

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. A meeting on 24 June is planned.

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 Further follow up tba Nov 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 Panel met on 8 March for discussion on the Mid-Year Budget Statement, Q3 Budget Monitoring and the Treasury Management Strategy Statement. On 12 April the Panel is expected to examine the Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2020/21 and the Planning Annual Performance Report 2020/2021. It should be noted that Corporate Performance Monitoring reports this year have been disrupted by the pandemic.

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

This Panel meets every month. The Panel in March spoke to four pupils and the Headteacher from Bishopston Primary School about their thoughts on remote and blended learning. They also received an update on the Covid impacts in education, looked at the pupil development grant spend and received an update on the current ERW situation. In April the Panel will discuss updates on progress with Additional Learning Needs Reform and the implementation of the New Curriculum in Swansea, they will also review the Estyn Report on the Education Response to the Pandemic.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks but had not met as a separate panel since October 2020 due to the pandemic. Separate meetings recommenced on 9 March when the Panel received an update on the West Glamorgan Transformation Programme, including the impact of the pandemic on the Programme and the Wales Audit Office Report on the Integrated Care Fund and Action Plan. When the Panel next meets on 20 April it will discuss the Performance Monitoring Report; receive an update on How Council's Policy Commitments translate to Adult Services and discuss Actions from WAO report 'Front door to Adult Social Care', specifically Recommendation: Impact of Preventative Services.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks but had not met as a separate panel since October 2020 due to the pandemic. Separate meetings commenced on 24 March when the Panel discussed the Wales Audit Office Report on Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; the Performance Monitoring Report for January 2021 and the Safeguarding Quality Unit Annual Report. The Panel will

meet next on 25 May when it will receive a briefing on the Youth Offending Service and an update on progress with CAMHS.

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

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

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

This Panel is scheduled to meet every two months, although there has been some disruption to this schedule due to pressures on Council resources dealing with the pandemic. A Panel meeting took place on 22 March, enabling the Panel to hear about the work of the Nature Conservation Team and current / future projects, and consider priorities for the Panel's future work plan. The Panel will meet next on 19 May to discuss progress on action on Climate Change including feedback following a public consultation exercise by the Council.

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 1 March 2021. They met with the Lead Director and the ERW Chief Officers to discuss the effects of Covid on the business of ERW and progress with ERW reform programme. They also discussed the items presented at the ERW Joint Committee on the 9 February. The next meeting will take place on 28 June 2021.

b) **Swansea Bay City Region City**

The Joint Scrutiny Committee met on 2 February to continue City Deal programme monitoring. There was specific discussion on the Life Science & Well-being Campuses Project, Pentre Awel Project, as well as update on City Deal funding / finances. The Committee is expected to meet again on 25 May 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 met on 29 March 2021 and asked about the impact of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of staff; how the Council is supporting this; issues around home working; staff sickness; staff turnover; use of agency staff and pressures. A range of information was considered by the Working Group, with input from relevant Cabinet Member(s) and officer(s). A letter with the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations will be sent to the relevant Cabinet Members. The Working Group were of the view that a further meeting should be arranged in around six months in order to revisit the topic and consider the latest position, information and experience including the results of the further staff survey that will be carried out by the Council in the coming months.

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

This Working Group will meet on the 11 May. 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.

c) **Bus Services** (convener: Cllr Lyndon Jones)

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: Cllr Mary Jones)

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