

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 Panel met on the 24 November to look at all the findings from the Inquiry and to start to draw their conclusions and recommendations. They will next meet on the 31 January to discuss the first draft of their final report to Cabinet.

(Inquiries may take up to six months to complete, as they 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: 26 Jan 2022

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 15 December to discuss the Recycling and Landfill Annual Performance Monitoring Report and the Budget Monitoring Report 2021-22.

The Panel will next meet on 18 January to discuss the Q2 2021/22 Performance Monitoring Report and the cabinet report on budget proposals.

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

This Panel meets every month. A progress report appears separately under Agenda Item 9.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. The Panel last met on 30 November to receive an update on the management of Covid and Performance Monitoring.

The next meeting on 12 January will focus on the same items.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. The Panel last met on 13 December to discuss the Performance Highlight Report and Emergency Staffing Plan and to receive an update on progress with the action plan for Ty Nant.

The next meeting will be held on 25 January and will discuss the Performance Highlight Report and Emergency Staffing Plan.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The Panel last met on November 2 to discuss the City Centre Travel Plan update and the Project Update Report.

The next meeting will be held on 25 January, when the Panel will receive an update presentation from the Swansea Business Improvement District. The Panel will also discuss the Foreshore Developments Update Report and the Project Update Report.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The Panel last met on 6 October to discuss Local Flood Risk Management and Water Pollution. At this meeting, officers from Natural Resources Wales were also in attendance to aid discussions.

The Panel will next meet on 12 January to discuss Management of Green Space / Weed & Verge Management.

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) Regional Education Partnership

The new regional education partnership called 'Partneriaeth' will commence shortly, and will include Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire Councils. Following recent approval of a legal agreement by each Council's Cabinet, the next step will be for the new Partneriaeth Joint Committee to meet to agree responsibility for functions / organisational support for the Partnership and other arrangements. Within the agreed governance structure, there will be a Joint Scrutiny Councillor Group, similar to that which existed to scrutinise the Education Through Regional Working (ERW) Regional School Improvement Consortium.

b) Swansea Bay City Region City Deal

The last Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting, on 23 November, looked at the current status of the Swansea Bay City Deal Homes As Power Stations (HAPS) project which is a regional project led by Neath Port Talbot Council. It also received an update on financial monitoring, and progress made to the recommendations resulting from the City Deal Internal Audit review, and the independent Gateway Review, as part of assurance arrangements.

The next meeting on 25 January will focus on the Skills & Talent regional project and review quarterly programme monitoring documents.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee is supported by Scrutiny Officers in Neath Port Talbot Council and agendas / minutes of meetings can be found on-line:

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=417>

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 was sent to the relevant Cabinet Members and this letter together with the Cabinet Members response was reported to the Committee in June.

The Working Group will meet again on 2 February in order to revisit the topic and consider the latest position, information and experience including the results of the further staff survey carried out by the Council.

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 was reported to the Committee in June.

The Working Group felt that further oversight of work on Digital Inclusion is necessary as things develop, perhaps annually, whether through Working Group or other method of scrutiny. This will be factored into future work planning discussion.

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

This Working Group met on 7 July when a range of information was considered, including bus network coverage and levels of service, community transport provision and integration with other forms of transport. Relevant Cabinet Member and officers participated in the meeting together with representatives of First Cymru and Cardiff Bus.

A letter with the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations was sent to the relevant Cabinet Member and this letter together with the Cabinet Members response was reported to the Committee on 19 October. It was agreed that a further meeting of the Working Group be held before the end of the municipal year to enable follow up on the Group's recommendations and see what changes / improvements had been made. This further meeting will be held on 21 March.

d) **Road Safety** (convener: Cllr Steve Gallagher)

Following adjustment to the Scrutiny Work Programme this Working Group was brought forward.

The meeting will enable information, questions and discussion to understand the Council's role and responsibilities on road safety, e.g., asking about hot spots; work to improve road safety; preventative measures; speed controls; safety of cycling routes; partnership working, etc.

A meeting was planned for February 2022 but has had to be cancelled due to service pressures affecting ability to report and support the meeting at that time. This topic will be carried forward and held at the earliest opportunity, subject to agreement of a new Scrutiny Work Programme after May 2022.

e) **Healthy City** (convener: Cllr Jennifer Raynor)

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.

Due to Covid pressures this Working Group will no longer be held in this municipal year.

Reserve Working Group List:

- Active Travel
- Accessibility for the Disabled / Elderly