



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Council Chamber - Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 9 July 2018 at 4.30 pm

**Present:** Councillor M H Jones (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

M Durke  
D W Helliwell  
W G Lewis

**Councillor(s)**

E W Fitzgerald  
T J Hennegan  
G J Tanner

**Councillor(s)**

L S Gibbard  
P K Jones

**Co-opted Member(s)**

A Roberts

**Officer(s)**

Allison Lowe  
Brij Madahar  
Lyndsay Thomas

Democratic Services Officer  
Scrutiny Team Leader  
Senior Lawyer

**Also Present:**

C H Holley  
J W Jones

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): C Anderson, E T Kirchner and W G Thomas  
Co-Opted Member(s): D Anderson-Thomas

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**14 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

**15 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.**

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, no declarations of Whipped Votes or Party Whips were declared.

**16 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 11 June 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**17 Public Question Time.**

There were no public questions.

**18 Role of the Scrutiny Programme Committee.**

The Chair and Scrutiny Team Leader presented a report on the Role of the Scrutiny Programme Committee. Councillors newly elected to the Committee were welcomed.

The following areas were highlighted: -

- Role of the Scrutiny Programme Committee in developing, managing and monitoring the work programme;
- Membership of the Scrutiny Programme Committee;
- Scrutiny Conveners and their Role Description;
- Effective Working – to consider the effective working of the Committee;
- Terms of Reference.

Permission was sought from the Committee to continue the practice of co-opting Performance Panel Conveners on to the Scrutiny Programme Committee (if they were not already members). They would be co-opted on to the Committee in a non-voting capacity.

The Committee also shared views about how it could work most effectively, so that it could be well prepared for meetings and inclusive, for example in developing questions in advance, participating in pre-meetings, length of committee meetings, regularly reflecting on how well the Committee is working.

The Committee discussed the way in which Conveners were selected for the individual Inquiry Panels / Performance Panels and Working Groups.

The Chair stated that with the exception of the Public Services Board Performance Panel, the existing Performance Panels had been asked to confirm their convener for the 2018/19 municipal year. All those that had met so far had agreed to maintain the same Convener for the forthcoming year.

In view of the debate regarding the process for appointing Conveners, it was agreed that a process for selecting Conveners be reported towards the end of the current municipal year (eg February 2019) in order that the approach for the 2019/20 Municipal Year is clear and agreed.

**Agreed that:**

- 1) The contents of the report be noted;
- 2) The continued co-option of Performance Panel Members as set out in at paragraph 4.4 of the report be endorsed;
- 3) The Scrutiny Team Leader circulate the membership list for all Scrutiny Panels & Working Groups to the Committee;
- 4) The Scrutiny Team Leader circulate any relevant guidance from the Welsh Government in relation to selecting Conveners/Chairs.

- 5) A report on the process for selecting Conveners be brought to Committee ahead of the next Municipal Year, around February 2019.

## **19 Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19.**

The Chair presented a report on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19 for consideration.

The Scrutiny Team Leader provided the background to the Scrutiny Work Programme and provided an overview of the Work Planning Conference. He highlighted the need for the Work Programme to be aligned with the Corporate Priorities but balanced to address issues of community concern. He referred to the guiding principles - the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant, focussed on issues of concern, and represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources.

He referred to the draft Work Programme for 2018/19 (Appendix 3 of the report) which took into account last's years plan, work already committed, and feedback from the Work Planning Conference, which included input from the Chief Executive on priorities and strategic challenges. The Programme shows the proposed topics that will be looked at either through in-depth work, ongoing monitoring activities, or with a light-touch.

The Committee held a discussion on the draft Work Programme that centred around the following: -

### Inquiry Panels

Equalities Inquiry – this would be the first new Inquiry of this municipal year.

Community Regeneration – the need to clearly define what aspect this would look at. It was confirmed that this will be established once the exact terms of reference and key questions are finalised, following initial briefing session of the Inquiry Panel. The Committee was alerted to the fact that there is already an independent review going on about the Communities First Programme and its impact in Swansea since 2013. It was noted that if this topic was the second scrutiny inquiry it would not commence until later in the year (once the Natural Environment Inquiry concludes) so even if agreed to put into the programme the Committee could still seek advice about whether a scrutiny inquiry would be duplication or how any scrutiny can best compliment this work. If necessary the Committee could look at another topic for inquiry in due course, for example work on Anti-Social Behaviour potentially could be looked at by this method.

### Performance Panels

Committee acknowledged proposed change in frequency – Development & Regeneration Panel increasing to every two months and Public Services Board Panel becoming a quarterly activity.

The Committee noted the various issues which could be picked up by relevant Performance Panels as part of their ongoing monitoring activities. In addition to the

issues contained in the appendix it was agreed that the Service Improvement & Finance Panel could include the Welsh Housing Quality Standard in its work plan given it has been identified as a key strategic challenge for the authority.

### Working Groups

There was a debate about the list of suggested topics and priority order.

It was noted that the Homelessness Working Group and Community Cohesion Working Group have now been completed, and that the Local Flood Risk Management Working Group will have an additional meeting around September / October before reverting back to an annual meeting in first half of 2019.

It was noted that if required anti-social behaviour issues could be raised during the annual crime and disorder scrutiny session around March 2019.

It was also highlighted that a Question Session with the Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy was planned for the next Committee meeting on 13 August and members were invited to think about developing questions for that session.

### **Agreed that:**

1. The draft Work Programme for 2018/19 be approved with the following amendments:
  - Welsh Housing Quality Standard be added to list of issues suitable for referral to Performance Panels.
  - Priority order of first four Working Groups agreed:
    1. Residents Parking
    2. Air / Noise Pollution
    3. Welfare Reform
    4. Environmental Enforcement
  - Second Working Group Priority list (to cover in 2<sup>nd</sup> six months) to include:
    - Digital Inclusion
    - Tourism
    - Anti-Social Behaviour
    - Archive Service
  - Reserve Working Group list:
    - Change 'Cultural Heritage' to 'Culture & Heritage'.
2. The plan for future Committee meetings, including schedule of Cabinet Member Question Sessions, be approved.

## **20 Scrutiny Improvement & Development Objectives.**

The Chair presented a report to consider objectives for the year ahead on the improvement and development of scrutiny process and practice.

The draft improvement objectives, taking into account annual councillor scrutiny survey responses and feedback from self-evaluation / reflection by committee members, were outlined by the Scrutiny Team Leader as follows:

- 1) We need more of our work to be reported to Cabinet so that there is more formal consideration of scrutiny conclusions and recommendations.
- 2) We need to be involved at an earlier stage in proposed Cabinet decisions so that our input can be more meaningful.
- 3) We need to increase opportunities for participation so that more councillors can get involved in the work of scrutiny.
- 4) We need to strengthen follow up of all scrutiny recommendations so that the response and difference made can be assessed.
- 5) We need more coverage in the media so that people are more aware of our work.

It was agreed that these were the priorities and members acknowledged that each of the above would need to be supported by specific actions to deliver the improvement sought. Ideas about possible actions were exchanged, for example findings from Working Groups being presented via short reports to Cabinet instead of via letter to relevant Cabinet Member, working more closely with Communications Officers to increase media coverage, holding some meetings in the community.

It was noted that any agreed objectives will need to be reviewed, and if necessary revised, when the findings of the Wales Audit Office Review of Scrutiny, which took place earlier this year, are received.

In addition, Councillor Training and development needs were discussed. Whilst the Annual Councillor Survey suggested that the majority of Councillors did not indicate any specific needs, it was suggested that any future opportunities be advertised to determine interest.

**Agreed** that the five Scrutiny Improvement Objectives be confirmed and the Scrutiny Team Leader report an action plan to a future meeting,

## **21 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.**

The Chair presented a report on Scrutiny Panel / Working Group Membership.

### **Agreed:**

- 1) Councillors J Hale, E Kirchner, Y Jardine, P K Jones and Hazel Morris be added to Adult Services Performance Panel;
- 2) Councillor A Pugh be removed from Adult Services Performance Panel;
- 3) Councillor A Pugh be removed from Child & Family Services Performance Panel
- 4) Councillor E J King be removed from the following Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups:
  - Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services Inquiry Panel;
  - Community Cohesion & Hate Crime Working Group;

- Homelessness Working Group.

**22 Scrutiny Letters.**

The Committee was provided with an updated log of all letters to / from Cabinet Members so far this year, and a copy of recent correspondence for discussion.

A response from Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy in relation to the Pre-Decision of Cabinet Report: More Homes Parc Yr Helyg Site Options Appraisal had been received after the agenda pack had been circulated. The letter had been circulated to the Committee via email for their information.

The Scrutiny Letters and Cabinet Member responses were **noted**.

**23 Audit Committee Work Plan (For Information).**

The Audit Committee Work Plan for 2018-2019 was noted.

**24 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.**

The dates and times of upcoming Panel / Working Group meetings were **noted**.

The meeting ended at 5.32 pm

**Chair**