

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 12 December 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
Lead Councillor	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer	Mike Hawes, Director – Resources
Report Author	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Coordinator Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk

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 The items scheduled for the next committee meeting on 9 January are:

- Cabinet Member Question Session: Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Finance & Strategy (Councillor Rob Stewart).
- Final Inquiry Report: Tackling Poverty (to receive the final report, including conclusions and recommendations, of the Inquiry Panel

from Councillor Sybil Crouch, prior to submission to Cabinet for decision)

- Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Reports: Child & Family Services

2.1.4 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.

NOTE: The committee has already requested to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on reports relevant to the development of Castle Square. A report is currently listed for Cabinet on 19 January. This will necessitate a special committee meeting in the week of the Cabinet meeting.

2.1.5 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)
Parks and Cleansing	David Hopkins / Mark Child	15 December	Service Improvement & Finance
Highways & Transportation	David Hopkins	19 January	Service Improvement & Finance
Public Protection	Mark Child	February 2017	Service Improvement & Finance
Planning Services/Economic Development/City Centre	Robert Francis Davies	March 2017	Service Improvement & Finance
Family Support (Domestic Abuse)	Christine Richards	March 2017	Child & Family Services

Family Support (Family Services for under and over 11s)	Christine Richards	April 2017	Child & Family Services
Family Support (Child Disability Services)	Christine Richards / Mark Child	May 2017	Child & Family Services
Additional Learning Needs	Jennifer Raynor	May 2017	Schools
All Residential and Day Care Services provided via: Learning Disability; Mental Health; Physical Disability Services	Jane Harris	June 2017	Adult Social Services
All Council Catering Services	Clive Lloyd	June 2017	Tbc
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)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education Inclusion (Jan 2017) 2. Social Care at Home (Jan 2017) 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 presented to Cabinet 20 Oct – decision awaited)

2.3 Performance Panels:

2.3.1 The following Performance Panels are meeting:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Service Improvement & Finance 2. Schools 3. Child & Family Services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Adult Services 5. Public Services Board
--	---

2.4 Working Groups:

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

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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>) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Houses in Multiple Occupation (started Nov 2016) 5. Roads / Highways Maintenance 6. Corporate Building Services 7. Digital Inclusion 8. Dog Fouling
--	--

2.4.2 It is proposed that 'Digital Inclusion' be moved up the list of priorities, and be the next Working Group to be established. It should be noted that the other topics identified have been included in recent commissioning reviews. The Corporate Director – Resources at the last meeting stated that digital inclusion was a big issue, given that there is a move towards increasing digital contact and making more services on-line. The committee is concerned about how the council is helping citizens to get on-line and the risk of digital exclusion. Expressions of interest will be invited from scrutiny councillors to get involved in this Working Group.

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. 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.

2.5.2 The Swansea Scrutiny Team is providing support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW. It is pleasing to report that we have received positive feedback from the Chief Executive of ERW, Betsan O'Connor, about the work of the Scrutiny Councillor Group, in particular how it is organised. She has told us that the work is well coordinated and the feedback is good. The scrutiny arrangement is still very new so praise about its impact and contribution to improvement is very welcome.

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 None.

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: Stephanie Williams

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