



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

**To**  
**Councillor Jennifer Raynor**  
**Cabinet Member for Education**

**BY EMAIL**

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*Date*  
*Dyddiad:*

3 February 2015

Dear Councillor Raynor,

**Re: Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel**  
**14 January 2015**

Thank you for your attendance at the Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel on 14 January 2015 and answering questions on the implementation and impact of the savings targets agreed for 2014/15 within your education portfolio.

The Panel is writing to you in order to reflect on what it learnt from the discussion, and share its views. The specific issues discussed are summarised below:

**Education Budget Overspends**

You discussed a number of the services within education that have been identified as areas of overspend, including: One to one education; Home Tuition/EOTAS; Employment Training; Education Improvement; Breakfast Club; Cleaning Costs.

You advised us that measures are in place to tackle the overspends and progress has been made in some areas such as cleaning costs, completion of a review of EOTAS (Education Other Than at School) and work is underway to examine in detail reasons behind the overspends on the breakfast club budget and one to one tuition.

**In Year Grant Reductions**

You raised an issue of particular concern regarding recent notification from ERW (Education through Regional Working) of in year grant reductions for a

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number of education related grants; the total amount that Swansea will lose is £424,251.

You informed us that these reductions will show as overspend in the education budget, especially as these cuts are being made at short notice and the funds have already been allocated to schools via the delegated budget therefore the authority cannot get this money back. You advised that the grant cuts will have a significant impact on the services that they fund such as EMLAS (Ethnic Minority Language Achievement Service), family learning projects etc as the authority will not have the capacity to cover the funding gap therefore these services will be correspondingly reduced.

It is clear that the cut is being made by the Welsh Government to the funding it provides to ERW, which then has to be passed onto local authorities; however we wish to ensure that the process by which the level of cuts for each authority has been determined is transparent and equitable. You advised us that you are not satisfied that this is the case. The Panel intends to write to ERW to echo your concerns and to request an explanation of how the cuts for each partner authority within ERW have been calculated.

#### **Education Budget Reductions 2015/16**

We discussed the draft budget proposals to implement an annual 5% budget cut (cumulatively 15% over 3 years) to the delegated schools budget and the plans in place for schools to manage this. You advised us that consultation with schools regarding the proposed budget cuts is on-going in a number of forums, including:

- School Budget Forum
- Letters sent to all head-teachers and chairs of governors (during the summer and again at the start of September) regarding the forthcoming cuts and asking them to start planning for the cuts.
- A further meeting has been arranged for the end of January to discuss the impact of the cuts and all schools have been invited.

We expressed concern that not all schools governors and school finance committees may be aware of the proposals. We would suggest that going forward, the School Governors Unit is asked to email any relevant correspondence to all school governors, in addition to letters being sent to head teachers and chairs of governors.

Since we met with you we have received a copy of the School Budget Forum's consultation response to the Council's draft budget proposals. We will consider this response as part of our deliberations on the final budget proposals when we meet with the Leader on 5 February. If you have any comments on the response it would be useful to be made aware of them either in advance of the meeting or through our discussions with the Leader on the day.

We would be grateful for your comments on the issues raised in this letter. It would be helpful to receive your reply by 24 February 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**COUNCILLOR MARY JONES**

Convener, Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

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