

## Report of the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance

Cabinet – 17 February 2015

### RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL: HOW CAN THE COUNCIL IMPROVE ITS ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES?

<b>Purpose:</b>	To outline a response to the scrutiny recommendations and to present an action plan for agreement.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None
<b>Reason for Decision:</b>	To comply with the requirements of the Council Constitution.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal, Financial, Access to Services.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that:  1) The response as outlined in the report and related action plan be agreed.
<b>Report Author:</b>	Lee Wenham
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Nigel Havard
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Carl Billingsley
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Phil Couch

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Public Engagement Scrutiny Inquiry Panel report was submitted to Cabinet on October 21, 2014 after the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel completed a detailed inquiry into public engagement.
- 1.2 Having considered the contents of the scrutiny report, and specific recommendations made, advice to Cabinet on whether it should agree, or not agree, with each recommendation is detailed in this report.
- 1.3 Cabinet is also asked to consider, for each of the responses, any relevant policy commitments and any other relevant activity.

**2.0 Response to Scrutiny Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation 1</b>
Provides information via a variety of media, including Swansea Voices, to councillors and residents on how to become a Swansea Voices panellist, how it functions, the social demographic profile of the panel, results and outcomes.
<p><b>Relevant Policy Commitments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues</li> <li>• Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action already being undertaken:</b></p> <p>The use of Swansea Voices is being reviewed to assess whether there are more timely and effective consultation mechanisms available.</p>
<p><b>New actions following from the recommendation:</b></p> <p>Once the assessment has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.</p>
<p><b>Cabinet Member Comments:</b></p> <p>It is important that we gather views and feedback from as wide a range of people as possible. The current review of Swansea Voices will enable us to do this more effectively.</p>
Recommendation is <b>AGREED</b>

<b>Recommendation 2</b>
Reviews the social demographic make-up of Swansea Voices and takes any action required to ensure that the panel is representative of the communities of Swansea
<p><b>Relevant Policy Commitments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues</li> <li>• Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action already being undertaken:</b></p> <p>The use of Swansea Voices is being reviewed to assess whether there are more timely and effective consultation mechanisms available.</p>
<p><b>New actions following from the recommendation:</b></p> <p>Once the assessment has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.</p>
<p><b>Cabinet Member Comments:</b></p> <p>The make-up of Swansea Voices is representative of the Swansea population aged over 16.</p>

It is important that we gather views and feedback from as wide a range of people as possible. The current review of Swansea Voices will enable us to do this more effectively.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

### **Recommendation 3**

Reports to Council on how Swansea Voices influences policy development and Council decision making.

#### **Relevant Policy Commitments:**

- Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues.
- Adopt a 'can do' attitude.

#### **Action already being undertaken:**

Consultation results from Swansea Voices are provided to officers for them to consider. In addition, there is an Equalities & Engagement Implications section in reports to Cabinet and Council.

#### **New actions following from the recommendation:**

Once the assessment of Swansea Voices has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.

#### **Cabinet Member Comments:**

It is important that public feedback plays an important part in decision-making and the recent consultation exercise on the budget proposals is a good example of this. The Cabinet is committed to the principle of public engagement.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

### **Recommendation 4**

Ensures that all consultation and engagement is carried out in line with any the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, with a particular focus on participant feedback.

#### **Relevant Policy Commitments:**

- Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues
- Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.

#### **Action already being undertaken:**

This requirement is included in the council's existing engagement strategy.

#### **New actions following from the recommendation:**

The engagement strategy is due to be revised and will be strengthened to give more priority to participant feedback.

**Cabinet Member Comments:**

It is pleasing that we already adopt the National Principles and the Cabinet is committed to maintaining this approach.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

**Recommendation 5**

Senior managers must increase visibility to services users during public consultation and engagement events.

**Relevant Policy Commitments:**

- Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues
- Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.
- Adopt a 'can do' attitude.

**Action already being undertaken:**

Senior managers, Cabinet Members and a number of other councillors were trained in engagement techniques by Participation Cymru during summer 2014. Since that time senior officers have been involved in public engagement events related to the budget proposals.

