



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 15 February 2022

Scrutiny Letters

Purpose:	To ensure the Committee is aware of the scrutiny letters produced following various scrutiny activities, and to track responses to date.
Content:	The report includes a log of scrutiny letters produced this municipal year and provides a copy of correspondence between scrutiny and cabinet members where discussion is required.
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the scrutiny letters and responses• Make comments, observations and recommendations as necessary
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer:	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
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Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The production of scrutiny letters has become an established part of the way scrutiny operates in Swansea. Letters from the chair (or conveners) allow scrutiny to communicate directly and quickly with relevant cabinet members.
- 1.2 These letters are used to convey views and conclusions about particular issues discussed, and provide the opportunity to raise concerns, ask for further information, and make recommendations. This enables scrutiny to engage with Cabinet Members on a regular and structured basis.

2. Reporting of Letters

- 2.1 All scrutiny letters, whether they are written by the Scrutiny Programme Committee or conveners of Panels / Working Groups, are published to ensure visibility, of the outcomes from meetings, across the council and public.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee agenda also includes a copy of letters to/from Cabinet Members where specific discussion is required, e.g. letters relating to the Committee, Working Groups, and Inquiry Panel follow ups. Letters are included when cabinet member responses that were awaited are received or where a scrutiny letter did not require a response.
- 2.3 Where requested Cabinet Members are expected to respond in writing to scrutiny letters within 21 calendar days. The response should indicate what action (if any) they intend to take as a result of the views and recommendations made.
- 2.4 Letters relating to the work of Performance Panels are part of an ongoing dialogue with Cabinet Members and are therefore reported back and monitored by each Panel. However, all Performance Panel conveners will provide a progress report to the Committee, including summary of correspondence with Cabinet Members and outcomes.

3. Letters Log

- 3.1 This report contains a log of scrutiny letters produced to enable the Committee to maintain an overview of letters activity over the current municipal year – see **Appendix 1**. The letters log will show the average time taken by Cabinet Members to respond to scrutiny letters, and the percentage of letters responded to within timescale.
- 3.2 The following letter(s), not already reported to the Committee, are **attached** for discussion:

	Activity	Meeting Date	Correspondence
a	Committee (Discussion on Parking Policy, Control & Enforcement)	14 Dec	Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management
b	Committee (Pre-decision Scrutiny – Covid Recovery & Investment)	18 Jan	Letter to Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader)
c	Equalities Inquiry Panel – follow up	26 Jan	Letter to Cabinet Member for Supporting Communities

3.3 Equalities Inquiry Follow Up

3.3.1 The Inquiry Panel has concluded formal monitoring of the inquiry recommendations and impact.

3.3.2 The Panel were happy with the progress made to date and were pleased with the positive impact that the inquiry, and the commitment to it by the Cabinet Member for Supporting Communities and officers, has made in helping to move this important agenda forward in Swansea. They heard for example that a new Strategic Equality Plan had been developed and published, a new Strategic Equality and Future Generation Board had been created, the Council's website has been updated and the mandatory equalities training refreshed, amongst other things.

3.3.3 The Panel recognised the Covid-19 pandemic continues to bring challenges to the Council and that many officers have had to shift focus to ensure that Council services were maintained and those most vulnerable were supported during the crisis. The Panel were pleased to see the huge amount of work completed throughout that time, with and for, our local communities.

3.3.4 The Panel agreed to finish their formal follow up involvement with the inquiry after satisfying themselves that good progress has been made with all the recommendations. They heard that seven of the recommendations are now complete and that good progress has been made with those recommendations that are outstanding. They were reassured to hear that all the necessary pieces are in place to ensure ongoing improvement in those areas where the recommendations are incomplete.

3.3.5 The Panel would like to refer one area to the Scrutiny Programme Committee for potential follow up in the new municipal year. This is relating to Recommendation 13 - *Build upon the development of a Co-production Strategy with inclusion of a Toolkit for use by staff across the authority.*

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Letters Log – 2021-22

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Letters / Responses