



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

**To/
Councillor Robert Francis-Davies,
Cabinet Member for Culture,
Tourism & Major Projects**

**Councillor David Hopkins
Cabinet Member for Commercial
Opportunities & Innovation**

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SPC/2017-18/2

16 August 2017

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Members for Culture, Tourism & Major Projects and Commercial Opportunities & Innovation following the meeting of the Committee on 14 August 2017. It is about the Cabinet report on the Planning & City Regeneration Commissioning Review.

Dear Councillor,

**Pre-decision Scrutiny of Cabinet Report:
Options Appraisal for the Future Delivery of Services in the Scope of the
Planning & City Regeneration Commissioning Review**

The Scrutiny Programme Committee met on 14 August to consider the report that you are presenting to Cabinet on 17 August, and give a view on the proposed decision.

We noted that your report concerned all aspects of the Planning & City Regeneration Service Unit, which includes development, conservation & design, strategic planning & natural environment, city centre management, and economic development. Your report recommended that future services will be best delivered through a transformed in-house model, which will see a number of team mergers and restructures and new ways of working and opportunities. This is anticipated to increase efficiencies, generate new income, ensure that services are fit for the future and deliver savings.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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The Committee received a very helpful presentation from Phil Holmes, Head of Service, to supplement the report, taking us thorough the key points and supporting evidence in relation to performance, finance, benchmarking and the options appraisal.

What follows is the view of the Committee, which we ask Cabinet to take into consideration before making its decision on the report.

Although we only had a short time to consider the report, the Committee was able to support the proposed decision. We found the report to be well evidenced and it provides a clear case for in-house transformation. The Committee also recognised the specialist nature of the work carried out within the service, which supports the development of an in-house model.

We were particularly pleased to see that Swansea Market comes out very well in the review. It is a great asset for the city centre and important that it stays under our control.

Whilst the Committee is supportive a number of relevant matters are highlighted below for your attention:

- We noted that an implementation plan will be developed following approval of the proposed way forward by Cabinet. Clearly a significant amount of work lies ahead to achieve the desired transformation. We felt that continued scrutiny was therefore necessary. We will consider how progress can be monitored by scrutiny, perhaps through the new Development & Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel, in order to keep abreast of developments, achievements, and assess impact.
- There are some concerns about the intention to split up the existing small Sustainable Development Team. The Team provides a lead for the adoption and accountability of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act across the Council, and supporting services to embed sustainability in corporate procedures and practice. Although now smaller (2 members of staff) the Team has developed a good reputation within and outside the Council. The Committee would prefer to see the current team retained and transformed within the service. We felt that splitting up the Team and function risked weakening supporting for this work, rather than building on its central role. We felt that corporate and service objectives in relation to the delivery of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and sustainable development were intertwined and saw little merit in disbanding the Team. Splitting the team might also give the impression of giving, what should be an important corporate objective, a lower priority to this work. We would like you to clarify the vision for sustainable development, how it is to be delivered, and resources being allocated to it.

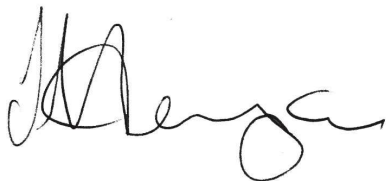
- We were interested in the proposal to create a core Land Charges Team, to deal with all aspects of searches, which will hopefully result in a more efficient and timely service to developers and the public.

Your Response

Although I will be attending the meeting on 17 August to verbally feedback our views to Cabinet we would be grateful for a written response to this letter. The Committee can then be informed of the decision taken by Cabinet and its consideration of our views, whether accepted or rejected.

It would be helpful to receive your reply to this letter by 6 September. We will then include both letters in the agenda of our next available committee meeting.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Hennehan', written in a cursive style.

COUNCILLOR TERRY HENNEGAN
Vice-Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee
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