



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 January 2019

Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19

Purpose:	This reports on progress with the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018/19 and information about current scrutiny activities which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.
Content:	The agreed work programme is attached, which includes the topics that will be examined by scrutiny through various Panels and Working Groups. The plan for future committee meetings is also attached.
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• plan for the committee meetings ahead• consider opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny• review the scrutiny work programme (including progress of current Panels and Working Groups)
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer:	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer
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Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee is responsible for developing the Council's scrutiny work programme, and managing the overall work of scrutiny to ensure that it is as effective as possible.
- 1.2 A report is provided to each meeting to enable the committee to maintain an overview of agreed scrutiny activities, monitor progress, and coordinate work as necessary.

- 1.3 The broad aim of the scrutiny function is to:
- help improve services
 - provide an effective challenge to the executive
 - engage members in the development of policies, strategies and plans
 - engage the public
- 1.4 The Scrutiny Work Programme is guided by the overriding principle that the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant, focussed on issues of concern, and represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources.

It also needs to be:

- manageable, realistic and achievable given resources available
 - relevant to council priorities
 - adding value and having maximum impact
 - coordinated and avoid duplication
- 1.5 The work of scrutiny is undertaken primarily in three ways – through the Committee itself, by establishing informal panels or via one-off working groups. Panels and Working Groups would be open to all non-executive councillors - the Committee will agree membership and conveners following expressions of interest.
- 1.6 Scrutiny will regularly send letters to Cabinet Members communicating findings, views and recommendations for improvement and, where appropriate, by producing reports. Inquiry panels will always produce a final report at the end of the inquiry with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers), informed by the evidence gathered. Inquiry panels will reconvene to follow up on the implementation of agreed recommendations and the impact of their work – usually 6-12 months following cabinet decision.
- 1.7 Although much of the work of scrutiny is carried out by informal panels and working groups these meetings are accessible to the public. Agendas, reports and letters relating to all such scrutiny activities are published, in the same manner as the committee, on the Council's modern.gov online platform:
<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

2. Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19

- 2.1.1 The agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018/19 is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.1.2 The following paragraphs break down the work programme by specific ways of working to provide a brief overview.

2.2 Scrutiny Programme Committee:

2.2.1 The Committee work plan for the year ahead is attached as **Appendix 2**. This should be kept under review to ensure it represents a robust and effective plan. The plan includes a schedule of future Cabinet Member Question & Answer Sessions.

2.2.2 Committee members should review and confirm items for the next and future meetings giving specific consideration to who should attend so that meetings are always well planned and prepared for, e.g. information required and key questions that the Committee wishes to ask.

2.2.3 The main item scheduled for the next Committee meeting on 11 February is:

- Cabinet Member Question Session: Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management - Councillor Mark Thomas.

2.2.4 The Committee will have the opportunity to review priorities and introduce issues of concern as and when they arise, e.g. pre-decision scrutiny which may require extra meetings.

2.2.5 Pre-decision scrutiny – this is carried out by the Committee unless delegated elsewhere. The Committee is invited to consider the available information on future cabinet business and any opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny, taking into account strategic impact, public interest, and financial implications (see Cabinet Forward Plan attached as **Appendix 3**). Any requests will require discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) to confirm timescales and window of opportunity for scrutiny involvement. Pre-decision scrutiny enables scrutiny to develop understanding about and ask questions on proposed Cabinet reports to provide ‘critical friend’ challenge and influence decision-making.

2.2.6 Commissioning Reviews – it has already been acknowledged that reports about the various commissioning reviews / new cross-cutting reviews that are planned over the next year are key cabinet decisions and should be subject to scrutiny. There is a general agreement that all these Reviews will undergo pre-decision scrutiny. This will be carried out via the Committee or relevant Panels as appropriate. Any outstanding reviews and the new cross-cutting reviews will be on the scrutiny radar during the year ahead and scheduled into work plans.

2.3 Inquiry Panels:

2.3.1 The first task of an Inquiry Panel will be to have a briefing on the issue and then determine the key question and terms of reference for the inquiry. Once the planning stage is complete, the inquiry will be evidence gathering, with the last stage being to develop the final report.

In Progress (yet to report):	Completed (follow up stage)
1. Natural Environment (final report stage; inquiry expected end: January 2019) 2. Equalities (evidence gathering stage; expected end: March 2019)	1. Regional Working (May 2019)

2.4 Performance Panels:

2.4.1 The following Performance Panels, which enables regular and structured monitoring of performance within these key areas, meet on an ongoing basis until otherwise agreed by the Committee (frequency of meetings in brackets):

Performance Panel	Convener
1. Service Improvement & Finance (monthly)	Cllr. Chris Holley
2. Schools (monthly)	Cllr. Mo Sykes (NB Cllr Lyndon Jones acting as informal vice-convener)
3. Adult Services (monthly)	Cllr. Peter Black
4. Child & Family Services (every two months)	Cllr. Paxton Hood-Williams
5. Development & Regeneration (every two months)	Cllr. Jeff Jones
6. Public Services Board (multi-agency) (quarterly)	Cllr. Mary Jones

2.4.2 Performance Panel conveners are scheduled to provide a regular update to the Committee to enable discussion on key activities and impact.

2.5 Working Groups:

2.5.1 The following Working Groups will be convened during the year ahead, in priority groups as shown and projected timetable:

First six months	Second six months
1. Air & Noise Pollution (Nov) COMPLETED	5. Tourism (Feb)
2. Welfare Reform (14 Jan)	6. Anti-Social Behaviour (Mar)
3. Residents Parking (Jan tbc)	7. Digital Inclusion (Apr)
4. Environmental Enforcement (5 Feb)	8. Archive Service (May)

(NB: an annual meeting on **Local Flood Risk Management** is a standing item in the work programme and will meet on 14 March

2019. At the request of the Working Group, an extra meeting, agreed by the Committee, already took place on 8 October 2018)

2.6 Regional Scrutiny:

2.6.1 **Education Through Regional Working** - Swansea scrutiny is involved in a regional scrutiny arrangement with the six councils participating in the 'Education Through Regional Working' (ERW) school improvement consortium. A Scrutiny Councillor Group has been set up in order to coordinate scrutiny work across the region and ensure a consistent approach. It is initially meeting bi-annually. The Swansea Scrutiny Team is providing support for this group as the Council's contribution to ERW. Swansea is represented by the chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee and convener of the Schools Performance Panel. The Group have agreed to an extra meeting in January 2019 where they have invited the Chair of the ERW Joint Committee and the Lead Director to discuss the ERW review and reform programme. This meeting will be hosted in Swansea. The next scheduled meeting is 25 March 2019.

2.6.2 **Swansea Bay City Region** – A Joint Scrutiny Committee has been established which involves 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. Swansea's Councillor Representatives are: Jan Curtice, Phil Downing & Jeff Jones (replacing Mary Jones from 20 December). The first meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Committee took place on 20 November in Carmarthen. The Joint Scrutiny Committee is being serviced by Neath Port Talbot Council.

3. **Monitoring the Work Programme**

3.1 The Committee is responsible for monitoring progress of work undertaken by the informal Panels and Working Groups and findings to ensure that this work is effective and has the required visibility.

3.2 **Appendix 4a** provides a timetable of all scrutiny activities (projected or actual where dates are known). Lead councillors and officers are also noted within.

3.3 **Appendix 4b** provides a snapshot of progress with all of the Panels and Working Groups established by the Committee and their current position.

4. **Public Requests for Scrutiny / Councillor Calls for Action**

4.1 None.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Any costs that arise out of work plan activities, for example expenses for witnesses or transport costs, are not envisaged to be significant and will be contained within the existing Scrutiny Budget.

6. Legal Implications

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

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Agreed Scrutiny Work Programme 2018-19

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Programme Committee - Work Plan 2018-19

Appendix 3: Cabinet Forward Plan

Appendix 4a: Scrutiny Work Programme – Projected Timetable of Activity

Appendix 4b: Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups