



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

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

*Please ask for:
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Scrutiny

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BY EMAIL

*Our Ref
Ein Cyf:*

SPC/2014-15/11

*Your Ref
Eich Cyf:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

23 February 2015

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member for Education following the meeting of the Committee on the 16th February 2015. It is about correspondence received from a member of the public on children's rights impact assessments in relation to the proposed sale of school playing fields at Parkland Primary School. It includes conclusions and proposals for the Cabinet Member.

Dear Councillor Raynor,

Public Request for Scrutiny

The committee met with you in December and amongst the issues discussed was that of school land sales and concerns raised by members of the public about proposals relating to Parkland Primary School. We wrote to you separately about this and look forward to your response. Since then the committee has been contacted by another member of the public with a specific request that scrutiny should undertake a children's rights impact assessment in relation to the proposals for Parkland Primary School.

We acknowledged this correspondence (attached) at our committee meeting on Monday and discussed possible course of action. We agreed that the issues raised in the correspondence should be brought to your attention. We understand that Cabinet will be considering a report on the disposal of surplus land on school sites although we are not entirely clear when this is likely to take place. We felt it was not appropriate for the committee to agree to the request without first establishing the facts and considering your response.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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The committee would like you to:

- provide us with a response to the issues contained in the correspondence
- confirm what impact assessments have been carried out or are planned in relation to school land sales
- confirm whether a Children's Rights Impact Assessment has been carried out in relation to proposals at Parkland Primary School. If not, why not?
- advise on the decision-making timetable for dealing with this whole issue, including matters relating to Parkland Primary School

It would be helpful to receive your reply to this letter by 16 March so that it can be included in the agenda of a future committee meeting at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR MARY JONES

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

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(see copy of correspondence attached)

Copy of Correspondence:

Subject: Children's Rights Impact Assessment

The Education Department wishes to sell off my daughter's school playground and playing field at Parkland Primary School. They have used a formula to work out if there will be enough space left for all the children to play on if they sell off this land but they have used the wrong number for all the children who attend the school. The land left will not be enough for all the children to play on and the youngest in the school will not have good access to green space that they need for their Foundation Phase education and a safe place to evacuate to if there is a fire. They do not say this on their information for parents on their website instead assuring parents there will be enough space - it also does not say where the children will go if there is a fire but say that the piece of land is surplus when it is played on five to six times a day. They don't explain that the piece of land is right in the middle of the school nor that it has very old trees on it which are the school's symbol.

The council have adopted a duty to embed the Rights of the Child into everything they do. I would like to ask you to consider if there should be a Children's Rights Impact Assessment as well as an equality impact assessment given that there are children with disabilities who will be immediately effected in the school. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that anyone ratifying the UNCRC undertake such impact assessments and the council has committed publically to be the first council to embed the rights throughout everything they do.

I am very concerned that the children of this schools catchment which includes a Flying Start and Communities First area are not being heard and their views and needs being taken into account as this issue is being hijacked by political agendas and the need to raise money. I am concerned that an impact assessment is needed as soon as possible and that the children in the school needs this due to the following reasons given as to why such assessments are needed (www.childrensrightswales.org.uk)

- * Children are disenfranchised, through lacking the vote and not playing a significant part in political processes.
- * Children's issues are fragmented across government departments that can result in uncoordinated or conflicting policies that fall short of reflecting the "whole child".
- * Children's issues are often likely to be hijacked by other political agendas and consequently children in many cases are in a different (usually weaker) position as compared with the rest of the population.
- * There is a need for governmental mechanisms to give children's issues better visibility, coherence and significance. Child policy proofing is one element in a drive to improve government for children and the mainstreaming of children's rights. It creates an invaluable opportunity for making adjustments to policies to ensure that children's interests are protected.

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee for children and young people should work with officials, key stakeholders and children and young people in the community to undertake this assessment and I would like to ask if you would consider doing this as soon as is possible given the speed with which this proposal is trying to be put through.

Please note that none of the children in this school have been consulted by the council in regards to the sale of their playground.

Thank you