

Appendix 6b - Annual Stakeholder Survey 2014
Councillors

All councillors received a copy of the annual stakeholder survey. 31 councillors completed the survey. The results were analysed and the results were as follows.

1. Are you a:

Councillor – Cabinet Member - 0

Councillor – Non Executive Member - 100% (31)

Scrutiny Arrangements

The scrutiny function is delivered through the work of the Scrutiny Programme Committee together with a number of topic-based Scrutiny Inquiry and Performance Panels, and Working Groups.

2. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
a. The scrutiny arrangements are working well.	6.9% (2)	65.5% (19)	20.7% (6)	6.9% (2)
b. Scrutiny works in a cross cutting fashion and not restricted to departmental silos.	10% (3)	76.7% (23)	6.7% (2)	6.7% (2)
c. Non-executive members have good opportunities to participate in scrutiny.	43.3% (13)	46.7% (14)	6.7% (2)	3.3% (1)
d. I have a good understanding of the work of scrutiny.	33.3% (10)	63.3% (19)	3.3% (1)	0
e. Scrutiny has a positive impact on the business of the Council.	21.4% (6)	50% (14)	17.9% (5)	10.7% (3)

Methods of Working

i) 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. It also holds formal questioning sessions with Cabinet Members and its work may cover a broad range of policy and service issues.

3a.. Have you been a member of the Scrutiny Programme Committee?

Yes - 63.3% (19)

No - 36.7% (11)

3b. If yes, how useful has the work of the committee been?

Very useful – 47.4% (9)
Fairly useful - 47.4% (9)
Not very useful – 5.3% (1)
Not at all useful - 0

ii) Inquiry Panels undertake in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern. These are expected to take up to six months and will result in a final report being published with conclusions and recommendations, informed by the evidence gathered, that is presented to cabinet for decision.

4a. Have you been a member of an Inquiry Panel?

Yes – 90% (27)
No – 10% (3)

4b. If yes, how useful have you found this way of working?

Very useful – 44.4% (12)
Fairly useful - 44.4% (12)
Not very useful – 11.1% (3)
Not at all useful - 0

iii) Performance Panels provide in-depth monitoring and challenge for clearly defined service areas. Performance panels are expected to have ongoing correspondence with relevant cabinet members in order to share views and recommendations, arising from monitoring activities, about services.

5a. Have you been a member of a Performance Panel?

Yes – 53.3% (16)
No – 46.7% (14)

5b. If yes, how useful have you found this way of working?

Very useful - 37.5% (6)
Fairly useful - 62.5% (10)
Not very useful - 0
Not at all useful - 0

iv) Scrutiny Working Groups provide opportunity for one-off meetings for 'light touch' scrutiny of a topic of interest, resulting in a letter to relevant cabinet member(s) with views and recommendations.

6a. Have you been a member of a Scrutiny Working Group?

Yes - 79.3% (23)
No - 20.7% (6)

6b. If yes, how useful have you found this way of working?

Very useful – 47.8% (11)

Fairly useful – 34.8% (8)
Not very useful – 13% (3)
Not at all useful – 4.3% (1)

Scrutiny Dispatches

Scrutiny Dispatches is a short monthly summary of the work of scrutiny which is reported to each council meeting. It aims to provide headlines, for example, key outcomes, findings, and events, typically with one major story each time.

7. Do you read Scrutiny Dispatches?

Yes – 90% (27)
No – 10% (3)

8. Do you share Scrutiny Dispatches?

Yes – 23.3% (7)
No – 76.7% (23)

9. Do you have any suggestions that would make Scrutiny Dispatches more effective?

The comments received were analysed and the following themes emerged:

- Make it into an insert/supplementary for the Swansea Leader.
- I believe there should be more outcomes generated by the process.
- I would like to see more contact involvement with server user groups linked to the Council, and analyse their comments/views on how they see us providing the services to them and have their quotes included in the Scrutiny Dispatches, for all members to see
- The dispatches are very detailed. That is good for Councillors, but they are too wordy to share the information with outside organisations which might just like a summing up sheet.
- Glossier production with images.
- It should be spoken about at Council
- Make available to Community Council's to keep them informed.
- Put onto the Council's website to keep public aware of the things being carried out to improve services.
- Dispatches are for information only. I believe the chairman of scrutiny programme committee should take questions from the chamber
- More public engagement

Officer Support

10. How would you rate the level of support you receive from the scrutiny team? Please tick ONE box

Excellent - 30% (9)
Very good – 53.3% (16)
Good – 10% (3)
Satisfactory – 6.7% (2)
Poor - 0

11. How could the scrutiny support be improved?

The comments received were analysed and the following themes emerged:

- The Team are doing a first class job.
- More resources
- I just feel that the team work has helped me get a greater understanding of the issues and I am grateful for the chance to dig deeper into the problems. It takes time to gain the knowledge of the situation and I don't know that it needs improving - just homework!
- Scrutiny website needs to be promoted. After scrutinising cabinet members, it would be useful to briefly discuss our views together.
- As meetings are not all held in the Civic Centre, printed documentation needs to be in the councillors pigeon holes a week in advance of meetings to ensure they are picked up.
- It needs to be support, not direction.

Training & Development

12. Do you have any training and development needs that you feel would assist you in your role as a Scrutiny Committee/Panel member? Please tick ONE box

Yes I do have training and development needs	- 16.7% (5)
I am ok at the moment but I would like to receive information on any future opportunities	- 66.7% (20)
No I do not have any training and development needs	- 13.3% (4)
N/A	- 3.3% (1)

13. If you do have any training and development needs? Please give further detail below.

The following comments were received:

- I think refresher training is very important
- Chairing
- Training on how to question strategically.
- Better understanding of the work of social services, the remits of different sections, access arrangements etc.
- Serious finance. I am particularly interested in understanding the parts of the Council's Finance Reports that never get discussed properly.
- I think we all have development needs and should have continuous training to keep up with scrutiny needs

Suggestions for the Scrutiny Work Programme

All councillors are encouraged to contribute ideas about future topics for scrutiny. If there is an issue of concern where scrutiny could make a difference please let us know. A Scrutiny Work Planning Conference will take place in May and your ideas will be considered and prioritised to ensure the future scrutiny work programme is effective and focussed on the right things.

14. Do you have any suggestions of topics for in-depth inquiries? If so, please indicate why?

The following comments were received:

- Council debt control and internal money management
- Does the culture within the Local Authority lend itself to ongoing performance improvement?
- Should we introduce a scrutiny topic on lifestyle?
- Front line services public comment regarding overlap with departments providing certain works being carried out by the Council.
- Communities First. It has been the Welsh Government flagship anti poverty programme for over a decade and I would like to find out if it is value for money or if we, as a council could use the money better.
- Education. I am concerned that the schools are not giving the children all the tools needed for competing in a very competitive world
- Library services
- Science Parks
- Roads- state of- why are they like they are, do we understand why, what are the prospects for improvement. Is their state a genuine function of resources- are they as good as the can be in the current climate or not.
- Building Corporate Services
- Charges of HRA
- School repairs and community centres etc. and housing cooperatives
- Renewable Energy Policy

15. Do you have any suggestions of areas for in-depth performance / financial monitoring? If so, please indicate why?

The following comments were received:

- The cost of pot hole repairs and why they take so long and who is doing them
- Do we have enough metrics to allow us to establish baselines for measurement?
- Costs to our own premises users, i.e. schools. community centres etc, when work is being carried out in house.
- Financial monitoring should be made on all major schemes of over £10m e.g. Boulevard, Morryston Comp etc.

16. Do you have any suggestions of topics for one-off Working Groups? If so, please indicate why?

The following comments were received:

- Highways, concerns regarding the lack of consultation with utility companies and Council, for programmed work we need to work more smarter with them to provide the public with value for money and job satisfaction.
- Tend & Mend to find out how it works, and can it work better as in my experience long waiting time
- Litter / Fly Tipping Hotspots look into feasibility of having a list which the NEAT & Probationer teams can address on a regular basis
- Housing benefit forms and council tax forms
- Renewable energy policy as there are too many myths surrounding the issue

Improvement

17. Do you have any suggestions about how scrutiny could be improved or further comments?

The following comments were received:

- We need to go back and look at the reason for scrutiny and who should run it. It is pointless have a scrutiny panel which looks into the nuts and bolts of a subject and then is not concerned with the overall input from the cabinet member. The role is one of holding the executive to account not one of looking trying to run the departments, many members are looking for the smallest detail instead of looking at the overall picture.
- We need to have set time scales and agenda time in the diaries, and much more public participation.
- Make sure any recommendations are followed up. Presently any recommendations from the Boards/Panels are reviewed by the Scrutiny Programme Committee. Prior to that they came back to their own Scrutiny Board for follow up after 6 months. There is no accountability.
- More training is needed for member on the councils key services such as education, social services and corporate services to enable more detailed scrutiny
- Continue to work with national bodies to keep improving scrutiny e.g. WLGA, WAO, Welsh Government, bench marking with other Local Authority's.
- I don't like the way Scrutiny is governed by the Scrutiny Programme Committee. It will only work well with a good chair.
- Yes make it clear when the panels will meet so I can get on the ones I can get too. (Maybe we should have a mixture of day and evening shift panels so Councillors with day jobs can volunteer for the ones they know they can get to).
- Inquiry topics are very wide ranging and under the current approx 6 month time scale result in having to assess a large amount of evidence in too tight a time. I feel this hinders the process of being as robust as it could. Ideally I would recommend tighten the remit so that the scope is no more than on side of A4. Alternatively vary the length of time it takes to be carried out, shorter and longer. At the recent scrutiny workshop two examples were highlighted as ones to follow, one taking years to complete, and the other took the form of an all day conference.
- Evidence collected may lead the inquiry in another direction so also recommend that the scope does not prescribe everything that the inquiry is going to carry out, but only puts forward suggestions which can be altered as the inquiry progresses.
- Involve all the panel in the scoping process, not just the convenor and officer. This will ensure that everyone owns it, and understands it, right from the outset.
- More scrutiny committees chaired by opposition councillors

18. Any other comments?

The following comments were received:

- Scrutiny should be an evolving process and should look at making improvements as necessary.
- Scrutiny is not working in its present form. A lot of work is being done by a few Councillors. When it was done by proportion you had a better mix and accountability. Scrutiny has no teeth.
- Overall do feel this one committee system is a great improvement on the previous fixed committee approach as it allows far greater flexibility.
- More than happy with staff support. I have already stated I would put my name to any recognition/awards etc.