



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 October 2019

Cabinet Member Question Session

Purpose:	To enable the Committee to question Cabinet Members on their work. The Committee's questions will broadly explore Cabinet Members' priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to areas of responsibility.
Content:	The following Cabinet Member will appear before the Committee to participate in a question and answer session: a) Councillor Jennifer Raynor, Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question the Cabinet Member on relevant matters • Make comments and recommendations as necessary
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Mary Jones, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee
Lead Officer:	Tracey Meredith, Chief Legal Officer
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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:

	Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet Member
1	Economy & Strategy (Leader of the Council)	Cllr Rob Stewart
2	Delivery & Performance (Joint-Interim Deputy Leader)	Cllr David Hopkins

3	Homes, Energy & Service Transformation (Joint-Interim Deputy Leader)	Cllr Andrea Lewis
4	Better Communities	Cllr Alyson Pugh (People – Lead) Cllr Andrew Stevens (Place – Lead)
5	Care, Health & Ageing Well	Cllr Mark Child
6	Children Services	Cllr Elliot King (Early Years - Lead) Cllr Sam Pritchard (Young People – Lead)
7	Education Improvement, Learning & Skills	Cllr Jennifer Raynor
8	Environment & Infrastructure Management	Cllr Mark Thomas
9	Investment, Regeneration & Tourism	Cllr Robert Francis-Davies
10	Resilience & Strategic Collaboration	Cllr Clive Lloyd

NOTE:

- All Cabinet Members have responsibility for Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea & Poverty Reduction
- Better Communities and Children Services Portfolios operate under a job share system with two named Councillors sharing the workload, split into 2 specialist knowledge areas, however, formally they remain as one cabinet portfolio. Each individual holds office for a rolling 3 month period and during that time assume responsibility for the overall portfolio. However, the workload in gathering information and learning will be shared.

1.3 The above listing has been updated following changes announced at Council on 26 September by the Leader of the Council to the Cabinet Portfolios, with effect from 1 October. The changes see Cllr Clive Lloyd stepping down as Deputy Leader of the Council for personal reasons. This is a temporary arrangement until further notice. Cllrs David Hopkins and Andrea Lewis take on the Deputy Leader of the Council role on a Joint-Interim basis. Cllrs David Hopkins, Clive Lloyd and Andrea Lewis have all had their Cabinet Portfolio titles changed. Additionally, some Cabinet Portfolio responsibilities have shifted between these three Councillors. There have also been some additional ones added.

1.4 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.

- 1.5 Cabinet Member Question Sessions have become a main feature of Committee meetings. At least one cabinet member is scheduled to appear at each monthly Committee meeting, ensuring all Cabinet Members appear before the Committee over the course of a year, in order to ask questions on their work. Questions will focus on their priorities, actions, achievements and impact.

2. Cabinet Member Question Session

- 2.1 The following Cabinet Member will appear before the Committee:

- a) Councillor Jennifer Raynor, Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills

- 2.2 Councillor Raynor has the following specific portfolio responsibilities:

- 21st Century Schools Programme inc. School Building Upgrades
- Apprenticeships Lead
- Catchment Review
- City of Learning - Member of UNESCO COL Steering Group
- CYP Board Member
- Education Charter
- Education Services from 3 to 19
- Further Education
- Future Schools Estate Scoping & Delivery
- Inclusion & Learner Support
- Leader's Representative on Education Regional Working (ERW)
- NEETS Prevention (Not in Education, Employment or Training) Lead
- Quality in Education (QEd) Programme
- Readiness for Work Lead
- Regional Workforce Planning & Skills Development
- School Improvement
- Schools Estate Planning & Resources Planning
- Schools' Organisation & Performance
- Skills & Talent Project (City Deal)

NB - All Cabinet Members have shared responsibility for Lead Elements of Sustainable Swansea & Poverty Reduction

3. Approach to Questions

- 3.1 At each Cabinet Member Question Session the Committee will generally ask Cabinet Members about:

- relevant priorities / objectives (e.g. policy commitments), notable activities and achievements, improvement / impact made, and service user / public engagement.

- what they hope to achieve over the coming months and challenges, including any key decisions they plan take to Cabinet over the next year.
- reflections on their engagement with scrutiny and whether there is any issue relevant to their portfolio that they would suggest for scrutiny, not otherwise covered in the work programme – to ensure scrutiny activity is aligned to priorities and focussed on the right things.

3.2 In terms of themes that cut across all cabinet portfolios, the Committee is interested in asking Cabinet Members 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.; any regional / collaborative working relevant to their portfolio responsibilities.
- Public Services Board (PSB) – their relationship with the work of the PSB; how the PSB impacts on their portfolio and how it is making a difference etc.
- Poverty Reduction – their contribution to the commitment to tackle poverty.
- Sustainable Swansea – their contribution to the transformation programme.

3.3 Cabinet Members will be invited to make introductory remarks before taking questions from the Committee. The Cabinet Member has provided a report on 'headlines' in relation to the portfolio to help the Committee focus on priorities, actions, achievements and impact - see **Appendix 1**.

3.4 Amongst key themes / questions from the Committee is the intention to ask about:

- Attendance – how attendance is recorded across schools and consistency
- Pupil Health & Safety - efforts to tackle problem of vehicles / air pollution outside schools (following on from raising this with the Cabinet Member at last year's Q & A session), as well as improving safety around schools
- School Governors – ideas around possible allocation of specific environmental responsibility within governing bodies and encouragement of pupils around environmental opportunities and responsibilities.
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) - activities and achievements to help NEETS and reduce numbers
- Skills and Talent project for the City Deal - progress in relation to the project

3.5 With reference to agreed Scrutiny Improvement Objectives the Committee should ensure the Q & A Session also enables it to:

- Follow up, where necessary, on progress with relevant Scrutiny Working Group recommendations to assess impact / outcomes
- Raise any outstanding actions in respect of any other scrutiny activities / recommendations.
- Ask about future key decisions so the Committee can identify any issues which they may want to discuss at an earlier stage than cabinet reporting.
- Encourage Cabinet Members to consider reporting to scrutiny / consulting on significant issues and planned decisions at an early stage to enable views of scrutiny to be taken.

3.6 Following each session the chair will write to Cabinet Members in order to capture the main issues discussed, views expressed by the Committee, and any actions for them to consider.

3.7 If the Committee wishes to conduct more detailed scrutiny of any of the issues raised during the Q & A 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.

4. Previous Scrutiny

4.1 The correspondence with Councillor Raynor following last year's Q & A session (October 2018) is attached. Taking account of any portfolio changes since last year, the following issues still relevant to the current portfolio were discussed, and Committee Members may wish to follow up:

- Pupil Health
- Local Development Plan
- 21st Century Schools Programme
- School Closures
- School Funding
- Pupil Development Grant
- School Maintenance
- Safeguarding, and
- Schools Admissions

4.2 Councillor Raynor was also called before the Scrutiny Programme Committee in March 2019 to respond to scrutiny call-in of her cabinet report on 21st Century Schools Programme - New Build For Gorseinon Primary School. The correspondence resulting from this meeting is also attached for information.

- 4.3 Members may also wish to follow up, as necessary, on the Cabinet Member's engagement with relevant Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups over the past year:

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – There is regular correspondence with the Cabinet Member, who was written to over the past year about the following issues:

- Wellbeing in Schools, Dylan Thomas Secondary School
- Individual School Scrutiny: Ysgol Crug Glas, Gowerton Primary, Morriston Primary and Burlais Primary Schools
- Pre-decision scrutiny of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service changes
- Education Other Than at School Service changes and the Wellbeing Behaviour Strategy
- School Improvement Service
- Pupil Deprivation Grant Spend
- Pre-decision on Small Schools Review
- Annual Budget as it related to education
- Looked After Children education outcomes
- Annual Education Performance Data and categorisation
- Science in Schools in Swansea

The Cabinet Member is also copied in to correspondence that the Education Through Regional Working (ERW) Scrutiny Councillor Group have with the ERW Joint Committee.

5. Future Scrutiny

- 5.1 The Committee should note that the Cabinet Member will be engaged in the following planned / future activity:

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – the Cabinet Member will continue to be involved as the Panel monitors and challenges school improvement. She will also be attending the Panel to discuss:

- 21st Century Schools Programme including progress with EOTAS new build - in Dec 2019
- Annual Education Performance and school categorisation - in Jan 2020
- Annual Budget as it relates to education matters - Feb 2020

6. Other Questions

- 6.1 For each Cabinet Member Q & A Session the Committee invites members of the public and other scrutiny councillors (not on the Committee) to suggest questions. It is up to the Committee how to deal with any suggested questions within the Session.

6.2 On this occasion, the Committee has been requested by a member of the public to ask the Cabinet Member about learning opportunities for adults with disabilities. Whilst the Cabinet Member may be prepared to comment, given the specific nature of the information received, and health issues the individual refers to, it may be a matter for Social Services who can signpost the individual to relevant services / support that may benefit them.

7. Next Session

7.1 The next scheduled Cabinet Member Question Session, on 11 November, is with the Cabinet Member for Children Services, Councillor Elliot King (Early Years – Lead) and Councillor Sam Pritchard (Young People - Lead). The Committee should identify specific questions / key themes, which it wishes to cover in that session.

7.2 As usual, all scrutiny councillors and members of the public will be able to suggest questions.

8. Legal Implications

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

9. Financial Implications

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

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Key Headlines: Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills

Appendix 2: Previous Correspondence