expected to take around six months to complete to enable wide-ranging evidence gathering, and production of a final report with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers).

a) **Procurement** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

Key Question: What is the Council doing to ensure it procures locally, ethically, and greenly while being cost effective and transparent in its practices?

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Procurement Pre-Inquiry Working Group originally met on 24 October 2019 for an overview / briefing on the subject matter. This helped Councillors to be informed about how scrutiny can contribute to improvement and the focus, scale and direction of any inquiry. The Panel agreed to undertake an inquiry and the Terms of Reference were agreed. The inquiry work was then placed on hold pending recruitment of Scrutiny Officer / available resources.

The Inquiry Panel will now resume and, given the passage of time and impact of the pandemic, will initially meet to review the key question and terms of reference and amend as necessary. A meeting on 24 June is planned.

The inquiry may take up to six months to complete, as it will call for wide ranging evidence, and will lead to a report with conclusions and recommendations that will be presented to Cabinet.

2. Follow Up on Completed Inquiries:

Follow-ups of inquiries will consider both the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and wider impact / difference made. Inquiry Panels are reconvened between 6-12 months after cabinet decision on Inquiry reports.

Inquiry	Cabinet Decision	Recommendations			Follow Up Panel Meeting
		Agreed	Partly	Rejected	
Equalities	21 Nov 2019	18	0	0	28 Jan 2021 Further follow up tba Nov 2021

3. Performance Panels:

Performance Panels enable regular and structured in-depth monitoring of performance and challenge within these key areas:

a) **Service Improvement & Finance** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

The Panel meets every month. The Panel met on 8 March for discussion on the Mid-Year Budget Statement, Q3 Budget Monitoring and the Treasury Management Strategy Statement. On 12 April the Panel is expected to examine the Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2020/21 and the Planning Annual Performance Report 2020/2021. It should be noted that Corporate Performance Monitoring reports this year have been disrupted by the pandemic.

b) **Education** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

This Panel meets every month. The Panel in March spoke to four pupils and the Headteacher from Bishopston Primary School about their thoughts on remote and blended learning. They also received an update on the Covid impacts in education, looked at the pupil development grant spend and received an update on the current ERW situation. In April the Panel will discuss updates on progress with Additional Learning Needs Reform and the implementation of the New Curriculum in Swansea, they will also review the Estyn Report on the Education Response to the Pandemic.

c) **Adult Services** (convener: Cllr Susan Jones)

This Panel meets every 6 weeks but had not met as a separate panel since October 2020 due to the pandemic. Separate meetings recommenced on 9 March when the Panel received an update on the West Glamorgan Transformation Programme, including the impact of the pandemic on the Programme and the Wales Audit Office Report on the Integrated Care Fund and Action Plan. When the Panel next meets on 20 April it will discuss the Performance Monitoring Report; receive an update on How Council's Policy Commitments translate to Adult Services and discuss Actions from WAO report 'Front door to Adult Social Care', specifically Recommendation: Impact of Preventative Services.

d) **Child & Family Services** (convener: Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams)

This Panel meets every 6 weeks but had not met as a separate panel since October 2020 due to the pandemic. Separate meetings commenced on 24 March when the Panel discussed the Wales Audit Office Report on Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; the Performance Monitoring Report for January 2021 and the Safeguarding Quality Unit Annual Report. The Panel will

meet next on 25 May when it will receive a briefing on the Youth Offending Service and an update on progress with CAMHS.

e) **Development & Regeneration** (convener: Cllr Jeff Jones)

This Panel meets every two months. A progress report appears separately in the agenda as Item No. 7.

f) **Natural Environment** (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

This Panel is scheduled to meet every two months, although there has been some disruption to this schedule due to pressures on Council resources dealing with the pandemic. A Panel meeting took place on 22 March, enabling the Panel to hear about the work of the Nature Conservation Team and current / future projects, and consider priorities for the Panel's future work plan. The Panel will meet next on 19 May to discuss progress on action on Climate Change including feedback following a public consultation exercise by the Council.

