



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 9 March 2020

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 Member will appear before the Committee to participate in a question and answer session: a) Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism
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 Member will appear before the Committee:

- a) Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

2.2 The Cabinet portfolio responsibilities are set out below:

- Business & City Promotion
- City Centre Management
- City Projects and Major Development Opportunities
- City Waterfront & Marina Promotion
- Creative City
- Culture, the Arts & Galleries
- Events, Tourism & Destination Marketing
- Healthy Night Life / Purple Flag
- Heritage inc. River Corridor Development
- Inward Investment Opportunities
- Libraries
- New Local & Regional Business Opportunities
- Parks, Beaches and Foreshore Events & Promotion
- Science City
- Sports Facilities
- Suburban Centres & Community Regeneration Initiatives
- Universities Collaboration (Development)

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 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 key themes / questions from the Committee is the intention to ask about:
- actions following recommendations made to Cabinet on Tourism and responded to by Cabinet on 21 November 2019
 - progress since Cabinet decision on Foreshore Sites on 9 January, and consideration of scrutiny views expressed to cabinet following pre-decision scrutiny
 - concerns around the Rural Economy and Employment
- 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 with Cllr. Robert Francis-Davies following last year's Q & A session is **attached**. Taking account that there have been portfolio changes since last year, the following issues still relevant to the current portfolio were discussed, and Committee Members may wish to follow up:

- River Tawe Corridor Development
- Swansea Marina
- Skyline Development
- New Local and Regional Business Opportunities
- Archives Service
- Sports Facilities
- Parks
- Santander Bike Hire Scheme
- Swansea at 50
- Seafront Development

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.

Performance Panels:

- Development & Regeneration Performance Panel – there is regular contact / correspondence with the Cabinet Member to give scrutiny views following performance monitoring activities. However the Cabinet Member was specifically written to in July 2019 about the Wales Audit Office report - Services to Rural Communities and Council response, and in February 2020 about the Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme – Residential Units above Shops.
- Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel (Archives Service – October 2019).

Working Groups:

- Tourism Working Group

The Working Group, convened by Councillor Peter Jones, met in May 2019 to look at the marketing and development of tourism in Swansea, including eco/sustainable tourism.

A report from the Working Group, reflecting on the discussion, was presented to Cabinet on 18 July. 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.

As a result of this scrutiny the Cabinet Member confirmed the action(s) that will be taken, including the following:

- Considering the possibility of a Gower off-road cycle route that would develop and promote a network of bridleways as a way of enjoying the countryside by bike and enable visitors to explore large areas of Gower AONB by bicycle, and investigate grant funding to deliver this.
- Giving consideration to making more use of volunteers to help maintain our environmental assets such as footpaths, steps etc.
- Improvement to signage, especially in Gower, subject to findings of the 2019 visitor and trade surveys, and budget constraints
- Work to identify future grant funding possibilities, post-Brexit, including exploration of potential partnership funding models for future projects.
- Looking at good practice elsewhere regarding the marketing of accommodation in Swansea.
- Ensuring a 'whole council' approach to supporting big events in Swansea, e.g. Refuse and Street Cleansing working effectively with the Tourism team to ensure events run smoothly and everything is cleaned up afterwards.
- More use of social media for advertising, and marketing videos / digital content to show more of what people can do and see if they visit Swansea. Councillors were told that new videos are already planned for 2020 'Year of the Great Outdoors'.
- Facilitating all Councillors to help promote Swansea as a tourist destination e.g. ensuring awareness of the various platforms / digital channels used by the Council that they can follow and share more widely.

5. Future Scrutiny

- 5.1 The Committee should note that the Cabinet Member will continue to be engaged in the work of the Development & Regeneration Performance Panel as it monitors and challenges this area of Council work.
- 5.2 Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel: Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Report 2018/19 (30 March).

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 The following question has been submitted by a member of the public:

- Street Lighting: Swansea Bay is already widely regarded for its natural beauty and I am aware that the Local Authority is considering options to increase visitor numbers through improved facilities. In this context, will you please support the installation of street lighting along the entire length of the footpath along the foreshore from SA1 to Mumbles to improve safety and thereby increase the number of people prepared to walk and cycle along the path after dark?

6.3 Public feedback on the scrutiny work programme last May included concerns about the following topic, which the Committee could raise with the relevant Cabinet Member:

- Leisure Facilities / Offer for residents and visitors.

7. Next Session

7.1 The next scheduled Cabinet Member Question Session, on 20 April, is with the Cabinet Members for Better Communities, Councillors Alyson Pugh (People) and Andrew Stevens (Place). The Committee should identify specific questions / key themes, which it wishes to cover in this session. This can be discussed under Item 9 – Scrutiny Work Programme.

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: Investment, Regeneration & Tourism Portfolio

Appendix 1a: Previous Correspondence