

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) **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 originally met on 24 October 2019 for 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 agreed. The inquiry work was then placed on hold pending recruitment of Scrutiny Officer / available resources.

The Inquiry Panel will now resume and, given the passage of time and impact of the pandemic, will initially meet to review the key question and terms of reference and amend as necessary.

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	
Equalities	21 Nov 2019	18	0	0	28 Jan 2021

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. On 9 November, the Panel met to discuss Q1 Budget Monitoring 2020/21, Review of Revenue Reserves and Mid Term Budget Statement. Recycling and Landfill Annual Performance Monitoring 2019/20 was also discussed. The next meeting will be held on 14 December and will focus on the Equality Plan Review 2019/20.

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

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

c) **Adult Services** (convener: Cllr Susan Jones)

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. The Panel met on 20 October to discuss the Performance Monitoring report for September 2020, to receive a briefing on Staff Sickness in Adult Services and to discuss the draft Work Plan for 2020-21. Due to the pressures of the Covid-19 Pandemic, a Joint Social Services Panel meeting will be held in December, January and February and will receive the Performance Monitoring reports for Adult Services and Child and Family Services, and an update on management of Covid-19. The meeting in February will also receive the draft budget proposals for both areas. It is currently planned for separate Panel meetings to recommence in March 2021.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. The Panel met on 28 October to discuss Wales Audit Office Follow Up Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements for Children in Swansea and the draft Work Plan for 2020-21. Due to the pressures of the Covid-19 Pandemic, a joint Social Services panel meeting will be held in December, January and February and will receive the Performance Monitoring reports for Adult Services and Child and Family Services, and an update on management of Covid-19. The meeting in February will also receive the draft budget proposals for both areas. It is currently planned for separate Panel meetings to recommence in March 2021.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The most recent meeting on 3 November discussed the current progress in relation to development and regeneration activity as outlined within the 'Dashboard Report', which is regularly provided to the Panel. At the next meeting on 12

January, as well as the usual 'Dashboard' Report, Commercial Opportunities in Rural Areas will be discussed. The Panel is also likely to hear from Swansea University, presenting on their involvement with the City Deal and their proposals for inward investment from a Swansea perspective.

f) Natural Environment (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

This Panel meets every two months. The next Panel meeting takes place on 14 December and will focus on monitoring the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priority – Maintaining & Enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources - and discuss the Council action plan following the authority's Climate Emergency Declaration. The convener of the Panel for this municipal year will be confirmed by the Panel, and reported verbally to the Committee.

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 remotely on 26 November 2020. They met with the Chair of the Lead Chief Executive and the Managing Directors to discuss the effects of Covid on the business of ERW and progress with ERW reform programme. They also discussed the business plan and risk register. The next meeting will take place around March 2021.

b) Swansea Bay City Region City

The Joint Scrutiny Committee met for the first time since January in October for an update on the City Deal Programme and Projects, as well as discussion around the impact of COVID-19. A meeting planned for December was cancelled. The Committee is expected to meet again on 2 February 2021.

5. Working Groups:

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) **Workforce** (convener: Cllr Cyril Anderson)

This will enable information, questions and discussion on how the Council supports health & well-being of staff; issues around home working; staff sickness; staff turnover; use of agency staff, pressures, etc.

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

This will enable information, questions and discussion, following up on previous scrutiny 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 with increasing dependency on digital technology and interaction, to avoid exclusion / poor access, etc.

c) **Bus Services** (convener: tbc)

This will enable information, questions and discussion about bus network coverage and levels of service; community transport provision; integration with other forms of transport, etc.

d) **Healthy City** (convener: tbc)

This will enable information, questions and discussion on Swansea as a healthy city, exploring in particular the provision, and promotion of, outdoor sport and activities and opportunities for young people, etc.