

Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

1. Inquiry Panels:

a) **Inward Investment** (convener: Cllr Jeff Jones)

Key Question: What can the Council do to influence inward investment into Swansea and the South West Wales region?

Progress Bar:

Scoping	Evidence Gathering	Draft Final Report

Report was presented to Cabinet on 26 August 2014. A response to the recommendations is currently scheduled for 20 January Cabinet Meeting.

b) **Public Engagement** (convenor: Cllr Joe Hale)

Key Question: How can the Council improve its engagement practices with the public, staff and external stakeholders?

Progress Bar:

Scoping	Evidence Gathering	Draft Final Report

The panel's final report was presented to Cabinet on 21 October. A response to the recommendations is expected within 3 months.

c) **Streetscene** (convenor: Cllr John Bayliss)

Key Question: How well does the Council maintain and keep clean the roads, footways and verges in Swansea, and what changes should it make?

Progress Bar:

Scoping	Evidence Gathering	Draft Final Report

The panel's final report is being presented to Cabinet on 16 December.

d) **Social Care at Home** (convenor: Cllr Uta Clay)

Key Question: How can Swansea Council and its partners support elderly people to enable them to remain in their own homes?

Progress Bar:

Scoping	Evidence Gathering	Draft Final Report

The panel's final report will be presented to the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 22 December. Subject to agreement it will be formally presented to Cabinet in January.

e) **Education Inclusion** (convenor: Cllr Cheryl Philpott)

Key Question: How can the Council improve education for those children who are other than at school?

Progress Bar:

Scoping				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Education Inclusion Inquiry Panel will reconvene again once the action plan arising from the independent review is available for discussion. The Panel will then consider whether / what further scrutiny activity is required. Any specific proposals will be reported back to the committee for agreement.

2. Pre-Inquiry Working Groups:

a) **Transformation of Adult Social Services** (convenor: Uta Clay)

This working group met on 8th November to consider a second briefing on the Transformation of Adult Social Services. This briefing dealt with the legislative and policy changes impacting on the delivery of social services with the authority and how they will be addressed in the next phase of the TASS implementation programme.

The panel has agreed dates for future meetings until April and has scheduled an additional meeting on 17 December to deal with the Independent Review Report. The Cabinet Member has been invited to attend this meeting.

The panel has yet to formally agree the following: a work plan, a set of key lines of inquiry, where and how it can add value and how it will engage service users.

b) **Corporate Culture** (convenor: Cllr Andrew Jones)

This pre-inquiry working group met on 12 November with an overview of the subject from the Corporate Director and the Organisational Change Manager. The Working Group agreed that an in-depth inquiry should take place which was confirmed by the Scrutiny Programme Committee. The Panel will meet on the 15 December where they will start their evidence gathering and agree the terms of reference for this work.

3. Follow Up on Completed Inquiries:

Follow-ups of inquiries will consider both the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and wider impact / difference made. Inquiry Panels are reconvened between 6-12 months after cabinet decision on Inquiry reports.

Inquiry	Cabinet Decision	Recommendations			Follow Up Panel Meeting
		Agreed	Partly	Rejected	
Services for Looked After Children	17 Sep 2013	14	1	0	(1) 15 Jul 2014 (2) Jan 2015
Public Transport	12 Nov 2013	13	1	0	(1) 20 Oct 2014 (2) April 2015
Affordable Housing	3 Dec 2013	7	2	4	3 Dec 2014
Tourism	14 Jan 2014	14	0	0	17 Nov 2014
Economic Inactivity	3 Jun 2014	7	0	0	tba
Attainment & Wellbeing	1 Jul 2014	11	0	0	April 2015

4. Performance Panels:

a) Service Improvement & Finance (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

The panel held an additional meeting on 4 December in order to meet with Cllr Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to discuss the annual recycling and landfill performance figures.

The panel met on 10 December where it carried out pre-decision scrutiny of the cabinet report "Everyone's IT – The Move to an In-House Managed ICT Service". The convener attended the cabinet meeting on 16 December in order to provide the panel's comments and observations.

