



Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 16 January 2024

Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities – Q & A Session with Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

Purpose:	To enable the Committee to question the Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy on his work. The Committee's questions will broadly explore priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to his areas of responsibility.
Content:	<p>The Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy will appear before the Committee for a Q & A Session which may cover any of his areas of responsibility, but will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• achievement against specific Policy Commitments / Council Priorities• progress with the Corporate Recovery / Transformation Plan• managing the Council's budget
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question the Leader / Cabinet Member on specific portfolio responsibilities• Make comments 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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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, Events & Tourism	Cllr Robert Francis-Davies
9	Culture, Human Rights & Equalities	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 When calling in Cabinet Members, 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. Q & A with Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

- 2.1 The Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy, Councillor Rob Stewart, will appear before the Committee to participate in a question-and-answer session.
- 2.2 Councillor Stewart has provided a report on his areas of responsibility and any issues identified by the Committee to help focus the discussion and questions - see **Appendix 1**. He will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the Committee. Lead officers may also be present to assist the Committee.
- 2.3 Although having specific Cabinet portfolio responsibilities, as Leader of the Council Councillor Stewart is responsible for:
- providing political leadership to the Council
 - working with officers to lead the organisation
 - appointing the Cabinet
 - managing and leading the work of the Cabinet and chairing meetings
 - delegation of executive functions that allow the Cabinet and Officers to make decisions and manage day-to-day delivery of Council Services, in line with the Council's overall policies and budget
- 2.4 The session provides Committee members with opportunity to hold the Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy to account for his work, actions, and challenge performance, improvement, and future thinking.

3. Approach to Questions

- 3.1 Councillor Stewart has wide ranging responsibilities which may be subject to Committee questions, but the session will usually focus on a smaller number of key issues, e.g., relating to:
- achievement against specific Policy Commitments / Council Priorities
 - progress with the Corporate Recovery / Transformation Plan
 - managing the Council's budget
- 3.2 The most recent report from the Leader / Cabinet Member on progress with the Policy Commitments (adopted by Council in July 2022) that was presented to Council in October 2023 is also **appended** for information, for any follow up further to discussion at Council.
- 3.3 The correspondence following last year's Q & A session with the Leader (January 2023) is **attached**, and Committee Members may wish to follow up on previous discussion. It mainly concerned development and regeneration activity, including the City Deal.

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 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.

3.6 Following the session the Chair will write to Councillor Stewart to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the Committee, and any actions for him to consider

3.7 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.

3.8 The Committee should note that Councillor Stewart has already been engaged in recent Scrutiny, or is planned, of the following:

- Public Services Board (Scrutiny Programme Committee)
- Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty & Enabling Communities (Scrutiny Programme Committee)
- Oracle Fusion Project Implementation (Scrutiny Programme Committee)
- Corporate Plan / Budget / Budget Monitoring (Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Performance Panel)
- Swansea Bay City Region City Deal (regional scrutiny) – Cllr Stewart is current Chair of the City Region Joint Committee
- South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (regional scrutiny) - Cllr Stewart is current Chair of the Corporate Joint Committee

4. Legal Implications

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

5. Financial Implications

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

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Leader's Report

Appendix 2: Council Report 5 October 2023 'Policy Commitments Progress'

Appendix 3: Committee Letter re. Leader Q & A Session held January 2023

Appendix 4: Cabinet Portfolio Responsibility Listing