**New actions following from the recommendation:**

The review of our consultation and engagement strategy will consider how we can build on this commitment.

**Cabinet Member Comments:**

The recent budget consultation which involved senior managers attending community meetings has been very successful and the Cabinet is committed to continuing this approach.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

**Recommendation 6**

Increases community involvement in significant planning issues by setting up community planning groups, going beyond the statutory to notify residents.

**Relevant Policy Commitments:**

- Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues
- Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.
- Adopt a 'can do' attitude.
- Give a stronger voice to residents in the design of community-based facilities, such as the development of suburban shopping centres, transport and other neighbourhood schemes, by ensuring there is full citizen engagement, including young people

<p><b>Action already being undertaken:</b>  <u>Development Management:</u> Undertaken consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Town &amp; Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order 2012 coupled with online access to live planning application files during the consultation period.</p> <p><u>Planning Policy:</u> Community information sessions held during key stages of Development Plan preparation; a database of consultees has been developed and contact with communities made more transparent through Candidate Site Notices to highlight site submissions, publication of newsletters and development of interactive website.</p>
<p><b>New actions following from the recommendation:</b>  <u>Development Management:</u> Need to provide a clear route map showing the opportunities that will be available for the public to participate in decision-making on the different types of planning application at different levels in the new development management hierarchy established within the Planning (Wales) Bill.</p> <p><u>Planning Policy:</u> Publication of additional background information on the Council's website to enable more informed comments to be submitted aligned to the timescales of Plan preparation. Town/Community Councils supported in the preparation of community plans.</p>
<p><b>Cabinet Member Comments:</b>  The forthcoming Planning (Wales) Bill (if enacted) could change the 'shape' of the Welsh planning system. The changes could potentially have impacts on the opportunities available for local communities to understand and engage meaningfully with the main components of planning process - development management and development plan preparation. The Planning process would have to respond accordingly to any changes.</p>
<p>Recommendation is <b>AGREED</b></p>

<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p>
<p>Increases non-executive councillor engagement in the Local Service Board by holding open meetings and providing meeting details and minutes to all councillors.</p>
<p><b>Relevant Policy Commitments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action already being undertaken:</b>  A new One Swansea website, due to be launched in January 2015, will allow Local Service Board meeting notes to be published online.</p>
<p><b>New actions following from the recommendation:</b>  Councillors will be alerted via email when meeting notes are published</p>
<p><b>Cabinet Member Comments:</b> The Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill, currently passing through the Welsh Assembly, will mean a</p>

number of changes to Local Service Boards including a new statutory status. In responding to this bill, Swansea Local Service Board will no doubt need to review its governance arrangements including how it engages with councillors.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

### **Recommendation 8**

Improves public engagement in the Local Service Board by making its meetings open and accessible to the public.

#### **Relevant Policy Commitments:**

- 

**Action already being undertaken:** None

#### **New actions following from the recommendation:**

- A proposal will be made to the Local Service Board that its main meetings are open for the public to observe

**Cabinet Member Comments:** Cabinet is supportive of this idea in principle and will seek to get it adopted. The final decision will be made by the Local Service Board.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

### **Recommendation 9**

Works with the LSB to develop greater coordination of engagement between the LSB partners and develops the LSB Engagement Group as a group of experts providing advice to the wider LSB on consultation and engagement.

#### **Relevant Policy Commitments:**

- Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.

#### **Action already being undertaken:**

The Local Service Board Engagement Group is currently chaired by Councillor Erica Kirchner who is also Chair of the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee and supported by the Council's Consultation Coordinator.

