

Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

1. Inquiry Panels:

a) **Regional Working** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

Key Question: How can the Council, with its partners, develop and improve regional working for the benefit of Swansea and its residents?

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The panel has met with representatives from across different Council partnerships including for example Western Bay, ERW and City Deal on in February. The panel will now start to draw their inquiry to a close by reviewing the evidence they have gathered and discussing conclusions and possible recommendations at their meeting on the 15 March.

Projected End Date: April 2018

b) **Natural Environment** (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

Key Question: to be agreed

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Report		Final	

The panel will meet for the first time on 26 March to have a presentation which outlines how the Council currently meets its commitments in relation to the Natural Environment under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. A further meeting in April will entail an overall briefing for relevant background information and to discuss how current services meet requirements under the Act. This will provide the starting point for the Panel to decide the direction and content of the inquiry.

Projected End Date: tbc

2. Follow Up on Completed Inquiries:

Follow-ups of inquiries will consider both the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and wider impact / difference made. Inquiry Panels are reconvened between 6-12 months after cabinet decision on Inquiry reports.

Inquiry	Cabinet Decision	Recommendations			Follow Up Panel Meeting
		Agreed	Partly	Rejected	
School Governance	16 Jun 2016	6	2	4	25 Sep 2017 (complete)
		Response to other 4 recommendations: Action already in place			
Building Sustainable Communities	19 Jan 2017	10	0	0	17 Oct 2017 (complete)
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services	16 Feb 2017	13	1	1	15 Nov 2017 (further follow up tba in 9-12 months)
School Readiness	15 Jun 2017	9	0	0	27 Mar 2018
Tackling Poverty	15 Jun 2017	12	1	2	tba

3. Performance Panels:

a) Service Improvement & Finance (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

The last meeting on 14 February incorporated the Annual Budget Scrutiny and the Highways and Transportation Commissioning Review. Cllr Rob Stewart, Cllr Clive Lloyd and Finance Lead Ben Smith attended to advise and answer questions on the budget. Cllr Mark Thomas, Stuart Davies and Phil John attended from the Highways and Transportation Department to assist with scrutiny of the commissioning review. Feedback on both items was presented to Cabinet on 15 February and letters will follow.

b) Schools Performance (convener: Cllr Mo Sykes)

The Panel in February met with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors from Morrison Primary School to discuss their current performance and prospects for improvement. They will at their meeting on 15 March meet with Headteacher and Chair of Governors from Bishop Vaughan Catholic Secondary School.

c) **Public Services Board** (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

The next meeting will look at the Early Years Work Stream including a presentation from Sian Bingham, Early Years and Family Support Manager. There will also be a discussion around the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and how the Panel can and do use it to inform and develop their scrutiny work.

d) **Child & Family Services** (convener: Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams)

A progress report appears separately in the agenda as Item No. 7.

e) **Adult Services** (convener: Cllr Peter Black)

The Panel met on 13 February to discuss Intermediate Care, and received a presentation on the Welsh Community Care Information System. At this meeting the Panel also considered budget proposals in relation to Adult Services before going to Cabinet. The Panel will meet again on 20 March to hold a question and answer session with the Cabinet Member for Health & Well-being and to consider the Adult Services Complaints Annual Report 2016/17.

f) **Development & Regeneration** (convener: Cllr Jeff Jones)

The Panel will formally meet again in April. In the meantime, there was an informal briefing on work being undertaken around business cases linked with the City Deal. This should help inform the Panel of work taking place which underpins the development and regeneration projects and create a wider understanding of the current picture.

4. **Regional Scrutiny:**

a) **Education Through Regional Working**

A regional scrutiny councillors group has been set up in order to coordinate scrutiny work and ensure a consistent approach across the six councils participating in ERW. At present this involves two meetings per year. Swansea is represented by the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and Convener of the Schools Performance Panel.

The Group met on 9 March 2018 and was hosted by Carmarthenshire Council. The group discussed the Annual verified data for the region, the impact of the work of ERW, the effects of poverty in rural wales, the recently established ERW programme board and they met with Kirsty Williams the Cabinet, the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education about the future of regional working in this area. The next meeting will take place in September 2018 and will be hosted by Neath Port Talbot.

Swansea's Scrutiny Team is providing the support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW.

5. Working Groups:

A number of topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Working Groups.

a) Community Cohesion & Hate Crime (convener: Cllr Elliot King)

This Working Group met on 14 November which enabled information and discussion / questions about the council's work and effectiveness to support and promote community cohesion and tackle hate crime, and consider the current situation. The Working Group will meet again around May 2018 to focus on Community Cohesion, as there was concern about the lack of an overarching direction, or strategy, for this aspect.

b) Tethered Horses (convener: Cllr Jeff Jones)

The committee agreed to revisit concerns / issues regarding Tethered Horses. Working Group meetings were originally held in the first quarter of 2016, resulting in a number of recommendations addressing the issue of whether the council should introduce a ban on the tethering of horses. A further one-off Working Group meeting took place on 31 January to enable councillors to get a position statement on the current situation, find out how things have changed / improved since the scrutiny in 2016, and identify any issues outstanding. The Cabinet Member for Environment provided a written report and attended with relevant officer(s). The RSPCA and FOSH (Friends of Swansea Horses) also attended to provide an external perspective on developments.

Correspondence with the Cabinet Member has now been responded to by Councillor Mark Thomas and is included within the agenda papers for awareness and discussion (item 10 – Scrutiny Letters).

c) Roads & Footway Maintenance (convener: Cllr Sam Pritchard)

This is an area of public concern and enabled scrutiny councillors to ask about the situation in Swansea and work / measures to tackle problems, with reference to:

- Service practices and procedures (e.g. dealing with pot holes)
- Use of resources / impact of budget cuts
- Quality and effectiveness of maintenance and repair
- Efforts to minimise disruption to major access roads
- Challenges / improvement issues.

The Working Group meeting took place on 31 January and a letter has been sent to the Cabinet Member with the views and recommendations of the Working Group.

d) **Local Flood Risk Management** (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

This is an annual recurring item in the work programme. The working group met on 20 February to receive an annual update to monitor progress on the delivery of the Flood Risk Management Plan. The Cabinet Member for Environment Services attended to update the group.

e) **Renewable Energy** (convener: Cllr Sam Pritchard)

This will enable information and discussion / questions on the Council's aims and objectives, development projects / initiatives, and progress in the promotion and use of renewable energy, and benefits. This topic is relevant to the aims of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and sustainable development. This meeting has been arranged for 26 March.

f) **Homelessness** (convener: Cllr Peter Black)

This will enable information, questions and discussion on activities to manage homelessness, the current position, performance of relevant services, and challenges and will also enable opportunity to influence the draft Homelessness Strategy. This meeting is anticipated to take place before the end of April.

Further Working Groups to be convened, in the order of priority shown (membership / conveners to be appointed in due course):

1. **Digital Inclusion**

This will enable councillors to follow up on the Working Group meeting held in March 2017. At that meeting the Working Group detailed a number of issues to be considered as part of a review of the Council's digital inclusion strategy. Councillors will be able to consider how well prepared both the Council itself and the public is to use and communicate via digital technology.

2. **Bus Services**

This will enable information and discussion / questions about the relationship between the Council and service providers e.g. progress with the agreement of a Quality Bus Contract, and consider current service issues.

3. **Public Conveniences**

This will enable information and discussion / questions on public convenience provision / access in Swansea, and relevant concerns.

4. Archive Service

This would enable discussion about current service delivery, performance, and challenges. There is particular concern about accommodation issues and their effect on the service.