

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 Further follow up tba Nov 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. A progress report appears separately in the agenda as Item No. 6.

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

Due to current pressures on the Education Department, the Panel agreed to put all items from the January and February meetings back to later in the year, apart from a verbal Covid-19 update on the 21 January and the Annual Budget as it relates to Education on 16 February.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. Due to the pressures of the Covid-19 Pandemic, a Joint Social Services Panel meeting was held in December and January to receive an update on management of Covid-19 and discuss performance monitoring reports. The Joint Panel will meet again in February and will receive an update on management of Covid-19 and discuss 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. See Adult Services above.

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

This Panel generally meets every two months, although there have been two extra meetings so far this year. During January, the Panel met to discuss usual progress under the 'Dashboard Report' and also received an update on Commercial Opportunities in Rural Areas. An extra meeting was also held during January, during which Members discussed the ATG Contract relating to the operation of Swansea Arena. The Panel is due to meet again in February for an extra session surrounding the budget. Meetings will then continue every two months from March.

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

This Panel is scheduled to meet every two months, although there has been some disruption to this schedule during recent months due to pressures on the Council / Officer resources. It is anticipated that a Panel meeting will take place in February / March, providing an update

on the work of the Nature Conservation Team, including feedback on current / future projects, funding position and successful programmes.

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 on 1 March 2021.

b) Swansea Bay City Region City

The Joint Scrutiny Committee met on 2 February to continue City Deal programme monitoring. There was specific discussion on the Life Science & Well-being Campuses Project, Pentre Awel Project, as well as update on City Deal funding / finances. The Committee is expected to meet again on 25 May 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 Working Group will meet on 29 March 2021 to 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 and pressures.

b) Digital Inclusion (convener: Cllr Lesley Walton)

This Working Group will meet on the 11 May. 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.

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.

Reserve List:

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