4. Regional Scrutiny:

This is collaborative scrutiny with other Local Authorities for topics / issues of shared interest or concern, and models of regional working.

a) **Education Through Regional Working**

The Scrutiny Councillor Group met remotely on 1 March 2021. They met with the Lead Director and the ERW Chief Officers to discuss the effects of Covid on the business of ERW and progress with ERW reform programme. They also discussed the items presented at the ERW Joint Committee on the 9 February. The next meeting will take place on 28 June 2021.

b) **Swansea Bay City Region City**

The Joint Scrutiny Committee met on 2 February to continue City Deal programme monitoring. There was specific discussion on the Life Science & Well-being Campuses Project, Pentre Awel Project, as well as update on City Deal funding / finances. The Committee is expected to meet again on 25 May 2021.

5. Working Groups:

A number of new topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Working Groups. These enable a 'light-touch' approach to specific topics of concern and will be planned as a one-off meeting (in the order shown below) primarily involving discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) / officer(s), and any other persons called, to gather information, ask questions, and give views / raise any concerns.

a) **Workforce** (convener: Cllr Cyril Anderson)

This Working Group met on 29 March 2021 and asked about the impact of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of staff; how the Council is supporting this; issues around home working; staff sickness; staff turnover; use of agency staff and pressures. A range of information was considered by the Working Group, with input from relevant Cabinet Member(s) and officer(s). A letter with the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations will be sent to the relevant Cabinet Members. The Working Group were of the view that a further meeting should be arranged in around six months in order to revisit the topic and consider the latest position, information and experience including the results of the further staff survey that will be carried out by the Council in the coming months.

b) **Digital Inclusion** (convener: Cllr Lesley Walton)

This Working Group will meet on the 11 May. This will enable information, questions and discussion, following up on previous scrutiny discussion around digital transformation, the Council's digital inclusion strategy, and how well prepared both the Council and the public is to use and communicate / engage with increasing dependency on digital technology and interaction, to avoid exclusion / poor access.

c) **Bus Services** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

This will enable information, questions and discussion about bus network coverage and levels of service; community transport provision; integration with other forms of transport, etc.

d) **Healthy City** (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

This will enable information, questions and discussion on Swansea as a healthy city, exploring in particular the provision, and promotion of, outdoor sport and activities and opportunities for young people, etc.

Reserve List:

- Road Safety
- Active Travel
- Accessibility for the Disabled / Elderly

Agenda Item 10



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 April 2021

Scrutiny Letters

Purpose:	To ensure the Committee is aware of the scrutiny letters produced following various scrutiny activities, and to track responses to date.
Content:	The report includes a log of scrutiny letters produced this year, and provides a copy of correspondence between scrutiny and cabinet members where discussion is required.
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the scrutiny letters and responses• Make comments, observations and recommendations as necessary
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer:	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Paul Cridland

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The production of scrutiny letters has become an established part of the way scrutiny operates in Swansea. Letters from the chair (or conveners) allow scrutiny to communicate directly and quickly with relevant cabinet members.
- 1.2 These letters are used to convey views and conclusions about particular issues discussed and provide the opportunity to raise concerns, ask for further information, and make recommendations. This enables scrutiny to engage with Cabinet Members on a regular and structured basis.

2. Reporting of Letters

- 2.1 All scrutiny letters, whether they are written by the Scrutiny Programme Committee or conveners of Panels / Working Groups, are published to ensure visibility, of the outcomes from meetings, across the council and public.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee agenda also includes a copy of letters to/from Cabinet Members where specific discussion is required, e.g. letters relating to the Committee, Working Groups, and Inquiry Panel follow ups. Letters are included when cabinet member responses that were awaited are received or where a scrutiny letter did not require a response.
- 2.3 Where requested Cabinet Members are expected to respond in writing to scrutiny letters within 21 calendar days. The response should indicate what action (if any) they intend to take as a result of the views and recommendations made.
- 2.4 Letters relating to the work of Performance Panels are part of an ongoing dialogue with Cabinet Members and are therefore reported back and monitored by each Panel. However all Performance Panel conveners will provide a progress report to the Committee, including summary of correspondence with Cabinet Members and outcomes.

