

Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups / Regional Scrutiny

1. Inquiry Panels:

These will undertake in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis and will be expected to take around six months to complete to enable wide-ranging evidence gathering, and production of a final report with conclusions and recommendations that will be presented to Cabinet (and / or other decision-makers).

a) **Community Assets** (convener: Cllr Stuart Rice)

Key Question: *How can the Council ensure that its community assets are working to provide the best outcomes for the people of Swansea?*

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Panel have concluded their inquiry and will meet in early November to discuss and agree their final report to Cabinet, which will be submitted to Scrutiny Programme Committee in November and onto the next available Cabinet.

b) **Grants** (convener: Cllr Joe Hale)

Key Question: *to be agreed*

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Committee agreed the membership / convener of the new Inquiry Panel in September. The Inquiry will commence following conclusion of the Community Assets Inquiry. An initial meeting will be arranged for the Councillors to have a briefing on the topic which will help the Panel to consider the focus for the Scrutiny Inquiry and Terms of Reference / Key Question that the Inquiry will explore.

2. Follow Up on Completed Inquiries:

Follow-ups of inquiries will consider both the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and wider impact / difference made. Inquiry Panels are reconvened between 9-12 months after Cabinet decision on Inquiry reports.

Inquiry	Cabinet Decision	Recommendations			Follow Up Panel Meeting
		Agreed	Partly	Not Agreed	
Anti-Social Behaviour	18 Apr 2024	21	1	2	tba

3. Performance Panels:

Performance Panels enable regular and structured in-depth monitoring of performance and challenge within these key areas:

a) **Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

This Panel meets every month. The meeting on 11 June featured two Audit Wales reports, a national report titled “Sustainable development? – making best use of brownfield land and empty buildings” and a local report titled “Use of Performance Information: service user perspectives and outcomes”.

On 6 August the Panel discussed the Annual Revenue Financial Outturn, Revenue Outturn (Housing Revenue Account) and Capital Outturn and Financing for 2023/24 as well as an update on city centre retail.

At the meeting on 10 September the Quarter 4 and End of Year 2023/24 Performance Monitoring Report were brought to the Panel as well as a local Audit Wales Report titled “Springing Forward – Assets”.

On 8 October the Panel reviewed the first quarter Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report and Performance Monitoring Report of 2024/25. There was also an update on 71-72 The Kingsway and the Panel reviewed the Annual Review of Performance 2023/24 before it goes to Council later in the year. The next meeting takes place on 5 November.

b) **Education** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

This Panel meets every month. A detailed progress report appears under Agenda Item 8.

c) **Adult Services** (convener: Cllr Susan Jones)

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At its meeting on 9 July the Panel discussed the latest Performance Monitoring Report and received a verbal briefing on the CIW Inspection of Adult Services. The Panel also discussed the Role of the Panel and the draft Work Plan 2024-25.

At its last meeting on 10 September the Panel received an update on progress following the Audit Wales Report 'A Missed Opportunity' Social Enterprises, and it received a full briefing on the CIW Inspection of Adult Services including the Action Plan. The Panel was also briefed on Residential Care.

The Panel will next meet on 29 October when it will look at Implementation of the Regional Partnership Board's Mental Health Strategy and receive an update on Local Area Coordination including the Impact Report for 2023-24.

d) Child & Family Services (convener: Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams)

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At its meeting on 24 June the Panel discussed Delivery of the Corporate Priorities/Policy Commitments in relation to Child and Family Services and received a briefing on the CIW Inspection Reports for Ty Nant and Heol Tir Du. The Panel also discussed the draft Work Plan 2024-25.

At its last meeting on 12 September the Panel received the Annual Wellbeing/Performance Report and discussed Respite and Short Break Provision.

At its next meeting on 12 November the Panel will receive an update from the Regional Safeguarding Board and discuss the Safeguarding Quality Unit Annual Report.

e) Climate Change & Nature (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

This Panel meets every two months. At its meeting on 16 July the Panel appointed a new Chair and discussed the draft Work Plan 2024-25.

