

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 11 April 2016

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

Purpose	This report reviews the current scrutiny work programme.
Content	The current work programme is described, including the plan for future committee meetings, and progress of panels and working groups.
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• accept or make changes to the scrutiny work programme• approve the establishment of an Adult Social Services Performance Panel (<i>see para. 2.2.3</i>)• plan for the committee meetings ahead• review progress of established panels and working groups• consider opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny
Lead Councillor	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair
Lead Officer	Dean Taylor, Director – Corporate Services
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for developing the Council's scrutiny work programme and managing the overall work of scrutiny to ensure that it is as effective as possible.

1.2 The work of scrutiny aims to:

- help improve services
- provide an effective challenge to the executive
- engage members in the development of policies, strategies and plans
- engage the public

1.3 The Scrutiny Work Programme is guided by the overriding principle that the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant, focussed on issues of concern, and represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources.

It also needs to be:

- manageable, realistic and achievable given resources available
- relevant to council priorities
- adding value and having maximum impact
- coordinated and avoid duplication

- 1.4 The work of scrutiny is undertaken primarily in three ways – through the committee itself, by establishing informal panels or via one-off working groups.
- 1.5 Scrutiny will regularly send letters to Cabinet Members communicating findings, views and recommendations for improvement and, where appropriate, by producing reports. Inquiry panels will produce a final report at the end of the inquiry with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers), informed by the evidence gathered. Inquiry panels will reconvene to follow up on the implementation of agreed recommendations and the impact of their work – usually 6-12 months following cabinet decision.
- 1.6 Although much of the work of scrutiny is carried out by informal panels and working groups these meetings are accessible to the public. Agendas, reports and letters relating to all scrutiny activities are published on-line: <http://swansea.gov.uk/scrutinypublications>.

2. Scrutiny Work Programme

2.1 Scrutiny Programme Committee:

- 2.1.1 The committee's work plan for the year ahead is attached as **Appendix 1**. This includes a schedule of future Cabinet Member Question & Answer Sessions. This should be kept under review to ensure it represents a robust and effective plan.
- 2.1.2 Committee members should review and confirm items for the next and future meetings giving specific consideration to who should attend so that meetings are always well planned and prepared for, e.g. information required and key questions that the committee wishes to ask. The committee will have the opportunity to review priorities and introduce issues of concern as and when they arise, e.g. pre-decision scrutiny which may require extra meetings.
- 2.1.3 Pre-decision scrutiny – the committee is invited to consider the available information on future cabinet business (see Forward Look attached as **Appendix 2**) and any opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny, taking into account strategic impact, public interest, and financial implications. Any requests will require discussion with relevant Cabinet Member(s) to confirm timescales and window of opportunity for scrutiny involvement. Pre-decision scrutiny enables scrutiny to develop

understanding about and ask questions on proposed Cabinet reports to provide 'critical friend' challenge and influence decision-making.

2.1.4 Committee Review - the review of the Gypsy & Traveller Site Search Process (commenced in February 2014) has now concluded with a report that was presented to Cabinet on 17 February. A Cabinet decision is expected in the next two months and a follow up on implementation of the learning points / recommendations will be scheduled in the committee's work plan in due course.

2.2 Panels and Working Groups:

2.2.1 **Appendix 3a & 3b** provide a snapshot of progress with the informal panels and working groups established by the committee to carry out specific activities and their current position.

2.2.2 For further information a contact list for lead scrutiny members and officers is also contained in **Appendix 4**.

2.2.3 Transformation of Adult Social Services Panel (TASS)

The TASS Panel is holding its final meeting on 4 April. It will agree its final letter to the Cabinet Member which will contain the Panel's key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The Panel was established in August 2014 to look at the TASS Programme and change process and provide critical friend challenge to the proposed or anticipated improvements. It was agreed by the Committee that as the work of the Panel and specific focus on TASS comes to an end it would be set up as an Adult Social Services Performance Panel.

The Committee is asked to confirm the establishment of an Adult Social Services Performance Panel and approve Terms of Reference (**Appendix 5**). Whilst it is anticipated that members of the TASS Panel will want to participate it is timely to review membership and invite expressions of interest from all scrutiny councillors. Proposals for membership (including convener) will then be reported back to the Committee for agreement.

3. **Public Requests for Scrutiny / Councillor Calls for Action**

3.1 The Annual Scrutiny Survey was issued at the end of February and invites, amongst other things, all councillors, staff, partners, and members of the public to suggest topics for the scrutiny work programme. The results of the survey will be shared with the committee once available and topic suggestions will be fed into the Annual Scrutiny Work Planning Conference taking place on 12 May 2016.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Any costs that arise out of work plan activities, for example expenses for witnesses or transport costs, are not envisaged to be significant and will be contained within the existing scrutiny budget.

5. Legal Implications

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

Background papers: None

Legal Officer: Wendy Parkin

Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Committee Work Plan 2015/16

Appendix 2: Forward Look (Cabinet Business)

Appendix 3a: Overall Scrutiny Work Programme Timetable 2015/16

Appendix 3b: Progress of Panels and Working Groups

Appendix 4: Scrutiny Councillor / Officer Leads

Appendix 5: Draft Terms of Reference – Adult Social Services Scrutiny Performance Panel