



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Council Chamber - Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 14 October 2019 at 4.30 pm

Present: Councillor M H Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
D W Helliwell
W G Lewis

Councillor(s)

M Durke
T J Hennegan
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

L S Gibbard
P K Jones

Also Present

Councillor Mark Child Cabinet Member for Care, Health & Ageing Well
Councillor Jennifer Raynor Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

P M Black L R Jones
C A Holley J W Jones

Officer(s)

Kate Jones Democratic Services Officer
Simon Jones Social Services Strategy and Performance Improvement Officer
Brij Madahar Scrutiny Team Leader
Mark Sheridan Head of Vulnerable Learner Service
Debbie Smith Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Nick Williams Director of Education

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): E T Kirchner and G J Tanner
Statutory Co-opted Member(s): A Roberts
Councillor Co-opted Members: P R Hood-Williams

53 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interests were declared:

D Anderson-Thomas – personal – Minute No 57 – Governor at Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr.

Councillor C A Holley – personal – Minute No 58 – Chair of Governors at Burlais School

54 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, no declarations of Whipped Votes or Party Whips were declared.

55 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Special Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 1 August 2019 and the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 9 September 2019 be approved and signed as correct records.

56 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

57 Cabinet Member Question Session: Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills (Councillor Jennifer Raynor).

The Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills presented a report on the key headlines of the Education Improvement, Learning & Skills portfolio. The Director of Education and the Head of Vulnerable Learner Service were also present for the question and answer session.

Questions and discussions with the Cabinet Member and Officers focused on the following: -

- Air pollution / emissions from vehicles travelling and parking outside schools – monitoring of schools for air pollution
- Dangerous parking outside schools and issues of abuse when controlling the same
- Education on the environment, climate and biodiversity and the role of the school governors
- Monitoring of Specialist Teaching Facilities (STF)
- Accessibility of Life Long Learning courses – provision and assistance for those with disabilities
- School condition surveys – recent water damage at Bishopston Comprehensive School and renovations of the roof
- 21st Century Schools Programme – Band B funding
- Education Through Regional Working (ERW) - outstanding issues and improvements that have been made to the working of the regional school improvement consortium
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) – progress and update
- School Attendance - recording of attendance in schools and consistency
- Progress on the Skills and Talent Project for the City Deal – regional skills partnership

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member, reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

58 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Education. (Councillor Lyndon Jones, Convener)

Councillor Lyndon Jones, Convener, presented a report on 'Education Scrutiny Performance Panel Update'. He specifically highlighted the following from the Panel's work:-

- The Panel's direct engagement with schools
- High quality of teaching staff throughout Swansea
- Progress at Burlais Primary School – the school had been working very hard on their improvement journey, with much success
- Good practice regarding pupil well-being at Dylan Thomas Community Comprehensive School
- Joint meeting with the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Panel on support for and educational outcomes of Looked After Children and challenges
- Some concern on the performance of those receiving free school meals – the Panel will continue to monitor
- Positive relationship with the Cabinet member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills, who is responsive to Panel letters, and the senior management of the Education Department

There was some discussion about the potential for confusion for schools between differing ERW (the regional school improvement consortium) and Estyn (inspectorate) viewpoints on improvement. There was also a discussion about the effectiveness of the regional school improvement consortium and progress made with its reform over the last few years, and new business plan. Some observations were made about the whether the regional footprint for ERW was right.

The Director of Education informed that Committee that there was currently a consultation open on the future of Estyn Inspections from September 2021 onwards should anyone wish to contribute to the consultation. He stated that there will be a period without Estyn inspections during 2020-21 to allow schools to respond to the demands of the new curriculum.

The Chair thanked Convener and the Performance Panel for its work.

Resolved that the update be noted.

59 Annual Report 2018/19 - Corporate Safeguarding.

The Cabinet Member for Care, Health and Ageing Well and the Social Services Strategy and Performance Improvement Officer attended to present the Annual Report on Corporate Safeguarding 2018/19.

