



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Performance Panel – Service Improvement & Finance

At: Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

On: Tuesday, 14 March 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Convenor: Councillor Chris Holley OBE

Membership:

Councillors: P M Black, R Fogarty, P R Hood-Williams, L James, D H Jenkins, M Jones, J W Jones, M W Locke and B J Rowlands

Agenda

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| 1 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 2 | Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests
www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests | |
| 3 | Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips | |
| 4 | Minutes
To receive the minutes of the previous meeting(s) and agree as an accurate record. | 1 - 3 |
| 5 | Public Questions
Questions can be submitted in writing to Scrutiny scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk up until noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Written questions take precedence. Public may attend and ask questions in person if time allows. Questions must relate to items on the open part of the agenda and will be dealt with in a 10 minute period. | |
| 6 | Planning Annual Performance Report 2021/22
<i>Invited to attend:</i>
Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance
Ian Davies - Development Conservation and Design Manager | 4 - 22 |
| 7 | Annual Complaints Report 2021/22
<i>Invited to attend:</i> | 23 - 57 |

Cllr Andrea Lewis - Cabinet Member for Service Transformation
Cllr Louise Gibbard - Cabinet Member for Care Services
Sarah Lackenby – Head of Digital and Customer Services

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Next Meeting: Tuesday, 18 April 2023 at 10.00 am

Huw Evans

Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Tuesday, 7 March 2023

Contact: Scrutiny Officer - 01792 636292

Agenda Item 4



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the Scrutiny Performance Panel – Service Improvement & Finance

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 14 February 2023 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor C A Holley (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

P M Black
L James
M W Locke

Councillor(s)

R Fogarty
D Jenkins
B J Rowlands

Councillor(s)

P R Hood-Williams
J W Jones

Cabinet Member(s)

Cllr Rob Stewart
(Leader)

Cabinet Member for Economy Finance and Strategy

Officer(s)

Ben Smith
Brij Madahar

Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer
Scrutiny Team Leader

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): M Jones

46 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interests were declared:

Cllrs Chris Holley, Dai Jenkins and Jeff Jones declared a Personal Interest relating to Minute 50.

47 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None.

48 Minutes

Minutes of previous meeting were agreed.

49 Public Questions

There were no public questions received.

50 Pre Decision Scrutiny of Cabinet Reports: Annual Budget

The Leader and Ben Smith the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer attended. They talked through the following:

Overall

- The Council faces cost pressures of £60m with a net of £35m being added to the budget which includes £31m from Welsh Government Aggregate External Finance and £4m from estimated Council Tax rises. This results in a savings requirement of £25m.
- While £35m is a significant investment it must be seen in the context of high energy prices and inflation.
- A fund of £15m has been redirected from the Economic Recovery Fund to cover energy costs to support service providers, for instance schools and care providers.
- The long term outlook remains challenging with a real terms impact for all.
- The budget assumes an increase in council tax of 4.95% to be considered by Cabinet and Council in due course but with advice to consider a range of increases.
- Notification has been received that fire authority levy will be an overall average increase of 16.5%. Although awaiting final notification of the Revenue Support Grant adjustment, no significant changes are expected. This equates to a 2% council tax rise.
- 61 full time equivalent local government posts are still at risk after however an estimated 40/50% of these are made up of vacant posts and early retirement/voluntary redundancies. Compulsory redundancies will be avoided where possible.
- City centre parking charges are due to increase while a citizen's app will reduce the cost for residents with a reduction applied at the meter to be rolled out this year.
- The budget proposes an increase of Swansea Market rents creating a saving of £50,000. This reflects inflationary pressures, balanced with additional support for market traders in difficult trading conditions.

Education

- Regarding schools, it remains the case that forward financial plans for the Council will continue to require significant and sustained savings. It is not possible to exempt schools' budgets fully from longer term real terms cuts. This has been discussed in the Schools Budget Forum.
- Pay awards for teachers this year and next, plus the local government pay award for next year are still unknown cost pressures.
- Pest control fees include a proposed increase of 15% which could put additional pressure on for schools and contracts however the fee is consistent with other increases for charges and pressures on the service and additional resources are required for the service to continue.

Social Services

- The national living wage will be under pressure due to legal obligations on all employers and real living wage expectations from social care providers to deliver Welsh government aspirations of us as a funder of care.
- While Social Services receive the biggest proportionate share increase of 8%, further longer term investment and significant structural change is required in social care.
- Recruitment remains a challenge within Social Services.

Reserves

- Earmarked and general reserves are adequate given the cost of living crisis but the often unchanged general reserves may need to be grown to be relative and proportionate to the overall revenue budget which has grown materially over the years.
- An estimated £60m is to be drawn down from cash backed reserves during this and next financial year leaving around £100m. This is being used to stabilise the budget pressures faced by the Council.

Capital Budget and Programme

- The budget sets out a £400m general fund capital programme.
- Officer advice indicates that sufficient borrowing and cash backed reserves will finance the programme in the short term and no built-in unsupported borrowing requirement of any note is required in the base budget for the next few years.
- Cabinet and Council may need to consider further borrowing if further capital schemes are added.
- There is an assumption within the budget that borrowing of up to £50m may be required, this decision will relate to match funding with for instance, Levelling Up bids and inflation pressures.
- One Levelling Up bid has been successful and two unsuccessful bids will be resubmitted. Cabinet and Council will be required to balance the affordability choice between capital match funding, revenue pressures and benefits to the economy.

51 Summarising Views for Feedback to Cabinet

- Panel Members discussed their feedback for Cabinet based on their discussions which will be addressed in a letter to the Leader and presented to Cabinet by the Chair on 16 February 2023.

52 Work Plan 2022/23

The Panel noted the Work Plan.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am.

Chair

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance

Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Panel – 14th March 2023

PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR) – 2021-22

Purpose	To provide an overview of the performance of the Development Management Service
Content	This report sets out the background to the Annual Performance Report, the context in which it has occurred and details the performance of the Authority.
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the information and give their views
Lead Councillor(s)	Cllr David Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance
Lead Officer(s)	Phil Holmes – Head of Planning and City Regeneration, Ian Davies – Development Manager
Report Author	Ian Davies - Development Manager ian.davies@swansea.gov.uk Tel : 07970 680549
Legal Officer	Jonathan Wills
Finance Officer	Peter Keys

PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Planning Annual Performance Report (APR) is seen by Welsh Government as an important mechanism for monitoring Local Planning Authority performance against a key set of National performance indicators and as a means of driving its agenda for modernising the planning system in Wales. It also represents an important tool for benchmarking the performance of Authorities across Wales and importantly must also be seen in the context of Welsh Government proposals to intervene where Local Planning Authorities exhibit consistent underperformance.

- 1.2 Since the Covid-19 pandemic, comparison data has not been produced to allow Welsh Local Authorities to benchmark performance. Indeed, it appears from all-Wales meetings that the majority of Welsh LPAs are not producing an APR this year. However, it is considered this report provides an opportunity to consider the performance of the Development Management Service. This report therefore will set out the department's performance for 2020-21 and where relevant, provides comparison data to the department's performance for the last APR produced for 2020-21.

2.0 Context

- 2.1 The Authority has undergone a significant change process in recent years, partly as a result of budgetary pressures, and partly in response to Welsh Government changes to the planning system as part of the "Positive Planning" agenda and the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.
- 2.2 The Council's Committee structures and scheme of delegation were amended in January 2015 to broadly align with Welsh Government recommendations and has proven to be a robust mechanism upon which to deliver sound and efficient decision making.
- 2.3 The Swansea Local Development Plan was adopted in February 2019 and now provides an up to-date policy framework, based upon placemaking principles, upon which to base decision making and facilitate the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and regeneration agenda.
- 2.4 The Section has also been restructured, agile working arrangements have been introduced and processes and procedures have been subject to continuous review, facilitating a paperless office environment and delivering efficiency savings.
- 2.5 The agile working arrangements that had been introduced previously meant that the department was already able to access its Planning IT systems from home when the Coronavirus Pandemic arrived in March 2020, Officers initially worked from home rather than in the office, and now work in a hybrid arrangement whereby they can work both at home and in the office.

3.0 Performance

- 3.1 The positive changes introduced in recent years have significantly improved the Authority's performance in both qualitative and quantitative terms. When assessed against the last Planning Performance Framework, the Council represents one of the best performing Local Planning Authorities in Wales.

- 3.2 The percentage of all applications determined within required timescales has also shown a significant improvement, increasing from 71% in 2014-15 to 99% in 2021-22. The figures for 2021-22 show a fall in performance to 97% but this can be attributed to the increase in the number of applications received and periods of staff vacancies. This figure is still well above the Welsh average of 88% in 2018/19 when figures were last produced
- 3.3 Significantly, for the delivery of the Council's regeneration agenda, the percentage of all major planning applications determined within required timescales has consistently increased year on year from 6% in 2014-15, which was the lowest performance in Wales, to 86% in 2020-21. There was a slight drop in performance in 2021-22, which related to four applications that were reported to committee and therefore went over the agreed timescale. In 2018-19, the Welsh average was 68%.
- 3.4 The area which was most affected by the Coronavirus pandemic has been enforcement. In 2019-20, 74% of all enforcement cases were investigated in 84 days compared to 46% in 2017-18. However, the impacts of the pandemic meant that this figure dropped to 51% in 2020-21. The backlog of cases that arose as a result of the pandemic meant that 32% of cases were investigated within 84 days.
- 3.5 The percentage of Member made decisions contrary to officer advice has also reduced from 24% in 2016-17 to 2% in 2021-22. This equates to just 1 application out of a total of 44 decisions made by Planning Committee in just 0.04% of all decisions made by the Authority. This performance is below the Welsh Government target of 5%. In 2018-19, the Welsh average was 9%.
- 3.6 The overall quality of decision making when assessed against the percentage of appeals dismissed was 69% in 2021-22 compared to 64% in 2020-21. With the adoption of the Swansea Local Development Plan in February 2019 the Council now has a robust and up-to-date policy framework upon which to defend its decision making at appeal and deliver the Council's corporate priorities and regeneration agenda. As detailed in the APR, most appeals were allowed on subjective grounds.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The APR provides a useful overview of the Council's performance over the last year. Comparison data to allow an assessment between local authorities has not been produced by Welsh Government. However, the report demonstrates pressures caused by increased workload and staff vacancies, the service has continued to perform at a high level. Enforcement has been affected by the pandemic and there will be

challenges for the service in tackling the backlog that has grown over the last three years.

- 4.2 There are also significant challenges ahead in the face of continued budgetary pressures and acknowledged resilience issues and specialism gaps. At a time of transformational change for the City and its region it is inevitable that further difficult decisions will continue to be made over priorities and service levels in the future.

Background papers:

City & County of Swansea APR 2019-21:

<i>Contact Officer:</i>	<i>Ian Davies</i>	<i>Extension No:</i>	<i>01792 635714</i>
<i>Date of</i>	<i>28th February 2023</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Swansea APR 2021-22</i>
<i>Production:</i>		<i>Name:</i>	

Swansea LPA

PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR) – 2021-22

PREFACE

I have the pleasure of introducing the Annual Performance Report (APR) for Swansea Council's Planning Service. APR's were introduced as part of Welsh Government proposals to modernise the planning system and improve local delivery of planning services. The Council's Planning Service is responsible for protecting the amenity and unique natural and built environment of our city and countryside in the public interest and facilitating sustainable development and the economic regeneration of our urban and rural areas. Having adopted the Swansea Local Development Plan the Council has an up to date planning policy framework which sets out a clear and ambitious vision for the future growth and regeneration of the City, its communities, economy and natural environment. In this context the APR provides a mechanism for ensuring that the Planning Service is responding positively to the challenges of evolving national planning guidance and the principles of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and the Environment (Wales) Act. In this respect the Planning Service presents the most tangible means of translating the Council's corporate objectives, commitments and regeneration agenda into development on the ground with the overall aim of improving the quality of life for local residents and building more sustainable communities.

Councillor David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance

CONTEXT

- 1.0 This section sets out the planning context within which the local planning authority operates.**
- 1.1 The City and County of Swansea covers an area of 378 square kilometres (about 2% of the area of Wales), approximately 66% of which is rural and 34% urban. The City is the second largest in Wales and the regional centre for South West Wales. As well as being characterised by a highly development central area and surrounding settlements, the County benefits from a number of high quality natural environments that are part of its rural hinterland.
- 1.2 The policies and proposals set out in the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) seek to address the County's need for new homes, jobs, infrastructure and community facilities to support economic growth and raise standards of living. Policies to promote development sit alongside and complement those that will ensure future proposals respect and promote the County's cultural heritage, important landscapes and sensitive environments. A clear 'placemaking' agenda is promoted which emphasises that future development must accord with the overarching aims of enhancing quality of life and well-being.
- 1.3 Swansea lies at the heart of the Swansea Bay City Region and the nature of future growth and development management will be critical to shaping the regional geographies of South West Wales. In particular, the aspirations for the City Region seek to significantly boost economic investment and activity, with an associated substantial uplift required in development, including housing.

2.0 Planning background,

2.1 The Swansea LDP, which was adopted in February 2019, provides the policy context for the period up to 2025. It superseded the Swansea Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2001-2016).

3.0 Place and fit within the community strategy and/or wider strategic and operational activity of the authority.

3.1 The Swansea Public Service Board's Local Well Being Plan: Working together to build a better future (2018) has four objectives relating to Early Years, Live Well, Age Well; Working with Nature; and Strong Communities underpinned by key themes of Housing and the Economy which are supported by the planning system.

3.3 The LDP seeks to deliver the land use, regeneration and natural environment enhancement objectives expressed in the Local Well Being Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan, together with other Council strategies, plans and programmes.

4.0 Employment Growth

4.1 National policy supports employment growth within the Swansea Bay City region, and there is a requirement to align jobs with housing and infrastructure to reduce the need to travel, especially by car. Current local policy focuses on generating wealth by diversifying the economy away from public sector employment and growing a higher value knowledge economy (life sciences, technology and engineering) that offers higher skilled and better paid employment opportunities. There are a number of projects to help deliver these objectives which are likely to be continued throughout the LDP period, with initiatives such as the ongoing transformation of Swansea's Fabian Way corridor by two universities, plans for the redevelopment of the City Centre, Waterfront, Tawe Riverside Corridor and Lower Swansea Valley areas, together with new super-hospital proposals.

4.3 Between 2001 and 2011 the average property price in Swansea rose by 124.8%. The West of the County now contains some of the more expensive dwellings in South Wales, whilst the North and East of the County contain generally much lower house prices. In August 2022, the average house sale price in Swansea was £196,492 - average for Wales £213,091.

4.4 Average (median) earnings for full-time employees in Swansea stand at £593.10 per week and £30,262 per year (April 2022), 6.9% higher than the previous year. This is lower than the weekly Wales average of £603.50 and UK average of £640.00.

5.0 Historic/landscape setting of the area, including AONBs, conservation areas etc.

5.1 Over 50% of the County's area is identified as being of significant ecological interest. Nearly 70% of the habitats and at least 20% of species identified as being of importance for biodiversity conservation in the UK can be found in the County, and approximately 17% of the County's area is protected by designations at a European (SAC, SPA, RAMSAR) or National (SSSI, NNR) level.

- 5.2 The landscape is of critical importance within the County, as it provides a striking setting for the City and at least 40% of the County (the Gower AONB) is recognised as being landscape of national importance. Most of the AONB coastline is also designated as Heritage Coast which extends for 59km. Gower attracts large numbers of visitors and tourism is very important for the local economy.
- 5.3 The County supports an extensive greenspace network, which is vital to economic, environmental and community well-being, and additional green infrastructure is needed to meet national guidance and local requirements for improving accessibility to open space. In particular improvements to linkages between open spaces, public rights of way and key destinations are needed to increase accessibility and promote physical activity.
- 5.4 The County has a proud industrial heritage and a number of historic buildings, such as castles and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are currently 31 Conservation Areas and 519 Listed Buildings within the County, many of which are characterised as having good authentic surviving historic features that still contribute to the distinctive, special character of the area. However, some Conservation Areas have been degraded in character due to inappropriate alterations to the external features of buildings, or new developments that are out of keeping with the character of the area. The character and size of Conservation Areas can vary greatly, from very small rural hamlets with a cluster of buildings around a church, to urban areas of buildings originally constructed for industrial and commercial purposes.
- 5.5 Most of Swansea's Conservation Areas were designated in the late 1960's and 1970's and therefore, the published documentation supporting these earlier Conservation Areas is often limited. This limits the amount of information available upon which development management decisions in Conservation Areas can be based. A programme of Conservation Areas Review is therefore underway.

6.0 Urban rural mix and major settlements.

- 6.1 The County can be broadly divided into four geographical areas: the open moorlands of the Lliw Uplands in the north; the rural Gower Peninsula in the west, containing a number of rural villages, contrasting coasts and the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); the suburban area stretching from the edge of Swansea towards settlements in the west and along the M4 corridor; and the coastal strip around Swansea Bay, which includes the City Centre and adjacent District Centres such as Sketty and Mumbles.
- 6.2 Some two-thirds of the County's boundary is with the sea - the Burry Inlet, Bristol Channel and Swansea Bay.
- 6.3 Most of the population live within the urban areas radiating from the City Centre and in the surrounding nearby urban settlements which are generally spread along the main transport corridors into the City. There are also rural / semi-rural settlements in and around the edges of Gower and to the North.
- 6.4 The regeneration of the retail heart of the City Centre through mixed use development, including the reintroduction of residential units into the central area, has been seen as a particularly important means of breathing life back into the City. There has been major investment in infrastructure and environmental improvements, and these areas are well located for access to a wide range of employment opportunities. Development has been encouraged within the Maritime Quarter, SA1 and Lower Swansea Valley riverfront areas to reinforce the image and role of Swansea as a 'Waterfront City'.

- 6.5 Within the North West part of the County, development has been concentrated on the settlements of Gorseinon, Loughor, Penllergaer and Pontarddulais in support of regeneration initiatives and local employment centres. This has included significant levels of housebuilding over the past decade.
- 6.6 West Swansea was the focus for the greatest boom in post war building and is now largely built-out to its environmental limits. Beyond this area the Gower Fringe is characterised by rural and semi-rural areas, including the settlements of Penclawdd, Crofty, Dunvant, Three Crosses, Upper Killay and Bishopston, where development has historically been limited to infill and small scale rounding off. Within the Gower AONB restrictive housing policies have historically been applied, however small-scale affordable housing development required to satisfy the overriding economic or social needs of a local community is supported through LDP policy. An increasing number of dwellings are being used as holiday homes within Gower which also impacts on the availability of housing to meet affordable and local needs. Recent changes in planning legislation has resulted in new use classes for Second Homes and Short Term holiday lets. The Council will monitor the impact of these changes to see whether any additional planning controls are required to ensure the availability of housing for local needs.

7.0 Population change and influence on LDP/forthcoming revisions.

- 7.1 The 2021 Census reported that the usually resident population of Swansea was 238,500; approximately 500 or 0.2 per cent less than the 2011 census total, and 8,100 (-3.3%) less than the 2020 estimates. The population of Wales was 3.1m, an increase of 1.4% on the previous census. The population of England and Wales grew by 6.3% compared to the census of 2011.
- 7.2 The population of Swansea comprises 117,600 males and 121,000 females (Source ONS). Previous population estimates suggests that Swansea's overall population reduction was due to negative natural change (more deaths than births) and internal (UK-based) out-migration, partly offset by net international in-migration. Analysis of the data will be released throughout this year.
- 7.3 Table 1 below shows Swansea's 2021 Census population by Age and sex:

Table 1: Swansea's 2021 Census Population by Age and sex.

Age group	Males	Females	Total (% of all)	Wales %	Difference: 2021 vs. 2011
0-4	5,800	5,600	11,400 (4.8%)	5.0%	-1,700 (-13.0%)
5-9	6,800	6,300	13,000 (5.5%)	5.7%	+600 (+4.5%)
10-14	7,100	6,500	13,700 (5.7%)	5.9%	+500 (+3.7%)
15-19	7,600	6,900	14,500 (6.1%)	5.7%	-1,500 (-9.7%)
20-24	10,500	8,700	19,200 (8.1%)	6.0%	-1,300 (-6.4%)
25-29	7,100	7,200	14,200 (6.0%)	6.0%	-1,400 (-8.7%)
30-34	7,400	7,700	15,100 (6.3%)	6.3%	+700 (+4.9%)
35-39	7,100	7,400	14,500 (6.1%)	6.0%	-200 (-1.4%)
40-44	6,800	7,000	13,800 (5.8%)	5.6%	-2,100 (-13.4%)
45-49	6,900	7,100	14,000 (5.9%)	6.0%	-2,300 (-14.1%)
50-54	7,800	7,900	15,700 (6.6%)	6.9%	+500 (+3.6%)
55-59	7,800	8,200	16,000 (6.7%)	7.2%	+2,100 (+15.5%)
60-64	7,000	7,600	14,500 (6.1%)	6.4%	-500 (-3.2%)
65-69	6,100	6,600	12,700 (5.3%)	5.7%	+700 (+5.4%)
70-74	6,200	6,900	13,100 (5.5%)	5.8%	+3,000 (+29.6%)
75-79	4,400	5,200	9,600 (4.0%)	4.2%	+1,000 (+11.2%)
80-84	2,900	3,900	6,800 (2.9%)	2.9%	+500 (+8.5%)
85-89	1,700	2,600	4,300 (1.8%)	1.7%	+500 (+12.7%)
90+	800	1,600	2,400 (1.0%)	1.0%	+500 (+23.7%)
All ages	117,600	121,000	238,500 (100%)	100%	-500 (-0.2%)

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), © Crown copyright 2022.

Note: 2011 and 2021 figures are from the Census; 2020 figures use the latest published mid-year population estimates.

- 7.3 There are 11,400 children aged 0-4 in Swansea, 4.8% of the total population – lower than the equivalent proportion for Wales (5.0%) and 13% lower than the 2011 census. Swansea also has a lower percentage aged 5-14, at 11.2% (26,700 children), than Wales (11.6%). 33,700 (14.2%) of Swansea's population are young people aged 15-24, a noticeably higher proportion than Wales (11.7%), likely in part due to students. 24.2% of the population (57,600 people) are aged 25-44, higher than the percentage for all of Wales (23.9%). 60,200 people in Swansea are aged 45-64 (25.3%), lower as a proportion than Wales (26.5%). 20.5% of Swansea's population are aged 65 and over (48,900), lower than the percentage figures for Wales (21.3%), but higher than the total for England (18.4%). 6,700 people in Swansea are aged 85 and over, 2.7% of the Swansea total; the same as the proportion in Wales (2.7%). Life expectancy at birth in Swansea now stands at 77.5 years for males (Wales 78.3) and 81.8 for females (Wales 82.1)
- 7.4 The total number of households (with residents) in Swansea in the 2021 census is estimated at 105,000, an increase of approximately 1,500 (1.4%) from the 2011 census figure. Average household size fell from 2.27 people (2010) to 2.20 people (2020). The falling average household size can be attributed to the significant rise of single-person households who now account for over a third of all households.
- 7.5 The Welsh Government's latest trend-based population projections suggest that Swansea's population will grow by 7.5% (18,400 people) between 2018 and 2043. In comparison, the projections suggest a population increase of 5.4% across Wales over the period.
- 7.6 The 2021 census indicates that Swansea had a minority ethnic group (non-white) population of around 20,400 in 2021 (approx. 8.6% of the population). In 2021, 75% of Swansea's population were born in Wales, with 22,500 (9.4%) born outside the UK.
- 7.7 The proportion of people aged 3 and over able to speak Welsh in Swansea decreased from 13.4% (28,938) in 2001 to 11.4% in 2011 (26,332 people); this fell further to 11.2 % in 2021.
- 7.8 Survey data (ONS) for the year period ending December 2021 suggests that Swansea has a higher proportion of working age residents with qualifications to NVQ level 3 and above than the Wales and UK average. In the last five years (2016 to 2021), the number of Swansea's working age (16-64) residents with NVQ level 4+ has risen from 55,200 to 61,600 (up by 6,400 or 11.6%); whilst the number with no qualifications fell from 15,700 to 12,100 (-3,600 or 22.9%). This is generally in line with national trends over the period.
- 7.9 GVA (Gross Value Added) per head in Swansea stands at £22,817, (2020, ONS); which is 8.6% above the Wales level but 21.0% below the UK average. However, over the longer term (2015 to 2020), overall growth in Swansea's GVA per head was 13.7%, which is above percentage increases in West Wales & Valleys (+9.0%), Wales (+10.1%), and the UK (+9.6%).
- 7.10 77.2% of Swansea's working age residents are economically active and 117,200 in employment (72.4% of working age) (year to June 2022, ONS), mostly in the service sectors 89.8%, with 29.6% employed in the public sector and 4.6% working in manufacturing.
- 7.11 27,000 people commute into Swansea each day (2021, ONS/WG). Most significant cross boundary flows are from Neath Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire. 83% of

Swansea residents worked within the local authority area. Active businesses in Swansea grew by 150 (1.9%) between 2019-20, compared to 0.7% across Wales and 0.4% in the UK.

7.12 Estimates suggest 4.79 million people visited Swansea Bay in 2019 spending over £477 million (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model). Due to the Covid pandemic, this is the most recent data available.

7.13 Swansea is forecast to see significant population growth over the next decade. The County will need new homes, additional employment opportunities and improved infrastructure and community facilities to support this level of growth and raise standards of living, while respecting the area's cultural and natural heritage.

7.14 Key influences on the LDP include:

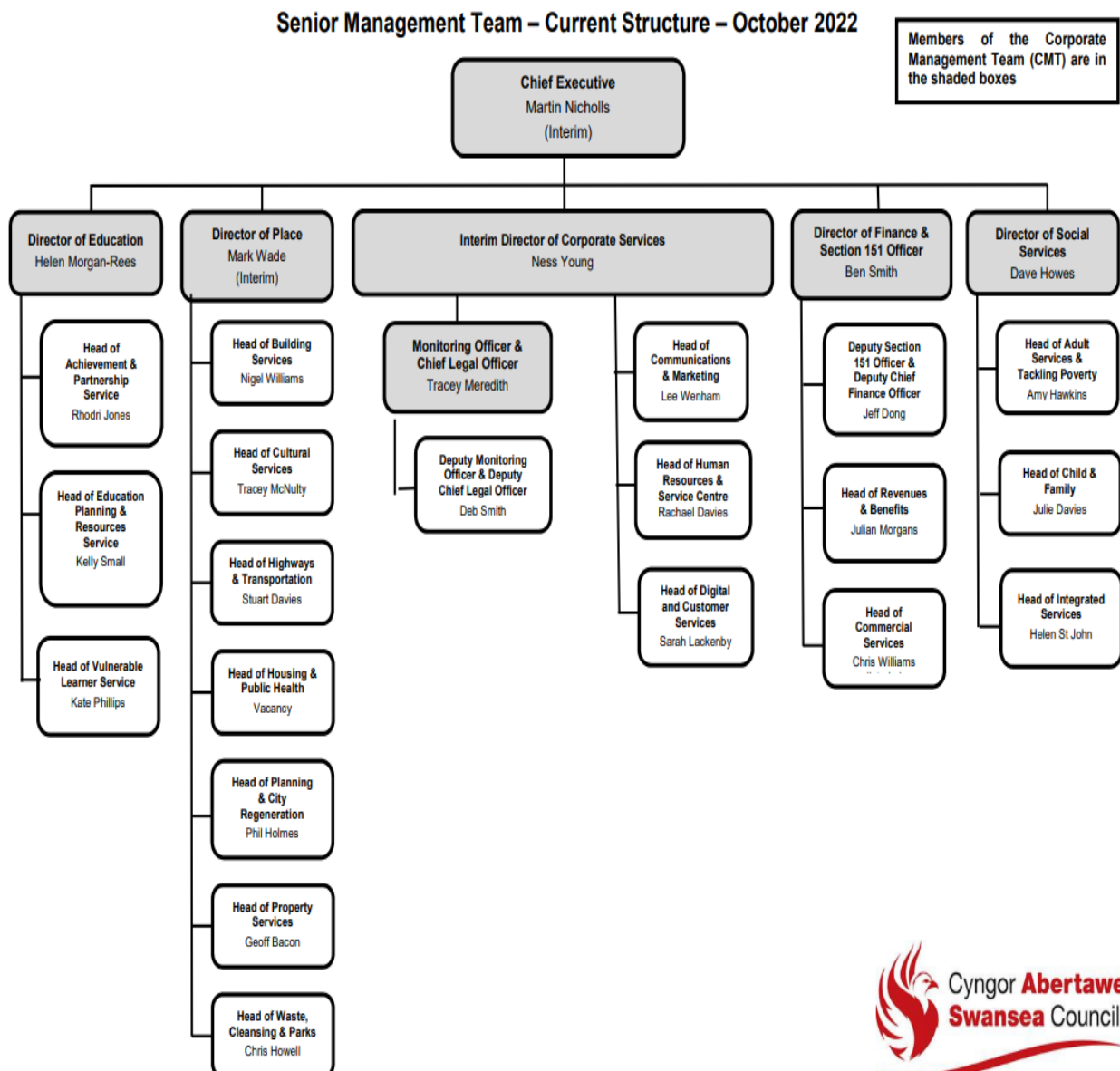
- The need to provide for 17100 new dwellings and support 13600 new jobs,
- Limited previously developed (brownfield) land remaining to accommodate development,
- The sustainable regeneration of the Swansea Central Area as the economic hub and main driver of the 'City Region',
- The need for further investment at SA1, Tawe Riverside and the Fabian Way Corridor to sustain the successful regeneration of waterfront areas, whilst complementing regeneration of the Central Area,
- Reorientation of the economy towards high quality, skilled and knowledge based sectors,
- Lack of available, high quality office space to meet economic growth needs,
- The impact of out of town development of retail, office and leisure uses on the Central Area,
- Significant opportunities for leisure, sustainable tourism and heritage-led development schemes,
- Supply of new house building not keeping pace with demand as the local population grows, a shortfall of affordable housing and the economic viability of sites for delivering new housing varying considerably across the County,
- Community cohesion issues in areas with high concentrations of HMOs,
- Need for greater variety of size and tenure mix within new housing developments to contribute towards sustainable balanced communities,
- Meeting the needs of an increasingly elderly population
- A sizeable Higher Education student population and increasing demand to provide additional accommodation,
- Significant variations across the County in terms of social indicators of deprivation, including access to health, education and community services and facilities and housing quality. Community cohesion issues in certain wards due to the number of conversions of housing stock to HMOs and the geographical spread,
- Safeguarding communities where Welsh language is an important part of the social fabric,
- The high quality natural environment, landscapes, and coastline are important assets to the local economy, attracting visitors, and providing resources,
- The extensive green space network is vital to economic, environmental and community well-being, and more green infrastructure is needed to meet national guidance and local requirements for improving accessibility to open space,
- Improvements to linkages between open spaces, Public Rights of Way, and key destinations are needed to increase accessibility and promote physical activity,

- Poor air quality is an issue in some areas, which can have a detrimental impact on human health. Parts of the urban area have been designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), where further deterioration in air quality would be of significant concern,
- The area's industrial past has left a legacy of potentially contaminated sites, where remediation is required to protect human health and well-being,
- The existing highway network experiences traffic congestion along certain main routes and junctions, which can have a negative impact on amenity, health and well-being, and economic competitiveness.

