

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. A meeting on 24 June is planned.

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)

This Panel meets every month. The Panel last met on 10 May to discuss the Welsh Housing Quality Standard Annual Report. The Panel held a discussion about the statutory requirement for all social landlords in Wales, forming part of the Council's Local Housing Strategy as well as the Public Accountability Measures.

The Panel are next due to meet on 11 June to receive an overview from the Chief Finance Officer (understanding financial reporting) and to discuss the Capital Outturn and Financing report 2020-21.

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

This Panel meets every month. The Panel in May received updates on Education Other Than At School Services (EOTAS) and the 21st Century Schools Programme. On the 24 June they will receive an update from the Cabinet Member and Director of Education on the key issues affecting education currently. They will then discuss and agree their work programme for 2021/2022.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At its meeting on 2 June, the Panel received an update on Adult Services Transformation Programme; a briefing on Annual Review of Charges (Social Services) 2020/21 and discussed Council actions following the WAO report 'The Front door to Adult Social Care', specifically on the recommendation concerning the impact of preventative services. At its meeting on 14 July the Panel will discuss the Performance Monitoring Report, receive a briefing on the Isolation of Elderly People and discuss the Options Appraisal for Assistive Technology and Community Alarms.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. The Panel last met on 25 May when it received a briefing on the Youth Offending Service and an update on progress with CAMHS from representatives of the Health Board. At its next meeting on 22 June, it will discuss the latest Performance Monitoring Report and receive an update on the Regional Adoption Service.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The Panel will next meet on 1 July to discuss the Dashboard Report and updates across all major projects. The Panel will also undertake an annual review of this year's work.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The Panel last met on 19 May, holding a discussion on Council progress surrounding the Climate Emergency Declaration. The Panel also heard from the Director of Place regarding the recent public consultation feedback about the Climate Change action plan.

The Panel is next due to meet on 29 June to discuss the Council's current Air Quality Management strategy. The Panel will also hear from Swansea University regarding research into the human-health impacts of Air Quality.

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 1 March 2021. They met with the Lead Director and the ERW Chief Officers to discuss the effects of Covid on the business of ERW and progress with ERW reform programme. They also discussed the items presented at the ERW Joint Committee on the 9 February. The next meeting will take place on 28 June 2021.

b) **Swansea Bay City Region City**

The Joint Scrutiny Committee continues to monitor the City Deal programme. A meeting that was planned for 25 May is being re-arranged and is expected to focus on the Pentre Awel project, as well as overall programme and financial monitoring.

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 met on 29 March 2021 and asked about the impact of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of staff; how the Council is supporting this; issues around home working; staff sickness; staff turnover; use of agency staff and pressures. A range of information was considered by the Working Group, with input from relevant Cabinet Member(s) and officer(s). A letter with the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations has been sent to the relevant Cabinet Members. The Working Group were of the view that a further meeting should be arranged in around six months in order to revisit the topic and consider the latest position, information and experience including the results of the further staff survey that will be carried out by the Council in the coming months. Response letter from Cabinet Members has now been received. The correspondence from this meeting is included in the 'Scrutiny Letters' agenda item 11 for Committee's information.

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

This Working Group met on the 11 May where they congratulated officers for the good work done so far in relation this, especially through the difficult Covid period. Overall the Working Group were of the view that the Council is on the right track with its Digital Inclusion Strategy and do recognise that the Council is keen to make the right improvements moving forward. The Digital Inclusion Framework/Strategy and the Council Website is currently being reviewed and members of the Working Group asked to be included in this process. The letter from the Working Group to the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement & Performance is included in the 'Scrutiny Letters' agenda item 11 for Committee's information.

c) **Bus Services** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

This Working Group will meet on 7 July. 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. Representatives of First Cymru and Cardiff Bus will also be participating in the meeting.

d) **Healthy City** (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

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