

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 24 November 2014

CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION – LEADER / FINANCE & STRATEGY PORTFOLIO

Purpose	To enable the committee to question Councillor Rob Stewart on his work, having specific responsibility and accountability as the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Strategy.
Content	Councillor Stewart 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 his areas of responsibility.
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question the Cabinet Member on relevant matters• Make comments and recommendations as necessary
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 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.
- 1.2 Cabinet Member Question Sessions have become a feature of committee meetings over the past 2 years. At least one cabinet member will be scheduled to appear at each committee meeting, ensuring all 10 Cabinet Members appear before the committee over the course of a year, in order to ask questions on their work.
- 1.3 Councillor Rob Stewart is the Leader of the Council and chairs the Cabinet. He is responsible for the delegation of all executive functions that allows the Cabinet and Responsible Officers to make decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of Council services, in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. The cabinet is made up of the

Leader and 9 additional councillors appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific responsibilities. Councillor Stewart has specific cabinet portfolio responsibility for Finance & Strategy.

2. Finance & Strategy Portfolio

2.1 This portfolio includes the following areas of responsibility:

- a. Finance – Budget Cycle
- b. Delivery and Performance
- c. Information & Business Change (incl. ICT)
- d. Strategic Estates & Property
- e. Poverty
- f. LSB / Community Leadership
- g. Regional Working / Collaboration
- h. Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea

2.2 Councillor Stewart has provided a short report on 'headlines' in relation to his portfolio objectives 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 and the key targets monitored 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) and what the challenges are (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 Stewart

- 4.1 The committee last met with Councillor Stewart in January 2014, as Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources. The resulting letter 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 as appropriate.

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

18 November 2014

Legal Officer: Nigel Havard
Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley