

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) **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 final report produced by the Inquiry Panel was presented to Cabinet on 19 September. A response to the recommendations was made by Cabinet on 21 November. All 18 recommendations were agreed and action plan provided. The Panel will follow up on the implementation of the action plan and impact of this scrutiny around May 2020.

Projected End Date: Complete

b) **Procurement** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

Key Question: What is the Council doing to ensure it procures locally, ethically, and greenly while being cost effective and transparent in its practices?

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Procurement Pre-Inquiry Working Group met on the 24 October and involved an overview / briefing on the subject matter. This helped Councillors to be informed about how scrutiny can contribute to improvement and the focus, scale and direction of any inquiry. The Panel agreed to undertake an inquiry and the Terms of Reference were discussed. The inquiry will start evidence gathering around Feb 2020 and this will explore, for example

- effectiveness of process & strategy
- value for money / social value
- benefits to local economy

- impact of local procurement on regeneration / jobs
- financial savings to the Council
- collaboration

The inquiry may take up to six months to complete, as it will call for wide ranging evidence, and will lead to a report with conclusions and recommendations that will be presented to Cabinet.

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	
Regional Working	16 Aug 2018	11	0	0	15 Oct 2019 COMPLETE
Natural Environment*	18 Jul 2019	18	0	2	tbc

*this inquiry will be followed up within the work of the new Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel

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 meets every month. In December, the Panel looked at the Budget Monitoring information for the 2nd Quarter, the Mid-year Budget Statement, Wales Audit Office Report and Response on the effectiveness of planning services and the Planning Annual Report. The next meeting they will discuss 2nd Quarter Performance Monitoring and the Draft Budget Proposals. A progress report appears separately in the agenda as Item No. 7.

b) **Education** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

This Panel meets every month. On 9 December, the Panel looked at Additional Learning Needs Reform and progress in Swansea. In January, they will discuss the Annual Education Performance Data, data on educational outcomes of Looked After Children and Pupil Development Grant Spend.

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

This Panel meets every month. The Panel met on 19 November and discussed the Telecare and Community Alarms mini commissioning review, the Workforce Development Plan and Improving Performance Data. The meeting on 17 December received a briefing on Carers Assessments and an update on Local Area Coordination.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The Panel met on 28 October and discussed progress with CAMHS, received a briefing on the Youth Offending Service and a presentation on the report to Welsh Government on the safe Looked After Children Reduction Strategy. The meeting on 18 December received an update on the Regional Adoption Service, the Corporate Parenting Board and Performance Monitoring.

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

This Panel meets every two months. A progress report appears separately in the agenda as Item No. 7.

f) **Natural Environment** (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

This Panel meets quarterly. The Panel meeting on 16 December focussed on Weed Management, and Air Pollution Control. The next meeting in March (date tbc) will focus on Local Flood Risk Management and follow up on the implementation of recommendations from the Natural Environment Inquiry that were agreed by Cabinet in July 2019.

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

This Panel meets twice yearly. The Panel will focus on action plans associated with Public Services Board objectives, progress and outcomes. The next meeting will take place in January (date tbc) to focus on the Early Years and Live Well, Age Well objectives, hearing from Council and Local Health Board leads.

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**

The Scrutiny Councillor Group met on the 23 September 2019 and looked at:

- Progress with reform programme and meeting the national mission with the Interim Managing Director of ERW

- Discussed the costed ERW business plan
- Spoke to the ERW Lead for Digital Learning Systems
- Spoke to the ERW Lead for Health and Wellbeing

The next meeting has been scheduled for the 27 January 2020 and will be hosted by Powys Council.

b) **Swansea Bay City Region**

The Joint Scrutiny Committee met on 28 October in Swansea to continue its City Deal Programme monitoring but also discuss local projects for Swansea (Digital Village; Digital Square) with the Leader of the Council, Cllr. Rob Stewart. The Committee will meet again on 15 January in Pembrokeshire.

5. **Working Groups:**

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

The convener of the Working Group presented a report to Cabinet, on 18 July, which reflected on the Working Group meeting in May. A number of recommendations were made by the Working Group, and a decision was made by Cabinet on 21 November. Of the 12 recommendations: 8 were agreed, 1 agreed in part, and 3 were not agreed. The Cabinet report is **attached** for the Committee's information, which includes the original Working Group report.

NEW TOPICS:

A number of new 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 (in the order shown below) primarily involving discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) / officer(s), and any other persons called, to gather information, ask questions, and give views / raise any concerns.

a) **Brexit** (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

This Working Group met on 23 September to enable information, questions and discussion about Council preparedness and resilience; how this is being discussed; what plans / contingencies are being put in place given possible impact, relationship with Wales / UK Government, etc. A letter was sent to the Cabinet Member for Economy & Strategy with the thoughts of the Working Group and a response received – reported to the Committee in November. This issue is being kept in the work programme with a further meeting of the Working Group anticipated post Brexit, when the impact(s) should be clearer.

b) **Staff Health & Well-being** (convener: Cllr Cyril Anderson)

This will enable information, questions and discussion on how the Council supports members of staff; issues around staff sickness; pressures, etc.

c) **Road Safety** (convener: Steve Gallagher)

This will enable information, questions and discussion on hot spots; work to improve safety; preventative measures; speed controls; safety of cycling routes; partnership working, etc.

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

This will enable councillors to follow up on the Working Group meeting originally 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 have a discussion around digital transformation, the Council's digital inclusion strategy, and how well prepared both the Council and the public is to use and communicate / engage via digital technology to avoid exclusion / poor access)