

Appendix 6 - Swansea Scrutiny – Improvement Action Plan

(agreed by Scrutiny Programme Committee – January 2019)

Part A - Response to Wales Audit Office Report Proposals for Improvement – Overview & Scrutiny: Fit for the Future?

Improvement Issue:			
P1 - The Council should consider the skills and training that scrutiny members may need to better prepare them for current and future challenges, and develop and deliver an appropriate training and development programme, including providing additional training on the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
<p>P1a – Annual Survey of Scrutiny Councillors and Officers to help identify training and development needs that will help scrutiny members in their role.</p> <p>PROGRESS: COMPLETE (13 May SPC): All Councillors have now been asked to indicate what training they would be interested in, in order to shape the programme and ensure it is focussed on the right areas and will meet the needs of scrutiny councillors.</p>	April 2019	Scrutiny Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Induction carried out June 2017 included focus on effective questioning. • Previous survey findings indicated that majority of councillors have no specific needs but would like to receive information on any future opportunities.
<p>P1b - Training and Development Programme to be developed and agreed taking into account survey findings and other relevant considerations (including financial implications).</p>	July 2019	Scrutiny Team Leader / Scrutiny Programme Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas previously identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chairing Skills - Questioning Skills - Public Participation - Ad-hoc briefings to improve knowledge of Council services / working

			- Refresher session(s) on Scrutiny Process
P1c – Training and Development Programme to be delivered.	During 2019-2020 municipal year	Scrutiny Team Leader / Relevant Training Providers	
P1d – Report back on training and development activities and evaluation	July 2020	Scrutiny Team Leader	
Improvement Issue: P2 - The Council should strengthen its evaluation of the impact and outcomes of its scrutiny activity.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
P2a – Existing performance indicators and measureable outcomes to be identified, where possible, regarding topics for scrutiny inquiry, which could help evidence change / difference following scrutiny.	Ongoing	Performance Manager / Scrutiny Officers / Scrutiny Inquiry Panels	
P2b – Follow up on Scrutiny Working Group recommendations to be formally monitored by Scrutiny Programme Committee to assess impact / outcomes. PROGRESS: ONGOING (13 May SPC): Information reported to Scrutiny Programme Committee to help members prepare for Cabinet Member Q & As includes reference to relevant Working Groups so they can be followed up. Working Group Conveners are	Ongoing	Scrutiny Team Leader / Scrutiny Programme Committee	

written to identify whether there is any issue that they would like the Committee to raise with Cabinet Members.			
P2c – Develop mechanisms for feedback from Cabinet Members, Officers, and other stakeholders about impact e.g. post-meeting evaluation; via Annual Survey etc.	May 2019	Scrutiny Team Leader	
P2d – Scrutiny Annual Report to include more reflection about activity and impact / outcomes.	Ongoing	Scrutiny Team Leader	Report for 2017-18 now includes distinct section on impact.
Improvement Issue: P3 - The Council should further clarify the distinction between scrutiny and Policy Development Committee activity in relation to policy development.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
P3a –The Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee and Scrutiny Performance Panel Conveners be added to the electronic distribution of Policy Development Committee agendas to ensure awareness of their work and work plans. PROGRESS: COMPLETE (13 May SPC)	Jan 2019	Scrutiny Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference of the PDCs were revised by Council (Nov 2017) to clarify role and reinforce the distinction from scrutiny. • Policy Development Committee Work Plans for 2018-19 were reported to Scrutiny Programme Committee in August to compare with agreed Scrutiny Work Programme.
P3b – Develop opportunities for Scrutiny Programme Committee Chair and Policy Development Committee Chairs to discuss any issues to avoid overlap / duplication between their roles	Ongoing	Scrutiny Team Leader	

Part B – Scrutiny Programme Committee Improvement Objectives

Improvement Issue: 1 - We need more of our work to be reported to Cabinet so that there is more formal consideration of scrutiny conclusions and recommendations.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
<p>1a - Scrutiny Working Groups have the option to report to Cabinet, depending on findings, instead of by letter to Cabinet Member.</p> <p>PROGRESS: ONGOING (13 May SPC): Working Group outcomes since this action was agreed have not yet necessitated the need to make a report to Cabinet instead of letter to relevant Cabinet Member.</p>	Ongoing	Scrutiny Officers	
<p>1b - Scrutiny Performance Panels have the option to report at least annually to Cabinet reflecting any major concerns / recommendations that the Panel(s) feel need to be made to Cabinet as a result of their monitoring activities.</p> <p>PROGRESS: ONGOING (13 May SPC): Performance Panel conveners are aware of this option and can take action as necessary.</p>	Ongoing	Scrutiny Officers	
<p>1c - Cabinet to respond to any such reports in the same fashion as Scrutiny Inquiries with a written response by relevant Cabinet Member presented to a Cabinet meeting within 2 months of receipt of report.</p>	Ongoing	Relevant Cabinet Members	

Improvement Issue

2 - We need to be involved at an earlier stage in proposed Cabinet decisions so that our input can be more meaningful.

Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
<p>2a – Scrutiny Programme Committee to ask Cabinet Members at future Q & A sessions about future key decisions so they can identify any issues which they may want to discuss at an earlier stage than cabinet reporting.</p> <p>PROGRESS: ONGOING (13 May SPC): Report to Committee encourages Committee Members to ask Cabinet Members about future decisions, as well as what is listed in the Forward Plan.</p>	Ongoing	Scrutiny Team Leader	Cabinet Members already advised to consider what they hope to achieve over the coming months and challenges, including any key decisions they plan take to Cabinet over the next year, to help them prepare for Q & A sessions.
<p>2b - Cabinet Members to consider reporting to scrutiny / consulting on significant issues and planned decisions at an early stage to enable views of scrutiny to taken e.g. Commissioning Reviews</p> <p>PROGRESS: ONGOING (13 May SPC): Advice to Cabinet Members ahead of their appearance at Committee meetings invites them to highlight issues for scrutiny.</p>	Ongoing	Cabinet / CMT	

Improvement Issue 3 - We need to increase opportunities for participation so that more councillors can get involved in the work of scrutiny.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
3a - Time of meetings of Performance Panels (and any other recurring activities) to be reviewed at the start of each municipal year.	Ongoing	Scrutiny Officers	
3b - Councillors not actively engaged in scrutiny to be surveyed, to find out whether there are any barriers to participation, and reported to Scrutiny Programme Committee for discussion. PROGRESS: ONGOING (13 May SPC): Those Councillors not involved in scrutiny activities over the past year have been identified. They have been invited to give feedback, in case there are any particular obstacles / barriers to their participation that need to be addressed.	May 2019	Scrutiny Team Leader	80% of backbench councillors were actively involved in scrutiny during 2017-18.
Improvement Issue 4 - We need to strengthen follow up of all scrutiny recommendations so that the response and difference made can be assessed.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
Links to WAO P2 above. Additional actions:			
4a – With guidance from the Scrutiny Team, Scrutiny Working Group Conveners encouraged to follow up directly with	Ongoing	Scrutiny Councillors	

Cabinet Members, if required, and report back any concerns to the Scrutiny Programme Committee.			
<p>4b - Questions to Cabinet Members at Scrutiny Programme Committee to cover any outstanding actions in respect of any scrutiny recommendations.</p> <p>PROGRESS: ONGOING (13 May SPC): Information reported to Scrutiny Programme Committee to help members prepare for Cabinet Member Q & As includes reference to relevant scrutiny activities they been involved in so they can be followed up.</p>	Ongoing	Scrutiny Programme Committee / Scrutiny Team Leader	To prepare for Cabinet Member Q & A Sessions Scrutiny Programme Committee is provided with a summary of scrutiny activities (Committee / Panels / Working Groups) that the Cabinet Member has been involved in to aid follow up.
<p>Improvement Issue: 5 - We need more coverage in the media so that people are more aware of our work.</p>			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
<p>5a - Explore with Council's Communications Team ways in which regular media coverage for scrutiny can be generated.</p> <p>PROGRESS: ONGOING (13 May SPC): Scrutiny Team Leader has discussed with the Council's Head of News and officers in the Communications Team. Closer links being developed – there is now more dialogue between teams about the work programme and upcoming meetings. Communications staff are signposted to scrutiny agendas / information that will hopefully result in more about scrutiny being reported in the media and improved awareness / public engagement. The Communications Team will closely follow scrutiny activities and agenda items to identify potential for press</p>	May 2019	Comms. Team / Scrutiny Team	Already good joint working on preparation of press releases in relation to specific scrutiny activities.

<p>releases / other media activity. Media coverage of scrutiny has increased significantly over the past year due to active local government reporter, leading to stories in print and on-line media (South Wales Evening Post, Wales Online, and Western Mail).</p>			
<p>5b – Greater use of social media including Swansea Scrutiny blog, Twitter, and developing a Facebook page e.g. promoting role, activities, impact of scrutiny and the ability for people to make requests for scrutiny to be promoted.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Scrutiny Team</p>	