



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Councillor Mary Jones
Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:
Direct Line:
Linell
Unioogyrochol:

Councillor Clive Lloyd
(01792) 637428

E-Mail / E-Bost:
Our Ref / Ein Cyf:
Your Ref / Eich
Cyf:
Date / Dyddiad:

cllr.clive.lloyd@swansea.gov.uk
CL/SH
SPC/2014-15/16
20 May 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 Jones

CABINET MEMBER QUESTION SESSION – 13 APRIL

Thank you for your letter dated 6 May 2015 regarding the above.

I set out below detail as requested in relation to your specific information requests:

Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the Future

- ***Involvement of Non-executive councillors and the public in Sustainable Swansea Commissioning Reviews*** – the process agreed for undertaking Commissioning Reviews sets out the requirement to invite one or more Scrutiny Members to participate in each Review. I am aware that invitations may not have been sent out in timely manner for the first two Reviews, although there were Councillors at the Business Support Review workshop on 29 April 2015. I have asked that attendance for future events is agreed at an earlier stage. I would welcome views from Scrutiny about how else they would wish to be engaged in these important Reviews.

**COUNCILLOR/Y CYNGHORYDD
CLIVE LLOYD**

**CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION & PERFORMANCE /
AELOD Y CABINET TRAWSNEDID A PHERFFORMIAD**

CABINET OFFICE, CIVIC CENTRE, OYSTERMOUTH ROAD, SWANSEA SA1 3SN
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, CANOLFAN DDINESIG, HEOL YSTUMLLWYNARTH, ABERTAWE SA1 3SN

☎ (01792) 637428 ☎ (01792) 636196
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In relation to the public, each Review is required to demonstrate that they have obtained and taken account of the views of service users, residents groups and other interested parties. The Gateway process that we have introduced as a quality assurance for Reviews will ensure that this is done

- **Impact of Budget Savings on Staffing** - The original number of "posts at risk" included the Cabinet Report in December 2014 was 64.

The current number is 22. The reduction has been a result of the following factors;

- Redeployment
- Reduction in hours
- Using vacant posts
- Flexible Retirement
- Deferring of the proposal to reduce posts in the School Crossing Patrol Service; Pontarddulais Sports Facility; Music Service and Youth Clubs

It should be noted that options for Plantasia are still being considered. However, because of the uncertainty, some staff have put themselves forward for redeployment opportunities and 2 are in trial periods. This means that there are 8 staff remaining at Plantasia.

With regards to the 14 other staff at risk, redeployment opportunities are currently being explored.

There have been 5 compulsory redundancies. However, it should be noted that a) redeployment opportunities were explored for these members of staff and b) none of these staff appealed against the redundancies.

Finally, regular meetings with the Trade Unions are still taking place regarding posts at risk and early retirement/voluntary redundancy with data being shared with them on a regular basis.

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Commercial Council

- ***What has been learnt from examples elsewhere to inform our new commercial approach*** – Swansea has taken a proactive approach to becoming a commercial Council by appointing a Commercial Team (now an integrated part of the Commercial & Commissioning Unit) and gaining Cabinet approval for an Authority-wide Charging Policy (attached) in April 2014. The first Welsh Authority to do so, we have been able to spend time learning from examples – both positive and negative – set by English Authorities (such as Nottingham City Council) and other Public Bodies who were affected by budget cuts before those of us in Wales. Initial benchmarking on charging and trading established a core set of data on Swansea's charges in comparison with all Welsh Authorities and a small range of those in England; this will now be updated on a yearly basis with the aim for this to become a publically visible document as per the example set by Oxford City Council.

The team regularly spend time researching examples to inform our approach. This is done through liaison and networking with other Authorities including peer review feedback, nationwide conferences and events, case studies and learning materials from organisations such as CIPFA, LGA and APSE, and direct work with organisations such as Social Firms Wales and Mutual Ventures. This is done on a case by case basis at present in order to ensure learning is directly relevant to the direction of travel services are seeking our support with. Members may be interested to review the following examples:

- Norse Group (Norfolk initially, now used by multiple Authorities)
http://www.ncsgrp.co.uk/local_authority_partnerships.htm
- Solutions SK (Stockport)
<http://www.solutionssk.co.uk/>
- Public Power Solutions (Swindon)
<https://publicpowersolutions.co.uk/>
- Kent Legal (Kent)
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/business/kent-legal-services>
- Monwel Signs & Services (Blaenau Gwent)
<http://www.monwel.com/>

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- Essex Cares (Essex)
<https://www.essexcares.org/>
- Beacons Creative (Powys)
<http://www.beaconscreative.co.uk/beacons/>
- **Your suggestion about collaboration with other public bodies in developing commercial opportunities** - Currently there are very few Welsh examples to draw on and we hope that Swansea will be a leader in this respect in our innovative approach. Rescue 365 – the Community Interest Company established by Mid & West Wales Fire Authority – is an exciting development which has been picked up with respect to a proposed partnership around training opportunities which is currently being explored by our Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service. We also hope to build stronger ties with both Universities, the DVLA (as mentioned in the Scrutiny letter) and ABMU, as well as our neighbouring Authorities and health boards within the City Region.

We believe that there will be many opportunities for collaboration, joint working, shared services and to trade with Public Bodies, businesses, and members of the public (with appropriate legal structures in place). Again this is informed by examples seen elsewhere and we hope to be able to take advantage of the opportunities presented by our locality's strong Public Sector presence. This is very much the focus of our work this year and we will be able to report regularly on progress via the Commercial Panel's quarterly reports to Executive Board from June onwards. Some of the questions we have identified to inform our approach are:

- Which projects tie into our vision for our 'place' (corporate priorities, economic regeneration programmes etc.)?
- What are our strengths? And our weaknesses?
- What is there a market for – both to sell and to buy?

Understanding our market and Swansea's place within it will be key to future commercial success; this can be seen in multiple English Local Authorities who are further down this path.

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We have developed our own bespoke toolkit which is used to analyse opportunities which we expect to evolve over time as we build our expertise; we are adding to this by pulling on knowledge, skills and experience from Councils such as Nottingham, Bournemouth, Sandwell and others. While our Commercial Strategy continues to evolve, it will be essential that we maintain our focus on targeting the projects that will afford the greatest value for money for our residents. We are already seeing other Authorities asking us for support, guidance, and networking as we are gaining a positive reputation for our approach, and we look forward to continuing to drive forward innovation as a Commercial Council.

Sustainable Development

- ***My role within the Cabinet in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations Bill*** – The Bill was enacted on 17th April 2015 and Welsh public sector bodies will be subject to the duties in the Act from 1st April 2016. The Act provides a framework for how local government and the rest of the public sector in Wales do business. It sets out seven Well-Being Goals for Wales, establishes a Well-Being Duty on public bodies to set objectives that contribute to these goals and places a duty on each public body in Wales to carry out sustainable development.

The Act also establishes arrangements for Public Service Boards, and local government scrutiny arrangements to review the actions of the PSBs.

As a result of the new Act, the Council to make decisions and act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present generations are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To do this, Council services must take account of the long-term, integration, involvement, collaboration and prevention elements of the sustainable development principle.

As the legislation sets out a principle framework for the Welsh public sector, it will require a transformational Council response that considers behaviours and culture as well as procedures and systems. As Cabinet Member for Transformation and the portfolio lead for Future Generations and sustainable development, I provide political leadership for this legislation on behalf of the Council.

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I play a key role, working with officers and members to set the strategic direction for this agenda and developing a work programme to prepare the Council for the Act, when it comes into force in April 2016.

It is key that the sustainable development principle and the achievement of our well-being objectives are not seen as additional work, but are central to the way that we transform our business. As such whilst I act as the political lead for the Council for the Well-Being of Future Generations, all Cabinet Members will be responsible for implementation of sustainable development in their own portfolio areas.

I trust that this response provides the information that you requested, but if you require any further detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR CLIVE LLOYD
CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSFORMATION & PERFORMANCE

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