



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Councillor Mike Day
Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

BY EMAIL

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Our Ref / Ein Cyf: CR/SH
Your Ref / Eich: SPC/2014-15/3
Cyf:
Date / Dyddiad: 3 November 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 Day

Re: Cabinet Member Question Session

Thank you for your letter dated 10 September 2014 regarding the meeting on 7 July, and 4 August 2014 relating to Cllr Theaker's portfolio as Cabinet Member for Opportunities for Children and Young People.

The specific items discussed and questions you raised in your letter are addressed below:

Play Sufficiency Assessment

Cllr Theaker clarified that the Annual Play Sufficiency assessment (PSA) was carried out in conjunction with Swansea University in order to bring a degree of independence to this work. I believe it is worth noting that for future updates of the PSA, most of the research is likely to be completed internally. It was felt that impartiality would support completion, but the reality is that where the Council directly undertakes research, the contacts and findings generated are more effectively maintained.

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The 'annual requirement' is to provide an annual action plan, which we currently have and I can provide if required. The next full assessment will need to be submitted in March 2016, so undertaken from the previous Autumn.

The committee felt that it was important that information about play provision was readily available and more visible to the public. Further, the committee suggested that more could be done to ensure all councillors were aware of the assessments carried out and issues relating to their areas. You felt it would be helpful if this information was clearly published, and you wanted to have a copy of the PSA.

A link to the Assessment and Public summary:
<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/7616/Play-for-the-children-of-swansea>

Youth Support Services

You were interested in dialogue with community councils to identify solutions for their areas and wanted us to confirm how this is being taken forward.

The European Rural Development Fund (ERDF) Rural Youth Project will end on the 30th of November 2014, although many of the activities run by the fund have already come to end. Discussions have been ongoing with both the Pennard Community Council and the Mawr Community Council in regards to sustaining suitable youth provision in the Rural Wards and there are a number of positive plans currently in place.

Good progress has been made with Pennard Community who have agreed both financial and volunteer support to continue the Youth Activity night through until the end of March 2015. During this period they are continuing to establish a Community Youth Council who will look to secure further support for the provision post March 2015.

Discussions with Llangennith Community Hall have also developed into a potential plan to secure limited funds and volunteers to continue to underpin a Youth Activities night in the village.

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In Garnswllt discussions are under way but there are still no firm plans in place.

The provision in Craig Cefn Park has now come to an end and there is no plan to continue provision.

Remaining equipment from the Rural Youth Project will be distributed amongst the remaining projects in order to improve their sustainability. Further support is being offered from Swansea Young People Services in the form of advice, guidance and training.

Youth Offending Service

You expressed concern about the lack of clarity about scrutiny of collaborative arrangements to ensure that aspirations for services and outcomes are being delivered. The agreement to date is that a Western Bay Scrutiny Seminar will be held before Christmas for members involved in scrutiny in each of the LAs. This was endorsed by the Chief Executive's Leadership Group and the Leaders/ Chairman/ portfolio holders meeting this month. Any formal arrangements for a regional scrutiny committee will emerge from this session. This should cover the regional Youth Offending Service and the regional Adoption Service.

UNCRC – Draft Children and Young People's Rights Scheme

The Committee raised a number of points which I have addressed below:

- the need for robustness of the due regard duty in order to withstand an possible criticism, where decisions could be perceived to be at odds with the commitment.

We have addressed this by embedding a Children's Rights Impact Assessment within the existing EIA process which asks for consideration of all protective characterises to be considered.

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ensure clarity about budgetary implications of this work

We have a statutory duty to ensure the participation of children and young people and already have 2 officers who carry out this role, these roles will be reviewed to ensure we meet our statutory duty and support and roll out our commitment to the UNCRC at no additional cost.

the importance of promoting and raising awareness of the scheme amongst children and young people

The promotion and awareness raising of the scheme will include all schools in Swansea and our participation network of service providers for children and young people, as a continuous programme of work.

improving ways in which children and young people can give their views and how assessments of impact are communicated to decision-makers

Once the scheme is launched and the EIA includes children's rights impact assessment (CRIA) we will work with groups of children and young people through our existing participation mechanisms like the Big Conversation and Rights Respecting Schools to involve children and young people in the monitoring process of the CRIA, this will be part of the annual report.

tackling any perception that decision-makers are only paying lip service to children's views

The annual report and the involvement of children and young people in the monitoring process will help this process as mentioned above, along with the communication plan which will see the report published.

the need to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme and its outcomes, and ensure interface with scrutiny is a central component.

A performance framework will be developed to capture both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the scheme; again this will be included in the annual report and taken to Scrutiny.

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□□fundamental to the success of the scheme will be ensuring that knowledge and understanding is developed amongst staff and capacity is built within the organisation to implement and mainstream the principles within the council's policy and practices. This would ensure that it represents more than just a 'tick-box' exercise.

Online training will be available for all staff, face to face training and awareness raising will be undertaken for decision makers and senior managers and support will be given to departments to look at ways this can be incorporated into everyday business.

□□the committee also suggested that, following anticipated adoption of the scheme, consideration be given to including a clause in tender documents and contracts which would place an expectation on those doing business with the Council to have due regard to children's rights

We are working with colleagues in procurement to look how this can be incorporated.

I hope this has answered all your queries and I look forward to attending in my role as Cabinet Member for Services for Children and Young People to share more about our achievements in the future.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE RICHARDS
DEPUTY LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR
SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

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