



## Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 11 February 2019

### Cabinet Member Question Session

<b>Purpose:</b>	To enable the Committee to question Cabinet Members on their work. The Committee's questions will broadly explore Cabinet Members' priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to areas of responsibility.
<b>Content:</b>	The following Cabinet Member will appear before the Committee to participate in a question and answer session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Infrastructure Management</li></ul>
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Question the Cabinet Member on relevant matters</li><li>• Make comments and recommendations as necessary</li></ul>
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer
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<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Paul Cridland

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 One of the most important roles that scrutiny carries out is holding the Council's Cabinet to account. The Cabinet (also known as the Executive) is made up of the Leader and other councillors, appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific portfolio responsibilities:

Cllr Rob Stewart	- Economy & Strategy (Leader)
Cllr Clive Lloyd	- Business Transformation & Performance (Deputy Leader)
Cllr Mary Sherwood & Cllr June Burtonshaw	- Better Communities - People
Cllr Mark Child	- Better Communities - Place
	- Care, Health & Ageing Well

Cllr Elliot King	- Children Services - Early Years
Cllr Will Evans	- Children Services - Young People
Cllr David Hopkins	- Delivery
Cllr Jennifer Raynor	- Education Improvement, Learning & Skills
Cllr Mark Thomas	- Environment & Infrastructure Management
Cllr Andrea Lewis	- Homes & Energy
Cllr Robert Francis-Davies	- Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

- 1.2 By acting as a 'critical friend' scrutiny has the opportunity to challenge the Cabinet and individual cabinet members on their actions and performance in relation to their areas of responsibilities.
- 1.3 Cabinet Member Question Sessions have become a main feature of Committee meetings. At least one cabinet member is scheduled to appear at each monthly Committee meeting, ensuring all 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 Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management.

This Cabinet Portfolio includes responsibility for:

- Biodiversity
- Coastal Defence, Marina, Foreshore & Beach Maintenance
- Environmental Health
- Estates Maintenance Management (non HRA)
- Fly tipping Task Force
- Highways & Engineering
- Infrastructure Repairs & Maintenance
- Licensing & Trading Standards
- Parking
- Pothole Task Force
- Poverty Reduction
- Public Protection
- Regional Collaboration for Transport, Highways & Waste
- Regional Transport Policy
- Streetscene
- Waste Management & Recycling
- Lead Elements of Sustainable Swansea

### 3. Approach to Questions

3.1 At each Cabinet Member Question Session the Committee will generally ask Cabinet Members about:

- relevant priorities / objectives, notable activities and achievements, improvement / impact made, and service user / public engagement.
- what they hope to achieve over the coming months and challenges, including any key decisions they plan take to Cabinet over the next year.
- reflections on their engagement with scrutiny and whether there is any issue relevant to their portfolio that they would suggest for scrutiny, not otherwise covered in the work programme – to ensure scrutiny activity is aligned to priorities and focussed on the right things.

3.2 In terms of themes that cut across all cabinet portfolios, the Committee is interested in asking Cabinet Members about:

- Well-being of Future Generations Act – impact on their work / decisions e.g. what they are doing to achieve the well-being goals and ways of working, e.g. focus on long-term thinking, collaboration / involvement etc.
- Public Services Board (PSB) – their relationship with the work of the PSB; how the PSB impacts on their portfolio and how it is making a difference etc.

3.3 Cabinet Members will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the Committee. The Cabinet Member has provided a report on 'headlines' in relation to the portfolio to help the Committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact - see **Appendix 1**.

3.4 Amongst questions from the Committee is the intention to ask about:

- Dropped kerbs – accessibility issues around the City Centre.
- Problems around collections from litter and dog bins, especially over the Christmas period, and missed household collections.

With reference to agreed Scrutiny Improvement Objectives the Committee should ensure the Q & A Session also enables it to:

- Follow up, where necessary, on progress with relevant Scrutiny Working Group recommendations to assess impact / outcomes
- Cover any outstanding actions in respect of any other scrutiny activities / recommendations.
- Ask about future key decisions so the Committee can identify any issues which they may want to discuss at an earlier stage than cabinet reporting.

- Encourage Cabinet Members to consider reporting to scrutiny / consulting on significant issues and planned decisions at an early stage to enable views of scrutiny to be taken.
- 3.5 Following each session the chair will write to Cabinet Members in order to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the Committee, and any actions for them to consider.
- 3.6 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 correspondence with Cllr. Thomas following last year's Q & A session (February 2018) is attached, as the following issues relating to his portfolio were discussed, and Committee Member may wish to follow up:
- Highways and Transportation
  - Waste & Recycling
  - Pollution Control
  - Car Parks
  - Dog Fouling
  - Food Safety
- 4.2 Members may also wish to follow up, as necessary, on the Cabinet Member's engagement with relevant Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups over the past year.

Scrutiny involving the Cabinet Member over the past year:

Cllr. Thomas was written to over the past year about the following issues:

- Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel:
  - Highways & Transportation Commissioning Review (Mar 2018)
  - Recycling & Landfill Annual Performance Report (Sep 2018)
- Working Groups:
  - Car Park Charges (Dec 2017 & May 2018)
  - Tethered Horses (Feb 2018)
  - Roads & Footway Maintenance (Mar 2018)
  - Local Flood Risk Management (Apr & Oct 2018)
  - Air & Noise Pollution (Oct 2018)

At the time of writing the Cabinet Member is scheduled to attend the Working Group focusing on Environmental Enforcement on 5

February, about what is being done in relation to issues such as fly tipping, dog fouling, litter and pavement parking.

## **5. Future Scrutiny**

5.1 The Committee should note that the Cabinet Member will be engaged in the following planned / future activity:

- Environmental Enforcement – response to any issues / recommendation from the Working Group meeting on 5 February.
- Local Flood Risk Management Working Group – meeting on 14 March
- Natural Environment Inquiry Panel – response to inquiry recommendations following presentation of Panel's report to Cabinet. Recommendations which are agreed will also be subject to a follow up process around 9-12 months after cabinet decision.
- Recycling & Landfill Annual Performance Report (Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel)

## **6. Other Questions**

6.1 For each Cabinet Member Q & A Session the Committee invites members of the public and other scrutiny councillors (not on the Committee) to suggest questions. It is up to the Committee how to deal with any suggested questions within the Session.

6.2 In response a member of the public has raised concerns about the focus and promotion of Swansea as a student city, the scale of university expansion, and impact on local communities and families from HMOs. These may not be issues that Cllr. Thomas has direct responsibility for and would need to be raised with relevant Cabinet Member(s). Councillor David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Delivery, has portfolio responsibility for HMOs, and is due to attend the Committee on 13 May for a Q & A session. Cllr Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism, has portfolio responsibility for Universities Collaboration (Development) and is due to attend the next Committee meeting on 11 March.

## **7. Next Session**

7.1 The next Cabinet Member Question Session on 11 March will be with Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, with focus on the Investment, Regeneration & Tourism cabinet portfolio.

## **8. Legal Implications**

8.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

## **9. Financial Implications**

9.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

**Background Papers:** None

### **Appendices:**

**Appendix 1:** Key Headlines: Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management

**Appendix 2:** Previous Correspondence