



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 9 April 2018

Scrutiny Letters

Purpose:	To ensure the committee is aware of the scrutiny letters produced following various scrutiny activities, and to track responses to date.
Content:	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.
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the scrutiny letters and responses• Make comments, observations and recommendations as necessary
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 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**:

	Activity	Meeting Date	Correspondence
a	Roads & Footway Maintenance Working Group	31 Jan	Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Environment Services

3.3 Points to highlight:

3.3.1 Roads & Footway Maintenance Working Group – The Working Group met on 31 January to look at functions, standards and operational activities in relation to highway maintenance. As a result of concerns / issues raised with the Cabinet Member for Environment, action will include:

- Looking at how surface water flooding and drainage issues affecting road maintenance can be treated as enforcement matters if resulting from new developments.
- Raising debate about whether developers should be pressured in order for highways to be adopted.
- Prioritising investment in highway drainage in those areas identified in the Authority's Floor Risk Management Plan.
- Monitoring reporting levels in relation to the 48hr pothole initiative and working with the Corporate Communications Team to further publicise.
- Developing a code of practice for developers / builders in relation to the obstruction of the carriageways by vehicles

The Committee should note that Working Group members feel that Roads & Footway Maintenance could be subject of in-depth inquiry, and consider this request, although the Cabinet Member points to previous scrutiny over recent years. As the municipal year is coming to an end, this can be considered at the next Scrutiny Work Planning Conference.

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