

## Report of the Vice-Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 22 December 2014

### CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Purpose</b>                        | To enable the committee to question Cabinet Members on their work. The committee's questions will broadly explore priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to areas of responsibility.   |
| <b>Content</b>                        | The following Cabinet Members will appear before the committee:<br>a) Councillor Christine Richards – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Services to Children & Young People<br>b) Councillor Jennifer Raynor – Cabinet Member for Education |
| <b>Councillors are being asked to</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Question Cabinet Members on relevant matters</li><li>• Make comments and recommendations as necessary</li></ul>  |
| <b>Lead Councillor(s)</b>             | Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee  |
| <b>Lead Officer(s)</b>                | Dean Taylor, Director – Corporate Services   |
| <b>Report Author</b>                  | Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Coordinator<br>Tel: 01792 637257<br>E-mail: <a href="mailto:brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk">brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk</a>  |

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 One of the most important roles that scrutiny carries out is holding the council's cabinet to account. The cabinet is made up of the Leader and 9 additional councillors appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific responsibilities.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 Cabinet Member Question Sessions have become a feature of committee meetings over the past 2 years. At least one cabinet member is 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.

## **2. Cabinet Member Question Session – 22 December**

- 2.1 The following Cabinet Members will appear before the committee:
- a) Councillor Christine Richards – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Services to Children & Young People
  - b) Councillor Jennifer Raynor – Cabinet Member for Education
- 2.2 The Services for Children & Young People portfolio includes the following areas of responsibility:
- a. Child & Family Services
  - b. Play
  - c. Youth Services & Promoting Youth Inclusion
  - d. Early Intervention / Prevention
  - e. Youth Offending Service
  - f. Youth Citizenship
  - g. Opportunities for Young People
  - h. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Champion
  - i. NEETS (Link with Education)
  - j. Regional Adoption Service
  - k. Children & Young People Board
  - l. Continuum of Care
  - m. Safe Looked After Children Reduction Strategy
  - n. Flying Start
  - o. Lead Elements of Sustainable Swansea
- 2.3 The Education portfolio includes the following areas of responsibility:
- a. Inclusion & Learner Support
  - b. School Improvement
  - c. Planning & Resources
  - d. Schools
  - e. City of Learning
  - f. NEETS
  - g. Education Regional Working
  - h. Schools' Organisation & Performance
  - i. QEd
  - j. Education Charter
  - k. Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea
- 2.4 Both Cabinet Members have provided a short report on 'headlines' in relation to portfolio objectives to help the committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact (**Appendix 1 & 2**).

## **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 Cabinet Members 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. 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

4 December 2014

Legal Officer: Nigel Havard

Finance Officer: Paul Cridland