



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 11 November 2019

Cabinet Member Question Session

Purpose:	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.
Content:	The following Cabinet Members will appear before the Committee to participate in a question and answer session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Councillor Elliott King, Cabinet Member for Children Services (Early Years – Lead) b) Councillor Sam Pritchard, Cabinet Member for Children Services (Young People – Lead)
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:	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer:	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
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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 (also known as the Executive) is made up of the Leader and other councillors, appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific portfolio responsibilities.

1.2 There are 10 Cabinet portfolios:

	Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet Member
1	Economy & Strategy (Leader of the Council)	Cllr Rob Stewart

2	Delivery & Performance (Joint-Interim Deputy Leader)	Cllr David Hopkins
3	Homes, Energy & Service Transformation (Joint-Interim Deputy Leader)	Cllr Andrea Lewis
4	Better Communities	Cllr Alyson Pugh (People – Lead) Cllr Andrew Stevens (Place – Lead)
5	Care, Health & Ageing Well	Cllr Mark Child
6	Children Services	Cllr Elliott King (Early Years - Lead) Cllr Sam Pritchard (Young People – Lead)
7	Education Improvement, Learning & Skills	Cllr Jennifer Raynor
8	Environment & Infrastructure Management	Cllr Mark Thomas
9	Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cllr Robert Francis-Davies
10	Resilience & Strategic Collaboration	Cllr Clive Lloyd

NOTE:

- All Cabinet Members have responsibility for Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea & Poverty Reduction
- Better Communities and Children Services Portfolios operate under a job share system with two named Councillors sharing the workload, split into 2 specialist knowledge areas, however, formally they remain as one cabinet portfolio. Each individual holds office for a rolling 3 month period and during that time assume responsibility for the overall portfolio. However, the workload in gathering information and learning will be shared.

1.3 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.

1.4 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 Members will appear before the Committee:

- a) Councillor Elliott King, Cabinet Member for Children Services (Early Years – Lead)
- b) Councillor Sam Pritchard, Cabinet Member for Children Services (Young People – Lead)

2.2 The Cabinet portfolio responsibilities are set out below:

Early Years Lead (Cllr King)	Young People Lead (Cllr Pritchard)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Start in Life • CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services) • Child & Family Services • Children & Young People (CYP) Chair • Continuum of Care • Corporate Parenting - Lead • Families First • Flying Start • Play Opportunities • Regional Adoption Service • Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy • Safeguarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships Support • CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services) • Children & Young People (CYP) Board - Lead • Corporate Parenting Support • NEETS Reduction Support (Not in Education, Employment or Training) • Opportunities for Young People • Promoting Youth Inclusion & Youth Citizenships • Readiness for Work (Support) • Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy • Safeguarding • UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) • YOS (Youth Offending Service) • Youth Services

3. Approach to Questions

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

- relevant priorities / objectives (e.g. policy commitments), 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.; any regional / collaborative working relevant to their portfolio responsibilities.
 - 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.
 - Poverty Reduction – their contribution to the commitment to tackle poverty.
 - Sustainable Swansea – their contribution to the transformation programme.
- 3.3 Cabinet Members will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the Committee. The Cabinet Members have 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 key themes / questions from the Committee is the intention to ask about Youth Work.
- 3.5 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
 - Raise 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.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 If the Committee wishes to conduct more detailed scrutiny of any of the issues raised during the Q & A session 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 Scrutiny

4.1 The correspondence following last year's Q & A session on Children Services (November 2018) is attached. Taking account of any portfolio changes since last year, the following issues relevant to the current portfolio were discussed, and Committee Members may wish to follow up:

- Child & Family Services Inspection Reports
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Regional Adoption Service
- Flying Start
- Play Therapy
- Apprenticeships
- Youth Inclusion & Citizenship, and
- Cultural Opportunities for Vulnerable Groups.

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:

Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel: There is regular correspondence with the Cabinet Members based on discussion of performance, but they were written to over the past year about the following specific issues:

- Youth Offending Service and Inspections on Children's Services and Foster Swansea (Nov 2018)
- Corporate Parenting (Jan 2019)
- Impact of Prevention and Early Intervention on Child & Family Services, Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Disability (Mar 2019)
- Looked After Children Reduction Expectations (May 2019)
- Care Inspectorate Wales Local Authority Performance Review (Sep 2019)

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services Inquiry Panel Follow Up: The Inquiry Panel concluded monitoring of the inquiry panel recommendations however wrote to the Cabinet Member for Children Services – Early Years in December 2018 about progress, some outstanding concerns, and the need for ongoing monitoring of CAMHS performance, which the Child & Family Services Performance Panel is carrying out.

5. Future Scrutiny

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

Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel – the Cabinet Members will continue to be involved as the Panel monitors and challenges performance of Child & Family Service.

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 On this occasion, the Committee has been requested by a councillor not on the Committee to raise the following:

- Flying Start (for Cllr. King) - Is Flying Start in Swansea generally considered to be a successful programme? Does the Cabinet Member feel that there is a shared understanding across the authority of what the programme is aiming to achieve, and with that in mind, that the right outcomes are being tracked through Flying Start to assess success? How does local performance compare to Wales-wide?
- UNCRC / Schools (for both) - Do the Cabinet Members feel that our position as a council, having adopted the UNCRC and declared a climate emergency, is adequately reflected in the work undertaken in Swansea schools to become more "rights respecting" or "eco" aware?
- Child Poverty (for both) - Given the predicted increases in child poverty, which we are already seeing in evidence as Universal Credit rolls out, do the Cabinet Members feel satisfied with the council's benefit take-up/money advice/benefits advice offer to families with young children?

NOTE – Welfare Reform / Welfare Rights is one of Cllr Alyson Pugh's responsibilities as Cabinet Member for Better Communities (People – Lead).

7. Next Session

7.1 The next scheduled Cabinet Member Question Session, on 9 December, is with the Cabinet Member for Care, Health & Ageing Well, Councillor Mark Child. The Committee should identify specific questions / key themes, which it wishes to cover in that session.

7.2 As usual, all scrutiny councillors and members of the public will be able to suggest questions.

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: Children Services Portfolio

Appendix 2: Previous Correspondence