



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Programme Committee

At: Remotely via Microsoft Teams

On: Tuesday, 14 July 2020

Time: 4.00 pm

Chair: Councillor Peter Black CBE

Membership:

Councillors: C Anderson, E W Fitzgerald, L S Gibbard, J A Hale, D W Helliwell, T J Hennegan, P K Jones, E T Kirchner, W G Lewis, G J Tanner, W G Thomas and T M White

Statutory Co-opted Members: D Anderson-Thomas and A Roberts

Councillor Co-opted Members: C A Holley, P R Hood-Williams, L R Jones and J W Jones

Watch Online: <https://bit.ly/38sLQR3>

Agenda

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|----------|---|---------------|
| 1 | Apologies for Absence. | |
| 2 | Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.
www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests | |
| 3 | Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips. | |
| 4 | Minutes.
To approve and sign the Minutes of the previous meeting(s) as a correct record. | 1 - 3 |
| 5 | Public Question Time.
Questions must be submitted in writing, no later than noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Questions must relate to items on the agenda. Questions will be dealt with in a 10 minute period. | |
| 6 | Update on COVID-19 Response and Recovery. | 4 - 15 |
| 7 | Date and Time of Upcoming Panel Meetings. | 16 |

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 18 August 2020 at 4.00 pm

Huw Evans

Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Tuesday, 7 July 2020

Contact: Democratic Services - Tel (01792) 636923

Agenda Item 4



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 16 June 2020 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
J A Hale
P K Jones
G J Tanner

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
D W Helliwell
E T Kirchner
T M White

Councillor(s)

L S Gibbard
T J Hennegan
W G Lewis

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley
P R Hood-Williams

L R Jones
J W Jones

Also Present:

Councillor R C Stewart Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

Officer(s)

Craig Gimblett Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager
Kate Jones Democratic Services Officer
Brij Madahar Scrutiny Team Leader
Martin Nicholls Director of Place
Phil Roberts Chief Executive
Ben Smith Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
Debbie Smith Deputy Chief Legal Officer

132 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

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

Councillor C A Holley - personal - Minute Nos. 88 – Daughter works for Social Services.

133 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.

134 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 9 March 20 and the Minutes of the Special Scrutiny Programme Committees held on the 24 April 20 and 4 June 20 be approved as a correct record.

135 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

136 Council Response to COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy, the Chief Executive, the Director of Place, the Chief Finance Officer and the Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager were present for the Committee's consideration of the Council's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Leader provided a presentation which included: -

- Decision making structure during the crisis
- Rapid redesign of council services
- Supporting our NHS
- Expanding Social Care
- Supporting key workers
- Supporting vulnerable people
- Helping the homeless
- Test Trace Protect
- Meeting the cost of Covid-19

Questions and discussions with the Leader and Officers focused on the following:

- Emergency planning arrangements – Joint working, Strategic command arrangements and South Wales Local Resilience Forum
- Necessary support for asylum seekers and refugees – overcoming restrictions on payments and being able to tailor food packages to suit needs
- No recourse to public funds – an issue buy had not inhibited ability to provide local services to those in need
- Resources needed / potential ongoing requirement for food parcels following the crisis
- Ongoing economic concern and increasing needs
- Homelessness – potential increase during and following the crisis, discussion around refusal to take offer of housing and the Council's 'Housing First' and wrap around support
- Partnership working specifically with business during the crisis and in terms of recovery planning
- City Deal Programme – work has continued and remains ongoing and Welsh Government funding remains unaffected by the crisis
- Lease issues regarding the Bay field hospital which may affect its future use as additional health capacity

- Impact of increased working from home on services and staff – balance benefits of home working with health, safety and wellbeing. Felt to be particularly useful for regional working but recognise limitations
- Review of agile and home working policies and looking at lessons learnt from this period
- Re-commencement of litter picking and recycling centres and impact of restrictions on service
- Financial implications of COVID-19 with both increased costs as well as lost revenue – recovery of costs from Welsh Government
- Ongoing resource / cost for Test, Trace, Protect
- Effect on income from fees, charges and council tax
- Importance of tourism for recovery planning and generating income from tourism – support for tourism
- Improvements and increased engagement with the environment – lessons to be learnt from the crisis
- Action plan for climate change
- Traffic in city centre – investment into metro network and active travel preferred to consideration of congestion charge
- Continued use of the volunteers who have helped the city during the crisis

The Leader outlined his thanks to all Staff, Volunteers, Key Workers, NHS, Councillors, Corporate Management Team, Chief Executive and many others who have worked tirelessly throughout the crisis

The Chief Executive outlined his thanks to all staff and the corporate management team who have all gone above and beyond, working tirelessly to deal with the crisis and maintain services. He also expressed his thanks to the Leader noting the continued progress with the city centre developments alongside dealing with the current crisis.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, outlined his thanks to all staff, the corporate management team and the Leader for the hard work undertaken in responding to this national crisis. He also expressed his thanks to all the Volunteers who have helped across the city.

