



**CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA**  
**DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE**

Councillor Terry Hennegan  
Convener,  
Corporate Building and Property  
Services Scrutiny Working Group

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DH/JW

12 January 2015

**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 Hennegan

**CORPORATE BUILDING AND PROPERTY SERVICES SCRUTINY WORKING  
GROUP – 29 OCTOBER 2014**

Thank you for your letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and can I apologise for the delay in responding. I would like to comment on each of the separate points referred to in your letter as below.

***Cost Effectiveness***

It is pleasing to see that Martin Nicholls (Chief Operating Officer/Head of Corporate Building and Property Services) was able to reassure Scrutiny Members as to the cost effectiveness of the service, based as on a robust approach to benchmarking. It also looks encouraging that he was able to perhaps clarify some of the ambiguity that exists within the process for schools to commission work.

***Relationship with Schools***

Whilst I would acknowledge that, on the whole, relationships with schools and community groups are good; I accept there is a different perception as to the cost effectiveness of the service, which can largely be attributed to the “best practice” specifications normally used to allow the Authority to protect its assets. I am also encouraged that the Chief Operating Officer acknowledges the concerns of Scrutiny and Members that this approach may not be sustainable in the current financial climate

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**Page 2**

and that a more flexible, responsive and client centred approach is being developed. In addition, the joint working group with CB&PS, Education and School Head teacher representatives will continue to meet and further develop this new approach.

On the wider operational activities, whilst the areas of Highways, Drainage and Parks fall outside my portfolio, I am aware that Martin Nicholls has shared this with Councillor Mark Thomas and the relevant Heads of Service so that a consistent "client centred" approach can be developed across the Council.

***Apprentice Scheme and Community Benefits***

Can I thank you for identifying the excellent work carried out by the department and wider Council in relation to the Apprentices and Beyond Bricks and Mortar and how this is fully aligned to the Welsh Government Community Benefit approach? I will ask the relevant Heads of Service to ensure the Council continues to positively promote these initiatives and continue to engage directly with Welsh Government representatives.

In terms of the recommendations, I fully accept these and, through the actions identified above, will ensure they are carried through and completed accordingly.

Finally, can I once again apologise for the delay in responding but reassure you that the actions listed are all agreed and already underway by the Chief Operating Officer.

Yours sincerely



**COUNCILLOR DAVID HOPKINS  
CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES & HOUSING**

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