The following was highlighted: -

- Safeguarding was a corporate priority - vulnerable adults and children was "everyone's business"
- Focus had been on creating more eyes and ears – if you see it, report it
- The Council's now has a well-established Corporate Safeguarding Group (first set up in 2014), chaired by the Director of Social Services, and has lead representatives from all service areas across the Council
- The need to respond to the changes in safeguarding issues arising e.g. financial exploitation, County Lines, modern slavery
- The Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy is focused on safeguarding arrangements and activity being proactive and preventative, implementing innovative ways of working with children, young people, adults and families through the Signs of Safety practice framework
- Wales Audit Office have carried out a review on Corporate Safeguarding and will publish report soon

Questions and Discussions with the Cabinet Member and Officers focussed on the following: -

- Ensuring the need for confidentiality does not become a barrier to safeguarding
- The role of councillors as corporate parents in safeguarding – and to what extent they can get involved in individual cases. It was stressed to the Committee that participation in multi-agency case conferences would not be appropriate or necessary for councillors, but it was important that councillors understood the policy and report any concerns to relevant professionals
- The percentage of elected members who have completed safeguarding training – it was noted that performance figures for 2018/19 showed that 81.9% had done so, however the Cabinet Member added that he was pleased that the figure was now 100%
- Addressing difficulties previously reported with the accuracy of record keeping on safeguarding training – the Committee heard that there was no single system to easily generate data and report on compliance, but work was ongoing to improve the collection and reporting of performance, and could be assisted with the Council's upcoming Oracle system upgrade. However, it was expected that each management team within the Council take responsibility for ensuring that members of staff are up-to-date with training requirements, and report this information centrally through safeguarding leads. It was accepted that current data recording had limitations but the Council was able to provide assurance to Wales Audit Office about access to and take up of training by staff, which is delivered at an appropriate level e.g. on-line and face-to-face. The Committee felt that it was necessary for the Council to improve its system of reporting and recording information
- Ensuring that temporary staff, services with a transient workforce, and external contractors have access to training and safeguarding awareness – it was noted that all training materials have been reviewed and updated and that the training offer is for all staff and built into induction processes, and for external partners engaged by the Council. Whilst induction for new employees was currently

delivered through e-learning consideration is being given to a face-to-face session instead when a new member of staff joins the Council

- Monitoring of safeguarding training for School Governors – the Committee noted that there was no specific data collected about this though the Education Department may have this information. It was clarified that every school has clear responsibilities around Child Protection, Looked After Children and Safeguarding and every governor needed to undertake training as part of their induction.
- The work of Regional Safeguarding Boards

Resolved that the views of the Committee be noted by the Cabinet Member.

60 Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19.

The Chair presented the Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19, which highlighted the work carried out by scrutiny during the previous municipal year.

Resolved that the report be agreed and presented to Council.

61 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

The Chair presented a report on 'Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups'. The Committee noted that:-

- Councillor Peter Jones had been appointed a Convener of the Natural Environment Performance Panel
- Councillor Cyril Anderson had been nominated as the representative for the Mid & West Wales Fire Authority, and will join the Public Service Board Scrutiny Performance Panel
- Mr John Meredith, Statutory Co-optee of the Scrutiny Programme Committee, had stood down and the Church of Wales would advise of a new representative in due course.

Resolved that the report be noted.

62 Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20.

The Chair presented the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019/20. She highlighted that Bethan Hopkins, Scrutiny Officer had recently left the authority and in the interim it would be necessary to put some scrutiny activities on hold – the Procurement Inquiry and next set of Working Groups.

She clarified that the first meeting of the Inquiry Panel would take place as planned on 24 October in order to discuss possible focus of the inquiry.

The Chair highlighted that the next meeting was scheduled to have the Annual Report on the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme as well as a Question and Answer Session with the Cabinet Members for Children Services.

There was also a Special Scrutiny Programme Committee meeting scheduled for 1pm on 18 November 2019 for pre-decision scrutiny on the Housing Commissioning Review.

Resolved that the report be noted.

63 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair presented a report on 'Scrutiny Letters' for information.

Resolved that the scrutiny letters log be noted.

64 Audit Committee Work Plan (For Information).

The Audit Committee Work Plan was **noted**.

65 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.

The dates and times of the upcoming Panel / Working Group meetings were **noted**.

The meeting ended at 6.07 pm

Chair