

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 24 November 2014

SCRUTINY DISPATCHES – FUTURE REPORTING

Purpose	To consider future reporting arrangements following discussion about Scrutiny Dispatches at Council on 4 November.
Content	The report informs of changes and proposed way forward.
Councillors are being asked to	Consider and agree future reporting arrangements for Scrutiny Dispatches.
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 The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for the overall work programme, including the various informal scrutiny activities, and monitoring progress to ensure that the work is effective. Scrutiny Dispatches was developed as a short monthly digest to provide 'headlines' from scrutiny activity and give the work of scrutiny greater visibility, both for council and public audience.
- 1.2 Since July 2013 the committee has submitted the Scrutiny Dispatches report to each Council meeting. The report usually focuses on key outcomes, findings, and events, typically with one major story each time. Content from the Dispatches is also posted on the Swansea Scrutiny blog so that it can be shared across social media platforms to develop public engagement in scrutiny.

2. Consideration at Council

- 2.1 In recent months the committee has raised an issue about the limited opportunity for discussion and questions based on the content of the Dispatches report at the council meeting, being listed as a 'for information' item.

- 2.2 At council on 4 November the Leader of the Council responded to requests from the committee and political group leaders about the Scrutiny Dispatches report. It was agreed to remove the monthly Scrutiny Dispatches report from Council meetings and to replace it with a new trial system whereby the Scrutiny Dispatches report will be presented to Council on a quarterly basis. Full discussion will be allowed on the report during the trial basis.

3. Future Reporting

- 3.1 It is proposed that the first of the quarterly reports is prepared for December's Scrutiny Programme Committee for approval. This can then be submitted to 3 February Council meeting. An appropriate schedule for future reports is to be considered.
- 3.2 Further to recent discussion about improving communication and public engagement, the purpose of Scrutiny Dispatches will be to demonstrate scrutiny achievements and outcomes. It will effectively be a regular report about impact and how scrutiny is making a difference, rather than a descriptive account of scrutiny activities.
- 3.3 The aim will be to focus on and promote a small number of 'significant stories' through a number of channels. As well as being a report to council the content will be shared more widely, with advice and support from the Council's Communications Team and utilising social media. This should help raise awareness of the work and impact of scrutiny, and hopefully encourage more public engagement and participation in scrutiny.
- 3.4 In order to ensure that people are informed about the work of scrutiny a monthly information list will continue to be produced. This list will be shared via email and on the Swansea Scrutiny blog (www.swanseascrutiny.co.uk). Initial consultations with a small number of councillors suggest that this monthly list should include details of:
- Forthcoming panel and working group meetings
 - Topics currently being looked at by scrutiny
 - Recent recommendations (i.e. from letters and inquiry reports)
 - Outcomes and impacts from scrutiny work

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

14 November 2014

Legal Officer: Nigel Havard
Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley