

**Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups**

**1. Inquiry Panels:**

These will undertake in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis, and will be expected to take around six months to complete to enable wide-ranging evidence gathering, and production of a final report with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers).

a) **Equalities** (convener: Cllr Louise Gibbard)

Key Question: How effectively is the Council meeting and embedding the requirements under the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Duty for Wales)?

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The final report produced by the Inquiry Panel was approved for submission to Cabinet by the Committee on 8 July, for decision. The report is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet on 19 September. Ahead of that a number of accessible versions of the scrutiny report are being prepared, including easy read, young persons, plain text and Welsh.

Projected End Date: Complete

b) **Procurement** (convener: tbc)

Key Question: tbc

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

Expressions of interest to participate in this potential new inquiry have been invited and are reported under agenda item no. 8 for the Committee’s agreement.

Once the membership is agreed the first stage will be for a ‘pre-inquiry’ meeting to be arranged which will involve an overview / briefing on the subject matter, with advice from relevant cabinet members / officers and existing research & information. This will help inform decisions about how scrutiny can contribute to improvement and the focus, scale and direction of any inquiry. If the Panel agrees an inquiry should be undertaken then it will then need to put together appropriate Terms of Reference for this work, that may explore for example:

- effectiveness of process & strategy
- value for money / social value
- benefits to local economy
- impact of local procurement on regeneration / jobs
- financial savings to the Council
- collaboration

The inquiry will be expected to take up to six months to complete, as it will call for wide ranging evidence, and will lead to a report with conclusions and recommendations that will be presented to Cabinet.

## 2. Follow Up on Completed Inquiries:

Follow-ups of inquiries will consider both the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and wider impact / difference made. Inquiry Panels are reconvened between 6-12 months after cabinet decision on Inquiry reports.

Inquiry	Cabinet Decision	Recommendations			Follow Up Panel Meeting
		Agreed	Partly	Rejected	
Regional Working	16 Aug 2018	11	0	0	16 Oct 2019
Natural Environment*	18 Jul 2019	18	0	2	tbc

\* this inquiry will be followed up within the work of the new Natural Environment Scrutiny Performance Panel

## 3. Performance Panels:

Performance Panels enable regular and structured in-depth monitoring of performance and challenge within these key areas:

a) **Service Improvement & Finance** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

This Panel meets every month. A progress report appears separately in the agenda as Item No. 7.

b) **Schools Performance** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

This Panel meets every month. In July, they visited Dylan Thomas Community Comprehensive School to look at good practice at the school in relation to how they improve the wellbeing of pupils in order to improve attainment. They will next meet on the 12 September where they will discuss the Healthy Schools Initiative and Elective Home Education.

c) **Adult Services** (convener: Cllr Peter Black)

This Panel meets every month. The Panel met on 20 June and discussed the WAO report on Housing Adaptations and the correspondence received by the Convener of the panel from RNIB. They also reviewed their year of the Panel and agreed the work plan for 2019/20. At its meeting on 30 July the Panel received an update on West Glamorgan Transformation Programme Arrangements following Review and discussed Performance Monitoring, Review of Final Budget Outturn for Adult Services and the CIW Local Authority Performance Review. The Panel will next meet on 20 August and will discuss Outcomes of the Re-procurement process for Domiciliary Care and Respite at Home and look at the Workforce Development Plan for Adult Services.

d) **Child & Family Services** (convener: Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams)

This Panel meets every two months. The Panel met on 26 June for a Q & A session with the Cabinet Members for Children Services and to agree its work plan for 2019/20. At its next meeting on 28 August the Panel will discuss Performance Monitoring, receive an update on the action plan following the CIW Inspection Report and discuss the CIW Local Authority Performance Review.

e) **Development & Regeneration** (convener: Cllr Jeff Jones)

This Panel meets every two months. The meeting on 17 July looked at the Wales Audit Office report – ‘Local Government Services to Rural Communities’ and the associated Response and Action Plan. The Panel will monitor this closely as the boundary commission review and Brexit will have implications on funding and ward classification. The Panel are writing a letter to Welsh Government to highlight the issue of lack of broadband in rural communities. The 31 July sees a meeting looking at the regular project update report and the transport plan for the City Centre.

f) **Natural Environment** (convener: tbc)

This Panel will meet quarterly. Arrangements are being made for a first meeting of this new Performance Panel. This will enable the Panel to appoint a convener and discuss work plan.

g) **Public Services Board** (convener: Cllr Mary Jones)

This Panel will meet twice yearly. The Public Services Board Panel last met to discuss the new Governance Structure which has been put in place consider the Annual Review. The Panel will look forward to seeing the new action plans and more evidence of outcomes in future meetings.

#### **4. Regional Scrutiny:**

This is collaborative scrutiny with other Local Authorities for topics / issues of shared interest or concern, and models of regional working.

##### **a) Education Through Regional Working**

The Scrutiny Councillor Group will meet on the 23 September 2019 to:

- Discuss progress with reform programme and meeting the national mission with the Lead Chief Executive Phil Roberts
- Discuss the costed ERW business plan
- Speak to the ERW Lead for Digital Learning Systems
- Speak to the ERW Lead for Health and Wellbeing

They will move from 2 to 4 meetings a year to coincide with school terms and the dates of the ERW Joint Committee meetings.

##### **b) Swansea Bay City Region**

The Joint Scrutiny Committee will meet on 2 September at the Civic Centre, Neath. The Committee will also have a site visit to the Homes as Power Stations (HAPs) Project.

The Committee will meet in the following dates during 2019/20: 28 October; 15 January; 9 March and 6 May.

#### **5. Working Groups:**

##### **a) Tourism** (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

The convener of the Working Group presented a report to Cabinet, on 18 July, which reflected on the Working Group meeting in May. A number of recommendations have been made by the Working Group, and a Cabinet response is awaited.

##### **NEW TOPICS:**

A number of new topics have been identified which will be dealt with through one-off Working Groups. These enable a 'light-touch' approach to specific topics of concern and will be planned as a one-off meeting (in the order shown below) primarily involving discussion with relevant cabinet member(s) / officer(s), and any other persons called, to gather information, ask questions, and give views / raise any concerns.

##### **a) Brexit** (convener: tbc)

This will enable information, questions and discussion about Council preparedness and resilience; how this is being discussed; what plans / contingencies are being put in place given possible impact, relationship with Wales / UK Government, etc.

b) **Staff Health & Well-being** (convener: tbc)

This will enable information, questions and discussion on how the Council supports members of staff; issues around staff sickness; pressures, etc.

c) **Road Safety** (convener: tbc)

This will enable information, questions and discussion on hot spots; work to improve safety; preventative measures; speed controls; safety of cycling routes; partnership working, etc.

d) **Digital Inclusion** (convener: Cllr Lesley Walton)

This will enable councillors to follow up on the Working Group meeting originally held in March 2017. At that meeting the Working Group detailed a number of issues to be considered as part of a review of the Council's digital inclusion strategy. Councillors will be able to have a discussion around digital transformation, the Council's digital inclusion strategy, and how well prepared both the Council and the public is to use and communicate / engage via digital technology to avoid exclusion / poor access)