

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 8 August 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 Jennifer Raynor – Cabinet Member for Education
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 Jennifer Raynor – Cabinet Member for Education

Within this Cabinet portfolio, she is responsible for:

- City of Learning
- Education Charter
- Education Regional Working (ERW)
- Flying Start - links with Services for Children & Young People and Wellbeing & Healthy City portfolios
- Inclusion & Learner Support
- Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) – Link with Services for Children & Young People portfolio
- Planning & Resources
- Quality in Education (QEd) Programme
- School Improvement
- Schools
- Schools' Organisation & Performance

2.2 The Cabinet Member has provided some 'headlines' in relation to the portfolio to help the committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact (see **Appendix 1**).

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 The committee has also identified sustainability and future trends as a key cross-cutting theme. It is interested in to what extent long-term thinking is influencing work / decisions. The committee is also interested in the relationship between the work of the Public Services Board (PSB) and Cabinet Members, and could ask about how the work of the PSB impacts on their portfolio and is helping them to deliver on priorities, and making a difference.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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 October 2015. Amongst the issues discussed then included:

- New Gorseinon Primary School / Parc y Werin
- School Budgets
- Education Inclusion
- School Attendance
- Safeguarding

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 relevant contact with scrutiny:

- Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel – Regular dialogue and correspondence with Cabinet Member on performance issues, with attendance as required by the Panel.
- Education Inclusion – the Cabinet Member provided a response to the recommendations of this inquiry in October, agreed by Cabinet. The Panel is expected to meet again in October to follow up on implementation of agreed recommendations and impact of this piece of scrutiny.
- School Governance Inquiry – the Cabinet Member provided a response to the recommendations of this inquiry in June, agreed by Cabinet. The Panel will meet during the next 9 months to follow up.
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services Inquiry – the Cabinet Member has also contributed evidence to this inquiry.

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: Carl Billingsley