

Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 11 September 2017

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

Purpose	This report reviews progress with the agreed scrutiny work programme for 2017/18.
Content	The work programme is described, including the plan for future committee meetings and topics that will be 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	Tracey Meredith, Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Business Intelligence
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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 such scrutiny activities are published, in the same manner as the committee, on the Council's modern.gov online platform:

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

2. Scrutiny Work Programme 2017/18

2.1 Overall Programme

- 2.1.1 The agreed scrutiny work programme for 2017/18 is set out in **Appendix 1**.

- 2.1.2. The following paragraphs break down the work programme by specific ways of working to provide a quick overview.

2.2 Scrutiny Programme Committee:

- 2.2.1 The committee work plan for the year ahead is attached as **Appendix 2**. This should be kept under review to ensure it represents a robust and effective plan. The plan includes a schedule of future Cabinet Member Question & Answer Sessions.

2.2.2 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.

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

- Cabinet Member Question Session: Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning - Councillor Jennifer Raynor.
- Children & Young People’s Rights Scheme – Compliance and Progress - to discuss annual progress report on implementation of Children & Young People’s Rights Scheme, and consider impact (scheme was agreed by Cabinet in October 2014).

2.2.4 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 and any opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny, taking into account strategic impact, public interest, and financial implications (see Forward Plan attached as **Appendix 3**). 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.

NB – it is anticipated that a further report on Castle Square Regeneration will be considered by Cabinet on 19 October. The Committee has already looked at two previous reports (June 2016 & March 2017) and agreed to look at future reports. This will necessitate an extra meeting to be arranged, week commencing 16 October, for pre-decision scrutiny to take place. A meeting on Tuesday 17 October at 4.30pm is suggested.

2.2.5 Commissioning Reviews – it has already been acknowledged that reports on various commissioning reviews that are planned over the next year are key cabinet decisions and should 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. Therefore scrutiny arrangements for these will need to be scheduled into work plans.

Commissioning Review	Cabinet Portfolio	Expected Cabinet Meeting
Catering Services	Service Transformation & Business Operations	17 Aug
Planning & City Regeneration	Culture, Tourism & Major Projects	17 Aug
Public Protection	Environment Services	19 Oct

Highways & Transportation Service	Environment Services / Commercial Opportunities & Innovation	tbc
Family Support	Health & Wellbeing	tbc
Additional Learning Needs	Children, Education & Lifelong Learning	tbc

2.3 Inquiry Panels:

2.3.1 Planning for the first potential inquiry is underway with a first meeting planned for 2 October. The first task of the Inquiry Panel will be to have a briefing on the issue and then determine the key question and terms of reference for the inquiry.

Planned (yet to report):	Completed (follow up stage)
1. Regional Working (expected Start - End: October 2017 - March 2018)	1. School Governance (Sep 25)
2. Natural Environment (expected Start - End: December 2017 - May 2018)	2. Building Sustainable Communities (17 Oct)
	3. Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (Nov)
	4. Tackling Poverty (Mar)
	5. School Readiness (Mar)

2.4 Performance Panels:

2.4.1 The following Performance Panels meet on an ongoing basis (frequency of meetings in brackets):

1. Service Improvement & Finance (monthly)	4. Child & Family Services (every two months)
2. Schools (monthly)	5. Public Services Board (every two months)
3. Adult Services (monthly)	6. Development & Regeneration (quarterly)

2.4.2 Performance Panel conveners will be asked to provide a regular update to the Committee to enable discussion on key activities and impact. As the work of these Panels for this municipal year begins a schedule for Performance Panels updates to committee will be developed in due course.

2.5 Working Groups:

2.5.1 The following Working Groups will be convened during the year ahead, with projected date:

1. Emergency Planning & Resilience (11 Oct)	6. Roads / Footway Maintenance (Jan)
2. Community Cohesion & Hate Crime (14 Nov)	7. Renewable Energy (Feb)
3. Homelessness (Nov)	8. Digital Inclusion (Mar)
4. Car Park Charges (Nov)	9. Bus Services (Apr)
5. Local Flood Risk Management (annual - Dec)	10. Public Conveniences (May)

2.6 Regional Scrutiny:

2.6.1 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 Councillor 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 is taking place on 29 September 2017 will be hosted by Powys Council.

2.7 Progress

2.7.1 The committee is responsible for monitoring progress of work undertaken by the informal Panels and Working Groups and findings to ensure that this work is effective and has the required visibility.

2.7.2 **Appendix 4** provides a timetable of all scrutiny activities (projected or actual where dates are known). Lead councillors and officers are also noted within. As work progresses future committee meetings will be provided a snapshot of progress with all of the informal Panels and Working Groups established by the committee and their current position.

2.7.3 To ensure awareness and avoidance of duplication with the work of the Council's new Policy Development & Delivery Committees, which are based on the Council's corporate priorities, it will be beneficial for the committee to receive information about their work plans when available.

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: Debbie Smith

Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Agreed Scrutiny Work Programme 2017/18

Appendix 2: Committee Work Plan 2017/18

Appendix 3: Forward Look (Cabinet Business)

Appendix 4: Scrutiny Work Programme Activity Timetable 2017/18