



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 15 September 2020

Future Scrutiny Programme Committee Work Plan

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| Purpose: | This report identifies possible adjustments to the work, and way of working, of the Committee and overall framework of the scrutiny work programme, in order to improve overall capacity for scrutiny activity. |
| Content: | The report outlines the rationale for making changes and provides relevant information to assist the Committee discussion. |
| Councillors are being asked to: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) consider moving away from routine monthly Cabinet Member Q & A sessions to create space to pick up on specific issues of concern for focussed discussion at Committee meetings. Instead retaining Q & A session with the Leader of the Council and 'as and when required' basis for other Cabinet Members;b) Subject to agreement of (a), carry out scrutiny of the Public Services Board via Committee meetings instead of via standalone Performance Panel (currently 2 meetings per year), which could provide further capacity in the overall work programme; andc) change frequency of the Adult Services and Child & Family Services Performance Panels - moving to a 6-weekly cycle, overall representing a neutral change in terms of officer support. |
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| Lead Officer: | Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer |
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee (SPC) is responsible for developing the Council's scrutiny work programme, and managing the overall work of scrutiny to ensure that it is as effective as possible. The Council has an agile scrutiny work programme, with choices made by the Committee around the type and number of specific activities, subject to available time and resources to support the work of scrutiny.
- 1.2 This report presents possible adjustments to the work, and way of working, of the SPC and overall framework of the scrutiny work programme, in order to improve overall capacity for scrutiny activity. Specifically, to create space within the programme for more topics of concern to be looked at each year, and provide better balance between planned and responsive scrutiny, i.e. ability to pick up new / urgent matters without necessarily having to stop other work.
- 1.3 This is not, at this point, about identifying specific topics for scrutiny – that is for later discussion – but about evolution of the Committee's way of working that could improve overall capacity for scrutiny.

2. Proposed Changes

- 2.1 Proposed are two relatively straightforward changes that could make a significant impact. The focus is on creating extra capacity within SPC meetings to 'pick up the slack' and look at specific topics of concern, which might otherwise need working groups to be established and space in the programme to look at.

2.2 Cabinet Member Q & As

- 2.2.1 Regular Q & A sessions with Cabinet Members have been the mainstay of work of the Committee, ensuring that each year all Cabinet Members are held to account through questioning on a range of issues within their overall portfolio responsibilities. This item, at each meeting, would dominate the SPC agenda.
- 2.2.2 The SPC could choose to move away from monthly structured Cabinet Member Q & A Sessions as its main agenda item. But, instead retain at least an annual Q & A with the Leader of the Council and perhaps operate on an 'as and when required' basis for other Cabinet Members.
- 2.2.3 This could be achieved with minimal consequence / issue given the ongoing accountability and challenge to Cabinet Members on service delivery and performance already taking place through our Scrutiny Performance Panels, which can be considered to be effectively doing the 'heavy lifting' of scrutiny. This would also avoid potential for any duplication of effort between the SPC and Performance Panels.

- 2.2.4 It is important that SPC members are satisfied that Performance Panels have robust arrangements in place in terms of Cabinet Member engagement and clear opportunities for questioning on matters relevant to their terms of reference. The Committee will need to consider whether all Cabinet Members would be subject to challenge from Performance Panels, and assess whether there may be any gaps that may need to be addressed through other arrangements. There may well be elements within Cabinet portfolios that do not receive focus within Panels that will help the SPC determine what activity may be appropriate; but it would have the capacity to deal with this, through topic-based scrutiny. Section 5 of this report provides some relevant information about the relationship between Performance Panels and Cabinet portfolios.
- 2.2.5 As a result of the proposed change, the SPC agenda would be freed up to incorporate specific topics of concern into the committee work plan, which in any case would engage relevant Cabinet Member(s), with the committee dealing with these in the same fashion as might otherwise be done by 'standalone' one-off Working Groups. As we go on, the Committee can determine and shift the balance between structured Cabinet Member Q & A sessions and the focus on topics of concern as necessary, and keep things fluid.

