

**Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups**

**1. Inquiry Panels:**

**a) School Governance (convener: Cllr Fiona Gordon)**

Key Question: How can the Council ensure that school governors provide effective challenge for their schools?

Progress Bar:

Planning	Evidence Gathering	Draft Final Report

The Panel’s final report will be presented to Cabinet on 17 March. A response to the recommendations from Cabinet will then be expected within two months.

Projected End Date: Complete

**b) Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)**

Key Question: How is the Council working with health and other partners to reduce demand for specialist child & adolescent mental health services?

Progress Bar:

Planning	Evidence Gathering	Draft Final Report

The Panel has the following evidence gathering sessions remaining

- 16 March – Phil Monaghan, Educational Psychologist
- 17 March - SCVS Parent Carer Forum
- 22 March – Head of Adult Services

Projected End Date: May 2016

**c) Building Sustainable Communities (convenor: Cllr Terry Hennegan)**

Key Question: How can the council best support residents to run services in their own communities?

Progress Bar:

Planning	Evidence Gathering	Draft Final Report

The Panel will at their next meeting speak to the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Healthy City and the Lead Officer for the Building

Sustainable Communities Corporate Priority. In April the panel will speak to the Head of Poverty and Prevention about the role Community First has in relation to Community Action. The panel has also produced a survey that is currently open. It has been particularly targeted at Councillors, Community Councils and Community Groups although it is also available online and in hard copy in a number of locations.

Projected End Date: May 2016

## 2. Pre-Inquiry Working Groups:

a) Tackling Poverty (convener: Sybil Crouch)

Preparations for this inquiry will begin shortly.

## 3. Follow Up on Completed Inquiries:

Follow-ups of inquiries will consider both the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and wider impact / difference made. Inquiry Panels are reconvened between 6-12 months after cabinet decision on Inquiry reports.

Inquiry	Cabinet Decision	Recommendations			Follow Up Panel Meeting
		Agreed	Partly	Rejected	
Services for Looked After Children	17 Sep 2013	14	1	0	15 Jul 2014 (Follow up complete)
Public Transport	12 Nov 2013	13	1	0	20 Oct 2014 (Follow up complete)
Affordable Housing	3 Dec 2013	7	2	4	3 Dec 2014 (Follow up complete)
Tourism	14 Jan 2014	14	0	0	17 Nov 2014 (Follow up complete)
Economic Inactivity	3 Jun 2014	7	0	0	24 Jun 2015 (Follow up complete)
Attainment & Wellbeing	1 Jul 2014	11	0	0	11 Jun 2015 (Follow up complete)
Inward investment	20 Jan 2015	10	0	2	14 Jul 2015 Further follow up (3 March 2016)
Public Engagement	17 Feb 2015	15	1	0	25 Aug 2015 (Follow up complete)
Streetscene	14 Apr 2015	14	4	3	20 Jan 2016

					(Follow up complete)
Social Care at Home	20 Aug 2015	16	5	1	May 2016
Corporate Culture	15 Oct 2015	19	0	0	Jul 2016
Education Inclusion	21 Jan 2016	19	0	1	Oct 2016

#### 4. Performance Panels:

##### a) Service Improvement & Finance (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

The Panel met with Cllr Rob Steward, Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy (Leader) on 10 February in order to discuss the Cabinet Budget Report. The Conveners of the other scrutiny performance panels were invited to attend and members of the public were also given the opportunity to ask questions. Cllr Chris Holley attended the Cabinet Meeting on 15 February to provide the views of scrutiny.

Specifically the Panel wished Cabinet to note that they felt that once the results of the numerous Commissioning Reviews become available, then robust public consultation should take place on the various options. The Budget Consultation process asked high level questions on whether people would be prepared to pay for services as an alternative to losing them. However, the Panel considered that more detailed information should be provided to people to enable them to make a fully informed decision. They understood that this information would be available once the reviews are complete. The Panel also stated that the relevant scrutiny panels should be involved in the consultation processes.

