



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 August 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 Member will appear before the Committee to participate in a question and answer session: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy
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
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1. Introduction

1.1 One of the most important roles that scrutiny carries out is holding the Council's Cabinet to account. The Cabinet (also known as the Executive) is made up of the Leader and other councillors, appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific portfolio responsibilities:

Cllr Rob Stewart	- Economy & Strategy (Leader)
Cllr Clive Lloyd	- Business Transformation & Performance (Deputy Leader)
Cllr Mary Sherwood & Cllr June Burtonshaw	- Better Communities - People
Cllr Mark Child	- Better Communities - Place
	- Care, Health & Ageing Well

Cllr Elliot King &	- Children Services - Early Years
Cllr Will Evans	- Children Services - Young People
Cllr David Hopkins	- Delivery
Cllr Jennifer Raynor	- Education Improvement, Learning & Skills
Cllr Mark Thomas	- Environment & Infrastructure Management
Cllr Andrea Lewis	- Homes & Energy
Cllr Robert Francis-Davies	- Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

- 1.2 By acting as a 'critical friend' scrutiny has the opportunity to challenge the Cabinet and individual cabinet members on their actions and 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 Member will appear before the Committee:

a) Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy

Within this cabinet portfolio, she is responsible for:

- Cooperative Housing
- Corporate Building & Property Services
- Council House Management
- Council House Repairs
- District Heating Schemes
- Energy
- Green Transport & Green vehicle adoption (incl. infrastructure works)
- Homelessness & Supporting People
- Homes as Power Stations (City Deal)
- Housing Adaptions & Renewal Schemes
- Housing Policy, Affordable Housing & Housing Options;
- More Homes Delivery
- Poverty Reduction
- Sheltered Housing
- Tenancy Enforcement
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)
- Lead Elements of Sustainable Swansea

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:

- Well-being of Future Generations Act – impact on their work / decisions e.g. what they are doing to achieve the well-being goals and ways of working, 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 Member has 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 Amongst questions from the Committee is the intention to ask the Cabinet Member about: what impact the introduction of universal credit has had on the willingness of registered social landlords to accept referrals from housing options for rehousing.

3.5 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.

3.6 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 Changes were announced by the Leader to cabinet portfolios, at the Council Annual General Meeting in May. Councillor Lewis was previously portfolio holder for Housing, Energy & Building Services, The following issues relevant to the Homes & Energy portfolio were discussed by the Committee during last year:

- Homelessness – development of a Homelessness Strategy
- Council Housing / Building Fire Safety – implications / actions taken regarding safety of council housing and buildings following Grenfell Tower fire in London. Installation of sprinkler systems.
- More Homes Council Housing Building Project – progress at Milford (now Colliers) Way and costs
- Electric Vehicles – increase in Council’s electric vehicle fleet and efforts to promote public usage of electric vehicles, and develop vehicle charging infrastructure; and
- Green Energy Schemes – current / future plans.

The correspondence between the Committee and the Cabinet Member relating to previous Q & A session is **attached**.

4.2 Scrutiny involving the Cabinet Member over the past year:

- Committee Pre-decision scrutiny – More Homes Pilot Scheme:
The Committee has been keeping a watching brief on the Council’s house building pilot project and carried out pre-decision scrutiny of cabinet reports in November 2017 on the scheme at Milford (now Colliers) Way, and June 2018 on the site options appraisal regarding the second scheme at Parc Yr Helyg.
- Renewable Energy Working Group:
The Cabinet Member attended a meeting in March 2018 which enabled questions and discussion on the Council’s aims and objectives, development projects/initiatives and progress in promotion and use of renewable energy and benefits. As a result of concerns/issues raised with the Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy action will include the following:
 - The Council will look to further extend any opportunities for its residents and tenants in terms of providing information on energy efficiency.
 - The Council will continue to explore any opportunities within its own asset base for options for using hydro power more.
 - The Council will continue to monitor potential future opportunities for its own assets to take advantage of installing solar panels on building roofs.
 - The Working Group’s comments in relation to funding for renewable energy will be borne in mind when any further

decisions are made about funding the various council priorities when future council budgets are set.

- Homelessness Working Group (May / June 2018)
Two meetings were held to explore activities to manage homelessness, look at the current position, performance of relevant services, and challenges. The Working Group's work would also enable opportunity to influence the draft Homelessness Strategy which is currently in development. The Working Group, wrote to the Cabinet Member with its views and recommendations, raising a number of concerns about current provision. The correspondence with the Cabinet Member, including her response, is included in this agenda pack within item 11 (scrutiny letters).

The Committee may wish to follow up on these issues, as necessary.

- 4.3 The Committee should note that the Cabinet Member will also be engaged in the following planned / future activity:

- Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel – the Cabinet Member will be invited to attend to discuss progress in the delivery of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

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. Next Session

- 6.1 The next Cabinet Member Question Session on 10 September will be with Councillor Clive Lloyd (Deputy Leader) to focus on the Business Transformation & Performance cabinet portfolio.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Key Headlines for the Homes & Energy Portfolio