

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA ON MONDAY
7 JULY 2014 AT 4.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor A M Day (Chair) presided

Councillor(s):

A M Cook
D W Cole
A C S Colburn
J P Curtice
N J Davies

Councillor(s):

V N Evans
E W Fitzgerald
J E C Harris
T J Hennigan

Councillor(s):

J W Jones
P M Meara
R V Smith
M Thomas

Co-opted Members:

D Anderson-Thomas
S Joiner

Officers:

N Havard - Directorate Lawyer
D McKenna - Overview and Scrutiny Manager
B Madahar - Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator
J Parkhouse - Democratic Services Officer

19. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Downing and A J Jones.

20. **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interests were declared:

Councillor E W Fitzgerald - Minute No. 27 - Scrutiny Letters - Trustee of the Penllergaer Trust - personal.

Councillor J E C Harris - Minute No. 23 - Cabinet Member Question Session - Governor of Pontarddulais School - personal.

21. **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.

22. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 9 June 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

The Committee were updated on the following:

Scrutiny Letters

Letter to the Cabinet Member for Place following discussion on 9 June was sent on 1 July 2014.

Scrutiny Annual Report

The Scrutiny Annual report is scheduled to be presented to Council on 9 September

Wellbeing Performance Panel

The Chair will be meeting with Cllr Hood-Williams to discuss issues relating to the operation of the Wellbeing Panel and consider a way forward

WAO Report – Good Scrutiny? Good Question!

A date is being arranged for WAO to attend the committee to discuss the recent audit report and implications for scrutiny practice in Swansea.

23. **CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION - CABINET MEMBER FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Committee took the opportunity to question Councillor Mitch Theaker on his work, having responsibility and accountability as Cabinet Member for Opportunities for Children and Young People.

The Cabinet Member provided an update to the portfolio work he had undertaken, providing details on UNCRC, Youth Offending Service, Fair Credit, Youth Support Services, Stone Wall Cymru and the Play Service. He also highlighted a number of areas of work undertaken.

Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee (07.07.2014) Cont'd

The Committee asked questions in relation to the portfolio objectives and developments, focussing on key activities, achievements and impact.

In response to Members' and public questions the Cabinet Member for Opportunities for Children and Young People confirmed that:

- Playgrounds are assessed on a red, amber, green basis with regards to standards. Red meaning it needed attention, amber they were nearly not fit for purpose and green they were fit for purpose. The Labour Group had committed £300,000 across the Authority in its 100 days policy using the red, amber and green system.
- Every year play sufficiency is assessed throughout the Authority by Swansea University and this outlines what provision is required by the Council. The sufficiency test undertaken by Swansea University is publicly available. Swansea University undertake a mapping process where it is clear where play facilities exist/do not exist within the Authority.
- Under the UNCRC policy, the Authority had a duty to provide play.
- Quality play equipment is very expensive and the Authority does offer small grants to organisations.
- Many planning applications include Section 106 Agreements to upgrade play facilities. However, facilities will not achieve the green standard without a huge influx of money.
- It had been recognised that there were access and transport problems particularly for children aged between 9 and 12 and the Authority had been actively involved in improving this situation.
- The Authority had encountered difficulties in accessing European funding and it seemed likely that some services will cease. Future funding was dependent upon the bid submitted.
- The core funding for Youth Services was not being reduced and overall funding had only reduced by £11,000 since 2011/12. This had affected three youth clubs. However, the Council was in consultation with young people and also received funding from Friendship House. Furthermore, the Authority was recruiting outreach workers for youth clubs and significant work had been completed in Morriston where a new youth club had commenced. The website address for the Youth Services would be circulated to all Councillors.

Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee (07.07.2014) Cont'd

- The regionalisation of the Youth Offending Service saw the City and County of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Bridgend County Borough Council combining under Western Bay and this has achieved significant savings. Bridgend Council was very keen to lead the project and the Western Bay Project Board supported their request. The combined service will lead to better outcomes and more efficient services. The merger was very simple but the Council will continue to deliver local services with local teams.
- The Authority was the first authority within the UK to adopt the UNCRC and a clear process for complaints exists that will deal with the issues raised. The Authority was also preparing to progress to the next stage of the process.
- Consultation regarding UNCRC had made an impact upon budget discussions and the Authority will monitor the impact upon the decision making process.
- The Chair referred to the Children and Young People's Rights Scheme Report scheduled for Cabinet on 29 July 2014 and requested that this report be presented to the next meeting to enable the committee to give views.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the Chair of the Committee writes a letter to the Cabinet Member reflecting on the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee;
- (2) the Cabinet Member:
 - (a) circulate the web address to information about youth club provision across the City & County of Swansea committee members and provide a list of youth clubs which have closed and the reason why;
 - (b) confirm whether play provision supported by community councils is included in the play sufficiency assessment;
 - (c) clarify whether a young persons impact assessment and/or other consultation has been undertaken in relation to the review of the Education Other Than At School provision.

Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee (07.07.2014) Cont'd

- (3) the Director of People and / or Cabinet Member for Opportunities for Children and Young People attend the Scrutiny Programme Committee scheduled for 4 August 2014 in order to report on the Children and Young People's Rights Scheme.

24. **PROGRESS REPORT - LOCAL SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL**

The Chair, Convenor of the Performance Panel, presented an update report on the work of the Panel and outlined progress.

The report presented the remit of the Panel, the introduction to the topic, progress to date, future work programme and the action required by the Scrutiny Programme Committee. The convener emphasised the developmental nature of the Panel's early work to help it understand the work of the Local Service Board (LSB) and how it operates. He provided a summary of work undertaken by the multi-agency Scrutiny Panel and highlighted activities ahead that will help the Panel to consider what difference the LSB is making for citizens. He referred to an exercise in which the Scrutiny Panel observed a recent LSB. Feedback from Scrutiny Panel Members was being discussed at the next Panel meeting. One of the issues identified so far was about the fact that LSB meetings were not open to the public.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

25. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**

The Chair presented the Scrutiny Work Programme 2014/15. The report explained the background and purpose of the Scrutiny Work Programme and the current position of all scrutiny activities. The Work Programme referred to the work currently active, showing progress with the established Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups. The Work Plan Timetable for future Committee meetings was also provided.

At the previous Scrutiny Programme Committee it was requested that further information be provided on the proposed topics for Inquiry Panels and possible focus. This was discussed.

The committee also discussed the current position in relation to the Education Inclusion Scrutiny Inquiry and implications of the departmental review on the same matter.

Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee (07.07.2014) Cont'd

The Chair also reported that a public request for scrutiny had been received after the agenda was published (in relation to Welsh Medium primary school provision in Swansea West) and stated that this will be considered and a proposal brought to the next meeting for the committee's agreement.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the Scrutiny Committee Work Plan Timetable and Plan for Meetings ahead be accepted;
- (2) the progress of established Panels and Working Groups attached at Appendix 2 of the report be noted;
- (3) the following be agreed as new topics for inquiry, in order of priority:
 - (a) Corporate Culture
An inquiry would look at the culture of the organisation and explore how changes can help tackle the challenges being faced e.g. demand management, reduced resources and rising expectations. It will enable scrutiny councillors to: consider the influences on organisational culture; and look at innovative approaches / models implemented elsewhere and lessons that can be applied in Swansea.
 - (b) Governance in Schools
An inquiry would look at how the effectiveness of school governance can be improved. It will enable scrutiny councillors to explore: the role and responsibility of governors; and issues relating to recruitment and the support they are given.
 - (c) Mental Health Services
An inquiry would look at the effectiveness of the provision of mental health services to children and young people, especially with reducing resources and increased demand for CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services). It will enable scrutiny councillors to: find about the extent of the problem in Swansea and access to services; look at the effectiveness of multi-agency working in delivering such services; and consider what improvements could be made.

- (4) the proposals for future Working Groups be agreed.
- (5) the Education Inclusion Inquiry Panel should reconvene as soon as possible in order to consider the findings of the departmental review which will then inform whether / what further scrutiny activity is required. The Panel should report back to the committee on the headlines and need for scrutiny.

26. **MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY PANELS AND WORKING GROUPS**

The Chair presented a report which advised of changes required to the membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

RESOLVED that the following membership changes be agreed:

Streetscene Scrutiny Inquiry Panel: add Councillor L V Walton
Inward Investment Scrutiny Inquiry Panel: remove Councillors R A Clay and G Owens.

27. **SCRUTINY LETTERS**

The Chair reported the updated Scrutiny Letters Log and referred to the recent correspondence between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members:

- (a) Letter to/from Cabinet Members for Place and Regeneration (Historic Building Scrutiny Working Group Meeting - 3 February 2014).

Councillor Paul Meara, convener of the Historic Buildings Scrutiny Working Group, shared the findings from the meeting and the response of the Cabinet Members for Place and Regeneration.

With respect to the outstanding letters from 2013/4 it was confirmed that the Schools Performance Panel had since discussed the issues raised within its letter and was now considered dealt with and a written letter from the Cabinet Member was no longer required. It was also confirmed that the Service Improvement & Finance Panel had raised its letter with Cllr Rob Stewart who stated that he would provide a response in July.

RESOLVED that the above letter and action log be noted.

28. **FORWARD LOOK (CABINET BUSINESS) - OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The Chair presented a report which provided a brief explanation of the pre-decision scrutiny process. Information was also provided regarding future Cabinet business at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Committee discussed a number of reports which appeared on forward look and highlighted the difficulties in raising matters for pre-decision scrutiny in view of limited information provided.

The Chair stated he would continue to engage and correspond with the Cabinet Member for Citizen, Community Engagement & Democracy about ways in which the cabinet forward plan can be improved for scrutiny.

RESOLVED that the Chair correspond with the Cabinet Member for Citizen, Community Engagement and Democracy regarding information about future cabinet business and the pre-decision scrutiny process.

29. **SCRUTINY DISPATCHES - JULY 2014**

The Chair reported the draft Scrutiny Dispatches for agreement and submission to Council on 12 August 2014.

It was noted that this would not be able to be considered by Council until 12 August despite the next meeting being 15 July due to publication deadlines. It was agreed that the scheduling of future Scrutiny Programme Committee meetings in next year's diary be arranged to ensure there is sufficient time between meetings so that any reports from the committee can be submitted to the next council meeting.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be agreed and submitted to Council on 12 August 2014.

30. **DATE OF TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS FOR 2014/15 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The dates of times of future meetings for 2014/15 Municipal Year were submitted for information.

The meeting ended at 6.05 p.m.

CHAIR