



## Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 8 October 2018

### Cabinet Member Question Session

<b>Purpose:</b>	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.
<b>Content:</b>	The following Cabinet Member will appear before the Committee to participate in a question and answer session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Jennifer Raynor, Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning &amp; Skills</li> </ul>
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question the Cabinet Member on relevant matters</li> <li>• Make comments and recommendations as necessary</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
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<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	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 (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
Cllr Elliot King	- Care, Health & Ageing Well
	- 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 Jennifer Raynor, Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills

Within this cabinet portfolio, she is responsible for:

- 21st Century Schools Programme
- Apprenticeships lead
- Band B Scoping and Delivery
- Catchment Review
- City of Learning - Member of UNESCO COL (Commonwealth of Learning) steering group
- Education Charter
- Education Regional Working (ERW)
- Education Services from 5 to 19
- Further Education
- Inclusion & Learner Support
- NEETS Prevention (lead)
- Quality in Education (QEd) Programme
- Readiness for Work lead
- Regional Workforce Planning & Skills Development
- Schools Estate Planning & Resources Planning
- School Improvement
- Schools' Organisation & Performance
- Skills & Talent Project (City Deal)
- 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, e.g. 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 some written information in support of her appearance to assist the Committee - see **Appendix 1**.

3.4 Amongst questions from the Committee is the intention to ask the Cabinet Member about how the schools are chosen for the 21st Century schools funding programme.

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 Raynor was previously portfolio holder for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning. The following issues relevant to her current Education Improvement, Learning & Skills portfolio were discussed by the Committee during last year:

- 21st Century School Programme,
- Sale of Surplus Education Land
- Welsh Education Strategic Plan
- Education Inclusion,
- School Catchment Areas
- School Curriculum
- Challenge Advisors
- Education Psychologists
- School Governing Bodies
- Delegated School Budgets
- Pupil Health

The correspondence between the Committee and the Cabinet Member relating to previous Q & A session (October 2017) is **attached**.

4.2 Members may also wish to follow up, as necessary, on the Cabinet Member's engagement both with the Committee and relevant Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups over the past year.

Scrutiny involving the Cabinet Member over the past year:

- Schools Performance Panel:  
There is regular correspondence with the Cabinet Member, who was written to over the past year about the following issues:
  - Education Other Than At School (October 2017)
  - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools (November 2017)
  - School Improvement Service (November 2017)
  - Olchfa and Parklands Collaboration on New Curriculum (November 2017)
  - Annual Review of Education Performance (February 2018)
  - Estyn Report Progress Update (February 2018)
  - Morriston Primary School (February 2018)
  - Bishop Vaughan Catholic School (April 2018)
  - Science in Schools (June 2018)
  - Changes to the Ethnic Minority Achievement Unit (July 2018)
  - The Foundation Phase following visit / meeting at Gowerton Primary School (July 2018).

- School Governance Inquiry:  
In September 2017 the Inquiry Panel followed up with the Cabinet Member on the implementation of agreed scrutiny recommendations and impact of the scrutiny inquiry. The Panel agreed to conclude monitoring of the inquiry. The inquiry was credited with prompting reflection on the support and training provided to school governors, and highlighting the need for closer working between governing bodies and school challenge advisors. The Panel felt that good progress had been made with many of the recommendations but highlighted the need for better signposting of information to governors. The Panel were also pleased to hear that Challenge Advisors were now attending governing bodies in the Autumn Term for schools that are identified as Red or Amber. The Panel wrote to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning with its view on how things have changed and outstanding issues that need attention. Any further issues relating to School Governance would be followed up via the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel.
  
- School Readiness Scrutiny Inquiry  
The Panel wrote to the Cllr Raynor and the then lead Cabinet Member (Health and Wellbeing) following an update on the impact and progress made with recommendations agreed by Cabinet in relation to this piece of work. The Inquiry Panel were pleased to hear that its work and the resulting recommendations have made an impact in many areas and that substantial progress had been made. They were keen to hear about changes that have occurred at operational and strategic levels - that the strategic changes will ensure a longer term commitment and strategy is in place, whilst at an operational level services are becoming more wide spread, aligned and linked across different organisations. They recognised that some of the recommendations made will have a longer term development timescale. The Panel therefore agreed to refer those outstanding recommendations to the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel to follow up upon in 12 months' time.

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

- Schools Performance Panel – the Cabinet Member will continue to be involved as the Panel monitors and challenges school improvement. She will also be attending the Panel to discuss
  - Education Other Than At School and progress with the New Wellbeing and Behaviour Plan in November 2018
  - The Annual Education Performance published data in January 2019
  - The Annual Budget as it relates to Education matters in February 2019.

- The Cabinet Member is also copied in to correspondence that the Education Through Regional Working (ERW) Scrutiny Councillor Group have with the ERW Joint Committee.

## **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 12 November will be with Councillors Will Evans and Elliot King to focus on the Children Services (Early Years & Young People) 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 Cabinet Portfolio

**Appendix 2:** Previous Correspondence