2.3 **Public Services Board Scrutiny**

- 2.3.1 Scrutiny of the local Public Services Board has a statutory basis - required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - but with exact arrangements a matter of local choice. We are required to discharge our statutory role in relation to PSB scrutiny: receiving and acting as a statutory consultee for the PSB Wellbeing Assessment and Wellbeing Plan, and considering the PSB's annual progress report. Scrutiny is currently carried out through a multi-agency standalone Performance Panel, however frequency of meetings have reduced over the years (currently two per year) to make room for additional Performance Panels established by the SPC in the last two years, reflecting emerging priorities.
- 2.3.2 Given the extra capacity that could be created within the SPC, moving away from monthly Cabinet Member Q & As, the SPC could take on scrutiny of the PSB instead of being carried out via a discrete Performance Panel (currently two meetings max per year).
- 2.3.3 It would make sense as the SPC is formally designated as the Council Committee for statutory scrutiny of the PSB, as it is for Crime & Disorder. The existing Performance Panel is chaired by the SPC chair, and involves the SPC vice-chair, and all Performance Panel conveners, who all would be involved in SPC meetings, so this could represent more efficient use of time and resources.

2.3.4 It would be important, however, to maintain the co-option of non-executive partner representatives, e.g. from Health Board, Fire Authority, SCVS, Police, which reflect the 'core' PSB members, at any SPC meetings where PSB scrutiny is taking place. The SPC will of course need to discharge its statutory role in relation to PSB scrutiny and allocate sufficient meeting time accordingly. As well as being consulted upon on the PSB's Well-being Needs Assessment and Well-being Plan, it should each year receive the PSB Annual Report, and consider progress against agreed PSB Well-being Plan objectives in order to consider the effectiveness of the PSB and difference being made.

2.3.5 This change will mean that there will be continuity of PSB Scrutiny, not a reduction, through the SPC, as per statutory requirement. Removing the need to support a specific Performance Panel for PSB scrutiny would also have additional benefits as it could create capacity for additional (perhaps 2) standalone Scrutiny Working Groups.

3. Overall Impact and Look of the 'new' Work Programme

3.1 The above-proposed changes could result in a more focussed work programme, covering a wide range of issues, better placed to act upon with topic suggestions raised by scrutiny councillors:

- Scrutiny Programme Committee – with a more flexible work plan (approx. 12-14 meetings factoring in extra meetings typically necessary each year)
- 1 Inquiry Panel (approx. 10-12 meetings)
Time-limited in-depth scrutiny - 6-month study on significant chosen topic of concern (wide-ranging evidence gathering, final report with conclusions and recommendations to Cabinet, structured follow up process).
- 6 Performance Panels (approx. 52-58 meetings)
Ongoing in-depth performance / financial monitoring and service-specific challenge, with greater focus on Cabinet Member accountability:
 - Service Improvement & Finance (monthly)
 - Education (monthly)
 - Adult Services (monthly)*
 - Child & Family Services (every two months)*
 - Development & Regeneration (every two months)
 - Natural Environment (quarterly)

***PROPOSED CHANGE:** change in frequency - Adult Services and Child & Family Services moving to a 6-weekly cycle, overall representing a neutral change in terms of officer support.

- Increased Number of Working Groups (*currently 4*) – up to 6 standalone, plus up to 4 additional topics via SPC
One-off meetings on chosen topic of concern (conclusion and recommendations sent to relevant Cabinet Member by letter or where wider Cabinet interest / significant recommendations via short report to Cabinet). Follow up via Committee.

Approx. total 80+ scrutiny meetings per year.

4. Future SPC Work Plan

- 4.1 Taking account of usual business, this would mean the SPC typically dealing with:
- Overall Work Programme Management
 - Q & A with Leader of the Council (and other Cabinet Members as & when necessary)
 - Pre-decision Scrutiny (as and when)
 - Small number of specific topics of concern / range of issues (potentially up to 4)
 - Crime & Disorder Scrutiny (Safer Swansea Partnership) - Annual
 - PSB Scrutiny (suggested minimum two meetings per year)
 - Corporate Safeguarding – Annual Report
 - Children & Young People’s Rights Scheme – Annual Report
 - Sustainable Swansea Programme – Annual Report
- 4.2 Proposed changes will also provide the flexibility in work plan for the Committee to focus on the most pressing issues, e.g. COVID-19, Brexit, moving away from the more rigid structure currently in place, and respond to issues as they arise.
- 4.3 The Committee acknowledges the current pressures on the Council as it focuses on the impact of the pandemic, response and recovery. COVID-19 has had a significant impact, and may continue to affect resources and normal working across the Council for some time. The desire for ‘business as usual’, in terms of the scrutiny work programme and individual work plans, will need to have cognisance of this. As such, the Committee will carefully consider this as it develops a new work programme, and recognises that resource constraints may have an impact on the level of scrutiny activity and ability to commit to the fullest work programme at this time. Whilst the global health crisis continues, we recognise the importance of flexible, timely, supportive and proportionate scrutiny activity, with clear objectives, expectations and lines of questioning.

4.4 The Committee is also mindful of resources within the Council's Scrutiny Team and ability to support a full work programme at this time. A new Scrutiny Officer (commenced 2 September) is undergoing necessary induction and training, and it will take some months for handover of work being covered by other team members and allocation of full workload. Members will also be supported as far as possible with research and consultation within the Team and/or with assistance from elsewhere within the Council. We are expecting our part-time Research Officer to return from maternity leave between Jan-Apr 2021.

5. Performance Panels / Lead Cabinet Members

5.1 The table below shows the relationship between Scrutiny Performance Panels and Cabinet portfolios.

| Panel: | Lead Cabinet Member(s): | Would also involve: |
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| Service Improvement & Finance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader) – Rob Stewart Business Improvement & Performance – Andrew Stevens | Other Cabinet Members as Panel's work is cross-cutting |
| Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Improvement, Learning & Skills – Jennifer Raynor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children Services – Elliot King / Sam Pritchard (re. Education of Looked After Children) |
| Adult Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult Social Care & Community Health Services – Clive Lloyd | |
| Child & Family Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children Services – Early Years - Elliot King / Young People - Sam Pritchard | |
| Development & Regeneration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment, Regeneration & Tourism – Robert Francis-Davies Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader) – Rob Stewart | |
| Natural Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management - Mark Thomas Delivery & Operations - David Hopkins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes, Energy & Service Transformation – Andrea Lewis (re. Green Energy / Green Transport) |

5.2 This may suggest gaps in focus on things like:

- Better Communities portfolio
- Social Environment / Infrastructure
- Housing and Homelessness

- 5.3 Any such matters, if there are issues of concern within, can be looked at by the SPC (one-off or regularly) or subject of standalone task and finish scrutiny. Ongoing Committee oversight of the work programme and work of Performance Panels will ensure that topics that merit scrutiny are not likely to be missed. The Committee can also keep the remit of Performance Panels under review to ensure coverage and accountability across all cabinet portfolios.
- 5.4 Further visibility and awareness can be given to the work of Performance Panels, by sending all non-executive councillors a monthly bulletin on specific activities carried out / planned. This may also encourage the participation of councillors and engagement in scrutiny, particularly in opportunities to put questions to Cabinet Members at Panel meetings.
- 5.5 A complete Cabinet Member portfolio listing is ***appended*** to this report, for information.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Current Cabinet Portfolios / Areas of Responsibility

APPENDIX 1 – CURRENT CABINET PORTFOLIOS

| Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader) (Cllr Rob Stewart) | Adult Social Care & Community Health Services (Cllr Clive Lloyd) | Better Communities (Cllr Alyson Pugh) | Business Improvement & Performance (Cllr Andrew Stevens) | Children Services (Early Years – Lead: Cllr Elliot King; Young People – Lead: Cllr Sam Pritchard) |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brexit & New Economic Relationships • Capital Programme Delivery • City Deal Delivery • City Centre Redevelopment • Communications • Community Leadership • Constitutional Changes • Finance Strategy, Budget & Saving Delivery • Financial Services • Future Digital Networks (City Deal) • Legal Services • Local & Regional Investment Strategy • Planning Policy (Regional) • Public Services Board (PSB) • Regeneration Strategy & Major Projects • Regional Working Lead (All Bodies) • Strategic Partnerships • Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee - Chair • Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) – Deputy Leader • WLGA Lead on Europe, Brexit, Economy & Energy • WLGA representative to LGA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities to Promote Independence & Ageing Well • Adult Social Services Modernisation • Assessment / Care Management • Elderly Care • Healthy City Partnership • Integration of Health & Social Care • Joint Equipment • Leaders Representative on West Glamorgan RPB • Learning Disability • Local Area Coordination Lead • Mental Health • Physical & Sensory Impairments • Public Services Board (PSB) – Leader’s Representative • Safeguarding • Strategic Health & Social Care Collaboration Opportunities • Supporting People • Wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd Sector Services • Access to Services (Equalities & Diversity Promotion in Council) • Community Cohesion • Community Groups, Engagement & Development • Community Growing (inc. Allotments) • Community Safety • Community Safety – Board Representative • Community Support Services • Employability • Financial Inclusion • Food Poverty Reduction • Food Bank Network Support (Covid-19) • LAC Services in Communities • Lifelong Learning • Neighbourhood Working • Poverty Reduction in Communities • Preventing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence • Safer Swansea Partnership Representative • Services for Vulnerable People in Communities during Covid-19 • Substance Misuse • Support for Veterans • Swansea Working • Welfare Reform & Rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile Working • Business & Service Improvement • Community Hubs, Service Protection • Contact Centre • Corporate Delivery of Priorities • Corporate Building Rationalisation • Council ICT and Digital Delivery of Services • Crowd Funding & New Community Funding Models • Digital Inclusion • Information & Business Change (inc. Better ICT) • Localised Services and Opportunity for New Business Models • Members Community Budget Scheme Delivery • Performance Management & Improvement • Post Covid-19 Council & Community Services Redesign • Risk & Resilience Management • Rural Economy Lead | <p>Early Years - Lead (Cllr Elliot King)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Start in Life • CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services) • Child & Family Services • Children & Young People (CYP) Chair • Continuum of Care • Corporate Parenting Lead • Families First • Flying Start • Play Opportunities • Regional Adoption Service • Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy • Safeguarding <p>Young People - Lead (Cllr Sam Pritchard):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships Support • CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services) • Children & Young People (CYP) Board - Lead • Corporate Parenting Support • NEETS Reduction Support (Not in Education, Employment or Training) • Opportunities for Young People • Promoting Youth Inclusion & Youth Citzenships • Readiness for Work (Support) • Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy • Safeguarding • UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) • YOS (Youth Offending Service) • Youth Services |

