

Progress Report – Current Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups / Regional Scrutiny

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 that will be presented to Cabinet (and / or other decision-makers).

a) **Anti-Social Behaviour** (convener: Cllr Terry Hennegan)

Key Question: *How can the Council ensure that it is working with its partners to appropriately and effectively tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in Swansea?*

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The final report was presented to Cabinet on the 21 December 2023. Cabinet will now consider the recommendations and provide a response, which is due to be discussed at Cabinet in March.

b) **Community Assets** (convener: Cllr Stuart Rice)

Key Question: *How can the Council ensure that its community assets are working to provide the best outcomes for the people of Swansea?*

Progress Bar:

Planning				Evidence Gathering				Draft Final Report			

The Inquiry key question and Terms of Reference were agreed by the Panel on 1 February, following an initial overview / briefing session, hearing from lead Cabinet Member(s) and Officer(s). Inquiry Terms of Reference are appended. The Panel is now ready to commence evidence gathering.

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	
Procurement	20 Oct 2022	14	0	0	24 Oct 2023 (MONITORING COMPLETE)

3. Performance Panels:

Performance Panels enable regular and structured in-depth monitoring of performance and challenge within these key areas:

a) **Service Improvement, Regeneration & Finance** (convener: Cllr Chris Holley)

This Panel meets every month. At their meeting on 16 January the Panel looked at the Budget Proposals 2024/25 – 2027/28, Quarter 2 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24, Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring Report 2023/24 and received an update on the Tourism Destination Management Plan.

On 13 February the Panel will carry out Pre-decision Scrutiny of the annual budget and medium-term financial plan. They will also consider the third quarter Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24.

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

This Panel meets every month. On the 18 January the Panel met with the Headteachers and Chairs of Governors from the Gowerton Comprehensive school cluster, known as the North Gower Partnership, to discuss progress with the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales across their school cluster.

The Panel have three meetings in February, the first will be to look at the annual budget as it relates to education on the 12th, then on the 19th they will look at the School Organisation – Special Schools in Swansea and on 22nd they will meet with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors from Clydach Primary School to discuss progress with their school improvement plan.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At its last meeting on 30 January the Panel received an update on the Adult Services Transformation and Improvement Programme and a presentation updating on Local Area Coordination.

On 12 February a Joint Social Services Panel meeting will be held to discuss the Annual Budget in relation to Social Services and Tackling Poverty.

The next Panel meeting will be held on 20 March and will discuss the West Glamorgan Transformation Programme, the latest Performance Monitoring Report and receive a briefing on the Annual Review of Charges (Social Services) 2022-23.

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

This Panel meets every 6 weeks. At its last meeting on 23 January the Panel received an update on progress with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) from a representative of the Health Board. The Panel also received an update on the Corporate Parenting Board.

On 12 February a Joint Social Services Panel meeting will be held to discuss the Annual Budget in relation to Social Services and Tackling Poverty.

At its next Panel meeting on 12 March the Panel will look at the latest Performance Monitoring Report, receive a briefing on the Youth Offending Service and discuss the Complaints Annual Report 2022-23 for both Child and Family Services and Adult Services. Adult Services Panel Members will also be invited for this item.

e) **Climate Change & Nature** (convener: Cllr Sara Keeton)

This Panel meets every two months. A progress report appears in the agenda under Item 8.

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) **Partneriaeth - Regional Education Partnership**

Partneriaeth Scrutiny is expected to take place every school term, mirroring meetings of the Partneriaeth Joint Committee.

The Councillor Group met on the 23 October, where they looked at progress with the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales, the Risk Assessment Profile and received an update on the performance of Partneriaeth Priority 2 – Embed principles and processes which underpin educational equity in all schools and educational settings. This included an example of practice happening on the ground from the Headteacher from Birchgrove Comprehensive School.

They will next meet on the 26 February 2024 where they have scheduled to discuss the Partneriaeth financial affairs, risk management and governance arrangements. They will all look at progress with Partneriaeth Priority 3 – Support schools and educational settings to develop of research and enquiry schools as a key part of their own professional learning. This will include looking at an example of a National and Professional Enquiry Project (NPEP).

b) Swansea Bay City Region City Deal

The Joint Scrutiny Committee usually meets every two months. As well as overall programme / project monitoring including the latest financial position, the meeting on 24 October focussed on specific regional Project(s), with updates on 'Skills & Talent' and 'Digital Infrastructure'. The Committee was also informed of the findings and actions of the 2022-23 Internal Audit review into the Swansea Bay City Deal Portfolio.

The next meeting takes place on 13 February 2024 and includes an update on progress on the Innovation Matrix Project and the outcomes of a recent external Gateway Review, and a report on Carbon Reduction Assessment of the Swansea Bay City Deal Portfolio.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee is supported by Scrutiny Officers in Neath Port Talbot Council and agendas / minutes of meetings can be found on-line:

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeed=417>

c) South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

The CJC Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee will meet at least quarterly. The last meeting held on 2 November focussed on the Audit Wales' findings follow their review of Corporate Joint Committees. The purpose of the review was to gain early assurance about the CJsCs' progress as newly established bodies, and provide some early feedback to help CJsCs as they continue to develop. The Committee was also updated on the Regional Transport Plan Implementation Plan which is to be submitted to Welsh Government.

The last meeting took place on 16 January 2024 for Quarterly Budget Monitoring and the CJC Draft Budget for 2024/25.

The Sub-Committee has added an extra meeting on 15 February for discussion on the Regional Transport Plan. The next ordinary meeting is scheduled for 12 March and is expected to include a focus on an Energy Action Plan.

The Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee is supported by Scrutiny Officers in Neath Port Talbot Council and agendas / minutes of meetings can be found on-line:

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeed=499>

5. Working Groups:

A number of 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) **Public Rights of Way** (convener: Councillor Mike White)

This Working Group was held on 22 November receiving an overview on Public Rights of Way across Swansea (mapping / numbers) and issues; impact on Public Rights of Way from developments; effect on communities, etc. The letter from the Working Group, reflecting on the meeting with its view and recommendations, to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure and the Cabinet Member's response were reported to the Committee on 16 January. The Committee will follow up on this work in the next 12 months.

b) **Customer Contact** (convener: Councillor Joe Hale)

This will enable information, focussed questioning & discussion on the user experience when contacting the Council / accessing services whether by telephone or on-line / through digital means; provision for offline and on-line contact; effectiveness of Council Contact Centre; on-going actions to improve digital inclusion / access; quality of website, etc. This Working Group has been arranged and will be held on 23 February 2024.

This Working Group was carried forward from 2022/23.

c) **Community Growing** (convener: TBC)

This will enable information, focussed questioning & discussion around Council activity / support to Community Growing, with examples (e.g., allotments) and experience; benefits / success; including focus on schools / children & young people; and its contribution to health & well-being, etc.