The panel also received a presentation from the Head of Communicators and the Consultation Co-ordinator on the results so far from the budget consultation events that have been taking place around Swansea this month. The panel also met with Councillor Robert Francis-Davies (Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Regeneration & Development) to hear how well Swansea is performing in relation to the Welsh Public Library Standards.

b) Schools Performance (convener: Cllr Fiona Gordon)

See separate report in item 8 of the agenda.

c) Local Service Board (convener: Cllr Mike Day)

The Panel's next meeting will take place on 26 January where they will meet with Councillor Rob Stewart, the new Chair of the LSB in order to gather his views on the LSB and plans for taking it forward.

d) Child & Family Services (convener: Paxton Hood-Williams)

The panel met on 24th November to consider the latest performance monitoring data. Overall, the panel was pleased with the continued and sustained performance in most areas, including reductions in departmental spend, and it continues to support the Safe LAC Reduction Strategy and the outcomes it is delivering.

The panel highlighted the following concerns:

- 9 cases of looked after children were not allocated to a qualified social worker and officers agreed to provide more information on this.
- Sickness levels: there were a number of factors that affected the figures and the panel agreed to consider this aspect of the performance report in February

5. Working Groups:

A number of topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Working Groups.

a) Planning Services (convener: Cllr David Cole)

Following to the Scrutiny Programme Committee's agreement that an additional meeting of this working can take place for further scrutiny of performance in relation to planning enforcement, a meeting will be arranged for late January/early February.

b) Car Parking (convener: Cllr Tony Colburn)

The Working Group met on 22 September and on 6 November to discuss car parks provision across Swansea, service performance, and plans for improvement. The group made a number of recommendations to the Cabinet member including for example developing a signage strategy for car parks, having a more flexible pricing policy and finding a different use for the four lower floors of High Street multi storey car park. A letter has been sent to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport and a response is awaited.

c) Local Flood Risk Management (convener: Cllr Susan Jones)

Following the working group's meeting on 13 November the group made a number of observations and recommendations to the Cabinet Member including:

- Ensure that the Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) is closely linked to the plans of Natural Resources Wales.
- Ensure that ward Councillors are consulted as the FRMP is developed and the work to develop ward level maps takes place.
- Consider the feasibility of reducing litter cleansing in areas of high risk at peak times in autumn in order to focus on increasing leaf collection as part of flood risk mitigation.
- Ensure the wider distribution of the public information leaflet “Guidance on drainage and flooding”.
- Provide additional information to the public about how to obtain sandbags and consider the previous suggestion for the Local Authority to provide sandbags, with an appropriate charge.

The group also proposes that the Scrutiny Programme Committee agrees for it to meet again in February in order to participate in the consultation process on the draft Flood Risk Management Plan for Swansea. It also recommends that scrutiny is involved in the planned annual monitoring process of the Flood Risk Management Plan and suggests that the working group would be an appropriate mechanism to do this. A response to the Convener’s letter is expected in early January.

d) the following Working Group has been given priority and will be convened in the next few months:

- **Sustainability** (convener / membership tbc) – the relevant cabinet member / officer will be requested to provide an assessment on current plans, priorities, activities and achievements. This will enable 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, taking account of specific future risks e.g. food security, climate change, energy supply.

e) the following Working Groups have also been identified and will be convened in the future as time and resources allow:

- **Target Areas** (convener / membership tbc) – the relevant cabinet member / officer will be requested to provide an assessment on progress with target areas work. This will enable questions about achievements and the impact of the new approach.
- **Roads / Highway Maintenance** (convener / membership tbc) – the relevant cabinet member / officer will be requested to provide a report covering service practices and procedures (e.g. dealing with pot holes), use of resources, prospects for improvement. This will enable questions about the quality and effectiveness of highway maintenance and repair, and also issues relating to the relationship with utilities and strategic

planning / co-ordination of works to minimise disruption to major access roads

- **Young Carers** (convener / membership tbc) – the relevant cabinet member / officer will be requested to provide a report on young carers. This will enable questions about the support available to young carers to minimise the impact on their personal development, education, employment and training.