

Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups / Regional Scrutiny

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 that will be presented to Cabinet (and / or other decision-makers).

a) **Anti-Social Behaviour** (convener: Cllr Terry Hennegan)

Key Question: *How can the Council ensure that it is working with its partners to appropriately and effectively tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in Swansea?*

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The final report was presented to Cabinet on the 21 December 2023. Cabinet will now consider the recommendations and provide a response, which is due to be discussed at Cabinet in April.

b) **Community Assets** (convener: Cllr Stuart Rice)

Key Question: *How can the Council ensure that its community assets are working to provide the best outcomes for the people of Swansea?*

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Inquiry key question and Terms of Reference were agreed by the Panel on 1 February, following an initial overview / briefing session, hearing from lead Cabinet Member(s) and Officer(s). The Panel is now ready to commence evidence gathering, starting with a session on 11 March with information / discussion around aspects of asset transfer including finance and legal aspects, due diligence, risks, main barriers, and guidance and support.

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	
Procurement	20 Oct 2022	14	0	0	24 Oct 2023 (MONITORING COMPLETE)

3. Performance Panels:

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

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

This Panel meets every month. At their meeting on 13 February the Panel carried out pre-decision scrutiny of the Annual Budget, Medium-Term Financial Plan and other associated budgets.

On 12 March the Panel will hear about the Councils response to the Audit Wales Report – “Cracks in the Foundations” Building Safety in Wales. They will also receive an update on the 71-72 The Kingsway project and receive a briefing on the achievements against Corporate Priorities / Objectives / Policy Commitments for Development and Regeneration.

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

This Panel meets every month. A detailed progress report appears in the agenda under Item 8.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. On 12 February a Joint Social Services Panel meeting was held to discuss the Annual Budget in relation to Social Services and Tackling Poverty.

The next Panel meeting will be held on 20 March and will discuss the West Glamorgan Transformation Programme, the latest Performance Monitoring Report and receive a briefing on the Annual Review of Charges (Social Services) 2023-24.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At its meeting on 12 March the Panel looked at the latest Performance Monitoring Report, received a briefing on the Youth Offending Service and discussed the Complaints

and Compliments Annual Report 2022-23 for both Child and Family Services and Adult Services. Adult Services Panel Members were also invited for this item.

On 1 May the Panel will discuss Delivery of the Corporate Priorities/Policy Commitments in relation to Child and Family Services and receive a briefing on the CIW Inspection Report on Ty Nant. The Panel will also undertake a review of the year.

e) **Climate Change & Nature** (convener: Cllr Sara Keeton)

This Panel meets every two months. At its meeting on 30 January the Panel discussed Public Electric Vehicle Charging Provision.

The meeting on 19 March will receive an Annual Update on Local Flood Risk Management and discuss Air Quality Management.

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) **Partneriaeth - Regional Education Partnership**

Partneriaeth Scrutiny is expected to take place every school term, mirroring meetings of the Partneriaeth Joint Committee.

The Partneriaeth Regional Scrutiny Councillor Group met on the 26 February 2024 where they discussed the Partneriaeth financial affairs, risk management and governance arrangements. They also looked at progress with Partneriaeth Priority 3 – Support schools and educational settings to develop of research and enquiry schools as a key part of their own professional learning. This included looking at an example of a National and Professional Enquiry Project (NPEP) with the NPEP Lead teacher at Heol Goffa Special School in Llanelli.

b) **Swansea Bay City Region City Deal**

The Joint Scrutiny Committee usually meets every two months. As well as overall programme / project monitoring including the latest financial position, the meeting on 13 February 2024 included an update on progress on the Innovation Matrix Project and the outcomes of a recent external Gateway Review, and a report on Carbon Reduction Assessment of the Swansea Bay City Deal Portfolio.

The next meeting takes place on 16 April 2024, and is expected to include updates on specific projects including: 'Homes as Power stations' and 'Pembroke Dock'.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee is supported by Scrutiny Officers in Neath Port Talbot Council and agendas / minutes of meetings can be found on-line:

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=417>

c) **South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

The CJC Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee will meet at least quarterly. The meeting held on 16 January 2024 was focussed on Quarterly Budget Monitoring and the CJC Draft Budget for 2024/25. An extra meeting took place on 15 February for discussion on the Regional Transport Plan.

The meeting scheduled for 12 March was cancelled.

The Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee is supported by Scrutiny Officers in Neath Port Talbot Council and agendas / minutes of meetings can be found on-line:

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=499>

5. **Working Groups:**

A number of 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) **Public Rights of Way** (convener: Councillor Mike White)

This Working Group was held on 22 November receiving an overview on Public Rights of Way across Swansea (mapping / numbers) and issues; impact on Public Rights of Way from developments; effect on communities, etc. The letter from the Working Group, reflecting on the meeting with its view and recommendations, to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure and the Cabinet Member's response were reported to the Committee on 16 January. The Committee will follow up on this work in the next 12 months.

b) **Customer Contact** (convener: Councillor Peter Black)

This Working Group took place on 23 February, enabling information, focussed questioning & discussion on the user experience when contacting the Council / accessing services whether by telephone or on-line / though digital means; provision for offline and on-line contact; effectiveness of Council Contact Centre; on-going actions to improve digital inclusion / access; quality of website, etc. Views and recommendations arising from the session will be communicated via letter to the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation, and reported, along with response, to the Committee in due course. The meeting was

convened by Cllr Peter Black in place of Cllr Joe Hale who was unable to attend due to illness.

c) **Community Growing** (convener: Councillor Michael Locke)

This will enable information, focussed questioning & discussion around Council activity / support to Community Growing, with examples (e.g., allotments) and experience; benefits / success; including focus on schools / children & young people; and its contribution to health & well-being, etc. A date for this Working Group has not yet been set.