

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

Key Question: What is the Council doing to ensure it procures locally, ethically, and greenly while being cost effective and transparent in its practices?

Progress Bar:

| Planning | | | | Evidence Gathering | | | | Draft Final Report | | | |
|----------|--|--|--|--------------------|--|--|--|--------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | |

The Procurement Pre-Inquiry Working Group originally met on 24 October 2019 for an overview / briefing on the subject matter. This helped Councillors to be informed about how scrutiny can contribute to improvement and the focus, scale and direction of any inquiry. The Panel agreed to undertake an inquiry and the Terms of Reference were agreed. The inquiry work was then placed on hold pending recruitment of Scrutiny Officer / available resources.

The Inquiry Panel will now resume and, given the passage of time and impact of the pandemic, will initially meet to review the key question and terms of reference and amend as necessary.

The inquiry may 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 | |
| Equalities | 21 Nov 2019 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 28 Jan 2021 |

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)

The Panel meets every month. The most recent meeting was held on 14 December, when the Panel discussed the Equality Plan Review, with Cllr Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Supporting Communities, and relevant officer(s).

The next meeting will be held on 20 January and will focus on Budget proposals, Q2 Budget Monitoring 20/21 and Q1 Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20.

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

The Panel met with the members of the Swansea Skills Partnership on the 17 December to discuss the role of partnership, the progress it is making and its future plans. They also received an update on the current Covid situation in Education.

Due to current pressures on the Education Department, the Panel agreed to put all items from the January and February meetings back to later in the year, apart from a verbal Covid-19 update on the 21 January and the Annual Budget as it relates to Education on 16 February.

c) **Adult Services** (convener: Cllr Susan Jones)

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. Due to the pressures of the Covid-19 Pandemic, a Joint Social Services Panel meeting was held in December to receive an update on management of Covid-19. The joint panel will meet again in January and February and will receive the Performance Monitoring reports for Adult Services and Child and Family Services, and an update on management of Covid-19. The meeting in February will also receive the draft budget proposals for both areas. It is currently planned for separate Panel meetings to recommence in March 2021.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. See Adult Services above.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The most recent meeting on 3 November discussed the current progress in relation to development and regeneration activity as outlined within the 'Dashboard Report', which is regularly provided to the Panel. At the next meeting, on 12

January, as well as the usual 'Dashboard' Report, the Panel will discuss the current status of Commercial Opportunities in Rural Areas.

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

This Panel meets every two months. A Panel meeting arranged for 14 December was cancelled due to current Covid-19 pressures on the Council. However, views on the delivery of the corporate objective on 'Maintaining & Enhancing Swansea's Natural Resources & Biodiversity' and on the recently published report on actions in response to the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration, were communicated to Cabinet Members.

It is anticipated that a Panel meeting will take place in February in order to focus on the management of green space / weed & verge management, including discussion on use of glyphosate, wildflower planting programme, and green infrastructure.

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 remotely on 26 November 2020. They met with the Chair of the Lead Chief Executive and the Managing Directors to discuss the effects of Covid on the business of ERW and progress with ERW reform programme. They also discussed the business plan and risk register. The next meeting will take place around March 2021.

b) **Swansea Bay City Region City**

The Joint Scrutiny Committee met for the first time since January in October for an update on the City Deal Programme and Projects, as well as discussion around the impact of COVID-19. A meeting planned for December was cancelled. The Committee is expected to meet again on 2 February 2021.

5. **Working Groups:**

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) **Workforce** (convener: Cllr Cyril Anderson)

This Working Group will meet on 29 March 2021 to enable information, questions and discussion on how the Council supports health & well-being of staff; issues around home working; staff sickness; staff turnover; use of agency staff and pressures.

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

This will enable information, questions and discussion, following up on previous scrutiny 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 with increasing dependency on digital technology and interaction, to avoid exclusion / poor access, etc.

c) **Bus Services** (convener: tbc)

This will enable information, questions and discussion about bus network coverage and levels of service; community transport provision; integration with other forms of transport, etc.

d) **Healthy City** (convener: tbc)

This will enable information, questions and discussion on Swansea as a healthy city, exploring in particular the provision, and promotion of, outdoor sport and activities and opportunities for young people, etc.

Reserve List:

- Road Safety
- Active Travel
- Accessibility for the Disabled / Elderly