

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			

On the 27 July the Panel met with Internal Audit to look how Procurement is audited. The Panel will now start their meetings with individual Council Departments starting with the Place Directorate on the 16 August.

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)

This Panel meets every month. A progress report appears separately under Agenda Item 7.

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

This Panel meets every month. At its most recent meeting on 15 July the Panel looked at how the delegated spend to secondary schools, relating to the Behaviour Strategy is being spent, meeting with two Headteacher's. The Panel Convener also updated the Panel on the current position in relation to ERW and the new Education Partnership following the regional scrutiny meeting on the 28 June.

Estyn is coming to the next Panel meeting on the 1 September to discuss the new Estyn Regime and Thematic Reviews. The Panel will also be updated on the current position with the Education Covid Recovery Plan and the New Regional Education Partnership.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At its last meeting on 14 July the Panel discussed the latest Performance Monitoring Report, received initial feedback on the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Assurance Visit in relation to Adult Services and agreed its work programme for 2021-22.

At its next meeting on 08 September the Panel will discuss the Workforce Support Programme - Support for Health and Social Care Staff.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. The Panel last met on 22 June and received an update on the Regional Adoption Service, discussed initial feedback on the CIW Assurance Visit and agreed its work programme for 2021-22.

At its next meeting on 11 August the Panel will discuss the latest Performance Monitoring Report, receive a briefing on the CIW Assurance Visit Full Report in relation to Child and Family Services and a briefing on the Outcomes from the Ty Nant CIW Inspection.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The Panel met on 1 July to discuss the monitoring Dashboard Report and updates across all major projects.

At the next meeting on 7 September, the Panel will receive a presentation from Swansea University in relation to their involvement with the City Deal investment projects.

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

This Panel meets every two months. The Panel last met on 29 June, holding discussions surrounding the Council's Air Quality Management strategies. The Panel also heard from Swansea University regarding research into the human-health impacts of Air Quality. The Panel will next meet on 26 August to hear updates regarding Ash Die Back.

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 for the last time in its current form on the 28 June 2021. They met with the Lead Director and the ERW Chief Officers to discuss ERW and the move to the new Education Regional Partnership. They also discussed progress with the Business Plan and how they would like to see Scrutiny operate under the new Partnership.

The new South West Region Education Partnership will commence shortly, and will include Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. The Governance Structure for the new body is currently being finalised and will go to each of the three Councils for discussion in autumn. The new scrutiny arrangement will form part of this Governance Structure.

b) **Swansea Bay City Region City**

The Joint Scrutiny Committee continues to monitor the City Deal programme. The Committee met on 20 July and considered the Swansea Bay City Deal Annual Report. There was also specific discussion on: Skills & Talent Business Case, Swansea Bay City Deal Change Control Procedure, Benefits Realisation - Benefits Profiles, as well as overall programme and financial monitoring. The next meeting is planned for 27 September with focus on: Pentre Awel Project, Digital Infrastructure.

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 was sent to the relevant Cabinet Members and this letter together with the Cabinet Members response was reported to the Committee in June.

With the Committee's agreement, the Working Group will meet again in the next 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 met on the 11 May where they congratulated officers for the good work done so far in relation this, especially through the difficult Covid period. Overall the Working Group were of the view that the Council is on the right track with its Digital Inclusion Strategy and do recognise that the Council is keen to make the right improvements moving forward. The Digital Inclusion Framework/Strategy and the Council Website is currently being reviewed and members of the Working Group asked to be included in this process. The letter from the Working Group to the Cabinet Member for Business Improvement & Performance was reported to the Committee in June.

The Working Group felt that further oversight of work on Digital Inclusion is necessary as things develop, perhaps annually, whether through Working Group or other method of scrutiny. This will be factored into future work planning discussion.

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

This Working Group met on 7 July and asked about bus network coverage and levels of service; community transport provision; integration with other forms of transport, etc. Representatives of First Cymru and Cardiff Bus also participated in the meeting.

A letter with the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations is currently being drafted and will be sent to the relevant Cabinet Member in due course, and reported to the Committee.

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 Working Group List:

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