

Annual Stakeholder Survey
2016
Councillors

1.0	Introduction					
1.1	All councillors and co-opted members received a copy of the annual stakeholder survey. 42 completed the survey. The results were analysed and the results were as follows.					
1.2	<p>1. Are you a:</p> <p>Councillor – Cabinet Member - 16.7% (7) Councillor – Non Executive Member - 78.6% (33) Co-opted Members – 4.8% (2)</p>					
2.0	Scrutiny Arrangements					
2.1	2. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements:					
		Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
	a. I have a good understanding of the work of scrutiny.	45.2% (19)	47.6% (20)	7.1% (3)	0.0%(0)	0.0%(0)
	b. The scrutiny arrangements are working well.	14.6% (6)	68.3% (28)	9.8% (4)	0.0%	7.3%(3)
	c. The work of scrutiny is councillor-led	33.3% (14)	57.1% (24)	7.1% (3)	0.0%	2.4% (1)
	d. Scrutiny works in a cross cutting fashion and not restricted to departmental silos.	33.3% (14)	47.6% (20)	16.7% (7)	0.0%	2.4% (1)
	e. Non-executive members have good opportunities to participate in scrutiny.	58.5% (24)	34.1% (14)	4.9% (2)	2.4% (1)	0.0%
	f. The Scrutiny Work Programme balances community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance.	26.2% (11)	47.6% (20)	16.7% (7)	2.4% (1)	7.1% (3)
2.2	3. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements:					
		Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
	a. Scrutiny has the officer support it needs to be effective	45.2% (19)	42.9% (18)	7.1% (3)	0.0%	4.8% (2)
	b. Scrutiny activities are well planned.	35.7% (15)	50.0% (21)	11.9% (5)	0.0%	2.4% (1)
	c. Scrutiny provides regular challenge to decision-makers	28.6% (12)	47.6% (20)	16.7% (7)	2.4% (1)	4.8% (2)
	d. Scrutiny is an important council mechanism for	38.1% (16)	38.1% (16)	23.8% (10)	0.0%	0.0%

	community engagement					
	e. Scrutiny has a positive impact on the business of the Council	31.0% (13)	45.2% (19)	16.7% (7)	2.4% (1)	4.8% (2)
	f. Scrutiny Councillors have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively	23.8% (10)	61.9% (26)	4.8% (2)	0.0%	9.5% (4)
3.0	Officer Support					
3.1	<p>4. How would you rate the level of support you receive from the scrutiny team?</p> <p>Excellent - 33.3% (14) Very good – 47.6% (20) Good – 7.1% (3) Satisfactory – 11.9% (5) Poor – 0.0%</p> <p>5. How could the scrutiny support be improved? The comments received were analysed and the following themes emerged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication should be ongoing not just before and after a meeting • Papers or emails with the agenda papers should be sent out sooner • Working well no need for changes • Have more scrutiny officers to cope with the work load. Some panels have very in-depth topics which take a lot of time. • Make work the work of scrutiny more widely known and implement its findings. • Improved research into scrutiny topic areas. • It needs to be councillor led, however councillors are not always the best to decide, officers need the power to suggest, guide and advise. • More involvement with officers on the ground - not only managers • Standardise the format of reports (and supply a template for presenters to use) • Activities/Meetings mainly take place in the daytime. 					
4.0	Training & Development					
4.1	<p>6. Do you have any training and development needs that you feel would assist you in your role as a Scrutiny Committee/Panel member?</p> <p>Yes I do have training and development needs - 21.4% (9) I am ok at the moment but I would like to receive information on any future opportunities - 61.9% (26) No I do not have any training and development needs – 16.7% (7)</p> <p>7. If you do have any training and development needs? Please give further detail below.</p> <p>The following comment was received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like proper training if possible shadow a more experienced councillor 					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a co-opted member I feel that I am not always aware of the bigger picture to fully participate in some debates. • Anything I can learn about scrutiny of education from other sources, for example sharing of practice with other local authorities or Welsh Government scrutiny of education matters. • I'd like to know more about the legal aspect of the extent to which scrutiny work in relation to Cabinet Members. • Just need to know a bit more of the way the council works. • IT training
5.0	Suggestions for the Scrutiny Work Programme
5.1	<p>8. Do you have any suggestions of topics for possible in-depth inquiry?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process by which the key corporate objectives are a) determined b) monitored and c) altered to reflect changed circumstances ought to be reviewed to see if it is i) sufficiently dynamic to respond to new in-year circumstances ii) fully compatible with the Cabinet system of governance. My experience suggests that the current arrangements are centred around the tasks set for the Chief Executive by the Remuneration committee - which in turn are cascaded down the officer hierarchy - but without, it seems, any involvement of the cabinet members charged with delivering key programmes. • Relationship with outside bodies, this could become a hot topic as inevitably things that used to be done in house are contracted out or taken over by community groups charities. • A review of the scrutiny arrangements and evaluation of the impact of scrutiny on council decisions? • Education SLAs to schools - are they value for money? • How effective are the Cabinet Advisory committees? A great deal of resource has been allocated to this, at the expense of scrutiny, and we need to check if this is good value and whether it undermines the scrutiny process? • Local authority governors - maximising the potential of this resource in school effectiveness. • The planning committee is small and most members would like to have a look at how it is working with the public and developers. • Trafficked overseas working • Swansea city council a paperless authority • Corporate Building Services (2) • More on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services • Highways, roads, street maintenance, streetscene. (2) • Anti - poverty outcomes • Commercialism • The complaints procedure • Implementation of the Welsh Language Act and Welsh Language Standards. This is an important area of legislation with the standards due to be introduced shortly. • Provision of affordable housing across Swansea. • Preparations for/understanding of wellbeing and future generations act. Are we narrowing the gap? If prevention is better than care, do we have the correct balance of resources? • We look at the needs of the children and at child abuse. I think we tend to see child abuse as a young person and an older person. I think we need to look at

	abuse that happens where both are of similar age e.g. 14+ and a boy of 16+.
5.2	<p>9. Do you have any suggestions of service areas that may require in-depth performance/financial monitoring?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter agency working with the NHS to increase jointly provided / jointly funded services. • Central services such as finance and HR because they have been at the centre of recent activities and we need to assess their effectiveness in achieving staffing and financial reductions. • Adult Services (2) • Highways maintenance • Dog fouling • Corporate Building Services, Examine Gold, silver and bronze service - do we get what we pay for? • None of the panels I have sat on look at financial aspects at any depth. Even when the budget is looked at by Service Improvement and Finance Panel, detailed figures are not available. • Transfer of community assets and their pit falls. • Possibly a discrete panel following on from the CAMHS inquiry as we haven't yet reached our conclusions. It is difficult to say but I feel there may be some issues that may need to be addressed. • WHQS and how the work has been carried out and the financial costs and implication. • I think the important areas are being covered but there will be opportunities for scrutiny to be involved in future commissioning reviews. • Estates, are landsales maximising profit or meeting corporate goals
5.3	<p>10. Do you have any suggestions of possible topics for one-off Working Groups?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways maintenance - effectiveness of patching scheme. So many repaired patches appear to disintegrate soon after repair. Is this value for money? • Housing for school leavers • This will come out of performance panel deliberation and work planning meetings • Anti-Social Behaviour - youths on bikes, road safety and damage caused by anti-social behaviour • Allotments, increasing the number of allotments is a target in creating an active and healthy Swansea Action Plan. Clas Cymru (Community Land Advisory Service) has/had a partnership with CCS to identify potential sites. This seems to have fallen off the agenda. • Communications within the council especially to councillors - information is not being disseminated. • Planning • Civic events needs to have another meeting • Resident Parking Policy - This is an important topic for many residents. I believe the policy has not been reviewed for a number of years. • Why have libraries been proposed for savings yet have no savings planned? What would be the effect of doubling rates on second homes? Are they really a source of additional income?
6.0	General
6.1	11. How would you describe scrutiny?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful to learn and understand areas of the council work. • An opportunity to improve areas of such work. In depth scrutiny of what is happening on the ground, finances etc. • Working well • An in depth evaluation of Council's performance, cross cutting departments with an emphasis on finance, delivered by Officers following Councillor enquiries. • As an important and useful methodology/tool for providing advice and recommendations on topic areas. • A 'watch dog' to hold Cabinet members to account but also, and perhaps more importantly, to ensure that senior officers of the Council carry out the policies of political representatives. • Sometimes very tedious and pointless. • Scrutiny gives me the opportunity to meet with officers and the councillor to get a better understanding of the work of the council. • It gives me the opportunity to have an input and shape the work and policy. • A critical friend which gives more back bench councillors a voice • At best it can be a huge additional resource to assist council in attaining difficult goals. At worst it can be a constant drag on progress without offering solutions itself.
6.2	<p>12. In your opinion, what is good about scrutiny?