



## Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 16 May 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>	Tracey Meredith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Paul Roach

#### 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:

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>
a	Co-production Working Group	9 Mar	Letter to/from Cabinet Member for Community (Support)

### 3.3 Co-production Safety Working Group

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

The Coproduction Working Group met to look at a number of issues related to the Council's role and responsibilities on the development of co-production in the Council and progress, helping to improve involvement and engagement with service users, partners and the public in the design & delivery of services & decision-making. Relevant officers attended alongside the Cabinet Member for Community, Cllr Hayley Gwilliam.

Co production at Swansea Council is still early into its journey. The Working Group were appraised on developments so far including the work of Co-Pro Lab Wales who are contracted for 12 months to provide advice and support and help to produce a tool kit and webpage. This 12 months will end in October 2023 when they will produce a feedback report. Internal Coproduction Champions will be equipped to provide support to colleagues within their directorates and identify coproduction opportunities. An Officer from Social Services also attended to report on the good progress they have made in co-production as well as the Director of SCVS who gave their perspective.

Overall, the Working Group were encouraged by the approach the Council are taking to coproduction. They favoured the Coproduction Champions model which can be harder to achieve than a centralised coproduction provision but has the potential to be more successful in embedding coproduction across departments and felt positive about the slow and steady approach the Council are taking. The Group recommended using a mix of existing coproduction tools and bespoke ones. The Group requested training for members as well as officers and recommends to the

In the Cabinet Members response Member development opportunities will be offered over the next 6 months and that the project will report to the Audit Committee on completion in Autumn 2023. Therefore, the Group recommends that to the Scrutiny Programme Committee that this topic is followed up after October 2023 when this report has come out and next steps are planned.

#### **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