



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 9 October 2017

Cabinet Member Question Session

Purpose:	To enable the Committee to question Cabinet Members on their work. The Committee's questions will broadly explore Cabinet Members' 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 Jennifer Raynor, Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning
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 Councillors:	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officers:	Tracey Meredith, Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Business Intelligence
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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:

Cllr Rob Stewart	- Economy & Strategy (Leader)
Cllr Clive Lloyd	- Service Transformation & Business Operations (Deputy Leader)
Cllr Jennifer Raynor	- Children, Education & Lifelong Learning

Cllr David Hopkins	- Commercial Opportunities & Innovation
Cllr Robert Francis-Davies	- Culture, Tourism & Major Projects
Cllr Mark Thomas	- Environment Services
Cllr June Burtonshaw /	- Future Generations
Cllr Mary Sherwood	
Cllr Mark Child	- Health & Wellbeing
Cllr Andrea Lewis	- Housing, Energy & Building Services
Cllr Will Evans	- Stronger Communities

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 main feature of Committee meetings. At least one cabinet member is scheduled to appear at each monthly Committee meeting, ensuring all 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 Jennifer Raynor, Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning

Within this cabinet portfolio, she is responsible for:

- Education Services from 5 to 19
- 21st Century Schools Programme
- Inclusion & Learner Support
- Planning & Resources
- Schools & School Improvement
- City of Learning - Member of UNESCO Commonwealth of Learning Steering Group
- Apprenticeships, Further Education & Readiness for Work
- Skills & Talent Project (City Deal)
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS)
- Education Regional Working (ERW)
- Schools' Organisation & Performance
- Quality in Education (QEd) Programme
- Education Charter
- Play
- Youth Services
- Promoting Youth Inclusion & Youth Citizenships
- Youth Offending Service (Y.O.S.)
- Opportunities for Young People

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Champion
- Children & Young People (CYP) Board
- Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy
- Skills & Talent project (City Deal)
- STEM Curriculum inc. coding

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 will also be 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 their 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 Members of the Committee have asked the Cabinet Member to tell the Committee about the council’s priorities with the Welsh Government’s 21st Century Schools and Education Programme.

3.4 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.

- 3.5 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 the portfolio service area in August 2016. Amongst the issues discussed then included:

- New Primary School in Gorseinon at Parc Y Werin
- Education Other Than At School
- Flying Start
- School Improvement
- Surplus School Places
- School Budgets
- School Attendance
- Education Department Structure

The actual correspondence relating to this meeting is attached (See **Appendix 2**) as the Committee may wish to follow up on these issues and previous discussion, as necessary.

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 the Committee has been asked to raise the following with the Councillor Raynor:

- What steps is the Cabinet Member taking to ensure that education is valued by all and that even the most challenging students are enabled to thrive?

(Evidence suggests that if a child is not securely attached to a primary caregiver early on in life then they are less likely to thrive. and some children fall dramatically below developmental milestones. Toddlers in this bracket sometimes have chaotic lifestyles throughout their childhood, becoming the most disruptive and challenging adults who place huge pressures on the public purse. For professionals often there are no surprises and we can predict human tragedy long before it happens)

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Portfolio Headlines

Appendix 2: Previous Correspondence