

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 10 August 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 Christine Richards – Cabinet Member for Services for Children & Young People
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 – 10 August

2.1 The following Cabinet Member will appear before the committee:

- a) Councillor Christine Richards – Cabinet Member for Services for Children & Young People

Within this Cabinet portfolio, Councillor Richards is responsible for:

- 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. 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.

2.2 The Cabinet Member has provided some written information in relation to her portfolio objectives to help the committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact (see **Appendix 1**).

This includes:

- Objectives / Progress for 2015/16
- Families First:
 - Programme Report Card
 - Case Study
- Flying Start:
 - Improvement Objectives
 - Outcomes
 - Case Study

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 Richards

4.1 The committee last met with Councillor Richards in December 2014.

Amongst the issues discussed with her over the last year included:

- Play Sufficiency Assessments
- Youth Support Services
- Youth Offending Service
- UNCRC - Draft Children & Young People's Rights Scheme
- Proposed School Land Sales / Children's Rights

The committee may wish to follow up on these, as necessary.

5. Other Questions

5.1 For each Cabinet Member Q & A Sessions the committee invites members of the public and other scrutiny councillors (not on the committee) to suggest questions. The following have been received:

- Is this Council confident that everything is being done to ensure that vulnerable young people are being protected against gangs who might want to sexually exploit them? (from Cllr Linda Tyler-Lloyd)

6. Legal Implications

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

7. Financial Implications

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

Background Papers: None

Legal Officer: Tracey Meredith
Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley