

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 3A, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON
MONDAY, 14 MARCH 2016 AT 4.30 PM**

PRESENT: Councillor M H Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

U C Clay
A M Cook
N J Davies
J W Jones
D J Lewis

Councillor(s)

A C S Colburn
S E Crouch
E W Fitzgerald
R V Smith

Councillor(s)

D W Cole
J P Curtice
T J Hennegan
G J Tanner

Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley

Co-opted Member(s)

P R Hood-Williams

Officer(s)

Brij Madahar
Wendy Parkin
S Woon

Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Senior Lawyer
Democratic Services Officer

144 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P M Meara.

145 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL & PREJUDICIAL INTEREST.**

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

146 **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.

147 **MINUTES:**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 8 February, 2016, be agreed as a correct record.

148 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME.**

There were no public questions.

149 **CRIME & DISORDER SCRUTINY - PROGRESS ON SAFER SWANSEA PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE. QUESTIONS TO CO-CHAIRS:**

Chief Superintendent Joe Ruddy (South Wales Police) and Chris Sivers (Director of People) attended to provide a progress report on Safer Swansea Partnership Performance and answer questions.

A presentation was given which encompassed:

- Recorded Crime Trends;
- Domestic Abuse;
- Sexual Offences;
- Robbery;
- Burglary;
- Hate Crime;
- Autocrime;
- Other Thefts;
- Criminal Damage and
- Sectors Recording Biggest Crimes.

The Chief Superintendent stated that crime has reduced over 5 years, making Swansea one of the safest Cities in the UK to live.

With effect from 1st April 2015 the revised Home Office Counting Rules came into effect. The Home Office Counting Rules provide a national standard for the recording and counting of 'notifiable' offences recorded by police forces in England and Wales (known as 'recorded crime').

Despite the changes made to how crime is recorded Swansea has only experienced a 0.7% increase (118 more offences) in recoded crime during 2015 compared against a 1.3% increase in recorded crime across the South Wales Police area.

Violent crime continues to be a priority for the Community Safety Partnership. It is important to note that while reported incidents of overall violent crime increased by 17% (826) the sub-category violence with injury actually reduced by 0.5% (10). The largest increases were seen in the 'less serious' sector of this crime category (assault without injury, harassment, public order offences).

He referred to the work being undertaken with Licensees and TASS (Tackling Alcohol Substance in the Community). The main theme and priority for Safer Swansea Partnership was domestic violence. 29.3% of all violent crime was domestic related.

The Director of People referred to the 13.9% increase in domestic violence since last year which was a significant increase in terms of how this is managed across the board. A strategic group had been established to deal with this, and work was underway to embed this within Partnership. Additionally, a systems review had been undertaken. Changes were in the process of being implemented. The domestic violence 'one stop shop' which had opened last year had proved to be a success.

It was noted that domestic abuse was a Local Service Board top priority. All Councillors will be offered domestic abuse training from the Summer of 2016. The Welsh Government have revised the funding arrangements for Domestic Abuse and work was underway regarding a plan of how this money would be spent. Progress was being made to analyse the data and understand the issues surrounding the high levels of domestic abuse and implications for children in Swansea.

The Chief Superintendent referred to the Police and Crime Reduction Plan in order to increase the level of recording. He referred to the high level of crime in Wind Street and the need to draw resources from other areas of the City.

In response to Member questions, the Chief Superintendent stated that there was an upsurge of incidents of domestic abuse on sports international days.

The Chief Superintendent referred to an increase of 17.2% (52 more cases) in respect of sexual offences, many of which were historic cases. He referred to the work of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which provided emotional and practical support. The increased figures were deemed to be a success in providing victims with the confidence to come forward.

Members' noted that:

- There had been a reduction of 2.9% in relation to robbery;
- There had been a reduction of 13% in relation to burglary;
- Hate Crimes has increased by 52 in 2015 and racial crimes had increased to 50;
- There had been a 11.2% increase in auto crime;
- There had been no increases in other crimes such as shop lifting;
- There had been a 2.5% increase in criminal damage and a restorative approach had been adopted in dealing with such issues;
- The sectors recording biggest crime were Gorseinon, Townhill (and other areas);
- The emerging crime areas included cyber crime; child sexual exploitation; community cohesion; new psycho-active substances and the student population.

In response to Member questions, the Chief Superintendent stated that:

- The Police had met with students during 'freshers week' to raise awareness of burglaries and the need to secure properties. It was felt that police operations and close working with the Universities has contributed to a reduction in burglaries;
- The Police were working with other agencies in the community to target specific areas suffering with high levels of anti-social behaviour. He referred to the work of the targeted action meeting and the need to deal with issues in a proportionate manner. He referred to the benefit of ISTAM meetings as part of this work. He was asked to review whether these meetings would benefit from councillor involvement;
- The Police often see 'peaks and troughs' in areas as a result of premises becoming less secure or known individuals being in custody;

