



## Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 18 January 2022

### Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities – Q & A Session with Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

<b>Purpose:</b>	To enable the Committee to question the Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy on his work. The Committee's questions will broadly explore priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to his areas of responsibility.
<b>Content:</b>	<p>The Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance &amp; Strategy will appear before the Committee for a Q &amp; A session which may cover any of his areas of responsibility, but will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• COVID response / recovery</li><li>• Brexit effects / response</li><li>• Budget</li><li>• City Centre Regeneration</li><li>• Developments in Partnership / Regional Working</li></ul>
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Question the Leader / Cabinet Member on specific portfolio responsibilities</li><li>• Make comments and recommendations as necessary</li></ul>
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
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<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Paul Cridland

## 1. Introduction

1.1 One of the most important roles that scrutiny carries out is holding the Council's Cabinet to account. The Cabinet (also known as the Executive) is made up of the Leader and other councillors, appointed by the Leader, who are allocated specific portfolio responsibilities.

1.2 There are 10 Cabinet portfolios:

	<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	<b>Cabinet Member</b>
1	Economy, Finance & Strategy (Leader of the Council)	Cllr Rob Stewart
2	Delivery & Operations (Joint Deputy Leader)	Cllr David Hopkins
3	Climate Change & Service Transformation (Joint Deputy Leader)	Cllr Andrea Lewis
4	Adult Social Care & Community Health Services	Cllr Mark Child
5	Business Improvement & Performance	Cllr Andrew Stevens
6	Children Services	Cllr Elliott King
7	Education Improvement, Learning & Skills	Cllr Robert Smith
8	Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management	Cllr Mark Thomas
9	Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cllr Robert Francis-Davies
10	Supporting Communities	Cllr Alyson Pugh Cllr Louise Gibbard

### NOTE:

- All Cabinet Members have responsibility for Poverty Reduction
- Supporting Communities Portfolios operate under a job share system with two named Councillors sharing the responsibility, rotated on a regular basis; however, formally they remain as one cabinet portfolio.
- Detailed Cabinet Portfolio Responsibility listing is **attached** to this report.

1.3 By acting as a 'critical friend' scrutiny has the opportunity to challenge the Cabinet and individual cabinet members on their actions and performance in relation to their areas of responsibilities.

1.4 The Committee should be mindful to avoid duplication of any issue(s) being examined elsewhere in the scrutiny work programme e.g., within Performance Panels.

## 2. Q & A with Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy

2.1 The Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy, Councillor Rob Stewart, will appear before the Committee to participate in a question-and-answer session. Councillor Stewart has wide ranging responsibilities which may be subject to Committee questions, but the session is planned to focus on a smaller number of key issues, relating to:

- COVID response / recovery
- Brexit effects / response
- Budget
- City Centre Regeneration
- Developments in Partnership / Regional Working

2.2 Councillor Stewart has provided a report on his areas of responsibility and issues identified by the Committee to help focus the discussion and questions - see **Appendix 1**. He will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the Committee.

2.3 Although having specific Cabinet portfolio responsibilities, as Leader of the Council Councillor Stewart is responsible for:

- providing political leadership to the Council
- working with officers to lead the organisation
- appointing the Cabinet
- managing and leading the work of the Cabinet and chairing meetings
- delegation of executive functions that allow the Cabinet and Officers to make decisions and manage day-to-day delivery of Council Services, in line with the Council's overall policies and budget

2.4 The session provides Committee members with opportunity to hold the Leader / Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance & Strategy to account for his work, actions, and challenge performance, improvement, and future thinking.

2.5 In terms of themes that cut across all cabinet portfolios, the Committee can also ask about:

- Well-being of Future Generations Act – impact on their work / decisions e.g., what they are doing to achieve the well-being goals and ways of working, e.g., focus on long-term thinking, collaboration / involvement etc. (including regional / collaborative working, service user / public engagement)
- Links to Poverty Reduction
- Reducing inequalities, including socio-economic disadvantage

- Links to the Council's Recovery and Transformation Plan, 'Swansea Achieving Better Together'
  - Links to the Public Services Board (PSB)
- 2.6 The Committee has also invited members of the public and other scrutiny councillors (not on the Committee) to suggest questions that the Committee should ask. It is up to the Committee how to deal with any suggested questions within the session.
- 2.7 Following the session the Chair will write to Councillor Stewart to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the Committee, and any actions for him to consider.
- 2.8 If the Committee wishes to conduct more detailed scrutiny of any of the issues raised during the session, then this should be agreed through the normal work planning process and planned for a future meeting. This will also allow proper time for preparation.

### 3. Previous Scrutiny

- 3.1 The correspondence following last year's Q & A session with the Leader (January 2021) is **attached**, and Committee Members may wish to follow up on previous discussion.
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee also wrote to the Leader over the past year on the following:
- Council's COVID-19 response and recovery plan (16 Mar meeting)
  - Council's Recovery & Transformation Plan – Swansea Achieving Better Together (19 Oct meeting)
- 3.3 There has also been Committee correspondence with Councillor Stewart, as Joint Chair of Swansea Public Services Board, following PSB Scrutiny sessions.
- 3.4 The Committee should note that Councillor Stewart has already been engaged in scrutiny, or is planned, of the following:
- Budget (Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel)
  - Project Updates (Development & Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel)

Other:

Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee:

The Leader has been held to account over the past year as current Chair of the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Committee. Meetings of the Joint Scrutiny Committee took place in February, July, and November 2021.

#### **4. Legal Implications**

4.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report.

**Background Papers:** None

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Leader's Key Headlines Report

Appendix 2: Letter to Cllr Rob Stewart re. Q & A Session  
(19 Jan 2021 SPC meeting)

Appendix 3: Cabinet Portfolio Responsibility Listing