

Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel 31 August 2017

ROLE OF THE SCHOOLS SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The main aim of scrutiny is to act as a 'critical friend' to the Cabinet and other decision makers in order to promote better services, policies and decisions. Councillors involved in scrutiny will hold the Council's executive to account and examine the work of Council departments, as well as other public services.

2. Role of the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

- 2.1 The role of this Panel in general is to provide ongoing challenge to schools performance to ensure that pupils in Swansea are receiving high quality education; and the authority is meeting its objectives in relation to improving school standards and pupil attainment. Terms of Reference are attached in **Appendix 1**.

3. Membership

- 3.1 In addition to the 14 councillors the Panel includes in its membership a place for up to four Education Statutory Co-optees. This is to enable the involvement of parent governors and church representatives in the scrutiny of education matters, with voting rights. They will also be entitled to sit on any relevant Panels and Working Groups focusing on education issues.
- 3.2 Mr Dave Anderson-Thomas is currently a member of the Panel (Parent Governor – primary). The Scrutiny Programme Committee will continue to seek interest for a Parent Governor (secondary), and a representative of the Catholic Church and Church in Wales.

4. Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel Convener

- 4.1 Scrutiny Conveners are appointed by the Scrutiny Programme Committee to lead specific activities. Mo Sykes will convene the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel.
- 4.3 Councillors who are appointed as conveners will be responsible for ensuring that Panels are operating effectively. A role description for conveners is attached in **Appendix 2** (taken from 'New Scrutiny Arrangements' Council Report 18 October 2012)

5. The Work Programme for 2017/18

- 5.1 The Schools Scrutiny Performance Work Programme has been developed based upon core annual items*, topic suggestions received and updated

based on discussion at the Education Scrutiny Briefing on 6 July. It is designed to be a basic framework that allows for further items to be added or removed allowing for flexibility throughout the year for any key items that may arise.

5.2 All meetings will be at 4pm with a preparation meeting before the start of the public meeting and will be held in a committee room in the Guildhall unless otherwise stated.

Meeting date	Items to be discussed
Briefing 6 Jul 17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education Scrutiny Workshop (Overview of Education, School Improvement Service and ERW) 2. Planning the year in Education Scrutiny
Meeting 1 31 Aug 17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreeing the Scrutiny Work Programme 2. Discuss how you wish the panel to operate (pre-meeting, questioning) 3. Developing key questions for school scrutiny sessions* 4. Information on the Pupil Voice in Swansea
Meeting 2 21 Sep 17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) - Update on progress with changes to service and accommodation 2. How Schools are building capacity to manage behaviour internally
Meeting 3 18 Oct 17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *School Improvement Service Performance update (Annual) 2. Quality in Education (QED) and 21st Century Schools Programme 3. Annual Audit report (for information)
Extra Meeting Date TBA	Pre-decision Scrutiny Alternative Learning Needs Reform Commissioning Review (awaiting a cabinet date)
Meeting 4 16 Nov 17 2.00pm till 4.00pm?	*School 1 – a Pioneer School (Green/excellent School) Olchfa Secondary School and Parklands Primary School Collaboration Visit to Olchfa Comp – invite and speak to Head and Chair of Governors from both schools along with the challenge advisor
Meeting 5 12 Dec 17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looked After Children Educational Outcomes 2. Pupil Deprivation Grant spend and support for vulnerable pupils
Meeting 6 18 Jan 18	*Annual Education Performance (incl. verified data) and *School Categorisation
Extra Meeting Date TBA Feb	*Scrutiny of Annual Budget as it relates to education matters (when Budget Cabinet date is arranged early Feb 18)
Meeting 7 15 Feb 18	*School 2 – Morriston Primary School Amber: Speaking to Head and Chair of Governors of a School including preparation session with the challenge advisor
Meeting 8 15 Mar 18	*School 3 – Bishop Vaughan Catholic Secondary School Amber: Speaking to Head and Chair of Governors of a School including preparation session with the challenge advisor
Meeting 9 12 Apr 18	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School to School Collaboration, and/or 2. Science in Schools in Swansea, or 3. Meeting with the Association of School Governors

6. Finding Effective Ways of Working

6.1 The panel should take the opportunity to discuss how it can work most effectively, for example in its preparation for meetings:

- **Developing Questions and a Questioning Strategy** (preparing for key scrutiny sessions by developing a core set of questions in advance this can be done through an email conversation.
- **Use of short Pre-meetings** (to discuss and prepare questioning strategy)
- **Post meetings / summing up** (to discuss thoughts about session, actions moving forward and what will go into the letter to the Cabinet Member)
- **Team / Inclusive Working and Communication** (to develop as a scrutinising team)
- **Decorum at meetings** (being inclusive, open minded, respectful scrutineers)
- Any other practical considerations

7. Developing Key Questions for School Scrutiny Sessions

7.1 One of the key roles of the panel will be to meet a selection of schools to look at their performance and prospects for improvement. Usually speaking to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors and this will include a preparation session with the Challenge Advisor. It will also be important this year to look at how the pupil voice can be introduced into this process.

Some of the key questions for schools sessions include:

1. How the school has responded to inspection findings and recommendations?
2. What does the school need to do to improve learner outcomes and to increase the schools capacity to improve in the future?
3. What are the barriers to the school improving learner outcomes?
4. How is the school using tools and initiatives available to improve outcomes?
5. What is the school doing to improve levels of pupil attendance?
6. What is the school is doing to minimise school exclusions?
7. What are the governing bodies' priorities and how are they being addressed?
8. How best practice is being shared across schools?
9. Looking at the support given by the local authority and the school improvement service

8. Some further background information/reading

8.1 Attached to the Agenda papers today are two useful documents that give good practice and hints and tips for Education Scrutiny also information on the children's rights approach (**see item 6 on Agenda**). Also see below relevant policy commitments and Council priorities in relation to Education matters.

8.2 **Councils relevant Policy Commitments**

The Councils Policy Commitments Statement relating to education matters are as follows (as agreed by Council on [27 July 2017](#)). These will inform the Council priorities and the Corporate Plan moving forward.

Standing up for Education Learning and Skills

- Swansea Council will strive to make our city one of the best places for children and young people to be educated in Wales and the UK.
- We will continue to work with local universities and continue to innovate, learn from the best, share best practice with all schools and run an ambitious, supportive and effective performance framework for our teachers and schools.

Investing in Education

- Swansea Council will commit to spending nearly £1bn on schools, teaching and learning in the next 5 years and invest over £100 million in extensive improvements to school buildings across Swansea.
- We will continue to invest in facilities for those who have additional learning needs or require additional wellbeing and mobility support in our schools and in our special schools, ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunity to realise their potential.
- Working in partnership with schools, colleges and employers, we will support pupils to choose the best career path. This will include alternative to traditional exams and assist those who want to progress through college and university education, ensuring that all young people have the opportunity to build a career and access well paid jobs.
- Working with our regional partners, we will align our education system to ensure we create the right people with the right skills to supply the new economy, and to fill jobs offering routes to well-paid careers. As part of the Swansea Bay City Deal, and working closely with the Regional Skills and Learning Partnership, we will help all people to attain the skills they need to find a job.

High Performing Community Schools

- Swansea Council will continue to work in partnership with head teachers and governing bodies to help ensure that schools are accessible and available for community activities and that children, young people, their families and the wider community can all benefit from these new arrangements.
- We will promote school buildings as a resource for the whole community, not just children and young people. We will assist schools to develop and promote Family Learning, Wellbeing, Healthy Eating and Exercise, Recreation and Sports.

The Best Start in Life for all our Children: Happy, Healthy and Safe

- Swansea Council will work with partners locally and internationally to seek to continue to participate in the World Health Organisation's 'Healthy City' initiative and encourage schools to provide school breakfast clubs and

provide a safe and supportive environment before and after the school day.

- Working with the Welsh Government, we will work in partnership with schools to encourage participation in the Welsh government's plan to provide 30 hours a week for 48 weeks a year, free to 3 and 4 year old children, to ensure that all young children have the best start in life.
- Swansea Council will aim to provide the right number of places, in both English medium education to meet the wishes of children and families who want to be education in the two language of Wales.

A City of Life Long Learning

- Working with our regional partners, Swansea will lead in creating an intelligent knowledge regional network, based on a new dynamic relationship with schools, the further education colleges, our two universities and employers. We will aim to create a seamless education and skills 'pipeline' through all levels education collaborating closely with partners we will create the workforce for the new technology skills and knowledge economy we will need to compete and succeed in the 21st century.
- Building upon our membership of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, the Council will build on our international links through our membership to share ideas and best practice, learning from each other and building strong and economic and cultural ties.

9.0 Relevant Extract from Corporate Plan 2017/22

Improving Education & Skills

Why this priority is a well-being objective

- We want every child and young person in Swansea to gain the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in life.
- Children and young people who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve the skills and qualifications that they need to go on into further education, higher education, employment or training.
- The Swansea Bay City Deal will deliver world-class facilities in the fields of energy, smart manufacturing, innovation and life science, with major investment in the region's digital infrastructure and workforce skills and talent underpinning each.
- Children and young people need qualifications and skills that are suited to the economic needs of the future.
- We want children to be prevented from becoming disengaged from learning.
- When a child is looked after by a local authority, the Council becomes a corporate parent with legal and moral responsibility for that child. We want looked after children to succeed in school and to have opportunities for further education, higher education, employment or training.
- We want our children and young people to be aware of their global rights and responsibilities so that they can be active and responsible citizens, fulfil their potential and make a difference to their communities.

- We want our children and young people to have appropriate Welsh language skills.

The longer term challenges this well-being objective will help address

- We want to respond to the shift away from large-scale manufacturing to the service economy and the growth of smart technology and the high tech industries sustaining the City Deal.
- We will respond to the City Deal ensuring our children and young people have success in the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and digital skills such as computer coding.

The steps we will take to meet this well-being objective

- Align our education system and work with partners to ensure we create the right people with the right skills to supply the new economy and meet the challenge of the Swansea Bay City Deal.
- Continue to support and challenge schools to improve attendance and pupil performance and encourage schools to support each other.
- Keep focusing on improving literacy (in English and Welsh) and numeracy at all ages.
- Transform the schools' estate to meet demand and respond to the developments set out within the *Local Development Plan*.
- Raise skill levels in the workplace and construction and vocational aspirations, contributing to the development of ambitious, skilled young people and adults by providing apprenticeships.
- Promote lifelong learning to reflect the changing nature of work and to support well-being and reduce social isolation.
- Teach young citizens to respect rights, understand responsibilities and be globally aware and responsible citizens by continuing to support schools to become *UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools* as part of our commitment to the UNCRC and also *Eco Schools* increasing understanding, respect and appreciation of our environment.
- Continue to involve children and young people in their education through *Pupil Voice* and *Schools Councils* and *Big Conversation* engagement events.
- Meet demand for Welsh medium education and promote the use of Welsh in schools through the *Welsh in Education* strategic plan.
- Using our school building and maintenance programme to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Ensure that children are not disadvantaged by poverty when achieving and attaining standards and wellbeing in education.

How we will maximise our contribution to the national goals through the way in which we work

- *Preventing problems from occurring or from getting worse* – improving school attendance and attainment so that pupils improve their skills and qualifications that they need to go on into further and higher education, training or employment.

- *Addressing long-term challenges* – ensuring the school curriculum in Swansea provides pupils have the skills and qualifications for the future and contributes to the success of the Swansea Bay City Deal.
- *Working in partnership with others* – work with local authorities through the regional arrangements to support school improvement services.
- *Working in partnership with others* – work with a range of providers to provide a range of learning opportunities.
- *Avoiding conflicts between public body objectives* – creating synergy between Council objectives and economic development.
- *Involving people* – involving pupils in their education through *Pupil Voice* and *Schools Councils* and *Big Conversation* events in order to demonstrate we value these key stakeholders.

How we will measure progress.

- Pupil attendance at school.
- Literacy in English and Welsh and numeracy at different ages.
- Pupils and pupils receiving free school meals achieving five or more GCSEs at A* to C, including English and Welsh.
- Pupil take up and attainment in STEM subjects at different ages.
- Young people known to be NEET at 16 years of age.
- Apprenticeships in the Council.
- Training weeks secured for the economically inactive or unemployed through community benefit clauses in contracts.

**Scrutiny Programme Committee
Terms of Reference**

Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel – Terms of Reference

1. Name:

Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

2. Why this topic is important:

- It is a key *corporate improvement objective* to ‘improve services for children and young people and in particular to maximise well being; raise standards of attainment and achievement; ensure services are safe and services provide excellent education opportunities’.
Source: Swansea’s Corporate Improvement Plan
- Swansea has some of the highest performing schools in Wales but also, some of the lowest.
Source: Educational Attainment Report, Scrutiny Programme Committee - 3 December 2012
- The attainment gap between schools with high and low free school meals numbers is unacceptable.

3. What is the purpose of the Panel?

To provide ongoing challenge to schools performance to ensure that:

- pupils in Swansea are receiving high quality education; and
- the authority is meeting its objectives in relation to improving school standards and pupil attainment.

4. What are the possible lines of inquiry?

To regularly review the authority’s assessments of all schools’ performance. Identify a range of schools performance within the authority. Meet with Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors to ask questions about performance and improvement, focusing on outcomes, provision and leadership, e.g.

1. How the school has responded to inspection findings and recommendations?
2. What does the school need to do to improve learner outcomes and to increase the schools capacity to improve in the future?
3. What are the barriers to the school improving learner outcomes?
4. How is the school using tools and initiatives available to improve outcomes?
5. What is the school doing to improve levels of pupil attendance?
6. What is the school is doing to minimise school exclusions?
7. What are the governing bodies’ priorities and how are they being addressed?
8. How best practice is being shared across schools?
9. Looking at the support given by the local authority and the Consortium.

5. Who will be participating in this Panel?

Which Scrutiny Councillors will sit on this panel?

Mo Sykes (Panel Convenor)	Dave Anderson Thomas (Parent Governor Co-optee)
Mike Day	Mike Durke
Beverley Hopkins	Louise Gibbard
Lyndon Jones	Fiona Gordon
Steven Gallagher	Cyril Anderson
Susan Jones	David Helliwell
Sam Pritchard	Lynda James

6. When will it report? (i.e. likely duration of the Panel)

The Panel will be expected to summarise its findings to each school after the session they attend, highlighting key points from the meeting, including suggestions for improvement

The Panel will also be expected to have on-going correspondence with the relevant cabinet member in order to share views and recommendations, arising from the Panel's activities, about schools performance.

The Panel will continue through this municipal year reporting back to the Scrutiny Programme Committee on a regular basis. The Panel may also raise issues, as appropriate, with the Committee.

7. Scrutiny Support

Your Lead Scrutiny Officer is Michelle Roberts and you can contact her at michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk or Tel: 01792 637256

As at: 6 July 2017

Scrutiny Convener Role Description

1. General

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Convener will be responsible for a portfolio of scrutiny topics that they will manage and deliver. These topics, allocated by the Council's Scrutiny Programme Committee, will not be confined to a single subject or department. The scrutiny work led by these conveners will be done through informal task and finish groups / panels and the conveners will chair the meetings of these groups. Conveners will be accountable to the Scrutiny Programme Committee.

2. Providing leadership

- 2.1 To provide confident and effective management of the topics for which they are responsible.
- 2.2 To promote the role of scrutiny within and outside the council, liaising effectively both internally within the Council and externally with the Council's partners.
- 2.3 To contribute to the development of a balanced scrutiny work programme.
- 2.4 To ensure the programme takes account of relevant factors such as: the work programmes of the executive and other committees, strategic priorities and risks, and relevant community issues.
- 2.5 To demonstrate an objective and evidence based approach to scrutiny and to facilitate the identification of conclusions and recommendations accordingly.
- 2.6 To evaluate the impact and added value of scrutiny activity and identify areas for improvement.
- 2.7 To promote cross party working.
- 2.8 To keep any relevant deputies fully involved and informed to ensure they are able to cover the conveners' role as required

3. Managing the work programme

- 3.1 To ensure that the work programme is delivered.
- 3.2 To report on progress against the work programme to Council, and others as appropriate.
- 3.3 To liaise with officers, other members and community representatives to resource and deliver the work programme.

4 Effective meeting management

- 4.1 To set agendas containing clear objectives and outcomes for meetings.
- 4.2 To manage the progress of business at meetings, ensuring that meeting objectives are met.
- 4.3 To ensure that the necessary preparation is done beforehand.
- 4.4 To ensure that all participants have an opportunity to make an appropriate contribution

5 Community leadership

- 5.1 Where necessary to act as a focus for liaison between the council, community and external bodies in relation to the scrutiny function.
- 5.2 To build understanding and ownership of the scrutiny function within the community.
- 5.3 To involve fully external stakeholders for example, service users, expert witnesses and partners in scrutiny activity.
- 5.4 To support the involvement and development of scrutiny members
- 5.5 To encourage high performance from all scrutiny councillors in task and finish groups.
- 5.6 To assess individual and collective performance within task and finish groups and facilitate appropriate development.

6 Values

6.1 To be committed to the values of the Council and the following values in public office:

- a. Openness and transparency;
- b. Honesty and integrity;
- c. Tolerance and respect;
- d. Equality and fairness;
- e. Appreciation of cultural difference;
- f. Sustainability.