

## Report of the Chair

### Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 April 2014

#### CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION

<b>Purpose</b>	To enable the committee to question the Leader of the Council, Councillor David Phillips, on his work, having specific responsibility and accountability as the Cabinet Member for Anti Poverty.
<b>Content</b>	Councillor Phillips will attend to participate in a question and answer session. The committee's questions will broadly explore key activities and achievements as well as current developments, in relation to portfolio responsibilities.
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Question the Cabinet Member on relevant matters</li><li>• Make comments, observations and recommendations as necessary</li></ul>
<b>Lead Councillor(s)</b>	Councillor Mike Day, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	Dean Taylor, Director – Corporate Services
<b>Report Author</b>	Brij Madahar, Overview & Scrutiny Coordinator Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: <a href="mailto:brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk">brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk</a>

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 One of the most important roles that scrutiny carries out is holding the council's cabinet to account. By acting as a 'critical friend' scrutiny has the opportunity to challenge the cabinet and individual cabinet members on their actions and monitor performance in relation to their areas of responsibilities. The Scrutiny Programme Committee has scheduled a session with all cabinet members over the course of the year in order to ask questions on their work.
- 1.2 Councillor David Phillips has been requested to attend this meeting to enable the committee to explore the work he has done in his role as Cabinet Member for Anti Poverty.

#### 2. Anti Poverty Portfolio

- 2.1 According to the Council Constitution the Anti Poverty portfolio includes the following areas of responsibility:

- a. Social Inclusion;
- b. Community Regeneration / Communities First;
- c. Child Poverty Forum;
- d. Links to Children & Young People and Area Committees.

### **3. Approach to Questions**

3.1 At the Cabinet Member Question Sessions the committee will generally ask cabinet members about:

- portfolio developments, key activities and achievements
- significant decisions that have been made and impact / difference made
- headlines with regard to the performance of services within the portfolio
- how they are measuring improvement and success
- their engagement with service users / public and what influence this has had
- what they hope to achieve over the next 12 months (plans / priorities)
- challenges in the months ahead (e.g. resources / budget)

3.2 The Cabinet Member will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the committee. Following the session the chair will write the Cabinet Member in order to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the committee, and any actions for the Cabinet Member to consider.

3.3 If the committee wishes to conduct more detailed scrutiny of any of the issues raised during this item then this should be agreed through the normal work planning process and planned for a future meeting. This will also allow proper time for preparation.

### **4. Recent Correspondence with Councillor Phillips**

4.1 Although Councillor Phillips attended the committee meeting on 28 October in his role as both Leader and Cabinet Member for Anti-Poverty, this further session has been arranged because the committee did not have sufficient time to be able to fully explore his work as Cabinet Member for Anti-Poverty.

4.2 The committee wrote to Councillor Phillips following the 28 October meeting, including some comments made about anti poverty and the target area approach. This letter was replied to by Councillor Phillips and led to a further letter exchange on the issues raised by scrutiny. This correspondence is ***attached*** for background information.

4.3 The main issues that the committee have been in discussion with Councillor Phillips about, and were interested in exploring further, were in relation to the management and monitoring of performance, e.g.:

- the allocation of resources and expectations about the impact of the target areas approach / difference it will make
- having clear objectives and measurable outcomes so that it is possible to check that things are heading in the right direction.
- value for money and measures of success in the short, medium and long term
- demonstrating the link between activity, improvement and outcomes

## **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

1 April 2014

Legal Officer: Nigel Havard  
Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley