Cyngor **Abertawe**
Swansea Council

Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 18 April 2023

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 for discussion as required.
Councillors are being asked to:	• 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
Finance Officer:	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 back to the Committee, are ***attached*** for discussion:

	Activity	Meeting Date	Correspondence
a	Committee (Scrutiny of Tackling Poverty)	17 Jan	Letter to/from Leader and Cabinet Member for Well-being
b	Committee (Scrutiny of Houses in Multiple Occupation)	14 Feb	Letter to Cabinet Member for Corporate Service & Performance

c	Committee (Pre-decision Scrutiny: National 20 Mph Default Speed Limit)	20 Mar	Letter to Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

3. Legal Implications

3.1 There are no legal implications.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:
Appendix 1: Scrutiny Letters Log – 2022-23
Appendix 2: Scrutiny Letters / Responses