At its meeting on 17 September the Panel discussed Planning Enforcement in relation to Nature and Biodiversity.

The Panel will next meet on 19 November and will receive a briefing on the new Waste Strategy / Recycling and will discuss Water Quality, Management and Pollution Control.

4. Regional Scrutiny:

This is collaborative Scrutiny with other Local Authorities for topics / issues of shared interest or concern, and models of regional working.

a) Partneriaeth - Regional Education Partnership

Partneriaeth Scrutiny is expected to take place every school term, mirroring meetings of the Partneriaeth Joint Committee.

They met on the 24 June where they spoke to the Chair of the Partneriaeth Joint Committee and Directors of the three local authorities to seek reassurance and to consider if Partneriaeth is operating according to the Legal Agreement, its Business Plan and its timetable is being managed effectively. They also looked at the risk profile and progress with supporting the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales. The next meeting has been scheduled for the 18 November 2024.

b) Swansea Bay City Region City Deal

The Joint Scrutiny Committee usually meets every two months. As well as overall programme / project monitoring including the latest financial position, the meeting on 25 June included specific update on the 'Homes as Power Stations' project. The Committee also considered a 'Assurance & Risk Assessment' report from Audit Wales which looked at the effectiveness of the City deal's existing management arrangements and how it supports the effective & efficient delivery of the City deal portfolio.

The last meeting took place on 8 October to consider the Swansea Bay City Deal Annual Report; Pre-Audit Annual Statement of Accounts and a Construction Impact Assessment Review Report. The next meeting is planned for 13 January 2025 (moved from December).

The Joint Scrutiny Committee is supported by Scrutiny Officers in Neath Port Talbot Council and agendas / minutes of meetings can be found on-line:

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=417>

c) South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

The CJC Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee will meet at least quarterly. The meeting on 16 July featured discussion on the South West Wales Regional Transport Plan, and the Corporate Plan 2023-2028 / Well-being Objectives for 2024/25 that will be delivered by the CJC. The last meeting on 3 September considered the Quarter 1 Financial Monitoring report; update on the progress with the Regional Transport Plan; and update on the development of the Joint Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy that will inform the Regional Strategic Equality Plan (SEP).

A meeting is planned for 14 October to receive the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee Annual Performance Report 2023/24. The Scrutiny Committee will also see the items being considered by the CJC meeting on 22 October including budget / financial monitoring information, and progress on Regional Transport and Regional Energy Policy.

The Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee is supported by Scrutiny Officers in Neath Port Talbot Council and agendas / minutes of meetings can be found on-line:

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=499>

5. Working Groups:

A number of topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Working Groups. These enable a 'light-touch' approach to specific topics of concern and will be planned as a one-off meeting, progressed one at a time, primarily involving discussion with relevant Cabinet Member(s) / officer(s), and any other persons called, to gather information, ask questions, and give views / raise any concerns.

a) **Empty Properties** (convener: Councillor Francesca O'Brien)

This will enable focussed questioning & discussion on what's being done to help bring empty properties back into use / repurposed; enforcement; given housing needs what steps are being taken to bring empty properties back into use, etc.

b) **Public Engagement** (convener: to be agreed)

This will enable focussed questioning & discussion, examination / evaluation of existing approaches to public engagement and how we can improve so that we reach all parts of society; evaluation of Council's resident's survey etc..

c) **Agile Working** (convener: to be agreed)

This will enable focussed questioning & discussion on the evaluation of 'success' of agile working policy incl. working from home; how the council is managing its staff post pandemic; impact on Council performance / efficiency; implications on Council's accommodation strategy; impact on staff well-being / morale; permanence of situation / future direction, etc.

d) **Trees** (convener: Councillor Peter May)

This will enable focussed questioning & discussion on tree services, management and development; tree planting strategy; tree protection orders; tree inspection programme; role and responsibility of the Council and landowners; tree maintenance – capacity to look after the many trees the Council has planted; opportunities / spaces for rewilding / tree planting, ash dieback issue, etc.