



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Multi-Location Meeting - Lilian Hopkin Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 16 April 2024 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

A Davis
W G Lewis

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
F D O'Brien

Councillor(s)

M Jones
S Pritchard

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

Beth Allender Elizabeth Lee

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley L R Jones

Officer(s)

Samantha Jenkins	Democratic Services Officer
Brij Madahar	Scrutiny Team Leader
Debbie Smith	Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Paul Thomas	Community Integration Partnership Manager
Jane Whitmore	Strategic Lead Commissioner (Joint Chair of Safer Swansea Partnership)

Also present:

Councillor Alyson Anthony – Cabinet Member for Wellbeing
Councillor Cyril Anderson – Cabinet Member for Community (Services)
Councillor Hayley Gwilliam – Cabinet Member for Community (Support)
Councillor Rob Stewart – Leader/Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

South Wales Police:

Chief Superintendent Chris Truscott
Superintendent Mark Kavanagh (Joint Chair of Safer Swansea Partnership)
Chief Inspector James Ratti, Community Safety & Partnerships
Jessica Williams – Community Safety Manager

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): V A Holland and T M White
Councillor Co-opted Members: S M Jones

96 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

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

Councillor C A Anderson, M Jones, W G Lewis declared a Personal Interest in Minute 100 – Crime & Disorder Scrutiny – Safer Swansea Community Safety Partnership.

97 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, no declarations of Whipped Votes or Party Whips were declared.

98 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 19 March 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

99 Public Question Time.

None.

100 Crime & Disorder Scrutiny - Safer Swansea Community Safety Partnership.

Representatives from South Wales Police and the Council attended to provide a progress report on Safer Swansea Partnership, and answer questions which both organisations jointly chair.

The Committee was provided with papers reflecting on the performance of the Partnership over the last year to help focus the discussion and questions, and took into account issues raised during the last session in April 2023, including:

- a Safer Swansea Annual Partnership Review 2023 Report (Appendix 1);
- a progress report on Learning from the Mayhill Disturbance, in response to the Independent Learning Review recommendations and the findings of the internal Police Review and actions to address the issues raised (Appendix 2);
- examples of the partnership's approach to Co-production (Appendix 3); and
- an evaluation of Operation Viscaria, a response to incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime within the City Centre (Appendix 4).

Committee questioning and discussions focussed on the following:

- Crime & Disorder Statistics – the rationale for comparing 2023 performance against the 2019/2020 financial year. Noted that data obtained during the COVID lockdown produced false data and it was deemed appropriate to compare the performance data that related to Safer Swansea Partnership Priorities the year prior to lockdown.

- Rape & Other Serious Sexual Offences – data showed an increase in the number of offences. Noted a dedicated Team has been established to deal with rape and other serious sexual offences. The 'One Stop Shop' which involved joint working with third sector organisations, had resulted in South Wales Police having the highest number of charges being brought against offenders and prosecutions in Wales and the second best performance Nationally. This area of work required continual progression and development.
- Reported Drop in Offences – Statistics indicated a significant drop in the number of burglary offences. A comprehensive overview of the process for dealing with a burglary in progress and historic burglaries was provided. A joint scientific unit had been developed with detectives assigned to both types of incidents. South Wales Police were ranked third Nationally in securing prosecutions.
- Car Crimes – whilst car crimes had significantly decreased, a dedicated team had been established to manage the increase in theft of motorcycles.
- Shoplifting/on-line crime – There has been a nationwide increase in both shoplifting and on-line crimes.
- Mental Health – the Committee asked about the local response and any changes to the Police approach. A comprehensive overview was provided regarding the process for prioritising and managing calls relating to mental health. A new system will be in place by February 2025 which will connect people to the correct services to improve outcomes and an update will be provided to the Committee in due course. It was recognised that services for mental health remained a challenge.
- PCSOs – implications on local Crime & Disorder from announced national cuts to PCSO budgets / workforce. Noted that a detailed analysis of ward data is being undertaken. It was not envisaged that there would be redundancies however it was acknowledged that any PCSO's leaving their posts were unlikely to be replaced. The service provided by PCSO's to schools was invaluable, however, funding had now ceased and staff would continue their roles until the conclusion of the academic year.
- Relationship between Neighbourhood Policing 101 & 999 – South Wales Police addressed concerns around the inter-connectivity between these and Councillors not being kept in the loop on issues affecting their areas / residents. They also commented on concern raised regarding reporting gaps between each service leading to some issues not being investigated. It was noted that significant improvements had been made with 92% of calls being answered with the average waiting time of 2.5 minutes. An online chat facility was also available. 2500 calls were received each day and the five stage process for dealing with calls was outlined. An invitation was extended to Councillors to visit the control room in Bridgend, where 101 and 999 calls are handled
- Learning from Mayhill Disorder – Assurances were provided regarding the deployment of resources should a similar situation arise in the future. A series of

test incidents had been trialled and experiences had been gained from the situation in Ely, Cardiff in 2023. Whilst South Wales Police were satisfied with the procedures in place they were not complacent and were working with communities to manage tensions.

- Drugs – the Committee heard about ongoing efforts to disrupt the supply of drugs in the area. There was a discussion around joint working with agencies to manage Mental health links with substance misuse – South Wales Police identified that this was an ongoing challenge and were working together. Noted that an independent Drugs Commission set up to explore the high number of drug-related deaths in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot is expected to report later this year with recommendations.
- High Street – the ongoing challenges in the area were detailed along with the investment in the area. It was noted that a recent news article had reported historic issues associated with the area and was not a reflection of the current situation and ongoing improvements
- Hate Crime – there was a discussion about efforts to tackle hate crime and extremism.

The Chair thanked the Joint Chairs, Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy, Cabinet Member for Wellbeing, Cabinet Member for Community (Support), Officers and Representatives of South Wales Police for their input.

Resolved that the Chair write to the Joint Chairs reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

101 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance (Councillor Chris Holley, Convener).

Councillor C A Holley provided the Committee with a progress report on the work / activities of the Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel.

Resolved that the Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance be noted.

102 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

No changes to report.

103 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Chair presented the regular report on the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/24 which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.

He confirmed that the main items for the next Committee on 14 May comprised:

- 1) Scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board.

- 2) Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2023/24.
- 3) Committee End of Year Review 2023/24.

104 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair referred to the following letters, reflecting on recent Committee Scrutiny activity:

- 1) Committee – Leader Q & A Session – 16 January 2024 - Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Economy, Strategy & Finance (Leader).
- 2) Committee – Follow Up – Road Safety Working Group – 16 January 2024 - Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure.
- 3) Committee - Annual Complaints & Compliments Report 2022/23 – 19 March 2024 - Letter to Cabinet Member for Service Transformation (Deputy Leader).

105 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.

The Chair referred to upcoming Panel/Working Group/Regional Scrutiny meetings, for awareness.

The meeting ended at 5.28 pm

Chair