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provides a dis-interested challenge to the Executive and has some reflective capability. • The monitoring • It's making bad decisions put right • Provides an opportunity for open and honest debate and challenge (5) • That it holds the council executive i.e. cabinet to account but also helps the cabinet to know how they are doing (3) • The flexible nature of the work, responding to suggestions and changes. • The officer support - the amount of research, follow up, organisation and creativity in terms of what can be done. The positive, can-do, helpful, friendly approach of members of the team. • Gives a chance to look at important problems • Being able to call in Cabinet Members • That non-executive members have access to cabinet members and are able to affect councils policy • I appreciate the positive contribution and constructive criticism from scrutiny members. Each meeting I have attended to date has been extremely professional and well-managed. • The recommendations • Gives all councillors the opportunity to look at the workings of departments and have good understanding (3)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That councillors are involved • It gives the opportunity to put forward topics for evaluation • How we work with partners - police, communities first, PCSO's • Gives you the opportunity to question representatives of departments and to make recommendations. • There are more topics we scrutinise with councillors that are interested in them. We scrutinise the corporate priorities and we should be scrutinising regulatory body inspections. • I believe all departments should be accountable to scrutiny and it can, through constructive criticism, improve the running of the City. • That is Member led. • Whipping does not apply, that gives freedom to speak according to one's views without having to watch over one's shoulder. • Areas of concern can be looked at by backbench councillors when they believe it needs to happen. • Can define a goal, works with internal and external expertise to challenge current methods and provide workable improvements that benefit the council and citizens.
6.3	<p>13. In your opinion, what could be better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between scrutiny and cabinet advisory committees • Standardise the format of documentation and reports and include executive summaries • Making it clear when a particular Panel will meet so that I can commit or not commit as appropriate. Will it be a daytime one or an evening one? • have said before feel that scoping should be simpler, less prescriptive, involve THE WHOLE GROUP not just chair & officer so everyone owns it • Unnecessary duplication from CACs (2) • More members need to be actively involved (3) • Be more proactive tends to be too conservative • Venues are sometimes too small to accommodate comfortably all who attend. • More outcomes which are measureable • Not all scrutiny members participate in questioning Cabinet members • Maybe greater clarity in linking scrutiny topics to corporate priorities. This could just be a tag attached to each panel • We need to make the executive feel that they have been through scrutiny. We must take the lead and not leave Cabinet members take up too much time especially over very good questions. • I feel that scrutiny still has not got the recognition it deserves. It is a function of council but I still feel that we are not appreciated. The officers work extremely hard to promote it - but the media do not help us enough to inform the public about us. • The Cabinet members should be more accountable to scrutiny, even fearful

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charing • Defining of goals
6.4	<p>14. Do you have any other suggestions for improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the various scrutiny teams have an opportunity to learn from each other? • Start with a blank page so the group is clear what it is scrutinising, and call in experts & reports later in order to decide how these can be used to help with the process • My experience of CAC's was that there is no link with work that is ongoing or has recently been done in terms of scrutiny in an area of council work. This could lead to duplication and increased pressure on departments to provide information to scrutiny and CAC's. It is also notable that the scrutiny support which is not in place around CAC's would help more the work forward, though I am sure that there is not enough capacity in scrutiny team to service CAC's as well. • More resident input - engagement • Officer presentations at scrutiny Board meetings • Scrutiny should be allowed greater leeway with regards to call ins • More non-executive councillors must participate in scrutiny, the same dedicated councillors cannot and should not carry the non-existence of the few who do. • Ensure chairs of panels are trained and competent • Make it part of proportionality and give allowances to the performance panel conveners. • Scrutiny should have teeth and should have shorter time frames for decisions. • The gradual move to standing committees should still be expected to produce regular, focussed recommendations.