



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Councillor Mary Jones
Convenor, Service Improvement & Finance
Performance Panel
City & County of Swansea

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23 September 2014

If you require this or any other information in another format e.g. Braille, audio tape or a different language, please contact me

Dear Councillor Jones

Thank you for your letter dated 6 August 2014. I note your comments about scrutiny involvement in the budget process and the future of the ICT contract.

I would like to respond to the Panel's observations concerning the Corporate Improvement Plan. The Corporate Improvement Plan is an ambitious document. We are always looking at how we can improve these things and so your comments are welcome.

As you rightly point out, it is difficult trying to balance the needs of different audiences when producing these plans, particularly when there is statutory and regulatory guidance to adhere to; and there is no doubt that the presentation of the plan could improve, particularly for the public audience.

In relation to the specific bullet points in your letter:

- **The use of a different numbering format of the Improvement Objectives**

I accept your point that the presentation of the Plan would be improved by the consistent numbering of the Improvement Objectives.

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- **The summary of the plan should include the results, and not just the indicators**

The Plan does include provisional results for 2013/14; final outturn data was not available at the time of writing.

The plan was developed using the Results Based Accountability approach and as such uses performance measures that are clearly more outcome focussed; the intention here was to better illustrate the 'impact' the Council's efforts are having than in previous such plans.

The performance measures are also much more bespoke and are plainly relevant to the improvement priorities, much more pertinent than some of the national measures Councils in Wales are asked to report on.

- **There are no indicators which directly relate to Target Areas**

Our approach to Target Areas is a key policy commitment and is part of a wider area based and strategic approach to tackling poverty and differential outcomes. The Corporate Improvement Plan is more narrowly focussed around performance improvement. The proper place for our approach to Target Areas will be as part of the Council's Poverty Strategy, which will be measured using appropriate indicators; poverty in turn will be a key priority in any Corporate Plan and the Panel will have an opportunity to scrutinise that Plan at the appropriate time.

- **The section of "What works well now" is underdeveloped**

In line with the results based approach, the plan is more narrative based and, while it could be more succinct and clearer for a public audience, it does try and tell the story behind the stark performance numbers. It represents an ambitious attempt to evaluate what is happening behind the headline figures in order to help draw conclusions and make improvements. For the future we are planning to use more real life examples or case studies as part of our public reporting.

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- **Development of a new Corporate Plan**

I would welcome the Panel's involvement in the development of the new Corporate Plan. I will ensure that a draft is presented to you at an early stage.

I hope that this response is helpful, please let me know if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR ROB STEWART
LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE & STRATEGY

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