



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 19 October 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
T J Hennegan
W G Lewis
G J Tanner

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
P K Jones
C E Lloyd
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

D W Helliwell
H Lawson
S Pritchard
T M White

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas A Roberts

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley S M Jones J W Jones
P R Hood-Williams L R Jones

Others Present:

Councillor Rob Stewart Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy
Councillor Andrea Lewis Cabinet Member for Climate & Service Transformation
Councillor Mark Child Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Community Health Services
Paula O'Connor Chair of Governance & Audit Committee

Officer(s)

Marlyn Dickson Strategic Change Programme Manager
Adam Hill Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Resources
David Howes Director of Social Services
Kate Jones Democratic Services Officer
Simon Jones Social Services Strategy and Performance Improvement Officer
Brij Madahar Scrutiny Team Leader
Debbie Smith Deputy Chief Legal Officer

48 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

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

49 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.

50 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on the 14 September 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

51 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

52 Update on 'Swansea - Achieving Better Together' (Recovery & Transformation Plan).

The Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Service Transformation, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Strategic Change Programme Manager were present for the report on 'Swansea – Achieving Better Together'

The Leader thanked all staff for their extraordinary efforts during such a difficult time and noted that the pandemic was still ongoing with 50,000 infections across the UK reported the previous day.

Questions and Discussions focussed on the following: -

- Timeline of the Re-focus Phase – noted fluid plan timelines
- Tangible achievements to date
 - Appointment of Strategic Programme Manager
 - Relaunch of ideas and leadership hubs
 - Updated timetable for the medium term financial plan
 - Renewal of the Agile Working Policy
 - A further 4000 devices had been delivered to schools since April
 - Professional learning programme was in place
 - Prices of free school meals were frozen
 - Continued monitoring of vulnerable children through partnership working
 - Continued provision of services within the care sector and ensuring those services remained resilient
 - Expansion of Local Area Co-ordinators to cover the whole of Swansea
 - Volunteering toolkits and training programme
 - Community calling project - over 162 phones had been delivered to residents
 - Work was ongoing in respect of a project to repurpose ex Civil Service devices for use in schools
 - Transport fund bids had been submitted
 - Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) upgrade in City Centre was progressing
 - Ongoing support for local businesses
 - Safeguarding Jobs – grants from the Local Recovery Fund
 - Supporting local Members priorities through the Recovery Fund
 - Partnership working

- Continued pressure on care services and the local health board from the pandemic, booster vaccinations, flu season, flu jabs, and consequences of Brexit with staffing
- Key targets for the next 7 months
 - Co-production strategy
 - Workforce Strategy
 - Consultation & Engagement Strategy
 - Volunteering Strategy
 - Review of the Corporate Plan
 - Regional Economic Delivery Plan
 - Review of Corporate Joint Committees (CJC's)
 - Continued regeneration
 - Continued partnership working
 - Continue and expand public communications
 - Capitalise on the new Arena
 - Assess financial impact of Covid-19
 - Shape the medium term financial plan
- Comparisons with other Local Authorities - lessons learnt from other authorities and good practices that have been shared
- Recognising and rewarding staff
- Communication with Councillors regarding Economic Recovery Fund applications, Capital Scheme Applications, Play Scheme Application and Recovery Fund applications for community priorities; possibility of streamlining the process Economic Recovery Fund applications, grants to businesses, etc. whilst also complying with the appropriate approval / audit process – noted that programme managers were in place to deliver schemes once approved
- Governance Structure for 'Swansea - Achieving Better Together' and co-ordination / overview of work streams - Integration of Work streams with Policy Development Committees / Member engagement; Reporting Mechanisms – clarity of the reporting process
- Effect of the pandemic on the regeneration projects – It was reported that a few weeks were lost on the Arena development during the first lockdown, practical completion was expected November / December 2021. Recently the impacts of Brexit had effected the availability of labour and materials, but this had been managed well to date. Given the pandemic it was reported that developments had progressed well as listed below
 - Events were on sale for the Arena for 2022
 - Copr Bay Development was making progress
 - Works on the Kingsway had completed
 - Private Schemes such as Mariner Street had continued during the pandemic
 - A contractor had been appointed for the Palace Theatre
 - Works on the former Oceana building would begin shortly

- Preparatory Works would be starting on the Local Services Hub shortly
 - Wind Street was on track for completion in a few weeks
 - The final design for Castle Square was due shortly
 - Work was underway on Penderyn Whiskey Distillery
 - Progress was ongoing with the Skyline Development
 - Progress was ongoing with the tidal lagoon
 - Urban Splash had been appointed in respect of the Civic Centre, St Thomas Station Site and Phase 2 of Copr Bay
- Extent to which the Natural Environment was reflected in the Recovery Plan – told that biodiversity, climate change and natural environment was considered on all work undertaken as well as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 being incorporated into all strategies
 - Local Elections in May 2022 and appointment of a New Chief Executive
 - Update on phase 2 of the City Centre / City Deal – opportunities of working with private developers
 - Future workforce

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Members and Officers.

Resolved that the update be noted, and the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Leader, reflecting the discussions and sharing the views of the Committee.

53 Annual Report - Corporate Safeguarding 2020/21.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Community Health Services, the Director of Social Services and the Social Services Strategy & Programme Improvement Officer were present for the Annual Report – Corporate Safeguarding 2020/21.

Councillor Mark Child gave a verbal address further to the written report provided and highlighted that safeguarding remained a priority and Swansea took the lead in making it a corporate responsibility. He was proud of the way that the Council had responded to safeguarding through the pandemic.

Questions and discussions focussed on: -

- The impact of the pandemic on Adult Services – aim to provide a more preventative approach
- Safeguarding training for Contractors / External Persons / Volunteers - monitoring and recording of training
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy – Improvements on DBS checks for contractors to ensure they were in line with the new DBS Policy and Risk Assessment

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers and looked forward to next years report.

Resolved that the update be noted.

54 Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report 2020-21 & Committee Work Plan (For Information).

The Chair welcomed Paula O'Connor, the Chair of the Council's Governance and Audit Committee, who presented the Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report 2020-21 and Committee Work Plan.

A verbal address was provided further to the written report which highlighted the importance of the both Committees operating in accordance with legislation and terms of reference, and she also referred to implications of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 with new requirements and responsibilities for the Governance and Audit Committee.

The Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee was invited to talk about the relationship between Audit and Scrutiny and importance of close working to ensure mutual awareness of each other's work, avoiding duplication and gaps in work programmes, and referral of issues between Committees. The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee stated that he had similarly addressed the Governance & Audit Committee on 12 October. It was noted that a number of councillors sit on both Committees, which aided the relationship.

The Committee discussed concerns about the new responsibilities of the Governance & Audit Committee around Council performance. The Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee assured the Scrutiny Programme Committee that, whilst it would discharge any legislative requirement around the Council's new performance duties arising from the Local Government & Elections Act, there would be no duplication with scrutiny or involvement in routine performance monitoring that scrutiny would be involved in. She stated that she had been actively seeking advice from officers on this issue to ensure there is clarity around responsibilities between Audit and Scrutiny. She stated that training had also been requested for Governance & Audit Committee members on their new responsibilities.

She reflected on the Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report, noted within significant activities and achievements during the pandemic and difficult period for the Council.

She remarked on the extensive scrutiny work programme and assurance this provided the Governance & Audit Committee.

The Chair thanked Paula O'Connor, and both Committee Chairs indicated that they would be engaged in regular conversation to ensure Scrutiny and Audit were working together effectively. One of the issues currently being discussed was around the systematic reporting of external audit reports, and respective role in considering and monitoring these.

Resolved that the report be noted.

55 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Child & Family Services (Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams, Convener).

Councillor Paxton Hood Williams, Convenor, presented the Child and Family Services Performance Panel Update Report, on key activities and achievements over the last 6 months.

He praised the support that he and the Panel receives from the Scrutiny Officer, and Committee Members joined in thanking the Scrutiny Team for their help and support to Councillors across all scrutiny activities.

Resolved that the update be noted.

56 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

The Chair presented a report on the Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

Resolved that Councillor Wendy Fitzgerald be removed from the Procurement Inquiry Panel.

57 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Chair presented a report on the Scrutiny Work Programme.

It was highlighted that the Adult Services Performance Panel has been adjusted in light of Covid-19 related current pressures within Adult Services. Meetings from October will focus only on how the service is managing those pressures and impact on performance, until otherwise agreed.

It was also noted the Healthy City Working Group would need to be put back to a later date due to pressures on Social Services and the Health Board. The topic of Road Safety, which had been held in reserve, would replace Health City until it was possible to progress. The Road Safety Working Group would, as previously agreed, be convened by Councillor Steve Gallagher.

Resolved that the report be noted.

58 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair presented a report on 'Scrutiny Letters' for information

Councillor Lyndon Jones, Convenor of the Bus Services Working Group, addressed the Committee and highlighted some of the findings from the Working Group meeting, including the following: -

- Regular meetings were needed between Bus Services and Members so that ward members were aware of what is going on in their area.

Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee (19.10.2021) Cont'd

- It was important to hear from people who do not use buses to understand why they do not use the service and what would encourage them to do so.

The Convenor thanked Officers, First Cymru and Cardiff Bus for their work in this and paid particular thanks to bus drivers for their work through the Pandemic.

It was agreed that a further meeting of the Bus Services Working Group be held before the end of the municipal year to enable follow up on the Group's recommendations and see what changes / improvements had been made.

The Chair thanked Councillor Lyndon Jones and the Working Group.

Resolved that the Scrutiny Letters be noted.

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

The dates and times of the upcoming Panel / Working Group meetings were noted.

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm

Chair