



Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 15 November 2022

Follow Up: Scrutiny Working Group - Workforce

Purpose:	This report provides background and advice to the Committee in following up on the Scrutiny Working Group which looked at issues relating to Workforce. Lead Cabinet Member / officers have been called to report on progress since the Working Group, including issues raised by the Working Group.
Content:	<p>The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance, Councillor David Hopkins, has provided a report which is appended for questions and discussion.</p> <p>The Committee is provided with the correspondence between the Working Group and Cabinet Member(s) following its meetings which contain the views / concerns of scrutiny councillors. The Committee should follow up on agreed action taken in response, where the Working Group has made suggestions for improvement.</p>
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the information provided, ask questions, and make comments and recommendations as necessary.
Lead Councillor:	Councillor David Hopkins (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance)
Lead Officers:	Ness Young, Interim Director of Corporate Services Rachael Davies, Head of HR & Service Centre
Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Amanda Thomas

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee has overall responsibility for the Scrutiny Work Programme. Each year, the Work Programme includes several 'one-off' topic-based Scrutiny Working Groups to look at specific issues of concern. These are usually set up as single meetings

to call in relevant Cabinet Member(s), officers, and other relevant persons, to examine the issue and feedback views and recommendations to the Cabinet Member(s). As such the Committee takes responsibility for following up on Working Groups, to check on progress with the topic / issue(s) and response to any specific suggestions / recommendations made and agreed action coming out of the scrutiny session.

2. Workforce Scrutiny Working Group

2.1 The Workforce Scrutiny Working Group originally met on 29 March 2021 to look at 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. The Working Group met with relevant Cabinet Members and Senior Officers.

2.2 Following this meeting, overall, the Working Group felt reassured that the Authority was doing what it can to support its workforce during and post pandemic, and were pleased about extensive engagement with the Trade Unions. It heard about results from a staff survey that was undertaken towards the start of the pandemic and were told that a follow up survey will be undertaken. Councillors gave their support to the approach of having an agile working policy and accommodation strategy that is more flexible and provides work / life balance, whilst still meeting the needs of the residents of Swansea. Amongst feedback, they recommended that any new home working policy must include clear provision to support the health and well-being of staff working from home.

2.3 In order to consider the results of the follow up staff survey, that was going to be carried out during the latter part of 2021, and better understand what the future holds for the Authority and its workforce emerging from the pandemic, when there was more clarity. it was agreed by the Committee that a further Working Group meeting could be convened. The second meeting of the Working Group took place on 2 February 2022, and following questions councillors had confidence that the Authority was progressing in the right direction with regards its workforce.

2.4 The correspondence between the Working Group and Cabinet Member(s) following these two meetings is **attached**, showing the range of issues that were discussed, detailed feedback and concerns, and Cabinet Member response provided at the time.

2.5 Link to the two scrutiny meetings:

2 Feb 2022 -

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=697&MIId=10661&Ver=4&LLL=0>

29 Mar 2021 -

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=697&MIId=9345&Ver=4&LLL=0>

- 2.6 Scrutiny Councillors who participated in the Working Group: Cyril Anderson (Convener), Joe Hale, Chris Holley, Lynda James, Yvonne Jardine, Mary Jones, Sue Jones, Hazel Morris, Cheryl Philpott, Gloria Tanner, and Lesley Walton.
- 2.7 By carrying out a follow up the Committee can then close off this scrutiny activity and work, as appropriate.

3. Cabinet Member Report

- 3.1 The lead Cabinet Member, Councillor David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance, has provided a report on progress, in the context of the scrutiny activity, on actions, delivery of work and achievements / performance on Workforce. See **attached**.
- 3.2 Lead officer(s) will also be present to assist and facilitate the discussion.
- 3.3 The Committee should hear from the Cabinet Member / officers before questions. At the conclusion of the session the Committee may wish to write to the Cabinet Member with any observations, views and recommendations arising from the follow up discussion.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development.

Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

4.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

4.2 An IIA screening has been undertaken noting there are minimal impact assessment implications associated with this information report. The work of Scrutiny is open to the public, promoted via Council media channels, and enable all citizens to ask questions, raise issues and/or input views. The work of Scrutiny involves examination of Council services and making recommendations for improvement to Cabinet Members (and other decision-makers). Scrutiny activities have the potential for engagement to ensure public views can feed into the Scrutiny process.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

- Letter correspondence between the Workforce Scrutiny Working Group and Cabinet Members: Letters dated 4 May 2021; 24 May 2021; 7 March 2022; and 24 March 2022.
- Cabinet Member Report