



## Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 8 July 2019

### Scrutiny Letters

<b>Purpose:</b>	To ensure the Committee is aware of the scrutiny letters produced following various scrutiny activities, and to track responses to date.
<b>Content:</b>	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.
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the scrutiny letters and responses</li><li>• Make comments, observations 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 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:

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>
a	Local Flood Risk Management Working Group	4 Apr	Letter to Cabinet Member for Better Communities (People)
a	Committee (Cabinet Member Q & A)	8 Apr	Letter to Cabinet Members for Better Communities

### 3.3 Key Points:

- 3.3.1 Local Flood Risk Management Working Group - The Working Group, convened by Councillor Sam Pritchard (in Councillor Peter Jones' absence), met on 4 April. This was an additional meeting to receive an update on progress made on the recommendations from the Working Group's last meeting on 8 October 2018.

As a result of this scrutiny the Cabinet Member (CM) has confirmed the action that will be taken, including the following:

- Providing opportunity for Working Group members to visit the natural flood risk management site in Neath Port Talbot.
- Updating scrutiny on the Green Infrastructure project.
- Improving information available by providing general advice on the Council's website to minimize effects of flooding and to promote best practice and prevention.
- Co-ordinating with National Media e.g. Wales Online, so that live updates on flooding can be made available, in addition to Council's own social media, particularly when incidents are out of usual working hours.
- Amending flooding advice pages to reflect that Swansea Council Advice is given priority.
- Commitment to providing scrutiny with a comprehensive annual update on progress with both the Sustainable Drainage and Flood Risk Management Plan.

## 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