#### **New actions following from the recommendation:**

The work of the Local Service Board Engagement Group is considered by the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee

**Cabinet Member Comments:** This group can be an important mechanism for a partnership approach to engagement that is both effective and allows duplication to be avoided. It is recognised, however, that the potential of this group has yet to be fulfilled.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

<b>Recommendation 10</b>
Implements a programme of regular and ongoing staff engagement which encourages openness and sharing of ideas and which has clear links to the Chief Executive (“golden thread”) by the end of the calendar year.
<b>Relevant Policy Commitments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a ‘can do’ attitude.</li> </ul>
<b>Action already being undertaken:</b> The weekly Chief Executive blog provides an update on key issues and opportunities for staff to feedback and ask questions. The Chief Executive also provides an update in the monthly Top Brief note that’s used in team briefings across the council. The Chief Executive also visits council sites and holds drop-in sessions for staff to meet him and raise issues face-to-face.
<b>New actions following from the recommendation:</b> A new employee engagement strategy is due to be launched in April 2015 and will strengthen this commitment.
<b>Cabinet Member Comments:</b> It is pleasing to note that there is already a high level of engagement with staff via various mechanisms. Following the recent staff survey there is a strong commitment to improving staff engagement which will be reflected in the new employee engagement strategy.
Recommendation is <b>AGREED</b>

<b>Recommendation 11</b>
Keeps staff informed on a quarterly basis of changes within the organisation as a result of the review of corporate culture.
<b>Relevant Policy Commitments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a ‘can do’ attitude.</li> </ul>
<b>Action already being undertaken:</b> There are already a number of mechanisms in place to keep staff updated – eg, Chief Executive’s blog, Top Brief, team meetings, StaffNet.
<b>New actions following from the recommendation:</b> A new employee engagement strategy is due to be launched in April 2015 and will strengthen this commitment.
<b>Cabinet Member Comments:</b> There are already a number of initiatives in place to keep staff informed, but this will be strengthened in the new employee engagement strategy to help change the corporate culture.
Recommendation is <b>AGREED</b>

<b>Recommendation 12</b>
Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy a method to inform councillors of consultation and engagement in their wards and to consult with them, where appropriate, as a stakeholder group.
<b>Relevant Policy Commitments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a 'can do' attitude.</li> <li>• Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues</li> <li>• Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.</li> </ul>
<b>Action already being undertaken:</b> Councillors are informed all of consultation activities.
<b>New actions following from the recommendation:</b> This commitment will be strengthened in the revised corporate consultation and engagement strategy.
<b>Cabinet Member Comments:</b> It is important that councillors are aware of all council consultation activities and participate and encourage participation wherever possible. I look forward to councillors taking on a greater role in this area.
Recommendation is <b>AGREED</b>

<b>Recommendation 13</b>
Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy clear processes to capture information from consultation and engagement; feed it into departments; communicate to participants the change and difference as a result of the consultation
<b>Relevant Policy Commitments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a 'can do' attitude.</li> <li>• Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues</li> <li>• Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.</li> </ul>
<b>Action already being undertaken:</b> Departments are informed of consultation outcomes and those departments holding their own consultation are encouraged to update participants on how their feedback has had an impact on decisions etc.
<b>New actions following from the recommendation:</b> This commitment will be strengthened in the revised corporate consultation and engagement strategy. We will also run "We asked,



you said, we did” campaigns to demonstrate how we have acted upon customer feedback.

**Cabinet Member Comments:**

The Cabinet is committed to listening to the views of the public and a campaign highlighting the difference their feedback has made will help improve engagement even further.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

**Recommendation 14**

Ensures that all relevant and public consultation and engagement opportunities continue to be posted in the “Have Your Say” section on the website and that this retains its visibility on the Council’s homepage.

**Relevant Policy Commitments:**

- Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to ‘own’ local issues
- Create a ‘Team Swansea’ approach – a commitment to work with others.

**Action already being undertaken:**

All consultation and engagement opportunities appear in the “Have your say” section.

**New actions following from the recommendation:**

The new-look council website which was launched in September 2014 promotes consultation and engagement from prominent positions on the front page. The “Have your say” section is not a standing item on the front page as these are determined by the amount of traffic, with the most popular pages being on the front page.

**Cabinet Member Comments:**

We will continue to use a range of ways to promote consultation and engagement opportunities, including using the website.

Recommendation is **PARTLY AGREED**

**Recommendation 15**

Reviews the use, format and focus of the Swansea Leader through engagement with readers and cross-party, non-executive councillors to ensure that it is relevant, provides value for money and is used to its full potential

**Relevant Policy Commitments:**

- Create a ‘Team Swansea’ approach – a commitment to work with others.

**Action already being undertaken:**

The Swansea Leader is regularly reviewed using residents' feedback via Swansea Voices.
<b>New actions following from the recommendation:</b> The future of the Swansea Leader is currently being reviewed as part of the council's current budget proposals.
<b>Cabinet Member Comments:</b> The Swansea Leader has been a very effective communication and consultation tool. We regularly seek view of the public on its use, format and content. We are committed to providing the most efficient and effective ways of engaging the public and reviewing publications such as the Swansea Leader is an important way of doing this.
Recommendation is <b>AGREED</b>

<b>Recommendation 16</b>
In the face of growing demand from the public, maintains provision for face to face contact for residents wishing to engage with the Council in this way.
<b>Relevant Policy Commitments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a 'can do' attitude.</li> <li>• Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues</li> <li>• Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.</li> </ul>
<b>Action already being undertaken:</b> The council regularly holds face-to-face events to engage the public. The recent budget consultation includes a series of community events where officers and councillors met residents face-to-face.
<b>New actions following from the recommendation:</b> The council will continue to hold face-to-face activities where appropriate and this will be reflected in the updated corporate consultation and engagement strategy.
<b>Cabinet Member Comments:</b> The recent budget consultation has shown how important it is to have face-to-face engagement with the public. We are aware that not everyone can use online methods so it is important that we maintain this option for the public.
Recommendation is <b>AGREED</b>

### 3.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

3.1 Although none of the recommendations will have specific Equality or Engagement Implications in themselves, they will all be considered for

inclusion in the development of the authority's new Consultation and Engagement Strategy which will be subject to a full EIA process.

#### **4.0 Legal Implications**

4.1 None

#### **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 None.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Appendices:** Appendix A – Proposed Cabinet Action Plan

## APPENDIX A

### Scrutiny Inquiry of Public Engagement – Cabinet Action Plan

Recommendation	Action already being undertaken	New Action Proposed	Timescale	Responsible Officer
1. Provides information via a variety of media, including Swansea Voices, to councillors and residents on how to become a Swansea Voices panellist, how it functions, the social demographic profile of the panel, results and outcomes.	The use of Swansea Voices is being reviewed to assess whether there are more timely and effective consultation mechanisms available.	Once the assessment has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.	August 2015	Rhian Millar
2. Reviews the social demographic make-up of Swansea Voices and takes any action required to ensure that the panel is representative of the communities of Swansea	The use of Swansea Voices is being reviewed to assess whether there are more timely and effective consultation mechanisms available.	Once the assessment has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.	August 2015	Rhian Millar
3. Reports to Council on how Swansea Voices influences policy development and Council decision making.	Consultation results from Swansea Voices are provided to officers for them to consider. In addition, there is an Equalities & Engagement Implications section in reports to Cabinet and Council.	Once the assessment of Swansea Voices has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.	August 2015	Rhian Millar
4. Ensures that all consultation and	This requirement is included in the	The engagement	October	Rhian Millar

	engagement is carried out in line with any the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, with a particular focus on participant feedback.	council's existing engagement strategy.	strategy is due to be revised and will be strengthened to give more priority to participant feedback.	2015	
5.	Senior managers must increase visibility to services users during public consultation and engagement events.	Senior managers, Cabinet Members and a number of other councillors were trained in engagement techniques by Participation Cymru during summer 2014. Since that time senior officers have been involved in public engagement events related to the budget proposals	The review of our consultation and engagement strategy will consider how we can build on this commitment.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
6.	Increases community involvement in significant planning issues by setting up community planning groups, going beyond the statutory to notify residents.	<u>Development Management:</u> Undertaken consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Town & Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order 2012 coupled with online access to live planning application files during the consultation period.  <u>Planning Policy:</u> Community information sessions held during key stages of Development Plan preparation; a database of consultees has been developed	<u>Development Management:</u> Need to provide a clear route map showing the opportunities that will be available for the public to participate in decision-making on the different types of planning application at different levels in the new development management hierarchy established	February 2016	Emyr Jones

