



## Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 12 February 2018

### Scrutiny Letters

<b>Purpose:</b>	To ensure the committee is aware of the scrutiny letters produced following various scrutiny activities, and to track responses to date.
<b>Content:</b>	The report includes a log of scrutiny letters produced this year, and provides a copy of correspondence between scrutiny and cabinet members where discussion is required.
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the scrutiny letters and responses</li><li>• Make comments, observations and recommendations as necessary</li></ul>
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Tracey Meredith, Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Business Intelligence
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<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Paul Cridland

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The production of scrutiny letters has become an established part of the way scrutiny operates in Swansea. Letters from the chair (or conveners) allow scrutiny to communicate directly and quickly with relevant cabinet members.
- 1.2 These letters are used to convey views and conclusions about particular issues discussed and provide the opportunity to raise concerns, ask for further information, and make recommendations. This enables scrutiny to engage with Cabinet Members on a regular and structured basis.

## 2. Reporting of Letters

- 2.1 All scrutiny letters, whether they are written by the Scrutiny Programme Committee or conveners of panels / working groups, are published to ensure visibility, of the outcomes from meetings, across the council and public.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee agenda also includes a copy of letters to/from Cabinet Members where specific discussion is required, e.g. letters relating to the Committee, Working Groups, and Inquiry Panel follow ups. Letters are included when cabinet member responses that were awaited are received or where a scrutiny letter did not require a response.
- 2.3 Where requested Cabinet Members are expected to respond in writing to scrutiny letters within 21 calendar days. The response should indicate what action (if any) they intend to take as a result of the views and recommendations made.
- 2.4 Letters relating to the work of Performance Panels are part of an ongoing dialogue with Cabinet Members and are therefore reported back and monitored by each Panel. The exception to this is the Public Services Board Scrutiny Performance Panel, whose letters will also be reported as this committee is the designated committee for scrutinising Swansea Public Services Board (for the purposes of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015). However all Performance Panel conveners will provide a progress report to the committee, including summary of correspondence with Cabinet Members and outcomes.

## 3. Letters Log

- 3.1 This report contains a log of scrutiny letters produced to enable the committee to maintain an overview of letters activity over the year – see **Appendix 1**. The letters log also shows the average time taken by Cabinet Members to respond to scrutiny letters, and the percentage of letters responded to within timescale.
- 3.2 The following letter(s) are also attached for discussion see **Appendix 2**:

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>
a	Committee (Cabinet Member Q & A)	13 Nov	Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing
b	Car Park Charges Working Group	28 Nov	Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Environment Services

### 3.3 Key Points:

- 3.3.1 Response from Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing – Amongst recommendations the committee requested that the Cabinet Member considers a method of regular feedback to councillors about the work of Local Area Co-ordinators. The Cabinet Member points out that a report is regularly provided to the LAC Leadership Group by individual Local Area Coordinators and can be shared with councillors. He asks for a steer from the Committee as to how widely this report should be shared, e.g. all Councillors?, Committee Members only? Adult Services Performance Panel members? Another option is for area specific reports to be circulated to relevant ward Councillors.

The Committee should discuss.

- 3.3.2 Car Park Charges Working Group – The Working Group discussed a range of issues relating to car parks and charging, including: the effect of winter charges; effect of charges on tourism and city centre footfall; and, quality of provision. As well as speaking to the relevant Cabinet Member and officers, the Panel was able to hear views from a number of members of the public about matters relating to foreshore car parks.

As a result of this scrutiny the Cabinet Member will work with officers to look at options as to how winter charges in foreshore car parks could be reviewed. One of the options is to look at increasing summer charges to compensate for a reduction in winter charges. The Working Group had also raised concerns about the problems associated with car parking ticket machines across our managed car parks. Officers have been working with neighbouring authorities, through the British Parking Association, to develop a joint procurement opportunity, which will provide a number of benefits including greater purchasing power, better technical support from the chosen manufacturer, greater emphasis for any contractor to perform, as failure will affect future contracts from this region. It is expected that combined procurement and bargaining power will bring about an improvement in the service.

## 4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications.

## 5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

**Background Papers:** None

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1:** Scrutiny Letters Log

**Appendix 2:** Correspondence between scrutiny and cabinet members