Resolved that the Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Leader, reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

137 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair presented a report on 'Scrutiny Letters'.

The report was **noted**.

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 July 2020

Update on COVID-19 Response and Recovery

Purpose:	The Committee will receive update on, and discuss, the Council's COVID-19 response and recovery planning with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.
Content:	The Leader of the Council, Cllr. Rob Stewart, and the Chief Executive, Phil Roberts, will report to the Committee. This covering report outlines the broad themes that may be covered by the Committee.
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions, and make comments and recommendations as necessary.
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer:	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Paul Cridland

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee held an initial scrutiny session in June on the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and handling of the crisis. This meeting enabled the Committee to receive information from the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and other senior officers. A copy of the presentation given to the Committee, which provided a high-level overview, is **attached** for information.

- 1.2 Questions were asked around the local experience, operational emergency response, decision-making, partnership working, key actions and impact, costs and resource / financial implications, and the outlook and challenges. The Committee wrote to the Leader of the Council following the meeting on the key findings and its reflections on the discussion. This letter is also **attached**.
- 1.3 The meeting today continues the discussion about the Council response but, will also focus on the recovery planning which the Committee was informed is underway. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Rob Stewart, has been invited to attend, along with the Chief Executive.
- 1.4 The session will be expected to cover:
- Current COVID position
 - Key decisions made by Executive Control Group
 - Developments with Test, Trace & Protect Programme
 - Recovery Planning Timetable / Outline
 - Current challenges

2. Legal Implications

- 2.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

3. Financial Implications


- 3.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

Background Papers: None


Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Presentation shown at Scrutiny Programme Committee 16 June 2020 on Swansea Council's response to Coronavirus

Appendix 2 – Letter to Councillor Rob Stewart dated 29 June 2020



Coronavirus
Swansea Council's Response
#HereforSwansea

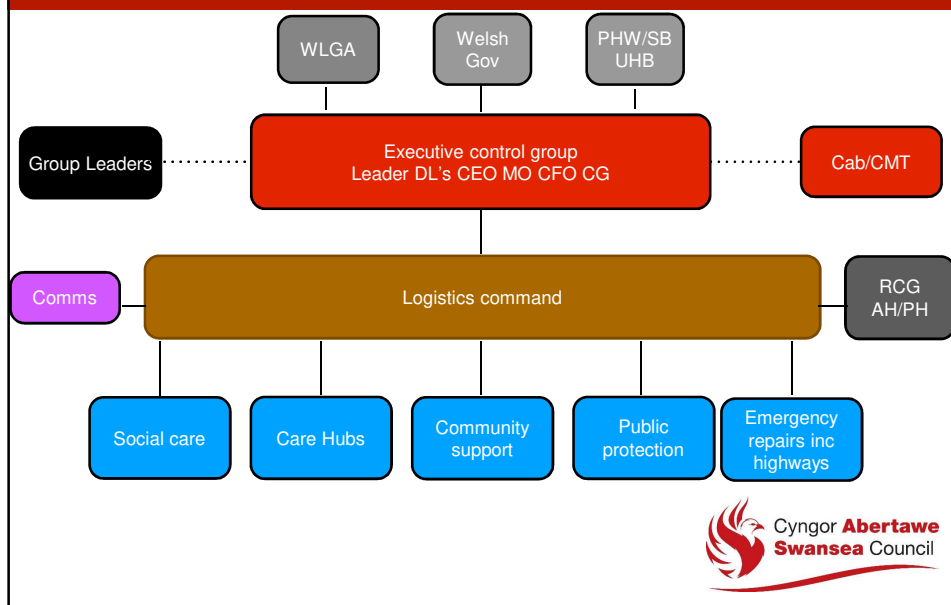


Content

- Decision making structure during the Crisis
- Rapid redesign of council services
- Supporting our NHS
- Expanding Social Care
- Supporting key workers
- Supporting Vulnerable People
- Helping the homeless
- Test Trace Protect
- Meeting the cost of Covid



