

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 presented to Cabinet on 19 September. A response to the recommendations is expected to be reported to Cabinet within two months.

Projected End Date: Complete

b) **Procurement** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

Key Question: tbc

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The first stage will be for a ‘pre-inquiry’ meeting which has been arranged for the 24 October this 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	15 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. The recent meeting on 16th September looked at Council Charges and the Archive Service. The Panel will request significant changes in charges to be reported each year and have expressed concern over the future plans for the Archive Service. Letters have been sent to relevant Cabinet Members. The next meeting will look at Q1 Performance Monitoring Report and the Recycling and Landfill Annual Report 18/19.

b) **Education** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

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

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

This Panel meets every month. The Panel last met on 24 September and looked at Supported Living Developments for Mental Health and Learning Disability Services and Procurement Practice and Assurance in Social Care. The meeting on 29 October will look at Performance Monitoring and Commissioning of Residential Care and receive an update on the Adult Services Transformation Programme.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The Panel will meet on 28 October when it will receive a briefing on the Youth Offending Service, an update on progress with CAMHS and an update on the report to WG on Safe Looked After Children Reduction Strategy.

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

This Panel meets every two months. On 17 July the Panel met to review the Wales Audit Office Report 'Local Government Services to Rural Communities'. The Panel wrote to the Cabinet Member and Ministers Ken Skates and Lesley Griffiths raising their concerns over lack of Broadband in rural areas and a successor to the Rural Development Programme with ends in 2020.

The recent meeting on 31 July had the usual dashboard update and provided the Panel with progress on these projects. There was also an update from Cabinet Member Mark Thomas and Stuart Davies Head of Highways and Transportation on Transport projects. The Panel have written to relevant Cabinet Members with their thoughts.

The FPR7 for Swansea Central Phase 1 will go to Cabinet in November and the Panel will undertake pre-decision scrutiny and invite the SIF Panel to the meeting for joint input.

f) **Natural Environment** (convener: Cllr Peter Jones)

This Panel will meet quarterly. The first meeting took place on 25th September. A presentation was delivered on the current Council position on the Natural Environment and its commitments both internally and externally. A discussion was had about the work which is currently being delivered and some of the barriers to delivering more such as funding. The Panel will write to the Cabinet Member and Environment Minister. The next meeting will look at Nuisance Gulls which was a public request for scrutiny.

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 and Annual Review of the Public Services Board. The Panel will look forward to seeing the new action plans and more evidence of outcomes in future meetings. The next meeting takes place on 4 December.

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 met on the 23 September 2019 and looked at:

- Progress with reform programme and meeting the national mission with the Interim Managing Director of ERW
- Discussed the costed ERW business plan
- Spoke to the ERW Lead for Digital Learning Systems
- Spoke to the ERW Lead for Health and Wellbeing

The next meeting has been scheduled for the 27 January 2020 and will be hosted by Powys Council.

b) Swansea Bay City Region

The Joint Scrutiny Committee met on 2 September at the Civic Centre, Neath, which included 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 expected on 21 November.

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: Cllr Peter Jones)

This Working Group met on 23 September to 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. A letter will be sent to the Cabinet Member for Economy & Strategy with the thoughts of the Working Group.

b) **Staff Health & Well-being** (convener: Cllr Cyril Anderson)

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: Steve Gallagher)

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)