

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 June 2016

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 the Cabinet Member on relevant matters• Make comments and recommendations as necessary
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer(s)	Mike Hawes, Corporate Director Services (Resources)
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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 4 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

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, she is responsible for:

- Child & Family Services
- Play
- Youth Services & Promoting Youth Inclusion
- Early Intervention / Prevention
- Youth Offending Service (Y.O.S.)
- Youth Citizenship
- Opportunities for Young People
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Champion
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) (Link with Education)
- Regional Adoption Service
- Children & Young People (CYP) Board
- Continuum of Care
- Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy
- Flying Start
- Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea

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

- 4.1 The committee last had a Q & A regarding this portfolio in August 2015. Amongst the issues discussed then included:

- Child & Family Services
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Employment Opportunities for Looked After Children
- Flying Start
- Children's University
- Youth Services
- Education for Gypsy & Traveller Children
- Children & Young People's Rights Scheme
- Children & Young People's Partnership

The actual correspondence relating to this meeting is attached as the committee may wish to follow up on these issues, as necessary.

- 4.2 Other contact with scrutiny:

- Child & Family Services Performance Panel – Regular dialogue and correspondence with Cabinet Member on performance issues, with attendance as required by the Panel.
- Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel – question session on the achievement and impact of budget savings relevant to her portfolio. She answered questions on: Child & Family Services, Youth Services, Outdoor Activity Centres, Youth Workers / NEETs; Regional Adoption Service, Youth Citizenship & Flying Start.
- Children & Young People Rights Scheme – discussion on compliance / progress with agreed scheme and impact.

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.

5.2 On this occasion no questions were received.

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: Wendy Parkin

Finance Officer: Paul Cridland