

**Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups**

**1. Inquiry Panels:**

**a) Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services** (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

Key Question: How is the Council working with health and other partners to reduce demand for specialist child & adolescent mental health services?

Progress Bar:

Planning	Evidence Gathering	Draft Final Report

Following agreement by the committee, the final report is being presented to Cabinet on 20 October 2016.

Projected End Date: Complete

**b) Building Sustainable Communities** (convenor: Cllr Terry Hennegan)

Key Question: How can the council best support residents to run services in their own communities?

Progress Bar:

Planning	Evidence Gathering	Draft Final Report

Following agreement by the committee, the final report is being presented to Cabinet on 20 October 2016.

Projected End Date: Complete

**c) Tackling Poverty** (convener: Sybil Crouch)

Key Question: How can the Council’s Tackling Poverty Strategy be improved?

Progress Bar:

Planning	Evidence Gathering	Draft Final Report

The Panel has commenced its evidence gathering and has held a number of meetings so far, including a session with representatives from the Bevan Foundation and the Public Policy Institute for Wales; and a session with Third Sector representatives. A number of meetings are planned over the next month including speaking to representatives from the Welsh Government on the national

perspective to tackling poverty and to representatives from community based organisations. A number of focus groups have been arranged to gather the views of people experiencing poverty and a survey is currently available for completion.

Projected End Date: December 2016

## 2. Pre-Inquiry Working Groups

### a) Partnerships & Collaboration

Preparations for this potential inquiry will begin shortly.

Key concerns:

- how are we currently working with others?
- how effective is it?
- how could the Council's collaboration with other authorities/ partners be further developed & improved?
- are we learning from examples elsewhere?

### b) Readiness for School

The Pre-Inquiry Working Group for this inquiry has been arranged for the 11 October. Key concerns to be looked at:

- how can support for 0-3 year olds be improved so that they arrive at school ready to learn?
- are we getting this right e.g. effectiveness of Flying Start

## 3. Follow Up on Completed Inquiries:

Follow-ups of inquiries will consider both the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and wider impact / difference made. Inquiry Panels are reconvened between 6-12 months after cabinet decision on Inquiry reports.

Inquiry	Cabinet Decision	Recommendations			Follow Up Panel Meeting
		Agreed	Partly	Rejected	
Social Care at Home	20 Aug 2015	16	5	1	25 October 2016
Corporate Culture	15 Oct 2015	19	0	0	6 Jul 2016 (complete)
Education Inclusion	21 Jan 2016	19	0	1	29 Nov 2016
School Governance	16 Jun 2016	6	2	4	tba
		Response to other 4 recommendations: Action already in place			

#### 4. Performance Panels:

a) **Service Improvement & Finance** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

The panel met on 21<sup>st</sup> September and discussed the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Performance Monitoring Report and the Local Government Data Unit Local Government Performance Bulletin for 2015/16.

The panel is due to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the Highways and Transportation Commissioning Review on 17<sup>th</sup> October. The Panel will also be considering a report on the full range Fees and Charges made by the Council on 26<sup>th</sup> October

b) **Schools Performance** (convener: Cllr Fiona Gordon)

The Panel will meet with YGG Bryniago Welsh Medium Primary School on the 19 October to discuss the outcome of their recent Estyn Inspection looking particularly at progress and prospects for improvement.

At their meeting in November the panel plan to look at the performance of children that receive free school meals (FSM) and what impact the Pupil Deprivation Grants is having for these pupils. Members will also discuss the Annual Audit of School report.

c) **Public Services Board** (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

The first meeting of the Public Services Board Scrutiny Performance Panel took place on 28<sup>th</sup> September. The Panel discussed its draft work plan and heard from a representative from the Future Generations Commissioner's Office on the role of the Commissioner in monitoring the work of the Public Services Board and the links with scrutiny.

d) **Child & Family Services** (convener: Paxton Hood-Williams)

The panel met on 26 September to discuss performance of the Western Bay Regional Adoption Service.

Overall the panel was pleased with performance in this area. Prior to the merger of the 3 adoption teams the panel was concerned that the merger could negatively affect performance but it was pleased that this had not happened. The panel was particularly pleased that the majority of placements were within the Western Bay region, the reductions in the time it took children to be matched to adopters, successful placements for sibling groups, a unified adoption allowance policy across the region, an increase in the number of adopters and success in placing harder to place and older children.

There were some areas of improvement that the service would be focussing on over the next year; these were: further development and

improvements to performance reporting, development of regionally based policies and procedures, improvements to life story work and materials and adoption support.