APPENDIX 1 – CURRENT CABINET PORTFOLIOS

| Delivery & Operations (Joint-Deputy Leader) (Cllr David Hopkins) | Education Improvement, Learning & Skills (Cllr Jennifer Raynor) | Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management (Cllr Mark Thomas) | Homes, Energy & Service Transformation (Joint- Deputy Leader) (Cllr Andrea Lewis) | Investment, Regeneration & Tourism (Cllr Robert Francis- Davies) |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champions' Liaison & Coordination • City Profile • Collaboration Opportunities • Commercial Services Procurement & Frameworks • Corporate Delivery of Priorities • Democratic Services • Health & Safety Policy • Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) • Human Resources • Landlord Licensing • Licensing Policy • Mayoral & Civic Functions • Member Development • Outside Bodies • Petitions • Planning Policy • Scrutiny Services • Strategic Estates & Property Management - Lead • Sustainable Development (incl Biodiversity) - Lead • Trade Union Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Regional Working (ERW) Leader's Representative • Education Services from 3 to 19 • Further Education • Future Schools Estate Scoping & Delivery • Inclusion & Learner Support • 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) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal Defence, Marina, Foreshore & Beach Maintenance • Community Caretakers (Non HRA) • Community Grass Cutting Services • Community / Public Transport • Cycleways • Environmental Health inc. COVID-19 Regulation Enforcement • Estates Maintenance Management (non HRA) • Fleet Renewal & Maintenance • Fly Tipping Task Force • Highways & Engineering • Infrastructure Repairs & Maintenance • Litter & Community Cleansing • Parking Policy & Control • Parks & Cleansing • Parks Maintenance • Pothole Task Force • Public Protection • Public Transport • Regional Collaborations for Transport, Highways & Waste • Regional Transport Policy • Streetscene • Trading Standards • Waste Management & Recycling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile Rollout Programme - Lead • Building Services • Cooperative Housing • Corporate ICT Strategy - Lead • Council House Management • Council House Repairs • District Heating Schemes • Energy Policy inc. Generation, Supply & District Heating • 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 • Modernisation of Council Services Programme Lead • More Homes Delivery • Organisational Development • Post COVID-19 Response on Housing & Homelessness • Sheltered Housing • Tenancy Enforcement • Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Programme Delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business & City Promotion • City Centre Management • City Projects and Major Development Opportunities • City Waterfront & Marina Promotion • Creative City • Culture, the Arts & Galleries • Events, Tourism & Destination Marketing • Healthy Night Life / Purple Flag • Heritage inc. River Corridor Development • Inward Investment Opportunities • Libraries • New Local & Regional Business Opportunities • Parks & Play Development • Parks, Beaches and Foreshore Events & Promotion • Science City • Sports Facilities • Suburban Centres & Community Regeneration Initiatives • Universities Collaboration (Development) |

All Cabinet Members: Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea & Poverty Reduction

NOTE:

Children Services Portfolios operate under a job share system with 2 named Councillors sharing the workload, split into 2 specialist knowledge areas, however, formally they remain as ONE cabinet portfolio. Each individual holds office for a rolling 3 month period and during that time assume responsibility for the overall portfolio. However, the workload in gathering information and learning will be shared.