

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 12 September 2016

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

Purpose	This report reviews progress with the scrutiny work programme for 2016/17.
Content	The current work programme is described, including the plan for future committee meetings and topics that will be examined by scrutiny through various Panels and Working Groups.
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• review the scrutiny work programme (including progress of established Panels and Working Groups)• plan for the committee meetings ahead• consider opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny• consider the public request for scrutiny on Houses in Multiple Occupation
Lead Councillor	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer	Mike Hawes, Corporate Director (Resources)
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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 A report is provided to each meeting to enable the committee to maintain an overview of agreed scrutiny activities, monitor progress, and coordinate work as necessary.
- 1.3 The broad aim of the scrutiny function is to:
 - help improve services
 - provide an effective challenge to the executive
 - engage members in the development of policies, strategies and plans
 - engage the public
- 1.4 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

- 1.5 The work of scrutiny is undertaken primarily in three ways – through the committee itself, by establishing informal panels or via one-off working groups. Panels and Working Groups would be open to all non-executive councillors - the Committee will agree membership and conveners following expressions of interest.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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 2016/17

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 – this is carried out by the committee unless delegated elsewhere. 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 Commissioning Reviews – Cabinet reports about the various commissioning reviews that are planned over the coming year will be subject to pre-decision scrutiny. This will be carried out via the committee or relevant Panels as appropriate. The following commissioning reviews are expected:

Commissioning Review	Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet	Pre-decision by Scrutiny Panel / Committee
Waste Management	David Hopkins	16 June	Service Improvement & Finance (6 June)
Corporate Building & Property	Rob Stewart / Andrea Lewis	18 August	Service Improvement & Finance (15 Aug)
Highways & Transportation	David Hopkins	October	Service Improvement & Finance
Family Support	Christine Richards / Mark Child	November	Child & Family Services
Parks and Cleansing	David Hopkins / Mark Child	November	Service Improvement & Finance
Public Protection	Mark Child	February 2017	Service Improvement & Finance
Special Education Needs	Jennifer Raynor	March 2017	Schools
All Council Catering Services	Jennifer Raynor	March 2017	tbc
Planning Services/Economic Development/City Centre	Robert Francis Davies	March 2017	Service Improvement & Finance
All Residential and Day Care Services provided via: Learning Disability; Mental Health; Physical Disability Services	Jane Harris	June 2017	Adult Social Services
Housing	Andrea Lewis	tbc - 2017	Service Improvement & Finance

2.2 Inquiry Panels:

2.2.1 The following Inquiry Panels are currently active:

In progress (yet to report):	Completed (follow up stage)
1. Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (final report stage - reporting to Committee 12 Sep) 2. Building Sustainable Communities (final report stage – reporting to Committee 12 Sep) 3. Tackling Poverty (planning stage) – Expected End: Dec 2016	1. Social Care at Home (Oct 2016) 2. Education Inclusion (Nov 2015) 3. School Governance (tba)

2.2.2 The committee has agreed the following as potential new inquiries, preparations for which will begin shortly, with a pre-inquiry working group.

- Partnerships & Collaboration
- Preparedness for School

2.3 Performance Panels:

2.3.1 The following Performance Panels are meeting:

1. Service Improvement & Finance 2. Schools 3. Child & Family Services	4. Adult Services 5. Public Services Board
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2.4 Working Groups:

2.4.1 The following Working Groups will be convened during the year ahead:

1. Local Flood Risk Management <i>(the committee has agreed that this Working Group should meet annually to review flood risk plans)</i> 2. Civic Events <i>(the Convener requested a follow-up meeting to address a number of issues that the Working Group felt needed further consideration)</i>	3. Planning 4. Roads / Highways Maintenance 5. Corporate Building Services 6. Digital Inclusion 7. Dog Fouling
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2.5 Regional Scrutiny:

2.5.1 Swansea scrutiny is also involved in a regional scrutiny arrangement with the six councils participating in the 'Education Through Regional Working' (ERW) school improvement consortium. A scrutiny councillors group has been set up in order to coordinate scrutiny work across the region and ensure a consistent approach. It is initially meeting bi-annually. The Swansea Scrutiny Team is providing support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW. Swansea is represented by the chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and convener of the Schools Performance Panel. The next meeting taking place in September 2016 will be hosted by Pembrokeshire Council.

2.6 **Appendix 3a & 3b** provide a snapshot of progress with all of the informal Panels and Working Groups established by the committee to carry out specific activities, and current position.

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

3. Public Requests for Scrutiny / Councillor Calls for Action

3.1 A public request for scrutiny has been made in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Concern has been raised about the numbers and control of HMOs in Swansea, and in particular the spread of HMOs into the east side due to the new University campus, and effect on local areas.

3.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee needs to consider this request and may choose to:

- a. include the matter in its work programme (taking into account existing work plan commitments)
- b. refer the matter elsewhere
- c. take no action

3.3 Taking into account relevant advice it is proposed that a one-off Scrutiny Working Group be established to obtain information on and discuss this matter with relevant Cabinet Member(s) and Officers that are responsible for HMO licensing and planning. The Working Group will need to consider:

- The Council's responsibilities (legislative or otherwise) and current position regarding HMOs licensing, management and control, and future plans.
- Service aims / targets / performance measures
- Service costs
- The intensity of HMOs across Swansea including East / West comparison
- Recent changes / trends and causes. Future projections.
- The Council's engagement with universities / landlords / HMO providers, and partnership working
- Impact on Council Tax revenue from HMO properties

3.4 We understand that Supplementary Planning Guidance is being developed over the next few months with a view to adoption in the first quarter of 2017. This provides opportunity for the Working Group's findings and recommendations to feed into and add value to this work.

3.5 The Working Group will be expected to capture its views, and recommended actions to address concerns, in a letter to the relevant Cabinet Member following the conclusion of the Working Group.

3.6 The Committee is asked to endorse this proposal. If agreed expressions of interest should be invited from non-executive councillors with a view to the Working Group being arranged as soon as practicably possible.

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 2016/17

Appendix 2: Forward Look (Cabinet Business)

Appendix 3a: Scrutiny Work Programme Timetable 2016/17

Appendix 3b: Progress of Panels and Working Groups

Appendix 4: Scrutiny Councillor / Officer Leads