



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 18 January 2022 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
T J Hennegan
W G Lewis
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
P K Jones
S Pritchard
T M White

Councillor(s)

D W Helliwell
H Lawson
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	Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy (Leader)
Councillor Andrea Lewis	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)
Councillor Andrew Stevens	Cabinet Member for Business Improvement and Performance
Keith Reid	Executive Director – Public Health

Officer(s)

Marlyn Dickson	Strategic Change Programme Manager
Julie Gosney	Partnership and Involvement Team Manager
Adam Hill	Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Resources
David Howes	Director of Social Services
Kate Jones	Democratic Services Officer
Sarah Lackenby	Chief Digital and Transformation Officer
Brij Madahar	Scrutiny Team Leader
Helen Morgan-Rees	Director of Education
Martin Nicholls	Director of Place
Debbie Smith	Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Jane Whitmore	Strategic Lead Commissioner

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): C E Lloyd
C Bija (PSB Scrutiny Co-optee), S Harrop-Griffiths (Director of Strategy, Swansea Bay University Health Board)

83 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 Sam Pritchard – Minute No. 88 – Councillor Sam Pritchard declared a personal and prejudicial interest and withdrew from the meeting for the item.

84 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.

85 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on the 14 December 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

86 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

87 Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board.

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader), the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Service Transformation (Deputy Leader), the Deputy Chief Executive, the Executive Director – Public Health, the Strategic Lead Commissioner and the Partnership & Involvement Team Manager were all present for Scrutiny of the Swansea Public Services Board.

The key focus was on the Public Services Board (PBS) Annual Report 2020/21, and specific discussion on the Early Years and Live Well Age Well PSB Well-being Objectives. A verbal address was given by representatives, further to the written report, including the following points: -

- The PSB Joint Committee had been improving baseline data, it was developing a new well-being assessment and a new framework that would support the reporting of performance
- The Joint Committee had agreed a scoping matrix to ensure clarity around objectives and projects being worked on in terms of the contribution of the PSB and involvement of the Joint Committee
- The past year or so had been dominated by Covid-19 response, impacting on its work
- Substantial work had been undertaken across the Live Well, Age Well and Early Years delivery groups, and reference was made to: -
 - Children's Rights Scheme
 - Children's Rights Network
 - Work ongoing to make Swansea an age friendly City
 - Age Well Steering Group

- Recruitment of a Partnership and Involvement Officer
- Engagements and consultations
- Safeguarding and Equality in the LGBTQ+ Community
- Work had commenced on encouraging voting at 16+

Questions and discussions focussed on the following: -

- Performance framework and management arrangements to evidence the difference the PSB is making as well as the reporting of achievements and outcomes of meetings
- Improvement of baseline data under the well-being assessment
- Development of a framework to support the reporting of performance
- Improved model for delivering and measuring success – hard and softer key performance indicators and the perception progress tracker for partners
- A scoping matrix had been agreed to ensure work streams and objectives were clear
- Some examples of improvements / initiatives implemented were reported such as – Commitment to Human Rights City, culture of community, mental health agenda, climate emergency and nature emergency, improvements on High Street, strengthening relationships with partners and funding from Natural Resources Wales
- Public visibility of the work of the PSB and better engagement with the public
- Arrangements for processing and using opinions collected in engagements events
- Effect of new distributor road on the air quality in Hafod – seen a 30% reduction in NO₂ since its opening in 2016 (this figure excluded the reduced traffic due to Covid-19) and a 28% reduction in traffic through Hafod on Neath Road in the first 2 years of opening
- Success of Men's Shed Scheme and Active Travel Scheme with increasing importance on green spaces
- Future of the Bay Hospital – extension of the temporary planning permission

The Chair thanked all Members, Officers and Board Members.

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

88 Pre-Decision Scrutiny - Covid Recovery and Investment.

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader), the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Service Transformation (Deputy Leader), the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement & Performance and Officers were all present for the Committee's consideration of the cabinet report on 'Covid Recovery and Investment'

The report contained a collection of investments and sums of money that were proposed to support a number of critical initiatives including infrastructure on the Council's IT systems to ensure resilience with movement to the Cloud. There were monies towards additional play areas across the City as well as some investments to offset some pressures which had arisen from Covid

Questions and discussions focussed on the following: -

- The delay to the implementation of the Oracle upgrade and impact on the programme and costs. It was clarified that the £3.62m investment was in addition to previous budget for the programme of £4.8m therefore would represent a total spend of just under £8.5m – It was not expected to rise further providing no further variants or unforeseen issues arose
- Impact of Covid – approx. £1 Million pounds was required for additional licences as well as the need for the provision of more devices to enable people to work from home. Systems had to be designed to provide support for businesses, administer grants, systems for payment of school meals, online payments for housing with housing portal being launched shortly etc., which all took priority over the Oracle upgrade as well as all the systems required by the Welsh Government such as Test, Trace Protect
- The resilience of the digital infrastructure and IT systems - the Oracle system was the last in a series of necessary upgrades and that all major / critical corporate systems were as robust as they could be, with resilience and recovery / continuity plans in place
- Method for the proposed investment in Skate Park Facilities across the Council area – A survey of existing facilities was being carried out by officers and interest would be invited from local councillors regarding facilities in due course, but a strategic approach would be taken to ensure effective use of funds, with facilities where there was clear demand for them. It was suggested that the feasibility of a mobile facility be included in any options for appraisal which could be shared by areas across the Swansea
- Assumptions about the longer-term of home working beyond the pandemic, and the implications for the Council in terms of future office space and associated costs – It was expected that the Council would continue with the Agile working policy with a mix of office and home working
- The Committee heard that there continued to be demand for the development of private office space
- Move to web-based telephony system – ability for the public to contact officers

The Chair thanked Members and Officers.

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee writes to the Leader, outlining the views of the Committee ahead of Cabinet on 20 January 2022.

89 Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities - Q & A Session with Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy (Councillor Rob Stewart).

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader) and the Deputy Chief Executive were present for the Scrutiny of his Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities.

Questions and Discussions focussed on the following: -

- Brexit - Expected implications for Swansea and impact on funding for Swansea with the replacement of the EU Structural Funds with the Shared Prosperity Fund anticipated that it would have a large negative impact on the economy overall. It was estimated that around £100 Million had been lost in funding in Swansea through various partners. Detail on the Shared Prosperity Funds was still awaited
- City Centre – progress / update on empty shops / units in the City Centre particularly Debenhams and the Quadrant Shopping Centre – The Committee heard that all City Centres have been hit by Covid and national companies failing. Swansea had weathered a significant amount of that and the numerous investments ongoing around the City were helping to make Swansea an attractive place to invest. There were 7 vacant stores in the Quadrant, 4 of which have now been re-let and discussions were ongoing in respect of Debenhams
- Increasing footfall in the City Centre - student accommodation, office accommodation including Palace Theatre, Princess Way further office accommodation, re-location of Civic Centre, community hub, private sector investments accompanied with events that can be held at the new arena, Albert Hall as well as the Brangwyn Hall, Liberty Stadium and Singleton Park as well as other venues such as Public Realms, Castle Gardens and Wind Street that will also add to Swansea's offering
- Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro Programme – outline and timescales
- Re-imaging of Wind Street –£3 million public realm improvement scheme aiming to expand the appeal of the area and provide a safer, more accessible and attractive environment.
- Installation of 70 air quality monitoring sensors which use digital technology to monitor and understand air quality, and use of the information from these sensors to inform decisions and potential future transport planning
- Update on progress in relation to the future of the housing estates on Heol Emrys and Tudno Place in Penlan and the masterplan – Consultations and engagement to continue from Spring 2022
- Provision of Hotels in Swansea and the miscommunication regarding the housing of refugees at the Dragon Hotel

The Chair thanked all Members and Officers.

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee writes to the Leader, outlining the views of the Committee.

90 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Education (Councillor Lyndon Jones, Convener).

Councillor Lyndon Jones, Convener, presented the Education Performance Panel Update Report and highlighted that the Panel, amongst other work, has been keeping a focus on: -

- The City Deal Skills & Talent project, and concerns about the opportunities for children to learn the right skills in schools to access jobs to support all City Deal projects
- The performance of those children eligible for free school meals

The Convener thanked teachers, head teachers and staff for all their hard work.

The Chair thanked the Convenor for the report.

Resolved that the update be noted.

91 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

The Chair presented a report on the Membership of Scrutiny Panel and Working Groups. No changes were indicated.

Resolved that the report be noted.

92 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Chair presented a report on the Scrutiny Work Programme.

The next Scrutiny Programme Committee was scheduled for 15 February 2022. The main item scheduled was Crime and Disorder Scrutiny – Safer Swansea Partnership.

The Chair provided an update on a public request for scrutiny regarding difficulties for those without off street parking to charge electric vehicles at home. There was no immediate action required in terms of scrutiny, however he suggested that the Committee may wish to scrutinise the Council's draft strategy for implementing electric vehicle charge points, which will take into account the issue of on street charging as part of the strategy, as it becomes available. This would be a matter for after the Local Government Elections in May.

Resolved that the report be noted.

93 Scrutiny Letters.

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

Resolved that the Scrutiny Letters be noted.

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

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

Letter to Cabinet Member - Pre-decision Scrutiny

The meeting ended at 6.01 pm

Chair