



## City and County of Swansea

### Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

## Scrutiny Performance Panel – Service Improvement & Finance

**At:** Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

**On:** Tuesday, 14 February 2023

**Time:** 10.00 am

**Convenor:** Councillor Chris Holley OBE

**Membership:**

Councillors: P M Black, R Fogarty, P R Hood-Williams, L James, D H Jenkins, M Jones, J W Jones, M W Locke and B J Rowlands

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### Agenda

### Page No.

**1 Apologies for Absence**

**2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

[www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests)

**3 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

**4 Minutes**

To receive the minutes of the previous meeting(s) and agree as an accurate record.

**1 - 4**

**5 Public Questions**

Questions can be submitted in writing to Scrutiny [scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk) up until noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Written questions take precedence. Public may attend and ask questions in person if time allows. Questions must relate to items on the open part of the agenda and will be dealt with in a 10 minute period.

**6 Pre-Decision Scrutiny of Cabinet Reports: Annual Budget**

*Invited to attend:*

Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy  
Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer

Link to [Cabinet Papers](#) for 16 February 2023 containing the budget papers.

7 Summarising Views for Feedback to Cabinet

8 Work Plan

5 - 7

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, 14 March 2023 at 10.00 am

*Huw Evans*

**Huw Evans  
Head of Democratic Services  
Tuesday, 7 February 2023**

**Contact: Scrutiny Officer**

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**01792 636292**

# Agenda Item 4



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Service Improvement & Finance**

**MS Teams**

**Tuesday, 17 January 2023 at 10.00 am**

**Present:** Councillor C A Holley (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

P M Black  
L James  
M W Locke

**Councillor(s)**

R Fogarty  
D Jenkins  
B J Rowlands

**Councillor(s)**

P R Hood-Williams  
J W Jones

**Cabinet Member(s)**

Cllr Rob Stewart  
(Leader)

Cabinet Member for Economy Finance and Strategy

**Officer(s)**

Martin Nicholls  
Ben Smith  
Richard Rowlands  
Sarah Lackenby  
Marlyn Dickson  
Rachel Percival

Chief Executive  
Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer  
Corporate Performance Manager  
Head of Digital and Customer Services  
Strategic Change Programme Manager  
Scrutiny Officer

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): Matthew Jones

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### **35 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interests were declared:

Rachel Percival - (Item 6) - personal interest, left prior item 6 and re-joined for item 7 onwards.

### **36 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

None

### **37 Minutes**

Minutes of previous meeting were agreed.

### **38 Public Questions**

There were no public questions received.

### **39 Draft Budget Proposals 2022/23 – 2025/26**

Cllr Rob Stewart Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy and Ben Smith the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer attended to give an overview of the draft budget. They talked through the following:

- Formal budget consultations have started and are ongoing.
- Significant cash funding for 23/34 has been agreed but this does not fully cover any pay awards.
- Over £75 million worth of cash sums going in over the next four years into directorate budgets, with more going into central pots but the real terms spending power will still be impacted.
- £15m has been budgeted for energy costs to cover short term inflation cost rises. This will be taken from the Economic Recovery Fund in the short term.
- £22.3 million of cash savings are required from services and a further near £3 million from schools, making £25 million in cash savings required at the moment on the planning assumptions made.
- Current reserves stands at £168m with £40m earmarked estimated spend for the current year and £30m earmarked spend for the coming year.
- Up to 68 full time equivalent roles are at risk with ongoing mitigations to reduce this number.
- The cost implications of the current and forecast pay awards for local government staff and teachers will fall upon the Council.
- Up to £50m future borrowing is forecast. Any borrowing will be delayed until rates of interest are more attractive.
- There is no plan to draw further on the Insurance Fund (£14m) this year especially as Cabinet only recently agreed a major draw in current year. Officers are confident this is well-funded at the present time, based on relevant information and advice.
- There is a current assumption of a 5% rise in Council tax for planning purposes but no decision yet and will only be finalised when all other costs factored in.
- The Fire Authority Levy which is independently set is yet unknown. Early indications are that the levy could rise by between 8% and 17%.

### **40 Q2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23**

Cllr Rob Stewart and Ben Smith talked through the Q2 budget monitoring report for 22/23:

- Quarter 2 Monitoring report demonstrates similar picture to Quarter 1.
- Directors have been requested to avoid overspending and overall there is just under a £3 million overspent forecast however the teachers' pay increase is anticipated at a £3.4 million cost pressure which will be drawn from school reserves ensuring the overall budget balanced.
- There is an under spend on capital financing which is being used to top up the Capital Equalization Reserve.

- There are emerging pressures in housing which will affect the HRA finances.

#### **41 Q2 2022/23 Performance Monitoring Report**

Richard Rowlands Corporate Performance Manager presented the report. It was noted that:

- Out of 27 comparable indicators in the report, 14 showed improvement or maintained performance. Of the remaining 13, 4 showed a decline but within just 5% of the previous result, 2 showed a drop in performance attributable to the effects of the pandemic and 7 showed a drop in performance not related to the pandemic.
- There were 6 new indicators during quarter 2 mainly as the result of the introduction of a new social services performance framework by Welsh Government.
- Safeguarding performance remains strong, but challenges also remain in terms of workforce capacity, which is an issue across health and social care.
- A shift to preventative and well-being approaches is envisaged by the social services well-being act which are yet to be fully embedded due to investment being directed towards health boards. Although the Council is committed to investing in preventative models.
- Education attendance figures have dropped but are within 5% of the previous result. Work is being undertaken by the Education and Skills Corporate Delivery Committee to look at this issue.
- Economy and Infrastructure has seen an improvement compared to the same period last year in the number of projects with social benefit clauses and Beyond Bricks & Mortar in their contracts. There was a slight fall in the % of planning applications determined in 8 weeks due to vacancies within the team.
- In regards to tackling poverty, the processing times for Council tax and housing benefits has dropped. Similarly to last quarter, staff continue to be diverted to administer Welsh Government grants in addition to some loss of staff.
- There is an increase in staff sickness due to the impact from the pandemic and delays to health treatments issues and personal stress.
- Work is underway to seek to develop new climate change and nature indicators aiming to be introduced for the first quarter of next year or as soon as possible thereafter in line with the work needed to define them and ensure data is collectable and reportable.

