

# CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

## MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 3A, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON  
MONDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2015 AT 4.30 PM

**PRESENT:** Councillor M H Jones (Chair) Presided

<b>Councillor(s)</b>	<b>Councillor(s)</b>	<b>Councillor(s)</b>
U Clay	N J Davies	D J Lewis
A C S Colburn	E W Fitzgerald	G Owens
D W Cole	T J Hennegan	R V Smith
A M Cook	J W Jones	G J Tanner
A C S Colburn		

Co-opted Member: Dave Anderson-Thomas

### **Also Present:**

- Councillor C Lloyd (min no. 71) - Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance
- Councillor C Holley (min no. 71-73) - Convener, Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
- Councillor F Gordon (min no. 72) - Convener, Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel
- A Thomas (min no. 79) - Chair of Audit Committee

### **Officers:**

- D Taylor - Director – Corporate Services
- B Madahar - Scrutiny Co-ordinator
- W Parkin - Senior Lawyer

### 67 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P M Meara.

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### 68 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL & PREJUDICIAL INTEREST.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

### 69 **PROHIBITION OF WHIPPED VOTES AND DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS.**

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, no declarations of Whipped Votes or Party Whips were declared.

70 **MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 12 October, 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

71 **CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION & PERFORMANCE.**

The Committee took the opportunity to question Councillor C Lloyd, Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance.

Members noted his short report on 'headlines' in relation to portfolio objectives which assisted the Committee in focusing on priorities, actions, achievements and impact.

Discussion during the question and answer session focused on:

- Sustainable Swansea
- Innovation Programme
- Performance Improvement
- Customer Contact
- Commercial Approach
- ICT

Although Councillor Lloyd was happy to talk about this work it was noted commercialism was now in the Next Generation Services cabinet portfolio.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for attending.

**RESOLVED** that the Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

72 **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS SCHEME - PROGRESS REPORT.**

Chris Sivers, Director – People, and Jane Whitmore (Poverty & Prevention), presented the committee with a report on the progress of the implementation of the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme in Swansea. The report detailed progress since:

- Council agreed in September 2013 to embed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) within the Council's policy framework; and
- the launch of a Children & Young People's Rights Scheme by Cabinet in November 2014 which provided an overview of the arrangements in place to demonstrate 'due regard' to the UNCRC and consider the rights of the child in decision making processes.

This report included details of:

- how the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme was developed and is being implemented
- how knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC has been promoted through training and awareness raising sessions
- How a whole Council approach to embedding Child Rights has been taken
- The participation of Children & Young People in decisions that affect them (Article 12)
- Accountability
- Case studies giving practical examples throughout the report
- Next steps looking ahead

The Chair praised the recent awareness raising training session for scrutiny councillors which helped to develop understanding of children's rights and the policy context within which they sit in Swansea. The session also covered the role of scrutiny and questioning in relation to championing children's rights and monitoring the council's implementation of a Children's Rights Scheme.

The committee noted the four guiding principle articles of the UNCRC which could be used as the foundation for monitoring by scrutiny. These guiding principles represent the underlying requirements for all the rights on the convention to be realised by children and young people:

- Non-Discrimination (Article 2)
- Best Interests (Article 3)
- Survival and Development (Article 6)
- Participation (Article 12)

The discussion focussed on:

- The training and awareness work with staff and councillors.
- The work in schools to become 'Rights Respecting'. It was noted that the majority of schools have now engaged in this, although it has been more of a challenge to get Secondary Schools involved.
- The need to focus on engaging children educated other than at school in this work
- How children and young people have been listened to and involved e.g. the Big Conversation
- Outcomes and impact
- Future work and challenges.

It was noted that Swansea has been the first Local Authority to voluntarily make a public commitment to Children's Rights, embed the UNCRC and adopt a Rights Scheme, therefore this was effectively ground breaking work.

The committee welcomed the report and congratulated the good work and progress detailed.

A number of suggestions were made by the committee:

- a session on 'Children's Rights' should be part of the councillor induction programme and recommended that officers liaise with the Head of Democratic Services on this.
- more clarity in the mapping of schools in the report which showed the level of engagement with the Rights Respecting School initiative.
- close working with Governors (which include councillors) in encouraging those schools not already engaged in the Rights Respecting School Initiative, as well as supporting the rights of children and young people generally.
- more use of social media to develop the involvement and participation of children and young people. It also suggested promotion of the City & County of Swansea as 'rights respecting' in corporate branding.

The chair highlighted the need for scrutiny councillors to champion children's rights and scrutinise how due regard to the UNCRC has been paid by asking pertinent questions.

**RESOLVED** that the views of the committee noted above be considered by the Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Director.

73 **SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL PROGRESS REPORT - SERVICE IMPROVEMENT & FINANCE.**

The Convener of the Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel, Councillor Chris Holley, presented an update on the work of the Panel.

He highlighted key activities over the last three months which has involved meeting with 3 Cabinet Members to either discuss the implementation and impact of budget decisions within their portfolios or discuss issues from performance monitoring.

In respect of future work he stated that the Panel would be discussing performance on selected issues with external organisations in order to hear different perspectives to help test and challenge reported levels of performance. He also referred to issues with the format of corporate monitoring reports and ease of understanding (particularly for the public) which the Panel has been discussing with relevant officers. The Panel is also planning its involvement in scrutiny of the forthcoming budget.

**RESOLVED** that the report be **NOTED**.

74 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2015-16.**

The report of the Chair reviewed the scrutiny work programme.

The report provided the committee with:

- The current scrutiny work programme
- A plan for future committee meetings

- A progress report on the various existing Panels and Working Groups
- Cabinet forward plan for opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny

The chair referred to the recently published CSSIW Performance Evaluation Report 2014/15. She stated that it was a very positive report about Swansea social services and it was very pleasing to read within the inspectors report praise for scrutiny, specifically the work of the Child & Family Services and Transformation of Adult Social Services Scrutiny Panels.

Amongst the positive comments noted were:

- Clear work programmes
- Close working with officers
- Robust challenge provided by councillors
- Improved information about scrutiny activities

Overall the report cited 'effective and well managed scrutiny arrangements' as an area of progress. The chair congratulated the two Panels and their conveners for their work and recognition.

Dean Taylor, Director – Corporate Services, had been invited to attend and gave advice on council priorities and main strategic challenges, following on from his contributions to the Scrutiny Work Planning Conference in May. His report provided information on the Corporate Plan, Sustainable Swansea programme, Medium Term Financial Plan, Whole Council Objectives, External Inspection Reports and Recommendation, and Current Directorate Priority Areas. This was intended to help the committee reflect on the work programme and the alignment of major activities with corporate priorities to ensure scrutiny can contribute to the big issues facing the council.

It was confirmed to the committee that a number of topics have been identified for potential inquiries, and these, including the issue of Sustainability – Food Security, will be looked at in order of agreed priority.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. the committee work plan be accepted; and
2. a request for pre-decision scrutiny be made in respect of the proposed cabinet report on 'City Centre Development Sites – Selection of Preferred Developer(s)', scheduled for 17 December Cabinet meeting.

## 75 **MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY PANELS AND WORKING GROUPS.**

The Chair presented a report which advised of changes to the membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

**RESOLVED** that the following changes be made:

1. Child & Family Services Performance Panel – Councillor Uta Clay be removed and Councillor Ceri Evans be added; and

2. Transformation of Adult Social Services Panel – Councillor Bob Clay (convener) be removed and Councillor Uta Clay be appointed convener.
3. the membership of the Tethered Horses Scrutiny Working Group be agreed as follows:

Cyril Anderson	Robert Smith
Anthony Colburn	Gloria Tanner
David Cole	Des Thomas
Joe Hale	Linda Tyler-Lloyd
Yvonne Jardine	Lesley Walton
<b>Jeff Jones (CONVENER)</b>	Mike White

76 **SCRUTINY LETTERS.**

The Chair reported the Scrutiny Letters Log and referred to recent correspondence between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members.

**RESOLVED** that the Scrutiny Letters Log be **NOTED**.

77 **FEEDBACK FROM RECENT SCRUTINY EVENTS.**

The Chair referred to the recent meeting of the National Assembly for Wales Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister, held in Swansea. It was agreed that observations about the meeting and learning points be circulated to committee members.

78 **UPCOMING SCRUTINY EVENTS.**

The Chair referred a joint Welsh Government / WLGA seminar on Welsh Local Government Finance taking place on 19 November, focusing on the challenges and opportunities for local service delivery in Wales. It was noted that the convener of the Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel would be attending.

79 **AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORT.**

The Chair of the Audit Committee, Alan Thomas, attended in support of developing the relationship between the scrutiny and the Audit Committee.

He provided the committee with the Audit Committee's work plan and the annual report in order to share information about the work and focus of the Committee. He highlighted that the work of the Audit Committee is concerned with looking at and gaining assurance about the Council's financial affairs, risk management, internal control and governance arrangements, as well as overseeing the Council's internal and external audit arrangements. It also reviews the Council's financial statements.

The purpose of the discussion was to ensure mutual awareness and understanding of respective work, and raise any issues regarding coordination / duplication or gaps, or raise any matters that may need to be referred.

Mr Thomas was pleased with the relationship between the two committees, coordination, and mechanisms for dialogue and raising issues. He was also pleased at being able to participate in the Annual Scrutiny Work Planning Conference. He did not feel there were any concerns about duplication in work plans. He also remarked at the significant amount of scrutiny being undertaken and work completed, and praised the commitment of those scrutiny councillors involved and management of the overall work programme. He acknowledged that it was not possible to look at everything therefore the challenge remains to focus on the big issues and prioritise.

The chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee echoed the view of the Mr Thomas. It was noted she was scheduled to attend the Audit Committee on 15 December.

The Chair thanked Mr Thomas for his attendance.

80 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2015/16 MUNICIPAL YEAR (ALL AT 4.30 P.M. EXCEPT WHERE NOTED):**

The date and time of future Committee Meetings for the 2015/16 Municipal Year was noted.

81 **DATE AND TIME OF UPCOMING PANEL / WORKING GROUP MEETINGS:**

The date and time of upcoming Panel/Working Group meetings were provided for information to help increase the visibility of this work and encourage participation.

The meeting ended at 6.32 pm

**CHAIR**