

Councillor Louise Gibbard
Convener – Community Cohesion
Scrutiny Working Group

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Mary Sherwood
Direct Line: 01792 63 7428
E-Mail: cllr.mary.sherwood@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: MS/KH
Your Ref:
Date: 11 July 2018

Dear Councillor Gibbard

Thank you for your positive comments about our community cohesion work and indeed about a meeting in which I would have liked to have participated. Cllr Evans included this item in his handover to me, and we presumed I would be invited to any further meetings. It would have been helpful for me to hear the discussion first hand and contribute some additional items of interest to the group, whose views I would have valued. Please note my frustration and disappointment at not having known the meeting was occurring.

In response to your points raised in the letter in relation to WG future funding of the regional community cohesion, I share your concern and will be writing to the relevant Cabinet Secretary to ask for more information about the situation.

In response to the specific points noted below, I am pleased to report that one of my objectives for this year is around community cohesion and address these.

1. Developing a stronger role for Councillors in mainstreaming community cohesion.
2. Whether there needs to be a bigger role for Local Area Co-ordinators in the mainstreaming of community cohesion.
3. That the myth busting information is shared/used more widely, made available online and shared via social media.
4. That links are made with and information supplied to Governing Bodies.
5. Make more use of local media including using corporate communications to get more good news stories and myth busting out into local community

One of my objectives is to '**Involve Councillors in Community Cohesion**' and includes;

1. **Countering negative messaging (involving corporate communications and other channels available to us)**
2. **Supporting interactions that bring groups together 3) supporting hate crime reporting & intelligence at the community level.**

This objective responds to some of the concerns expressed by officers and wider partners, which I believe you have heard about. I intend to work with officers to develop

this into an action plan. The aim is to ensure that councillors have the necessary information and support to play a fuller role as you have referred to in your letter.

The action plan will be drafted by the end of September and will include gathering of prevalent myths to inform how best to counter them. Members of the working group and the wider councillor body may have heard myths they would like to flag up; officers would be glad to receive these examples. Likewise if councillors have ideas for community activities they would like to contribute to the action plan, these would be welcome. Input will also be invited from wider partners who are members of the Safer Swansea Partnership, and the plan will be shared with the PSB. Both bodies have their own objective of developing "stronger communities". Councillors who are school governors will then hopefully be better equipped to help influence community cohesion in schools.

Use of social media will be a feature within action plan, with resources being produced that councillors can easily share online. In view of points 3 and 4 of your letter I am happy to extend the action plan to include the development of online resources which can be made widely available to others, including governing bodies.

Local Area Co-ordinators already play a significant role in connecting individuals, groups and communities. They do this with a focus on an individual who is on their caseload. The central concern is the individual but of course, community cohesion is an underpinning aspect of their work.

I look forward to any further contribution members of the working group and wider councillor in relation to community cohesion.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR MARY SHERWOOD
CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER COMMUNITIES - PEOPLE