

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 9 May 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• 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
Report Author	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Coordinator Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk

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. The exception to this is the Public Services Board Scrutiny Performance Panel, whose letters will be reported as this committee is the designated committee for scrutinising Swansea Public Services Board (for the purposes of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015). However all Performance Panel conveners will provide a quarterly progress report to the committee, including summary of correspondence with Cabinet Members and outcomes.

3. Letters Log

3.1 This report contains a log of scrutiny letters produced to enable the committee to maintain an overview of letters activity over the last year – see **Appendix 1**.

3.2 The following letter(s) are also attached for discussion:

	Activity	Meeting Date	Correspondence
a	Cabinet Member Q & A	8 Feb	Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Adults & Vulnerable Children
b	Cabinet Member Q & A	14 Mar	Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services
c	Local Service Board Performance Panel	21 Mar	Letter to / from Leader of the Council (chair of the LSB)

3.2.1 The letter from the LSB Performance represents the conclusion of the Panels work before the Public Services Board Scrutiny Performance Panel begins shortly.

3.3 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: Paul Cridland