



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 9 April 2018

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 Members will appear before the Committee to participate in a question and answer session: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor June Burtonshaw and Councillor Mary Sherwood, Cabinet Members for Future Generations
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 Councillor:	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer:	Tracey Meredith, Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Business Intelligence
Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Coordinator Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Stephanie Williams
Finance Officer:	Paul Cridland

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 Members will appear before the Committee:

a) Councillor June Burtonshaw and Councillor Mary Sherwood, Cabinet Members for Future Generations

Within this cabinet portfolio, they are responsible for:

- Future Generations Bill Adoption
- Equalities (Access to Services)
- Diversity
- Risk & Resilience
- Engagement
- Strategic Estates & Property inc. Asset Rationalisation
- Community Building & Asset Transfer Opportunities
- Suburban Centres & Community regeneration Initiatives
- Members Community Budget Scheme
- Digital Inclusion
- Sustainable Development
- Biodiversity
- Poverty Reduction

3. Approach to Questions

3.1 At the Cabinet Member Question Sessions the Committee will generally ask cabinet members about:

- relevant priorities / objectives, notable activities and achievements, improvement / impact made, and service user / public engagement.

- what they hope to achieve over the coming months and challenges, including any key decisions they plan take to Cabinet over the next year.
 - reflections on their engagement with scrutiny and whether there is any issue relevant to their portfolio that they would suggest for scrutiny, not otherwise covered in the work programme – to ensure scrutiny activity is aligned to priorities and focussed on the right things.
- 3.2 In terms of themes that cut across all cabinet portfolios, the Committee is interested in asking Cabinet Members about:
- impact of Well-being of Future Generations Act – impact on their work / decisions e.g. whether there is a greater focus on long-term thinking, collaboration / involvement etc
 - Public Services Board (PSB) – their relationship with the work of the PSB; how the PSB impacts on their portfolio and how it is making a difference etc
- 3.3 Cabinet Members will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the Committee. The Cabinet Members have provided a report on ‘headlines’ in relation to the portfolio to help the Committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact – see **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4 Following each session the chair will write to the Cabinet Members in order to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the Committee, and any actions for them 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 This is a new Cabinet portfolio, established in May 2017, therefore first Q & A session on this specific portfolio. However the following relevant issues were discussed by the committee during last year:
- Community Building and Asset Transfer – issue was raised about the length of leases for community buildings which impact on whether community groups could bid for funds to improve buildings. Queries also raised about the advice and support available to community groups / volunteers
 - Digital Inclusion - given the considerable shift towards on-line council business and communication, concern about the extent to which it may be excluding people with little or no access to ICT, most likely those in poverty. Committee felt this needs to be

considered and alternative methods of contact need to remain available as much as possible.

4.2 Relevant contact with scrutiny this year:

- Building Sustainable Communities Inquiry Panel Follow Up (Oct 2017):
The Cabinet Member(s) provided a report which helped the Panel to assess the impact of its work. The report detailed progress against recommendations that were agreed by cabinet in January 2017. The Panel wrote to the Cabinet Member(s) in November with their views. The Panel was pleased with the delivery of actions against scrutiny recommendations. The monitoring on the inquiry is now complete.
- Scrutiny Programme Committee (Feb 2018):
The Committee carried out pre-decision scrutiny on the Cabinet Member's report on 'Transfer of Management of Allotments to Management Associations'. The Cabinet Member attended the Committee meeting to present the cabinet report and respond to questions. The Chair attended the Cabinet meeting on 15 February to verbally feedback the Committee's views. The Committee was supportive of the proposed decision but raised some issues for the attention of Cabinet. The formal letter sent by the Committee following its meeting was responded to by the Cabinet Member.

The Cabinet Member will also be engaged in the following planned / future activities:

- Natural Environment Inquiry Panel – Councillors Burtonshaw and Sherwood have been invited to the 'planning' meeting on 24 April along with relevant officers. The invitees will be providing a service / policy overview to the Panel and answer any related questions, which will help inform the Panel's decisions about the focus on an inquiry. Other contributions from the Cabinet Members when the evidence gathering is underway may also follow.
- Digital Inclusion Working Group - Councillors will 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 / engage via digital means.

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 no questions have been received.

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: Key Headlines for the Future Generations Portfolio

Appendix 2: Previous Correspondence