



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 May 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
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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	Committee (Cabinet Member Q & A)	11 Feb	Letter to / from Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management
b	Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group	15 Apr	Letter to Cabinet Member for Better Communities (People)

3.3 Key Points:

- 3.3.1 Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group (convener Cllr Terry Hennegan) - A meeting of the Working Group was held on 15 April. The Panel discussed the steps involved in the process, and how collaborative working is helping with prevention and early intervention in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases.

The Panel were impressed by the 4 step approach used to deal with ASB which is proving very effective with only 2-3% of cases escalating further than step 1. The team have a reactive approach, focusing resources when needed as ASB is an unpredictable activity.

The Panel were interested to hear that ASB is not specific to young people, however, the loss of youth services and community activity plays a part. There needs to be more resources in communities for youth, more help with mental health (nationally) and an absolute commitment to deal with poverty and inequality which damages societies. The Panel appreciate these are national issues, but locally Councils must do their part.

Councillors did note that an increase in the amount of Local Area Co-ordinators would be extremely beneficial and felt that local Councillors should be involved in local ASB meetings.

As a result of this scrutiny the Working Group was pleased with the preventative and flexible support offered and commend the team on their efforts. No significant concerns have been raised with the Cabinet Member.

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