#### **42 Sustainable Swansea Update**

Martin Nicholls, Chief Executive presented this report. The following was noted:

- Sustainable Swansea has been previously brought to scrutiny and this report covered the remaining outstanding items.
- Sustainable Swansea has delivered close to £70 million worth of savings and contributed to service reform and that some of the reviews highlighted the Council offers competitive services with value for money.
- A number of queries about the report were made in regards to how well the progress made met achieved the intended outcomes. These will be set out in a letter to the Cabinet Member for response.

**43 Letters**

No comments were made on the attached letter to Cabinet Members.

**44 Work Plan 2022/23**

No comments were made on the Work Plan.

The meeting ended at 11.56 am.

**Chair**

# Agenda Item 8

## Service Improvement and Finance – Scrutiny Performance Panel

### Work Plan 2022/23

<p><b>Meeting 1</b> 6 Sep 2022 10am</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Role of the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Panel</b></li> <li>2. <b>Overview: <i>Understanding Financial Reporting</i></b> Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</li> <li>3. <b>Overview: <i>Understanding Performance Monitoring</i></b> Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery and Performance Manager</li> <li>4. <b>Work Plan 2022/23</b> Panel to discuss/agree work plan topics for the coming year.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Meeting 2</b> 4 Oct 2022 10am</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Q1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report – 2022/23</b> <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</li> <li>2. <b>Annual Performance Monitoring Report for 2021/2022</b> <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services &amp; Performance Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery &amp; Performance Manager</li> </ol>
<p><b>Meeting 3</b> 8 Nov 2022 10am</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Review of Revenue Reserves</b> <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</li> <li>2. <b>Annual Review of Performance 2021/2022</b> <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services &amp; Performance Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery &amp; Performance Manager</li> <li>3. <b>Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Performance Report</b> <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Elliott King – Cabinet Member Equalities and Culture Karen Gibbins – Library Services Manager Karen Davies – Principal Librarian</li> <li>4. <b>Welsh Housing Quality Standards Annual Update</b> <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Service Transformation Carol Morgan – Head of Housing and Public Health</li> </ol>
<p><b>Meeting 4</b> 6 Dec 2022 10am</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Mid Term Budget Statement 2022/23</b> <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</li> <li>2. <b>Quarter 1 2022/23 Performance Monitoring Report</b> <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services &amp; Performance Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery &amp; Performance Manager</li> <li>3. <b>Recycling and Landfill - Annual Performance Monitoring 2021/22 and Recycling of Business Waste Briefing</b> <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Cyril Anderson– Cabinet Member Community Services Chris Howell – Head of Waste Management and Parks Matthew Perkins – Group Leader, Waste</li> </ol>

	<p><b>4. Audit Wales Report – “Making Equality Impact Assessments more than just a tick box exercise”</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr Elliot King - Cabinet Member Culture and Equalities  Rhian Millar – Consultation Coordinator  Lee Wenham – Head of Communications and Marketing</p>
<p><b>Meeting 5</b>  17 Jan 2023  10am</p>	<p><b>1. Budget Proposals 2023/24 – 2026/27</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy  Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</p> <p><b>2. Q2 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy  Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</p> <p><b>3. Q2 Performance Monitoring Report 2022/23</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services &amp; Performance  Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery &amp; Performance Manager</p> <p><b>4. Sustainable Swansea Update - Transformational delivery aspects</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr Andrea Lewis – Cabinet Member for Service Transformation  Martin Nicholls – Chief Executive  Sarah Lackenby – Head of Digital and Customer Services  Marlyn Dickson – Strategic Change Programme Manager</p>
<p><b>Meeting 6</b>  14 Feb 2023  10am</p>	<p><b>1. Annual Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan: Pre-Decision Scrutiny</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy  Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</p>
<p><b>Meeting 7</b>  14 Mar 2023  10am</p>	<p><b>1. Q3 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy  Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</p> <p><b>2. Planning Annual Performance Report 2021/22</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Corporate Services &amp; Performance  Phil Holmes – Head of Planning and City Regeneration  Ian Davies - Development Conservation and Design Manager  Tom Evans – Place making and Strategic Planning Manager</p> <p><b>3. Annual Complaints Report</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr Andrea Lewis - Cabinet Member for Service Transformation  Sarah Lackenby – Head of Digital and Customer Services</p>
<p><b>Meeting 8</b>  18 April 2023  10am</p>	<p><b>1. Q3 Performance Monitoring Report 2022/23</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr David Hopkins - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services &amp; Performance  Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery &amp; Performance Manager</p> <p><b>2. Annual Review of Well-being Objectives and Corporate Plan</b>  <i>Invited to attend:</i>  Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy  Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery &amp; Performance Manager</p>



<p><b>Meeting 9</b> 9 May 2023 10am</p>	<p><b>1. Progress update on the Local Government Use of Data Action Plan</b> (delayed due to pandemic impacts / diversion of resources) – tbc</p> <p><b>2. Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021/2022</b></p> <p><i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Elliott King – Cabinet Member Culture and Equalities Cllr Robert Smith – Cabinet Member for Education and Learning Lisa DeBenedictis - Standards Officer</p>
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