3. Letters Log

- 3.1 This report contains a log of scrutiny letters produced to enable the committee to maintain an overview of letters activity over the year – see **Appendix 1**. The letters log also shows the average time taken by Cabinet Members to respond to scrutiny letters, and the percentage of letters responded to within timescale.
- 3.2 The following letter(s), not already reported to the Committee, are **attached** for discussion:

	Activity	Meeting Date	Correspondence
a	Committee – COVID Response / Progress with Recovery & Transformation Plan	16 Mar	Letter to Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Letters Log

Appendix 2: Correspondence between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members

Scrutiny Letters Log (2020-2021)

Appendix 1

Ave. Response Time (days): 21 (target within 21 days) % responses within target: 57

No.	Committee / Panel / Working Group	Meeting Date	Main Issue(s)	Cabinet Portfolio	Letter Sent	Response Received	Days Taken
1	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	21-Sep	Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2019/2020	Business Improvement & Performance	02-Oct	23-Oct	21
2	Natural Environment Performance Panel	01-Sep	COVID-19 impacts, issues and environmental lessons	Joint Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management and Delivery & Operations	05-Oct	30-Oct	25
3	Natural Environment Performance Panel	01-Sep	Follow Up - Natural Environment Scrutiny Inquiry	Delivery & Operations	05-Oct	n/a	n/a
4	Natural Environment Performance Panel	01-Sep	Local Flood Risk Management	Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management	05-Oct	n/a	n/a
5	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	14-Sep	Project Update Report	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	06-Oct	04-Nov	29
6	Child & Family Services Performance Panel	16-Sep	Update on COVID-19 in relation to Child & Family Services	Children Services - Early Years	07-Oct	n/a	n/a

7	Education Performance Panel	22-Oct	Update on COVID-19 in relation to Education and opening of schools, work planning.	Education Improvement, Learning & Skills	03-Nov	n/a	n/a
8	Education Performance Panel	22-Oct	Thank you to Education and Schools to Director	Education Improvement, Learning & Skills	03-Nov	n/a	n/a
9	Adult Services Performance Panel	20-Oct	Performance Monitoring and Sickness Levels in Adult Services and work planning	Adult Social Care & Community Health Services	04-Nov	25-Nov	21
10	Child & Family Services Performance Panel	28-Oct	WAO Report follow up review of corporate arrangements for safeguarding of children in Swansea	Children Services	16-Nov	n/a	n/a
11	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	03-Nov	City Centre developments, dashboard updates	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	19-Nov	18-Dec	29
12	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	03-Nov	Dashboard Report (Active Travel) and Landore Metro	Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management	19-Nov	27-Nov	8
13	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	09-Nov	Q1 Budget Monitoring Report, Review of Revenue Reserves, Mid Term Budget Statement	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	25-Nov	14-Dec	19

14	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	09-Nov	Recycling and Landfill Annual Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20	Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management	25-Nov	n/a	n/a
15	Committee	17-Nov	COVID-19 response & recovery	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	03-Dec	n/a	n/a
16	ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group	26-Nov	ERW and Covid Recovery and the ERW into the future	ERW Joint Committee	17-Dec	15-Feb	n/a
17	Education Performance Panel	19-Nov	Waun Wen Primary School and Elective Home Education	Education Improvement, Learning & Skills	09-Dec	n/a	n/a
18	Committee	15-Dec	PSB Annual Report	Chair of Public Services Board	08-Jan	n/a	n/a
19	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	14-Dec	Equality Plan Review 2019/20	Better Communities	11-Jan	01-Feb	21
19	Joint Social Services Performance Panel	16-Dec	Update on Management of Covid-19	Adult Social Care & Community Health Services	11-Jan	n/a	n/a
20	Education Performance Panel	17-Dec	Swansea Skills Partnership and Covid update	Education Improvement, Learning & Skills	12-Jan	03-Feb	22
21	Committee	19-Jan	Pre-decision Scrutiny: Community Asset Transfer to Mumbles Community Council (skatepark)	Joint Delivery & Operations and Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	20-Jan	n/a	n/a

