



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Council Chamber - Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 12 November 2018 at 4.30 pm

Present: Councillor M H Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
L S Gibbard
P K Jones
G J Tanner

Councillor(s)

M Durke
D W Helliwell
W G Lewis
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
T J Hennegan
S Pritchard

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

P M Black	P R Hood-Williams
C A Holley	J W Jones

Also Present:

Councillor Will Evans	Cabinet Member for Children's Services – Young People
Councillor Elliot King	Cabinet Member for Children's Services – Early Years

Officer(s)

Rosie Jackson	Senior Policy & Leasehold Officer
Kate Jones	Democratic Services Officer
Brij Madahar	Scrutiny Team Leader
Steve Porter	Housing Operations Manager
Debbie Smith	Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Katie Spendiff	Children's Rights Co-ordinator
Julie Thomas	Head of Child & Family Services
Jane Whitmore	Partnership & Commissioning Manager

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): E T Kirchner

69 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interests were declared:

Councillor M Durke - personal - Minute Nos. 73 – Partner works for Swansea Council Child and Family Social Services.

Councillor J W Jones - personal - Minute Nos. 73 – Daughter is a Midwife.

Councillor M H Jones – personal – Minute no. 73 – Daughter is a Midwife.

70 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.

71 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Special Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 1 October 2018 and Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 8 October 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

72 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

73 Cabinet Member Question Session: Cabinet Members for Children Services (Councillors Elliot King & Will Evans).

The Cabinet Members for Children Services presented a report on the key headlines for the Children Services Portfolio. A verbal address was provided further to the written report circulated. The Children Services Portfolio was shared and split into Early Years and Young People. Child Protection and Safeguarding remained paramount across the whole portfolio.

Questions and Discussions with the Cabinet Members and the Head of Child and Family Services focused on the following: -

- Recent positive Care Inspectorate Wales findings in relation to Child & Family Services and Foster Swansea
- Corporate Parenting Board – making the Board more collaborative within the Authority and strengthen relationships between Members and Officers.
- Education Outcomes for Looked After Children particularly in further and higher education
- Development of Virtual School
- Play Therapists – provision within the Council
- Apprenticeships – opportunities for Looked After Children
- Child Protection / Safeguarding training
- Flying Start – coverage in Swansea, budget, improvement plans, measuring outcomes
- Promoting Youth Inclusion & Citizenship – engagement of Swansea children & young people in the Youth Parliament.
- Interaction with Youth Services and Development of Youth Parliament
- Cultural Opportunities for vulnerable groups
- Adoption – progress with the regional adoption service and performance, noted increase in in complex cases

- Child Protection Register – increasing number of children being re-registered for different reasons.

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Members, reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

74 Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Progress Report 2018.

The Partnership and Commissioning Manager and the Children's Rights Co-ordinator presented a report on Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Progress Report 2018. It was noted that this was the fourth annual report following Council decision to embed the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) into Policy Framework. They provided a background and outlined achievements in relation to implementing the Scheme and embedding the UNCRC across the Council, and ensuring due regard, through:-

- Engagement and Participation
- Promoting Knowledge and Understanding
- Raising Awareness
- Improving How We Work
- Evidencing Impact

A summary of achievements against objectives was provided and, looking ahead to 2019, they also highlighted next steps and challenges.

The Children's Rights Co-ordinator highlighted the following: -

- Overall it was a positive report demonstrating good progress and achievement of key objectives
- Big Conversations – nine big conversations were now being held each year. They had been developed for a wider age range of children and young people and included intergenerational work.
- Rights Respecting Schools Award - 100% of schools were now engaged in the award scheme. Council and School Staff would be trained to be assessors in order to make accreditation free for schools, and help sustain this work in the future
- Wellbeing Plan – A lot of work had been carried out with families and children in order to make the Plan accessible to all.
- Working towards creating a child friendly city alongside City Centre Developments
- International Children's Day Conference held last year and well attended
- The need to take stock of the last four years, evaluate and review the Scheme
- Challenges in embedding this work, making it everyone's business and high priority, and measuring difference made.

Questions and discussions focussed on the following:-

- The commitment to hearing children's voices and valuing their opinions

- The need to ensure information on children's rights (including promoting the Big Conversation) is accessible and available on a variety of platform, which may not necessarily only be through the Council website
- Engagement with children on issues including relationships, sexual health, smoking (including vaping)

Overall the Committee were pleased with the Annual Report and progressive work carried out. The Officers were thanked for their hard work.

Resolved that the views of the Committee on progress be noted by the Cabinet Member for Children Services – Young People and Officers.

75 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report.

Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams, Convener of the Child & Family Services Performance Panel, provided an update on the work of the panel to date. He highlighted the two recent inspections of Child & Family Services and of Foster Swansea. They were very thorough inspections and the reports had been very positive. There were also some concerns / issues raised by the Panel particularly in respect of re-registration on the Child Protection Register. This would continue to be monitored.

Resolved that the update be noted.

76 Pre-decision Scrutiny: Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2022.

The Operations Manager – Community Housing Services and the Senior Policy and Leasehold Management Officer were present for the Committee's consideration of the Cabinet Report on 'Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022'.

The Operations Manager – Community Housing Services highlighted recent amendments to the Strategy following the Consultation and input from Scrutiny. The key amendments centred around: -

- Incorporation of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a key principle of the Strategy
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- 'Holistic Solutions Centre' – revision of the timetable for feasibility study.

The Committee asked questions of the Officers who responded accordingly. Questions and discussions focused on the following:-

- Making the most of public goodwill to help tackle homelessness – looking at ways to engage with people all year round not just in the winter
- 'Holistic Solutions Centre' – the need for a good name for the proposed centre and involvement of external organisations in carrying out the feasibility study
- Insufficient supply of Social Housing to meet demand
- Improving relationships with Registered Social Landlords, and alternatives to developing a 'Common Waiting List'

- Monitoring progress against the Strategy and Action Plan

The Committee thanked Officers for their hard work on the Strategy and for taking on board and incorporating the comments / recommendations made by Scrutiny into the final Strategy.

Overall the Committee was pleased with the proposed Strategy and Action Plan

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy outlining the views of the Committee on the 'Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022', for Cabinet's consideration.

77 Wales Audit Office Reports to Scrutiny.

The Chair provided a report on 'Wales Audit Office Reports to Scrutiny' and highlighted paragraph 2.3 of the report, which outlined which Performance Panel / Committee each Wales Audit Report expected during the course of the year could be allocated to.

Resolved that the contents of the report be noted.

78 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

The Chair presented a report on the Membership of Scrutiny Panel and Working Groups.

Resolved that the following amendments be noted: -

- 1) Equalities Inquiry Panel – Remove Councillors Wendy Fitzgerald and Mo Sykes and Add Councillors Lyndon Jones and Susan Jones.
- 2) Residents Parking Working Group – Add Councillor Chris Holley

79 Scrutiny Dispatches - Quarterly Impact Report.

The Chair presented a report on 'Scrutiny Dispatches – Quarterly Impact Report'.

Resolved that the content of the draft Scrutiny Dispatches be noted and presented to Council.

80 Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19.

The Chair presented the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018/19.

She highlighted that the next Cabinet Member Question Session would be on Care, Health & Ageing Well. A report on post implementation outcomes following Sustainable Swansea Commissioning Reviews would also be presented at the next Scrutiny Programme Committee on 10 December 2018.

The Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19 was **noted**.

81 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair presented a report on “Scrutiny Letters” for information. She noted that a response had now been received from the letter sent on the 2 July 2018 to the Cabinet Member for Better Communities – People regarding Community Cohesion.

The Scrutiny Letters Log was **noted**.

82 Audit Committee Work Plan (For Information).

The Audit Committee Work Plan was **noted**.

83 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.

The dates and times of upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings were **noted**.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

Chair