



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 16 March 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
E W Fitzgerald
P K Jones
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

J E Burtonshaw
D W Helliwell
W G Lewis
T M White

Councillor(s)

M C Child
T J Hennegan
G J Tanner

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas A Roberts

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley S M Jones J W Jones
P R Hood-Williams L R Jones

Also Present:

Councillor Rob Stewart Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy
Councillor Elliott King Cabinet Member for Children Services

Officer(s)

Julie Gosney Life Stages Partnership Manager
Adam Hill Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Resources
Kate Jones Democratic Services Officer
Brij Madahar Scrutiny Team Leader
Phil Roberts Chief Executive
Debbie Smith Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Katie Spendiff Children's Rights Co-ordinator
Jane Whitmore Strategic Lead Commissioner

45 **Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interest was declared:

Councillor Mark Child declared a Personal & Prejudicial interest in Minute No. 51 "Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Joint Social Services." and withdrew from the meeting prior to its consideration.

46 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, no declarations of Whipped Votes or Party Whips were declared.

47 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on the 16 February 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

48 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

49 COVID-19 Update / Recovery Plan.

The Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy, the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive were present for the Committee's consideration of the Council's current response and recovery planning from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Chief Executive provided some updates which included: -

- Positive impact of lockdown on the number of cases which were currently around 34 cases per 100,000 population in Swansea.
- The vaccination programme was progressing well with approximately 128.000 vaccines administered
- Primary school pupils had returned to school, as well as the phased return of secondary school pupils
- Restrictions were still in place and it was important not to be complacent and to continue to follow those restrictions
- The development of new variants of the virus remained a concern
- Epidemiologists had predicted further peaks – the degree of these peaks remained uncertain and difficult to predict as it was dependant on numerous factors such as restrictions, continued vaccine supply, take up and roll out.

The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the following aspects in relation to the recovery plan:-

- There has been a further wave of the virus since the Cabinet report was approved in October 2020
- Governance Review – review and streamlining of governance and creation of a new steering group
- Workstreams and meeting schedule
- Update on actions, which included:
 - Swansea Economic Recovery Action Plan
 - Welsh Housing Quality Standards Capital Programme & Compliance
 - Home Working during Covid-19
 - Staff Survey on home working

- Briefing note to managers on support for staff
- Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy
- Agile Policy
- Delivery Tracker for the Medium Term Financial Plan targets

Questions and discussions with the Leader and Officers focused on the following:

- Impressive organisation by those involved in the vaccination programme
- Recent press regarding the AstraZeneca Vaccine and possible impact
- Opportunities for Member input into the Recovery Plan – decision making process
- Membership of Third Sector Liaison Group within the Community Support Work stream – including whether there was an environmental presence
- Membership of Climate Change Working Group within the Economy and Environment Work Stream
- Challenges of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021– lack of statutory guidance, timescales, resources for performance assessments and peer reviews as well as ensuring joint working is productive and efficient
- Opportunities of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – general power of competence, public participation strategy, ability and opportunities of co-working and corporate joint committees
- Linking work streams and partnership working
- Partnership working on recovery of Swansea

The Committee thanked all staff for their work during the pandemic.

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Leader, reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

50 Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Progress Report 2020.

The Cabinet Member for Children Services, the Strategic Lead Commissioner, the Children's Rights Coordinator and the Life Stages Partnership Manager were present for the report on Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Progress Report 2020. There was also a Bridging Report provided to cover the period of April 2020 – March 2021 and impact of the pandemic. The following key points were highlighted: -

- Impact and issues of Covid-19 and lockdown on children and young people – widening of inequalities
- Lessons learnt through the pandemic including examples of engagement practice during lockdown
- Examples of engagement practice during Covid-19
- Sometimes online meetings could offer greater opportunity for increased engagement
- Restructure of the Council's Life Stages Team
- Proposed revision of the Children's Rights Scheme – developing a 'plan on a page' – this accessible document had been picked up by the Children's Commissioner as an example of good practice to share across Wales

- Restructure and Remodel of Children's Rights work
- Gaps and Recommendations for recovery from Covid-19
- Making information accessible during lockdown without the usual access points such as school and other services being available
- Young people had been involved with the appointments of the Director of Education and the head of Child and Family Services

Questions and discussions focused on the following:-

- Protection of rights
- Consideration of Votes at 16 – how to support the political literacy of children and young people to allow them to make informed choices when voting
- Position of schools not engaged in rights respecting – the way rights respecting was implemented had changed and was being brought into the new curriculum
- Possibility of having a UNCRC champion in every school

The Strategic Lead Commissioner thanked Cabinet Members and Councillors in supporting and taking this work forward, as well as Officers.

The Chair and Cabinet Member thanked Councillor Sam Pritchard, former Cabinet Member for Children Services.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers

Resolved that the report be noted.

**51 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Joint Social Services.
(Councillors Paxton Hood-Williams and Susan Jones, Conveners)**

Councillors Paxton Hood-Williams and Susan Jones, Conveners, presented the Joint Social Services Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report.

Further to the written report, they specifically highlighted that both the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel and the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel had come together to form a Joint Social Services Scrutiny Performance Panel during the pandemic in order to maintain scrutiny, but without placing undue pressure on Officers whilst dealing with the pandemic,

The key concerns were around carers and mental health.

The panels had now split again into their separate Panels and future meetings would be looking at the budget and joint working of Health and Social Services.

The Conveners and Chair thanked staff for all their work during the pandemic.

Resolved that the update be noted.

52 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

The Chair presented a report on the Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups. There were no amendments to report.

Resolved that the report be noted.

53 Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22.

The Chair presented a report on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22.

The next Scrutiny Programme Committee was scheduled for the 13 April 2021. The main item scheduled was the Homelessness Strategy.

The Chair noted that Covid-19 is scheduled bi-monthly on the Committee's work plan, and it was suggested that given the time recovery may take that bi-monthly updates may be too frequent and other items in the plan could be scheduled. The Chair and Scrutiny Team Leader would discuss updating the work plan and report back to the Committee.

Resolved that the report be noted.

54 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair presented a report on 'Scrutiny Letter' for information.

Resolved that the scrutiny letters log be noted.

55 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.

The dates and times of the upcoming Panel / Working Group meeting were **noted**.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm

Chair