Decision making during the crisis



Rapid Redesign of council services

- 4500 Council staff moved to work from home using digital technology
- 221 redeployed and over 300 repurposed Council staff into essential / support services
- Non essential services hibernated
- Emergency child care hubs created in 60 school locations
- Free school meals services established
- Social care packages of care reviewed to limit unnecessary contact
- Over 140 extra social care workers available
- 2 additional emergency care centres opened
- PPE supply chains bolstered and new suppliers identified
- PPE supply arrangements established to support all Swansea bay social care locations
- Risk assessments undertaken on essential roles
- 1000 bed surge hospital designed, approved and constructed @ bay studios
- Emergency homeless support established
- Food supply and distribution networks established
- Over 1400 local volunteers recruited
- Shielding support services established including dedicated helpline, food and medicine delivery, local area workers
- Business support grants totaling £47m paid to over 3700 local businesses
- £35m in rate relief to local businesses
- Total so far over £82m to help businesses get through the crisis
- Recovery plans being created

#HereForSwansea

Supporting our NHS - Surge Hospital

- 1000 bed surge hospital created at Swansea Bay studios
- Hospital build Lead and managed by Swansea Council Building Services
- KIER and TRJ were main contractors
- Up to 400 trades on site 24x7 in first 30 days
- First 500 bed phase completed within 35 days
- Full completion in less than 90 days
- Estimated cost £12m-£15m
- Funded by Council Capital equalisation reserve
- SBUHB full repayment due end June 2020
- Thanks recorded for Roy Thomas for agreement to use the site
- Surge hospital has not been required for COVID 19 treatment to date but will be used for Antibody testing
- Longer term use being considered



Expanding Social Care

- 140 extra Social care workers available
- Over 1500 hours made available for community care
- Two additional care locations created in Sketty and Gorseinon
- 140 additional bed spaces made available
- Packages of care reviewed to limit unnecessary external contact
- PPE supply arrangements bolstered with Swansea procuring PPE for Swansea Bay Healthboard Area - Swansea and NPT
- PPE supplies available to independent sector care homes
- Support offered to independent care homes



Supporting Key Workers

- Emergency care hubs established in 60 school locations
- FSM grab and go bag service established
- Food box delivery service established
- BACS payments services established - £39.00 per 2 weeks
- Thanks to heads, teachers, teaching staff and all other staff who helped design and operate this system within 3 days of the lockdown announcement



Supporting Vulnerable People

- Food supply and distribution network established
- Council stepped in to support and expand food bank network
- 8,500 residents identified as part of the Shielding programme
- 2800 residents provided with food box deliveries to shielding and vulnerable people (currently 500 per week)
- Local area coordinator network expanded using redeployed staff to cover all areas of Swansea
- Medicine collection and delivery service established
- Volunteer shopping service established
- Dedicated helpline created - linked to a remote working contact centre



Helping the Homeless

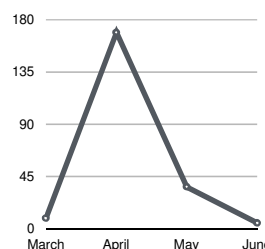
- 'Always a bed' homeless programme in place before the pandemic
- Additional Emergency provision secured for the homeless at start of lockdown
- 70-75 in emergency B&B accommodation
- Between 3-6 people per week have refused emergency help
- Ty Tom Jones reopened to provide additional capacity for homeless provision - 9 households now moved in
- 3 special isolation properties available
- Support for the U.K. Asylum Seeker programme provided - temporary help for over 100 families/individuals
- 20 households identified for Housing First programme



Current Covid position - Swansea

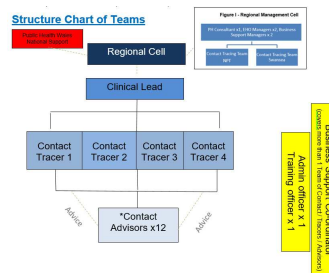
1. Currently Swansea has the lowest rate of positive cases for any large population centre at **518.5** per 100,000 population.
2. **1,278** cases have been confirmed positive across all settings
3. **219** people have confirmed to have died from Covid 19
4. **15.3%** of tests have been found positive, again lower than other population centres.
5. **8,353** tests have been delivered and this continues to increase with the CTU formed at Liberty Stadium in conjunction with SBUHB, providing the largest capacity in Wales (up to 340 physical tests per day) and additional capacity for drive through for home test drop off
6. Bay Field Hospital will commence Antibody testing of Education staff week commencing 15/06/20
7. Mobile Testing Units for Care Homes established and working effectively.

**All correct as of 12th June*



Test Trace Protect - Status

- Test, Trace, Protect strategy is to enhance health surveillance in the community, undertake effective and extensive contact tracing, and support people to self-isolate where required to do so
- A three-tiered approach - national, regional and local
- Based on Swansea Bay Health Board Region
- Responsible for supporting Regional approach and manage local approach
- The aim is to reduce the number of secondary cases
- Virtual Contact centre
- 8 Teams – 139 Staff
- 18th - 29th May 1 Team
- 1st – 7th June 2 Teams
- 8th June (go live) 4 Teams
- 1st July 8 Teams
- Digital first approach through email, text and online
- Non-contact or Complex cases followed up by contract tracing team



Meeting the cost of COVID19

- Budgets significantly flexed - £100m+ revenue / £15m+ capital
- Temporary use of earmarked reserves including contingency – flexing financial muscle
- Claims made monthly to WG for reimbursement
- Cash flow impact – increased spend, lost service & tax income, grant pots from WG mostly in arrears
- Tightly managing cash flow and resource cover daily
- Impact and forecast reported formally at 1st quarter
- Too early to tell longer term effects versus temporary
- Supplementary budget statement made with little negative change for Local Government budgets
- WLGA coordinating claims for lost income replacement funding to WG 'star chamber' - £78m
- Looking at longer term Impacts rest of 21/22 & MTFP
- Business support grants totaling £47m paid to over 3700 local businesses
- £35m in rate relief to local businesses
- Total so far over £82m to help businesses get through the crisis





**To/
Councillor Rob Stewart
Cabinet Member for Economy,
Finance & Strategy (Leader)**

BY EMAIL

cc: Cabinet Members

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Linell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Our Ref
Ein Cyf:*

*Your Ref
Eich Cyf:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Scrutiny

01792 637257

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

SPC/2019-20/16

29 June 2020

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Leader & Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy following the meeting of the Committee on 16 June 2020. It is about the Council response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 16 June

Thank you for attending the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 16 June 2020 to talk to us and answer questions about the Council response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also thank the Chief Executive, Director of Place, Chief Finance Officer, and Emergency Planning lead officer for their contributions to the discussion.

There is of course nothing more important right now than this crisis and I felt it important that scrutiny is able to shine a light on the Council's handling of the crisis, the effects of the pandemic locally, and enable our contribution and perspective on the response to be considered.

Furthermore, I hope that, whatever structures are in place to strategically manage the crisis and develop recovery plans, you can integrate scrutiny with this work. We will of course involve ourselves as we see necessary; however welcome pro-active engagement by the management team with scrutiny to help the Council navigate its way forward.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU
SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE
GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE
www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

This letter reflects on what we learnt from the discussion, shares the views of the Committee, and highlights any outstanding issues / actions for your response. As a recording of the meeting is available on-line it is not necessary for me to repeat everything here, but the main issues are summarised below.

The Committee wanted to take an overview of the Council response and was particularly interested in local experience, operational emergency response, decision-making, partnership working, key actions and impact, costs and resource / financial implications, and the outlook and challenges.

It has clearly been a difficult and challenging time for the Council, however we heard from you and officers at the meeting about the various actions taken and activities the Council has been involved in to deal with the effects of COVID-19 in Swansea. We were struck by how the Council has adapted and realigned services and the workforce to focus efforts on helping to save lives, protect and support the most vulnerable in society (including those shielding, people struggling financially, asylum seekers, refugees, and the homeless), and adhere to national restrictions. We were impressed by the work that has been done and placed on record our thanks and appreciation of everyone involved, not least our brilliant staff and those who have volunteered their time in every community.

Some notable findings from the discussion:

- The Spread of COVID-19 - Swansea has seen a lower rate of infection than similar population centres, reaching a peak in mid-April. The Bay Field Hospital has not yet needed to be utilised to treat COVID-19 patients but will be used for antibody testing, and remains available to support NHS capacity. We noted your offer of a visit for committee members to view the hospital. You supported the continued use of the field hospital beyond the initial 12-month period for whatever use required, as additional health capacity, given the investment and semi-permanent structure in place, subject to lease issues that would need to be resolved by the Welsh Government and Health Board.
- Emergency Management Arrangements - there is an Executive Control Group made up of senior Councillors and officers taking strategic decisions that interfaces with Cabinet, Corporate Management Team, and Group Leaders, and a Logistics Command Group overseeing the running of key services (including Social Care, Child Care Hubs, and Community Support), and taking operational decisions. Our local governance arrangements interface with the regional South Wales Local Resilience Forum, as well as with the Local Health Board / Public Health Wales, the Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association.
- Council Workforce - the majority of Council officers have been able to work from home, facilitated by the Council's agile working programme. Many officers have been re-deployed or job roles re-purposed in order to support the emergency operational response to COVID-19. The ability to hold remote meetings has been a great benefit. The Council will need to

