

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 November 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 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 current Panels and Working Groups)• consider opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny• plan for the committee meetings ahead• consider the advice of the Director – Corporate Services on council priorities, strategic challenges, and key decisions to help inform work
Lead Councillor	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer	Mike Hawes, 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. The items for the next meeting on 12 December are:

- Cabinet Member Question Session: Cabinet Member for Adults & Vulnerable People (Councillor Jane Harris).
- Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Reports: Service Improvement & Finance

- Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Castle Square – Development & Public Realm Opportunity (*subject to report going to Cabinet on 15 December*)

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)
Family Support (Focusing on Children with Additional Needs and Disabilities)	Christine Richards / Mark Child	17 November	Child & Family Services
Highways & Transportation	David Hopkins	15 December	Service Improvement & Finance
Parks and Cleansing	David Hopkins / Mark Child	15 December	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	Jane Harris	June 2017	Adult Social Services

Health; Physical Disability 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. Tackling Poverty (evidence gathering stage) – Expected End: Dec 2016 2. Children’s Readiness for School (evidence gathering stage) – Expected End: March 2017 3. Partnerships & Collaboration (planning stage) – Expected End: March 2017	1. Social Care at Home (Nov 2016) 2. Education Inclusion (Nov 2016) 3. School Governance (tba) 4. Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (final report was presented to Cabinet 20 Oct – decision awaited) 5. Building Sustainable Communities (final report was to Cabinet 20 Oct – decision awaited)

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. Planning (Oct 2016) COMPLETE 2. Local Flood Risk Management (<i>annual review of flood risk plans</i>) 3. 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>)	4. Houses in Multiple Occupation (Nov 2016) 5. Roads / Highways Maintenance 6. Corporate Building Services 7. Digital Inclusion 8. 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 on 27 February 2016 will be hosted by Ceredigion 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. Council Priorities - Update

3.1 Mike Hawes, Director - Resources, is the corporate lead for scrutiny. Following on from the information he provided to the Scrutiny Work Planning Conference in May, he will attend the meeting to help the committee with advice relevant to the scrutiny work programme. The Director will provide an update on council priorities and main strategic challenges facing the council.

3.2 The purpose of the Director's report is to help inform decisions on the Scrutiny Work Programme and help ensure that major activities are aligned with corporate priorities and contribute to the big issues facing the Council.

4. Public Requests for Scrutiny / Councillor Calls for Action

4.1 The committee is asked to consider a request for scrutiny associated with the project involving the demolition of the building known as Oceana on the Kingsway. This includes concern about financial implications as described in a report to Cabinet on 20 October.

4.1.1 The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Regeneration presented this report which provided an update on the current situation regarding the demolition of the former Oceana building and to outline the need to commit further funding to complete its demolition. It was resolved by Cabinet that the budget provision to reflect the negotiated final account value of £3.7 Million together with amended terms to bi-monthly valuation payments and capped retentions to 3% of the original contract value be approved.

4.2. The following councillors have called for scrutiny of this matter: Mary Jones, Chris Holley, Lynda James, Jeff Jones, Linda Tyler-Lloyd, and Ioan Richard.

4.3 The committee should consider this request and whether to include this matter into the scrutiny work programme or refer the matter elsewhere.

4.4 If the committee agrees that this issue merits scrutiny then it will need to:

- review existing work plan commitments
- clarify the purpose and focus of any work
- determine the best method for carrying out this work

4.5 It is proposed that a one-off Scrutiny Working Group be established to meet with the cabinet member / officers in order to look at the relevant cabinet reports on this matter, and ask questions to better understand the process and events leading to the report, such as about the:

- project planning
- demolition contract
- demolition asbestos surveys
- internal audit review of project
- options considered
- decision-making process
- increased project costs and financial commitment
- legal implications
- future risks

4.6 Views, conclusions and recommendations from this piece of scrutiny will be communicated to relevant cabinet member(s) by letter.

4.7 The Committee is asked to endorse this proposal. If agreed expressions of interest will be invited, as usual, from non-executive councillors with a view to the Working Group being arranged as soon as practicably possible. This will take priority over other Working Groups that have been identified but are not in progress.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 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.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 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