

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 February 2017

CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION

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| Purpose | To enable the committee to question Cabinet Members on their work. The committee's questions will broadly explore priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to areas of responsibility. |
| Content | The following Cabinet Member will appear before the committee to participate in a question and answer session: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Andrea Lewis – Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services |
| Councillors are being asked to | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question the Cabinet Member on relevant matters• Make comments and recommendations as necessary |
| Lead Councillor(s) | Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee |
| Lead Officer(s) | Mike Hawes, Director – Resources |
| Report Author | Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Coordinator Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 One of the most important roles that scrutiny carries out is holding the council's cabinet to account. The cabinet is made up of the Leader and 9 additional councillors, appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific responsibilities.
- 1.2 By acting as a 'critical friend' scrutiny has the opportunity to challenge the cabinet and individual cabinet members on their actions and monitor performance in relation to their areas of responsibilities.
- 1.3 Cabinet Member Question Sessions have become a feature of committee meetings over the past 5 years. At least one cabinet member is scheduled to appear at each committee meeting, ensuring all 10 Cabinet Members appear before the committee over the course of a year, in order to ask questions on their work. Questions will focus on their priorities, actions, achievements and impact.

2. Cabinet Member Question Session

2.1 The following Cabinet Member will appear before the committee:

- a) Councillor Andrea Lewis – Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services

Within this Cabinet portfolio, she is responsible for:

- Commercial Services: Identify & Implement New Commercial Models
- Council House Management
- Council House Repairs
- Councillors Community Budget Schemes
- District Heating Schemes
- Energy Schemes
- Future Generations Bill (link with Wellbeing & Healthy City)
- Housing Policy, Affordable Housing & Housing Options
- Housing Renewal Schemes
- Housing Renewals and Adaptations
- Improve Procurement Frameworks
- School Building Programme - Quality in Education (QEd) 2020 (link with Education)
- Sheltered Housing (Link with Adults & Vulnerable People)
- Sustainable Development
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard

2.2 The Cabinet Member has provided some ‘headlines’ in relation to the portfolio to help the committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact (see Appendix 1).

3. Approach to Questions

3.1 At the Cabinet Member Question Sessions the committee will generally ask cabinet members about:

- priorities / objectives
- specific activities and achievements, progress against policy commitments, key decisions taken, and impact / difference made
- headlines on the performance of services and the key targets monitored to measure improvement and success
- their engagement with service users / public and what influence this has had
- what they hope to achieve over the coming months and challenges (e.g. resources / budget)
- key decisions they are expecting to take to Cabinet over the next year
- interactions with scrutiny over the last year, and whether there is any specific scrutiny activity they would welcome

3.2 The committee is also interested in:

- Sustainability and future trends - to what extent long-term thinking is influencing work / decisions, in light of the Well-being of Future Generations Act?
- Public Services Board (PSB) – what is the relationship with the work of the PSB? how is the work of the PSB impacting on their portfolio and helping them to deliver on priorities, and making a difference?

3.3 Cabinet Members will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the committee. Following the session the chair will write to the Cabinet Member in order to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the committee, and any actions for the Cabinet Member to consider.

3.4 If the committee wishes to conduct more detailed scrutiny of any of the issues raised during this item then this should be agreed through the normal work planning process and planned for a future meeting. This will also allow proper time for preparation.

4. Previous Correspondence

4.1 The committee last had a Q & A regarding this portfolio in March 2016. Amongst the issues discussed then included:

- Housing ('More Homes' Programme, Welsh Housing Quality Standard, Disabled Facilities Grants)
- Corporate Building & Property Services
- Energy
- Commercialism

The actual correspondence relating to this meeting is attached as the committee may wish to follow up on these issues, as necessary.

4.2 Other relevant contact with scrutiny:

- Pre-decision Scrutiny of Corporate Building & Property Services Commissioning Review:
The Cabinet Member responded to the views of the Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel following a meeting in August 2016.
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard:
The Cabinet Member responded to the conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group, convened by Cllr Terry Hennegan, following a meeting in February 2016. The Committee can ask for a progress update on actions following this scrutiny activity in relation to: introducing Building Advisory Groups for major elements of the Capital Programme in 2016/17; informing

Councillors and tenants regarding progress in meeting the Standard, and proposed capital works; and taking more 'before and after' photographs to document improvements.

- **Gypsy Traveller Site Search Process:**
Following a review of the site search process culminating the Council meeting in October 2013, the committee presented a report to Cabinet in February 2016 on learning points. The Cabinet Member presented a response to the report in July 2016 and accepted the five key learning points / recommendations. In respect of future work the committee called for clarity about: policy and leadership; the role of members and officers; the importance of early consultation with the Gypsy Traveller community; and work to promote and improve community cohesion. The committee will want to follow up is progress on the accommodation of gypsy travellers, and how the search for additional provision is being taken forward.

5. Other Questions

5.1 For each Cabinet Member Q & A Session the committee invites members of the public and other scrutiny councillors (not on the committee) to suggest questions.

5.2 On this occasion no questions were received.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

Legal Officer: Wendy Parkin

Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley