

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL

SUMMARY: This is an agenda pack for a meeting for the Public Engagement Scrutiny Inquiry Panel taking place on the 25th August 2015. The main item being discussed is inquiry impact report. Reports are included.

Date: 25th August 2015 **Time:** 11.00am

Venue: **GUILDHALL Committee Room 3A**

Members of the Panel:

Joe Hale
Sue Jones
Ann Cook
Fiona Gordon
Yvonne Jardine
Mary Jones
Andrea Lewis
Lesley Walton
Terry Hennegan

AGENDA

No.	Item
1.	Welcome and apologies
2.	Public Engagement Scrutiny Inquiry – impact report

ITEM 2

Report of the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INQUIRY PANEL – AUGUST 25, 2015

IMPACT REPORT: SCRUTINY INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Purpose	To help the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel to assess the impact of their report into public engagement.
Content	This report deals with three questions related to the impact of the inquiry: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What has changed since the report was presented to Cabinet?2. Have the agreed recommendations been implemented?3. What has been the impact of the scrutiny inquiry?
The Scrutiny Inquiry Panel are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the contents of the report• Reach conclusions about the impact of the inquiry
Lead Councillor(s)	Cabinet Member for transformation and Performance Councillor Clive Lloyd
Lead Officer(s)	Lee Wenham, Head of Communications and Customer Engagement
Report Author	Lee Wenham

1. Introduction

1.1 The Public Engagement Scrutiny Inquiry Panel undertook an in-depth inquiry between September 2013 and March 2014. This final report is attached at Appendix A. The Cabinet Member response and action plan are attached at Appendix A.

1.2 The reporting timeline of the inquiry is as follows:

Commenced	September 2013
Agreed by the Scrutiny Programme Committee	June 2014
Presented to Cabinet	October 21, 2014
Cabinet Response agreed	February 17, 2015

1.3 The final stage of the scrutiny inquiry process is the follow up. It is at this point that the original panel reconvenes in order to assess the impact of the work.

1.4 The purpose of this report is to assist the panel as it seeks to answer the following three questions, each of which will be dealt with in detail below:

- What has changed since the report was presented to Cabinet?
- Have the agreed recommendations been implemented?
- What has been the impact of the scrutiny inquiry?

2. What has changed since the report was presented to Cabinet?

2.1 Since the inquiry concluded a new Employee Engagement Strategy has been approved and is being implemented and a new Consultation and Engagement Strategy is being developed.

3. Have the agreed recommendations been implemented?

3.1 In responding to the inquiry an action plan was drawn up showing what steps would be taken to implement all of the scrutiny recommendations agreed by Cabinet (Appendix A).

3.2 The table at Appendix A shows progress against each recommendation and specifically:

- the Cabinet decision in respect of each recommendation
- the action taken / proposed to implement the recommendations
- the responsible officer(s)
- timescales involved

4. What has been the impact of the scrutiny inquiry?

4.1 The inquiry has helped to raise awareness of the need to consult and engage both employees and the public. It has also raised awareness of the role that Councillors can play in promoting consultation and engagement in their communities.

4.2 Recommendations from the inquiry have been included in the new Employee Engagement Strategy and will be included in the new Consultation and Engagement Strategy which means the inquiry will have a lasting impact in the way the Council carries out consultation and engagement.

4.3 The inquiry has also helped to influence engagement outside of the Council with the Local Service Board opening its meetings to the public, in line with one of the inquiry's recommendations.

Background Papers: None.

Contact Officer: Lee Wenham

Legal Officer: Debbie Smith

Finance Officer: Carl Billingsley

Equality Officer: Phil Couch

Scrutiny Inquiry of Public Engagement – Cabinet Action Plan

Recommendation	Action already being undertaken	New Action Proposed	Timescale	Responsible Officer
1. Provides information via a variety of media, including Swansea Voices, to councillors and residents on how to become a Swansea Voices panellist, how it functions, the social demographic profile of the panel, results and outcomes.	The use of Swansea Voices is being reviewed to assess whether there are more timely and effective consultation mechanisms available.	Once the assessment has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.	August 2015	Rhian Millar
<p>COMPLETED – YES Progress: The review of Swansea Voices has been completed and all Councillors have been informed that the new arrangements include six annual telephone tracker surveys of 200 new panellists each time. New panellists are representative of Swansea’s demographic profile. In addition, two online surveys will be carried out each year with Swansea Voices citizen panel (1,250) and any of the telephone panellists who have the option to participate.</p>				
2. Reviews the social demographic make-up of Swansea Voices and takes any action required to ensure that the panel is representative of the communities of Swansea	The use of Swansea Voices is being reviewed to assess whether there are more timely and effective consultation mechanisms available.	Once the assessment has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.	August 2015	Rhian Millar
<p>COMPLETED – YES Progress: The review of Swansea Voices has been completed and all Councillors have been informed that the new arrangements as set out above. The previous Swansea Voices panel was representative of the communities of Swansea based on the following demographics – age, gender, ward area and socio-economic status. The same process is used when selecting telephone</p>				

panellists.					
3.	Reports to Council on how Swansea Voices influences policy development and Council decision making.	Consultation results from Swansea Voices are provided to officers for them to consider. In addition, there is an Equalities & Engagement Implications section in reports to Cabinet and Council.	Once the assessment of Swansea Voices has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.	August 2015	Rhian Millar
COMPLETED – YES Progress: The results of the telephone surveys and online surveys will be made available to Heads of Service, Directors and Cabinet Members. The surveys include questions based on council priorities and potential changes which will help to inform policy development.					
4.	Ensures that all consultation and engagement is carried out in line with any the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, with a particular focus on participant feedback.	This requirement is included in the council's existing engagement strategy.	The engagement strategy is due to be revised and will be strengthened to give more priority to participant feedback.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
COMPLETED – NO (UNDER WAY) Progress: Work has already started on developing the new Consultation and Engagement Strategy and the National Principles will be applied in order to improve participant feedback.					
5.	Senior managers must increase visibility to services users during public consultation and engagement events.	Senior managers, Cabinet Members and a number of other councillors were trained in engagement techniques by Participation Cymru during summer 2014. Since that time senior officers have been involved in public engagement events related to the budget proposals	The review of our consultation and engagement strategy will consider how we can build on this commitment.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
COMPLETED – YES					

Progress: Senior managers are already taking an active role in consultation, particularly around the budget consultation. This will be included in the new Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

6.	Increases community involvement in significant planning issues by setting up community planning groups, going beyond the statutory to notify residents.	<p><u>Development Management:</u> Undertaken consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Town & Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order 2012 coupled with online access to live planning application files during the consultation period.</p> <p><u>Planning Policy:</u> Community information sessions held during key stages of Development Plan preparation; a database of consultees has been developed and contact with communities made more transparent through Candidate Site Notices to highlight site submissions, publication of newsletters and development of interactive website.</p>	<p><u>Development Management:</u> Need to provide a clear route map showing the opportunities that will be available for the public to participate in decision-making on the different types of planning application at different levels in the new development management hierarchy established within the Planning (Wales) Bill.</p> <p><u>Planning Policy:</u> Publication of additional background information on the Council's website to enable more informed comments to be submitted aligned to the timescales of Plan preparation. Town/Community</p>	February 2016	Emyr Jones
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			Councils supported in the preparation of community plans.		
<p>COMPLETED – NO (UNDER WAY)</p> <p>Progress: The actions proposed for Development Management have not been implemented as yet given that the provisions of the Wales Planning Bill in this respect have not been articulated by the Welsh Government. As soon as the Bill is enacted then the actions will be implemented.</p> <p>As part of Local Development Plan production, the Planning Policy Team undertook a non-statutory consultation exercise on the Pre Deposit Proposals Map which was available to view in completeness on the website. This was over and above the required consultation requirements and encouraged more informed comments to be received that will help inform the production of the forthcoming Deposit Plan. Furthermore, all petitions received as part of the preparation process have been formally considered via special Planning Committee sessions the details and outcomes of which have/will be available online. No requests for assistance have been expressed by Town/Community Council's in relation to the preparation of Community Plans but the Team would be happy to advise interested parties.</p>					
7.	Increases non-executive councillor engagement in the Local Service Board by holding open meetings and providing meeting details and minutes to all councillors.	A new One Swansea website, due to be launched in January 2015, will allow Local Service Board meeting notes to be published online.	Councillors will be alerted via email when meeting notes are published	May 2015	Dave McKenna
<p>COMPLETED – YES</p> <p>Progress: The new website has been put on hold and will be launched for the new Public Service Board (the statutory replacement for the LSB) when it becomes live in April 2016. In the meantime, to coincide with LSB meetings being made public (see below), agendas and minutes are now being published on a dedicated page on Swansea.gov.uk (www.swansea.gov.uk/lb agendas). From September all councillors will receive an email when the agenda pack for an LSB meeting is published. Councillors are welcome to observe meetings and ask questions as part of the public question time agenda item.</p>					
8.	Improves public engagement in the Local Service Board by	None	A proposal will be made to the Local	May 2015	Dave McKenna

	making its meetings open and accessible to the public.		Service Board that its main meetings are open for the public to observe		
<p>COMPLETED – YES Progress: The LSB agreed in March 2015 that its meetings should be open to the public from July. On 21 July the first public meeting was held making Swansea LSB to the first to open its meetings to the public in Wales. Six people observed this meeting from the public gallery. ‘Questions from the Public’ is included as an agenda item at each meeting. A press release was published to promote the first meeting and can be found here: www.swansea.gov.uk/article/19360/Get-a-first-glimpse-of-your-citys-Local-Service-Board</p>					
9.	Works with the LSB to develop greater coordination of engagement between the LSB partners and develops the LSB Engagement Group as a group of experts providing advice to the wider LSB on consultation and engagement.	The Local Service Board Engagement Group is currently chaired by Councillor Erica Kirchner who is also Chair of the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee and supported by the Council’s Consultation Coordinator	The work of the Local Service Board Engagement Group is considered by the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee	July 2015	Dave McKenna
<p>COMPLETED – NO Progress: The Engagement Group is currently under review as the Council and partners seek to ensure that it can be effectively supported. The Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee has included the LSB Engagement Group as a future topic within its workplan.</p>					
10.	Implements a programme of regular and ongoing staff engagement which encourages openness and sharing of ideas and which has clear link to the Chief Executive (“golden thread”) by the end of the calendar	The weekly Chief Executive blog provides an update on key issues and opportunities for staff to feedback and ask questions. The Chief Executive also provides an update in the monthly Top Brief note that’s used in team briefings	A new employee engagement strategy is due to be launched in April 2015 and will strengthen this commitment.	May 2015	Rhian Millar

		across the council. The Chief Executive also visits council sites and holds drop-in sessions for staff to meet him and raise issues face-to-face.			
<p>COMPLETED – YES</p> <p>Progress: Following the 2014 staff survey managers have carried out a number of engagement events in their area as part of a council-wide action plan. It is also planned to hold a series of events to continue conversations with staff. These events will include updates on corporate priorities.</p> <p>A new Staff Engagement Strategy was recently agreed which sets out a number of actions to improve staff communication, involvement and feedback.</p> <p>The Innovation Group is also carrying out research to find best practice and generate ideas to further improve staff engagement.</p>					
11.	Keeps staff informed on a quarterly basis of changes within the organisation as a result of the review of corporate culture.	There are already a number of mechanisms in place to keep staff updated – eg, Chief Executive's blog, Top Brief, team meetings, StaffNet.	A new employee engagement strategy is due to be launched in April 2015 and will strengthen this commitment.	July 2015	Rhian Millar
<p>COMPLETED – YES</p> <p>Please see response to recommendation 10 above.</p>					
12.	Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy a method to inform councillors of consultation and engagement in their wards and to consult with them, where appropriate, as a stakeholder group.	Councillors are informed all of consultation activities.	This commitment will be strengthened in the revised corporate consultation and engagement strategy.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
<p>COMPLETED – NO (UNDER WAY)</p> <p>Progress: The new Consultation and Engagement Strategy is currently being developed and will include methods to highlight consultation to Councillors.</p> <p>Councillors will also be involved in consultation exercises, where appropriate.</p> <p>In the meantime, councillors will be informed by email of any new consultation activities. This can also be viewed on the council</p>					

website "Have your Say" section.					
13.	Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy clear processes to capture information from consultation and engagement; feed it into departments; communicate to participants the change and difference as a result of the consultation	Departments are informed of consultation outcomes and those departments holding their own consultation are encouraged to update participants on how their feedback has had an impact on decisions etc.	This commitment will be strengthened in the revised corporate consultation and engagement strategy. We will also run "We asked, you said, we did" campaigns to demonstrate how we have acted upon customer feedback.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
<p>COMPLETED – NO (UNDER WAY)</p> <p>Progress: The results of the telephone surveys and online surveys will be made available to Heads of Service, Directors and Cabinet Members. The new consultation and engagement strategy will include a requirement to feedback to participants.</p>					
14.	Ensures that all relevant and public consultation and engagement opportunities continue to be posted in the "Have Your Say" section on the website and that this retains its visibility on the Council's homepage.	All consultation and engagement opportunities appear in the "Have your say" section.	The new-look council website which was launched in September 2014 promotes consultation and engagement from prominent positions on the front page. The "Have your say" section is not a standing item on the front page as these are determined by the amount of traffic,	October 2015	Rhian Millar

			with the most popular pages being on the front page. We will ensure that officers are aware of the Have Your Say section for consultations.		
COMPLETED – YES					
Progress: All relevant consultation activities undertaken are included the “Have your Say” section on the council website.					
15.	Reviews the use, format and focus of the Swansea Leader through engagement with readers and cross-party, non-executive councillors to ensure that it is relevant, provides value for money and is used to its full potential	The Swansea Leader is regularly reviewed using residents’ feedback via Swansea Voices	The future of the Swansea Leader is currently being reviewed as part of the council’s current budget proposals.	August 2015	Patrick Fletcher
COMPLETED – YES					
Progress: A review of the Swansea Leader’s format has been completed to ensure it provides value for money. Further work will be undertaken in the coming months to engage councillors and the public.					
16.	In the face of growing demand from the public, maintains provision for face to face contact for residents wishing to engage with the Council in this way.	The council regularly holds face-to-face events to engage the public. The recent budget consultation includes a series of community events where officers and councillors met residents face-to-face.	The council will continue to hold face-to-face activities where appropriate and this will be reflected in the updated corporate consultation and engagement strategy.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
COMPLETED – NO (UNDER WAY)					
Progress: The new consultation and engagement strategy is currently being developed and will include the requirement to provide					

face-to-face opportunities, where appropriate.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance

Cabinet – 17 February 2015

RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL: HOW CAN THE COUNCIL IMPROVE ITS ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES?

Purpose:	To outline a response to the scrutiny recommendations and to present an action plan for agreement.
Policy Framework:	None
Reason for Decision:	To comply with the requirements of the Council Constitution.
Consultation:	Legal, Financial, Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The response as outlined in the report and related action plan be agreed.
Report Author:	Lee Wenham
Finance Officer:	Nigel Havard
Legal Officer:	Carl Billingsley
Access to Services Officer:	Phil Couch

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Public Engagement Scrutiny Inquiry Panel report was submitted to Cabinet on October 21, 2014 after the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel completed a detailed inquiry into public engagement.
- 1.2 Having considered the contents of the scrutiny report, and specific recommendations made, advice to Cabinet on whether it should agree, or not agree, with each recommendation is detailed in this report.
- 1.3 Cabinet is also asked to consider, for each of the responses, any relevant policy commitments and any other relevant activity.

2.0 Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

Recommendation 1
Provides information via a variety of media, including Swansea Voices, to councillors and residents on how to become a Swansea Voices panellist, how it functions, the social demographic profile of the panel, results and outcomes.
<p>Relevant Policy Commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues • Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.
<p>Action already being undertaken:</p> <p>The use of Swansea Voices is being reviewed to assess whether there are more timely and effective consultation mechanisms available.</p>
<p>New actions following from the recommendation:</p> <p>Once the assessment has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.</p>
<p>Cabinet Member Comments:</p> <p>It is important that we gather views and feedback from as wide a range of people as possible. The current review of Swansea Voices will enable us to do this more effectively.</p>
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 2
Reviews the social demographic make-up of Swansea Voices and takes any action required to ensure that the panel is representative of the communities of Swansea
<p>Relevant Policy Commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues • Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.
<p>Action already being undertaken:</p> <p>The use of Swansea Voices is being reviewed to assess whether there are more timely and effective consultation mechanisms available.</p>
<p>New actions following from the recommendation:</p> <p>Once the assessment has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.</p>
<p>Cabinet Member Comments:</p> <p>The make-up of Swansea Voices is representative of the Swansea population aged over 16.</p>

It is important that we gather views and feedback from as wide a range of people as possible. The current review of Swansea Voices will enable us to do this more effectively.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 3

Reports to Council on how Swansea Voices influences policy development and Council decision making.

Relevant Policy Commitments:

- Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues.
- Adopt a 'can do' attitude.

Action already being undertaken:

Consultation results from Swansea Voices are provided to officers for them to consider. In addition, there is an Equalities & Engagement Implications section in reports to Cabinet and Council.

New actions following from the recommendation:

Once the assessment of Swansea Voices has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.

Cabinet Member Comments:

It is important that public feedback plays an important part in decision-making and the recent consultation exercise on the budget proposals is a good example of this. The Cabinet is committed to the principle of public engagement.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 4

Ensures that all consultation and engagement is carried out in line with any the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, with a particular focus on participant feedback.

Relevant Policy Commitments:

- Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues
- Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.

Action already being undertaken:

This requirement is included in the council's existing engagement strategy.

New actions following from the recommendation:

The engagement strategy is due to be revised and will be strengthened to give more priority to participant feedback.

Cabinet Member Comments:

It is pleasing that we already adopt the National Principles and the Cabinet is committed to maintaining this approach.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 5

Senior managers must increase visibility to services users during public consultation and engagement events.

Relevant Policy Commitments:

- Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues
- Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.
- Adopt a 'can do' attitude.

Action already being undertaken:

Senior managers, Cabinet Members and a number of other councillors were trained in engagement techniques by Participation Cymru during summer 2014. Since that time senior officers have been involved in public engagement events related to the budget proposals.

New actions following from the recommendation:

The review of our consultation and engagement strategy will consider how we can build on this commitment.

Cabinet Member Comments:

The recent budget consultation which involved senior managers attending community meetings has been very successful and the Cabinet is committed to continuing this approach.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 6

Increases community involvement in significant planning issues by setting up community planning groups, going beyond the statutory to notify residents.

Relevant Policy Commitments:

- Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues
- Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.
- Adopt a 'can do' attitude.
- Give a stronger voice to residents in the design of community-based facilities, such as the development of suburban shopping centres, transport and other neighbourhood schemes, by ensuring there is full citizen engagement, including young people

<p>Action already being undertaken: <u>Development Management:</u> Undertaken consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Town & Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order 2012 coupled with online access to live planning application files during the consultation period.</p> <p><u>Planning Policy:</u> Community information sessions held during key stages of Development Plan preparation; a database of consultees has been developed and contact with communities made more transparent through Candidate Site Notices to highlight site submissions, publication of newsletters and development of interactive website.</p>
<p>New actions following from the recommendation: <u>Development Management:</u> Need to provide a clear route map showing the opportunities that will be available for the public to participate in decision-making on the different types of planning application at different levels in the new development management hierarchy established within the Planning (Wales) Bill.</p> <p><u>Planning Policy:</u> Publication of additional background information on the Council's website to enable more informed comments to be submitted aligned to the timescales of Plan preparation. Town/Community Councils supported in the preparation of community plans.</p>
<p>Cabinet Member Comments: The forthcoming Planning (Wales) Bill (if enacted) could change the 'shape' of the Welsh planning system. The changes could potentially have impacts on the opportunities available for local communities to understand and engage meaningfully with the main components of planning process - development management and development plan preparation. The Planning process would have to respond accordingly to any changes.</p>
<p>Recommendation is AGREED</p>

<p>Recommendation 7</p>
<p>Increases non-executive councillor engagement in the Local Service Board by holding open meetings and providing meeting details and minutes to all councillors.</p>
<p>Relevant Policy Commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Action already being undertaken: A new One Swansea website, due to be launched in January 2015, will allow Local Service Board meeting notes to be published online.</p>
<p>New actions following from the recommendation: Councillors will be alerted via email when meeting notes are published</p>
<p>Cabinet Member Comments: The Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill, currently passing through the Welsh Assembly, will mean a</p>

number of changes to Local Service Boards including a new statutory status. In responding to this bill, Swansea Local Service Board will no doubt need to review its governance arrangements including how it engages with councillors.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 8

Improves public engagement in the Local Service Board by making its meetings open and accessible to the public.

Relevant Policy Commitments:

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Action already being undertaken: None

New actions following from the recommendation:

- A proposal will be made to the Local Service Board that its main meetings are open for the public to observe

Cabinet Member Comments: Cabinet is supportive of this idea in principle and will seek to get it adopted. The final decision will be made by the Local Service Board.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 9

Works with the LSB to develop greater coordination of engagement between the LSB partners and develops the LSB Engagement Group as a group of experts providing advice to the wider LSB on consultation and engagement.

Relevant Policy Commitments:

- Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.

Action already being undertaken:

The Local Service Board Engagement Group is currently chaired by Councillor Erica Kirchner who is also Chair of the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee and supported by the Council's Consultation Coordinator.

New actions following from the recommendation:

The work of the Local Service Board Engagement Group is considered by the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee

Cabinet Member Comments: This group can be an important mechanism for a partnership approach to engagement that is both effective and allows duplication to be avoided. It is recognised, however, that the potential of this group has yet to be fulfilled.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 10
Implements a programme of regular and ongoing staff engagement which encourages openness and sharing of ideas and which has clear links to the Chief Executive (“golden thread”) by the end of the calendar year.
Relevant Policy Commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a ‘can do’ attitude.
Action already being undertaken: The weekly Chief Executive blog provides an update on key issues and opportunities for staff to feedback and ask questions. The Chief Executive also provides an update in the monthly Top Brief note that’s used in team briefings across the council. The Chief Executive also visits council sites and holds drop-in sessions for staff to meet him and raise issues face-to-face.
New actions following from the recommendation: A new employee engagement strategy is due to be launched in April 2015 and will strengthen this commitment.
Cabinet Member Comments: It is pleasing to note that there is already a high level of engagement with staff via various mechanisms. Following the recent staff survey there is a strong commitment to improving staff engagement which will be reflected in the new employee engagement strategy.
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 11
Keeps staff informed on a quarterly basis of changes within the organisation as a result of the review of corporate culture.
Relevant Policy Commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a ‘can do’ attitude.
Action already being undertaken: There are already a number of mechanisms in place to keep staff updated – eg, Chief Executive’s blog, Top Brief, team meetings, StaffNet.
New actions following from the recommendation: A new employee engagement strategy is due to be launched in April 2015 and will strengthen this commitment.
Cabinet Member Comments: There are already a number of initiatives in place to keep staff informed, but this will be strengthened in the new employee engagement strategy to help change the corporate culture.
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 12
Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy a method to inform councillors of consultation and engagement in their wards and to consult with them, where appropriate, as a stakeholder group.
Relevant Policy Commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a 'can do' attitude. • Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues • Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.
Action already being undertaken: Councillors are informed all of consultation activities.
New actions following from the recommendation: This commitment will be strengthened in the revised corporate consultation and engagement strategy.
Cabinet Member Comments: It is important that councillors are aware of all council consultation activities and participate and encourage participation wherever possible. I look forward to councillors taking on a greater role in this area.
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 13
Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy clear processes to capture information from consultation and engagement; feed it into departments; communicate to participants the change and difference as a result of the consultation
Relevant Policy Commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a 'can do' attitude. • Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues • Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.
Action already being undertaken: Departments are informed of consultation outcomes and those departments holding their own consultation are encouraged to update participants on how their feedback has had an impact on decisions etc.
New actions following from the recommendation: This commitment will be strengthened in the revised corporate consultation and engagement strategy. We will also run "We asked,

you said, we did” campaigns to demonstrate how we have acted upon customer feedback.

Cabinet Member Comments:

The Cabinet is committed to listening to the views of the public and a campaign highlighting the difference their feedback has made will help improve engagement even further.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 14

Ensures that all relevant and public consultation and engagement opportunities continue to be posted in the “Have Your Say” section on the website and that this this retains its visibility on the Council’s homepage.

Relevant Policy Commitments:

- Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to ‘own’ local issues
- Create a ‘Team Swansea’ approach – a commitment to work with others.

Action already being undertaken:

All consultation and engagement opportunities appear in the “Have your say” section.

New actions following from the recommendation:

The new-look council website which was launched in September 2014 promotes consultation and engagement from prominent positions on the front page. The “Have your say” section is not a standing item on the front page as these are determined by the amount of traffic, with the most popular pages being on the front page.

Cabinet Member Comments:

We will continue to use a range of ways to promote consultation and engagement opportunities, including using the website.

Recommendation is **PARTLY AGREED**

Recommendation 15

Reviews the use, format and focus of the Swansea Leader through engagement with readers and cross-party, non-executive councillors to ensure that it is relevant, provides value for money and is used to its full potential

Relevant Policy Commitments:

- Create a ‘Team Swansea’ approach – a commitment to work with others.

Action already being undertaken:

The Swansea Leader is regularly reviewed using residents' feedback via Swansea Voices.
New actions following from the recommendation: The future of the Swansea Leader is currently being reviewed as part of the council's current budget proposals.
Cabinet Member Comments: The Swansea Leader has been a very effective communication and consultation tool. We regularly seek view of the public on its use, format and content. We are committed to providing the most efficient and effective ways of engaging the public and reviewing publications such as the Swansea Leader is an important way of doing this.
Recommendation is AGREED

Recommendation 16
In the face of growing demand from the public, maintains provision for face to face contact for residents wishing to engage with the Council in this way.
Relevant Policy Commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a 'can do' attitude. • Follow the co-operative council model and ensure that the whole council - elected Members and Staff - works together to empower local communities, enabling their voices to be heard and allowing them to 'own' local issues • Create a 'Team Swansea' approach – a commitment to work with others.
Action already being undertaken: The council regularly holds face-to-face events to engage the public. The recent budget consultation includes a series of community events where officers and councillors met residents face-to-face.
New actions following from the recommendation: The council will continue to hold face-to-face activities where appropriate and this will be reflected in the updated corporate consultation and engagement strategy.
Cabinet Member Comments: The recent budget consultation has shown how important it is to have face-to-face engagement with the public. We are aware that not everyone can use online methods so it is important that we maintain this option for the public.
Recommendation is AGREED

3.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

3.1 Although none of the recommendations will have specific Equality or Engagement Implications in themselves, they will all be considered for

inclusion in the development of the authority's new Consultation and Engagement Strategy which will be subject to a full EIA process.

4.0 Legal Implications

4.1 None

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 None.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: Appendix A – Proposed Cabinet Action Plan

APPENDIX A

Scrutiny Inquiry of Public Engagement – Cabinet Action Plan

Recommendation	Action already being undertaken	New Action Proposed	Timescale	Responsible Officer
1. Provides information via a variety of media, including Swansea Voices, to councillors and residents on how to become a Swansea Voices panellist, how it functions, the social demographic profile of the panel, results and outcomes.	The use of Swansea Voices is being reviewed to assess whether there are more timely and effective consultation mechanisms available.	Once the assessment has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.	August 2015	Rhian Millar
2. Reviews the social demographic make-up of Swansea Voices and takes any action required to ensure that the panel is representative of the communities of Swansea	The use of Swansea Voices is being reviewed to assess whether there are more timely and effective consultation mechanisms available.	Once the assessment has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.	August 2015	Rhian Millar
3. Reports to Council on how Swansea Voices influences policy development and Council decision making.	Consultation results from Swansea Voices are provided to officers for them to consider. In addition, there is an Equalities & Engagement Implications section in reports to Cabinet and Council.	Once the assessment of Swansea Voices has been completed all councillors will be updated on the new arrangements.	August 2015	Rhian Millar
4. Ensures that all consultation and	This requirement is included in the	The engagement	October	Rhian Millar

	engagement is carried out in line with any the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, with a particular focus on participant feedback.	council's existing engagement strategy.	strategy is due to be revised and will be strengthened to give more priority to participant feedback.	2015	
5.	Senior managers must increase visibility to services users during public consultation and engagement events.	Senior managers, Cabinet Members and a number of other councillors were trained in engagement techniques by Participation Cymru during summer 2014. Since that time senior officers have been involved in public engagement events related to the budget proposals	The review of our consultation and engagement strategy will consider how we can build on this commitment.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
6.	Increases community involvement in significant planning issues by setting up community planning groups, going beyond the statutory to notify residents.	<u>Development Management:</u> Undertaken consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Town & Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order 2012 coupled with online access to live planning application files during the consultation period. <u>Planning Policy:</u> Community information sessions held during key stages of Development Plan preparation; a database of consultees has been developed	<u>Development Management:</u> Need to provide a clear route map showing the opportunities that will be available for the public to participate in decision-making on the different types of planning application at different levels in the new development management hierarchy established	February 2016	Emyr Jones

		and contact with communities made more transparent through Candidate Site Notices to highlight site submissions, publication of newsletters and development of interactive website.	within the Planning (Wales) Bill. <u>Planning Policy:</u> Publication of additional background information on the Council's website to enable more informed comments to be submitted aligned to the timescales of Plan preparation. Town/Community Councils supported in the preparation of community plans.		
7.	Increases non-executive councillor engagement in the Local Service Board by holding open meetings and providing meeting details and minutes to all councillors.	A new One Swansea website, due to be launched in January 2015, will allow Local Service Board meeting notes to be published online.	Councillors will be alerted via email when meeting notes are published	May 2015	Dave McKenna
8.	Improves public engagement in the Local Service Board by making its meetings open and accessible to the public.	None	A proposal will be made to the Local Service Board that its main meetings are	May 2015	Dave McKenna

			open for the public to observe		
9.	Works with the LSB to develop greater coordination of engagement between the LSB partners and develops the LSB Engagement Group as a group of experts providing advice to the wider LSB on consultation and engagement.	The Local Service Board Engagement Group is currently chaired by Councillor Erica Kirchner who is also Chair of the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee and supported by the Council's Consultation Coordinator	The work of the Local Service Board Engagement Group is considered by the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee	July 2015	Dave McKenna
10.	Implements a programme of regular and ongoing staff engagement which encourages openness and sharing of ideas and which has clear link to the Chief Executive ("golden thread") by the end of the calendar	The weekly Chief Executive blog provides an update on key issues and opportunities for staff to feedback and ask questions. The Chief Executive also provides an update in the monthly Top Brief note that's used in team briefings across the council. The Chief Executive also visits council sites and holds drop-in sessions for staff to meet him and raise issues face-to-face.	A new employee engagement strategy is due to be launched in April 2015 and will strengthen this commitment.	May 2015	Rhian Millar
11.	Keeps staff informed on a quarterly basis of changes within the organisation as a result of the review of corporate culture.	There are already a number of mechanisms in place to keep staff updated – eg, Chief Executive's blog, Top Brief, team meetings, StaffNet.	A new employee engagement strategy is due to be launched in April 2015 and will strengthen this commitment.	July 2015	Rhian Millar

12.	Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy a method to inform councillors of consultation and engagement in their wards and to consult with them, where appropriate, as a stakeholder group.	Councillors are informed all of consultation activities.	This commitment will be strengthened in the revised corporate consultation and engagement strategy.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
13.	Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy clear processes to capture information from consultation and engagement; feed it into departments; communicate to participants the change and difference as a result of the consultation	Departments are informed of consultation outcomes and those departments holding their own consultation are encouraged to update participants on how their feedback has had an impact on decisions etc.	This commitment will be strengthened in the revised corporate consultation and engagement strategy. We will also run "We asked, you said, we did" campaigns to demonstrate how we have acted upon customer feedback.	October 2015	Rhian Millar
14.	Ensures that all relevant and public consultation and engagement opportunities continue to be posted in the "Have Your Say" section on the website and that this retains its visibility on the Council's homepage.	All consultation and engagement opportunities appear in the "Have your say" section.	The new-look council website which was launched in September 2014 promotes consultation and engagement from prominent positions on the front page. The "Have your say" section is not a	October 2015	Rhian Millar

			standing item on the front page as these are determined by the amount of traffic, with the most popular pages being on the front page. We will ensure that officers are aware of the Have Your Say section for consultations.		
15.	Reviews the use, format and focus of the Swansea Leader through engagement with readers and cross-party, non-executive councillors to ensure that it is relevant, provides value for money and is used to its full potential	The Swansea Leader is regularly reviewed using residents' feedback via Swansea Voices	The future of the Swansea Leader is currently being reviewed as part of the council's current budget proposals.	August 2015	Patrick Fletcher
16.	In the face of growing demand from the public, maintains provision for face to face contact for residents wishing to engage with the Council in this way.	The council regularly holds face-to-face events to engage the public. The recent budget consultation includes a series of community events where officers and councillors met residents face-to-face.	The council will continue to hold face-to-face activities where appropriate and this will be reflected in the updated corporate consultation and engagement strategy.	October 2015	Rhian Millar

Public Engagement

How can the Council improve its engagement practices?

**An Inquiry by the Public Engagement Inquiry Panel
City and County of Swansea - Dinas a Sir Abertawe**

June 2014



Why This Matters



Convener
Councillor Joe Hale

Good Public engagement is fundamental to the success of any large organisation especially when there are severe economic pressures to contend with such as those affecting public spending at the moment.

This inquiry panel sought to take a fresh look at how the Council engages with communities and people at the forefront of delivering quality services for the residents of Swansea.

The panel believe that all engagement needs to be citizen centred, it needs to be genuine and not tokenistic. Our organisation needs to know who it needs to engage with, when that engagement should take place and why; more importantly it needs to be told the outcomes to those engagement exercises.

In order to bridge the gap in Health, Wealth and Education that exists in Swansea the panel felt that the Council needed an engagement strategy that was inclusive, with citizens being equal partners in delivery of services in a rapidly changing landscape. Only then will we be able to have equality in partnerships and decision making that affects our communities, our environment, where we live and where we work.

Throughout the inquiry the panel recognised the good public engagement that has taken place but we have also recognised where lessons have needed to be learnt.

The panel would like to thank everyone who contributed to the inquiry and it hopes the recommendations will be acted upon and will lead to a more inclusive engagement strategy.

Summary

1. Aims of the Review

- How is the Council meeting the objectives within the Consultation and Involvement Strategy?
- How well is Swansea Voices and other consultation and engagement mechanisms used to engage the public in Council decision making?
- How will the current review of Corporate Culture improve the Council's engagement with staff?
- How does the Council promote engagement in the Local Service Board?
- How will budget cuts impact on the Council's ability to consult and engage its stakeholders?

2. Evidence Considered

- Briefing report - how the Council delivers its objectives under the Consultation and Engagement Strategy, provided by Head of Service for Communications and Consultation, Lee Wenham, and the Corporate Consultation Co-ordinator, Rhian Millar.
- Consultation and engagement good practice report – examples from within the Council
- National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales – Participation Cymru
- Verbal evidence on external examples provided by the Welsh Local Government Association, Clover Rodrigues
- Question and answer session with the Local Service Board lead officer, Dave Mckenna, and the Chair of the LSB engagement Group, Cllr Christine Richards
- Question and answer session with Corporate Services Director, Dean Taylor and Head of Service for Communications and Consultation, Lee Wenham
- Briefing report and question and answer session the review of corporate culture with Head of HR, Steve Rees

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 Swansea Voices is a significant corporate consultation and engagement tool used to understand the views and needs of residents but the social demographic make-up was unclear to the panel
- 3.2 There are excellent examples of consultation and engagement good practice identified across the Council and these should be shared
- 3.3 The Local Service Board is an important collaborative body and would benefit from greater public engagement and councillor involvement
- 3.4 The panel is supportive of the Cabinet Member's policy commitments which related to public and staff engagement
- 3.5 Effective staff engagement is important for continuous organisational improvement
- 3.6 Councillors are a useful source of information from their wards and communities and could be better engaged during consultations
- 3.7 The Council uses a variety of methods to communicate with residents of Swansea

4. Recommendations

The Panel recommends to Cabinet that it:

- 4.1 Provides information via a variety of media, including Swansea Voices, to councillors and residents on how to become a Swansea Voices panellist, how it functions, the social demographic profile of the panel, results and outcomes.
- 4.2 Reviews the social demographic make-up of Swansea Voices and takes any action required to ensure that the panel is representative of the communities of Swansea.
- 4.3 Reports to Council on how Swansea Voices influences policy development and Council decision making.
- 4.4 Ensures that all consultation and engagement is carried out in line with any the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, with a particular focus on participant feedback.
- 4.5 Senior managers must increase visibility to services users during public consultation and engagement events.
- 4.6 Increases community involvement in significant planning issues by setting up community planning groups, going beyond the statutory to notify residents.
- 4.7 Increases non-executive councillor engagement in the Local Service Board by holding open meetings and providing meeting details and minutes to all councillors.
- 4.8 Improves public engagement in the Local Service Board by making its meetings open and accessible to the public.
- 4.9 Works with the LSB to develop greater coordination of engagement between the LSB partners and develops the LSB Engagement Group as a group of experts providing advice to the wider LSB on consultation and engagement.
- 4.10 Implements a programme of regular and ongoing staff engagement which encourages openness and sharing of ideas and which has clear link to the Chief Executive (“golden thread”) by the end of the calendar year.
- 4.11 Keeps staff informed on a quarterly basis of changes within the organisation as a result of the review of corporate culture.
- 4.12 Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy a method to inform councillors of consultation and engagement in their wards and to consult with them, where appropriate, as a stakeholder group.
- 4.13 Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy clear processes to capture information from consultation and engagement; feed it into departments; communicate to participants the change and difference as a result of the consultation
- 4.14 Ensures that all relevant and public consultation and engagement opportunities continue to be posted in the “Have Your Say” section on the website and that this retains its visibility on the Council’s homepage.

- 4.15 Reviews the use, format and focus of the Swansea Leader through engagement with readers and cross-party, non-executive councillors to ensure that it is relevant, provides value for money and is used to its full potential.
- 4.16 In the face of growing demand from the public, maintains provision for face to face contact for residents wishing to engage with the Council in this way.

Full Report

1. Aim of the Inquiry

- 1.1 The aim of the Inquiry was to examine how well the Council engages the public, staff and external stakeholders and how it can improve its engagement practices

2. Evidence Considered

- 2.1 The inquiry was carried out in by the Public Engagement Scrutiny Inquiry Panel over a period of 7 months. The panel held 7 evidence gathering session and 2 additional sessions to write the final report.
- 2.2 The following evidence was considered by the Inquiry Panel between September 2013 and April 2014

Date	Meeting	Evidence considered
11/9/13		Inquiry pre-briefing
28/10/13		Consultation & Engagement Strategy Consultation & engagement good practice
3/12/13		Engagement in the Local Service Board
16/12/13		Cabinet Member's policy commitments
20/1/14		Consultation & engagement good practice and the national perspective
24/2/14		Budget cuts and the Council's ability to consult and engage stakeholders
24/3/14		Corporate culture and staff engagement

3. Conclusions

3.1 Swansea Voices is a significant corporate consultation and engagement but the demographic make-up of it was unclear to the panel

3.1.1 The Council has a duty to consult and engage with residents it provides services for. It does this to:

- Plan services and make them more cost effective
- Provide Citizen Centred Service Delivery
- Develop new ideas
- Improve local democracy and feelings of involvement
- Develop better policies and priorities
- Undertake scrutiny, review and performance.
- Promote community cohesion, inclusion and participation

3.1.2 The Council uses a variety of methods to consult and engage including research activities, information giving, consulting on opinions, direct involvement of stakeholders in service development, collaboration and partnership working in decisions and empowerment of stakeholders to make decisions.

3.1.3 One of the methods used is Swansea Voices Citizens' Panel. The panel consists of a representative sample of 1,250 residents who are regularly consulted by the Council about its services and local issues. The panel has been in operation since 1999. Its membership is regularly refreshed to ensure the Panel continues to be representative of the County's population and to give as many people as possible the opportunity to take part.

3.1.4 The panel was informed that Swansea Voices is one of the main corporate consultation mechanisms used by the Council to ascertain views and opinions of the public on Council service issues, policies and developments. It learned that the majority of the corporate consultation budget was spent on Swansea Voices. Recent areas of consultation have covered subjects such as views of the local neighbourhood and the City Centre; perceptions of safety and security; use of Council services and priorities for the Council's budget.

3.1.5 The panel welcomed the variety of consultation and engagement methods including Swansea Voices. The panel agreed that Swansea Voices could be effectively used for Council policy development but it was not clear how departments used the results and analysis of Swansea Voices. The panel felt that councillors needed to be better informed about Swansea Voices including the results and outcomes of the surveys, how it functioned, the demographic make-up of it and how residents could become a member of Swansea Voices.

3.1.6 The panel concluded that Swansea Voices was a significant and important corporate consultation tool. More needed to be done to understand how the data and analysis was used to influence policy decisions and changes to service

delivery. The panel also concluded that it was of the utmost importance that Swansea Voices was truly representative of the communities within Swansea. The panel therefore recommends that Cabinet:

Provides information via a variety of media, including Swansea Voices, to councillors and residents on how to become a Swansea Voices panellist, how it functions, the social demographic profile of the panel, results and outcomes.

Reviews the social demographic make-up of Swansea Voices and takes any action required to ensure that the panel is representative of the communities of Swansea.

Reports to Council on how Swansea Voices influences policy development and Council decision making.

3.2 There are excellent examples of consultation and engagement good practice identified across the Council and these should be shared

- 3.2.1 Service areas across the Council have developed successful and effective processes for consulting and engaging their stakeholders. The WLGA attended the evidence gathering session which considered good practice and the organisation said that “Swansea is ahead of the game in terms of its consultation practise: it consults in a real and effective way using many different processes”.
- 3.2.2 The panel found evidence of this when it invited representatives from the Children and Young People Participation Team, Community Regeneration Team and the Planning Team to talk to the panel about their consultation practices. The panel was impressed by the scope and extent of recent consultations on the Local Development Plan, Target Area consultation and engagement to tackle poverty and consultation with young people and the Swansea Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB).
- 3.2.3 Each of these consultations were well thought out and scoped, aims and objectives were agreed, a range of methods were used including questionnaires, workshops, interviewer completed questionnaires, social media, online consultation pages, public consultation events and innovative practice was encouraged.
- 3.2.4 The panel found evidence of innovative practice during each of the consultation and engagement good practice examples. During the Swansea Safeguarding Children Board consultation 30 young people and the members of the Board were brought together in one event to make the SSCB more accessible to the young people. The panel heard that Target Areas each had their own engagement officers whose role it was to encourage greater direct community involvement in developing an approach to tackle poverty in Target Areas. To stimulate greater public involvement and engagement in the Local Development Plan the team adopted creative and new approaches to ensure that the consultation was more inclusive and that the resulting policy making was more transparent. This was achieved by a multi-faceted media, public relations and information campaign to raise the profile, providing accessible information for the different types of consultees and undertaking a range of consultation and

engagement activities to ensure as many people as possible were able to contribute.

3.2.5 A common theme that the panel found was that the consultation and engagement activities were taken to the stakeholders so that their involvement was made as easy as possible. The panel also noted that each of these consultations and the innovative practice were all carried out within existing resources, each drew on internal support and support from partners, officers were visible and a good range of engagement methods were used.

3.2.6 In conclusion the panel felt that there were some excellent examples of good practice consultation within the Council and the panel welcomed the WLGA's opinion on consultation in Swansea and felt that this and good practice should be shared throughout the organisation. The panel therefore recommends to Cabinet that it:

Ensures that all consultation and engagement is properly scoped and carried out in line with the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, with particular focus on participant feedback.

Senior managers must increase their visibility to services users during public consultation and engagement events.

Increases community involvement in significant planning issues by setting up community planning groups, going beyond the statutory to notify residents.

3.3 The Local Service Board is an important collaborative body and would benefit from greater public engagement through councillor involvement

3.3.1 The Local Service Board had recently undergone a structural change to improve the way it works to provide better support to frontline work. A new Engagement Group was established to support the Local Service Board in effective engagement with the public and professionals.

3.3.2 The panel recognised the importance of the Local Service Board as a collaborative body that works across service delivery organisations and partnerships to identify and improve the key health, social and economic challenges in Swansea.

3.3.3 At the time of the inquiry the panel found that engagement in the Local Service Board had been limited to organisations that were members of the it, councillor engagement had been limited and public engagement in the LSB had primarily been associated with the consultation for the One Swansea Plan.

3.3.4 The panel felt that greater public engagement in the Local Service Board could help improve the outcomes of the Local Service Board and through its discussions, identified a number of ways in which greater public involvement could be achieved.

- Educate the public: Give the Local Service Board a public face through communication channels to promote why the Local Service Board exists, what it does, what it's achieved and what it hopes to achieve.

- Make the Local Service Board relevant: Narrow the focus of the consultation to stimulate engagement from particular groups that have something to contribute on a specific issue - if an issue affects people they have an incentive to get involved. Not all issues are suited to public engagement.
- Make it accessible - make it easy for people to be involved and to contribute to consultations, engagement exercises, community events. Don't reinvent the wheel, use existing networks, mechanisms to provide ways for people to be involved
- Acknowledge that not everyone has the desire to be involved and that participation might be limited to small numbers.

3.3.5 In conclusion the panel felt that Swansea's Local Service Board would benefit from increased public engagement. The panel therefore recommends to Cabinet that it:

Works with the LSB to develop greater coordination of engagement between the LSB partners and develops the LSB Engagement Group as a group of experts providing advice to the wider LSB on consultation and engagement.

Increases non-executive councillor engagement in the Local Service Board by holding open meetings and providing meeting details and minutes to all councillors.

Improves public engagement in the Local Service Board by holding open meetings

3.4 The panel is supportive of the Cabinet Member's policy commitments which related to public and staff engagement

3.4.1 The Cabinet Member's policy commitments in this area are:

- Collaboration and a "Team Swansea" approach
- Improving citizen engagement
- Improving staff consultation and engagement and encourage the sharing of ideas
- Reviewing the Corporate Culture of the Council

3.4.2 The panel welcomed the Cabinet Member's commitment to collaboration and agreed that working in an outward facing collaborative way with regional bodies such as the Western Bay in Health and Social Care and the Regional Consortia in Education would produce benefits for the Council.

3.4.3 The Cabinet Member considered that the engagement with young people on the budget proposals was an effective consultation and was keen to use the model in other consultations. The panel welcomed the review of Corporate Culture and agreed that genuine staff engagement was vital to the corporate health of the Council.

3.4.5 The panel felt that these policy commitments would help the Council improve its engagement with the public, staff and external stakeholders and its engagement

practices. The panel therefore endorses and supports the Cabinet Member's policy commitments in this area.

3.5 Effective staff engagement is important for continuous organisational improvement

- 3.5.1 The Cabinet Member is committed to improving staff consultation and engagement and to encouraging the sharing of ideas. The last council-wide staff survey was in 2008 and 1.5k responses were received. The panel learned that staff surveys have been carried out since 2008 but more often on particular issues and conducted online. It concerned the panel that there were still many council employees who were not office based and therefore did not have IT access to contribute their views to online staff surveys. The panel welcomed the new strategy that would focus on staff without IT access to ensure that they had the opportunity to contribute their opinions and ideas.
- 3.5.2 The panel learned about the establishment of the staff survey group that was set up to look at employee engagement and good practice in this area. The group will also help develop the staff survey that will be available to staff to complete later in the summer. The panel welcomed this and agreed that this would help the Council understand how staff want to be engaged and the issues they want to be engaged on.
- 3.5.3 The panel was pleased to hear that staff engagement does not incur high expenditure costs but rather it is time costly when it comes to analysing and reporting on the results; with staff reductions this could pose a risk to the achievement of greater staff engagement.
- 3.5.4 The panel felt that significant consultation such as the Council-wide survey needed involvement and visibility of Cabinet Members and senior officers to demonstrate the importance of the survey and the importance of staff to be involved and contribute their ideas.
- 3.5.5 The panel felt that there were a number of good communication tools that were used to communicate with staff – for example Jack's weekly blog and StaffNet. The panel agreed they were good information sharing tools but that on big corporate issues it would be good practice to have an engagement plan with different types of engagement activities which enabled the involvement of as many people as possible.
- 3.5.6 In conclusion the panel felt that staff engagement needed to be regular, feedback provided in a timely fashion which clearly demonstrated how staff views had impacted on changes. The panel felt it important that staff were encouraged to be open and honest when providing their views and that engagement should be regular and ongoing. The panel was supportive of the Council-wide staff survey and felt that the staff survey group was a positive development. The panel therefore recommends to Cabinet that it:

Implements a programme of regular and ongoing staff engagement which encourages openness and sharing of ideas and which has a clear link to the Chief Executive (the "golden thread") by the end of the calendar year.

Keeps staff informed on a quarterly basis of changes within the organisation as a result of the review of corporate culture.

3.6 Councillors are a useful source of information from their wards and communities and could be better engaged during consultations

3.6.1 It was acknowledged during the evidence gathering sessions that councillors are useful source of information from their wards and that they could be much better engaged during consultations. It was also acknowledged that capturing information from councillors is a challenge. The panel felt that councillors were key stakeholders of the Council, were valid consultees and they were a good way into communities for departments undertaking consultation and engagement activities.

3.6.2 Effective consultation and engagement brings extensive benefits to the citizens and agencies involved, including knowledge of local issues which allows service providers to reach a better understanding of their communities and be more in tune with needs or problems as they arise. Councillors, in their role as the community voice are well placed to help achieve this benefit.

3.6.3 The current consultation and engagement strategy is undergoing a revision. The panel felt that this was an opportune time to include within the framework practice that improves involvement of councillors in corporate and service delivery consultations.

3.6.4 In conclusion the panel felt that Councillors offered valuable and unique perspectives and needed to be an integral part of consultation and engagement practices. The panel therefore recommends to Cabinet that it:

Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy a method to inform councillors of consultation and engagement in their wards and to consult with them, where appropriate, as a stakeholder group.

Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy clear processes to capture information from consultation and engagement; feed it into departments; communicate to participants the change and difference as a result of the consultation.

3.7 The Council uses a variety of corporate communication methods to engage with residents of Swansea

3.7.1 It was found that the Council, within departments as evidenced in previous sections of this report, and corporately used a wide variety of methods to communicate with residents of Swansea, keep them informed of developments & important issues and enable residents to conduct their business with the Council. The panel welcomed this and agreed that a wide variety of communication methods was important to ensure that all residents had the ability to engage with the Council.

3.7.2 The panel was pleased to hear that the corporate consultation budget had not

been reduced in the last budget and that capacity within this service area was not affected. The panel learned that the Council's role to consult and engage with the public and stakeholders would be developed rather than be reduced. The recent budget consultation moved away from the traditional type of consultation which has asked residents to rate services. Rather, it tried to engage residents in a conversation about how they felt about services and how they would like to see services provided. The panel learned that this was the direction that the Council wanted to move in but that this type of consultation takes time to develop.

- 3.7.3 As well as Swansea Voices which has been addressed in previous sections of this report, the council uses a number of other corporate consultation methods. The Swansea Leader is delivered to 105,000 homes in Swansea, six times per year and costs £74,000 per year to print and deliver. The Swansea Leader offers the Council an opportunity to reduce advertising costs in other media and it is a proven way to disseminate information directly to residents. The effectiveness of the Swansea Leader is regularly tested via Swansea Voices and in the last survey it was ranked 2nd behind the Evening Post as a source of council information. The panel was supportive of the Swansea Leader but felt that now was an appropriate time to review the use of the Leader to ensure that it represented value for money
- 3.7.4 The Council also has the website as a means of communication with the public. There is a "Have your Say" section on the front page of the website which invites visitors to the website to take part in current consultations. The number of visits to the Council's website has increased year on year from 2.5million visits in 2011, 3 million in 2012 and 3.2 million in 2013. The panel learned that the use of social media within the Council as a means of communication, consultation and engagement is in development and will be part of a package of tools used by the Council. There were 29 Twitter accounts and 27 Facebook accounts across the Council in regular use. The Council will need to develop skills within the organisation to use social media to the greatest effect.
- 3.7.5 A very visible and valued method of communication was the contact centre. The panel felt that this was an important service that provided the opportunity of face to face or telephone contact for residents of Swansea. The panel acknowledged that many residents value the importance of being able to speak directly to an officer within the Council to help them resolve an issue or provide them with information or advice. The Contact Centre, along with the wide variety of print, written, social media and electronic communication and engagement methods ensures that all residents have the opportunity to transact business with the Council, receive and share information and to take part in consultation and engagement activities.
- 3.7.6 The panel felt that corporate communications had a role within the Council to help services and departments improve their consultation and engagement practices. There were a number of recent examples of consultations where lessons needed to be learned, for example the EMLAS, care homes and respite consultations. A number of lessons could be taken from these and shared, such as, consultation proposals and information provided were not specific enough, lack of communication between departments and corporate consultation and the

location of consultation events. Given that the Council will continue to feel budget pressures and there will be less resource available for expenditure on consultation, departments and the corporate consultation service will need to strengthen their working relationships to ensure that departments' consultation and engagement exercises are successful and provide value for money

- 3.7.7 In conclusion the panel felt that smarter use of existing consultation, engagement and information tools and improved working between service department and the corporate consultation unit will help to offset the effects of reduced resources and budget pressures. The panel saw the value of electronic communication and social media but felt that maintaining a face to face option of communication for residents in the form of the contact centre was important. This would ensure that a wide variety of methods were available to all residents of Swansea. The Swansea Leader is a valued communication tool but the authority must continue to ensure that it represents value for money. The panel therefore recommends to Cabinet that it:

Ensures that all relevant and public consultation and engagement opportunities continue to be posted in the "Have Your Say" section on the website and that this retains its visibility on the Council's homepage.

Reviews the use, format and focus of the Swansea Leader through engagement with readers and cross-party, non-executive councillors to ensure that it provides value for money and is used to its full potential.

In the face of growing demand from the public, maintains provision for face to face contact for residents who wish to engage with the Council in this way.

4. Recommendations

The Board commends Cabinet to consider all issues and ideas raised by this inquiry and, in particular, the recommendations set out below.

The Board recognises that the Authority

- (a) will need to ensure that any subsequent actions are legal and meet the requirements of any relevant legislation;
- (b) has a responsibility to make the best use of limited resources and that any additional costs will need to be considered carefully as part of the annual budget setting process.

The Board has kept these principles in mind in the course of its investigations.

The Board recommends to Cabinet that it:

- 4.1 Provides information via a variety of media, including the Swansea Leader, to councillors and residents on how to become a Swansea Voices panellist, how it functions, the social demographic profile of the panel, results and outcomes.
- 4.2 Reviews the social demographic make-up of Swansea Voices and takes any action required to ensure that the panel is representative of the communities of Swansea.
- 4.3 Reports to Council on how Swansea Voices influences policy development and Council decision making.
- 4.4 Ensures that all consultation and engagement is carried out in line with any the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales, with a particular focus on participant feedback.
- 4.5 Senior managers must increase visibility to services users during public consultation and engagement events.
- 4.6 Increases community involvement in significant planning issues by setting up community planning groups, going beyond the statutory to notify residents.
- 4.7 Increases non-executive councillor engagement in the Local Service Board by holding open meetings and providing meeting details and minutes to all councillors.
- 4.8 Improves public engagement in the Local Service Board by making its meetings open and accessible to the public.

- 4.9 Works with the LSB to develop greater coordination of engagement between the LSB partners and develops the LSB Engagement Group as a group of experts providing advice to the wider LSB on consultation and engagement.
- 4.10 Implements a programme of regular and ongoing staff engagement which encourages openness and sharing of ideas and which has clear link to the Chief Executive (“golden thread”) by the end of the calendar year.
- 4.11 Keeps staff informed on a quarterly basis of changes within the organisation as a result of the review of corporate culture.
- 4.12 Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy a method to inform councillors of consultation and engagement in their wards and to consult with them, where appropriate, as a stakeholder group.
- 4.13 Includes in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy clear processes to capture information from consultation and engagement; feed it into departments; communicate to participants the change and difference as a result of the consultation.
- 4.14 Ensures that all relevant and public consultation and engagement opportunities continue to be posted in the “Have Your Say” section on the website and that this retains its visibility on the Council’s homepage.
- 4.15 Reviews the use, format and focus of the Swansea Leader through engagement with readers and cross-party, non-executive councillors to ensure that it is relevant, provides value for money and is used to its full potential.
- 4.16 In the face of growing demand from the public, maintains provision for face to face contact for residents wishing to engage with the Council in this way.

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Rachel Davies, Planning Officer, CCS

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About the Public Engagement Scrutiny Inquiry Panel

The **Public Engagement Scrutiny Inquiry Panel** is a body of Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet. Their role is to scrutinise the performance of Council services and to make recommendations about how services can be improved.

Members of the Panel

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