



Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 December 2022

Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities

Purpose:	To enable the Committee to question Cabinet Members on their work. The Committee's questions will broadly explore Cabinet Members' priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to specific areas of responsibility.
Content:	<p>The following Cabinet Member will appear before the Committee:</p> <p>a) Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Service Transformation</p> <p>The specific areas of responsibility being discussed are:</p> <p>a) Homelessness</p>
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question the relevant Cabinet Member on the specific portfolio responsibilities• Make comments and recommendations as necessary
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1. Introduction

1.1 One of the most important roles that scrutiny carries out is holding the Council's Cabinet to account. The Cabinet (also known as the Executive) is made up of the Leader and other councillors, appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific portfolio responsibilities.

1.2 There are 10 Cabinet portfolios:

	Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet Member
1	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader of the Council)	Cllr Rob Stewart
2	Service Transformation (Deputy Leader)	Cllr Andrea Lewis
3	Corporate Services & Performance (Deputy Leader)	Cllr David Hopkins
4	Education & Learning	Cllr Robert Smith
5	Care Services	Cllr Louise Gibbard
6	Wellbeing	Cllr Alyson Pugh
7	Environment & Infrastructure	Cllr Andrew Stevens
8	Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cllr Robert Francis-Davies
9	Equalities & Culture	Cllr Elliott King
10	Community (Services) Community (Support)	Cllr Cyril Anderson Cllr Hayley Gwilliam

NOTE:

- The Community Portfolio operates under a job-sharing arrangement
- Detailed breakdown of Cabinet Portfolio Responsibilities are **attached** to this report.

- 1.3 By acting as a 'critical friend' scrutiny has the opportunity to challenge the Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members on their actions and performance in relation to their areas of responsibilities.
- 1.4 Rather than a look at overall responsibilities, the Committee has agreed to focus on specific areas of interest / concern, taking into account any gaps in the overall scrutiny work programme and ensuring good coverage of scrutiny across all cabinet portfolios.
- 1.5 The Committee should be mindful to avoid duplication of any issue(s) which are being examined elsewhere in the Scrutiny Work Programme e.g., within Performance Panels.

2. Discussion on Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities

- 2.1 The following Cabinet Member will appear before the Committee:
- a) Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Service Transformation
- 2.2 The Cabinet portfolio responsibilities that the Committee will focus on are:
- a) Homelessness

- 2.3 The Cabinet Member, will attend, along with lead officers who can assist the Committee, to report on aims / objectives, plans, and the delivery of work related to this portfolio responsibility and objectives. Cabinet Members will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the Committee.
- 2.4 The Cabinet Member has provided a report on the portfolio responsibility under discussion to help the Committee focus the discussion and questions - see **Appendix 2**.

3. Approach to Questions

- 3.1 The session should provide Committee members with a greater understanding of what the specific responsibilities entail, resources, priorities/objectives/commitments, key activities & headlines/achievements, performance measures, and overall assessment of service health (including, for example, how we compare with others, challenges / risks) and improvement/impact/difference made. This will give the Committee the chance to ask focused questions and provide challenge on actions and performance in relation to these areas of responsibility, as well as future thinking.
- 3.2 During 2018, the work of a Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group and meetings of the Scrutiny Programme Committee contributed to the development of the Council's four-year Homelessness Strategy. The Committee met in April 2021 to see how the new Strategy, adopted by Cabinet in November 2018, has delivered improvement to services, advice and support, both in preventing homelessness and dealing with it where it exists. The Committee recognised the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on homelessness in Swansea. At the Strategy's mid-point of implementation, the Committee gave views on the impact and difference made, and achievements against objectives and specific planned actions. The Committee letter sent following that meeting in April 2021 and the response that was provided is **attached**.
- 3.3 Councillors will be interested in how homelessness is being managed as we emerge from the pandemic and the support that is provided, what has changed over the last 18 months in that regard, current performance and trends (relevant data/statistics), notable practice and outcomes, current pressures / challenges / risks, the overall assessment of things and outlook.
- 3.4 In terms of themes that cut across all cabinet portfolios, the Committee can ask Cabinet Members about:
- Well-being of Future Generations Act – impact on their work / decisions e.g., what they are doing to achieve the well-being goals and ways of working, e.g., focus on long-term thinking, collaboration / involvement etc. (including regional / collaborative working, service user / public engagement)

- Links to poverty reduction, reducing inequalities, including socio-economic disadvantage
- Links to the Council's Recovery and Transformation Plan, 'Swansea Achieving Better Together'
- Links to the Public Services Board (PSB)

3.5 Links to Policy Commitments 2022-2027:

- Swansea Council will offer immediate support for people who become homeless and a commitment to shorter housing waiting lists.
- 100 days target: We are committed to agreeing a strategy to support homeless individuals as the Covid hotel use ends, whilst we will strive to continue our 'always a bed' pledge.

3.6 The Committee also invites members of the public and other scrutiny councillors (not on the Committee) to suggest questions that the Committee should ask. It is up to the Committee how to deal with any suggested questions within the session.

3.7 Following each session the Chair will write to Cabinet Members in order to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the Committee, and any actions for them to consider.

3.8 If the Committee wishes to conduct more detailed scrutiny of any of the issues raised during the session, then this should be agreed through the normal work planning process and planned for a future meeting. This will also allow proper time for preparation.

3.9 The Committee should note that Councillor Andrea Lewis has already been engaged in scrutiny, or is planned, of the following other matters:

- Public Services Board (Scrutiny Programme Committee)
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard Programme (Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel)
- Climate Change Action Plan & Nature Recovery (Climate Change & Nature Performance Panel)
- Green Vehicle Adoption (Climate Change & Nature Performance Panel)
- Public / Residential Electric Vehicle Charging (Climate Change & Nature Performance Panel)
- Anti-Social Behaviour Inquiry
- Sustainable Swansea Programme Review (Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel)
- Crime & Disorder (Community Safety) (Scrutiny Programme Committee)
- Customer Contact Working Group
- South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (representative for regional Energy)

4. Next Session

- 4.1 The next scheduled Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities, will be a Q & A session with the Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy, Councillor Rob Stewart. This is being arranged for the Committee meeting on 17 January 2023. The Committee should identify in advance any key issues that it may wish to explore so that these can be reported on and responded to. Although an overall look at his responsibilities and achievements, the Committee should consider those issues where focus will allow a more in-depth discussion. The Committee could focus on the achievement against specific Policy Commitments / Council Priorities, and the Council's Recovery & Transformation Plan, and of course managing the Council's budget. Committee Members should raise specific questions in advance to aid planning and preparation for the meeting.

5. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 5.1 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.

- 5.1.1 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'.

- 5.1.2 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.

5.2 An IIA screening has been undertaken noting there are minimal impact assessment implications associated with this report (IIA can be viewed in **Appendix 1**). 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 public were invited to contribute to the session. The work of Scrutiny will involve 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.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: IIA Screening

Appendix 2: Cabinet Member Report – Homelessness

Appendix 3 – Committee Letter & Response – Scrutiny of Homelessness Strategy (April 2021)

Appendix 4: Cabinet Portfolio Responsibility Listing