



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

Dinas A Sir Abertawe

Councillor Rob Stewart
Leader of the Council

BY EMAIL

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11/9/2014

Dear Councillor Stewart,

**Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
20 August 2014**

Thank you for attending our Panel meeting on 20 August in your capacity as Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, and engaging in an interesting and productive discussion regarding the Sustainable Swansea – fit for future Strategy and Delivery Programme. We are also grateful to Dean Taylor for his helpful advice and support at the meeting. This letter summarises the main points from our discussion.

Public engagement

We discussed in detail with you public engagement with the budget process. It is essential that the public are involved with any decisions relating to the stopping of services and the future priorities of the Council. We wish to emphasise how important it is that the engagement on these key issues is with the right people and that it provides opportunities for a wide range of people to get involved. We are pleased to see the Sustainable Swansea Strategy includes an engagement strategy and we look forward to receiving more detail about it at our meeting on 17 September (as per your suggestions for scrutiny involvement in the budget process outlined in your letter to me dated 18 July).

In this letter you also suggested that the Panel could consider the engagement outcomes at our meeting on 10 December. We feel that this is too late in the process and would request that the information is provided to us sooner if possible. You

Overview & Scrutiny / Trosolwg a chraffu

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agreed to check the date for the end of the consultation and confirm how soon we would be able to have the information.

Digital services

We were interested to learn of the Council's strategy for improving access to services via digital means and ensuring that our customer contact strategy is fit for purpose in the future. However we were keen to ensure that this does not mean that the Council goes down the route of only providing digital/call centre contract. We were pleased to receive your assurance that you agreed there will always be a need for face to face contact for more vulnerable people or complex cases. You informed us that the strategy is not about removing channels of communication but offering excellent digital contact so that the people who can use it will chose to.

Governance structures for Sustainable Swansea

We discussed the governance structure and noted that it indicates that a lead Member will be allocated to each of the four work streams, although this has not yet happened. You advised us that the structure related to the officer side of the work stream delivery is not reflective of political involvement in the budget; however plans are in place to allocate a lead member to each work stream. We would like to be kept informed of developments in this area and to be provided with an up-dated governance chart once the Members have been appointed.

End of Year Performance Report

We also considered the End of Year Performance report. In particular we discussed the performance of Flying Start and agreed that this is an area that requires further scrutiny. We will be contacting the relevant Cabinet Member separately to make arrangements for this.

It would be helpful to receive your reply to this letter by 13/10/14 so that it can be included in the agenda of a future Scrutiny Programme Committee meeting at the earliest opportunity. We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Mary Jones

Convenor, Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel

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