



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 13 April 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
E W Fitzgerald
T J Hennegan
G J Tanner

Councillor(s)

J E Burtonshaw
J A Hale
P K Jones
W G Thomas

Councillor(s)

M C Child
D W Helliwell
W G Lewis
T M White

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas A Roberts

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley S M Jones
P R Hood-Williams J W Jones

Also Present

Councillor Andrea Lewis Joint Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Homes,
Energy & Service Transformation

Officer(s)

Rosie Jackson	Senior Policy & Leasehold Officer
Kate Jones	Democratic Services Officer
Brij Madahar	Scrutiny Team Leader
Steve Porter	Operations Manager, Community Housing Services
Debbie Smith	Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Mark Wade	Head of Housing & Public Health

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Co-opted Members: L R Jones

56 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:

Councillor Mark Child – Minute No. 60 – Member of Swansea Bay University Health Board – Personal

57 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.

58 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 16 March 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

59 Public Question Time.

There were no public questions.

60 Scrutiny of Homelessness Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation / Deputy Leader presented the 'Homelessness Strategy Progress Report'.

The Head of Housing and Public Health, the Operations Manager, Community Housing Services and the Senior Policy & Leasehold Management Officer were also present.

The report outlined the progress with the Council's Homelessness Strategy since adoption by Cabinet in November 2018.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the following:

- It had been a hugely challenging time for the service
- Commitment to an 'always a bed' pledge
- The Homelessness Strategy was currently at the mid-point
- Despite the pandemic good progress had been made on all 5 objectives of the Strategy
- The pandemic had seen outstanding partnership working which was hoped to continue

Questions and discussions focused on the following: -

- What had changed since the Strategy began – were any elements redundant given the current situation. It was noted that the pandemic had accelerated plans in many ways
- Funding and sustainability of service provided during pandemic
- Focus on rapid rehousing approach – wrapping multi agency support around people to help them succeed in their tenancies
- Likely removal of 'priority need' test as a criteria for housing – possible effects on funding, resources and current points system
- Change in public perception of homelessness
- Numbers of homelessness in Bed and Breakfast accommodation – efforts on replacing with more sustainable housing

- The need to increase supply of 1 bedroom of properties – supply is not meeting demand
- Undertaking a temporary supported housing review
- Improving the position for Asylum Seekers and Refugees – providing assistance for significant needs particularly those leaving Home Office accommodation on change of status. Noted that Swansea was one of four dispersal areas in Wales
- Training on 'Psychologically Informed Environment' – impact and effect of that – early days to assess the impact of this training
- Impact of homelessness on children and young people in respect of their education – ensuring no one is left behind
- Care leavers – told that support to be 'tenancy ready' was working well
- Target to avoid Bed and Breakfast housing for families
- A move away from developing an holistic 'solutions centre' – alternative options for such services with more outreach working or some services provided in other centres such as Ty Tom Jones or a City Centre Hub.
- Partnership working between the Council and Registered Social Landlords to prevent homelessness
- Progress of vaccination programme in respect of those who have been accommodated by the Council
- Provision / Funding of Mental Health Support
- Progress on providing housing those with pets

The Committee and Cabinet Member noted the excellent work carried out by staff during the pandemic.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers

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

61 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Development & Regeneration. (Councillor Jeff Jones, Convener)

Councillor Jeff Jones, Convenor, presented the Development & Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel Update.

Further to the written report provided, he specifically highlighted that the Panel looks at a wide range of topics in addition to the City Deal. The next phase of the City Centre Development would be crucial to be success of the project for Swansea and would continue to be monitored by the Panel.

Resolved that the update be noted.

62 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

The Chair presented a report on the Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

The Committee was informed that Councillor Peter Jones had been re-appointed as Convenor of the Natural Environment Performance Panel.

63 Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/22.

The Chair presented a report on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/22.

The Chair noted that Scrutiny Working Group on Workforce met on the 29 March 2021. The Committee endorsed the request of the Working Group to meet again in 6 months' time to revisit the topic.

The next Scrutiny Programme Committee was scheduled for the 18 May 2021. The main item scheduled was Crime & Disorder Scrutiny, which would look at the performance of Swansea's Community Safety Partnership, the Safer Swansea Partnership.

Resolved that the report be noted.

64 Scrutiny Letters.

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

Resolved that the scrutiny letters log be 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 5.05 pm

Chair