



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 9 September 2019

Cabinet Member Question Session

Purpose:	To enable the Committee to question Cabinet Members on their work. The Committee's questions will broadly explore Cabinet Members' priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to areas of responsibility.
Content:	The following Cabinet Member will appear before the Committee to participate in a question and answer session: a) Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question the Cabinet Member on relevant matters• Make comments and recommendations as necessary
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
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1. Introduction

1.1 One of the most important roles that scrutiny carries out is holding the Council's Cabinet to account. The Cabinet (also known as the Executive) is made up of the Leader and other councillors, appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific portfolio responsibilities:

Cllr Rob Stewart	- Economy & Strategy (Leader)
Cllr Clive Lloyd	- Business Transformation & Performance (Deputy Leader)
Cllr Alyson Pugh	- Better Communities - People
Cllr Andrew Stevens	- Better Communities - Place
Cllr Mark Child	- Care, Health & Ageing Well
Cllr Elliot King	- Children Services - Early Years

Cllr Sam Pritchard	- Children Services - Young People
Cllr David Hopkins	- Delivery
Cllr Jennifer Raynor	- Education Improvement, Learning & Skills
Cllr Mark Thomas	- Environment & Infrastructure Management
Cllr Andrea Lewis	- Homes & Energy
Cllr Robert Francis-Davies	- Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

1.2 By acting as a 'critical friend' scrutiny has the opportunity to challenge the Cabinet and individual cabinet members on their actions and performance in relation to their areas of responsibilities.

1.3 Cabinet Member Question Sessions have become a main feature of Committee meetings. At least one cabinet member is scheduled to appear at each monthly Committee meeting, ensuring all Cabinet Members appear before the Committee over the course of a year, in order to ask questions on their work. Questions will focus on their priorities, actions, achievements and impact.

2. Cabinet Member Question Session

2.1 The following Cabinet Member will appear before the Committee:

a) Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy

2.2 Councillor Lewis has the following specific portfolio responsibilities:

- Building Services
- Cooperative Housing
- Council House Management
- Council House Repairs
- District Heating Schemes
- Energy Policy inc. Generation & Supply
- Green Energy Infrastructure
- Green Fleet Transport & Green Vehicle Adoption
- Homelessness & Supporting People
- Homes as Power Stations (City Deal)
- Housing Adaptions & Renewal Schemes
- Housing Policy, Affordable Housing & Housing Options
- Landlord Licensing
- More Homes Delivery
- Sheltered Housing
- Tenancy Enforcement
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

NB - All Cabinet Members have shared responsibility for Lead Elements of Sustainable Swansea & Poverty Reduction

3. Approach to Questions

3.1 At each Cabinet Member Question Session the Committee will generally ask Cabinet Members about:

- relevant priorities / objectives (e.g. policy commitments), notable activities and achievements, improvement / impact made, and service user / public engagement.
- what they hope to achieve over the coming months and challenges, including any key decisions they plan take to Cabinet over the next year.
- reflections on their engagement with scrutiny and whether there is any issue relevant to their portfolio that they would suggest for scrutiny, not otherwise covered in the work programme – to ensure scrutiny activity is aligned to priorities and focussed on the right things.

3.2 In terms of themes that cut across all cabinet portfolios, the Committee is interested in asking Cabinet Members about:

- Well-being of Future Generations Act – impact on their work / decisions e.g. what they are doing to achieve the well-being goals and ways of working, e.g. focus on long-term thinking, collaboration / involvement etc.; any regional / collaborative working relevant to their portfolio responsibilities.
- Public Services Board (PSB) – their relationship with the work of the PSB; how the PSB impacts on their portfolio and how it is making a difference etc.
- Poverty Reduction – their contribution to the commitment to tackle poverty.
- Sustainable Swansea – their contribution to the transformation programme.

3.3 Cabinet Members will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the Committee. The Cabinet Member has provided a report on 'headlines' in relation to the portfolio to help the Committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact - see **Appendix 1**.

3.4 Amongst key themes / questions from the Committee is the intention to ask about:

- Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan Progress – the Committee gave views during consultation and carried out pre-decision scrutiny ahead of Cabinet decision in November 2018 and will be interested in activities and achievements over the past 9 months.
- Council Housebuilding – the Committee has kept keen interest in this over the last two years, having discussed progress / proposals at Colliers Way and Parc Yr Helyg, and will be interest to know the latest position about these and other developments.