The Panel is meeting on 9 March where they will hold Q&A sessions with Cllr Christine Richards, Cabinet Member for Services for Children & Young People and Cllr Jane Harris, Cabinet Member for Adults & Vulnerable People. The purpose will be to monitor the implementation and impact of savings targets for 2015/16 within their portfolios. The Panel will also consider the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Budget monitoring report.

##### b) Schools Performance (convener: Cllr Fiona Gordon)

The Panel will next meet on the 17 March where they will meet with the Challenge Advisor, Headteacher and Chair of Governors of a Primary School to discuss the schools current performance and prospects for improvement. The Panel in April will look at some examples of good practice sent in by schools and they will also complete a pre-decision exercise on the proposed changes to the West Glamorgan Music Service.

**c) Local Service Board (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)**

The Panel met on 22 February where they discussed their work to date with Councillor Rob Stewart (Chair of the LSB) looking at the LSB priority of Older People's Independence, in order to extrapolate conclusions about the effectiveness of the LSB as a whole.

The Panel noted that the final meeting of the LSB is taking place in March, before transition to the Public Services Board (PSB). The Panel agreed it was timely to present its conclusions from its work to date, informed by its specific work on Older People's Independence. It was agreed that a formal letter be sent to the Chair of the LSB on the Panel's conclusions, which should help influence the development of the new PSB.

The Panel also looked at the draft terms of reference for the PSB and discussed the on-going role of scrutiny in the new arrangements, and made some comments that will be fed back to the LSB.

The Panel will now focus on the development of the Public Services Board and associated work. The Panel is meeting on 21 March where they will discuss the Wellbeing Assessment that needs to be produced by the PSB. They will also look at the LSB Driver Diagrams.

**d) Child & Family Services (convener: Paxton Hood-Williams)**

The panel met on 15 February and examined the quality assurance framework and audit processes in place in Child & Family Services and the December 2015 performance report.

**Quality Assurance**

The panel had asked officers to bring a briefing on audit and quality assurance processes because it wanted to satisfy itself that these were robust. Officers demonstrated that the department had rigorous quality assurance and audit processes and also how it fed into the Western Bay Performance and Impact Framework and the Quality and Performance Management Group.

**Performance Report**

Overall the panel was pleased with the performance report. In particular it was pleased with the highest performance on children seen alone at Initial Assessment, low numbers of repeat referrals, levels of supervised contact undertaken. It did highlight some areas which it felt needed to be brought to the attention of the department. These were:

- The general trend for Contacts is up – it was suggested that the increase could be down to the entitlement under the Act to have an assessment. This will be closely monitored over the next few months
- Lack of data in the report on sickness and absence – the panel was told that the data is being reviewed to make it clearer and

more robust. The Head of Service has a regular report which details sickness and absence and this will be in the next report to the panel

- Core Assessment performance has fallen and work is being duplicated. The Act will support improvements in this area.

While not in the report the panel felt it needed to raise the budget reduction that was in the recent draft budget report. The Head of Service informed the panel that the savings will come from current underspend within the Department but making savings in the future will get harder.

## **5. Other Panels / Working Groups:**

A number of topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Panels / Working Groups.

### **a) Transformation of Adult Social Services (convener: Uta Clay)**

The Panel met on 8 February to examine the objective setting and performance appraisal process for senior officers and the draft Adult Services Budget report.

#### **Performance/Appraisal Report**

The panel was keen to understand the content of the objectives as well as the overall process and agreed that further evidence should be sought to allow the panel to understand whether TASS objectives have been translated into service delivery. Specifically in respect of Director of People, Chief Social Services Officer, Head of Adult Services, Head of Finance.

#### **Budget Report**

The panel noted that there was a proposed increase in the adult services budget and no additional savings proposals. The emphasis was on ensuring that services were excellent, citizens are safe and arrangements are as cost effective as they can be. The assumption was that, by ensuring services meet people needs effectively, costs will reduce over time. This was the experience in child and family services.

