



## Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 February 2023

### Scrutiny Letters

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

#### 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 for its attention and discussion as required, e.g., letters relating to the work of 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, or have taken, 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. For comparison, during the previous year (2021/22) 66 letters were sent to Cabinet Members, of which 24 required a written response. The average time taken to respond was 18 days, with 71% responded to within the 21 days target.
- 3.2 The following letter(s), not already reported to the Committee, are **attached** for discussion:

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>
a	Committee (Scrutiny of Fly Tipping)	15 Nov	Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Community (Services)
b	Road Safety Working Group	7 Dec	Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

### 3.3 Road Safety Working Group

#### 3.3.1 In order to assist future Committee follow up, a summary is provided:

The Road Safety Working Group met to look at a number of issues related to road safety including speed controls (signs, humps and cameras), the new 20mph limits, road conditions and partnership working. Officers from the Road Safety Team attended the meeting to assist Councillors.

The Working Group were concerned that the Welsh Government Road Safety Grant has been held back for the 2nd year in a row due to the 20mph speed reduction scheme and the potential impact this will have, including other safety measures that are already in place like speed bumps, plus the additional work load to highways staff.

The Cabinet Member is a member of the Go Safe Partnership, the working group requested for him to appeal to the Partnership to be more proactive in the area of Gower Commons. The Cabinet Member has agreed to work constructively with Go Safe to remove barriers limiting enforcement activity.

A recommendation to increase signage and banners outside schools as a deterrent to remind drivers to drive and park safely around schools was given by the working group. The Cabinet Members responded to say that an arrangement with a major local employer who provided financial support for these measures has now expired and that the Road Safety Team would welcome the opportunity to reintroduce these messages and continue to seek partnerships through the Commercial Team to support this activity.

The Working Group raised the need for developments in the Kerbcraft programme with the particular suggestion of developing a module on encouraging walking to school and general active travel. The Cabinet Member informed the Group that Welsh Government is presently in the process of reviewing the Kerbcraft program and is seeking contractors to undertake this operation. Once appointed, Swansea Council, as a key stakeholder, will contribute to this review and will take the opportunity provided to seek expansion of the education modules to build in the benefits of an active travel approach.

## **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 – 2022-23

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Letters / Responses