

## Report of the Chair

### Scrutiny Programme Committee – 1 September 2014

#### CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION – CITIZEN, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DEMOCRACY PORTFOLIO

<b>Purpose</b>	To enable the committee to question Councillor Christine Richards on her work, having specific responsibility and accountability as the Cabinet Member for Citizen, Community Engagement and Democracy.
<b>Content</b>	Councillor Richards 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 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
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## 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 Christine Richards has been requested to attend this meeting to enable the committee to explore the work she has done in his role as Cabinet Member for Citizen, Community Engagement and Democracy.

## 2. Citizen, Community Engagement and Democracy Portfolio

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

- a. Developing Citizen Engagement Strategies, Consultation and The Promotion of Openness and Transparency
- b. Developing Local Partnerships for Service Improvement, including the Local Service Board
- c. Community Leadership
- d. Democratic Services
- e. Participation – Children & Young People
- f. Petitions
- g. Staff Co-operation and Development
- h. Business Manager

2.2 The Cabinet Member has provided a short report on the ‘headlines’ from her work to help the committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact. (**Appendix 1**).

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

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

- portfolio objectives
- specific activities and achievements, progress against policy commitments, key decisions taken, and impact / difference made
- headlines with regard to the performance of services within the portfolio
- key targets to measure 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 ahead (e.g. resources / budget)
- engagement with scrutiny on portfolio issues

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 to 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. Previous Correspondence with Councillor Richards**

4.1 The previous question session with Councillor Richards took place in September 2013. The resulting letters to / from the Cabinet Member are attached for background information to remind the committee of the

issues that were discussed then and the response provided. The committee may wish to use the previous meeting as a reference point and follow up accordingly. The letters are ***appended*** to this report.

**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

19 August 2014

Legal Officer: Nigel Havard

Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley