

Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

1. Inquiry Panels:

These will undertake in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis, and will be expected to take around six months to complete to enable wide-ranging evidence gathering, and production of a final report with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers).

a) Natural Environment (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

Key Question: What should Swansea Council be doing to maintain, enhance and promote its natural environment and biodiversity, and in doing so promote the resilience of eco-systems?

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The final report was presented to the cabinet meeting on 21 March. A decision on the inquiry recommendations is expected within two months.

b) Equalities (convener: Cllr Louise Gibbard)

Key Question: How effectively is the Council meeting and embedding the requirements under the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Duty for Wales)?

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Panel will meet in March with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to discuss their role, with Joining the Dots Team of parent carers, Veterans and with the BME Forum. A staff survey was also completed in March. Councillors will meet in April to look at their findings and to begin to draw conclusions and recommendations resulting from this inquiry.

Projected End Date: May 2019

2. Follow Up on Completed Inquiries:

Follow-ups of inquiries will consider both the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and wider impact / difference made. Inquiry Panels are reconvened between 6-12 months after cabinet decision on Inquiry reports.

Inquiry	Cabinet Decision	Recommendations			Follow Up Panel Meeting
		Agreed	Partly	Rejected	
Tackling Poverty	15 Jun 2017	12	1	2	15 Oct 2018 COMPLETE
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services	16 Feb 2017	13	1	1	(i) 15 Nov 2017 (ii) 21 Nov 2018 COMPLETE
Regional Working	16 Aug 2018	11	0	0	June 2019

3. Performance Panels:

Performance Panels enable regular and structured in-depth monitoring of performance and challenge within these key areas:

a) **Service Improvement & Finance** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

The Panel's most recent meetings look at the Complaints Annual Report 2017/18, Community Centres and Friends of Parks Groups, the Welsh Housing Quality Standards audit report and the Library Annual Report 2017/18. The next meeting in April will focus on the Q3 Performance Monitoring Report and an item looking at successes and challenges of relevant commissioning reviews.

b) **Schools Performance** (convener: Cllr Mo Sykes)

The Panel met on 21 March with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and Challenge Advisor for Burlais Primary School to discuss their current performance and prospects for improvement. A letter will be written to the Cabinet Member outlining their thoughts. The Panel will next meet jointly with the Child and Family Services Scrutiny Panel to look at the education performance and support for Looked After Children.

c) **Public Services Board** (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

A progress report appears separately in the agenda as Item No. 8.

d) **Child & Family Services** (convener: Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams)

The Panel met on 25 February and received a presentation to update on the impact of Prevention and Early Intervention on Child and Family Service; discuss Safeguarding in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and receive an update on Child Disability. The next meeting on 29 April will discuss Performance Monitoring and receive a report on the Looked After Children Audit.

e) **Adult Services** (convener: Cllr Peter Black)

The Panel met on 19 March and discussed Safeguarding arrangements including a briefing on Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking and received an update on the Commissioning Review – Domiciliary Care and Procurement and a briefing on the CIW inspection report on domiciliary support services. An additional meeting is being held on 26 March when the Chairman and Chief Executive of ABMU Health Board will attend for a question and answer session.

f) **Development & Regeneration** (convener: Cllr Jeff Jones)

The meeting on 19 March had the usual dashboard report and an in depth look at Swansea Central Phase 1 (The Arena). It also had an update on procurement processes. The final meeting of this municipal year in April will have the dashboard update and will focus on the outcome of the business case meeting with Welsh Government on 21 March and financial impacts and updates.

4. Regional Scrutiny:

This is collaborative scrutiny with other Local Authorities for topics / issues of shared interest or concern, and models of regional working.

a) **Education Through Regional Working**

A regional scrutiny councillors group meets to coordinate scrutiny work and ensure a consistent approach across the six councils participating in ERW. At present this involves two meetings per year. Swansea is represented by the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and Convener of the Schools Performance Panel.

The Scrutiny Councillor Group met on the 25 March 2019 to look at:

- Progress with reform programme
- ERW budget and budget allocations
- School categorisation and supporting data
- On the Money, targeted funding to improve education outcomes

The Group will next meet in September, date to be agreed.

Swansea's Scrutiny Team is providing the support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW.

b) **Swansea Bay City Region**

The Committee, which will scrutinise the work of the Joint Committee responsible for delivering the City Deal Programme, is serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council. Swansea Councillor representatives are: Jan Curtice, Phil Downing & Jeff Jones.

The last meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Committee was held on 1 March 2019 in Swansea and enabled the Committee to learn more about the City Deal Programme and regional projects.

The Committee will hold an extra meeting in Carmarthen on 30 April to discuss the conclusions of the various reviews that have been carried out on the City Deal.

The next meeting is scheduled for 16 May.

5. Working Groups:

A number of topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Working Groups. These enable a 'light-touch' approach to specific topics of concern and will be planned as a one-off meeting primarily involving discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) / officer(s) (and any other persons called) to gather information, ask questions, and raise any concerns.

a) Local Flood Risk Management (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

This is an annual recurring item in the work programme. The next meeting will be held on 4 April to monitor progress on the delivery of the Flood Risk Management Plan.

b) Welfare Reform (convener: Cllr Louise Gibbard)

A meeting of the Working Group was held on 14 January 2019 which enabled information, questions and discussion on the impact of welfare reform in Swansea, e.g. Universal Credit, and work / measures in place to support citizens and mitigate problems. The Citizens Advice Bureau participated in this Working Group. The correspondence following the meeting between the Working Group and Cabinet Member for Better Communities (People), with the views and recommendations of the Working Group, is included within the Committee agenda – see item 11 – Scrutiny Letters.

c) Environmental Enforcement (convener: Cllr Jeff Jones)

A meeting of the Working Group was held on 5 February and enabled information, questions and discussion about what is being done in relation to the enforcement / prevention of environmental issues such as fly tipping, dog fouling, litter, pavement parking and branches and undergrowth overhanging public footpaths and highways etc., concerns about which seem to be regularly raised by the public. The correspondence following the meeting between the Working Group and Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure Management with the views and recommendations of the Working Group, is included within the Committee agenda – see item 11 – Scrutiny Letters.

d) **Anti-Social Behaviour** (convener: Cllr Terry Hennegan)

A meeting of the Working Group will be held on 15 April. This will enable information, questions and discussion on current approaches to tackle anti-social behaviour in our communities and their effectiveness.

e) **Tourism** (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

A meeting of the Working Group will be held on 1 May. An informal meeting of Working Group members only was held on 26 February to discuss what issues should be considered in this piece of scrutiny.

f) **Digital Inclusion** (convener: Cllr Lesley Walton)

This will enable councillors to follow up on the Working Group meeting held in March 2017. At that meeting the Working Group detailed a number of issues to be considered as part of a review of the Council's digital inclusion strategy. Councillors will be able to consider how well prepared both the Council itself and the public is to use and communicate / engage via digital technology.

g) **Residents Parking** (convener: Cllr Peter May)

This meeting was scheduled for 8 November but has been delayed due to resource issues within the department, to allow time for information required to be provided. The focus is on concerns that have been raised about the new electronic permit issuing process and will enable relevant information to be discussed and questions to be asked.

Further Working Groups to be convened (membership / convener to be appointed in due course):

- **Archive Service**

This would enable discussion about current service delivery, performance, and challenges. There is particular concern about accommodation issues and their effect on the service.