The Panel further noted that the expected overspend in Adult Services will be balanced by an equivalent underspend in child and family services. This is a reversal of the position in the past.

The panel was concerned about the financial risk associated with the transformation programme. Previous savings targets associated with programmes such as TASS have not been delivered and it is not clear that lessons have been learnt. The Panel urged the Cabinet Member to ensure that monitoring of these savings is robust.

The panel agreed to provide its views on the budget to the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel to be included in the Convener's report to the Cabinet.

b) **Education Through Regional Working** (regional scrutiny group)

A meeting for scrutiny councillors and officers from the six councils participating in ERW was held in Port Talbot on 22 September. Swansea was represented by Cllr Fiona Gordon and Cllr Cheryl Philpott. It was agreed that a scrutiny councillors group will be set up in order to coordinate scrutiny work and ensure a consistent approach. The next meeting will be hosted by Swansea and is being arranged for 11 March 2016. Swansea Scrutiny Team will provide the support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW.

c) **Local Flood Risk Management** (convener: Cllr Susan Jones)

The Working Group met on 14 December and the letter to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport is included in the Committee's agenda for discussion. The Committee is asked agree to the Working Group's request to meet on an annual basis in order to provide an on-going scrutiny involvement in the annual review of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan.

d) **Civic Events** (convener: Cllr Anthony Colburn)

The Convener of the Civic Events Working Group requested a follow-up meeting to address a number of issues that the working group felt needed further consideration. This will take place later on in March.

e) **Welsh Housing Quality Standard** (convener: Cllr Terry Hennegan)

The Working Group met with Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services, and officers, on 3 February in order to consider the Council's progress towards achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard within its social housing stock.

The Working Group was pleased to find out that the Council is on course to deliver the WHQS to all Council homes by 2020. It was clear that the Council has a good grasp on what is required to achieve the standard by 2020 and that the mechanisms are in place to ensure that progress is measured and reported accurately. Some concerns were raised regarding the level of information available on long terms plans, to enable tenants and Members to understand where their properties/wards fall in the investment programme priorities.

The Working Group made a number of recommendations in a letter to the Cabinet Member, which will be reported to the Committee in due course once a response is received.

f) **Tethered Horses** (convener: Cllr Jeff Jones)

A second meeting is taking place on 8 March to receive further evidence, including practice elsewhere. The working group is considering the Council's overall approach and has been asked to comment on a petition from Friends of Swansea Horses that calls for a ban on the tethering of horses on public spaces across Swansea.

Further Working Groups to be convened in the future as time and resources allow, in the order of priority shown:

**1. Tree Preservation**

The Working Group will enable scrutiny councillors to ask questions about the Council's work in relation to the tree preservation process, including the making, monitoring and enforcement of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The relevant Cabinet Member / officer(s) will be invited to provide assessment of current service and information on objectives, procedures / practice, challenges, and improvement plans etc. Following discussion the views of the Working Group and any recommendations will be presented in a letter to the relevant Cabinet Member. The Scrutiny Programme Committee agreed to establish Working Group after some issues were raised by members about the identification / maintenance of TPOs, enforcement process and sanctions, and also in relation to the interface with local members about information relevant to their areas. Scrutiny councillors have been invited to express interest in participating and proposed membership will be reported to the committee for agreement.

**2. Corporate Building Services**

the relevant cabinet member / officer will be requested to provide a report covering assessment of current service (objectives and achievements, procedures and practice, value for money, challenges, improvement plans etc) for questions and discussion. Some issues raised in relation to procurement, costs / competitiveness, joined up working across the Council.

**3. Roads / Highway Maintenance**

the relevant cabinet member / officer will be requested to provide a report covering service practices and procedures (e.g. dealing with pot holes), use of resources, prospects for improvement. This will enable questions about the quality and effectiveness of highway maintenance and repair, and also issues relating to the relationship with utilities and strategic planning / co-ordination of works to minimise disruption to major access roads.