- Housing Commissioning Review Progress – the Committee discussed progress at its meeting on 1 August and would be interested to hear of any further progress, as this matter proceeds towards decision later in the year.
- Housing Voids / Empty Properties
- Council House Management
- Green Energy
- Green Fleet Transport

3.5 With reference to agreed Scrutiny Improvement Objectives the Committee should ensure the Q & A Session also enables it to:

- Follow up, where necessary, on progress with relevant Scrutiny Working Group recommendations to assess impact / outcomes
- Raise any outstanding actions in respect of any other scrutiny activities / recommendations.
- Ask about future key decisions so the Committee can identify any issues which they may want to discuss at an earlier stage than cabinet reporting.
- Encourage Cabinet Members to consider reporting to scrutiny / consulting on significant issues and planned decisions at an early stage to enable views of scrutiny to be taken.

3.6 Following each session the chair will write to Cabinet Members in order to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the Committee, and any actions for them to consider.

3.7 If the Committee wishes to conduct more detailed scrutiny of any of the issues raised during the Q & A session then this should be agreed through the normal work planning process and planned for a future meeting. This will also allow proper time for preparation.

4. Previous Scrutiny

4.1 The correspondence with Councillor Lewis following last year's Q & A session (August 2018) is attached. Taking account of any portfolio changes since last year, the following issues still relevant to the current portfolio were discussed, and Committee Members may wish to follow up:

- Housing
- More Homes Delivery / Affordable Housing
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard
- Homelessness
- Green Transport & Green Vehicle Adoption, and
- Energy

4.2 Members may also wish to follow up, as necessary, on the Cabinet Member's engagement with relevant Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups over the past year:

- Welsh Housing Quality Standard (Wales Audit Office Report) – Councillor Lewis attended a meeting of the Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel in March to report on progress in meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and response to WAO improvement recommendations.
- Housing Adaptations (Wales Audit Office Report) – Councillor Lewis attended a meeting of the Adult Service Scrutiny Performance Panel in June to report on progress in implementing WAO improvement recommendations.

5. Future Scrutiny

5.1 The Committee should note that the Cabinet Member will be engaged in the following planned / future activity:

- Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel – the Panel intend to have yearly update on WHQS progress and follow up on implementation of WAO recommendations.

6. Other Questions

6.1 For each Cabinet Member Q & A Session the Committee invites members of the public and other scrutiny councillors (not on the Committee) to suggest questions. It is up to the Committee how to deal with any suggested questions within the Session.

6.2 On this occasion, the Committee has been requested by a member of the public to ask the Cabinet Member, as lead councillor for Green Fleet Transport & Green Vehicle Adoption, about:

- Vehicle-Charging Points – Given that electric vehicles will help to need to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality and support the growth of the UK's economy, charging infrastructure is something that more and more employees and visitors will want and expect from workplace car parks. Would Swansea Council allow employees to charge their vehicles in work to demonstrate that Swansea is serious on issues such as reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality and promoting sustainability? There are vehicle-charging points available in depots and offices which could be used by staff, with electricity usage paid for by the user, and therefore no financial loss for the Council.

7. Next Session

7.1 The next scheduled Cabinet Member Question Session, on 14 October, is with the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills, Councillor Jennifer Raynor. The Committee should identify specific questions / key themes, which it wishes to cover in that session.

7.2 The Cabinet Member's portfolio covers:

- 21st Century Schools Programme inc. School Building Upgrades
- Apprenticeships Lead
- Catchment Review
- City of Learning - Member of UNESCO COL Steering Group
- CYP Board Member
- Education Charter
- Education Services from 3 to 19
- Further Education
- Future Schools Estate Scoping & Delivery
- Inclusion & Learner Support
- Leader's Representative on Education Regional Working (ERW)
- NEETS Prevention (Not in Education, Employment or Training) Lead
- Quality in Education (QEd) Programme
- Readiness for Work Lead
- Regional Workforce Planning & Skills Development
- School Improvement
- Schools Estate Planning & Resources Planning
- Schools' Organisation & Performance
- Skills & Talent Project (City Deal)

7.3 Based on previous discussions the Committee may wish to focus on issues including:

- Current position / progress in relation to new primary school build at Parc Y Werin
- Actions around reducing the health risk caused by vehicle exhaust emissions around schools

7.4 As usual, all scrutiny councillors and members of the public will be able to suggest questions.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Key Headlines: Cabinet Member for Homes & Energy

Appendix 2: Previous Correspondence