

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 8 August 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)	Mike Hawes, Corporate Director (Resources)
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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. 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	Transformation of Adult Social Services Panel	4 Apr	Letters to / from Cabinet Member for Adults & Vulnerable People
b	Corporate Culture Inquiry Panel (follow up)	6 Jul	Letter to Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance

Summary:

Both letters represent the conclusion of these activities.

a. An Adult Services Performance Panel is now established to monitor and challenge service performance, which may encompass the issues arising from this work.

b. The Inquiry Panel's letter indicates satisfaction with the implementation of agreed recommendations and impact of this work. The scrutiny recommendations have provided a focus for improvement and the Panel was told that they will continue to serve as a checklist for future work of the Innovation Programme. The Panel was encouraged by strides forward made e.g. significant progress thanks to the work of the innovation community around staff engagement, bullying and harassment, employee behaviours and the staff suggestions scheme.

Although formal monitoring has concluded the Committee has the opportunity to question the Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance during his next Q & A on relevant issues on the corporate culture of the Council.

- 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. The letters log will show the average time taken by Cabinet Members to respond to scrutiny letters, and the percentage of letters responded to within timescale.

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