

**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 response of Cabinet to the recommendations resulting from the inquiry were presented to the Cabinet meeting on the 20 March 2025. 11 of the 14 recommendations were agreed by Cabinet and an action plan to take these forward will be developed and progress on that will be discussed at an Inquiry Panel meeting in 9-12 months.

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

Key Question: *How can the Council ensure that the grants it receives are working to provide the best outcomes for the people of Swansea?*

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Committee agreed the membership / convener of the new Inquiry Panel in September. An initial meeting took place 27 January where Councillors had a briefing on the topic, helping the Panel to consider the focus for the Scrutiny Inquiry and Terms of Reference / Key Question that the Inquiry will explore. Based on the discussion, agreed Terms of Reference and the plan for evidence gathering will be reported to the next Panel meeting.

The first evidence gathering session on the 19 May will be looking at those grants received by the Education Directorate.

## 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	13 March 2025 *MONITORING COMPLETE*

## 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. A detailed progress report on the Panel's work appears in the agenda under Item 7.

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

This Panel meets every month. A detailed progress report on the Panel's work appears in the agenda under Item 7.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At the next meeting on 7 May the Panel will receive an update on West Glamorgan Transformation Programme and discuss the latest Performance Monitoring Report. The Panel will also look at delivery of corporate priorities/policy commitments in relation to Adult Services.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At its next meeting on 1 April the Panel will receive an update on CAMHS from the Health Board, discuss the latest Performance Monitoring Report and look at delivery of Corporate Priorities / Policy Commitments in relation to Child and Family Services.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The meeting on 18 March looked at the Asset Management Strategy in terms of Decarbonisation, received an annual update on Local Flood Risk Management and discussed Air Quality Management.

The meeting on 13 May will receive an update on Climate Change, discuss the Local Nature Recovery Section 6 Action Plan and receive an update on achievement against Corporate Priorities and Policy Commitments.

#### 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) **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 18 March 2025 included an update on the review of the Construction Impact Assessment Report; an update on the current situation with City Deal portfolio private sector investment and contributions; and discussion on the future role of the Programme/Portfolio Management Office.

Meetings for the 2025/26 municipal year are to be confirmed.

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?Committeed=417>

##### b) **South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

The CJC Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee will meet at least quarterly.

The last meeting on 11 March included: Sub-Committee Update – Economic Wellbeing and Economic Development; General Progress Report on the Corporate Joint Committee for 2024-25; and Draft Corporate Plan 2023-2028.

Meetings for the 2025/26 municipal year are to be confirmed.

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?Committeed=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) **Agile Working** (convener: Councillor Stuart Rice)

This Working Group took place on 20 January 2025 looking at the evaluation of the '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. It considered the impact on costs, any impacts on productivity including contacting Council staff; the effect on building occupancy (currently and in the future). Also, data from the staff feedback survey, that gives any indication to the impact of agile working on staff, or and available data that gives an indication to the impact on the public.

The Working Group wrote to the Cabinet Member following the meeting with its findings, conclusions and recommendations and received a response to their letter on 24 February. A summary was provided to the Scrutiny Programme Committee in March. The Committee will follow up on this Working Group during 2025/26.

### b) **Public Engagement** (convener: Councillor Lyndon Jones)

This Working Group took place on 5 February 2025 looking at 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. A representative from Mid and West Wales Fire Service also attended to discuss their recent experience with engaging the public.

The Working Group wrote to the Cabinet Member following the meeting with its findings, conclusions and recommendations and received a response to their letter on 19 March. A summary has been provided for this meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Committee including items for follow up (see Item 10 – Scrutiny Letters).

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

This Working Group took place on 25 March 2025. It enabled 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. Findings, conclusions and recommendations arising from this activity will be reported to the Committee in due course.

d) **Tree Services** (convener: Councillor Peter May)

This Working Group will take place on 19 May 2025. This will enable focussed questioning & discussion on the Councils roles and responsibilities to tree maintenance and the tree planting strategy.