The panel agreed that it should consider performance of this service again in the future. And this will be added to the panel's work plan.

e) **Adult Social Services** (convener: Uta Clay)

The panel met on 21 September to receive a briefing on the Mental Capacity Act Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS). This is a piece of legislation that provides protection of vulnerable people who are accommodated in care homes or hospitals in circumstances that amount to deprivation of their liberty and who lack capacity to consent to the care or treatment they need.

A judgement in 2014 has meant that a much greater number of service users and patients are now subject to a deprivation of liberty and will come under the protection of the DOLS procedure. This has financial and legal implications for the Council and it has increased caseloads of social workers.

The panel was concerned about the increase in workloads for social workers and the pressure that would bring and the increase in expenditure that resulted from the difference DoLS assessments. The panel was also concerned that only appropriately trained and experienced doctors conducted the medical assessment because if successfully challenged in court, the local authority was the supervisory body and therefore liable for any financial penalty. Furthermore, the panel was pleased to hear that if adult services was not satisfied with the quality of a particular doctor's medical assessment it would cease commissioning that doctor for future assessments.

The panel welcomed the possibility of more joint working with health and was pleased to learn that to date only 2 challenges had been received to date.

A budget line has been created for DoLS and next year a budget figure may be achieved but this would have to be done within existing budgets and officers would not be seeking additional funding for this.

The panel next meets on 25 October to discuss the commissioning review consultation report.

## **5. Other Panels / Working Groups:**

A number of topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Panels / Working Groups.

a) **Education Through Regional Working** (regional scrutiny group)

A meeting for scrutiny councillors and officers from the six councils participating in ERW took place on 27 September. Swansea was represented by Cllr Fiona Gordon. A scrutiny councillors group has been set up in order to coordinate scrutiny work and ensure a consistent approach. The group discussed individual Councils scrutiny education work programmes, looked at the ERW Business Plan for 2016-19 and the recent ERW Estyn report, shared good practice in relation to use of the pupil deprivation grant and was updated on the Special Education Needs Reform. The next meeting will be hosted by one of the other local authorities and is being arranged for 27 February 2017. Swansea Scrutiny Team will provide the support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW.

b) **Local Flood Risk Management** (convener: Cllr Susan Jones)

The Committee previously agreed that the Local Flood Risk Management Working Group can continue to meet on an annual basis in order to monitor and check progress with the Local Flood Risk Management Plan and priorities. The Head of Highways and Transportation has been contacted and asked to provide a timescale for future scrutiny involvement. The last meeting of the Working Group took place on 14 December 2015.

c) **Civic Events** (convener: Cllr Anthony Colburn)

The Convener of the Civic Events Working Group requested a follow-up meeting to address a number of issues that the Working Group felt needed further consideration. This is being arranged.

d) **Planning** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

The working group will meet initially on 12<sup>th</sup> October in order to receive an officer briefing and carry out a question planning session in advance of its session with the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Regeneration on 19<sup>th</sup> October. This will provide opportunity to ask questions about the current planning system, including Section 106 Agreements, and the call-in process.

Further Working Groups to be convened, in the order of priority shown (membership / conveners to be appointed in due course):

1. **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**

This was agreed following public concern 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. It will enable a meeting with relevant Cabinet Member(s) and Officers that are responsible for HMO licensing and planning, and explore:

- 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

The findings of the Working Group can feed in to the planned development of Supplementary Planning Guidance on HMOs and add value to this work.

Expressions of interest from scrutiny councillors to participate in the Working Group are reported to the committee for agreement (see Item 10)

**2. Roads / Highway Maintenance**

the relevant cabinet member / officer will be requested to provide a report covering service practices and procedures (e.g. dealing with pot holes), use of resources / impact of budget cuts, prospects for improvement. This will enable questions about the quality and effectiveness of highway maintenance and repair, and also issues relating to the relationship with utilities and strategic planning / co-ordination of works to minimise disruption to major access roads.

**3. Corporate Building Services**

the relevant cabinet member / officer will be requested to provide a report to provide a briefing about Corporate Building Services to enable questions and discussion e.g. about value for money provide, costs / competitiveness for works including councillor ward requests.

**4. Digital Inclusion**

the relevant cabinet member / officer will be requested to provide a report on digital inclusion for discussion and questions e.g. many council services will be digital in future but is the quality of services being preserved? how can we ensure that people are not being excluded from services once they become digital? what is the Council's strategy to ensure that all can access and are not excluded from services?

**5. Dog Fouling**

the relevant cabinet member / officer will be requested to provide a report on dealing with dog fouling, e.g. community initiatives, support for dog owners, deterrents, dealing with complaints, enforcement, resources, achievements etc.