



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 January 2019

Scrutiny Letters

Purpose:	To ensure the Committee is aware of the scrutiny letters produced following various scrutiny activities, and to track responses to date.
Content:	The report includes a log of scrutiny letters produced this year, and provides a copy of correspondence between scrutiny and cabinet members where discussion is required.
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the scrutiny letters and responses• Make comments, observations and recommendations as necessary
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer:	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer
Report Author:	Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer:	Paul Cridland

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The production of scrutiny letters has become an established part of the way scrutiny operates in Swansea. Letters from the chair (or conveners) allow scrutiny to communicate directly and quickly with relevant cabinet members.
- 1.2 These letters are used to convey views and conclusions about particular issues discussed and provide the opportunity to raise concerns, ask for further information, and make recommendations. This enables scrutiny to engage with Cabinet Members on a regular and structured basis.

2. Reporting of Letters

- 2.1 All scrutiny letters, whether they are written by the Scrutiny Programme Committee or conveners of panels / working groups, are published to ensure visibility, of the outcomes from meetings, across the council and public.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee agenda also includes a copy of letters to/from Cabinet Members where specific discussion is required, e.g. letters relating to the Committee, Working Groups, and Inquiry Panel follow ups. Letters are included when cabinet member responses that were awaited are received or where a scrutiny letter did not require a response.
- 2.3 Where requested Cabinet Members are expected to respond in writing to scrutiny letters within 21 calendar days. The response should indicate what action (if any) they intend to take as a result of the views and recommendations made.
- 2.4 Letters relating to the work of Performance Panels are part of an ongoing dialogue with Cabinet Members and are therefore reported back and monitored by each Panel. The exception to this is the Public Services Board Scrutiny Performance Panel, whose letters will also be reported as this Committee is the designated committee for scrutinising Swansea Public Services Board (for the purposes of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015). However all Performance Panel conveners will provide a progress report to the committee, including summary of correspondence with Cabinet Members and outcomes.

3. Letters Log

- 3.1 This report contains a log of scrutiny letters produced to enable the committee to maintain an overview of letters activity over the year – see **Appendix 1**. The letters log also shows the average time taken by Cabinet Members to respond to scrutiny letters, and the percentage of letters responded to within timescale.
- 3.2 The following letter(s) are **attached** for discussion:

	Activity	Meeting Date	Correspondence
a	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services Inquiry (follow-up)	21 Nov	Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Children Services (Early Years)

3.3 Key Points:

3.3.1 Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services Inquiry (follow-up) - The Inquiry Panel reconvened for a second time on 21 November to follow up on the implementation of recommendations and impact of this scrutiny inquiry.

In response to scrutiny recommendations the Panel was particularly pleased that services were in a much better place than when the inquiry had started. They heard about a greater focus on prevention, better joint working between local authorities and the ABMU Health Board and improved response to urgent cases. They also welcomed that ABMU have made changes to some of their commissioning arrangements, and have simplified processes to access the service, and that parents and Third Sector representatives are being involved more. The Panel felt that there are now well established arrangements in place to drive improvement forward.

The Inquiry Panel agreed that monitoring of this inquiry can be concluded. Although pleased with progress the Panel recognised that there is a long way to go to implement all of the recommendations and achieving significant improvement. The Panel agreed that the Child & Family Services Performance Panel was best placed for continued monitoring of Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services.

The Cabinet Member's response accepts the need for ongoing monitoring and confirms that there is now more performance information available to monitor CAMHS. He states that there is a considerable amount of work being undertaken on developing an integrated approach to service delivery at each tier and across the continuum of need, driven through the 'Getting it right for every Child Steering Group', monitored through the Children and Young People and Corporate Parenting Boards.

The Cabinet Member recognises the contribution made by the scrutiny inquiry in highlighting the issues and in the progress made to improve services.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Letters Log

Appendix 2: Correspondence between scrutiny and cabinet members