



# Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22



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# 1. Chair's Foreword

*Councillor Peter Black, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee*



I am proud to present the Scrutiny Annual Report, reflecting on the final year of the 2017-2022 Council term, as Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee. This report covers the work of scrutiny between May 2021 and May 2022.

We continued with delivering the eighteen-month Scrutiny Work Programme agreed in October 2020 and covered most of the areas of focus, although implications from the continuing pandemic and impact on resources did affect some plans. Scrutiny activity has continued to be responsive and flexible taking into account the pressures on the organisation.

Scrutiny is a vital part of local democracy and good governance. The work covered by this report ensures the Council remains accountable and transparent, effective and efficient. Questioning and providing challenge to decision-makers also helps the Council to achieve its objectives and drive improvement. We appreciate the engagement of Cabinet Members in scrutiny and Officers for their support. Our report focuses on how scrutiny has made a difference in Swansea, and our efforts to support continuous improvement and good practice.

Measuring the performance of scrutiny in a meaningful way can be challenging, however we have taken a 'results based' approach to tell you about:

- How much scrutiny we carried out
- How well we did it
- How scrutiny impacted on the business of the Council
- What the outcomes of scrutiny were

However, please note that comparison with the previous year, which was untypically short, is not meaningful.

We hope that each Annual Report provides you with assurance and confidence that councillors involved in scrutiny are contributing to better services, policies and decision making in Swansea.

Being the last year of a Council term, we've also provided a summary of the work carried out over the past five years showing the main topics that have been examined by scrutiny during that time.

Finally, I would like to give my thanks to all of the councillors who have contributed over the past year, in particular those who have led on scrutiny activity. We look forward to the new Council term, welcoming new councillors and encouraging their involvement in scrutiny.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Black', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Peter Black

## 2. Swansea Scrutiny Results Scorecard 2021/22

Scrutiny Practice	<b>A. How much scrutiny did we carry out?</b>	<b>B. How well did we do?</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of Committee meetings = 10 ↑ (7)</li> <li>2. Number of Panel &amp; Working Group meetings = 56 ↑ (31)</li> <li>3. Number of in-depth inquiries completed = 1 ↑ (0)</li> <li>4. Number of Working Group topics completed = 2 ↔ (2)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Average councillor attendance at scrutiny meetings = 78% ↓ (86%)</li> <li>6. Backbench councillors actively involved in scrutiny = 70% ↑ (66%)</li> <li>7. Meetings with public observers = 17% ↓ (24%)</li> <li>8. Meetings with public input = 17% ↑ (13%)</li> <li>9. Meetings attracting media coverage = 29% ↓ (32%)</li> </ol>
Scrutiny Outcomes	<b>C. How did scrutiny impact on the business of the Council?</b>	<b>D. What were the outcomes of scrutiny?</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Number of Chairs' Letters sent to Cabinet Members = 66 ↑ (46)</li> <li>11. Average time for Cabinet Member response letter = 18 days ↓ (24)</li> <li>12. Letters responded to within 21 day target = 71% ↑ (52%)</li> <li>13. Number of scrutiny reports to Cabinet = 0 ↔ (0)</li> <li>14. Cabinet action plans agreed = 0 ↔ (0)</li> <li>15. Follow ups undertaken = 1 ↔ (1)</li> <li>16. Number of Cabinet reports subject to pre decision scrutiny = 4 ↑ (3)</li> <li>17. Number of Cabinet reports subject to Call-in = 0 ↔ (0)</li> <li>18. Cabinet Members who attended at least one Scrutiny meeting = 100% ↔ (100%)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. Scrutiny recommendations accepted or partly accepted by Cabinet = n/a (n/a)</li> <li>20. Recommendations signed off by scrutiny as completed = 39% (n/a)</li> </ol>

(Last year in brackets) ↓↑ = notable change, ↓↑ = small change, ↔ no change

### **3. About the Indicators**

#### **A. How much scrutiny did we carry out?**

##### **3.1 Number of Committee meetings = 10**

The Council has a single overarching Scrutiny Committee, called the Scrutiny Programme Committee, which is scheduled to meet every 4 weeks, with extra meetings added as necessary. During 2021/22 the Committee met 10 times (not including the meeting following Council Annual General Meeting to elect the Committee chair/vice-chair).

The Committee is responsible for developing and managing the overall Scrutiny Work Programme. Overarching priorities were shaped by the work planning conference which took place in October 2020 (open to all non-executive councillors), that heard a range of perspectives on what should be included. All councillors can suggest particular topics of concern for possible scrutiny.

The councillor-led Scrutiny Work Programme is guided by the overriding principle that the work of scrutiny should be strategic and significant, focussed on issues of concern, and represent a good use of scrutiny time and resources.

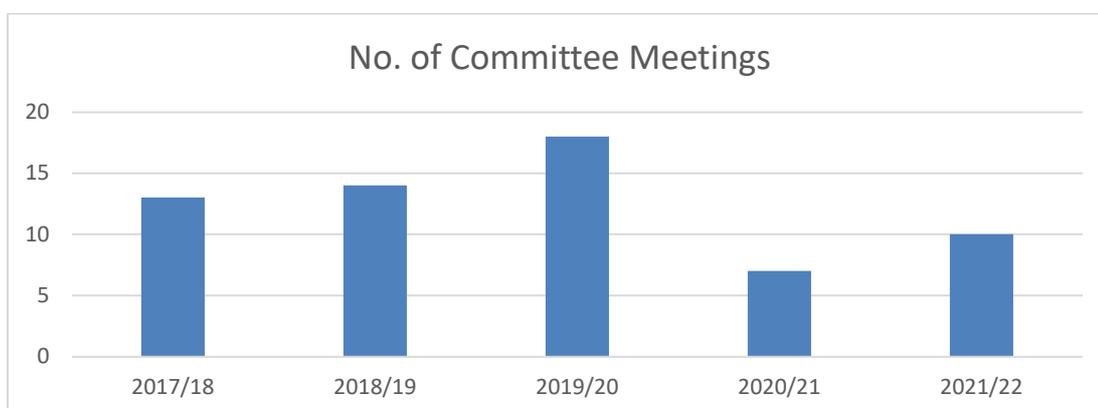
In November 2020, because of the short 2020/21 municipal year, the Committee agreed a work programme that would cover eighteen months, rather than a year, i.e., until the end of the 2017-22 Council term. Specific scrutiny activities included in the work programme are carried out either by the Committee or by establishing informal Panels and Working Groups. All meetings are held in public.

Formal Committee meetings gave councillors the opportunity to hold Cabinet Members to account and provide challenge on a range of policy and service issues of concern, relevant to their portfolio responsibilities, and its work addressed any gaps in the scrutiny work programme to ensure good coverage of scrutiny across all Cabinet portfolios. The Committee is also the Council's designated Committee for statutory scrutiny of Swansea Public Services Board, and Crime & Disorder Scrutiny of the Safer Swansea Community Safety Partnership.

The following topics were also examined by the Committee:

- Recovery & Transformation Plan
- Brexit and the wider 'Levelling Up' Agenda
- The City Centre
- Delivering the Swansea Bay City Deal - Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth Programme
- Swansea Bay and West Wales Metro Programme.
- Highways and Engineering
- Infrastructure Repairs and Maintenance
- Tourism, Destination Management, and Marketing
- Business and City Promotion
- Energy Policy (incl. Generation, Supply & District Heating)
- Litter and Community Cleansing
- Parking Policy, Control & Enforcement
- Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report
- Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty
- Follow Up on Tourism Scrutiny Working Group Recommendations
- Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2020/21

Comparison with previous years:



### 3.2 Number of Panel & Working Group meetings = 56

It is important that the Scrutiny Work Programme strikes a balance between community concerns and strategic issues. The Committee considers what specific topics should feature in the programme so that it is focussed on the right things.

Most of the work of scrutiny is delegated to informal topic based Panels and Working Groups. Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups are established by the Scrutiny Programme Committee, with an appointed convener (chair), to carry out specific scrutiny activities.

There are two types of panels:

**Inquiry Panels** - these undertake in-depth inquiries into specific and significant areas of concern on a task and finish basis, usually around six months, and will produce a final report at the end of the inquiry with conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet (and other decision-makers), informed by the evidence gathered.

Topics examined	Convener	Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Procurement</b> Key Question: What is the Council doing to ensure it procures locally, ethically, and greenly while being cost effective and transparent in its practices?</li> </ul>	Cllr. Chris Holley	Final report presented to Cabinet on 16 June 2022

See para. 3.15 for previous inquiries followed up

**Performance Panels** - these provide in-depth performance / financial monitoring and challenge for clearly defined service areas.

Performance Panels 2021/22	Convener
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service Improvement &amp; Finance (monthly)</li> <li>Education (monthly)</li> <li>Adult Services (6-weekly)</li> <li>Child &amp; Family Services (6-weekly)</li> <li>Development &amp; Regeneration (every two months)</li> <li>Natural Environment (every two months)</li> </ul>	Cllr. Chris Holley Cllr. Lyndon Jones Cllr. Sue Jones Cllr. Paxton Hood-Williams Cllr. Jeff Jones  Cllr. Peter Jones

Performance Panels are expected to have on-going correspondence with relevant cabinet members in order to share views and recommendations, arising from monitoring activities, about services. Performance Panels will hold relevant Cabinet Members to account with clear opportunities for questioning, to explore their work, looking at priorities, actions, achievements and impact. Performance Panel conveners provide a regular update to the Committee to enable discussion on key activities and impact.

**Working Groups** are one-off meetings established to enable a 'light-touch' approach to specific topics of concern, to consider a specific report or information, resulting in a letter to the relevant Cabinet Member(s) or report to Cabinet with views and recommendations.

Four one-off Working Groups were included in the work programme, to be completed as time and resources allow. The following Working Group meetings were held during 2021/22:

<b>Working Groups</b>	<b>Convener</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce</li> <li>• Bus Services</li> </ul>	Cllr Cyril Anderson Cllr Lyndon Jones

### **3.3 Number of in-depth inquiries completed = 1**

The Procurement Inquiry which was originally delayed during 2020/21 was re-convened at the start of the 2021/22 municipal year and completed in March 2022.

### **3.4 Number of Working Group topics completed = 2**

Work on the following topic(s) was completed through meetings of Working Groups:

- Workforce

Original meeting held in March 2021 with agreement to hold a further meeting. This was held in February 2022, completing this Working Group.

- Bus Services

Meeting held in July 2021 with agreement to hold follow up meeting to enable follow up on the Group's recommendations and see what changes / improvements had been made. Meeting held in March 2022 to complete this work.

NOTE: There are also regional scrutiny arrangements that Swansea is involved in, which have enabled scrutiny councillors to look at the work of:

- Education Through Regional Working (ERW) and consider the development of the new regional School Improvement Consortia, Partneriaeth, through a Joint Scrutiny Councillor Group.
- Delivery of the Swansea Bay City Deal programme, through the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee.

## **B. How well did we do?**

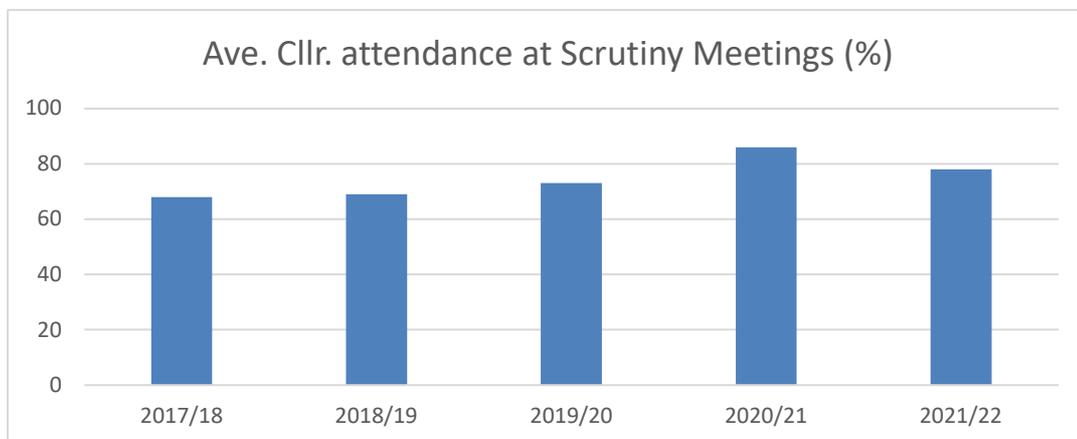
### **3.5 Average councillor attendance at scrutiny meetings = 78%**

The rate of councillor attendance measures an important aspect of effectiveness as it reflects the engagement of councillors in the scrutiny process.

Council determines the membership of the Scrutiny Programme Committee. However, membership of the various informal Panels and Working Groups is based on interest shown by councillors in the topics under scrutiny. Based on expressions of interest the membership of Panels and Working Groups is determined by the Committee.

Attendance figures for councillors are collected by the Council's Democratic Services Team and published on the Council's website. Our figure is an overall attendance figure that includes the Scrutiny Programme Committee, Panel meetings and Working Groups and was 78%. Attendance at the Committee meetings was 85%. Both healthy figures of engagement.

Comparison with previous years:

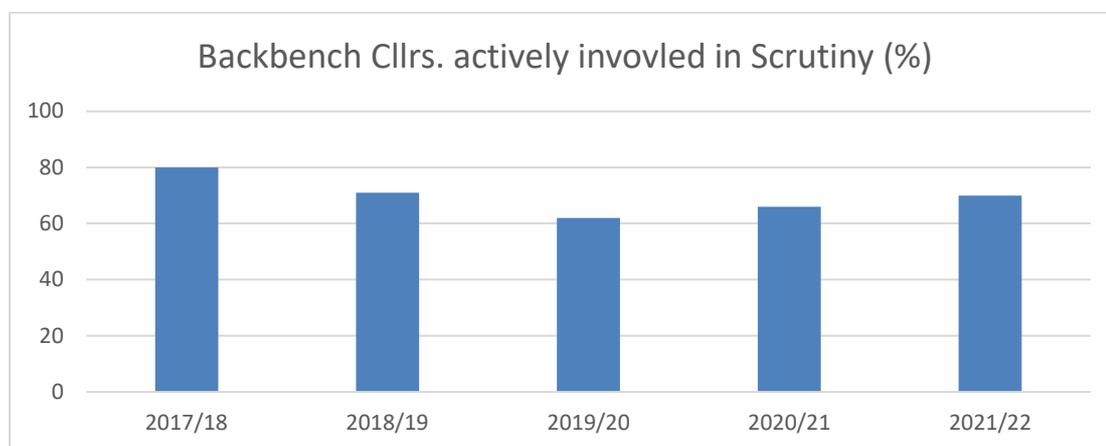


### **3.6 Backbench councillors actively involved in scrutiny = 70%**

All backbench councillors have the opportunity to participate in scrutiny work regardless of committee membership. New scrutiny topics, once agreed, were advertised to all non-executive councillors and expressions of interest sought to lead and/or participate in these activities. It enables councillors to participate based on interest, and enables them to build up specialist expertise.

The majority of backbench councillors were involved in scrutiny, through either the Scrutiny Programme Committee, Panels or Working Groups.

Comparison with previous years:



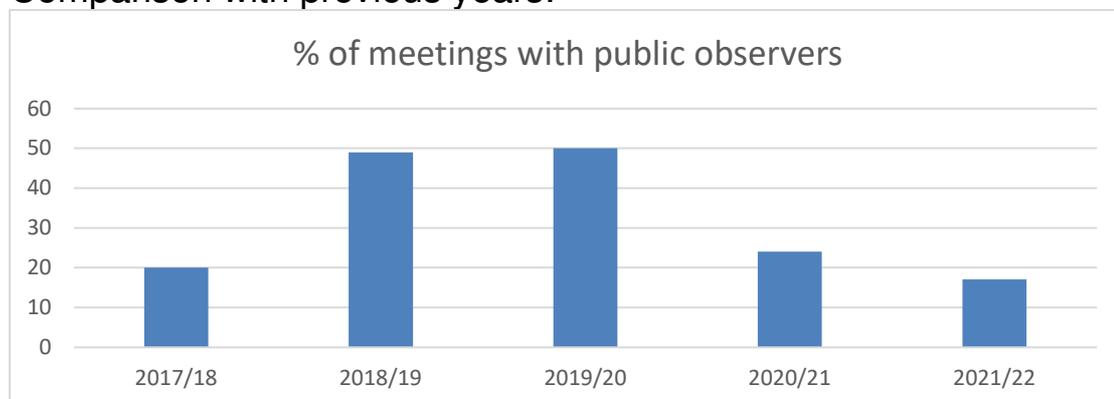
### **3.7 Meetings with public observers = 17%**

Scrutiny is important as a mechanism for community engagement. The extent to which the public observes meetings may indicate whether there is a significant focus of scrutiny on matters of public interest. All scrutiny meetings, whether the Committee or Panels and Working Group, are conducted in public, subject to specific items of business that on rare occasions may contain exempt information. With the move to remote meetings over the past two years, people are now able to watch video recordings of meetings, which has impacted on the number of observers watching live. 11 of the 66 scrutiny meetings held were observed by members of the public who joined the remote meeting on request or in order to ask a question.

Committee meetings were live-streamed, however Panel / Working Group meetings were not. However all meetings were recorded, with video subsequently published on the Council's website / YouTube account for viewing. The move to remote meetings during the pandemic has affected our ability to report accurately on the number of public observers, other than those we know to have been specifically invited into meetings. A scan of YouTube views, however, shows Committee meetings seem to attract on average 40 viewers, significantly more people than who would have watched meetings pre-COVID from the public gallery. There are similarly good figures across other scrutiny meetings, with Development &

Regeneration Performance Panel meetings appearing to attract the biggest interest.

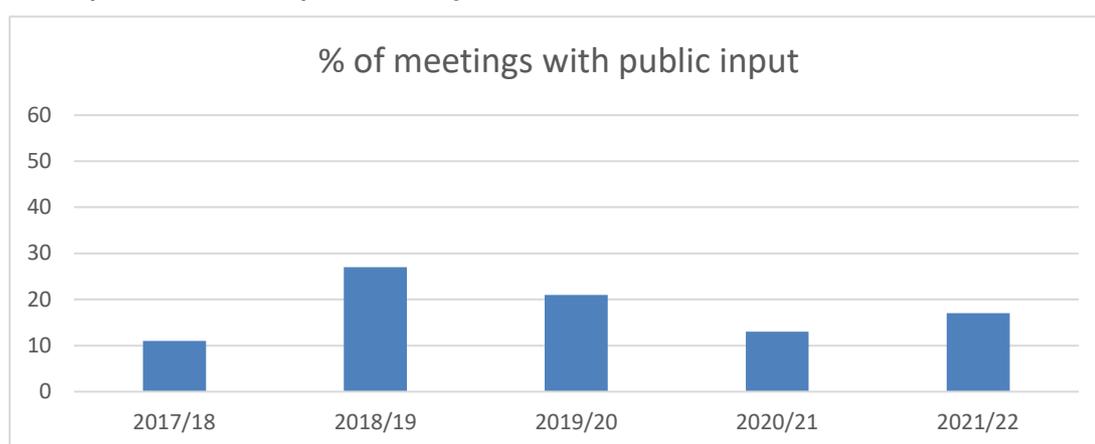
Comparison with previous years:



### 3.8 Meetings with public input = 17%

As well as attracting interest and observers to listen to what is being discussed, councillors are keen to increase active public involvement in the work of scrutiny. 17% of all scrutiny meetings had some form of such engagement and public input. This input can take various forms, including submission of questions for scrutiny sessions with Cabinet Members, making suggestions for the scrutiny work programme, contributing evidence to specific items under scrutiny - whether in person or reflected in the meeting agenda.

Comparison with previous years:

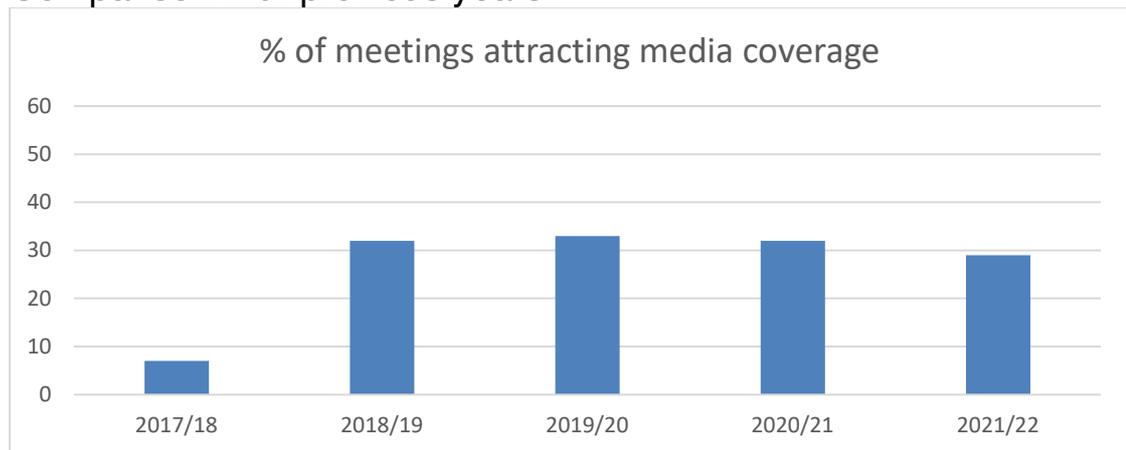


### 3.9 Meetings attracting media coverage = 29%

As well as attracting interest from individuals and getting members of the public to engage directly, a measure of whether scrutiny is focussed on the right things and is making an impact is the amount of media coverage that scrutiny is attracting. We found that almost a third of scrutiny meetings made the news, e.g. in print in the South Wales Evening Post or Western Mail, and/or on websites including WalesOnline, BBC etc. Across all activities there were at least 21 scrutiny discussions reported in the local press (print and on-line).

Issues which generated coverage included scrutiny discussion on: looked after children; residential social care; trees (ash dieback); City Deal; developments, including Tidal Lagoon plans, pollution control; tackling poverty; parking services; recycling & waste; potholes, violence against women, complaints performance, and pupils educated other than at school.

Comparison with previous years:

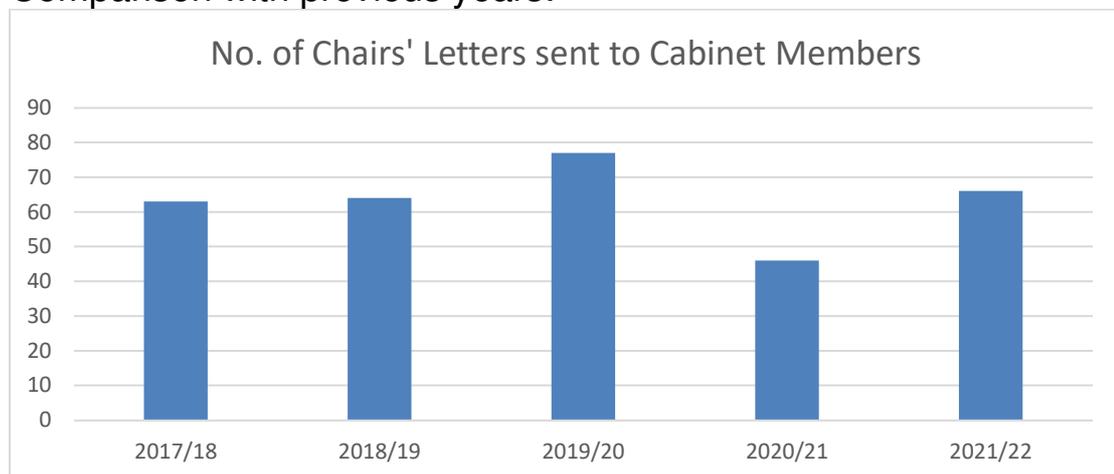


## C. How did scrutiny impact on the business of the Council?

### 3.10 Number of Chairs' Letters sent to Cabinet Members = 66

Chairs letters are an established part of the scrutiny process in Swansea. They allow the Committee and Panel meetings / Working Groups to communicate quickly and efficiently directly with relevant Cabinet Members. They will send letters to raise concerns, recognise good practice, ask for further information and make recommendations for improvement, reflecting the discussion at Committee / Panel / Working Group meetings. Letters are effectively 'mini-reports' with conclusions and proposals from scrutiny – and where necessary require a response. 66 letters were sent to Cabinet Members.

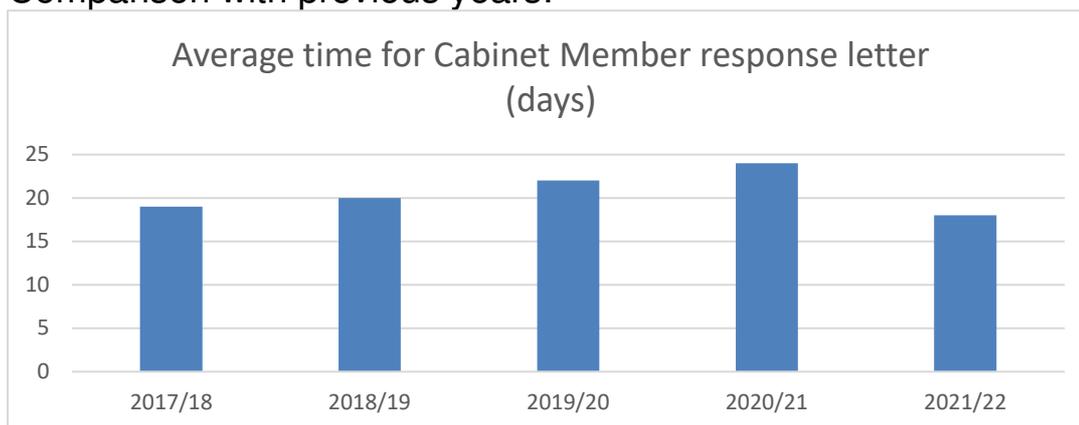
Comparison with previous years:



### 3.11 Average time for Cabinet Member response letter = 18 days

When scrutiny letters are sent to Cabinet Members and require a response, Cabinet Members are required to respond within 21 calendar days. The average response time for letters sent was 18 days, which is a significant improvement on the 24 days taken in 2020/21, and indicates that scrutiny is getting a timely response to views, concerns, and any suggested action for Cabinet Members.

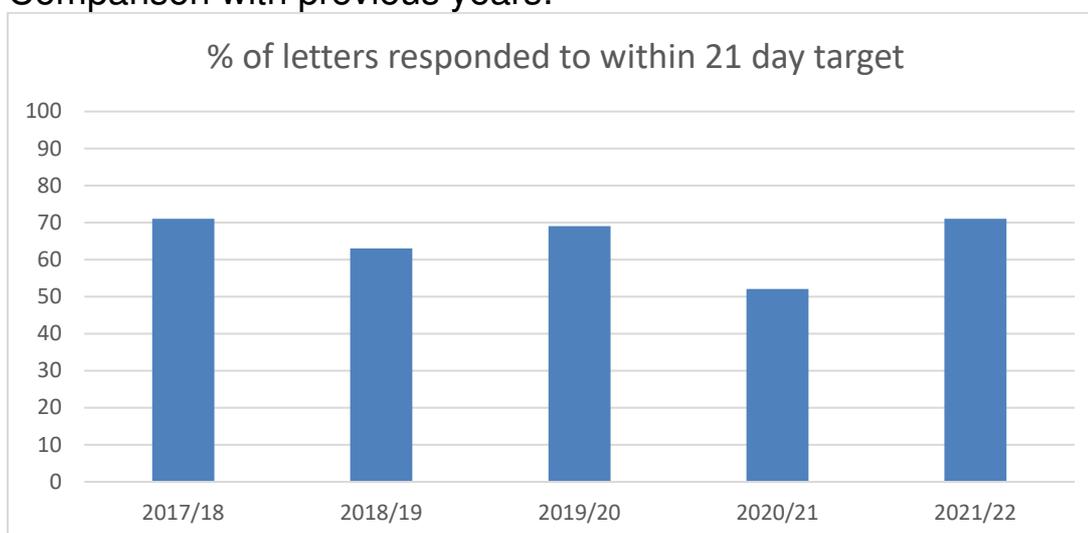
Comparison with previous years:



### 3.12 Letters responded to within 21 day target = 71%

Whilst the response to scrutiny letters was on average 18 days, some did take longer. The number of letters responded to within the 21 day target was 71% (17 out of 24 letters), again a significant improvement on previous.

Comparison with previous years:

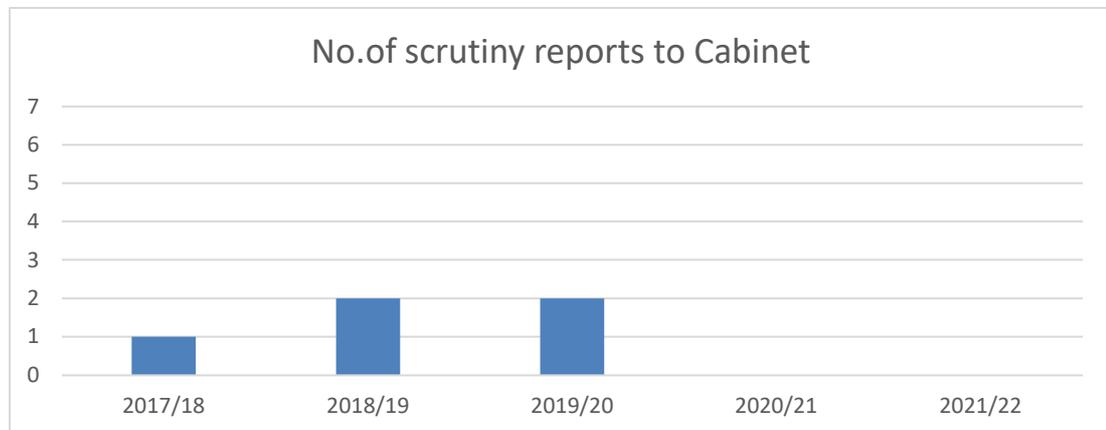


### 3.13 Number of Scrutiny reports to Cabinet = 0

In-depth inquiries are reported to Cabinet for a response to the recommendations agreed by scrutiny and its action plan on how the recommendations will be implemented. Scrutiny Working Groups also have the option of either writing a letter to relevant Cabinet Member(s) or report to Cabinet, depending on outcomes from discussion. There were no inquiry reports presented to Cabinet

during 2020/21, however see para. 3.16 for pre-decision scrutiny feedback reports to Cabinet.

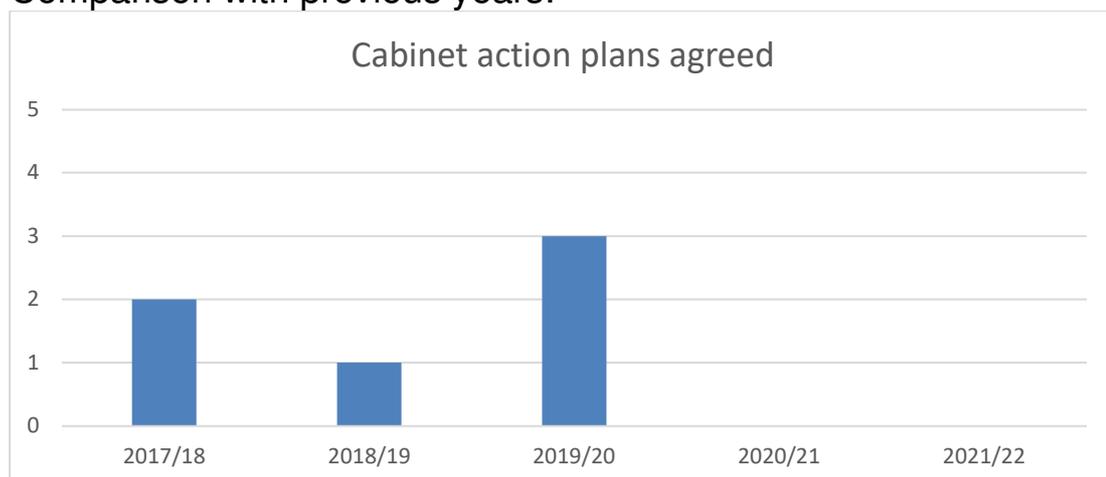
Comparison with previous years:



### 3.14 Cabinet action plans agreed = 0

Once recommendations and an action plan have been agreed by Cabinet, scrutiny will follow up on progress with implementation and impact. 2021/22 did not feature any action plans being published and agreed by Cabinet, but the Procurement Scrutiny Inquiry progressed during 2021/22, reporting to Cabinet early in the new 2022/23 municipal year.

Comparison with previous years:



### 3.15 Follow ups undertaken = 1

Inquiry Panels reconvene to follow up on the implementation of agreed recommendations and Cabinet action plans, and assess the impact of their work. A meeting will usually be held 6-12 months

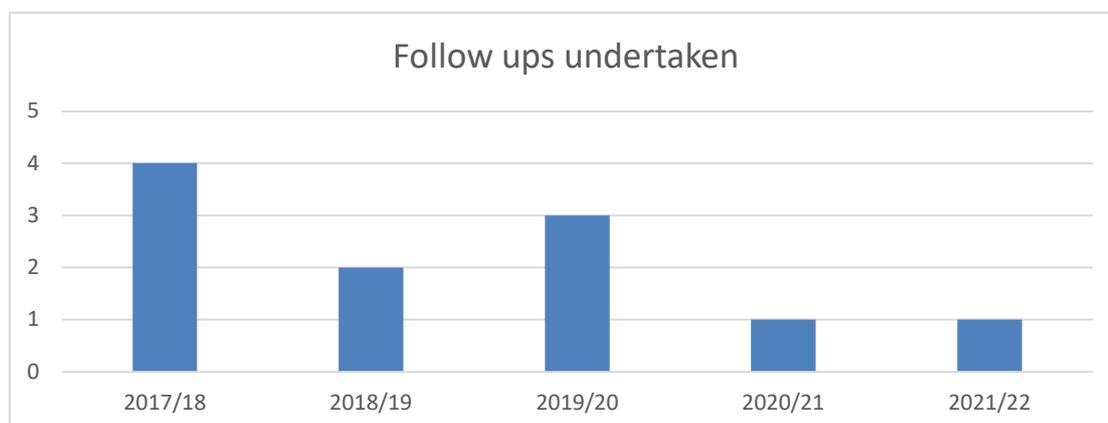
following Cabinet decision, with a further follow up arranged if required.

In order to check whether the agreed action plans have been carried out, scrutiny will ask for follow up reports from Cabinet Members. If councillors are satisfied they can then conclude the work for that inquiry. Previous scrutiny inquiries that required a follow up were followed up:

Inquiry	Convener	Cabinet Action Plan agreed	Monitoring Status
Equalities Key Question: How effectively is the Council meeting and embedding the requirements under the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Duty for Wales)?	Cllr. Lyndon Jones	November 2019	Complete - second follow up meeting held Jan 2022

The Scrutiny Programme Committee will, ordinarily, follow up any Working Group reports to Cabinet.

Comparison with previous years:



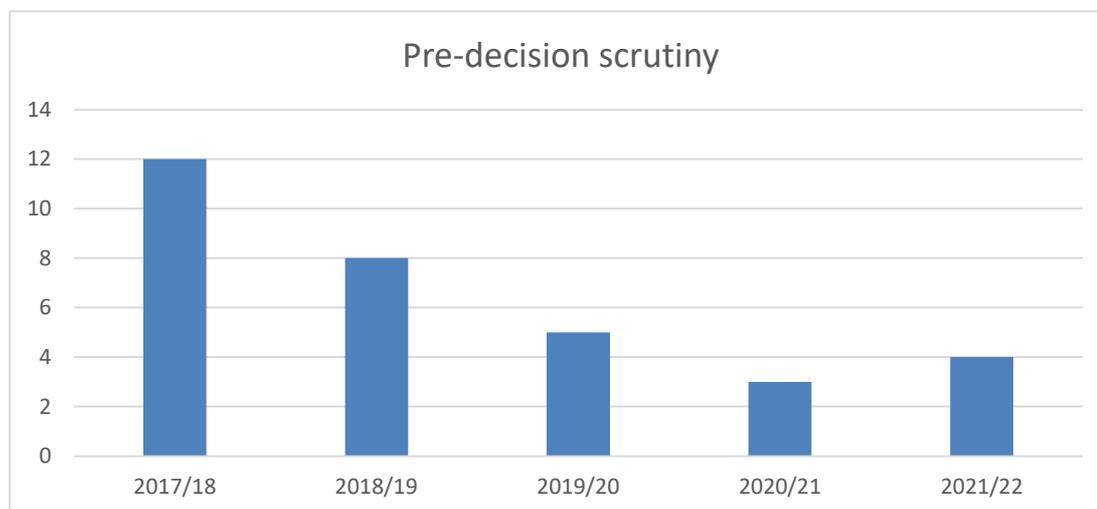
### 3.16 Number of Cabinet reports subject to pre-decision scrutiny = 4

Pre-decision scrutiny involves scrutiny councillors considering Cabinet reports before Cabinet makes a final decision. Considering strategic impact, public interest, and financial implications, the following three Cabinet reports were subject to pre-decision scrutiny

(carried out by the Committee or relevant Performance Panels), with views reported to Cabinet before decisions were taken:

Report	Cabinet Member	Cabinet Meeting	Undertaken by
Update Management Report on Swansea Airport	Delivery & Operations	16 Nov 2021	Service Improvement & Finance Panel
Leasehold Acquisition and Redevelopment FPR7 – 279 Oxford Street/25-27 Princess Way	Economy & Strategy (Leader)	14 Dec 2021	Committee
Covid Recovery and Investment	Economy & Strategy (Leader)	18 Jan 2022	Committee
Annual Budget	Economy & Strategy (Leader)	15 Feb 2022	Service Improvement & Finance Panel (with contribution from other Panels)

Comparison with previous years:



### 3.17 Number of Cabinet reports subject to Call-in = 0

During 2018-19, the Council agreed new call-in arrangements with scrutiny at the centre of the process. Any valid call-in of Cabinet decisions leads to the calling of a special meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Committee. A call-in can be made by the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee or by any four

councillors by giving notice in writing to the Head of Democratic Services within a specific call-in period. With the increase in pre-decision scrutiny seen over the last few years a large number of call-ins are not anticipated. There were no Cabinet decisions 'called in' over the past year.

### **3.18 Cabinet Members who attended at least one Scrutiny meeting – 100%**

Cabinet Members attend scrutiny meetings to answer questions and provide information to assist scrutiny and account for their work. Cabinet attendance at scrutiny meetings is a good indicator that the 'holding to account' role of scrutiny is functioning well. It ensures that scrutiny provides regular challenge to decision-makers.

to explore the work of Cabinet Members, looking at priorities, actions, achievements and impact. Aside from a regular Q & A session with the Leader of the Council, there is targeted approach within the Committee, calling in Cabinet Members as and when required to report on specific portfolio responsibilities and issues, with emphasis on Performance Panels to hold relevant Cabinet Members to account with clear opportunities for questioning. All Cabinet Members were engaged with scrutiny, whether with the Committee, Panel or Working Group, over the last year. The range of issues discussed within the Committee alone involved six Cabinet Members.

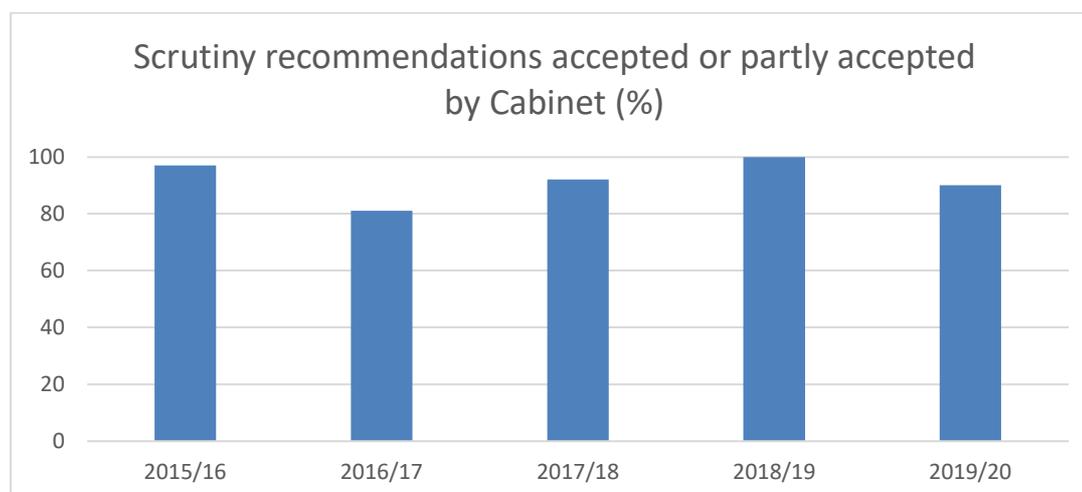
Although there are 10 Cabinet Portfolios, during 2021/22 there were 11 councillors in Cabinet positions. The Supporting Communities portfolio operating under a job share system between two councillors sharing the responsibilities. Our target is always 100%.

## D. What were the outcomes of scrutiny?

### 3.19 Scrutiny recommendations accepted or partly accepted by Cabinet = n/a

The rate that Cabinet accept scrutiny recommendations is a good indicator of whether scrutiny is making strong recommendations based on robust evidence. We cannot report on this for 2021/22 as there were no outstanding scrutiny reports to Cabinet requiring a formal response. The same applied to 2020/21.

Comparison with previous years:



### 3.20 Recommendations signed off by scrutiny as completed = 39%

When follow up reports are presented to scrutiny (usually within 12 months following original Cabinet decision) they detail which of the recommendations from the in-depth inquiry (or other scrutiny report) have been completed in line with the agreed cabinet member's action plan and which have not. In the case of in-depth inquiries scrutiny councillors consider whether they agree with the assessment about implementation of recommendations, taking into account the evidence they are presented with about the changes that have happened following scrutiny and its impact. This indicator would represent the percentage of recommendations accepted by scrutiny as being completed for the year.

The Equalities Inquiry, which made 18 recommendations, was formally responded to by Cabinet in November 2019 and was followed up by the Panel in January 2021. Although some notable progress was reported, such as the creation of the new Strategic Equality and Future Generations Board, which will take forward

actions and recommendations within the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and the Scrutiny Inquiry, and associated support to drive improvement, the pandemic had impacted on the Council's ability to focus on this work. The Panel agreed that there has been positive progress with the recommendations and work done so far should provide a good foundation for moving forward in the medium and longer term. The Panel agreed to meet again for a second follow up to look in more detail at the progress made and impact of the inquiry, when a full assessment of the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and agreed Cabinet action plan will be made. The Inquiry Panel met in January 2022 and following discussion concluded formal monitoring of the inquiry recommendations and impact.

The Panel were happy with the progress made to date and were pleased with the positive impact that the inquiry, and the commitment to it by the Cabinet Member for Supporting Communities and officers, has made in helping to move this important agenda forward in Swansea. They heard for example that a new Strategic Equality Plan had been developed and published, a new Strategic Equality and Future Generation Board had been created, the Council's website has been updated and the mandatory equalities training refreshed, amongst other things.

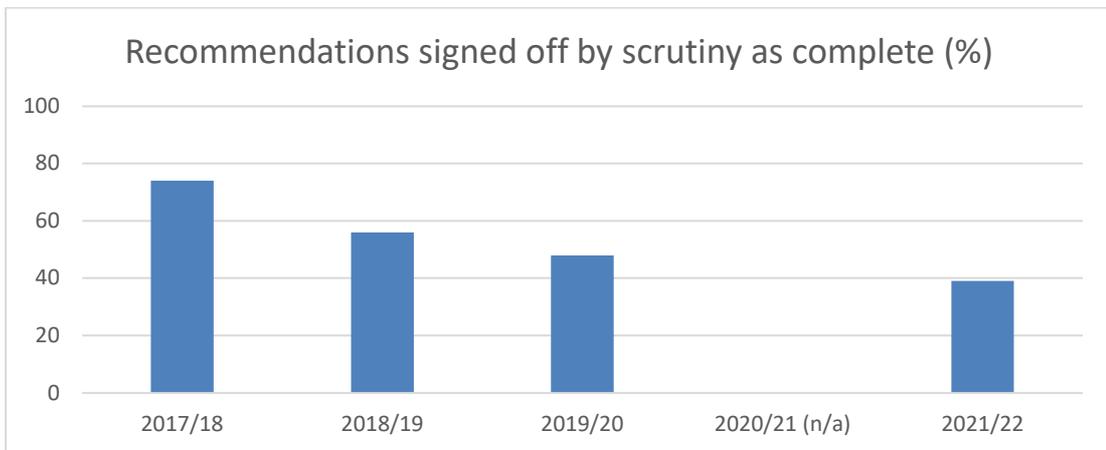
The Panel recognised the Covid-19 pandemic continues to bring challenges to the Council and that many officers have had to shift focus to ensure that Council services were maintained and those most vulnerable were supported during the crisis. The Panel were pleased to see the huge amount of work completed throughout that time, with and for, our local communities.

The Panel agreed to finish their formal follow up involvement with the inquiry after satisfying themselves that good progress has been made with all the recommendations. They heard that seven of the recommendations are now complete and that good progress has been made with those recommendations that are outstanding. They were reassured to hear that all the necessary pieces are in place to ensure ongoing improvement in those areas where the recommendations are incomplete.

The Panel decided to refer one area to the Scrutiny Programme Committee for potential follow up in the new municipal year. This related to Recommendation 13 - Build upon the development of a Co-production Strategy with inclusion of a Toolkit for use by staff across the authority.

It should be noted that in many cases implementation of scrutiny recommendations continues beyond the process of formal monitoring.

Comparison with previous years:



## **4. Impact**

### **4.1 How Scrutiny Councillors have made a difference**

#### 4.1.1 Scrutiny Councillors make a difference by:

- Ensuring that Cabinet Members (and other decision-makers) are held to account through public question and answer sessions
- Making evidence based proposals on topics of concern through task and finish Scrutiny Inquiry Panels, and other scrutiny activities, that report to Cabinet
- Monitoring and challenging service performance and improvement through standing Scrutiny Performance Panels
- Addressing issues of concern through one off working groups
- Acting as a 'check' on the key decisions through pre-decision scrutiny and call-in
- Communicating concerns and proposals for improvement through regular publication of scrutiny letters and reports

4.1.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee produces a summary of the headlines from the work of scrutiny for Council and the public, which focuses on impact and how scrutiny is making a difference. The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee reports the summary, known as Scrutiny Dispatches, to Council.

4.1.3 It is important to know that the work and the efforts of scrutiny councillors are having a positive impact and are delivering effective scrutiny. We make sure that the recommendations we make, in whatever scrutiny forum, are followed up to check on implementation and assess the impact of this work.

4.1.4 The difference made and impact of the overall work of scrutiny is also communicated via:

- press releases to the local media;
- regular posts to our Swansea Scrutiny blog;
- an email monthly subscription newsletter, and
- use of social media, including Twitter.

4.1.5 A selection of stories from the past year of scrutiny from Scrutiny Dispatches, which demonstrate the impact made, are **appended**.

This includes reference to:

- **Focussing on the importance of efficient bus services in Swansea** (*Bus Services Working Group*)
- **Holding Cabinet Members to account** (*Scrutiny Programme Committee*)
- **Continuing to monitor council performance in relation to the natural environment** (Natural Environment Performance Panel)
- **Evidence gathering for in-depth reviews** (*Procurement Scrutiny Inquiry*)
- **Contributing to future arrangements for regional education scrutiny** (*reference to Education Through Regional Working Scrutiny Councillor Group and transition to new partnership arrangements and establishment of Partneriaeth*)
- **Making sure Safeguarding is everyone's business** (*Scrutiny Programme Committee's Scrutiny of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements*)
- **Monitoring how Social Services are managing through the pandemic and ensuring Health & Social Care staff are supported well** (*reference to Adult Services Performance Panel*)
- **Monitoring the Council's Recovery and Transformation Plan** (*Scrutiny Programme Committee*)
- **Continuing to monitor corporate performance** (*Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel*)

## **5. Feedback and Improvement**

### **5.1 Improving Scrutiny**

5.1.1 It is good practice for those involved in the scrutiny function to undertake regular self-evaluation of this work. Taking into account characteristics of effective scrutiny and experiences, it is important for the continuous improvement of the function that any issues identified about current scrutiny practice are discussed and addressed. Annual review discussions are usually held within the Scrutiny Programme Committee and Scrutiny Performance Panels towards the end of each municipal year, to reflect on the year's work and scrutiny experience, specifically considering, for example, how well they have worked, whether they have focussed on the right things, and what lessons had been learnt.

5.1.2 The Scrutiny Programme Committee carried out an Annual Work Programme Review in May 2022, reflecting on the past year, the work of the Committee and work programme, to identify any improvement and development issues. As well as reviewing previously agreed improvement objectives, councillors were encouraged to identify areas of improvement in relation to the work programme and scrutiny practice, so that it is even more effective.

The following were raised:

- Current scrutiny arrangements are well-established.
- Having to prioritise activity because of limited time and resources can be frustrating.
- We need to ensure that the structure of Scrutiny and activities under the Scrutiny Programme Committee align well with Council / Cabinet priorities with good level of scrutiny across all Cabinet Portfolios and is focussed on cabinet decision-making.
- The Committee has done well in plugging any gaps in the work programme and held Cabinet members to account for specific portfolio responsibilities and issues, rather than a 'broad brush' approach looking at overall responsibilities.
- The Committee's co-option of Performance Panel Conveners is good.
- We need to consider whether the Committee could hold at least two sessions per year on Crime & Disorder / Safer Swansea Partnership performance, rather than an annual session.

- We need to ensure scrutiny takes in a range of perspectives on issues.
- It is important to balance local scrutiny with regional / joint scrutiny and ensure scrutiny is effectively co-ordinated and complements well, which will from 2022/23 include the newly established South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.
- We should encourage more people to participate in scrutiny and councillors to actively participate in questioning.
- We need a training programme which will include helping scrutiny councillors to improve how they question and do scrutiny better.
- Although the Council has Policy Development Committees it should be remembered that scrutiny councillors can also inform and influence the development and revision of policy through their work.
- Holding a Work Planning Conference to inform the development of a scrutiny work programme is important.

### 5.1.3 Feedback from Scrutiny Performance Panels

As well as discussion about future work, the following general observations can be noted:

- Overall, Panels were pleased with how the year had gone and felt they have made a positive difference to the working of Council departments and services, and citizens, through ongoing monitoring and challenge, despite the ongoing impacts from the pandemic which had in some cases affected reporting or affected the ability to hold visits or meeting people face-to-face.
- There has been excellent cross-party working within Panels - all have engaged well, with every opportunity to ask questions and contribute.
- There are positive relationships with Cabinet Member and officers, who have attended meetings and provided reports / information when requested. Panels have felt well supported.
- Panels have been flexible and understanding in the face of pressures on the organisation and specific service areas working in the most challenging circumstances. Covid has sharpened the focus of Scrutiny.
- Panels should keep a close eye on Cabinet / Cabinet Members' response to scrutiny, and follow up on agreed action(s).
- Panels could engage in peer review with other Councils to assess how well they are working.

5.1.4 Internal Audit Review of Scrutiny – There has been praise for our Scrutiny arrangements. An internal audit of scrutiny was carried out in 2021, the outcome of which was a high level of assurance and no recommendations, with no key issues / risks found. The audit looked at the role of Scrutiny, its work programme and reporting lines, the relationship between the scrutiny and audit committees, scrutiny of partnership arrangements, coverage of corporate risks in the risk register, examination and follow-up of external reviews, and compliance with the Wales Audit Office discussion paper - Six Themes to Make Scrutiny Fit for the Future. The outcome was reported to the Governance & Audit Committee in June 2021.

## 5.2 Scrutiny Improvement Objectives

5.2.1 A number of scrutiny improvement objectives and action plan were agreed by the Committee in January 2019. This included actions to address the three proposals for improvement made by the Wales Audit Office following its review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements in 2018. This was a co-ordinated and comprehensive single improvement plan for scrutiny, for the issues that matter most.

### **WAO Proposals for Improvement**

- 1) The Council should consider the skills and training that scrutiny members may need to better prepare them for current and future challenges, and develop and deliver an appropriate training and development programme, including providing additional training on the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.
- 2) The Council should strengthen its evaluation of the impact and outcomes of its scrutiny activity.
- 3) The Council should further clarify the distinction between scrutiny and Policy Development Committee activity in relation to policy development.

### **Councillor Improvement Issues**

- 1) We need more of our work to be reported to Cabinet so that there is more formal consideration of scrutiny conclusions and recommendations.
- 2) We need to be involved at an earlier stage in proposed Cabinet decisions so that our input can be more meaningful.
- 3) We need to increase opportunities for participation so that more councillors can get involved in the work of scrutiny.
- 4) We need to strengthen follow up of all scrutiny recommendations so that the response and difference made can be assessed.
- 5) We need more coverage in the media so that people are more aware of our work.

5.2.2 The Committee has regularly reviewed and considered progress against the action plan and did so last in March 2022. The review of the current improvement plan showed only a small number of outstanding actions:

- Development and delivery of a scrutiny training and development programme (as suggested by Wales Audit Office) – it was agreed that this would be arranged post-May 2022 at an appropriate time during the new Council, in addition to the Scrutiny Induction Session that will be held around June 2022. It is anticipated this will include areas such as: Chairing Skills; Questioning Skills, Public Participation, as well as improving understanding around the Well-being of Future Generations Act and how scrutiny can support its impact on local services, policies and decision-making. Any planned programme will be refined subject to further feedback / indications from scrutiny councillors.
- Developing a method of direct post-meeting evaluation from those attending scrutiny meetings (Cabinet Members, officers, external persons etc.) that will help strengthen our evaluation of the impact and outcomes of scrutiny activity – this was developed and tested during 2021-22. We are now inviting post-meeting feedback from scrutiny participants, i.e., Cabinet Members, officers, external invitees, and public attendees, about their experience and satisfaction. They will be invited to complete a short anonymous survey shortly after each scrutiny meeting. This will provide us with valuable information that will help us to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of scrutiny practice and inform the improvement and development of scrutiny in Swansea.
- Developing a specific Facebook page for scrutiny that should improve visibility of the work of scrutiny and sharing of stories, and active public engagement – following discussion with the Corporate Director it was agreed that the Council’s Facebook page could be used to post information and stories about Scrutiny, rather than a setting up a separate account, which should ensure a bigger audience. This has been utilised and is available for future use.

5.2.3 The Committee was content with progress against scrutiny improvement objectives and thought will be given to improvement objectives for the new Council term.

## For further information:

### **Making the work of scrutiny more transparent and accessible**

All scrutiny agenda packs are now available on the Council's '[agenda and minutes](#)' webpage. There you can also find all scrutiny letters sent to cabinet members following meetings and responses. All scrutiny meetings are open to the public and anyone living or working in Swansea can [suggest a topic for scrutiny](#). There are also opportunities to [suggest questions, and submit views](#). If you would just like to keep an eye on what's going on we have webpages, a [blog](#) and a [newsletter](#), you could even [follow us](#) on Twitter.

### **Connect with Scrutiny:**

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Twitter: @swanseascrutiny

Web: [www.swansea.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/scrutiny)

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# Scrutiny Dispatches

City & County of Swansea – 2021/2022 (No.1)

## ‘How scrutiny councillors are making a difference’

### Focussing on the importance of efficient bus services in Swansea

The Bus Services Working Group met to look at bus network coverage and levels of service, community transport provision and integration with other forms of transport. Representatives of First Cymru and Cardiff Bus were invited to participate.

(Lead: Councillor Lyndon Jones)

Scrutiny Working Groups are one-off meetings where scrutiny councillors focus on one particular item and produce a letter with comments and recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Member.

The Bus Services Working Group met early in July with Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management.

The Working Group talked about the importance of getting a regular bus service to all areas in Swansea to tackle residents’ isolation and to start to shift away from car use to using public transport. People who have given up driving need to be able to access public transport otherwise they become prisoners in their own home. Funding for active travel has been used to make it easier for people to cycle or walk, but not everyone is able to do this and accessibility has to be the main point for the elderly.

The Working Group emphasised the importance of bus companies and public transport more generally contributing to carbon emission reduction.

The Working Group recommended that regular meetings are held between Members and First Cymru to raise and discuss issues and felt it was very important for the Authority and bus companies to listen to people who currently do not use buses in Swansea, as well as people who do, to help shape current and future bus services.

The importance of joining up bus and rail times so services are more co-ordinated and the introduction of cross ticketing between bus and rail were also issues emphasised by the Working Group.

A follow up meeting of the Working Group is anticipated in around six months to see what changes / improvements have been made, as it is vitally important to see positive changes taking place that will benefit Swansea residents.

## Holding Cabinet Members to account

The Scrutiny Programme Committee continues to hold cabinet members to account through regular question sessions. Acting as a 'critical friend' Scrutiny Councillors explore Cabinet Members' priorities, actions, achievements and impact in relation to specific areas of responsibility. The Committee recently met with Councillor Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism.

*(Lead: Councillor Peter Black)*

The Committee questioned the Cabinet Member on specific areas of his portfolio responsibilities, namely Tourism, Destination Management & Marketing and Business & City Promotion. The Panel heard about the value of tourism to the local economy and the impact of Covid-19 on the tourism industry.

Committee Members were informed of strategic priorities outlined in The Tourism Recovery Action Plan (TRAP), developed as part of the recovery strategy for the Tourism Sector and forms an integral part of Swansea Council's wider Economic Recovery. The vision of TRAP is to '*Create a world class tourism destination, which delivers a high-quality visitor experience in a pleasant, clean and well-maintained environment.*'

The Committee also discussed the specific effect of the pandemic on the city centre and recovery plans. Committee Members discussed the large number of empty units in the Quadrant and heard that work is ongoing with the owners of the Quadrant and new lettings were due to come on board. Committee Members heard that a 'City Centre Repurposing Strategy' report is scheduled to go to Cabinet in September.

## Continuing to monitor council performance in relation to the natural environment

The Natural Environment Performance Panel has continued to examine performance indicators on issues relating to the natural environment including climate change, air quality and Ash Dieback disease affecting local trees.

*(Lead: Councillor Peter Jones)*

The Panel recently considered progress on the Council's response to Ash Dieback and future aims. Ash Dieback is a disease that affects Ash Trees and causes trees to become brittle over time with branches breaking away from the main body of the tree. If they are not dealt with, trees are at risk of collapsing, presenting an immediate danger to the surrounding area. The Council have surveyed trees on council land and categorised them in four categories with category three and four being at highest risk. Hundreds of trees that cause a risk to the public such as on highways, parks and cemeteries have been felled.

The Panel questioned Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management on what the council is doing in terms of re-planting and which trees are being re-planted. Panel Members heard that should a single ash tree be removed within a cluster or woodland, then nature is allowed to take its course and no replanting at that site would be carried out. To offset the removal of trees the Council has a replacement programme in place where trees that are planted will be of a natural native and mixed species to ensure that any other future diseases that may naturally come along, only affect individual trees within a cluster.

Panel Members queried if there is currently any engagement ongoing to inform members of the public why trees are being felled. Officers explained that extensive communication via social media, media outlets and its' website has occurred and that notice boards are used where large tree felling operations are carried out. Panel Members felt that permanent signage maybe more suitable so that information is also available post the felling operations. Panel Members put forward ideas to get members of the public engaged more and recommend that information on large felling operations should be circulated with all Councillors for awareness.

## Commencing of Procurement Scrutiny Inquiry

The Procurement Scrutiny Inquiry has commenced and is currently in the evidence gathering stage. The key question of the Inquiry is: *'What is Swansea Council doing to ensure it procures locally, ethically and greenly while being cost effective and transparent in its practices?'*

*(Lead: Councillor Chris Holley)*

The inquiry is looking at procurement in relation to the provision of council functions. It will consider what the Council does well and what can be improved in this area. This will include:

1. Legislation/policy including national, local and European influences on our procurement practice
2. Positive social/local procurement
3. Environmentally and ethical procurement practices
4. Equalities Duty
5. Systems/processes and consistency of approach
6. Joint procurement activities and working with others
7. Measuring success

Panel Members met the Council's Chief Auditor to answer a set of key questions on how procurement is audited internally. To understand what the departmental perspectives are on procurement activities the Panel have already met with the Director of the Place Directorate and are due to meet with Social Services and Education services.

The Panel recognise the importance of ensuring probity, transparency and value for money in its procurement practices. They are keen to look at how we embed social value and sustainability in what we do.



### Chair's Round up

This is my first roundup of the work of scrutiny for 2021/22, as Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee.

### Scrutiny Work Programme

The work of scrutiny continues in accordance with the Work Programme agreed in November 2020, which will take us up to the end of this Council Term. We are making progress on scrutiny priorities. The in-depth inquiry focusing on Procurement, which originally started before the pandemic, re-convened in June 2021 and will report around March 2022. Continuing from the previous municipal year, our six Performance Panels are meeting on a regular basis and we are working through a list of one-off Working Groups. I am grateful to the conveners for their leadership in delivering scrutiny activities and councillors across all parties coming together to participate in this important work. We continue of course to ensure the work programme, and demands of scrutiny, remain flexible whilst still in the midst of the pandemic.

### Looking back at 2020/21

Our Annual Report for 2020/21 is out. We have reflected on what was a relatively short municipal year, affected by the pandemic, but it nevertheless shows a good level of scrutiny. Councillors have worked hard in both supporting and challenging the organisation, contributing to better services, policies, decisions, and a better Swansea. I presented the report to Council on 2 September.

## **Praise for our Scrutiny arrangements**

I am pleased to report that an internal audit of scrutiny was carried out earlier this year, the outcome of which is a high level of assurance and no recommendations, with no key issues / risks found. The audit looked at the role of Scrutiny, its work programme and reporting lines, the relationship between the scrutiny and audit committees, scrutiny of partnership arrangements, coverage of corporate risks in the risk register, examination and follow-up of external reviews, and compliance with the Wales Audit Office discussion paper - Six Themes to Make Scrutiny Fit for the Future. The outcome was reported to the Governance & Audit Committee in June. Credit to all involved!

## **Committee Work Plan**

As well as monitoring the delivery of the work programme, the Committee has a varied work plan looking at a broad range of service / policy matters, targeting specific issues of concern and focused on addressing any gaps in the overall scrutiny work programme. The Committee will call in Cabinet Members as and when required to account for delivery of objectives, performance, and service improvement. We have already questioned Cllr. Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management, on the Council's work and his responsibilities relating to Highways & Engineering, Infrastructure Repairs & Maintenance, and Litter & Community Cleansing. Similarly, the Committee has met with Cllr. Robert Francis-Davies on Tourism, Destination Management & Marketing, and Business & City Promotion, and Cllr. Andrea Lewis on Energy Policy (including Generation, Supply & District Heating).

We invite the public and all scrutiny councillors to contribute ideas to ensure the Committee asks the right questions. We publish a summary of each scrutiny session and views of scrutiny in a letter to relevant Cabinet Members, ensuring a clear and ongoing conversation between scrutiny and the executive to have an influence.

Future Committee meetings will include looking at: Recovery & Transformation Plan Progress, Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report, Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty, Scrutiny of Public Services Board, Parking Policy, Control & Enforcement, Q & A with the Leader of the Council, Crime & Disorder, and Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Progress Report.

## **Regional Education Scrutiny**

With the winding down of the Education Through Regional Working (ERW) regional school improvement consortium and establishment of a new South West Wales Education Partnership consisting of Swansea Council, Carmarthenshire Council and Pembrokeshire Council, new scrutiny arrangements are to be developed. Those involved in the scrutiny of ERW, which has seen an informal regional Scrutiny Councillor Group operating since 2016, have been able to feed their views into the process as the new Partnership is developed. We await the legal agreement between the Councils will confirm the terms of the partnership and governance arrangements, for details on future scrutiny.

## **Making the work of scrutiny transparent and accessible**

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# Scrutiny Dispatches

City & County of Swansea – 2021/2022 (No.2)

## ‘How scrutiny councillors are making a difference’

### Making sure Safeguarding is everyone’s business

Safeguarding people from harm is considered to be the Council’s number one priority. Councillors considered the Annual Report on Corporate Safeguarding to review the implementation of the Council’s Corporate Safeguarding policy, which promotes a “Safeguarding as everyone’s business” approach.

*(Lead: Councillor Peter Black)*

The Council’s Scrutiny Work Programme is closely aligned to Council priorities to ensure it is focused on the most important issues and can influence improvement. Monitoring and challenging performance in delivering on Safeguarding has been a standing item in the work plan of the Scrutiny Programme Committee since 2016 and it has reviewed progress and achievements against objectives.

An Annual Report was considered by the Committee in October 2021, which reflected on seven key areas of activity during 2020/21, under the headings of: Safe Governance, Safe Employment, Safe Workforce, Safe Practice, Safe Partnerships, Safe Voice, all contributing to Delivering Safe Performance.

The Committee recognised the extraordinary circumstances with the pandemic and workforce pressures and were concerned about risks to safeguarding. Councillors gained assurance that despite difficulties at no stage did the Council or partners lose focus and dedicated safeguarding teams have continued to provide support and come up with solutions to protect those in urgent need.

The Committee commended the continuing efforts of the Corporate Safeguarding Group across the Council to make safeguarding everyone’s business – not just a matter for Social Services and Education.

Among the issues raised the Committee will be closely watching action on:

- the Council’s effectiveness in ensuring that all contractors, companies and individuals carrying out work on behalf of the Council whether voluntary or paid are compliant with the Council’s Safeguarding Policies.
- the Council being able to provide access to its own safeguarding training materials to external providers.
- ensuring DBS checks for contractors are completed in line with the new DBS Policy and Risk Assessment.

The Committee will also be following up on other work identified for the year ahead within the Annual Report.

## Monitoring how Social Services are managing through the pandemic and ensuring Health & Social Care staff are supported well

The Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel continue to monitor the performance of the Directorate including how the department is managing through the Covid pandemic and have recently focussed on the Workforce Support Programme in place for Adult Services.

*(Lead: Councillor Susan Jones)*

In terms of management of the pandemic the Panel heard that whilst the Directorate is still manging, it remains a struggle and the third wave is having a very significant impact. Fragility of Domiciliary Care has hit the Directorate worst, particularly the workforce.

The Panel heard that whilst the waiting list for long term domiciliary care has reduced, the situation is still far from ideal. The list includes individuals who do have care but not the right type of care, the Directorate is working with families and carers to come up with alternatives up until February 2022. Panel Members heard that a small number of individuals are having to consider residential care as the Authority is unable to provide the domiciliary care they need.

The Panel heard that having realised there was an issue with sickness, Social Services were the first to trial a dedicated Human Resources Officer to support staff to return to work and support staffing pressures within teams. Panel Members were pleased to hear that this has led to a reduction in sickness levels in Social Services but expressed concern that the private sector suffered similar problems with staffing and queried if the Authority has shared its practices. Panel members were reassured that although private homes have their own governance arrangements in place, they can turn to our commissioning services for advice and that the Authority ensures that when recruiting, staff are not taken from private homes.

Panel Members praised and expressed their thanks and appreciation to all members of staff, who continue to have a huge burden placed upon them and are doing an amazing job in very difficult circumstances.

## Monitoring the Council's Recovery and Transformation Plan

Councillors are keeping a watching brief on the Council's Recovery and Transformation Plan, 'Swansea Achieving Better Together', monitoring progress against key objectives and milestones, and challenging the Leader of the Council on action.

*(Lead: Councillor Peter Black)*

Members of the Scrutiny Programme Committee heard that whilst there is a focus on recovery, there are challenging times ahead given that the pandemic is still with us causing continued pressure on services and therefore the Phases and timelines noted within the Plan are fluid. Nevertheless, it was reported that the Council's position on recovery and transformation was strong in comparison with other Councils and has been held up by the Welsh Local Government Association as good practice.

Numerous examples were given to the Committee in relation to work on recovering, restarting & adapting Council services, and the strategic response to support the city to emerge and grow from the pandemic and deliver corporate priorities.

The Committee raised some issues, including the need to:

- streamline the process for Economic Recovery Fund applications, grants to businesses, etc. to avoid undue delay in the processing and ensure the Council is dealing with applications as swiftly as possible.
- ensure good communications with all councillors on recovery and transformation work, to ensure it is well understood, including opportunities to engage in the delivery of the Plan and specific work streams.

The Committee will continue to keep a close watch on progress and success of the Plan.

## Continuing to monitor corporate performance

Councillors on the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel have continued to keep a close eye and challenge performance in relation to relevant indicators across the authority. They have recently reviewed the Quarter 1 2021/22 Performance Monitoring Report presenting the performance results in delivering the Council's Well-being Objectives and priorities.

*(Lead: Councillor Chris Holley)*

Overall Council performance reports are routinely considered by the Scrutiny Panel. It is recognised that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has brought huge challenges and changes to the Council, its services and workforce. This will have impacted on performance across the Council.

However, the Panel heard that, overall, during Q1, 81% of indicators have improved or stayed the same and the Council's response to the pandemic, whilst not necessarily reflected in the established corporate performance indicators, has been extraordinary.

The Panel queried some indicators and why they have improved in such adverse circumstances, asking how indicators are selected. Officers explained that the indicators help to measure priorities within the Corporate Plan and are selected specifically for that purpose.

Amongst questions raised, Panel Members heard that in Q1 2020/21 the Council was in the height of the pandemic and saw less family homeless presentations due to the suspension of evictions. This had a direct impact on Council data and the comparable indicators.

Panel Members queried measures for, and the use of the term, 'tackling poverty' and suggested this description be reviewed in the future to better reflect Council objectives.

The Panel noted the statistic regarding 'Number of data breaches which has resulted in an enforcement or monetary penalty notice being issued by the Information Commissioners Office' – and these results being zero, Panel Members felt was an impressive reflection on the Council.



### Chair's Round up

This is my second roundup of the work of scrutiny for 2021/22, as Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee.

### Scrutiny Work Programme

The work of scrutiny continues in accordance with the Work Programme agreed in November 2020, which will take us up to the end of this Council Term. We are making progress on scrutiny priorities. The in-depth inquiry focusing on Procurement has now completed evidence gathering, and the Panel, led by Cllr. Chris Holley will be reflecting on the evidence and findings. You can expect the Panel's final report with conclusions and recommendations by March 2022.

Our six Performance Panels are meeting on a regular basis however some adjustment has been made to the work plans of the Adult Services and Child & Family Services Panel as scrutiny continues to ensure that it is flexible and responsive to pressures whilst still in the midst of the pandemic. Both Panels will keep close focus on how the service is managing those pressures and its impact on performance.

For similar reasons, we have had to put back a planned Healthy City Working Group. A further meeting of the Bus Services Working Group, following a meeting in July 2021, will however be held before the end of this municipal year to follow up on their recommendations and see what changes / improvements have been made.

## **Committee Work Plan**

As well as monitoring the delivery of the work programme, the Committee has a varied work plan looking at a broad range of service / policy matters, targeting specific issues of concern and focused on addressing any gaps in the overall scrutiny work programme. The Committee will call in Cabinet Members as and when required to account for delivery of objectives, performance, and service improvement.

Since my last update we have asked questions on the Council's Recovery & Transformation Plan, Corporate Safeguarding, and Delivery of the Corporate Objective on Tackling Poverty. We have also questioned Cllr. Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management, on the Council's work and his responsibilities relating to Parking Policy, Control & Enforcement.

Future Committee meetings will include looking at: Scrutiny of Public Services Board, Q & A with the Leader of the Council, Crime & Disorder / Safer Swansea Partnership, and Children & Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Progress Report.

## **Developing a Strong Scrutiny / Audit Relationship**

Although Scrutiny and Audit have distinctive roles, there are common aims in terms of good governance, improvement in performance and culture, and financial management, so a regular conversation between Committee Chairs and Members will help to ensure we are working together effectively. I addressed the Governance & Audit Committee on this in October and we also heard from Paula O'Connor, Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee, at the Scrutiny Programme Committee that month. We are making sure that there is good awareness of each other's work, avoiding duplication and gaps in work programmes, and are able to refer issues between Committees. Some of the areas that will benefit from co-ordination between Committees include the new responsibilities arising from the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 around Council performance, and around the systematic reporting of external audit reports, and respective role in considering and monitoring these.

## **Regional Education Scrutiny**

Following approval of a legal agreement by each Council in the new Education Partnership, Partneriaeth, a Joint Scrutiny Councillor Group, comprising of Education Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs or equivalent from each of the three Councils, will be set up to scrutinise the work of the regional Partnership. This will support the delivery of school improvement and ensure greater public accountability over decisions made. Scrutiny will seek reassurance and consider if the Partnership is operating according to the Joint Committee Agreement, and its Business Plan, and is being managed effectively. Responsibility for Scrutiny Support, as well as responsibility for other functions, will be determined in due course by the Partneriaeth Joint Committee, comprising the Leaders of the three Councils, as the strategic decision-making body.

## **Improving Scrutiny**

Leading by example, we are always looking to improve how we work as scrutiny councillors and the effectiveness of scrutiny meetings. We are now inviting post-meeting feedback from scrutiny participants, i.e., Cabinet Members, officers, external invitees, and public attendees, about their experience and satisfaction. They will be invited to complete a short anonymous survey shortly after each scrutiny meeting. This will provide us with valuable information that will help us to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of scrutiny practice and inform the improvement and development of scrutiny in Swansea.

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## Appendix B – The Work of Scrutiny 2017-22

<b>Scrutiny Programme Committee</b> (every 4 weeks) (Overall work programme development & management; discussion of broad range of policy and service issues)			
1. Cabinet Member Q & A Sessions on overall Portfolio Responsibilities 2. Crime & Disorder – Safer Swansea Partnership 3. Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 4. Children & Young People’s Rights Scheme – Annual Compliance Progress Report 5. Oceana Building Demolition 6. Sustainable Swansea Programme – Commissioning Reviews: Service Areas – Post Implementation Updates	7. Scrutiny of Specific Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities: - Highways and Engineering - Infrastructure Repairs and Maintenance - Tourism, Destination Management, and Marketing - Business and City Promotion - Energy Policy (incl. Generation, Supply & District Heating) - Litter and Community Cleansing - Parking Policy, Control & Enforcement	8. Consultation on Draft Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022 9. Housing Commissioning Review Progress 10. Swansea Public Services Board 11. COVID-19 Pandemic - Update on Impact and Response 12. West Glamorgan Regional Partnership - Overview of the Regional Response to COVID focussed on Care Homes	13. Council’s Recovery & Transformation Plan 14. Active Travel Consultation Process 15. Delivery of Homelessness Strategy 16. Delivery of Corporate Priority – Tackling Poverty 17. Co-ordination with the Governance & Audit Committee 18. Follow Up on Scrutiny Working Group Recommendations 19. Complaints Annual Report 2020/21
<b>Inquiry Panels</b> (time-limited in-depth scrutiny – one per year)	<b>Performance Panels</b> (regular meetings to provide ongoing in-depth performance / financial monitoring & challenge)	<b>Working Groups</b> (light-touch scrutiny / one-off meetings)	
1. Regional Working 2. Natural Environment 3. Equalities 4. Procurement  Inquiries pre 2017/18 followed up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Governance</li> <li>• Building Sustainable Communities</li> <li>• School Readiness</li> <li>• Child &amp; Adolescent Mental Health Services</li> <li>• Tackling Poverty</li> </ul>	1. Service Improvement & Finance (corporate performance & financial monitoring, budget scrutiny, specific service performance / improvement reports) 2. Adult Services (Adult Social Services performance) 3. Education (formerly Schools) (schools performance / standards, pupil attainment, local education authority priorities & support to learning) 4. Child & Family Services (Child and Family Social Services and Poverty and Prevention performance) 5. Development & Regeneration (monitoring Council development and regeneration programme, Swansea Bay City Deal – local projects) 6. Public Services Board (ended 2020 – work added to Committee work plan) (performance of multi-agency Swansea Public Services Board and difference it is making) 7. Natural Environment (commenced 2019) (natural resources, biodiversity, climate change issues)	1. Emergency Planning & Resilience 2. Car Park Charges 3. Tethered Horses 4. Roads & Footway Maintenance 5. Local Flood Risk Management 6. Renewable Energy 7. Homelessness 8. Community Cohesion & Hate Crime 9. Air & Noise Pollution 10. Welfare Reform 11. Environmental Enforcement 12. Anti-Social Behaviour 13. Tourism 14. Brexit 15. Workforce 16. Digital Inclusion 17. Bus Services	

**Pre-Decision Scrutiny & Call-In of Cabinet Decisions** (carried out by the Committee unless delegated to relevant Performance Panel)

Pre-decision Scrutiny:

1. Adult Services Commissioning Reviews Consultation Outcome
2. Catering Services Commissioning Review
3. Planning & City Regeneration Commissioning Review
4. Public Protection Commissioning Review
5. Castle Square Regeneration
6. Family Support (Children with Additional Needs & Disability) Commissioning Review
7. More Homes Pilot Scheme
8. Liberty Stadium
9. Transfer of Management of Allotments
10. Highways & Transportation Commissioning Review
11. Council Budget (annually)
12. Residential Care and Day Services for Older People Commissioning Review
13. More Homes Parc Yr Helyg Site Options Appraisal

14. Cultural Services Commissioning Review
15. The Future Structure and Delivery of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Unit
16. Outcome of Residential Care & Day Services for Older People Consultation
17. Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022
18. Swansea Central Phase 1 Project Update and FPR7
19. Small School Review & School Organisation Linked to the Welsh Education Strategic Plan
20. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System Business
21. Housing Commissioning Review Option Appraisal Report
22. Foreshore Sites - Public Consultation and Procurement Responses Summary and Next Steps

23. COVID-19 Emergency Surge Hospital
24. Proposed Lease to Mumbles Community Council under the Community Asset Transfer Policy
25. Development of 71/72 The Kingsway & 69/70 The Kingsway – Business Case (FPR7)
26. Update Management Report on Swansea Airport
27. Leasehold Acquisition and Redevelopment FPR7 – 279 Oxford Street/25-27 Princess Way
28. Covid Recovery and Investment

Call-In:

1. 21st Century Schools Programme - New Build For Gorseinon Primary School

**Regional / Joint Scrutiny** (collaborative scrutiny with other Local Authorities for topics / issues of shared interest or concern, and models of regional working)

1. Education Through Regional Working (ERW) Scrutiny Councillor Group – ended 2021 (Scrutiny of new 'Partneriaeth' Education / School Improvement Partnership to be arranged in 2022)
2. Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee (commenced 2018 to scrutinise the Swansea Bay City Deal Programme)
3. South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee in process of being set up 2022 (to scrutinise the CJC which will exercise functions relating to strategic land use planning, regional transport planning and the exercise of economic well-being powers)