

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 March 2016

SCRUTINY LETTERS

Purpose	To ensure the committee is aware of the scrutiny letters produced following various scrutiny activities, and to track responses to date.
Content	The report includes a log of scrutiny letters produced this year and provides a copy of correspondence between scrutiny and cabinet members, where discussion is required.
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the scrutiny letters and responses – a request for further scrutiny in relation to Local Flood Risk Management is presented for the committee's approval• Make comments, observations and recommendations as necessary
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer(s)	Dean Taylor, Director – Corporate Services
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The production of scrutiny letters has become an established part of the way scrutiny operates in Swansea. Letters from the chair (or conveners) allow scrutiny to communicate directly and quickly with relevant cabinet members.
- 1.2 These letters are used to convey views and conclusions about particular issues discussed and provide the opportunity to raise concerns, ask for further information, and make recommendations. This enables scrutiny to engage with Cabinet Members on a regular and structured basis.

2. Reporting of Letters

- 2.1 All scrutiny letters, whether they are written by the Programme Committee or conveners of panels / working groups, are published on the Council's website (<http://swansea.gov.uk/scrutinypublications>) to

ensure visibility, of the outcomes from meetings, across the council and public.

- 2.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee agenda also includes a copy of letters to/from Cabinet Members where specific discussion is required. Letters are included where cabinet member responses were awaited and have now been received or where a scrutiny letter did not require a response.
- 2.3 Letters relating to the work of Performance Panels are part of an ongoing dialogue with Cabinet Members and are therefore reported back and monitored by each Panel. However the convener will provide a quarterly progress report to the committee, including summary of correspondence with Cabinet Members and outcomes.

3. Letters Log

- 3.1 As the current municipal year progresses this report will contain a log of scrutiny letters produced to enable the committee to maintain an overview of letters activity over the year – see **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The following letter(s) are also attached for discussion:

	Activity	Meeting Date	Correspondence
a	Local Flood Risk Management Working Group	14 Dec	Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport
b	Committee Cabinet Member Q & A	11 Jan	Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Anti-Poverty

- 3.3 The Local Flood Risk Management Working Group recommends that the Working Group meets annually to monitor and review the progress of the Flood Risk Management Plan, including scrutinising and assessing the progress of the priority measures and to consider the Flood Risk Maps in more detail. It also expects scrutiny to be involved in the 6 year review of the Plan. The Cabinet Member also welcomes further involvement in meeting annually to monitor and review the progress of the Plan.

The committee is asked to agree to include this in the scrutiny work programme.

- 3.4 Where requested Cabinet Members are expected to respond in writing to scrutiny letters within 21 calendar days. The response should indicate what action (if any) they intend to take as a result of the views and recommendations made. For this municipal year the letters log now shows the average time taken by Cabinet Members to respond to scrutiny letters.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

Background Papers: None

Legal Officer: Wendy Parkin

Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley