



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 15 December 2020

Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22

Purpose	This report presents the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2020/22, which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.
Content	The agreed work programme is attached, which shows the topics that will be examined by scrutiny through various Panels and Working Groups. A plan for future Committee meetings is also attached.
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• plan for the committee meetings ahead• consider opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny• review the scrutiny work programme (including progress of current Panels and Working Groups)
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for developing the Council's scrutiny work programme, and managing the overall work of scrutiny to ensure that it is as effective as possible.
- 1.2 A report is provided to each meeting to enable the committee to maintain an overview of agreed scrutiny activities, monitor progress, and coordinate work as necessary.
- 1.3 The broad aim of the scrutiny function is to engage non-executive councillors in activities to:

- provide an effective challenge to the executive
 - help improve services, policies, and performance
 - engage the public in its work
- 1.4 The Scrutiny Work Programme is guided by the overriding principle that the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant, focussed on issues of concern, and represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources.

It also needs to be:

- manageable, realistic and achievable given resources available to support activities
 - relevant to council priorities
 - adding value and having maximum impact
 - coordinated and avoids duplication
- 1.5 The work of scrutiny is undertaken primarily in three ways – through the Committee itself, by establishing informal Panels (for in-depth activities) or via one-off Working Groups. Panels and Working Groups would be open to all non-executive councillors - the Committee will determine membership and conveners following expressions of interest.
- 1.6 Scrutiny will regularly send letters to Cabinet Members communicating findings, views and recommendations for improvement and, where appropriate, by producing reports. Inquiry panels will always produce a final report at the end of the inquiry with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers), informed by the evidence gathered. Inquiry panels will reconvene to follow up on the implementation of agreed recommendations and the impact of their work – usually 6-12 months following cabinet decision.
- 1.7 Although much of the work of scrutiny is carried out by informal Panels and Working Groups these meetings are accessible to the public. Agendas, reports and letters relating to all such scrutiny activities are published, in the same manner as the committee, on the Council's modern.gov online platform:

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

2. Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22

- 2.1.1 Following discussion at the Committee meeting on 17 November the agreed scrutiny work programme for 2020/22 is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.1.2. The following paragraphs break down the work programme by specific ways of working to provide a brief overview.

2.2 Scrutiny Programme Committee:

2.2.1 The Committee work plan for the year ahead is attached as **Appendix 2**. This should be kept under review to ensure it represents a robust, manageable, and effective plan. In order to ensure coverage of scrutiny across all cabinet portfolios and address any gaps in the work programme, a small number of topics have been identified for inclusion in the Committee's work plan. In each case, the relevant Cabinet Member would be asked to report and answer questions on the following portfolio responsibilities:

- Brexit (Cllr Rob Stewart)
- Business & City Promotion (Cllr Robert Francis-Davies)
- Tourism, Destination Management, and Marketing (incl. Scrutiny Working Group follow up) (Cllr Robert Francis-Davies)
- Highways & Engineering, Infrastructure Repairs and Maintenance (Cllr Mark Thomas)
- Litter and Community Cleansing (Cllr Mark Thomas)
- Parking Policy, Control & Enforcement (Cllr Mark Thomas)
- Energy Policy (incl. Generation, Supply & District Heating) (Cllr Andrea Lewis)

These will be scheduled where space allows between now and May 2022.

2.2.2 Committee members should review and confirm items for the next and future meetings giving specific consideration to who should attend so that meetings are always well planned and prepared for, e.g. information required and key questions that the Committee wishes to ask.

2.2.3 The main item(s) scheduled for the next Committee meeting on 19 January are:

- Cabinet Member Question Session: Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy - Councillor Rob Stewart. This session will focus on: COVID-19, Budget, Brexit, Partnership Working (incl. the Great Western Gateway new economic partnership).
- Pre-decision Scrutiny:
 - a) Proposed Lease to Mumbles Community Council under the Community Asset Transfer Policy (relates to the proposed development of a new Skatepark by the Community Council).
 - b) Business Case for the Relocation of Civic Centre.

2.2.4 The Committee will have the opportunity to review priorities and introduce issues of concern as and when they arise, e.g. pre-decision scrutiny or call-in which may require extra meetings.

2.2.5 Pre-decision scrutiny – this is carried out by the Committee unless delegated elsewhere. The Committee is invited to consider the available information on future cabinet business and any opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny, taking into account strategic impact, public interest, and financial implications (see Cabinet Forward Plan attached as **Appendix 3**). Any requests will require discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) to confirm timescales and window of opportunity for scrutiny involvement. Pre-decision scrutiny enables scrutiny to develop understanding about and ask questions on proposed Cabinet reports to provide ‘critical friend’ challenge and influence decision-making.

2.3 Inquiry Panels:

2.3.1 Once membership and a convener have been appointed the first task of an Inquiry Panel will be to have a briefing on the issue and then determine the key question and terms of reference for the inquiry. Once the planning stage is complete, the inquiry will be evidence gathering, with the last stage being to develop the final report.

In Progress / Planned	Completed (follow up stage)
1. Procurement (initial meeting of re-convened Panel to be arranged)	1. Equalities (Jan 2021)

2.4 Performance Panels:

2.4.1 The following Performance Panels, which will enable regular and structured monitoring of performance within these key areas, have been agreed and will meet on an ongoing basis until otherwise agreed by the Committee (frequency of meetings in brackets):

Performance Panel	Convener
1. Service Improvement & Finance (monthly)	Cllr. Chris Holley
2. Education (monthly)	Cllr. Lyndon Jones
3. Adult Services (every six weeks)	Cllr. Susan Jones
4. Child & Family Services (every six weeks)	Cllr. Paxton Hood-Williams
5. Development & Regeneration (every two months)	Cllr. Jeff Jones
6. Natural Environment (every two months)	Cllr. Peter Jones

2.4.2 Performance Panel conveners are scheduled to provide a regular update to the Committee to enable discussion on key activities and impact.

2.5 Working Groups:

2.5.1 The following Working Groups will be convened during the year ahead, in the order shown:

1. Workforce 2. Digital Inclusion	3. Bus Services 4. Healthy City
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Reserve List:

- Road Safety
- Active Travel
- Accessibility for the Disabled / Elderly

2.6 Regional Scrutiny:

2.6.1 **Education Through Regional Working** - Swansea scrutiny is involved in an informal regional scrutiny arrangement with the six councils participating in the 'Education Through Regional Working' (ERW) school improvement consortium. A Scrutiny Councillor Group has been in existence since 2016 in order to provide challenge to ERW, coordinate scrutiny work across the region and ensure a consistent approach. The Swansea Scrutiny Team is providing support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW via Service Level Agreement. Swansea is represented by the chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and convener of the Education Performance Panel.

2.6.2 **Swansea Bay City Region City Deal** – Swansea scrutiny is also involved in the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee established during 2018/19. This formal arrangement involves three councillor representatives from each of the four Councils involved in the City Deal, meeting to scrutinise the work of the Joint Committee responsible for delivering the City Deal programme. As per Joint Committee Agreement, the Joint Scrutiny Committee is serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council.

3. **Monitoring the Work Programme**

3.1 The Committee is responsible for monitoring progress against the agreed work programme and this includes work undertaken by the informal Panels and Working Groups and findings, to ensure that this work is effective and has the required visibility.

3.2 **Appendix 4a** provides a timetable of all scrutiny activities (projected or actual where dates are known). Lead councillors and officers are also noted within.

3.3 **Appendix 4b** provides a snapshot of progress with all of the Panels and Working Groups established by the Committee and their current position.

3.4 The work plans of the individual Performance Panels are also **attached** to improve Committee oversight of topics being examined, check coverage across cabinet portfolios, and help avoid duplication of effort between the Committee and Panels and between Panels etc.

- 3.5 The work programme is kept under constant review by the Committee, with changes made as necessary. The Committee will always retain the flexibility to adapt and re-prioritise the work of scrutiny, to ensure the continued relevance of the programme.

4. Public Requests for Scrutiny / Councillor Calls for Action

- 4.1 Members of the public are able to make requests for scrutiny by contacting the Chair or Scrutiny Team in writing detailing the issue of concern, its impact, and suggested action. In accordance with agreed protocol the chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee will consider any requests received and bring about proposals to deal with these to the Committee for consideration. Taking into account relevant advice, any such issues may merit inclusion in the work programme, referral elsewhere, or no action.

- 4.2 Public Request - a public request for scrutiny has been received regarding work on the bridleway at Clyne Valley Woods and concern about the nature of the works and consultation / due process, and possible damage to the nature reserve area. The Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management has advised that the existing 2.5km Bridleway running through the park, currently available to walkers, cyclists, and horses, is being resurfaced to accommodate the needs and concerns of current users of this path. It is not, as some believe, the creation of a new cycle path. The Council has looked at materials that are sympathetic to the environment as well as users of the path. Signage will be erected to remind people that the path is for everyone and they should respect that, along with the installation of speed control measures where possible, to avoid excessive speeds on the path. This new improved path will meet with stated objectives to expand our network of Active Travel routes right across Swansea following Swansea wide consultation carried out in 2017.

- 4.3 Chair's Response – it was considered appropriate to refer immediately to the Cabinet Member for direct response to the member of the public. Discussion of this matter within scrutiny is not considered necessary.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Any costs that arise out of work plan activities, for example expenses for witnesses or transport costs, are not envisaged to be significant and will be contained within the existing Scrutiny Budget.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Agreed Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Programme Committee Work Plan 2020/22

Appendix 3: Cabinet Forward Plan

Appendix 4a: Scrutiny Work Programme – Projected Timetable of Activity

Appendix 4b: Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

Appendix 5: Performance Panel Work Plans