

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 July 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 Member will appear before the committee to participate in a question and answer session: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Rob Stewart – Leader (chair of Cabinet)
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. Questions will focus on their priorities, actions, achievements and impact.

2. Cabinet Member Question Session – 13 July

2.1 The following Cabinet Member will appear before the committee:

a) Councillor Rob Stewart – Leader (chair of Cabinet)

As Leader of the Council, Councillor Stewart is responsible for:

- providing political leadership to the Council
- working with officers to lead the organisation
- appointing the Cabinet
- managing and leading the work of the Cabinet and chairing meetings
- delegation of all executive functions that allow the Cabinet and Officers to make decisions and manage day-to-day delivery of Council Services, in line with the Council's overall policies and budget
- internal governance, ethical standards and relationships
- representing and acting as ambassador for the authority
- leading partnerships and community leadership

The meeting will focus on Councillor Stewart's role as Leader. A separate session, in December, will explore Councillor Stewart's specific Finance & Strategy portfolio responsibilities.

The role description of the Leader is attached for the committee's information at **Appendix 1**.

3. Approach to Questions

3.1 At the Cabinet Member Question Sessions the committee will generally ask cabinet members about:

- priorities / objectives
- specific activities and achievements, progress against policy commitments, key decisions taken, and impact / difference made
- headlines on the performance of services 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 and challenges (e.g. resources / budget)
- key decisions they are expecting to take to Cabinet over the next year
- interactions with scrutiny over the last year, and whether there is any specific scrutiny activity they would welcome

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. Previous Correspondence with Councillor Stewart

4.1 The committee last met with Councillor Stewart in November 2014. The resulting letter to / from the Cabinet Member are **attached** to remind the committee of the issues that were discussed then and the response provided for follow up as necessary.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

Legal Officer: Tracey Meredith
Finance Officer: Paul Cridland