consider the lessons learnt, positives and negatives, from new working arrangements and review existing home-working / agile-working policies to strengthen and facilitate this way of working where it is possible for staff to work away from the office. This should ensure organisation benefits as well as the health, well-being and safety of our workforce, wherever they work from in the future. We felt that issues around lone working and costs borne by staff from home working would need to be part of future discussion. We noted that there are robust risk assessment processes in place to ensure safe working, particular where members of staff may be returning to the civic offices. Workforce planning, and getting the Council's new approach to home-working right, is something of particular interest to the committee.

- Supporting the Vulnerable - there are well-established support networks for those in need, including food / medicine support and Local Area Coordinator provision extended across the whole of Swansea (using redeployed staff) to support people's health and well-being in this crisis. Reliance on the Council for support may continue or even increase beyond the immediate crisis because of the ending of national government support and the economy. We talked about the importance of support for asylum seekers and refugees, a group who are at particular risk and extremely vulnerable. We queried the predicament of those with 'no recourse to public funds' and access to Council and local support. We also discussed the expansion of social care and the extra efforts that have been made to tackle homelessness, and acknowledged difficulties, despite the availability of housing, in the case of a small number of 'hard to reach' people. We hoped that the Council could find a way to maintain and harness the tremendous number of volunteers that have helped our communities during the crisis and been a great asset.
- Council Finances - the Council's financial position is stable however, there is tight management and continued vigilance whilst the crisis is not over. We noted that the Council was expecting full cost recovery of the emergency build of the field hospital at Bay Studios by the end of June. Council spending on COVID-19 and delivery of national schemes (including business support) is supported by Welsh Government grant funding commitments, with claims being made monthly for reimbursement. We discussed issues around loss of service and tax income. We highlighted the value of tourism on the local economy as an important source of recovery that could be exploited further with the dip in international travel. Whilst there are no immediate concerns, it is too early to provide any long-term assessment about the impact of COVID-19. We will be scrutinising upcoming budget monitoring / outturn reports.
- Test, Trace & Protect Service - in partnership with the Health Board, the Council has established teams of officers, from within existing resources, to deliver the Test, Trace & Protect Service. However, recruitment to the service may become necessary as the programme continues and experiences more demand, and existing staff return to their designated jobs.

- Regeneration - work has continued at pace in the City Centre to drive an optimistic future for the city. The Swansea Bay City Region City Deal Programme is unaffected and remains on track.
- Natural Environment - there have been positive impacts on the natural environment and biodiversity. For example, less air pollution from reduced vehicle emissions / travel, reduced grass cutting / weed control, more active travel such as walking / cycling, increased usage of parks and open spaces, and contact with nature / wildlife, etc. We must learn lessons from the experience. We felt the challenge, as we come out of lockdown, would be to ensure these gains are not lost, and the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, as it is being finalised, should benefit from that experience.
- Recovery Planning - as the spread of the virus is coming under control and lockdown restrictions are beginning to ease, including re-opening of businesses, the Council is recovery planning. There is work in progress around business and the economy, workforce, and community support.

To conclude, the Committee praised the Council's leadership and handling of the crisis to date. However, we are keen for further involvement in the ongoing work, particularly around recovery planning, which we hope to be able to influence. This will be the focus of the next Committee meeting in July, and we have invited you and the Chief Executive to attend. We look forward to meeting you then and getting an update on the situation.

Finally, please note that Scrutiny Performance Panels will also begin to meet again, and I expect that these will take the opportunity to explore in greater depth service-specific matters and issues arising from COVID-19, engaging with the relevant Cabinet Members, Directors / Heads of Service.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter useful and would welcome any further comments, however we do not expect you to provide a formal response.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR PETER BLACK

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

✉ cllr.peter.black@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 7

Date and Time of Upcoming Scrutiny Panel Meetings

13 July – 17 August

- a) 13 July at 2.00pm – Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel
- b) 15 July at 2.00pm – Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

Meetings will be held remotely via MS Teams