22	Committee	19-Jan	Cabinet Member Q & A Session	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	01-Feb	n/a	n/a
23	Education Performance Panel	21-Jan	Update on Covid Recovery Plan in Education	Education Improvement, Learning & Skills	02-Feb	26-Feb	24
24	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	12-Jan	Dashboard Report	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	02-Feb	26-Feb	24
25	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	12-Jan	Commercial Opportunities in Rural Areas	Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	02-Feb	23-Feb	21
26	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	20-Jan	Budget proposals / Q2 Budget Monitoring Report	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	08-Feb	n/a	n/a
27	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	20-Jan	Q1 Performance Monitoring Report	Business Improvement & Performance	08-Feb	24-Feb	16
28	Equalities Inquiry Panel	28-Jan	Impact/follow up on recommendations agreed	Better Communities	08-Feb	n/a	n/a
29	Joint Social Services Performance Panel	26-Jan	Performance Monitoring and update on management of Covid-19	Adult Social Care & Community Health Services	15-Feb	n/a	n/a
30	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	17-Feb	Annual Budget Proposals	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	17-Feb		
31	Committee	16-Feb	Active Travel Consultation Process	Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management	08-Mar	26-Mar	18

32	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	02-Mar	Project Update Report	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	23-Mar		
33	Development & Regeneration Performance Panel	02-Mar	Discussion with ATG regarding Arena	Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	23-Mar	n/a	n/a
34	Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel	08-Mar	Q3 Budget Monitoring report 2020-21, the Mid-Year Budget Statement 2020-21 and the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	23-Mar		
35	Joint Social Services Performance Panel	15-Feb	Draft Annual Budget and update on management of Covid 19 pandemic	Adult Social Care & Community Health Services	03-Mar	n/a	n/a
36	ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group	01-Mar	ERW and Covid Recovery and the new regional body	ERW Joint Committee	23-Mar		n/a
37	Committee	16-Mar	COVID-19 Response and Progress with Recovery & Transformation Plan	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)	06-Apr	n/a	n/a
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**To/
Councillor Rob Stewart
Cabinet Member for Economy,
Finance & Strategy (Leader)**

BY EMAIL

cc: Cabinet Members

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SPC/2020-21/6

06 April 2021

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Leader of the Council following the meeting of the Committee on 16 March 2021. It is about the Council's COVID-19 response and recovery plan. A response is not required.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 16 March

The Committee is monitoring and challenging Council action in relation to the COVID-19 response and recovery. Thank you for attending the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 16 March 2021. The focus of the meeting was on receiving update on the latest position on how the Council is dealing with COVID-19, and hearing about progress with the Council's Recovery and Transformation Plan 'Swansea – Achieving Better Together'.

The Committee is grateful to the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive for updating the Committee on the current situation and main headlines, and in terms of recovery telling us how things have developed since agreement of the plan by Cabinet last October, and in light of events how the plan is currently shaping.

This letter reflects on what we learnt from the discussion, shares views of the Committee, and highlights any outstanding issues / actions for your response - main issues summarised below.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU
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COVID-19 Latest

We were pleased to hear at the meeting about a steady decline in local case rates helped by continuing lockdown measures, with figures around 34 cases per 100,000 population. Although at the time of writing, we note that the case rate has increased again reminding us that we are not out of the woods.

The Committee was also pleased that the vaccination programme has been running at full pace and current figures indicate that in excess of 170,000 people across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot have received a first dose, with around a third of those having also received a second dose. We asked about the widely reported concerns on the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine and whether there may be an impact on vaccine take up.

It remains a subject of debate whether further peaks will be experienced later in 2021, and will be affected by a range of factors including the impact of vaccinations, decisions about lockdown and release, and the unpredictability regarding possible new variants of concern. There is a view that whilst infections may increase we may see fewer deaths and serious illness with less impact on our health and social care services, but that remains to be seen.

The phased lifting of restrictions has now seen the reopening of our primary schools and secondary schools for a number of year groups, bringing about what could be described as a greater sense of 'normality' despite ongoing restrictions. We note the Welsh Government's plan to further ease restrictions in the coming weeks.

Recovery and Transformation Plan 'Swansea – Achieving Better Together'.

