

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 12 October 2015

CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION

Purpose	To enable the committee to question Cabinet Members on their work. The committee's questions will broadly explore priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to areas of responsibility.
Content	The following Cabinet Member will appear before the committee to participate in a question and answer session: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Jennifer Raynor – Cabinet Member for Education
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question the Cabinet Member on relevant matters• Make comments and recommendations as necessary
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer(s)	Dean Taylor, Director – Corporate Services
Report Author	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Coordinator Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 One of the most important roles that scrutiny carries out is holding the council's cabinet to account. The cabinet is made up of the Leader and 9 additional councillors, appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific responsibilities.
- 1.2 By acting as a 'critical friend' scrutiny has the opportunity to challenge the cabinet and individual cabinet members on their actions and monitor performance in relation to their areas of responsibilities.
- 1.3 Cabinet Member Question Sessions have become a feature of committee meetings over the past 2 years. At least one cabinet member is scheduled to appear at each committee meeting, ensuring all 10 Cabinet Members appear before the committee over the course of a year, in order to ask questions on their work. Questions will focus on their priorities, actions, achievements and impact.

2. Cabinet Member Question Session – 12 October

2.1 The following Cabinet Member will appear before the committee:

a) Councillor Jennifer Raynor – Cabinet Member for Education

Within this Cabinet portfolio, Councillor Raynor is responsible for:

- a. Inclusion & Learner Support;
- b. School Improvement;
- c. Planning & Resources;
- d. Schools;
- e. City of Learning;
- f. Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS);
- g. Education Regional Working (ERW);
- h. Schools' Organisation & Performance;
- i. Quality in Education (QEd) Programme;
- j. Education Charter;
- k. Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea

2.2 The Cabinet Member has provided some 'headlines' in relation to her portfolio objectives to help the committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact (see **Appendix 1**).

3. Approach to Questions

3.1 At the Cabinet Member Question Sessions the committee will generally ask cabinet members about:

- priorities / objectives
- specific activities and achievements, progress against policy commitments, key decisions taken, and impact / difference made
- headlines on the performance of services and the key targets monitored to measure improvement and success
- their engagement with service users / public and what influence this has had
- what they hope to achieve over the next 12 months and challenges (e.g. resources / budget)
- key decisions they are expecting to take to Cabinet over the next year
- interactions with scrutiny over the last year, and whether there is any specific scrutiny activity they would welcome

3.2 Cabinet Members will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the committee. Following the session the chair will write to the Cabinet Member in order to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the committee, and any actions for the Cabinet Member to consider.

- 3.3 If the committee wishes to conduct more detailed scrutiny of any of the issues raised during this item then this should be agreed through the normal work planning process and planned for a future meeting. This will also allow proper time for preparation.

4. Previous Correspondence with Councillor Raynor

- 4.1 The committee last met with Councillor Raynor in December 2014.

Amongst the issues discussed with her over the last year included:

- Quality in Education (QEd) 2020 Review
- School Land Sales
- Childhood Obesity
- School Surplus Places
- School Performance

The committee may wish to follow up on these issues, as necessary.

5. Other Questions

- 5.1 For each Cabinet Member Q & A Sessions the committee invites members of the public and other scrutiny councillors (not on the committee) to suggest questions.

Based on a number of questions received on the same topic the following will be asked:

- Can the Cabinet Member advise the committee on the current position with regard to the proposed new primary school in Gorseinon at Parc Y Werin. It would be helpful if you could inform the committee of the rationale for the project, options considered, and how public views have influenced the decision?

- 5.2 A number of questions were also received about the Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) service. However a Cabinet report is expected shortly on the future of the EOTAS service and it has been agreed that the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel will undertake pre-decision scrutiny of this report and proposed Cabinet decision. A date for the Panel meeting is being arranged. The questions received from members of the public will be forwarded on to the Scrutiny Panel who will consider how these can be dealt with.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

Legal Officer: Wendy Parkin

Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley