



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 14 November 2023 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

A Davis
M Jones
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)

E W Fitzgerald
W G Lewis
T M White

Councillor(s)

V A Holland
F D O'Brien

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

Elizabeth Lee

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley P Hood-Williams S M Jones

Officer(s)

Stuart Davies	Head of Highways & Transportation
Barrie Gilbert	Senior Transport Officer
Julie Gosney	Partnership and Involvement Team Manager
David Howes	Director of Social Services
Simon Jones	Social Services Strategy and Performance Improvement Officer
Brij Madahar	Scrutiny Team Leader
Debbie Smith	Deputy Chief Legal Officer
Mark Wade	Director of Place
Jane Whitmore	Strategic Lead Commissioner
Samantha Woon	Democratic Services Officer

Also present

Councillor H Gwilliam - Cabinet Member for Community (Support)
Councillor A Anthony - Cabinet Member for Well-Being
Councillor L Gibbard - Cabinet Member for Care Services
Councillor A S Stevens – Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure
Councillor T J Hennegan – Convener - Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry Panel

External Participant

Bev Fowles – Director of South Wales Transport / Vice-Chair of Coach and Bus Association Cymru

Apologies for Absence

Statutory Co-opted Member(s): Beth Allender
Councillor Co-opted Members: L R Jones and S E Keeton

35 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

36 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.

37 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 17 October 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

38 Public Question Time.

None.

39 Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Final Report.

The Convener of the Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry Panel presented the final report for the Scrutiny Inquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour. The report presented the conclusions and recommendations arising from the Inquiry that sought to answer the following question: *How can the Council ensure that it is working with its partners to appropriately and effectively tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in Swansea?*

The Convener thanked all participants and the Scrutiny Officer for their assistance in preparing the report.

The Chair thanked the Convener and Members of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel for their thorough and informative report and referred to the Panel's request to consider adding into the Scrutiny Work Programme examination of Youth Provision in Swansea, including the provision of current issues like preventative work, funding and the difficulty in recruiting qualified youth workers. The Chair stated that this could be included in discussion of potential Scrutiny Work Programme for 2024/25 perhaps as a possible Working Group or future Committee item.

Subject to Committee agreement, the Inquiry report would be presented to the next available Cabinet meeting for decision, currently 21 December.

Resolved that:

- 1) the Inquiry report proceed to Cabinet meeting on 21 December 2023.
- 2) The topic of 'Youth Provision' be included in discussion of future Scrutiny Work Programme.

40 Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Progress Report 2021-2023.

The Cabinet Member for Community (Support) assisted by the Director of Social Services (Lead Director), Strategic Lead Commissioner and Partnership & Involvement Team Manager, presented the report on the progress of the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme in Swansea 2021-2023.

An overview of the refreshed Children & Young People's Rights Scheme in Swansea, a summary of the Countywide priorities identified by Children & Young People, progress via the "Right Way" five principled approach and recommendations were detailed.

Committee questioning and discussion focussed on the following:

- Whole Council Approach – there have been successes in embedding a whole-Council approach on CYP Rights and the use of the 5 principle approach and the matrix ensured that arrangements were in place to benchmark and measure / monitor performance. The development of a training module would help ensure that all aspects of work being undertaken by the Council were captured and embedded.
- UNCRC Training – the Education Department were currently reviewing School Governor Training with a view to ensuring that UNCRC training is mandatory.
- UNCRC Rights Respecting Schools – whether all schools were now 'rights respecting' and developments following introduction of the new curriculum for Wales.
- Youth Service – The Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry had flagged up issues with Youth Provision in Swansea including funding and the difficulty in recruiting qualified youth workers. This has issue has not impacted on work to embed CYP Rights and Children have been involved in how the Council's outreach model is designed.

The Chair thanked all concerned for the informative report.

Resolved that:

- 1) the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member for Community (Support) reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.
- 2) The Committee were content to receive future updates on a two-yearly basis for better alignment with Welsh Government model of reviewing the Children's Rights Scheme.

41 Annual Report - Corporate Safeguarding 2022-23.

The Cabinet Member for Care Services, assisted by the Director of Social Services and Social Services Strategy & Performance Improvement Officer summarised the work programme of the Corporate Safeguarding Group during 2022-23, and highlighted improvements carried out in support of the Council's corporate safeguarding policy and corporate arrangements for safeguarding across the whole Council, covering seven key areas of activity.

Committee questioning and discussion focussed on the following:

- Working with Contractors and Suppliers – level of compliance / arrangements for monitoring. Noted that challenges still existed, and this was 'work in progress'.
- Mandatory Safeguarding Training – level of promotion across the Authority and take up. New training was 'live' at the moment and the new Oracle system will provide better management information and more effective oversight of training compliance across the Council. With regard to Councillor Training, a step-by-step guide was being developed by the Head of Digital & Customer Services, which will shortly be communicated to Councillors.
- DBS Checks – have been re-examined across a range of staff and categories and have changed over time. The Council is compliant with Welsh Government guidance.

The Chair thanked all concerned for the informative report.

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

42 Follow Up: Scrutiny Working Group - Bus Services.

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure, assisted by the Director of Place, Head of Highways & Transportation and Team Leader, Public & School Transport, provided an update on issues raised in the previous meetings of the Scrutiny Working Group in July 2021 and March 2022, and developments.

Detailed updates were provided in respect of cleaner fuel buses, bus service network and bus emergency schemes, bus and rail links and bus shelters.

Mr B Fowles, Director of South Wales Transport, was also present to provide an external perspective from a local SME bus service operator, which has been a long-standing local bus service contractor for the Council. He was also Vice-Chair of Coach and Bus Association Cymru which is a trade association representing the interest of smaller bus operators in Wales provided a useful perspective on things, particularly in terms of Welsh Government proposed legislation to franchise local bus services. He referred to issues surrounding the continual reorganisation coupled with decreased budgets and the Welsh Governments efforts to re-create a franchise similar to Transport for London.

Committee questioning and discussion focussed on the following:

- Communication & Engagement - progress made on fostering effective dialogue between the Council and First Cymru (as well as other bus operators) and any barriers. Noted that constant changes in First Cymru senior management / leadership does not help but regular meetings are held to raise / discuss service issues.
- Bus Cuts – Noted that service providers are able to provide a six week notice for change, which provides a real challenge. Despite this, dialogue was continuing.

- Transport Integration & Cross Ticketing – cross ticketing would be part of the franchise and would be rolled out in zones from April 2026. It was anticipated that in 3-5 years there would be improvements in connectivity. Transport for Wales are looking at integration to bring buses into railways stations.
- Travel Initiatives – discussion on encouraging bus use, including Council free bus travel initiative. Noted this would be operational on weekends between now and Christmas and the week after Christmas.
- Transport for London – the success of this network was discussed and comparisons with other areas.

The Chair thanked all concerned for the informative report and discussion, which now concluded formal follow up in the Bus Services Scrutiny Working Group.

Resolved that the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee write to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure reflecting the discussion and sharing the views of the Committee.

43 Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress Report: Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance (Councillor Chris Holley, Convener).

Councillor Chris Holley provided the Committee with a progress report on the work / activities of the Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel. He thanked all Panel members for their participation and 'teamwork' in carrying out this Scrutiny.

Resolved that the Scrutiny Performance Panel Progress report in respect of Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance be noted.

44 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

Resolved that the membership of the Panels and Working Groups as reported, be agreed.

45 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Chair presented the regular report on the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/24 which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.

The main items for the next Committee on 19 December comprised:

- Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities – Support for Businesses.
- Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty.

Members noted that the Scrutiny Training & Development Programme for Swansea Scrutiny Councillors was underway, which was being facilitated by the Improvement Team at the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).

Upcoming Sessions:

- Scrutiny of Performance – to be held on 4 December / 6 December
- Self-Assessment of Scrutiny (two parts) – to be held on 17 January / 23 January

The Chair encouraged all to attend. All Sessions were being held online via MS Teams, with the exception of the final 'Self-Assessment' part 2 session which will be in-person only. As well as benefitting individual Councillors, the Programme will help to inform Scrutiny Improvement Objectives and actions going forward.

46 Scrutiny Letters.

The Chair referred to the following letters, reflecting on recent Committee Scrutiny activity:

- Committee - Scrutiny of Active Travel – Letter to Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure.
- Committee - Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Oracle Project Closure Process and Transition to New Operating Model – Letter to Cabinet Member for Service Transformation.
- Procurement Scrutiny Inquiry – Follow Up – Letter to Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance.

47 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.

The Chair referred upcoming Panel/Working Group/Regional Scrutiny meetings, for awareness.

The meeting ended at 5.27 pm

Chair