



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 October 2019

Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20

Purpose	This report presents the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019/20, which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.
Content	The agreed work programme is attached, which shows the topics that will be examined by scrutiny through various Panels and Working Groups. A plan for future committee meetings is also attached.
Councillors are being asked to	• plan for the committee meetings ahead • consider opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny • review the scrutiny work programme (including progress of current Panels and Working Groups)
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for developing the Council's scrutiny work programme, and managing the overall work of scrutiny to ensure that it is as effective as possible.
- 1.2 A report is provided to each meeting to enable the committee to maintain an overview of agreed scrutiny activities, monitor progress, and coordinate work as necessary.
- 1.3 The broad aim of the scrutiny function is to:
 - help improve services
 - provide an effective challenge to the executive
 - engage members in the development of policies, strategies and plans

- engage the public
- 1.4 The Scrutiny Work Programme is guided by the overriding principle that the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant, focussed on issues of concern, and represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources.
- It also needs to be:
- manageable, realistic and achievable given resources available
 - relevant to council priorities
 - adding value and having maximum impact
 - coordinated and avoid duplication
- 1.5 The work of scrutiny is undertaken primarily in three ways – through the Committee itself, by establishing informal panels or via one-off working groups. Panels and Working Groups would be open to all non-executive councillors - the Committee will determine membership and conveners following expressions of interest.
- 1.6 Scrutiny will regularly send letters to Cabinet Members communicating findings, views and recommendations for improvement and, where appropriate, by producing reports. Inquiry panels will always produce a final report at the end of the inquiry with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers), informed by the evidence gathered. Inquiry panels will reconvene to follow up on the implementation of agreed recommendations and the impact of their work – usually 6-12 months following cabinet decision.
- 1.7 Although much of the work of scrutiny is carried out by informal Panels and Working Groups these meetings are accessible to the public. Agendas, reports and letters relating to all such scrutiny activities are published, in the same manner as the committee, on the Council's modern.gov online platform:
<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

2. Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20

- 2.1.1 The agreed scrutiny work programme for 2019/20 is set out in **Appendix 1**. The following paragraphs break down the work programme by specific ways of working to provide a brief overview.
- 2.2 Scrutiny Programme Committee:
- 2.2.1 The Committee work plan for the year ahead is attached as **Appendix 2**. This should be kept under review to ensure it represents a robust and effective plan. The plan includes a schedule of future Cabinet Member Question & Answer Sessions.
- 2.2.2 Committee members should review and confirm items for the next and future meetings giving specific consideration to who should attend so that meetings are always well planned and prepared for, e.g.

information required and key questions that the Committee wishes to ask.

2.2.3 The main item(s) scheduled for the next Committee meeting on 11 November are:

- Cabinet Member Question Session: Cabinet Member for Children Services - Cllr Elliot King (Early Years - Lead) & Cllr Sam Pritchard (Young People – Lead)
- Children & Young People's Rights Scheme – Compliance and Progress: To discuss annual progress report on implementation of Children & Young People's Rights Scheme, and consider impact.

2.2.4 The Committee should identify specific questions / key themes, which it wishes to cover in the Cabinet Member Q & A session. The Cabinet Portfolio covers the following areas of responsibility:

Early Years	Young People
• Best Start in Life • CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services) • Child & Family Services • Children & Young People (CYP) Chair • Continuum of Care • Corporate Parenting - Lead • Families First • Flying Start • Play Opportunities • Regional Adoption Service • Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy • Safeguarding	• Apprenticeships Support • CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services) • Children & Young People (CYP) Board - Lead • Corporate Parenting Support • NEETS Reduction Support (Not in Education, Employment or Training) • Opportunities for Young People • Promoting Youth Inclusion & Youth Citizenships • Readiness for Work (Support) • Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy • Safeguarding • UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) • YOS (Youth Offending Service) • Youth Services

2.2.5 The Committee will have the opportunity to review priorities and introduce issues of concern as and when they arise, e.g. pre-decision scrutiny or call-in which may require extra meetings.

2.2.6 Pre-decision scrutiny – this is carried out by the Committee unless delegated elsewhere. The Committee is invited to consider the available information on future cabinet business and any opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny, taking into account strategic impact, public interest, and financial implications (see Cabinet Forward Plan attached as **Appendix 3**). Any requests will require discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) to confirm timescales and window of opportunity for scrutiny involvement. Pre-decision scrutiny enables scrutiny to develop

understanding about and ask questions on proposed Cabinet reports to provide 'critical friend' challenge and influence decision-making.

- 2.2.7 **Commissioning Reviews** – it has already been acknowledged that reports about the various commissioning reviews / new cross-cutting reviews that are planned are key cabinet decisions and should be subject to scrutiny. There is a general agreement that all these Reviews will undergo pre-decision scrutiny. This will be carried out via the Committee or relevant Panels as appropriate. Any outstanding reviews and the new cross-cutting reviews will be on the scrutiny radar during the year ahead and scheduled into work plans. Further to Committee discussion on 1 August on emerging proposals, the Housing Commissioning Review final report will be subject of Cabinet decision on 21 November. A special Committee meeting on 18 November could be arranged for pre-decision scrutiny, subject to availability of cabinet report.

2.3 Inquiry Panels:

- 2.3.1 The first task of an Inquiry Panel is to have a briefing on the issue and then determine the key question and terms of reference for the inquiry. Once the planning stage is complete, the inquiry will be evidence gathering, with the last stage being to develop the final report.

In Progress / Planned	Completed (follow up stage)
1. Equalities (final report was presented to Cabinet 19 Sep – response awaited) 2. Procurement (initial meeting arranged for 24 Oct)	1. Regional Working (15 Oct 2019) 2. Natural Environment (tba as part of Performance Panel work plan)

2.4 Performance Panels:

- 2.4.1 The following Performance Panels, which will enable regular and structured monitoring of performance within these key areas, have been agreed and will meet on an ongoing basis until otherwise agreed by the Committee (frequency of meetings in brackets):

Performance Panel	Convener
1. Service Improvement & Finance (monthly) 2. Education (monthly) 3. Adult Services (monthly) 4. Child & Family Services (every two months) 5. Development & Regeneration (every two months) 6. Natural Environment (quarterly)	Cllr. Chris Holley Cllr. Lyndon Jones Cllr. Peter Black Cllr. Paxton Hood-Williams Cllr. Jeff Jones Cllr. Peter Jones

7. Public Services Board (multi-agency) (twice yearly)	Cllr. Mary Jones
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- 2.4.2 Performance Panel conveners are scheduled to provide a regular update to the Committee to enable discussion on key activities and impact.

2.5 Working Groups:

- 2.5.1 The following Working Groups will be convened during the year ahead, in the order shown:

1. Brexit (meeting was held on 23 Sep)	3. Road Safety
2. Staff Health & Wellbeing	4. Digital Inclusion

2.6 Regional Scrutiny:

- 2.6.1 **Education Through Regional Working** - Swansea scrutiny is involved in a regional scrutiny arrangement with the six councils participating in the 'Education Through Regional Working' (ERW) school improvement consortium. A Scrutiny Councillor Group has been in existence since 2016 in order to provide challenge to ERW, coordinate scrutiny work across the region and ensure a consistent approach. The Swansea Scrutiny Team is providing support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW via Service Level Agreement. Swansea is represented by the chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and convener of the Education Performance Panel. The Councillor Group is currently meeting quarterly.

- 2.6.2 **Swansea Bay City Region City Deal** – Swansea scrutiny is also involved in the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee, established during 2018/19. This involves three councillor representatives from each of the four Councils involved in the City Deal, meeting to scrutinise the work of the Joint Committee responsible for delivering the City Deal programme. As per Joint Agreement, the Scrutiny Committee is serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council. The Committee currently appears to be meeting every two months.

3. **Monitoring the Work Programme**

- 3.1 The Committee is responsible for monitoring progress of work undertaken by the informal Panels and Working Groups and findings to ensure that this work is effective and has the required visibility.
- 3.2 **Appendix 4a** provides a timetable of all scrutiny activities (projected or actual where dates are known). Lead councillors and officers are also noted within.
- 3.3 **Appendix 4b** provides a snapshot of progress with all of the Panels and Working Groups established by the Committee and their current position.

4. Scrutiny Support

- 4.1 The Committee should note that one of the Council's Scrutiny Officers is leaving their post from 11 October, however recruitment process is underway to fill the full-time vacant post. This clearly affects capacity to support the scrutiny work programme for the time being.
- 4.2 As a consequence the proposed inquiry on Procurement, and the remaining Working Groups will need to be put on hold, in order to re-direct support to on-going activities. With regard to Procurement, a 'pre-inquiry' meeting has already been arranged for 24 October. We intend to proceed with that meeting as it is an initial briefing on the subject, and will help to define what the focus / scope for any inquiry should be. The work can then be resumed as soon as we are able to do so.
- 4.3 The Scrutiny Team will endeavour to maintain support for, and minimise impact on, planned Performance Panel activities. However, we will need all Conveners and Councillors involved to be mindful of capacity to support meetings, which should be taken into account before planning future work. A member of the Scrutiny Team will be in touch with individual Conveners / Panels to discuss their work and take over support. Lead officers are shown within Appendix 4a (Work Programme Timetable).

5. Public Requests for Scrutiny / Councillor Calls for Action

- 5.1 None.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Any costs that arise out of work plan activities, for example expenses for witnesses or transport costs, are not envisaged to be significant and will be contained within the existing Scrutiny Budget.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Agreed Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Programme Committee Work Plan 2019/20

Appendix 3: Cabinet Forward Plan

Appendix 4a: Scrutiny Work Programme – Projected Timetable of Activity

Appendix 4b: Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups