

# **CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA**

## **MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA ON  
MONDAY, 10 JULY 2017 AT 4.30 PM**

**PRESENT:** M H Jones (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

S E Crouch  
D W Helliwell  
B Hopkins

**Councillor(s)**

E W Fitzgerald  
T J Hennegan  
M Sykes

**Councillor(s)**

L S Gibbard  
C A Holley  
W G Thomas

**Co-opted Member(s)**

D Anderson-Thomas

**Co-opted Member(s)**

P R Hood-Williams

**Co-opted Member(s)**

**Officer(s)**

Kate Jones  
Brij Madahar  
Debbie Smith

Democratic Services Officer  
Scrutiny Team Leader  
Interim Deputy Head of Legal , Democratic Services and  
Business Intelligence.  
Senior Lawyer

Lyndsay Thomas

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): C Anderson, J P Curtice, N J Davies, C R Evans, I E Mann and G J Tanner

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

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

**6 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.

**7 MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Special Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 9 March 2017 and Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 10 April 2017 and 25 May 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**8 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME.**

There were no public questions.

9 **ROLE OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE.**

The Chair and Scrutiny Team Leader presented a report on the Role of the Scrutiny Programme Committee. New Councillors and those new to the Committee were welcomed.

The following areas were highlighted: -

- Role of the Scrutiny Programme Committee including the management of the Scrutiny Work Programme, Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups through a single work programme;
- Membership of the Scrutiny Programme Committee;
- Interest would be sought for the vacant Education Statutory Co-optees;
- Scrutiny Conveners and their Role Description;
- The importance of Conveners to involve fully external stakeholders for example, service users, expert witnesses and partners in scrutiny activities, where relevant;
- Effective Working – to consider the effective working of the Committee and any suggestions for improvement;
- Consider the preparation and structure of the meetings;
- Terms of Reference;

Permission was sought from the Committee to continue to practice of co-opting Performance Panel Conveners on to the Scrutiny Programme Committee (if they were not already members). They would be co-opted on to the Committee in a non-voting capacity.

The committee also shared views about how it can work most effectively, so that it can be well prepared for meetings and inclusive, for example in developing questions in advance, participating in pre-meetings, length of committee meetings, regularly reflecting on how well the committee is working.

**RESOLVED** that: -

- 1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- 2) the continued co-option of Performance Panel Members as set out in at paragraph 3.4 of the report be approved.

10 **SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17.**

The Chair presented the Scrutiny Annual Report 2016-2017.

The report highlighted the work carried out in the last municipal year, showed how scrutiny has made a difference, and supported continuous improvement for the scrutiny function.

Section 4 Feedback and Improvement was specifically highlighted which reported those things which had worked well and those that could be improved.

A discussion ensued surrounding the following: -

- Whether the Committee had any views on the report and whether there were any suggestions to improve the way it was written;
- The level of Staff awareness and understanding of scrutiny appeared to be a concern. Members were informed that the staff response to the Annual Survey was very low therefore it was difficult to draw meaningful conclusions;
- How staff engagement could be improved;
- Look at amendments to the Questionnaire for the future to ensure that the Survey is effective;
- There had been a high percentage of recommendations made by Scrutiny which had been accepted by Cabinet

A typographical error was also noted. The Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 paragraph 4.3 (7) to be amended to include the word 'not' on line 2 in-between 'were' and 'fully understood' to read 'not fully understood'.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted, and would be presented to Council in July.

11 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18.**

The Chair presented a report on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2017/18 for consideration.

The Scrutiny Team Leader provided the background to the Scrutiny Work Programme and provided an overview of the Work Planning Conference. He highlighted the need for the Work Programme to be aligned with the Corporate Priorities but balanced to address issues of community concern. He referred to the guiding principles - the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant, focussed on issues of concern, and represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources.

The Committee held a discussion on the Work Programme which centred around the following: -

- The use of Performance Panels and Question and Answer Sessions to deal with appropriate issues;
- Flexibility and fluidity of Work Programme as required;
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny;
- 2 Inquiry Panels proposed for next year;
- Performance Panels – new Performance Panel on Development and Regeneration and appointment of Conveners;
- Expressions of Interest would be invited for a Convenor for the Schools Performance Panel;
- 9 Working Groups identified and their respective priority within the work programme;
- Regional Scrutiny in respect of 'Education Through Regional Working' and the possibility of other regional arrangements;
- Public Requests for Scrutiny;
- Possible Short Delay on starting the first Inquiry Panel to focus on starting the Working Groups;

- Provision of sufficient support and/or staff to accommodate proposed Work Programme;
- Child and Family and Adult Services Performance Panels.

The order of the Working Groups was discussed further. Emergency Planning was deemed a priority and important to remain as the first working group, as was Community Cohesion and Hate Crime. Due to the impending consultation on Homelessness it was requested that this be given greater priority. It was also requested that Car Parking Charges be dealt with more expediently due to decrease in use of beach car parks over the winter period as a result of the increase in Car Parking Charges.

It was noted that the Cabinet Member dealing with Homelessness was scheduled to attend the next Scrutiny Meeting should the Committee Members wish to consider questions.

The new Tackling Poverty Consultation was highlighted, and all Committee Members were urged to respond.

**RESOLVED** that

- 1) the Scrutiny Work Programme (Appendix 3) be approved save for the amendments to the order of the working groups, to be re-ordered as follows: -
  1. Emergency Planning and Resilience
  2. Community Cohesion and Hate Crime
  3. Homelessness
  4. Car Park Charges
  5. Roads / Footway Maintenance
  6. Renewable Energy
  7. Digital Inclusion
  8. Bus Services
  9. Public Conveniences;
- 2) the first Inquiry Panel would focus on the topic of Regional Working;
- 3) the following conveners be appointed: -
  - Service Improvement & Finance – Councillor Chris Holley
  - Adult Services – Councillor Peter Black
  - Child & Family Services – Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams; and
- 4) Expressions of interest from all scrutiny councillors be invited to participate in agreed Panels and Working Groups.

12 **SCRUTINY LETTERS.**

The Scrutiny Letters regarding pre-decision Scrutiny on Castle Square were reported to the Committee.

It was noted that Castle Square would be subject to a further cabinet report therefore coming back to the Scrutiny Programme Committee for pre-decision, providing an opportunity to discuss further.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the letters be noted.

13 **AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN (FOR INFORMATION).**

The Audit Committee Work Plan for 2017/18 was noted.

This was part of developing the relationship between the Committee and the Audit committee. It was important that the each committee is aware of each other's work plans to ensure they are coordinated and avoid duplication or gaps.

14 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC.**

The Committee was requested to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the item(s) of business identified in the recommendation(s) to the report on the grounds that it / they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the exclusion paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007 relevant to the item(s) of business set out in the report.

The Committee considered the Public Interest Test in deciding whether to exclude the public from the meeting for the items of business where the Public Interest Test was relevant as set out in the report.

**RESOLVED** that the public be excluded for the following items of business.

**(CLOSED SESSION)**

15 **SCRUTINY LETTERS.**

The Scrutiny Letters regarding the Oceana Building were noted.

It was noted that a number of questions and issues remained outstanding and it was agreed to request the Leader to attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Committee to deal with these.

**RESOLVED** that arrangements be made for the Leader to attend a future Scrutiny Programme Committee for further discussion of the Oceana building demolition.

16 **MATTERS ARISING.**

The Chair reported on changes to the Scrutiny Team. She referred to the former Scrutiny Manager, Dave Mckenna, who left at the end of June. She also informed the committee that Jenna Tucker, Scrutiny Research Officer, was leaving at the end of July.

The Chair thanked the Officers on behalf of the Committee for all their hard work and wished them well for the future.

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm

**CHAIR**