



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

Dinas A Sir Abertawe

Councillor Rob Stewart
Leader and Cabinet Member Finance and
Strategy

BY EMAIL

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Scrutiny

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4 December 2014

Dear Leader,

Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel 12 November 2014

Mid-Term Budget Statement

At our meeting on 12 November we considered the Mid-Year Budget Statement. We are grateful to Mike Hawes, Head of Finance & Delivery, for the advice and information he provided to us.

We found the Mid-Term Budget Statement to be a useful document, which enabled us to understand the latest position with regard to the 2014/15 budget. It also provided a helpful initial assessment of the 2015/16 position. This will assist us in our discussions on the draft budget for 2015/16 in the New Year. We are pleased to see that a robust approach is being taken by the authority to monitor the ambitious savings targets and to plan for the forthcoming year.

We discussed a wide range of issues including:

- financial risks facing the authority
- overspends in Social Services
- Western Bay Health and Social Care Programme
- use of reserves and capital receipts
- Council tax collection and arrears levels

We requested that in the future we would like to receive regular updates on the collection rates for Council Tax, including details of arrears and actions taken by the authority. Mike Hawes agreed to provide us with this information as part of his quarterly reports to the Panel.

As a result of our discussion about the overspend within Adult Social Services we discussed the impact of the Western Bay Health and Social Care Programme. This is a major programme in terms of regional working in key social services areas between Swansea, Bridgend, Neath & Port Talbot local authorities and the Health Board. We understand that joint working in this area is essential for the long term viability of services. However, we have concerns about the lack of clarity regarding governance arrangements, for example accountability for spending and performance and the opportunities available for scrutiny to input in to the process. We believe that the issue of scrutiny of regional working is something that needs to be considered by the Scrutiny Programme Committee and we would be interested to hear your views on this matter.

Swansea Voices Survey: Sustainable Swansea: Fit for the Future Final Report

We received the results from Swansea Voices Survey on Sustainable Swansea/budget consultation. We also discussed the Sustainable Swansea community consultation events that are currently underway. The Panel noted that not all wards were covered in the list of events that we were provided with. We believe that when events of this nature are planned the Council should ensure that as a minimum at least one event is held within each ward.

It would be helpful to receive your reply to this letter by 5 January 2015 . Scrutiny letters and responses are also included in the agenda of the Scrutiny Programme Committee as the committee maintains an overview of all scrutiny activities, and monitors correspondence. We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,



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