

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 11 April 2016

SCRUTINY LETTERS

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| Purpose | To ensure the committee is aware of the scrutiny letters produced following various scrutiny activities, and to track responses to date. |
| Content | The report includes a log of scrutiny letters produced this year and provides a copy of correspondence between scrutiny and cabinet members, where discussion is required. |
| Councillors are being asked to | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the scrutiny letters and responses• Make comments, observations 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 The production of scrutiny letters has become an established part of the way scrutiny operates in Swansea. Letters from the chair (or conveners) allow scrutiny to communicate directly and quickly with relevant cabinet members.
- 1.2 These letters are used to convey views and conclusions about particular issues discussed and provide the opportunity to raise concerns, ask for further information, and make recommendations. This enables scrutiny to engage with Cabinet Members on a regular and structured basis.

2. Reporting of Letters

- 2.1 All scrutiny letters, whether they are written by the Programme Committee or conveners of panels / working groups, are published on the Council's website (<http://swansea.gov.uk/scrutinypublications>) to ensure visibility, of the outcomes from meetings, across the council and public.

2.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee agenda also includes a copy of letters to/from Cabinet Members where specific discussion is required. Letters are included where cabinet member responses were awaited and have now been received or where a scrutiny letter did not require a response.

2.3 Letters relating to the work of Performance Panels are part of an ongoing dialogue with Cabinet Members and are therefore reported back and monitored by each Panel. However the convener will provide a quarterly progress report to the committee, including summary of correspondence with Cabinet Members and outcomes.

3. Letters Log

3.1 As the current municipal year progresses this report will contain a log of scrutiny letters produced to enable the committee to maintain an overview of letters activity over the year – see **Appendix 1**.

3.2 The following letter(s) are also attached for discussion:

| | Activity | Meeting Date | Correspondence |
|---|--|---------------------|---|
| a | Streetscene Inquiry Panel (follow up) | 20 Jan | Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Environment & Transportation |
| b | Welsh Housing Quality Standard Working Group | 3 Feb | Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services |
| c | Inward Investment Inquiry Panel (follow up) | 3 Mar | Letter to Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration |

3.2.1 The committee should note that the Streetscene and Inward Investment Inquiry Panels have now concluded their monitoring of agreed recommendations / cabinet action plan.

3.2.2 With regard to the work on Streetscene the letter from the convener does highlight the ongoing budget situation and the importance of continuing to provide good quality Streetscene services. It asks the committee to consider how the current budget situation will affect street scene services, as well as keep an eye on progress. This is something which the committee can raise as part of its regular Q & A with the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transportation.

3.3 Where requested Cabinet Members are expected to respond in writing to scrutiny letters within 21 calendar days. The response should indicate what action (if any) they intend to take as a result of the views and recommendations made. For this municipal year the letters log

now shows the average time taken by Cabinet Members to respond to scrutiny letters.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

Background Papers: None

Legal Officer: Wendy Parkin

Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley