

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 27 October 2014

FUTURE TRENDS FOR SWANSEA

Purpose	This report provides information to the committee giving an insight into current understanding of future trends likely to impact the planning and delivery of Council Services. It is intended to help support the development of scrutiny by building long term thinking, future risks and sustainability principles into scrutiny activities.
Content	The report appends a paper prepared by the Sustainable Development Unit which also includes key questions for service delivery. Officers from the Sustainable Development Unit will be present to assist the committee in understanding / using the information and issues raised.
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the information to help influence the work of scrutiny in relation to sustainability and future generations.
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Mike Day, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer(s)	Dean Taylor, Director – Corporate Services
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In March a workshop was held for all scrutiny councillors, facilitated by the Sustainable Development Unit and partners, designed to explore how the scrutiny function in Swansea can drive long term, preventative decision making through its work.

The workshop enabled members to consider:

- the role of scrutiny and current and future influences
- long term future trends, sustainable development and the role of scrutiny
- the potential impacts of the forthcoming Well-being of Future Generations Bill
- learning from others

- how the scrutiny function can make an bigger impact by using sustainability principles to ensure services are 'fit for purpose'
 - next steps
- 1.2 The workshop was supported by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and run by PwC and Netherwood Sustainable Futures. It was part of a package of work that is being delivered as the City & County of Swansea is the pilot authority for the WLGA on Sustainable Development.
- 1.3 The chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee recently met with officers to reflect on the workshop and to further investigate suggestions both from the event and the follow up survey in order to develop and embed long term thinking and preventative decision making into the scrutiny process.
- 1.4 Some of the ideas around developing scrutiny include:
- building long term thinking into the annual work planning process
 - building long term thinking and future risks / sustainability principles into scrutiny activities e.g. via Terms of Reference of inquiries
 - engaging at a regional and national level to encourage the development of a 'longer term' focus in scrutiny e.g. via the National Scrutiny Reference Panel.

2. Future Trends for Swansea

- 2.1 The Council's Sustainable Development Unit has prepared a paper on 'Future Trends for Swansea' as a regularly updated working document. As part of the thinking process for developing scrutiny the paper was attached to the agenda of the last committee meeting, to help to build a 'long-term lens' into the work of scrutiny.
- 2.2 At that committee meeting members were very interested in the paper and a request was made to allocate time for discussion and for relevant officers to attend to assist the committee in understanding / using the information and issues raised. Whilst the committee understood the context, in terms of developing scrutiny and questioning around sustainability and long term thinking, there was much interest in the actual data within the paper.
- 2.3 The following officers from the Sustainable Development Unit will attend the meeting to assist the committee in understanding / using the information and issues raised:
- Tanya Nash – Sustainable Development Team Leader
 - Penny Gruffydd – Sustainable Policy Officer

3. Sustainability and Scrutiny

- 3.1 Within the overall scrutiny work programme the committee has already agreed for a Working Group to meet to look at sustainability. This Group would ask for an assessment on current plans, priorities, activities and impact, and ask questions on how this work is impacting on policies, service delivery and planning, and whether the authority is planning longer term / being preventative / considering future generations. The convener / membership of this Working Group are to be confirmed.
- 3.2 In addition, the committee agreed at the last meeting that the issue of sustainability and long term thinking should be a recurring theme for future Cabinet Member question sessions.
- 3.3 Members were also encouraged to use the information to inform discussion in other scrutiny activities, e.g. the Affordable Housing Scrutiny Inquiry follow up.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

15 October 2014

Legal Officer: Nigel Havard
Finance Officer: Ben Smith