		and contact with communities made more transparent through Candidate Site Notices to highlight site submissions, publication of newsletters and development of interactive website.	within the Planning (Wales) Bill.  <u>Planning Policy:</u> Publication of additional background information on the Council's website to enable more informed comments to be submitted aligned to the timescales of Plan preparation. Town/Community Councils supported in the preparation of community plans.		
7.	Increases non-executive councillor engagement in the Local Service Board by holding open meetings and providing meeting details and minutes to all councillors.	A new One Swansea website, due to be launched in January 2015, will allow Local Service Board meeting notes to be published online.	Councillors will be alerted via email when meeting notes are published	May 2015	Dave McKenna
8.	Improves public engagement in the Local Service Board by making its meetings open and accessible to the public.	None	A proposal will be made to the Local Service Board that its main meetings are	May 2015	Dave McKenna

			open for the public to observe		
9.	Works with the LSB to develop greater coordination of engagement between the LSB partners and develops the LSB Engagement Group as a group of experts providing advice to the wider LSB on consultation and engagement.	The Local Service Board Engagement Group is currently chaired by Councillor Erica Kirchner who is also Chair of the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee and supported by the Council's Consultation Coordinator	The work of the Local Service Board Engagement Group is considered by the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee	July 2015	Dave McKenna
10.	Implements a programme of regular and ongoing staff engagement which encourages openness and sharing of ideas and which has clear link to the Chief Executive ("golden thread") by the end of the calendar	The weekly Chief Executive blog provides an update on key issues and opportunities for staff to feedback and ask questions. The Chief Executive also provides an update in the monthly Top Brief note that's used in team briefings across the council. The Chief Executive also visits council sites and holds drop-in sessions for staff to meet him and raise issues face-to-face.	A new employee engagement strategy is due to be launched in April 2015 and will strengthen this commitment.	May 2015	Rhian Millar
11.	Keeps staff informed on a quarterly basis of changes within the organisation as a result of the review of corporate culture.	There are already a number of mechanisms in place to keep staff updated – eg, Chief Executive's blog, Top Brief, team meetings, StaffNet.	A new employee engagement strategy is due to be launched in April 2015 and will strengthen this commitment.	July 2015	Rhian Millar

12.	Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy a method to inform councillors of consultation and engagement in their wards and to consult with them, where appropriate, as a stakeholder group.	Councillors are informed all of consultation activities.	This commitment will be strengthened in the revised corporate consultation and engagement strategy.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
13.	Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy clear processes to capture information from consultation and engagement; feed it into departments; communicate to participants the change and difference as a result of the consultation	Departments are informed of consultation outcomes and those departments holding their own consultation are encouraged to update participants on how their feedback has had an impact on decisions etc.	This commitment will be strengthened in the revised corporate consultation and engagement strategy. We will also run "We asked, you said, we did" campaigns to demonstrate how we have acted upon customer feedback.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
14.	Ensures that all relevant and public consultation and engagement opportunities continue to be posted in the "Have Your Say" section on the website and that this retains its visibility on the Council's homepage.	All consultation and engagement opportunities appear in the "Have your say" section.	The new-look council website which was launched in September 2014 promotes consultation and engagement from prominent positions on the front page. The "Have your say" section is not a	October 2015	Rhian Millar



			standing item on the front page as these are determined by the amount of traffic, with the most popular pages being on the front page. We will ensure that officers are aware of the Have Your Say section for consultations.		
15.	Reviews the use, format and focus of the Swansea Leader through engagement with readers and cross-party, non-executive councillors to ensure that it is relevant, provides value for money and is used to its full potential	The Swansea Leader is regularly reviewed using residents' feedback via Swansea Voices	The future of the Swansea Leader is currently being reviewed as part of the council's current budget proposals.	August 2015	Patrick Fletcher
16.	In the face of growing demand from the public, maintains provision for face to face contact for residents wishing to engage with the Council in this way.	The council regularly holds face-to-face events to engage the public. The recent budget consultation includes a series of community events where officers and councillors met residents face-to-face.	The council will continue to hold face-to-face activities where appropriate and this will be reflected in the updated corporate consultation and engagement strategy.	October 2015	Rhian Millar