- The violent crime reduction campaign in the press had been used to address crimes against women and girls. However, this type of crime is difficult to manage when it is committed in the home. He stated that much of the effort needed to be about reducing alcohol consumption because of the link to domestic violence;
- There was no clear connection between alcohol and sexual crimes. Work was on-going with SARC in order to raise awareness and increase victim support. Work was also being progressed with schools to let them know what is and is not acceptable behaviour;
- There were no current plans to introduce a drunk tank within the City although discussions had taken place between the Leader regarding the redevelopment of the City Centre and ways to manage crime;
- The Council's decision to reduce budgets for CCTV within the City was a political matter although the Police and Crime Commissioner has had discussions with the Leader and Chief Executive;
- CCTV is a useful tool in protecting the City, and Swansea does enjoy more CCTV coverage than other cities in England and Wales;
- The seemingly high turnover of Police Officers at senior level in Swansea was linked to a previous Police recruitment initiative and many reaching the age of retirement. He expected the number of PCSOs in the area to be more settled now;
- A lot of work is ongoing with schools at Key Stage 1, 3 and 4. Crucial Crew are involved in raising awareness regarding internet safety for young people.

In response to Member questions, the Director of People stated that discussions had taken place with Councillor P M Meara regarding research to better understand the problem and relatively high levels of domestic violence / abuse within Swansea. This issue remains as a top priority when Welsh Government grant money is received.

The Chair thanked Chief Superintendent Joe Ruddy and Chris Sivers for the informative presentation and was pleased to see progress in a number of key areas.

RESOLVED that the report be **NOTED**.

150 **CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR NEXT GENERATION SERVICES.**

Councillor A S Lewis referred to her written report which detailed the areas covered within her Portfolio.

She detailed work ongoing in Housing (which included Landlord Services, Community Housing and the Business Planning Division); the priorities, achievements and plans for the next 12 months in Corporate Building and Property Services; Energy and Commercialism.

She stated that the Commercial Team works to support all Council departments and service areas. A report would be submitted to Council over the forthcoming months which would detail progress. She referred to the particular success in relation to

public sector contracts which had produced an additional £1.8m savings bringing the total to £3m.

In response to Member questions, the Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services stated that:

- The More Homes Pilot provided the Authority with an opportunity to test the capability of Corporate Building and Property Services who have to be competitive and build properties to a certain standard. Whilst Corporate Building and Property Services undertake work on schools and other buildings and do have building skills in-house, the pilot scheme should identify any gaps
- The air tightness of properties, insulation and quality of building products all had an impact into reducing fuel poverty. Whilst the houses cost slightly more to build, the savings are realised over time;
- In relation to commencing the pilot homes building works, whilst the timeline was aspirational it was intended that work would be progressed to deliver the first homes around early March/April 2017.
- Timescales in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) were governed by the Occupational Therapist's (OT) ability to assess individuals. The appointment of 2.5 OT posts directly to Housing had made a positive impact of waiting times and there was an argument for expanding this service within Housing;
- The process of assessment for DFG's involves input from the OT and the Surveyor. Each recommendation and every property is different. The surveyors visit is a critical part of the whole process.
- The commercialisation agenda includes looking at advertisements on pillars in multi-story car parks. Organisations such as Admiral or Great First Western could provide commercial income; and

The Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services stated that she would provide more information about the income generation achieved through the new commercial approach. The committee also asked her to look into the overall process in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants and timescales / waiting involved at various stages to see what could be done.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services for her informative presentation.

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

151 **SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL PROGRESS REPORT - CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES.**

Councillor P Hood-Williams, Convenor, Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel referred to his third update to the Committee on the work of the Panel.

He highlighted the key activities; achievements/impact and future work programme.

RESOLVED that the report be **NOTED**.

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

The report of the Chair reviewed the current 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; and
- Cabinet forward plan for opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny.

RESOLVED that the report be **NOTED**.

153 **MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY PANELS AND WORKING GROUPS.**

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

RESOLVED that the following changes be made:

- 1) Councillor S M Jones to be added to the proposed Tackling Poverty Inquiry; and
- 2) Councillors D W Cole (Convenor); A C S Colburn, R Doyle, E W Fitzgerald, M H Jones, L James, K E Marsh, I Richard, G J Tanner and T M White be confirmed as members of the Scrutiny Working Group on Tree Preservation.

154 **SCRUTINY LETTERS.**

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

The committee was asked to discuss the recommendation of the Local Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Working Group that it should meet annually to monitor and review progress of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Scrutiny Letters Log be **NOTED**; and
- 2) the Local Flood Risk Management Working Group be authorised to meet annually to monitor the authority's flood risk management plans.

155 **OLDER PEOPLE'S COMMISSIONER FOR WALES - GUIDANCE ON EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND SCRUTINY.**

The Chair referred to the report which informed the committee of guidance from the Older People's Commissioner for Wales which contains implications for scrutiny in relation to changes to community services.

It was noted that a workshop was taking place on 18 April, 2016 to help members and officers understand the guidance and take forward a rights-based approach to

impact assessment for older people and scrutiny around changes to community services.

RESOLVED that the report be **NOTED**.

156 **FEEDBACK FROM RECENT SCRUTINY EVENTS.**

There were none.

157 **UPCOMING SCRUTINY EVENTS.**

There were none.

158 **AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN.**

RESOLVED that the Audit Committee Work Plan be **NOTED**.

159 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2015/16 MUNICIPAL YEAR.**

The date and time of future Committee meetings for the 2015-2016 Municipal Year was **NOTED**.

160 **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 6.10 pm

CHAIR