



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 19 July 2022 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
V A Holland
W G Lewis
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)

R Fogarty
M Jones
P N May
M S Tribe

Councillor(s)

T J Hennegan
H Lawson
F D O'Brien
T M White

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

Beth Allender Dr Elizabeth Lee

Officer(s)

Brij Madahar Scrutiny Team Leader
Debbie Smith Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Samantha Woon Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): None.

4 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

5 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.

6 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committees held on 15 March 2022 and 24 May 2022 be approved and signed correct records.

The Chair referred to the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 15 March, 2022. In relation to the Annual Complaints Report, there was one query which was raised that the Head of Digital & Customer Services undertook to respond to: Whether the Council is seeing a rise in the proportion of complaints being made

coming via legal firms, acting on behalf of residents, given the proliferation of companies advertising 'no win, no fee'. He reported that Sarah Lackenby has responded that there has not been a rise in complaints made by legal firms and numbers continue to be very low. To give further context, should a complainant explicitly state in writing that they intend taking legal action then the complaint would effectively be suspended until the legal action has been dealt with. Once the legal proceedings have concluded the complainant can resubmit the complaint within six months.

7 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

8 Role of the Scrutiny Programme Committee.

The Scrutiny Team Leader presented the report on the 'Role of the Scrutiny Programme Committee'. The report also invited the Committee to renew the appointment of Committee co-optees.

He stated that the Committee is responsible for managing all scrutiny activity, through a single work plan.

Work is either carried out by the Committee or delegated elsewhere. So, the Committee itself will have a plan of work, but it will establish Panels and Working Groups to examine specific topics or issues to enable the engagement of all non-executive councillors in the scrutiny process, regardless of committee membership, and participation in topics which match their areas of interest.

The membership of Panels / Working Groups, as well as the appointment of a lead Councillor (known as Convener) was a matter for the Committee to determine. The role of a Convener was also explained in the report.

The Committee would monitor agreed activities and outcomes to ensure that the work programme is being delivered effectively, and in accordance with the Committee's wishes.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee were included in the papers for information.

In relation to Membership, the Committee noted that there is a place for up to 4 Education Statutory Co-optees. 2 Parent Governor reps and 2 faith representatives. Beth Allender is the new primary parent governor rep, and Dr. Elizabeth Lee, the new secondary parent governor rep, and both were welcomed by the Committee. Seats for the 2 faith representatives were currently vacant. These co-optees have voting rights in relation to any education matters discussed by the Committee, and will also be entitled to sit on any Panels / Working Groups related to Education.

He stated that previously the Committee has also found it beneficial to co-opt (in a non-voting capacity) those councillors appointed as Performance Panel conveners not already on the Committee. As the Committee with responsibility for Scrutiny of

the multi-agency Public Services Board, it has also involved representatives from partner agencies in assisting with that scrutiny.

In conclusion, he highlighted the importance of teamwork to the Committee's success. The report detailed some practical considerations that could help to achieve this, and some examples around effective working. As it meets, whether long-serving or new, he recommended that Members should reflect on the way they work together as a group, plan work, and plan for meetings; and evaluate how well they have gone and consider any room for improvement to be more effective in the way the Committee works.

Resolved that: -

- 1) The co-option of Scrutiny Performance Panels conveners to the Committee be renewed.
- 2) The co-option of partnership organisations to enable representatives to participate in the Committee's scrutiny of the Public Services Board be renewed.

9 Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23.

The Chair stated that following consultation with Members the report contained the emerging draft programme for the year ahead.

The draft work programme takes into account last years' programme, work already committed and feedback from the recent Work Planning Conference which included input on Council priorities and strategic challenges, and public issues.

He highlighted the key considerations for the Committee to think about before agreeing the programme, and took Members through the detail.

Firstly, he presented the Committee's own draft work plan which included specific issues of concern for focussed discussion at Committee meetings. He mentioned that the Committee would also coordinate any pre-decision scrutiny activity. There was some discussion around Committee activity on Crime & Disorder / Safer Swansea Partnership scrutiny. The desire of the Committee to do more than the single Committee session on the work and performance of the Safer Swansea Community Safety Partnership (SSP) was noted. The Chair stated that the inquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour would touch on the work of the SSP, and that the Partnership also reports to the Public Services Board (PSB), and therefore relevant for any PSB Scrutiny Session, for example the Strong Communities PSB well-being objective encompasses the work / contribution of the SSP to achieving this objective and is covered in the PSB Annual Report, which would be discussed at October's Committee meeting. He emphasised that any additional Committee session should have a clear and specific purpose / focus, for example, any aspect the Committee wants to drill down into. Looking back at the February 2022 session (letter included in the Committee agenda), he pointed out that Committee members were keen to engage with the development of new SSP Strategy and pick up progress in relation to improvements following the Mayhill riot. The Chair also reminded the Committee

that scrutiny was about the partnership, and that there were other arrangements for specifically holding the Police to account.

He referred to the proposal to set up an Inquiry Panel to look at Anti-Social Behaviour. Whilst there were some ideas about the work the Panel could examine, the Panel itself would develop terms of reference and identify the key question for the Inquiry following an initial briefing session on the topic.

He stated that Performance Panels make up the majority of scrutiny activity, as these represented ongoing monitoring and challenge of key services, holding cabinet members to account, with ongoing conversation to share their views and recommendations. It was proposed that the previously established Performance Panels continue but with a renaming of the Natural Environment Panel to 'Climate Change & Nature', reflecting recent change in corporate priorities.

In order to provide continuity for this first year of the new Council term, it was proposed that the Councillors previously acting as conveners, who wish to continue, be re-appointed in that role, namely:

- Councillor Chris Holley as Service Improvement & Finance convener
- Councillor Lyndon Jones as Education convener
- Councillor Sue Jones as Adult Services convener; and
- Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams as Child & Family Services convener

With regard to the Development & Regeneration and Climate Change & Nature Panels, expressions of interest were invited, initially from Councillors that have been previously involved in this work. Based on feedback the Committee was asked to agree:

- Councillor Chris Holley as Development & Regeneration convener; and
- Councillor Hannah Lawson as Climate Change & Nature convener

He reported that for a more light-touch approach, a small number of Working Group topics have been identified with a focus on the Road Safety, Co-production, Swansea as a Healthy City, and Customer Contact.

Members also noted the arrangements for regional scrutiny, as referred to in para. 4.7 of the report.

He reiterated that the work programme will be subject to requests for scrutiny throughout the year. Furthermore, the work programme would be kept under constant review by the Committee, with changes made as necessary. The Committee would always retain the flexibility to adapt and re-prioritise the work of scrutiny, to ensure the continued relevance of the programme.

He referred to the next Committee meeting scheduled for 16 August. He stated that the Cabinet Member for Equalities & Culture, Cllr Elliott King, will attend to report on, and take questions on, his responsibilities relating to the Archives Service and developments around the new Community Hub, which will house the Service. The Committee will need to consider questions for that session.

Resolved that:

- 1) the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 (shown in appendix 3), including Inquiry topics, Performance Panel and Working Group topic priorities be agreed.
- 2) the appointment of the Performance Panel Convenors (shown in 4.5) be agreed.
- 3) the proposed Committee work plan (shown in appendix 4) be agreed.

10 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair referred to the following letters:

- 1) Workforce Working Group – Letter to / from Cabinet Member.
- 2) Bus Services Working Group – Letter to / from Cabinet Member.
- 3) Committee Letter to Joint Chairs of Safer Swansea Community Safety Partnership.

The meeting ended at 4.20 pm

Chair