The Recovery and Transformation Plan has replaced the Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the Future Strategy, which was the Council's long-term plan for transformation and change that had been in existence since 2013/14. The new Plan has been borne out of not only current circumstances and impact of the pandemic, but new challenges and opportunities arising from the new Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 as well as a changing national political landscape and economic uncertainty including from both COVID-19 and post-Brexit risks.

We noted that statutory guidance on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 was awaited, which features a range of new developments. This includes: the introduction of a general power of competence; new regional working mechanisms (Corporate Joint Committees); new performance management arrangements (including self-assessment and peer review); commitments to ensuring greater public participation in local democracy; and reforms to electoral arrangements (extending the vote to 16 and 17-year-olds, and foreign citizens who are legally resident in Wales).

The Committee heard that the continued impact of COVID-19 and the Council's necessary response has had an impact on progress since agreement by Cabinet in October 2020. However, there has been an opportunity to review and streamline governance arrangements for the Plan and refine the scope of the five workstreams, which will focus on Care Services, Education & Learning, Economy & Environment, Community Support, and Future Workforce & Equalities. The programme has been aligned to existing groups and meetings to improve efficiency and effectiveness of delivery.

We noted that there is an Organisational Cross-Cutting & Transformation officer Steering Group at the heart of the structure. It was clarified that whilst workstreams and associated sub-groups will have various inputs and involve a range of people and partners, internal and external, this will feed into the usual process of decision-making by Cabinet where required (and be available for scrutiny), with strategic overview and direction from a member / officer Recovery, Reshaping & Budget Strategy Board, ensuring that proper governance is being observed and reporting to appropriate bodies. For example, work carried out under the Economy & Environment workstream to develop COVID economic recovery action plan was being considered by Cabinet in March.

The report presented to the Committee provided a project progress update and description of planned activities / decisions in relation to each workstream. It also showed how Medium Term Financial Plan delivery targets are on target to be delivered for the financial year 2021/22. Overall, we noted that the recovery phase is well underway and that the workstreams are in place and working through the actions associated with their agendas, and that reporting mechanisms and governance boards were also in place.

We acknowledged the responsibility of officers to deliver the agreed Plan, but asked about the role of councillors other than executive members. Although noting the interface with Scrutiny and Audit the Committee queried the involvement of councillors generally and opportunities to input into the recovery work to inform and influence outcomes. We were told that each workstream and individual projects, as work progresses, would include the involvement of councillors through Policy Development Committees and workshops for wider awareness and engagement.

We also asked about specific workstreams and sought clarification on the various groups / organisations that would be involved, e.g. reference to a 'Third Sector Liaison Group' under the Community Support workstream, and Climate Change Working Group under the Economy & Environment workstream. We also highlighted the need for clear linkages between workstreams, e.g. across care services and education where issues may overlap such as transforming mental health services and safeguarding and well-being. Some clarification was also sought about the involvement / engagement with Health across relevant workstreams. We heard there is a

clear commitment to collaborative working (internally and externally, with the public and private sector), something that the COVID experience has strengthened, building on already good relationships between social services and education, and with health, avoiding duplication and making the most of resources so there is a more coherent single system approach to recovery and transformation. We agreed that post-COVID this joint working must not be lost.

Finally, recognition was once again paid to the workforce, in all roles, that together have kept people safe, kept the work of the Council going, supported those in need, and who will deliver the recovery and transformation.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter useful and would welcome any comments, however we do not expect you to provide a formal response.

We will of course return to the Recovery and Transformation Plan and will make arrangements for a progress report to the Committee later in the year, most likely around September 2021.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR PETER BLACK

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

✉ cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 11



Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 April 2021

Date and Time of Upcoming Scrutiny Panel Meetings

13 April – 18 May

- a) 20 April at 4.00pm – Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel
- b) 22 April at 4.00pm – Education Scrutiny Performance Panel
- c) 10 May at 10.00am – Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel
- d) 11 May at 10.00am – Development & Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel
- e) 11 May at 2.00pm – Digital Inclusion Scrutiny Working Group
- f) 13 May at 4.00pm – Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

Meetings will be held remotely via MS Teams