

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA ON
MONDAY, 11 JULY 2016 AT 4.30 PM**

PRESENT: Councillor M H Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

A C S Colburn
E W Fitzgerald
P R Hood-Williams
D J Lewis

Councillor(s)

D W Cole
T J Hennegan
J W Jones
P M Meara

Councillor(s)

S E Crouch
C A Holley
E J King
G J Tanner

Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley

Co-opted Member(s)

P R Hood-Williams

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden
Brij Madahar
Wendy Parkin

Democratic Services Officer
Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Senior Lawyer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): C Anderson, U C Clay, N J Davies, C R Evans and F M Gordon

24 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL & PREJUDICIAL INTEREST.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

25 **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.

26 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 13 June 2016 be approved as a correct record.

27 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME.**

The Chair reported that questions had been submitted by Mr David Grimsell, on behalf of Friends of Swansea Horses, in writing for Councillor M C Child, Cabinet Member for Wellbeing & Healthy City. The questions related to the recent Tethered Horses Scrutiny Working Group. It was noted that Mr Grimsell was concerned about the amount of horses kept on public spaces, particularly Council land, without authorisation, with many kept tethered and suffering poor welfare. The questions were accompanied by comments about the number of horses that have had to be seized, impounded and destroyed by the Council, and complaints that are made to

the Council about horse welfare and management issues. The questions put to the Cabinet Member were read out by the Chair:

- How is it that the Council presumes to do nothing and to continue with a reactive approach that has proved entirely ineffective in addressing the needs of the horses and the concerns of the community that has allowed these problems to continue year-in year-out without change?
- How is it that it presumes to disregard the recommendations of the 'Tethered Horses Working Group' for fundamental change?

Councillor M C Child, Cabinet Member for Wellbeing & Healthy City gave a verbal response and indicated a full written answer would be sent to Mr Grimsell, and copied to Members of the Committee.

He provided some assurance to the committee that he is keen to meet with all interested groups in order to make progress, but drew attention to financial pressures on the service that may affect possible investment to deal with this issue. Cllr Child pointed out that improved partnership working has already seen a big fall in the number of stray horses having to be put down.

28 **CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR WELLBEING & HEALTHY CITY. (COUNCILLOR MARK CHILD).**

Councillor Child provided opening remarks and information about his Cabinet Portfolio, prior to taking questions from the Committee.

He gave a verbal update to his written submission outlined in the report regarding the following areas within his portfolio:

- Local Area Coordinators – coverage and progress / evaluation
- 'Park Lives' Scheme – encouraging use of parks and participation in activities
- 3G Pitches – delivery of two new all-weather pitches
- Japanese Knotweed – income generated
- Tree Policy – contribution of Scrutiny Working Group looking at Tree Preservation and need to develop a policy
- Best Start in Life Scheme
- Tethered Horses

He then took questions from Committee Members on these and other topic areas including the following areas:

- Use of CCTV / coverage – review of service
- Healthy City Partnership – activities and achievements
- HMO's – impact of new University campus on the east side of Swansea
- Bowling Clubs & Greens – maintenance of unused greens
- Transfer of Assets/Buildings to Community Groups/Transition Funds
- Rationale for council charges for "Friends of Parks" events
- Open Spaces Strategy – survey carried out to influence decisions on future development
- City Centre Development – focus on building design and urban space to ensure healthy / safe access for the public

- Community Volunteers & Groups – advice and support provided
- Anti-Social Behaviour – portfolio responsibilities
- Funding for Community Sports Clubs / Groups
- Challenges for the year ahead

He indicated he would respond in writing to the Committee with information on a number of issues raised.

RESOLVED that the Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member, reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

29 **SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16.**

The Chair presented the Scrutiny Annual Report 2015-2016 for agreement.

The purpose of the report was to:

- highlight the work carried out by scrutiny
- show how scrutiny has made a difference
- support continuous improvement for the scrutiny function

For the fifth year the report is being produced as a simple scorecard. This approach is intended to highlight a small number of key indicators that illustrate four performance questions. These questions, which are intended to reflect a 'results based' approach, are:

- What was the impact of scrutiny?
- How well did we do it?
- How much did scrutiny affect the business of the Council?
- How much scrutiny did we do?

Charts have been added that show comparative data with previous years where available and arrows on the main scorecard have also been added to indicate the direction of change for each measure.

Subject to agreement the annual report would be presented to Council on 28 July 2016.

RESOLVED that the report be **AGREED** and submitted to Council subject to the addition of a thank you to staff supporting the scrutiny process in the Chairs forward.

30 **SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL PROGRESS REPORT - SERVICE IMPROVEMENT & FINANCE. (COUNCILLOR CHRIS HOLLEY, CONVENER)**

Councillor C A Holley, Convener provided an update of the work of the Service Improvement & Finance Panel.

Discussions centred on the following:

- Key issues discussed by the Panel
- Pre decision scrutiny exercise carried out regarding the Waste Management Commissioning Review

- Future topics to be reviewed – Corporate Plan, Further pre decision of Commissioning Reviews, Fees and Charges & Budget

RESOLVED that the report be **NOTED**.

31 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17.**

The Chair presented the proposed work programme, including a plan for future committee meetings, which showed the topics that would be examined by scrutiny through various Panels and Working Groups.

She referred to information about Cabinet Advisory Committee (CAC) work plans which had been provided within the report to ensure awareness and help avoid duplication. Members noted CAC involvement in 'Tacking Poverty' and 'Section 106 Agreements' however were satisfied that that the scrutiny work planned on these issues would not cause any undue duplication.

RESOLVED that the scrutiny work programme as outlined in the report be noted.

32 **MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY PANELS AND WORKING GROUPS.**

The Chair presented a report outlining proposed revisions to the Scrutiny Panel / Working Group Membership.

It was reported that Councillor U C Clay had been appointed as the convenor for the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel, and as such will also be added to the membership of the new Public Services Board Scrutiny Performance Panel, and that Councillor C L Philpott will be re-joining the Schools Performance Panel.

RESOLVED that the above appointments be **ENDORSED**.

33 **SCRUTINY LETTERS.**

The Chair reported the Scrutiny Letters Log and referred to the recent correspondence between Scrutiny and Cabinet Members. This included letters from the Tethered Horses Working Group to the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing & Health City and the subsequent response.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Letters Log be **NOTED**.

34 **FEEDBACK FROM RECENT SCRUTINY EVENTS.**

The Chair referred to the National Municipal Journal Achievement Awards Ceremony on 16 June 2016 which she, Councillor T J Hennegan and Councillor P R Hood-Williams had attended. The Authority had been shortlisted for the Swansea Scrutiny in the Excellence in Governance & Scrutiny category. Although the award was not won members recognised the achievement in being in the shortlist of five councils from across the UK.

Councillors C A Holley and P Hood-Williams also provided feedback on a seminar arranged by the Wales Audit Office on 'The Future of Governance: Effective Decision Making for Current and Future Generations'. This was held on 6 July on Cardiff, and focused on the implications of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act on running, delivering and holding public services to account, and skills and behaviours needed.

35 **UPCOMING SCRUTINY EVENTS.**

The Chair referred to the Poverty Awareness Workshop being held at 4pm on Monday 25 July 2016 in the Civic Centre. The workshop was open to all councillors, but primarily arranged to provide background on the issues to the Tackling Poverty Scrutiny Inquiry Panel prior to their evidence gathering.

36 **AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN. (FOR INFORMATION)**

RESOLVED that the Audit Committee Work Plan be **NOTED**.

37 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2016/17 MUNICIPAL YEAR (ALL AT 4.30 P.M. EXCEPT WHERE NOTED):**

The dates and times of future Committee meetings for the 2016-2017 Municipal Year were **NOTED**.

38 **DATE AND TIME OF UPCOMING PANEL / WORKING GROUP MEETINGS.**

The date and time of upcoming Panel / Working Group meetings were provided for information.

The meeting ended at 5.57 pm

CHAIR