

Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups

1. Inquiry Panels:

These will undertake in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis, and will be expected to take around six months to complete to enable wide-ranging evidence gathering, and production of a final report with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers).

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’s final report was approved for submission to Cabinet for decision on 11 June. The report was presented to Cabinet on 21 June and a response to the recommendations will usually follow within two months of reporting.

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

Key Question: What should Swansea Council be doing to maintain, enhance and promote its natural environment and biodiversity, and in doing so promote the resilience of eco-systems?

Terms of Reference of this inquiry are attached to this report.

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Panel had their third meeting on the 18 June and fourth meeting on 26 July. The June meeting was a gathering of organisations including NRW, Plant Life and RSPB (amongst others). These organisations outlined to their work to the Panel and made suggestions about how the Council could work better both in partnership and as a standalone organisation. The fourth meeting was a meeting with voluntary ‘Friends of’ groups who are managing Council green spaces. They spoke to the Panel on the work they do in relation to the natural environment and biodiversity and talked about what support they may need going forward to continue to manage the land.

Projected End Date: November 2018

c) **Equalities** (convener: tbc)

Key Question: tbc

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

Expressions of interest to participate in this potential new inquiry have been invited and are reported under agenda item no. 8 for the Committee's agreement.

Once agreed the first stage will be for a 'pre-inquiry' meeting to be arranged which will involve an overview / briefing on the subject matter, with advice from relevant cabinet members / officers and existing research & information. This will help inform decisions about how scrutiny can contribute to improvement and the focus, scale and direction of any inquiry. If the Panel agrees an inquiry should be undertaken then it will then need to put together appropriate Terms of Reference for this work, for example:

- how well the Council is meeting requirements under the Equality Act 2010 / Public Sector Equality Duty for Wales and equality objectives
- how effectively equalities are being embedded across the Council, and how this is being monitored & measured
- examination of specific equality issues / areas / groups e.g. make-up/diversity of the Council workforce, gender pay, engagement with different groups during consultation processes, access to council services etc.

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	
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services	16 Feb 2017	13	1	1	(i) 15 Nov 2017 (ii) 21 Nov 2018
Tackling Poverty	15 Jun 2017	12	1	2	Sep 2018 tbc

3. Performance Panels:

Performance Panels enable regular and structured in-depth monitoring of performance and challenge within these key areas:

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

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

b) **Schools Performance** (convener: Cllr Mo Sykes)

The Panel met twice in July, firstly, to visit Gowerton Primary School Foundation Phase and, secondly, to carry out pre-decision scrutiny on the future structure and delivery of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service. They will next meet in September when they will speak to the Head of Achievement and Partnership Service about the School Improvement Service, the Education through Regional Working Business Plan priorities and receive a briefing on the new standards for teachers and school leaders.

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

The Panel had a session on the 18 July looking at Governance of the Public Services Board as a whole. The Panel received a report by Suzy Richards which answered many questions around governance. The report included the Terms of Reference and the Partnership Manual. Councillor Clive Lloyd came to answer questions and update the Panel on the work of the Board. The next meeting will be in October, which will feature the Future Generations Commissioner coming to speak to the Panel about the Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Public Services Boards in general. The remainder of the work plan is still being developed.

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

The Panel met on 25 June and discussed the impact of Prevention and Early Intervention on Child and Family Services. They also agreed the work programme for the coming year. The Panel will next meet on 28 August when they will monitor the performance of the Service, discuss the Adoption Service including the recent inspection and receive an update on Advocacy.

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

The Panel met last on 17 July to receive a presentation and video and discuss Local Area Coordination. The next meeting is due to take place on 21 August when they will look at the performance monitoring reports for the Service. Following this meeting the Panel will decide if they need to invite ABMU Health Board to a future meeting to discuss issues around Continuing Health Care.

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

The Panel met on 19 July to discuss the report on Swansea Regeneration Projects Update which went to Cabinet on 21 June. The financial implications of this were reviewed with Section 151 Officer. In terms of developing the work of the Panel and structured monitoring the Convener of the Panel recently met with Martin Nicholls, Director-Place to discuss this and was informed that a new monitoring report is being developed. This will come to Panel at every meeting to provide a consistent and regular update. Along with this, there will be individual items which will be looked at as one off topics by the Panel. These items are flexible throughout the year.

4. Regional Scrutiny:

This is collaborative scrutiny with other Local Authorities for topics / issues of shared interest or concern, and models of regional working.

a) **Education Through Regional Working**

A regional scrutiny councillors group meets 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 will next meet on the 10 September 2018 and will be hosted by Neath Port Talbot Council. The Group will discuss the national model for education consortia, the ERW review and reform programme, the Measuring Impact Report and Pupil Performance at Key Stage 4 across the region. The meeting following this will take place on the 25 March 2019 and will be hosted by Swansea Council.

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

b) **Swansea Bay City Deal**

A Joint Scrutiny Committee has recently been established which will involve three councillor representatives from each of the four Councils involved in the City Deal meeting to scrutinise the work of the Joint Committee responsible for delivering the City Deal Programme. The Joint Scrutiny Committee will be serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council, which they will arrange in due course.

5. Working Groups:

A number of topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Working Groups. These enable a 'light-touch' approach to specific topics of concern and will be planned as a one-off meeting primarily involving discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) / officer(s) (and any other persons called) to gather information, ask questions, and raise any concerns.

a) **Community Cohesion & Hate Crime** (convener: Meeting 1 Cllr Elliot King and Meeting 2 Cllr Louise Gibbard)

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.

A second meeting to look in more detail at the Community Cohesion aspect took place on the 20 June 2018 which looked at concerns concern raised about the lack of an overarching direction, or strategy, for this aspect. The Working Group has written to the Cabinet Member for Better Communities (People) and a response is awaited. Both letters will then be reported to the Committee.

b) **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 Scrutiny Programme Committee has agreed an additional meeting to monitor progress on the recommendations made by the Group. This will take place on 8 October.

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

The second meeting of this Working Group took place on 12 June and used the information gathered from the first meeting and from councillor visits to put questions to the Cabinet Member, officers of the Council and representatives of ABMU Health Board. A letter was then sent to the Cabinet Member with the views and recommendations of the group. A response was received from the Cabinet Member on 26 July. This correspondence is included in agenda item 10 (Scrutiny Letters).

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

1. Residents Parking

This will enable information, questions and discussion about concerns that have been raised about the new electronic permit issuing process, as well as other relevant issues e.g. members of the public have raised issues about the adequacy of parking provision, and whether there is potential for charging given financial pressures has / is being explored.

2. Air / Noise Pollution

This will enable information, questions and discussion on the situation in Swansea and effects, how pollution is measured / monitored, and efforts to tackle problems and reduce.

3. Welfare Reform

This will enable information, questions and discussion on the impact of welfare reform in Swansea, e.g. Universal Credit, and work / measures in place to support citizens and mitigate problems.

4. Environmental Enforcement

This will enable information, questions and discussion about what is being done in relation to the enforcement / prevention of environmental issues such as fly tipping, dog fouling, litter, pavement parking etc., concerns about which seem to be regularly raised by the public.

Further Working Groups to be convened in the second half of 2018/19 (membership / conveners to be appointed in due course):

- **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 / engage via digital technology.

- **Tourism**

This will enable assessment of current activities taking into account previous scrutiny inquiry, and include discussion on issue raised about the maintenance / development of coastal path.

- **Anti-Social Behaviour**

This will enable information, questions and discussion on current approaches to tackle anti-social behaviour in our communities and their effectiveness.

- **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.