PLANNING SERVICE

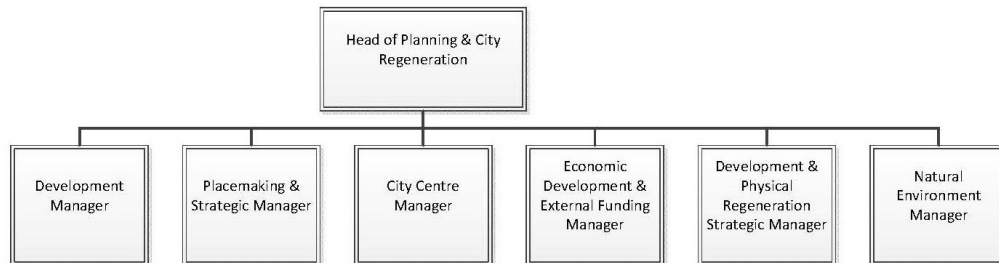
8.1 The Council is organised into five Corporate Directorates reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer, as detailed in Chart 1 below. Both the Development Management and Placemaking & Strategic Planning functions sit within the Planning and City Regeneration Service under a single Head of Service who reports to the Director of Place.

Chart 1 - Organisational Structure



- 8.2 The Planning and City Regeneration Service is within the Place Directorate and as detailed in Chart 2 below, is organised into 6 separate service areas namely; Development Management, Placemaking and Strategic Planning, Natural Environment, City Centre Management, External Funding, and Development and Physical Regeneration.

Chart 2 – Organisational Structure



- 9.0 **Wider organisational activities impacting on the service – how has the department responded to financial constraints imposed during budget setting? What cross departmental activities has the department been involved in or been affected by, e.g. closer joint working, IT changes, real estate rationalisation?**

9.1 Agile working arrangements have been introduced as part of a corporate initiative, to facilitate the rationalisation of accommodation within the Civic Centre, income generation through the rental of office floor space and improved productivity. In this respect the Development Management function of the Authority has, since 2013, progressively introduced new document management, back office and workflow management systems together with revised and refined business processes to facilitate a paperless office that has allowed the efficiencies and benefits associated with agile working to be exploited more effectively. This work meant the when the Coronavirus pandemic restrictions were imposed in March 2020, officers were fully equipped to work from home. Officers continue to work flexibly with officers able to work both from home and in the office.

9.2 Cross departmental working initiatives include the formation of a core Land Charges Team in April 2019 embedded within the Development Management Section. This brought together discrete functions carried out by 11 separate officers in 7 different Departments under one management structure providing the potential for greater resilience, improvements in the quality of service and opportunities to generate further fee income. In March 2022, part of the Land Charges service was migrated to the Land Registry as part of a national programme. Swansea was the first Authority in Wales to migrate

- 10.0 **Operating budget – including budget trend over 3 years, and fee income. Does the planning department retain fee income? Is this used to calculate its operating budget? Has a discrepancy between expected fee income and actuals affected the forward planning or operational activity of the department?**

10.1 The operating budget dedicated specifically to the Development Management, Placemaking and Strategic Planning and Natural Environment functions is difficult to

establish as staff within the Development Management, Placemaking and Strategic Planning and Natural Environment service areas input into a range of functions including central administration for the department as a whole, rights of way, ecology and AONB functions.

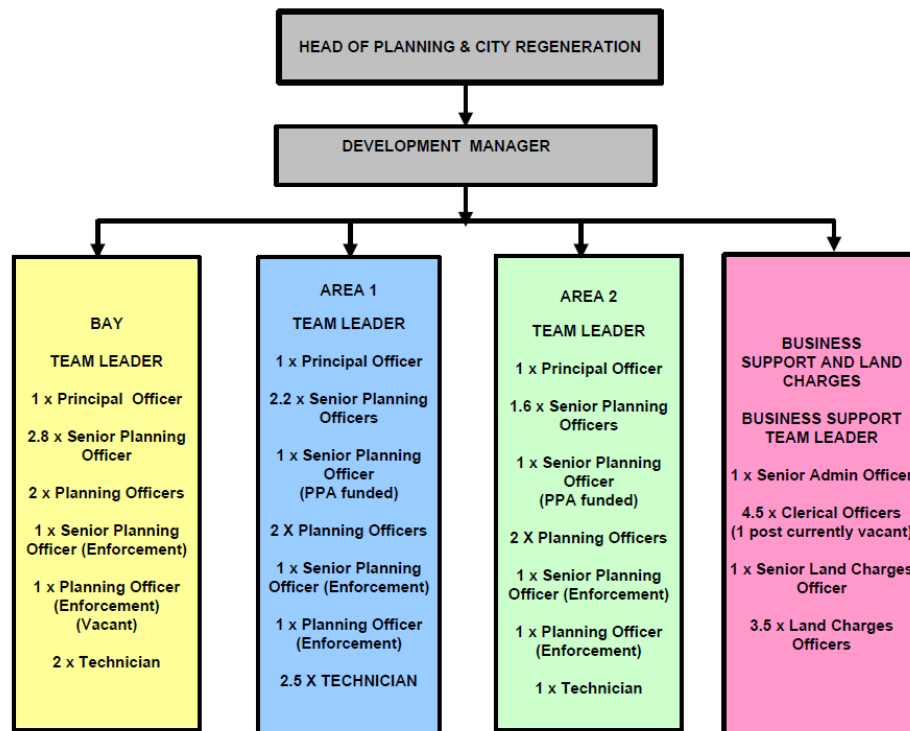
- 10.2 In terms of Development Management, the cost of the service is heavily reliant on planning application fee income to offset the costs of the service. However, the three years has seen a reduction in income as illustrated in Table 1 below. Whilst Welsh Government increased planning fees in August 2020, and the number of planning applications received over the period has increased from 2082 in 2018-19 to 2390 in 201-22, there has been decrease in the amount of fees received. This is because of an increase in the number of householder applications received which generate lower application fees.

Table 1 – Planning Application Fee Income

Income (£)	2018/19	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22
Target	1,072,100	1,073,800	1,080,500	1,212,650
Actual	1,257,249	934,109	916,723	926,812

- 10.3 Fee income is retained within the Development Management budget which is, however, set demanding fee income targets for each financial year to cover a growing proportion of the costs of the Service. Any budget underspend at the end of the financial year is not carried forward to the following financial year. Two full time Senior Planning Officers are also currently funded by Planning Performance Agreement. This places a heavy emphasis on unpredictable fee income as a means of sustaining the core business of the Service and represents a significant risk to service delivery should fee income fall.
- 11.0 Staff issues – what is the current staffing level of the department? What are the current plans for staff skills development and succession planning? Are any vacancies being carried? Has the service had to manage with redundancies (with reference to budget section above)? Has a loss of skills through sickness absence or other reasons, adversely affected the department? What are the coping mechanisms for this?**
- 11.1 Development Management consists of 4 teams, comprising three Area Planning Teams, and a Business Support Team incorporating the Land Charges Section

Chart 4 – Development Management



- 11.3 The Section has previously been restructured and accommodated a number of redundancies with job descriptions rationalised to provide more flexible working. Authority has also been delegated further down the staff structure and through on the job training staff from previously discrete teams carry out a much wider range of functions. In this way the impact of redundancies and budget cuts has been managed to an extent with existing officers absorbing these roles in parallel with the introduction of revised business processes and a review of service delivery options.
- 11.4 Upskilling and reskilling of staff in this way remains an ongoing process but is a robust mechanism to manage the risk to the Service in the face of ongoing budget situation.
- 11.5 Budgetary pressures and recruitment policies have, however, generated clear resilience issues, with a contracting, ageing workforce and reliance on a small number of individual officers in key specialist fields. The Authority is increasingly having to “buy in” services to address specialism gaps.
- 11.6 During the year, a number of vacancies have arisen in the department through a combination of staff resignations, long term sickness and internal promotions. These posts have been filled but this process is lengthy and posts remain vacant for a significant period whilst the recruitment process is ongoing. These periods of vacancies has created additional workload pressures on staff. In addition, the significant increase in the number of planning applications being submitted, has further increases the workload pressure on staff. Temporary staff have been recruited to assist in the short term, although these posts are dependent on funding being available in the future.
- 11.7 In addition, and as stated above, two Senior Planning Officers continue to be funded via fee income generated from Planning Performance Agreements negotiated on a variety of projects. Fee income is now the primary source of funding for the service

and as illustrated in Table 1 above can experience significant variations year on year placing the delivery of statutory services at potential risk moving forward. Whilst the costs of providing the service are increasing, there has been no increase in planning fees to meet these increases. The fees are set by Welsh Government at a national level and there is no scope for the Council to increase the fees.

YOUR LOCAL STORY

12.0 Workload. What are the current planning pressures the service is facing? What is the status of the LDP? Is development/monitoring/revision proceeding as planned? What is the impact on support of development management services, e.g. for master planning? What is the DM workload per officer?

12.1 Development management pressures stem from an increase in the number of planning and related applications received rising from 1482 in 2012/13 to 2088 in 2020/21 and 2390 in 2021-22. This has had a significant impact on officer workload. The number of planning applications received per case officer (FTE) was 124 per annum in 2020-21. In 2021/22 this was 149. However, it should be noted that at various times during the year, there were vacant posts in the department which meant that in the average number of applications per officer was greater than this. This figure excludes the provision of pre-application advice, input into the change process described above, appeals, enforcement cases, corporate projects and initiatives and policy/SPG formulation.

12.2 The number of enforcement cases received in 462 in 2020-21 with 445 received in 2021-22, which coupled with the remnants of an historic backlog of stubborn cases continues to place pressure on the enforcement service when measured against the performance indicators introduced by Welsh Government in 2017. Furthermore, the restrictions brought in to limit the spread of Covid 19 impacted on the speed of investigation of these complaints, and the impact of those restrictions continued to be felt during 2021-22. Enforcement officers currently carry an average caseload of 139 complaints, up from 129 in 2021-22 and 78 in 2018-19

12.3 Internal and statutory consultees have had capacity issues over the period, These capacity issues can have a significant impact on the provision of comprehensive and/or timely consultation responses and the efficiency of decision making.

13.0 Reference to the Annual Monitoring Report (as an attachment). In the absence of an AMR, the authority should report on its progress towards adoption of the LDP, and any key issues arising in the year.

13.1 The LDP was adopted in February 2019 and provides a clear planning framework to address key issues facing the County. It is underpinned by an extensive and up to date evidence base. The AMR is due to be presented to Council on 2nd March 2023. The report will be available to view via the Council website once the agenda for Council is published.

14.0 Current projects. Any specific items of research, best practice development or other initiatives being undertaken within the planning service. Examples could include a “development team” approach to major applications, work on a Local Development Order or process reviews.

14.1 Officers meet regularly with Stakeholders to identify issues which may impact on the efficiency of the Development Management Process, including Welsh Government, Internal Departments and Developers.

- 14.2 The promotion of a development team approach led by officers from the Council's Development and Physical Regeneration Section (as developer and applicant), externally appointed consultants and officers in the Placemaking and Strategic Planning Team continues to be a highly effective model for the delivery of the Swansea City Centre redevelopment scheme. In development management terms roles were clearly articulated and resourced through the signing of a Planning Performance Agreement which has facilitated the efficient delivery of schemes through the pre-application process with added value and the determination of the resultant applications in a timely manner.
- 14.3 The Council has also established a Developer Forum to improve working relationships with small and medium sized housing developers (SME's) and address issues which may be frustrating the development process. In this respect two current work streams are ongoing firstly, focussing on providing consistency between planning placemaking policy and highway adoption processes and standards and secondly, on introducing a cross department pre-application advice service which goes beyond the statutory pre-application process that exists.
- 14.4 Officers of the Development Management Team have a significant input into the Council's 'More Homes' project which aims to deliver new affordable housing within Swansea.
- 15.0 Local pressures. Major applications or other planning issues having a disproportionate impact on the efficiency of the service. Could include specific development pressures, enforcement issues such as major site restoration issues, monitoring compliance of conditions with non-devolved consents (e.g. wind energy applications) or applications of national significance (e.g. LNG storage site).**
- 15.1 As detailed above a number of major and strategic sites including the redevelopment of Swansea City Centre have come forward. The approach adopted by the Authority detailed at Section 14 above has facilitated the effective delivery of a number of these sites in accordance with the "placemaking" policy objectives set out in the LDP and without formal challenge.
- 15.2 Considerable resources have, however, been dedicated to this process which has only been possible to manage, without impacting on the performance of the Development Management Service as a whole, through the appointment of staff via fee income generated by Planning Performance Agreement (PPAs). As planning applications for these strategic sites have come forward, the scope for further PPAs had reduced. Unless new proposals come forward with PPAs, it will not be possible to retain the temporary posts funded from PPA income. This will place pressure on the service as the reduction in staff set against increased workload will inevitably impact on service delivery.
- 16.0 Our Performance 2021-22**
- 16.1 In previous years, data has been provided to Local Authorities to allow comparison of our performance and the all Wales picture. However, this data has not been produced for the last three years. As a result, this report provides a comparison against performance in 2020-21. Some reference will be made to all Wales data, although this data is not up to date.
- 16.2 Performance is analysed across the five key aspects of planning service delivery as set out in the Planning Performance Framework:

- Plan making;
- Efficiency;
- Quality;
- Engagement; and
- Enforcement.

16.3 Plan making

16.4 The Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in March 2019 and provides a framework for making decisions on planning applications.

16.5 Efficiency

16.6 In 2021-22 we determined 2138 planning applications, 84% of which were approved. 97% of all planning applications were determined within the required timescales. The target for Wales is 80%. For comparison, in 2020-21, we determined 1652 planning applications with 82% of applications approved. 99% of all planning applications were determined within the required timescales. This slight drop in performance can be attributed to the increased number of applications received and determined (29%) compared to the previous year

16.7 Table 1 below shows that our performance remained at a high level and above the last available figure for Wales.

Table 1 : Percentage of planning applications determined in required timescales

Wales 2018/19	Swansea 2019/20	Swansea 2020/21	Swansea 2021/22
88%	99%	99%	97%

16.8 Major applications

16.9 We determined 18 major planning applications in 2020-21, 14 of which were in required timescales.

Table 2: Percentage of major applications determined within required timescales:

Wales 2018/19	Swansea 2019/20	Swansea 2020/21	Swansea 2021-22
68%	96%	86%	78%

16.10 The figure for 2020-21 shows a drop on the previous year. The four applications that went over agreed timescales were all reported to committee and as a result went over the agreed timescale.

- The percentage of minor applications determined within the required timescales fell from 99% to 95%;
- The percentage of householder applications determined within the required timescales increased from 99.7% to 98% ; and
- The percentage of other applications determined within required timescales increased from 99% to 98%.

This reflects the increase in the number of planning applications received and determined, as identified above.

16.11 Quality

16.12 In 2021-22, our Planning Committee made 44 planning application decisions, which equated to 2% of all planning decisions made in the year. This represents an increase from 19 (1.2%) in 2020-21 which was impacted by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in Committees being cancelled and a reduction in major planning applications being submitted.

16.13 Planning Committee made 1 (2%) decision against officer advice. This equated to 0.04% of all planning application decisions made by the Council going against officer advice.

16.14 In 2021-22 we received 74 appeal decisions against our planning decisions. Of these, the Council's decision was upheld in 51 (69%) of cases, up from 67% in the previous year. No appeals related to a committee overturn.

16.15 Analysis of the appeals allowed shows that the applications had been refused for the following reason:

- Visual Amenity – 13
- Highway Safety - 3
- Residential Amenity of neighbours– 2
- Amenity for future occupiers- 3
- Lawfulness of development – 1
- Condition attached to planning permission - 1

16.16 It is evident that most appeals are allowed when the reason for refusal relates to visual amenity and these appeals related mainly to householder development. The design of a development is subjective. The Council is bringing forward new SPG so monitoring of decisions will continue particularly once the new SPG is adopted.

16.17 The Welsh Government's target for a good Authority is 66% of appeals dismissed so the Council is still performing above this target.

16.18 During 2021-22 one award of costs were awarded against the Council and one award of costs was made in the Council's favour.

16.18 Engagement

16.19 In previous years, data provided to the Council has allowed us to compare engagement with other Authorities. As this data has not been provided for the last three years, this comparison cannot be undertaken. However,

- we allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee;
- The department has maintained a phone service, albeit with reduced hours (10.30am to 3.00pm) due to long-term staff sickness. In addition, case officers have mobile phones and email so can be contacted directly by applicants and agents.; and
- we maintain an online register of planning applications and the online system allows members of the public to view applications, follow progress of the application and submit comments.

16.20 Enforcement

- 16.21 In 2021-22 we investigated 218 enforcement complaints, 32% of these within 84 days. In 2020-21 we investigated 229 enforcement cases, 51% within 84 days.
- 16.22 The drop in performance in 2020-21 can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, the Coronavirus lockdown impacted the ability of enforcement officers to investigate complaints. Access to property was restricted and as a result, it took longer for officers to be able to establish whether a breach of planning control had occurred. This led to a backlog in enforcement cases, which has increased following the receipt of 445 complaints in 2021-22.
- 16.23 The second issue relates to staff resources. One of the enforcement officers left the Authority early in the year. This vacancy put additional pressure on the enforcement service with an inevitable impact on performance. The post has since been filled, albeit on a temporary basis. In addition, the departure of a team leader towards the end of the year also had an impact, as other team leaders absorbed his workload until a replacement was appointed. This added to the timescale for progressing cases.
- 16.24 The average time taken to pursue positive enforcement action was 99 days in 2021-22.

Agenda Item 7



Report of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation

Cabinet Member for Care Services

Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel – 14th March 2022

COMPLAINTS REPORT 2021-22

Purpose	To present the Annual Complaints Report for 2021-22
Content	This report provides a summary of complaints performance across both Corporate and Social Services including complaints, comments, and compliments.
Councillors are being asked to	Discuss the Council's complaints performance for 2021-22 and the comments and compliments received from service users
Lead Councillor	Cabinet Member for Service Transformation – Councillor Andrea Lewis (Deputy Leader) Cabinet Member for Care Services – Councillor Louise Gibbard
Lead Officer	Sarah Lackenby
Report Author	Sarah Lackenby
Legal Officer	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer	Ben Smith
For Information	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report highlights the number of complaints received by the Council and the Public Services Ombudsman Wales (PSOW) during 2021-22.
 - 1.2. The Council recognises that complaints are a valuable resource, helping us to understand the needs and concerns of members of the public and to improve services. All complaints are taken very seriously and provide valuable customer insight.
- 1.1 The impact of the pandemic on services continued to be seen throughout 2021-22, including:
- The increased complexity of cases across all Social Services teams
 - Recruitment pressures across social care leading to staffing issues with providers
 - The reduction of available staff due to sickness absence
 - A delay in launching the new IT system, as the Council prioritised payments and support to residents and businesses. The new system will make the process easier for the public and more efficient for staff with improved reporting functionality. The aim is to go live with staff trained for the start of the new financial year, starting with Corporate Complaints.

2. Requests for Service (RFS)

- 2.1 A request for service is not a complaint (e.g., a request for service could be a request to repair an unlit lamp post, or missed bin collection). A complaint would only arise should the request for service not be properly dealt with.

3. Corporate Complaints

Appendix 1 contains all statistical tables referring to corporate complaints, comments, and compliments in this report.

- 3.1. Stage 1 Complaints (informal)
Informal complaints are defined as Stage 1 complaints and are dealt with by the relevant service areas. When a complaint spans several different service areas, the Complaints' Team will coordinate the handling of the complaints and provide a single, substantive response. All stage 1 complaints should be responded to within 10 working days.

1,274 Stage 1 complaints were received (see Appendix 1), which is an increase of 8% compared with the previous year (1,274 compared to 1,171 in 2020 - 2021).

3.2. Stage 2 Complaints

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 1 complaint, they may request that the matter be investigated by the Complaints' Team, which is independent of the service department.

The Complaints Team will carry out an investigation, re-examining those issues with which the complainant remains aggrieved. This investigation will include a review of all relevant correspondence, often incorporates separate discussions with both the complainant and relevant officers from the service department(s) concerned, and should be responded to within 20 working days.

Complainants who remain unhappy with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation by a Complaints Officer can refer their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW).

Of the 1,274 Stage 1 Complaints received only 154 (12%) disagreed with the original investigation and appealed to Stage 2. 115 (74%) were not justified and 25 (16%) were either justified or partially justified. In addition to this, six were not pursued and eight were withdrawn.

3.3. Welsh Language Complaints

Seven (0.55%) of the corporate complaints received were made through the medium of Welsh, or related to Welsh Language issues. All of these were handled at stage one and none escalated to stage two.

3.4. Comments

The "Comments" section relates to cases where an individual has made a comment regarding a service as opposed to a complaint, which is then passed on to the relevant service unit for information. These comments may be negative or positive. Examples of comments and compliments have been included in the appendices. 31 corporate comments were received, which is a 38% increase compared with 19 for the previous year.

3.5. Compared to the previous year:

- Stage 1 complaints increased by 8% (1,274 compared to 1,171 in 2020 - 2021) of which 407 were justified
- Stage 2 complaints increased by 16% (154 compared to 129 in 2020-21) of which 25 were justified
- Requests for service increased by 24% (851 compared with 644 in 2020-21)
- The Council received 38% more comments (31 compared with 19 in 2020-21).

4. **Social Services Complaints**

Appendix 2 (Adult Services) and Appendix 3 (Child & Family Services) contain further details referring to Social Services complaints, comments, and compliments in this report.

- 4.1. Swansea Council's Social Services complaints procedures seek to empower service users, or those eligible to speak on their behalf, to voice their concerns in relation to the exercise of Social Services functions. The Social Services Complaints Policy can be viewed online at: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/sscomplaints>
- 4.2. Swansea Council's Social Services teams are committed to ensuring that concerns raised are listened to and resolved quickly and efficiently. Lessons learned from this process are fed back to relevant teams and used wherever possible to improve future service delivery.
- 4.3. Our aim is to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity and teams are encouraged to be proactive in achieving this goal.
- 4.4. Where someone has been deemed 'not eligible' to utilise the social services complaints procedure in accordance with guidance/legislation, their complaints may be dealt with under the corporate complaint procedure. This ensures that everyone is able to voice their concerns and that a complaints mechanism is accessible to everyone.
- 4.5. For Adult Services, the total number of Stage 1 complaints received this year increased by 11% in comparison with figures for the previous year (139 compared with 123 for 2020-21). Under the Social Services complaints policy, the legislative framework allows complainants to immediately request a stage 2 investigation. Though efforts to resolve complaints internally are made wherever possible, the number of stage 2 complaints this year has increased from 10 to 11.
- 4.6. For Child and Family Services, the number of Stage 1 complaints received this year has decreased by 19% compared to the previous year (114 compared with 141 for 2020-21). Fifteen of which were justified. Under the Social Services complaints policy, both the old and new legislative framework allow complainants to immediately request a stage 2 investigation. Through efforts to resolve complaints internally wherever possible, the number of stage 2 complaints this year has reduced to six compared with seven in 2020-21.
- 4.7. The number of justified complaints in Adult Services increased by 53% (20 to 43) in 2021-22. The majority of these are related to delays in arranging assessments or packages of care due to staff pressures, including in external providers.

5. Cases reported to the Ombudsman

- 5.1. Should a complainant remain dissatisfied following completion of the two internal complaint stages, they can take their complaint to the Ombudsman's office for independent investigation.

- 5.2. The Ombudsman publishes an Annual Report and sends an annual letter to the Council every year. Full details of this report and letter for Swansea Council for 2021-22 can be viewed at Appendix 4.
- 5.3. In summary, Appendix 4 shows the Ombudsman received 71 complaints. This is a slight decrease (2.7%) compared with 73 in 2021-22.
- 5.4. Some Ombudsman complaints can carry across different financial years. 76 Ombudsman complaints were closed in 2021-22, ten of which received intervention including: six early resolution / voluntary settlement and four which were upheld. There were 73 Ombudsman complaints in 2020-21, nine of which received early intervention including: five early resolution / voluntary settlement and four which were upheld.

6. Service improvements

- 6.1. Lessons can be learned from complaints received where complaints are upheld. Redress measures have included the issuing of apologies, small payments, additional training for staff, and the introduction of new procedures.
- 6.2. Where a complaint was upheld by the PSOW, the findings were discussed with the Head of Service and relevant Principal Officer. The Complaints Officer responded to the PSOW on the actions undertaken by Swansea Council and any lessons learned. Once actions were completed, the complaint was closed on the system, recording the outcome and any lessons learned
- 6.3. The Complaints Service receives an Internal Audit every three years to ensure it is undertaking its functions correctly. The last Audit took place in October/November 2019 and received a substantial rating.

7. Compliments

- 7.1. When compliments are received they are acknowledged and forwarded to the Head of Service for the relevant service area. A selection are highlighted for the staff newsletter, The Weekly. This has a positive impact on staff morale and allows departments to recognise good practices. Examples of the many compliments received are shown in the appendices.
- 7.2. 360 corporate compliments were received during 2021-22. Social Services compliments include 96 for Adult Services and 100 for Child and Family Services over the period.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. Based on the statistical evidence provided, there are no trends to cause concern.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. During 2021-22, the Council spent £15,551 on complaints investigations in social services and paid £12,187 in financial redress. £8,600 of which relates to one case following a re-assessment. During 2020-21, the Council spent £22,700 on complaints investigations in social services and paid £3,633 in financial redress.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Corporate Complaints and Compliments 2021-22

Appendix 2 - Adult Social Services Complaints and Compliments 2021-22

Appendix 3 - Child and Family Services Complaints and Compliments 2021-22

Appendix 4 - PSOW Annual Letter 2021-22

Appendix 1: Corporate Complaints Annual Report - Statistical data

TABLE 1: Complaints recorded from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 by Service Department

Service Area	Stage 1 Complaints 2020/21	Stage 1 Complaints 2021/22	Stage 2 Complaints 2020/21	Stage 2 Complaints 2021/22	Requests for Service 2020/21	Request for Service 2021/22	Comments 2020/21	Comments 2021/22
Commercial Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Communications & Customer Engagement	23	45	0	2	8	19	1	3
Corporate Building & Property Services	187	170	9	16	27	47	0	2
Cultural Services	15	44	1	6	24	18	2	5
Economic Regeneration & Planning	34	54	19	19	16	25	1	0
Education	27	21	0	3	11	21	0	0
Financial Services	46	43	8	6	42	54	1	1
Highways & Transportation	296	277	44	55	176	279	5	4
Housing & Public Protection	204	260	30	32	158	153	4	4
HR & OD	8	3	1	0	1	5	0	0
Information & Business Change	0	1	0	0	4	1	0	0

Legal & Democratic Services	4	11	1	2	9	18	0	1
Poverty, Wellbeing & Communities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Management & Parks	527	345	16	13	168	211	5	11
Totals	1171	1274	129	154	644	851	19	31

TABLE 2: Comparison of total enquiries received with the Previous Year

	1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022	Difference (+ or -)
Stage 1	1171	1274	+103
Stage 2	129	154	+25
Requests for Service	644	851	+207
Comments	19	31	+12

Table 3 – Examples of Compliments Received	
Teams	Compliments Received
Waste, Parks & Cleansing	Thank you so much for leaving unmown parts of Dunvant Park, the southern marsh orchid is beautiful and plentiful this year. Great job.
Cultural Services	An interesting selection of contemporary art with a really nice collection of more classic drawings and pottery. The cafe was brilliant and reasonably priced. Had a great time.
Education	None for Education last year
Highways	I would like to pass on the thanks of the committee of The Friends of De la Beche Park for the excellent job that has been done making the footpaths safe.
Libraries	I just wanted to express my appreciation and thanks for the 1st class service I have received from a member of the library staff in Killay, namely Lynne Joyce.
Revenues and Benefits	I have had to call Housing Benefit three times over the last few weeks, and each time Donna Marie has answered me, and dealt with the enquiry swiftly and easily, There is a wait for the service and she obviously has had to deal with a lot of people moaning, as I used to work there I understood how difficult her role is in these times, I did joke with her today and said is she the only one working down there as i have had her every time I have phoned!!
Housing	Please could you thank and praise the man from Swansea Housing Department Repairs who came yesterday afternoon to repair the garage door that had jammed and cable broken at Garage 13 Laurel Place. He came very quickly and rang me and made the repair. I was very impressed. I was worried in case the door fell on my car
Customer Services	I'd like to compliment Kim Bowden -Customer Services Advisor for her excellent customer service issuing my visitor parking permit. It wasn't clear on the form what your processing time was and I'd already requested my permit to start the next day thinking it would be an electronic doc I could print. Kim contacted me early morning with the option to collect from the reception desk which I was happy to do. A big thank you to Kim for her efforts and forward thinking. Much appreciated

APPENDIX 2: Adult Services Complaints and Compliments

1. Total Complaints received during the reporting period.

- 1.1 **Table 1** shows total complaints received by the complaint team for 2021-22 in respect of Adult Social Services with the previous three years of figures for comparison. The total number of Stage 1 complaints received increased by 11% in comparison with figures for the previous year.
- 1.2 Under the Social Services complaints policy, the legislative framework allows complainants to immediately request a stage 2 investigation. Though efforts to resolve complaints internally are made wherever possible, the number of stage 2 complaints for 2021-22 increased from 10 to 11.

2. Stage 1 Complaints

- 2.1. A detailed breakdown of the Stage 1 Complaints received by service area is shown in **Table 2**. Complaints need to be acknowledged within 2 working days. In 90.5% of cases where complaints proceeded to conclusion, discussions took place within 10 working days, this is higher than the previous year at 82%.
- 2.2 Complaints have been broken down by individual service teams this year, in order to provide greater clarity on specific areas where complaints are being received.

3. Stage 2 Complaints

- 3.1 Complaints are considered at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure either where the Council has not been able to resolve the issues to the complainant's satisfaction at stage 1, or the complainant has requested that the matter be immediately considered at Stage 2.
- 3.2 Complainants are able to request that their complaint is dealt with directly at Stage 2 should they wish and is not dependent on having been investigated at stage 1 or the outcome at stage 1.
- 3.3 An independent person is commissioned for a Stage 2 investigation and a formal report is produced. Finding resolutions and applying lessons learned is the prime objective of the complaint's procedure.
- 3.4 **Table 3** provides a summary of the complaints handled at Stage 2 of the complaints process.
- 3.5 The timeframe for dealing with Stage 2 complaints is 25 working days under the Social Services complaints policy, or within a reasonable time agreed with the complainant. This may be due to the complexity of a case or where enquiries could be extensive. Where an extension of time is sought this will normally only be granted with the permission of the Director of Social Services.

In 2021-22, two stage 2 investigations were subject to extended periods of time with the Director's consent.

- 3.6 Whether the complaint is upheld or not, staff maintain confidence and a good working relationship with the service user or their representatives. There have been 11 complaints taken to Stage 2 in this reporting period compared to the 10 last year. Of the 11 complaints taken to stage 2, three were not pursued. Below is a summary of stage 2 complaints which have been upheld.

3.7 **Summary of Stage 2 complaints**

Hospital social work team

Due to family disagreements a social work capacity assessment was carried out on the complainant's husband without notifying her. The reason for this was that other family members were alleging undue influence by her on the husband. This was found not to be the case and an apology was offered that she was not made aware of the visit to her husband until after it had been carried out.

Partially Justified

Lifeline

A relative complained that her mother who was living in warden controlled accommodation had activated her lifeline and had not received a response from lifeline. There was an ongoing fault from another unit, which came through just before her mother activated the alarm. As both calls come through from the scheme, the first call had to be dealt with before moving onto the next call, causing an additional line delay of 1.19 minutes.

Justified

Community Long Term Social Work Team

Two parts to this complaint, one in relation to the lack of a carer's assessment meant that complainant had unmet needs as a carer.

Justified

The second in relation to disability related expenses.

Not Justified

Direct Payments

The delay in direct payments being made to a service user's account caused financial hardship. The findings from the investigation were used to improve processes and procedures.

Justified

Direct Payments

Complaint in respect of the service user's Direct Payments being stopped. The stage 2 complaint process did not proceed as there was an ongoing criminal matter being investigated by the police who were prosecuting for fraud.

Concurrent investigation stage 2 process closed.

Financial Issues

Complainant's mother was sent an invoice after she had passed away.
Complaint withdrawn.

Withdrawn

4.0 Complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

4.1 The remit of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is to identify whether a member of the public has suffered hardship or injustice through maladministration or identify where services have fallen below a reasonable standard. There is an obligation for a report to be produced on any investigation the Ombudsman accepts. Section 27 of the Ombudsman's legislation details when a report could be made public. Further details of the role of the PSOW can be found at <http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk>

4.2 The council received 12 queries from the Ombudsman in relation to Adult Services. Eight of these were not investigated, two complaints were referred to health, one was referred to the Council to be investigated via Stage 2 of the complaint process and one is still ongoing.

5. Reasons for complaints and their outcome

5.1 Further analysis of the reasons for complaints is shown in **Table 4**. Whilst service users have unique and complex individual circumstances, complaints have been grouped under 'best fit' generic headings for reporting purposes.

5.2 Wherever possible, lessons are learnt and improvements are made to service delivery when a complaint is upheld. 34.5% of complaints were justified/partly justified this year, an increase compared to last year at 27%.

6. Advocacy

6.1 Advocacy services exist to represent service recipients' views and feelings when dealing with organisations. Social Services engage in statutory arrangements to ensure the welfare of clients with mental health and learning disability needs where capacity is compromised and provide signposting to other organisations providing such services for all clients.

6.2 The Complaints Officer will work with groups and organisations providing advocacy services, to address issues and promote the provision of assistance to service-users through the complaints process. Effective engagement with advocacy services empowers more individuals and groups to make use of the complaints process at the earliest opportunity.

7.0 Compliments

7.1 Adult Services have received in excess of 96 compliments over the course of the year. At the point of service delivery, service users, relatives or friends can convey their appreciation more formally through the Comment or Compliment

process. Set out in **Table 5** are examples of some of the compliments which have been passed to the complaints team in relation to Adult Services. The individual staff members have been made aware of the compliments concerning them, as has the Head of Service. The Director of Social Services reported compliments throughout the pandemic via mid-week briefing emails.

7.2 Compliments received are an equal reflection of individual and team efforts and Adult Services teams should be encouraged by their successes having regard to compliments received.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 All costs incurred in dealing with complaints have to be covered within existing budgets.

8.2 External Independent Investigators and Independent Persons may be appointed to deal with some complaints in accordance with legislation. The cost to the Authority of providing this service in 2020/21 for Adult & Directorate Services was **£4,532.50** (down by £7,393.75 on the previous year).

Appendices: Appendix A – Statistical Data Tables

Appendix A – Statistical data in Tables

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Service Requests	27	48	32	48
Stage 1 Corporate	25	21	17	24
Stage 2 Corporate	0	0	0	0
Stage 1 Social Services	135	150	106	115
Stage 2 Social Services	4	6	10	11
Ombudsman	13	14	9	12
Totals	204	239	174	210

	Total
Bonymaen Residential Home	2
CAP MDT	3
Central Hub	1
CLDT 1	3
CLDT 2	2
CMHT 1	1
Community Initial Assessment Team	16
Contracting	28
Direct Payments	8
Financial issues	5
Financial assessments	8
Hospital social work team	6
Lifeline	2
Long term care and complex team	17
Maesglas Residential Service	2
North Hub	1
Occupational Therapy	3
Older People Team	1
Older People Community MH	1
Referred to Other Agency	4
Rapid Discharge Team	3
Safeguarding	3
Transition Team	1
Transport	1
Ty Waunarlwydd Residential home	1
Unknown	14
West Hub	2
Total number of Stage 1 complaints (includes corporate)	139

Table 3 – Stage 2 Social Services complaints by Service Area		Total
Service	Outcome	ID
CLDT 1	Not upheld	262406
Direct Payments	Concurrent investigation (criminal)	264674
Direct Payments	Upheld	263139
Financial Assessments	Not upheld	262004
Financial Assessments	Partially upheld	262670
Financial Assessments	Not Pursued	261910
Hospital social work team	Partially upheld	260819
Lifeline	Upheld	262262
Finance Team	Withdrawn	260768
Safeguarding	Not Pursued	259180
Safeguarding	Not Upheld	262296

Table 4 Main Reason for Complaints and their outcome	Justified	Not Justified	Partially Justified	Not Pursued	Local resolution (within 24 hours)	Impasse	Dept to Respond Outcome unknown	For Information	Withdrawn	Not Eligible	Referred to NHS	For info	Directed to another Forum	Referred to another Agency	Referred to POVA	Referred for New Assessment	Escalated to Stage 2	Not investigated Historical	Matter in court	Referred to provider
Breach of Confidentiality	1																			
Change in Care Plan																				
Delay in hospital discharge	3		1																	
Delay in assessment	5	1									1					1				
Delay in care package	1																			
Delay in financial assessment	1																			
Delay in service after assessment	3		1	1							1									
Deviating from care plan	1																			
Direct Payments	5			2	1											1				
Disagree with info held																				
Dissatisfaction with assessment	1	1		3					1											
Eligibility Criteria																				
Excessive waiting time																				
Financial Errors	1																			
Financial issues	4	2		1						1										
Lack of carers																				
Lack of consultation/involvement																				
Lack of support				1					1	1										
Misconduct of staff															1					
Not following procedure/policy	1													1						

Poor Communication	4	1	1		2															
Poor standard of care	1										1									
Request for placement move																				
Safeguarding concerns																				
Staff attitude		2																		
Unhappy with action taken	5		3	3			1		2	5	1			1			1	1		
Unhappy with charges levied		4	1					1	1											
Unhappy with decision		2	2			2					1			1					1	
Unhappy with level of service	6	2	2	2	1	1		1				1		1					1	
Unhappy with response																				
Unknown				14								4								
Withdrawal of service																				
Totals	43	15	11	27	4	3	1	2	5	6	5	5	0	3	2	2	1	2	0	2

Table 5 – Examples of Compliments Received

Teams	Compliments Received
Common Access Point	CAP MDT have been praised by the daughter of a gentleman they have been supporting. The daughter said: "A huge thank you for all your help last week with my dad - I am enormously grateful for all your hard work in pulling off what felt like a miracle! And for being so lovely and supportive and understanding."
Hospital Social Work Team	Social Worker in the Hospital Social Work Team at Morriston has been praised by a family member for her work supporting a gentleman at the end of this life. The son wrote: "I will always be very grateful for all the efforts you made before Christmas, at a busy time for you, in getting him discharged and into the care home so that he could come up to see us at Christmas time. It was the last time I saw him and without your help, it would not have been possible".
Community Initial Assessment Team	Social Worker in the Community Initial Assessment Team has been praised by the son of a service user she was working with. The son said: "SW has been absolutely brilliant and took all the worry away from me". Sandra, you did an excellent job in extremely time-limited circumstances! Well done.
Direct Payments	Direct Payment advisor in the Direct Payments Team has received the following message from a son of one of our DP recipients: "Thank you very much A, your service has been brilliant, and we could not praise you enough".
Homecare	A daughter has contacted us to thank Community Care Assistant M and the Homecare Team for the excellent care they have been providing to her mother.
Safeguarding	A gentleman has written to thank H in the Safeguarding Team for supporting him to care for his wife at home. The gentleman wrote: "I am writing with great sadness and devastation to let you know that my dear wife recently passed away at home. You probably know but I still want to write to say that I will never ever find words to express my gratitude to you. Your help and support have been immeasurable. Setting us up so professionally on the right course from the very beginning and the support you kindly and generously provided throughout our ordeal were incredible. I thank you from the bottom of my broken heart. Very best wishes for a bright future at work and very happy family life".

APPENDIX 3: Child and Family Services Complaints and Compliments

1. Total Complaints received during the reporting period

- 1.1 **Table 1** shows total complaints received in 2021-2022 by the complaints team in respect of Child and Family Services with the previous two years' figures for comparison. The number of Stage 1 complaints received for 2021-2022 has decreased by 19% compared to the previous year's figure.
- 1.2 Under the social services complaints policy, the legislative framework allows complainants to immediately request a stage 2 investigation. Through efforts to resolve complaints internally wherever possible, the number of stage 2 complaints in 2021-2022 is six, slightly less of the previous year's figure of seven received.

2. Stage 1 Complaints

- 2.1. A detailed breakdown of the Stage 1 Complaints received by service area is shown in **Table 2**. Complaints need to be acknowledged within 2 working days, and in 82% of cases where complaints proceeded to conclusion, discussions took place within 10 working days, a decrease of 12% on the previous year.
- 2.2 Complaints have been broken down by individual service teams. However, due to continuing changes in the structure of Child and Family Services it is possible that the teams shown below have since been reorganised and may no longer exist as set out. Adjustments will be made to the team names year on year as required to reflect any such changes.

3. Stage 2 Complaints

- 3.1 Complaints are considered at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure either where the Council has not been able to resolve the issues to the complainant's satisfaction at stage 1, or the complainant has requested that the matter be immediately considered at Stage 2.
- 3.2 The social services complaint regulations give an eligible complainant a statutory right to request Stage 2 of the process. Complainants are able to request that their complaint is dealt with directly at Stage 2 should they wish and is not dependent on having been investigated at stage 1 or the outcome at stage 1.
- 3.3 An independent investigator is commissioned for a Stage 2 investigation, overseen by an independent person to ensure the investigation is carried out in a fair and proper way. A formal report is produced and suggests ways to move forward.
- 3.4 **Table 3** provides a summary of the complaints handled at Stage 2 of the complaints process.

- 3.5 The timeframe for dealing with Stage 2 complaints is 25 working days under the Social Services complaints policy, or within a reasonable time agreed with the complainant and with the Director's consent. This may be due to the complexity of a case, or where enquiries could be extensive in order to provide a comprehensive review. Where an extension of time is sought this will normally only be granted with the permission of the Director of Social Services. All investigations in 2021-2022 were subject to extended periods of time.
- 3.6 Whether the complaint is upheld or not, staff work to maintain confidence and a good working relationship with the service user or their representatives.
- 3.7 There were six complaints received in this reporting period that went to investigation at Stage 2. One of these was via the corporate complaint process.
- 3.8 **Summary of Stage 2 complaints:**

Case 1 Child Disability Team

There were 9 complaints made in respect of poor communication, delay in a carers assessment and allocation of social worker amongst other matters. Only one complaint was upheld which was in relation to the delay in a carers assessment.

Case 2 Child Disability Team

There were three complaints made, in relation to CHC funding not being raised sooner, a carer's assessment not being carried out, and not being informed Direct Payments were stopping. All complaints were upheld.

Case 3 BAYS

Six complaints were made by a young person who felt that Social Services did not provide him with the support he needed when leaving school in addition to lack of social work support. Four complaints were upheld in relation to the College not being informed he was a looked after child, delay in notifying a young person advisor, and two problems with communication.

Case 4 Townhill

The complaint was from a mother, via an advocate, about the way in which Children's Services carried out their duties in relation to her children. There were six complaints made, three complaints were upheld which were regarding foster carers not being made aware of mother's medication, a number of different social workers, and poor communication.

Case 5 West Team

This complainant had made several complaints this year regarding Child and Family Services. There were 15 complaints that were investigated, mostly in relation to communication. Two were upheld, which were not replying to emails within the Swansea standard timeframe and inaccurate minutes.

Case 6 Foster Swansea

The complaint was looked at via the corporate complaint route. A foster carer was unhappy with the actions of Foster Swansea. There were eight complaints in total. Only one complaint was upheld in relation to comments made that were not relevant to the family being mentioned in a report.

- 3.9 Where complaints are upheld that information is shared with relevant teams and used to improve services.

4.0 Complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

- 4.1 The remit of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is to identify whether a member of the public has suffered hardship or injustice through maladministration, or identify where services have fallen below a reasonable standard. There is an obligation for a report to be produced on any investigation the Ombudsman accepts. Section 27 of the Ombudsman's legislation details when a report could be made public. Further details of the role of the PSOW can be found at: <http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk>

- 4.2 The PSOW has produced the Annual Letter for 2021-2022, containing details of complaints across Wales. Six Children Services cases were referred to the Ombudsman this year, none of which were investigated by the Ombudsman.

5. Reasons for complaints and their outcome

- 5.1 Further analysis of the reasons for complaints is shown in **Table 4**. Whilst service users have unique and complex individual circumstances, complaints have been grouped under 'best fit' generic headings for reporting purposes.
- 5.2 Wherever possible, lessons are learnt and improvements are made to service delivery when a complaint is upheld. 15% were found to be justified/partly justified this year, which is 17% lower than the equivalent figure for 2020-21, though the number of complaints received has decreased slightly.
- 5.3 This year the figures for the Penderry and Valley team both have a high amount of complaints. With regard to the Penderry team, 11 relate to the same case. With regard to the Valley team there were a number of parents who submitted additional complaints after each one had been resolved.

6. Advocacy

- 6.1 Advocacy services exist to represent children's views and feelings when dealing with organisations. Social Services engage in statutory arrangements to ensure that Looked After Children or Care Leavers have access to an advocate. National Youth Advocate Services are available to provide the support.
- 6.2 The Complaints Officer will work with groups and organisations providing advocacy services, to address issues and promote the provision of assistance to service-users through the complaints process. Effective engagement with

advocacy services empowers more individuals and groups to make use of the complaints process at the earliest opportunity.

7.0 Compliments

- 7.1 Child and Family Services have received around 100 compliments over the course of the year. Set out in **Table 5** are some examples of the compliments which have been passed to the complaints team this year in relation to Child and Family Services. The individual staff members have been made aware of the compliments concerning them as has the Head of Service and the Director.
- 7.2 As well as substantial acknowledgements of thanks from service users that are given to staff at the point of service delivery, service users, relatives or friends can convey their appreciation more formally through the Comment or Compliment process.
- 7.3 Many complaints are often accompanied by compliments for other elements of service provision.
- 7.4 Compliments received are an equal reflection of individual and team efforts and Child and Family Services teams should be encouraged by their successes having regard to compliments received.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 All costs incurred in dealing with complaints are covered within existing budgets.
- 8.2 External Independent Investigators and Independent Persons may be appointed to deal with some complaints in accordance with legislation. The cost to the Council of providing this service in 2021-2022 for Child and Family Services was £11,018.75, similar to 2020-2021 costs.

Appendices: Appendix A – Statistical Data Tables

Appendix A – Statistical data in Tables

Table 1 - Total number of complaints received by Complaints Team				
	Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Service Requests		12	19	18
Corporate Social Services Stage 1		13	33	23
Social Services Stage 1		123	108	91
Corporate Social Services Stage 2		0	4	1
Social Services Stage 2		7	3	5
Ombudsman		11	12	6
Totals		166	179	143

Table 2 – Stage 1 Social Services complaints by Service Area	Total
Bays	6
CCARAT-IAA	9
Child Disability Team	1
Contracting	1
Evolve	1
Family Support	1
Foster Swansea	2
Friends & Family	4
LAC	10
Other agency	4
Penderry Team	15
Safeguarding Team	2
Swansea East	1
Swansea Valley Team	8
Swansea West Team	10
Townhill Team	14
Ty Nant	1
Unknown Teams	21
Western Bay Adoption Agency	3
Total	114

Table 3 – Total Stage 2 complaints by Service Area		
Service	Outcome	ID
Child Disability Team	Partially Justified	00257728
Child Disability Team	Justified	00259651
BAYS	Partially Justified	00258933
Townhill	Partially Justified	00260298
Swansea West Team	Partially Justified	00263780
Foster Swansea	Partially Justified	00256338


Table 4 Reason for Complaints and their outcome Stage 1	Totals	Justified	Not Justified	Partially Justified	Not Pursued	Not Eligible	Withdrawn	Refer to Safeguarding	Local Resolution	Impasse	Concurrent Investigation	Directed to another forum	For Information Only	Matter in court	Department to action / monitor	Referred for a new assessment	Not taken up	Escalated to stage 2	Unknown	Not investigated -historical
Breach of confidentiality	1											1								
Child protection conference	0																			
Child protection concerns	2							2												
Delayed assessment	3	1	1											1						
Delay in service after assessment	1	1																		
Disagree with rules set	2		1		1															
Dissatisfaction with contact	9		2				1							6						
Dissatisfaction with assessment	5	1	0	1										3						
Excessive waiting time	2	1	1																	
Failing to respond to correspondence	1																			
Failure to action info	2		2																	
Financial errors	1				1		1													
Financial issues	0				1															
Lack of consultation	1				1															
Lack of support	5	1	2		1							1								
Not following policy/procedure	0																			
Poor Communication	6	2	3										1							
Staff Attitude / Misconduct	3		1									2								
Unhappy with action taken	47	3	17	1	9	6	1	1				4	1	4						
Unhappy with decision	2	1												1						
Unhappy with level of service	11	4	4		2							1								
Unknown complaints	10				10															
	114	15	33	2	26	6	3	3	0	0	0	9	2	15	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5 – Examples of Compliments Received from service users and outside agencies


Teams	Nature of Compliment
LAC	X has been praised for supporting some very complex and tricky contact needs for two children. The mum was very complimentary of x, said how "lovely" she was and how well she felt she was doing a good job as the children's social worker. She was pleased that the children liked her and that she got involved with the games and fun at the children's contact with her.
Valley	A Primary School Headteacher has shared her thanks for X's support and work on a particularly difficult case. Her input with the family has made a huge difference. Thank you for making such a positive difference with this family.
East Team	A note written by 10- and 11-year-old siblings to Social Worker X who worked with the girls initially through a very difficult child protection process, supported the family to enable them to be reunited safely in line with their wishes. They said: "Thank you so much for helping us. We will never forget about you. We really like you. It was really nice meeting you."
Penderry	A hospital Consultant Community Paediatrician shared special thanks to Child and Family Services Practice Lead X saying "I wanted to thank you all for your valuable contribution to our work. You are all highly valued members of our team safeguarding children living in our patch.
East team	Message of praise sent to Child and Family social worker X at the point of case closure and how what you do for families shows social work to be a caring profession there to help and support families through difficult times. The family member said: "Thank you for being a lovely social worker and showing me that lots of horror stories you read about Social Services are not true. Thank you for your help."
West Team	X has received thanks from a member of the support network of a family she is working with. There are some complex dynamics within this family, which make it difficult to engage and support. The family were really impressed with her approach and commitment to developing positive working relationships and by how creative she is in her thinking around this.
Safeguarding	Project Lead with Parent Advocacy PAN West Glamorgan has thanked X for taking part in the PAN conference. Your suggestion in the panel about the active offer of parent advocacy at the earliest stages for parents made a strong impact. We can see today the example of professionals supporting parents to play their part. We're building the foundations for the future and are most appreciative of your support."

Townhill	Social Worker X received a direct address from the Judge in a recent Final Hearing. The Judge complimented her on her well written, in-depth statements, Family Network Meetings, Safety Plans, and contact trajectory over the last year.
Single Point of Contact	X and X have been praised for their work with a child. The child's dad said thanks for your working so well with this family. At times, contact has been difficult, and you have remained professional and shown great understanding throughout. Your hard work has clearly paid off and shines through in dad's email to you.
IRO	X has been praised by a mum with a longstanding history of social services. She said: "I wanted to thank you for your advice and support yesterday - it totally did seem everything you said was from an angle that I hadn't experienced before with talking to a social worker. It felt as if I was talking to a family member. So, thank you once again it means a lot."
IIAA Domestic Abuse Hub	X and X have been praised for the life changing work they are doing through the Domestic Abuse Hub Equilibrium programme. A service user said: "The Equilibrium course changed my life. Myself and my children are now thriving as a result of this turn around in our lives."

Ask for: Communications

 01656 641150

Date: August 2022

 communications@ombudsman.wales

Cllr. Rob Stewart
City of Swansea Council
By Email only: cllr.rob.stewart@swansea.gov.uk

Annual Letter 2021/22

Dear Councillor Stewart

I am pleased to provide you with the Annual letter (2021/22) for City of Swansea Council which deals with complaints relating to maladministration and service failure, complaints relating to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Councillors and the actions being taken to improve public services

This is my first annual letter since taking up the role of Public Services Ombudsman in April 2022, and I appreciate that the effects of the pandemic are still being felt by all public bodies in Wales. Our office has not been immune from this, with records numbers of cases being referred to us over the last two years. The strong working relationships between my Office and local authorities continues to deliver improvements in how we are dealing with complaints and ensuring that, when things go wrong, we are learning from that and building stronger public services.

Complaints relating to Maladministration & Service Failure

Last year the number of complaints referred to us regarding Local Authorities increased by 47% (compared to 20/21 figures) and are now well above pre-pandemic levels. It is likely that complaints to my office, and public services in general, were suppressed during the pandemic, and we are now starting to see the expected 'rebound' effect.

During this period, we intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) a similar proportion of complaints about public bodies, 18%, when compared with recent years. Intervention rates (where we have investigated complaints) for Local Authorities also remained at a similar level – 14% compared to 13% in recent years.

Page 1 of 9

Complaints relating to the Code of Conduct for Councillors

We also received a high number of Code of Conduct complaints last year, relating to both Principal Councils and Town and Community Councils. A record number (20) were referred to either the Adjudication Panel for Wales or local standards committees, due to evidence of a breach of the Code.

Supporting improvement of public services

In addition to managing record levels of complaints, we also continued our work using our proactive powers in the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019. Specifically undertaking our first Own Initiative Investigation and continuing our work on the Complaints Standards Authority.

October 2021 saw the publication of the first own initiative investigation in Wales: [Homelessness Reviewed](#). The investigation featured three Local Authorities and sought to scrutinise the way Homelessness assessments were conducted. The report made specific recommendations to the investigated authorities, as well as suggestions to all other Local Authorities in Wales and Welsh Government. Some of these recommendations will bring about immediate change – updating factsheets and letter and assessment templates to ensure that key equality and human rights considerations are routinely embedded into processes for example – all the recommendations were designed to bring about tangible change to people using homelessness services in Wales.

The Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) continued its work with public bodies in Wales last year. The model complaints policy has already been adopted by local authorities and health boards in Wales, we have now extended this to an initial tranche of Housing Associations and Natural Resources Wales. The aim being to implement this work across the Welsh public sector.

In addition to this, the CSA published information on complaints handled by local authorities for the [first time](#) – a key achievement for this work. The data for 21/22 showed:

- Over 15,000 complaints were recorded by Local Authorities
- 4.88 for every 1000 residents.
- Nearly half (46%) of those complaints were upheld.
- About 75% were investigated within 20 working days.
- About 8% of all complaints closed ended up being referred to PSOW.

The CSA has now implemented a model complaints policy with nearly 50 public bodies, and delivered 140 training sessions, completely free of charge, during the last financial year. The feedback has been excellent, and the training has been very popular - so I would encourage City of Swansea Council to engage as fully as possible.

Complaints made to the Ombudsman

A summary of the complaints of maladministration/service failure received relating to your Council is attached, along with a summary of the Code of Conduct complaints relating to members of the Council and the Town & Community Councils in your area.

In light of the new duties on political leaders and standards committees to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members, we look forward to working with you, your Monitoring Officer and standards committees to share any learning from the complaints we receive and to support your authority's work.

I would also welcome feedback on your Governance & Audit Committee's review of your authority's ability to handle complaints effectively so that we can take this into account in our work and support its work on the handling of complaints.

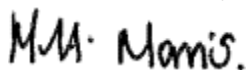
Finally, can I thank you and your officials for the positive way that local authorities have engaged with my Office to enable us to deliver these achievements during what has been a challenging year for everyone. I very much look forward to continuing this work and collaboration to ensure we further improve public services across Wales.

Further to this letter can I ask that your Council takes the following actions:

- Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet and to the Governance & Audit Committee to assist members in their scrutiny of the Council's performance and share any feedback from the Cabinet and the Governance & Audit Committee with my office.
- Continue to engage with our Complaints Standards work, accessing training for your staff, fully implementing the model policy, and providing complaints data.
- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters by 30 September.

This correspondence is copied to the Chief Executive of your Council and to your Contact Officer. Finally, a copy of all Annual Letters will be published on my website.

Yours sincerely,



Michelle Morris

Public Services Ombudsman

cc. Martin Nicholls, Chief Executive, City of Swansea Council.

By Email only: chiefexecutive@swansea.gov.uk

Factsheet

Appendix A - Complaints Received

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Received per 1000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	14	0.20
Bridgend County Borough Council	55	0.37
Caerphilly County Borough Council	60	0.33
Cardiff Council*	182	0.50
Carmarthenshire County Council	54	0.29
Ceredigion County Council	52	0.72
Conwy County Borough Council	27	0.23
Denbighshire County Council	34	0.36
Flintshire County Council	99	0.63
Gwynedd Council	39	0.31
Isle of Anglesey County Council	29	0.41
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	27	0.45
Monmouthshire County Council	20	0.21
Neath Port Talbot Council	45	0.31
Newport City Council	40	0.26
Pembrokeshire County Council	39	0.31
Powys County Council	55	0.42
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	51	0.21
Swansea Council	71	0.29
Torfaen County Borough Council	18	0.19
Vale of Glamorgan Council	61	0.46
Wrexham County Borough Council	71	0.52
Total	1143	0.36

* inc 17 Rent Smart Wales

Appendix B - Received by Subject

Swansea Council	Complaints Received	% Share
Adult Social Services	7	10%
Benefits Administration	0	0%
Children's Social Services	6	8%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	0	0%
Complaints Handling	9	13%
Covid19	1	1%
Education	0	0%
Environment and Environmental Health	5	7%
Finance and Taxation	3	4%
Housing	10	14%
Licensing	0	0%
Planning and Building Control	15	21%
Roads and Transport	10	14%
Various Other	5	7%
Total	71	

Appendix C - Complaint Outcomes (* denotes intervention)

County/County Borough Councils	Out of Jurisdiction	Premature	Other cases closed after initial consideration	Early Resolution/ voluntary settlement*	Discontinued	Other Reports- Not Upheld	Other Reports Upheld*	Public Interest Report*	Total
Swansea Council	13	12	41	6	0	0	4	0	76
% Share	17%	16%	54%	8%	0%	0%	5%	0%	

Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	0	13	0%
Bridgend County Borough Council	7	54	13%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	7	58	12%
Cardiff Council	45	159	28%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	1	16	6%
Carmarthenshire County Council	7	49	14%
Ceredigion County Council	13	46	28%
Conwy County Borough Council	2	24	8%
Denbighshire County Council	4	33	12%
Flintshire County Council	15	94	16%
Gwynedd Council	6	41	15%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	3	28	11%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	2	26	8%
Monmouthshire County Council	2	21	10%
Neath Port Talbot Council	5	45	11%
Newport City Council	4	36	11%
Pembrokeshire County Council	2	40	5%
Powys County Council	7	55	13%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	3	45	7%
Swansea Council	10	76	13%
Torfaen County Borough Council	2	20	10%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	9	62	15%
Wrexham County Borough Council	4	67	6%
Total	160	1108	14%

Appendix E - Code of Conduct Complaints

County/County Borough Councils	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Refer to Standards Committee	Withdrawn	Total
Swansea Council	2	10	0	0	0	0	12

Appendix F - Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Refer to Standards Committee	Withdrawn	Total
Clydach Community Council	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Gowerton Community Council	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Mumbles Community Council	0	10	0	0	0	0	10
Port Eynon Community Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Three Crosses Community Council	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

Information Sheet

Appendix A shows the number of complaints received by PSOW for all Local Authorities in 2021/2022. These complaints are contextualised by the number of people each health board reportedly serves.

Appendix B shows the categorisation of each complaint received, and what proportion of received complaints represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix C shows outcomes of the complaints which PSOW closed for the Local Authority in 2021/2022. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix D shows Intervention Rates for all Local Authorities in 2021/2022. An intervention is categorised by either an upheld complaint (either public interest or non-public interest), an early resolution, or a voluntary settlement.

Appendix E shows the outcomes of Code Of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Local Authority in 2021/2022. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix F shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Town and Community Councils in the Local Authority's area. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for each Town or Community Council.

Agenda Item 8



To:
**Councillor Andrea Lewis,
Cabinet Member for Service
Transformation**

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch
am:*

Overview & Scrutiny

*Direct Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrchol:*

01792 636292

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

BY EMAIL

*Date
Dyddiad:*

2 February 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation. The letter concerns the meeting held on 17 January 2023 and the Sustainable Swansea Update. A response is required by 23 February 2023.

Dear Councillor Lewis,

On the 17 January, the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel met to discuss the Sustainable Swansea Update. The Panel are grateful to the Leader and Martin Nicholls, Chief Executive for attending to discuss and answer questions. Our observations focused on the following areas.

The Chief Executive reminded us that Sustainable Swansea had been last discussed a number of years ago and due the impact of the Covid pandemic a final report had been delayed and that some of this project has been superseded now by the subsequent Achieving Better Together program.

The Chief Executive explained that this report was only on Sustainable Swansea reviews that had not previously been reported to scrutiny and was therefore not the full portfolio of outcomes and savings that had been achieved.

It was also pointed out that there was a long period of austerity in 2016 which affected funding and that Sustainable Swansea has delivered close to £70 million worth of savings and contributed to service reform and that some of the reviews highlighted the Council offers competitive services with value for money.

We recognise the difference Sustainable Swansea has made but were unsure how well the progress column clearly aligns with the intended outcomes. In regards to the parks and cleansing service review there has been an increase in income streams since 2017 however it is unclear how the parks and cleansing services have been improved. It was disappointing to see that there were no developments progressing with the botanical gardens given that this was discussed during the service review.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

Regarding additional learning needs, we request further information on the impact of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018, as the report informs us that this service review has not progressed due to the implications of this act and we were informed that this is progressing under a different project.

We were pleased to see that progress of the public protection service review is continuing and noted that in regards to catering and in particular the social services catering review a saving of £100k has been achieved however the intended outcomes did not solely focus on cost and it is unclear from the progress whether this resulted in an improvement in the catering and higher satisfaction with the service as intended.

Regarding the day services progress review we noted that there is further action to review the demand for, and scope of internal and commissioned older peoples day services post Covid. We would be interested in more information on this and at what stage this review is at.

Regarding the reviews relating to new contracts within social services, some of the Panel members remember from taking part in the reviews, plans to collect feedback from service users to gauge the effectiveness and satisfaction with new contracts. This may not have happened due to Covid but again we would request an update as to whether this did take place and what the response was.

Your Response

We welcome your comments on any of the issues raised and in this instance a formal response is required by 23 February 2023 to the following -

- Further information on the impact of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018 and where this is progressing under a different project.
- Further information and clearing linking between the progresses made in the Social Services catering review and how these meet the intended outcomes.
- More information on the Day Services Review regarding further action to review the demand for, and scope of internal and commissioned older peoples day services post Covid.
- An update on whether feedback was collected from service users to gauge effectiveness and satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
✉ cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk

Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and
Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk

(By Email)

Please ask for: Councillor Andrea Lewis

Direct Line: 01792 63 7442

E-Mail: cllr.andrea.lewis@swansea.gov.uk

Our Ref: AL/JG

Your Ref:

Date:

21 February 2023

Dear Councillor Holley,

Re: - Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel meeting held on 17 January 2023 and the Sustainable Swansea Update.

Thank you for your letter following the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel on 17 January. Please find below a formal response to points in your letter.

1. With regard to the Panel's observations around the Parks and Cleansing review, improvements over recent years include:

- Restructure of the Cleansing Teams to introduce a dedicated Operational Team Leader and Operational Charge hands to improve communications and quality
- Improvement programme for the Public Toilet Infrastructure
- Increased toilet cleaning frequencies at peak times which have improved quality and reduced complaints
- Introduction of mechanical scrubbing of paving to improve cleanliness
- Introduction of Cleansing Ward Operative Teams
- Increased litter/dog bin cleaning, repair, and renewal
- Significant investment in playgrounds
- Increase in biodiversity through cut and collect operations for some grassed areas

2. The Panel requested further information on the impact of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018 (ALNET), in particular where this is progressing under a different project.

This work was progressed under a dedicated transformation programme between 2019 and 2022. An Additional Learning Needs Strategy was developed for Swansea in 2019 to outline the transformation programme required to implement the ALNET Act successfully between 2019-2022. This was developed with key strategic partners and overseen by the ALN Strategic Board. The strategy was developed under six key themes:

- Transition
- Capacity
- Provision
- Quality
- Partnership
- Assessment

These themes were broken down into individual projects led by senior leads within the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team (ALNIT) and with input from a number of key stakeholders. The whole programme was overseen by a dedicated transformation programme manager and the transformation programme was concluded in 2022 at which point a new strategy was developed to take forward the implementation of the act. The current implementation strategy is planned to be delivered between 2022 to 2025 and will continue to report to the ALN Strategic Board.

Progress of the 2019 – 2022 strategy has been reported regularly to the Education Scrutiny Committee using a tracker to measure progress. Attached are the most recently updated progress tracker and scrutiny reports for your information. These reflect the scale of this project, which has fully transformed provision for children and young people with additional learning needs in Swansea.

3. The Panel requested further information and clearly linking between the progresses made in the Social Services catering review and how these meet the intended outcomes.

It was found that savings could be made through the implementation of a revised service in consultation with the Catering Unit. Progress includes:

- Reduction in number of staff on shift per day
- Reduction in non-efficient staff hours
- Flexible hours built in for anomalies and unforeseen circumstances
- Overall reduction in core hours
- Overall reduction in food costs
- Overall reduction in annual staff cost
- Universal menu structure
- Comprehensive collection of costed menu items
- Recipe cards
- Portion control measures
- Nutritional analysis of meals
- Meal pre-ordering system
- Reduced and streamlined breakfast structure
- Easy-to-serve evening meal structure

All teams were provided with a manual, which included: Cleaning schedules, dietary information, food hygiene, information health & safety, job descriptions, kitchen logbook, recipes, templates to use and menus.

Benefits to the service and residents included:

- More choice and control over menus
- Portion control
- Supporting individual with dietary needs
- Recipe Cards so individuals can see what they would like to eat
- More awareness of health needs i.e., diabetes

4. With regard to the Panel request for more information on the Day Services Review, particularly regarding further action to review the demand for, and scope of internal and commissioned older people's day services post Covid.

The Adult Services Commissioning team will lead on the review of day centres internally and externally. This process is only at its initial stages however, the scope of the work will include a review of current use, capacity, increasing demand to support complex needs, further reshaping from the original review, and best use of the services going forward.

5. The Panel requested an update on whether feedback was collected from service users to gauge effectiveness and satisfaction.

All social care contracts have monitoring arrangements built into the contract service specification, which includes service user feedback to assess effectiveness and ensure the contract arrangements are meeting the outcomes for people. Over the past two years, the Council has not been able to collect this in the way that was originally anticipated, due to Covid. However, built into reporting and monitoring arrangements are sections that ask providers to collate feedback from service users. This is ongoing throughout the lifetime of the contract in order to inform service improvements as part of the commissioning cycle.

The department is also undertaking a large-scale consultation with service users to gauge satisfaction with services which have transferred under contract and will report findings to Scrutiny during September 2023.

Yours sincerely



**Y Cynghorydd Andrea Lewis / Councillor Andrea Lewis
Dirprwy Arweinydd / Aelod y Cabinet dros Drawsnewid Gwasanaethau
Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Service Transformation**



To:
**Councillor David Hopkins, Cabinet
Member for Corporate Services and
Performance**

BY EMAIL

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch
am:*

*Direct Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Overview & Scrutiny

01792 636292

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

2 February 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance concerning the meeting held on 17 January 2023 and the Q2 Performance Monitoring Report 2022/23. This letter requires a response by 23 February 2023.

Dear Councillor Hopkins,

On the 17 January, the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel met to discuss the Q2 Performance Monitoring Report 2022/23. The Panel are grateful to Richard Rowlands, Corporate Performance Manager, for attending to discuss and answer questions. Our observations focused on the following areas.

We were informed that out of the 27 comparable indicators in the report, 14 showed an improvement, 4 showed a decline but within 5% of the previous result and 9 showed a drop in performance, 2 of these drops were attributable to the pandemic and the remaining 7 were not.

Safeguarding

In regards to safeguarding, we are aware of the 6 new indicators as the result of the introduction of a new social services performance framework by Welsh Government which have no previous comparable data and these will be supplemented by further indicators on corporate safeguarding, in line with the corporate development of Oracle fusion and also the development of the new corporate plan.

The overview informs us that safeguarding performance remains strong, but challenges also remain in terms of workforce capacity, which is an issue across health and social care. The shift to preventative and well-being approaches, which is envisaged by the social services well-being act which are yet to be fully embedded due to investment being directed towards health boards. The officer informed us that the Council is committed to investing in preventative models to allow people to remain at home, and that is reflected in the Council's investment into integrated enablement services and supporting informal carers.

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GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

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Education and Skills

In regards to education we raised our concern about attendance levels and although they are within 5% there is still a general decline. We are aware that school attendance varies from school to school and considered whether there were good practise examples from those with higher attendance figures.

Economy and Infrastructure

You officer reported a general improvement in Economy and Infrastructure compared to the same period last year compared to the same period last year in the number of projects with social benefit clauses and Beyond Bricks & Mortar in their contracts. There was a slight fall in the percentage of planning applications determined in 8 weeks due to vacancies within the team.

Tackling Poverty

We considered the time taken to process housing benefit and council tax reduction claims. While council tax reduction claims benefit from a new automated system, in the main these indicators have declined in quarter 2 similarly to the previous quarter 1. At the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Panel on 6 December looking at quarter 1, we were informed by the officer that this was due staff being diverted to processing Covid and other Welsh Government grants and this is still the case in quarter 2. At the December meeting the officer informed us that the Welfare Right Team had indicated they were not too adversely affected by this however the quarter 2 report also indicates additional strain from the loss of staff to other services. Your officer told us it will take some time before we can expect an improvement in performance in this area.

We therefore seek further reassurance that individuals claiming a benefit or grant are not being adversely affected by this delay and that housing benefits continue not to be adversely affected by their challenging circumstances. We will address this question to the Cabinet Member for Welfare.

Also in relation to the indicator reflecting the amount of benefits raised through securing rights and entitlements by the Welfare Rights Team, we noted that this indicator continues to decline which the comments explain is due to the impact of welfare reform, resulting in less benefit income being available to claimants. In addition there has been an increase in the need for appeals representation. Therefore this indicator is not reflective of the efforts and successes of the Welfare Rights Team in terms of securing income maximization and instead based on the amount raised. We wonder if a change to this indicator in relation to welfare reform in the current climate should be considered.

Transformation and Future Council

In regards to Transformation and Future Council Performance indicators it was noted that staff sickness continues to be impacted by Covid but in additional personal stress and critical illness has had an impact.

Nature Recovery and Climate Change

It remains difficult for us to comment on Nature Recovery and Climate Change until the new indicators are introduced. Your officer informed us they are aiming to introduce these for the first quarter of next year or as soon as possible thereafter in line with the work needed to define them and ensure data is collectable and reportable.

Your Response

We welcome your comments on any of the issues raised and request a formal response by 23 February in regards to the following -

- Your thoughts on the indicator relating to the amount of benefits raised through securing rights and entitlements by the Welfare Rights Team and consideration of whether an indicator that indicates income maximisation rather than income amount may be more suitable.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
✉ cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk



Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and
Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk

(VIA EMAIL)

Please ask for: Councillor David Hopkins
Direct Line: 01792 63 6141
E-Mail: Cllr.David.Hopkins@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: DH/JG
Your Ref:
Date: 23 February 2023

Dear Councillor Holley,

**Re: Scrutiny Letter to Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance
dated 2 Feb (Service Improvement and Finance - 17 Jan)**

Thank you for your letter dated 2nd February 2023.

In response to your query on the indicator relating to the amount of benefits raised through securing rights and entitlements by the Welfare Rights Team and consideration of whether an indicator that indicates income maximisation, rather than income amount may be more suitable. I respond as follows:

Whilst income maximisation is an aspiration it is very hard to measure and capture as a sole measure and express as a figure. Income amount achieved is easily measured and therefore remains the preferred measure.

Yours sincerely

Y Cynghorydd David Hopkins / Councillor David Hopkins
Dirprwy Arweinydd / Aelod y Cabinet dros Wasanaethau a Pherfformiad
Corfforaethol
Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance





To:
Councillor Rob Stewart
Cabinet Member for Economy,
Finance & Strategy

Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:

Overview & Scrutiny

Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:

01792 636292

e-Mail
e-Bost:

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

BY EMAIL

Date
Dyddiad:

2 February 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy. The letter concerns the meeting held on 17 January 2023 and the Draft Budget Proposals 2022/23 – 2025/26, Q2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 and the Q2 Performance Monitoring Report 2022/23. A response is required by 23 February 2023.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

On the 17 January, the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel met to discuss the Draft Budget Proposals 2022/23 – 2025/26, Q2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 and the Q2 Performance Monitoring Report 2022/23. The Panel are grateful to you and Ben Smith, Chief Finance Officer / S.151 Officer, for attending to discuss and answer our questions.

Draft Budget Proposals 2022/23

We are aware that formal consultation with a number of statutory consultees and bodies remains ongoing regarding the draft proposals with a view to an agreed budget proposal being considered for pre decision scrutiny on 14 February.

We were made aware of the £31.2m increase and that over £75m worth of cash sums are going to directorate budgets over the next four years, with more going into central pots as well but that real terms spending power will be impacted. You informed us that £22.3m of cash savings is still required from services and a further near £3m from schools, making £25m in cash savings required at the moment on the planning assumptions made. It was emphasized that at the point of drawing up the draft proposals, up to 68 full time equivalent Council posts are at risk.

Pay awards

We acknowledge that teachers pay awards are currently in contention and we asked for further clarity around this, you informed us that the cost is likely to fall on local government.

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Energy costs

It was emphasised that the Council has provisioned for £15m from the Economic Recovery Fund to pay for the increase in energy prices in the short term to allow time for energy prices to settle. Around 80-85% of energy costs are known due to being locked into price agreements, but any fall in prices may benefit the last 15% and therefore benefit the 2024/25 budget. We understand that given element of uncertainty the actual draw from reserves may be less.

Fire levy

You informed us that the fire authority which are independent, set their own levy and the Council are awaiting the final decision in terms of their levy. Early indications are that the levy could rise by between 8% and 17% which would equate to a net cost to the Council of between £2-2.2m.

Reserves

We relayed previous discussions that the Council projects using £40m of earmarked cash backed reserves. We asked for an update on this and you confirmed it is still estimated that £30m from central and £10m from school reserves would be drawn with an additional £30m spending of reserves in the coming year.

Council tax reduction scheme

We asked about the proposal to rebase the Council Tax Reduction Scheme resulting in £1.5m budget savings. You clarified that it is a locally administered benefit scheme and the budget reduction reflects historic take up so it is prudent to rebase it this year. However it is not capped so if more claim there will be a decrease in the budget saving identified and this will be monitored.

Insurance fund

We queried the absence of any reference to the Insurance Fund as part of Indicative Investment and Savings Requirement for 2023/24 to 2026/27, which has appeared in previous budgets and were told that there is no plan to further draw on the Insurance Fund (£14m) this year especially as Cabinet only recently agreed draw in the current year, and that the Section 151 Officer is satisfied that this is well-funded at the present time, based on relevant information and advice.

Borrowing

We questioned the inclusion of a potential up to £50m net addition to the overall capital envelope, and the need to be mindful of revenue cost implications and affordability. We were told the new future planning assumption of up to £50m of unsupported borrowing for a range of capital improvement projects could be taken forward, but much is dependent on the outcome of bids for Levelling Up funds and the requirements for match funding. We were informed that any borrowing will be delayed until rates of interest are more attractive and the use of the Capital Equalisation Reserve provides a short-term solution for financing costs and avoids direct impact on other service revenue budgets and delays borrowing until necessary. We are aware that future capital projects will be subject to FPR7 reports to Cabinet.

The Panel noted that the Council has benefited in respect of the Minimum Revenue Provision (charges to the revenue budget to repay debt) but queried that a tipping point will come at some point, though noted this would be beyond the budget period currently under consideration.

Council tax

We discussed with you a potential Council Tax increase for 2023/24 and we were told that current assumptions are at 5% for planning purposes but no decision yet and will only be finalised when all other costs factored in, including the Fire Authority Levy.

Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2nd Quarter 2022/23

We also briefly discussed the Quarter 2 Monitoring report which is a similar picture to Quarter 1. The advice to directors was highlighted to avoid overspending and overall there is just under a £3m overspend forecast, however the teachers' pay awards is anticipated to be a £3.4m cost pressure which will be drawn from school reserves ensuring the overall budget is balanced.

The under spend on capital financing was highlighted, which is being used to top up the Capital Equalization Reserve. We were also told of the emerging pressures in housing which will affect the HRA financing. The relevant cabinet member continues to be concerned.

The second quarters figures continue to predict a spend in reserves of £40m in current and £30m next year which is manageable in the short term, but the outlook remains challenging, therefore we await to see what 3rd quarter holds as well as the final budget proposals.

Q2 Performance Monitoring Report 2022/23

Whilst a letter regarding this item in general has been addressed to Cllr Hopkins, we had a question regarding the Housing Benefits Team.

We considered the time taken to process housing benefit and council tax reduction claims. While council tax reduction claims benefit from a new automated system, in the main these indicators have declined in quarter 2 similarly to the previous quarter 1. At the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Panel on 6 December we were informed by the officer, that this was due to staff being diverted to process Covid and other Welsh Government grants and this is still the case in quarter 2. We were reassured in our Panel meeting on 6 December that the Housing Benefits Team had indicated they were not too adversely affected by this.

The quarter 2 report however indicates that there is additional strain from the loss of staff to other services and that it will take some time before we can expect an improvement in performance in this area.

We therefore seek further reassurance that individuals claiming a benefit or grant are not being adversely affected by these delays and that housing benefits continue not to be adversely affected by their challenging circumstances.

Your Response

We welcome your comments and request a formal response by 23 February 2023 in regards to the following -

- Reassurance that the Housing Benefits Team are not adversely affected by the loss of staff in addition to staff being diverted to processing Covid and other Welsh Government grants.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
✉ cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk



Councillor Chris Holley
Convener,
Service Improvement and Finance
Scrutiny Performance Panel

Please ask for: Councillor Rob Stewart
Direct Line: 01792 63 6366
E-Mail: cllr.rob.stewart@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: RS/JW
Your Ref:
Date: 17 February 2023

Dear Councillor Holley

Thank you for your letter dated 2 February 2023.

In response to your query on reassurance that the Housing Benefits Team are not adversely affected by the loss of staff in addition to staff being diverted to processing Covid and other Welsh Government grants. I respond as follows.

The Authority's Housing Benefits Team is part of the wider Revenues and Benefits Service which, in addition to administering and paying Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction, is also responsible for collection of Council Tax & Business Rates, determining eligibility for Free School Meals, School Uniform Grants and our Passport to Leisure Scheme. In addition, the service undertakes financial assessments of service users' contribution towards the cost of their social care, collection of that contribution, makes payments to residential and domiciliary care providers and pays direct payments and childcare payments on behalf of social services. Due to the technical nature of its role, the service also provides its own customer services function over the telephone, skype/teams, by e-mail and face to face in the contact centre.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the service has become almost the 'deliverer of choice' for the various Welsh Government grants that have been made available and is now starting delivery of 2 further fuel grants on behalf of the UK government which is already proving to be challenging.

All staff in the service have come together to deliver what was required at pace, and often at short notice. One of the strengths of this service is the great teamwork between colleagues who will always support each other and our citizens to complete complex tasks in good time.

The following payments have been managed on behalf of Welsh Government:

- Over 9,800 grants to a value of £94,000,000 were paid to Swansea Businesses to support them through the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Nearly 16,000 applications for Covid-19 Self-Isolation grants were processed resulting in nearly 3,500 payments worth over £6,500,000 to citizens on a low income, which enabled them to self-isolate and keep safe from Covid-19.
- Over 4,500 applications for the Unpaid Carers Recognition payment were dealt with, paying £1,726,500 to those who care for our most vulnerable.
- For the last winter fuel scheme, over 18,100 fuel grants were processed and £2,761,200 was paid to eligible Swansea residents.
- The current winter fuel scheme is still underway and to date £5,315,800 has been paid to 26,579 eligible households.
- Under the auspices of the Cost-of-Living Payment scheme, over £12,985,000 has been paid so far and as we head towards the end of the scheme in March 2023, further payments are now going to be made to the most vulnerable as Cabinet has just approved some additional eligibility criteria.

All of this has been achieved with only a small temporary increase in customer services staff.

It is clear the service has been impacted by the additional payments it has been required to deliver over the period, as indeed have colleagues in similar roles in other local authorities. This was to be expected. In addition, the loss of experienced staff has also not helped the position.

In mitigation, although we still have 2 grant schemes underway but due to close, and two new ones about to commence, additional claim processing staff have recently been appointed and are currently in the middle of their initial training period. Once this has been completed, they will begin to assist with the work to reduce processing times. However, and again as we would expect and as you are already aware, it will be some time before new staff can process complex benefit claims as quickly as the experienced staff the section has recently lost. They will be provided with mentoring and support to achieve the required performance levels as quickly as possible.

The employment of the temporary customer services staff has been extended until June 2023 and this will be further reviewed with the requirements of the 2 additional grant schemes about to commence in mind.

Page 3

Although the Housing Benefits Team has been adversely affected by the loss of experienced staff and by having to deal with Covid-19 and other Welsh Government / UK Government grants, I can assure you that all necessary action possible within the available resources is being taken to mitigate that impact.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rob Stewart', written in a cursive style.

**Y CYNGHORYDD/COUNCILLOR ROB STEWART
ARWEINYDD/LEADER**

**To/
Councillor Rob Stewart
Cabinet Member for Economy,
Finance & Strategy (Leader)**

BY EMAIL

cc: Cabinet Members

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Our Ref
Ein Cyf:*

*Your Ref
Eich Cyf:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Scrutiny

01792 637257

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

15 February 2023

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Leader / Cabinet Member following the meeting of the Panel on 14 February 2023. It relates to pre-decision scrutiny of the Annual Budget.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

Pre-decision Scrutiny of Cabinet Reports: Annual Budget

The Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel met on 14 February 2023 to consider the Annual Budget reports that are being considered by Cabinet on 16 February.

We thank you and the Director of Finance / Section 151 Officer for attending the meeting to present the reports and answer questions. This letter reflects on what we gained from the information presented, questions, and discussion.

We asked a number of questions, which were responded to, around:

- Cost of borrowing / likely movement in interest rates during the Medium Term Financial Plan, and use of cash balances / reserves whilst rates are high.
- Level of reserves and projection for the next year, and use of the Capital Equalisation Reserve to smooth cost pressures.
- Affordability of the Capital Programme and potential future borrowing requirement for new schemes, including needing to take account of match funding successful Levelling Up bids, for example.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

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- Roll back in base on some proposed revenue budget savings in specific areas across Directorates following December's budget proposals report.
- Staffing implications / Headcount reduction
- Budget Consultation
- Increases in Fees and Charges

We are writing to confirm the views of scrutiny for Cabinet to consider before making its decisions. This is based on discussion at the Service Improvement & Finance Panel meeting as well as input from our Education and Social Services Scrutiny Panels which met separately ahead of our Panel meeting with the relevant Cabinet Members and lead officers.

Scrutiny Views, including any outstanding issues / actions:

In the time available to review the reports and ask questions, the Panel wish to bring the following views / recommendations to the attention of Cabinet:

Overall

- **Budget Process / Local Government Settlement** - We share concerns about the tight timetable for the budget setting process, hindered by the timing of Welsh Government budget announcements - we note the final settlement is not expected until end of February. The Panel welcomes the increase in central funding, but this falls significantly short when considering the level of inflation and other pressures, such as energy costs.
- **Capital Charges** - The use of Capital Equalisation Reserve provides a short-term solution for financing costs and avoids direct impact on other service revenue budgets, but there is concern about its sufficiency beyond the Medium Term Financial Plan given increased capital charges.
- **Headcount Reduction** - Cabinet should clarify the extent to which the reported potential headcount reduction (61 FTEs) will be through either the deletion of vacant posts or through members of staff wishing to take ER/VR to understand how many posts are likely to mean compulsory redundancies. Cabinet will need to be satisfied that the Headcount reduction does not risk future service delivery in those areas affected. The Panel has some concerns about the proposed reduction in Scrutiny Support staff and implication on the ability for Councillors to properly carry out Scrutiny.
- **Cost of Living** - We acknowledge that it is a cost of living crisis for the Council as well, but the likely Council Tax increase, as well as planned increase in fees and charges, will be felt by all our residents.
- **Fees and Charges** - The proposed increase in Car Parking tariffs may have a detrimental effect on usage / visitor numbers, particularly footfall in the City Centre. We note the intention to introduce a residents' discount and would urge the speedy rollout of the planned Residents App. As another City Centre impact, there was concern that the proposed increase to Swansea Market Rent Charges will impact on stall occupancy.

Social Services

- **Uplift** - The Panel is encouraged to see an increase in the overall budget for Social Services for 2023/24 and welcomes the way Social Services has operated with a higher level of efficiency.
- **Fees & Charges** - Overall, the Panel understands that £6 million savings is necessary but is concerned about the 10% increase in fees and charges and the effect of this on the 25% of people affected by the increase, who are already hard pressed.
- **Staffing** - The Panel understands there is a proposed saving of £1 million to be raised from vacant posts but is concerned this could result in increased use of agency staff and will be monitoring this at future meetings.
- **Child & Family Services Placements** - The Panel understands savings of £500k are proposed by reducing placements in Child and Family Services and hopes this is achievable in the current climate.
- **Co-production** - The Panel is interested in the idea of strengthening organisational co-production and supports a common approach.
- **Re-Commissioning Services** - The impact of re-commissioning services is not fully understood, in terms of the budget set, and will have to be monitored closely.

Education

- **Uplift** - We welcome the uplift in the budget this year from £202 to £215 million but recognise this will not cover all the financial pressure on schools budgets. However, it is very welcome and we recognise that it is the largest cash allocation for any Council department in Swansea, which highlights the fact that education is a top priority.
- **School Reserves** - We heard that the school reserves have reduced substantially and are now approximately £11 million across schools in Swansea. Concern was raised about the fact that some schools reserves are high while others have very low reserves and therefore these schools will require help and support.
- **Financial Pressure** - We recognise that schools will be under a lot of pressure from a number of costs that are currently not fully known this year 2023/24, and indeed 2024/25, for example ALN, free school meals universal roll, fuel and energy costs and teacher pay increases etc. With that in mind, we would additionally question the significant increase in pest control fees being proposed for the schools contract, that will add to pressures.
- **Pressures on reducing School Meals Budget** - We must ensure there is no loss of quality or standard of the school meals provided and our aim should be to buy local.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter helpful. I will be attending the meeting on 16 February to address Cabinet with the feedback from Scrutiny, as contained in this letter.

We would welcome comments on any of the issues raised within. However, no formal written response is required unless there are any material changes to the Annual Budget reports and/or amendments to the budget agreed by Cabinet, which the Panel should be alerted to.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Holley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

COUNCILLOR CHRIS HOLLEY

Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

✉ cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 9

Service Improvement and Finance – Scrutiny Performance Panel

Work Plan 2022/23

<p>Meeting 1 6 Sep 2022 10am</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Role of the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Panel 2. Overview: <i>Understanding Financial Reporting</i> Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer 3. Overview: <i>Understanding Performance Monitoring</i> Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery and Performance Manager 4. Work Plan 2022/23 Panel to discuss/agree work plan topics for the coming year.
<p>Meeting 2 4 Oct 2022 10am</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Q1 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report – 2022/23 <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer 2. Annual Performance Monitoring Report for 2021/2022 <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager
<p>Meeting 3 8 Nov 2022 10am</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Revenue Reserves <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer 2. Annual Review of Performance 2021/2022 <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager 3. Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Performance Report <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Elliott King – Cabinet Member Equalities and Culture Karen Gibbins – Library Services Manager Karen Davies – Principal Librarian 4. Welsh Housing Quality Standards Annual Update <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Service Transformation Carol Morgan – Head of Housing and Public Health
<p>Meeting 4 6 Dec 2022 10am</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mid Term Budget Statement 2022/23 <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer 2. Quarter 1 2022/23 Performance Monitoring Report <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager 3. Recycling and Landfill - Annual Performance Monitoring 2021/22 and Recycling of Business Waste Briefing <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Cyril Anderson– Cabinet Member Community Services Chris Howell – Head of Waste Management and Parks Matthew Perkins – Group Leader, Waste

	<p>4. Audit Wales Report – “Making Equality Impact Assessments more than just a tick box exercise” <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Elliot King - Cabinet Member Culture and Equalities Rhian Millar – Consultation Coordinator Lee Wenham – Head of Communications and Marketing</p>
<p>Meeting 5 17 Jan 2023 10am</p>	<p>1. Budget Proposals 2023/24 – 2026/27 <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</p> <p>2. Q2 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</p> <p>3. Q2 Performance Monitoring Report 2022/23 <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager</p> <p>4. Sustainable Swansea Update - Transformational delivery aspects <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Andrea Lewis – Cabinet Member for Service Transformation Martin Nicholls – Chief Executive Sarah Lackenby – Head of Digital and Customer Services Marlyn Dickson – Strategic Change Programme Manager</p>
<p>Meeting 6 14 Feb 2023 10am</p>	<p>1. Annual Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan: Pre-Decision Scrutiny <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy Ben Smith – Director of Finance / S.151 Officer</p>
<p>Meeting 7 14 Mar 2023 10am</p>	<p>1. Planning Annual Performance Report 2021/22 <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr David Hopkins – Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance Phil Holmes – Head of Planning and City Regeneration Ian Davies - Development Conservation and Design Manager Tom Evans – Place making and Strategic Planning Manager</p> <p>2. Annual Complaints Report 2021/22 <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Andrea Lewis - Cabinet Member for Service Transformation Sarah Lackenby – Head of Digital and Customer Services</p>
<p>Meeting 8 18 April 2023 10am</p>	<p>1. Q3 Performance Monitoring Report 2022/23 <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr David Hopkins - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager</p> <p>2. Annual Review of Wellbeing Objectives and Corporate Plan <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Rob Stewart - Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy Richard Rowlands – Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager</p>
<p>Meeting 9 9 May 2023 10am</p>	<p>1. Progress update on the Local Government Use of Data Action Plan (delayed due to pandemic impacts / diversion of resources) <i>Invited to attend:</i> Cllr Andrea Lewis - Cabinet Member for Service Transformation Sarah Lackenby - Head of Digital and Customer Services</p>

	<p>Steve King – Research and Information GIS Team Leader</p> <p>2. Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021/2022</p> <p><i>Invited to attend:</i></p> <p>Cllr Elliott King – Cabinet Member Culture and Equalities</p> <p>Cllr Robert Smith – Cabinet Member for Education and Learning</p> <p>Lisa DeBenedictis - Standards Officer</p>
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