

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 16 March 2015

CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION

Purpose	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.
Content	The following Cabinet Members will appear before the committee: a) Councillor Will Evans – Cabinet Member for Anti Poverty b) Councillor David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question Cabinet Members on relevant matters• Make comments and recommendations as necessary
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Mary Jones, 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. 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 – 16 March

2.1 The following Cabinet Members will appear before the committee:

a) Councillor Will Evans – Cabinet Member for Anti Poverty

The Anti Poverty portfolio includes the following areas of responsibility:

- a. Poverty Strategy
- b. Communities First
- c. Welfare Rights
- d. 3rd Sector
- e. Social Inclusion
- f. Localised Services
- g. Welfare Reform
- h. Financial Information
- i. Digital Inclusion
- j. Food Access/Growing
- k. Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea.

b) Councillor David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities

The Housing & Communities portfolio includes the following areas of responsibility:

- a. Community Cohesion;
- b. Armed Forces Champion;
- c. Council House Management;
- d. Council House Repairs;
- e. Homelessness;
- f. Housing Policy & Affordable Housing;
- g. Neighbourhood Working;
- h. Community Development;
- i. WHQS;
- j. Community Building & Asset Transfer;
- k. Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea.

2.2 The Cabinet Members have each provided a short report on ‘headlines’ in relation to their portfolio objectives to help the committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact (see **Appendix 1 and 2** respectively).

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

9 March 2015

Legal Officer: Wendy Parkin

Finance Officer: Paul Cridland