



**To/  
Councillor Mark Child  
Cabinet Member for Care, Health &  
Ageing Well**

**BY EMAIL**

cc Cabinet Members

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**SPC/2018-19/8**

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Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member following the meeting of the Committee on 10 December 2018. It is about Western Bay Health & Social Care Programme, the Public Services Board, Funding for Health & Social Care, and Local Area Coordination.

Dear Councillor Child,

### **Cabinet Member Question Session – 10 December**

Thank you for attending the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 10 December 2018 and answering questions on your work as Cabinet Member for Care, Health & Ageing Well.

We appreciate you providing a written paper in support of your appearance. The Q & A session gave us an opportunity to explore priorities and achievement in relation to your areas of responsibility.

You highlighted key priorities within your portfolio, referring to the importance of prevention and early intervention, modernisation and integrated working, as well as dealing with the pressures arising from austerity and increasing demand for the service. You reported that whilst progress is constantly being made in efficiency, prevention and reablement, the savings made by achieving these improvements lags behind the impact of increasing pressures.

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We acknowledged that Adult Services is the focus of one of our Scrutiny Performance Panels and therefore your work is subject to close scrutiny. We are aware of your ongoing engagement with that Panel. As such we focussed on a small number of issues at the Committee.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the Committee, and, where necessary, raise any outstanding issues / actions for your response. The main issues discussed are summarised below:

### **Western Bay Health & Social Care Programme**

Questions had been received by the Committee in advance of the meeting from a member of the public in relation to the Western Bay regional Health & Social Care Programme. You are the Council's lead councillor and member of the Programme's Board. We noted from your written paper the various work being carried out, including specific projects to improve integration between health and social care, and multi-agency working. We also noted that the Programme will work with partners to ensure that services are not affected as a result of the boundary change for the Partnership with Bridgend County Borough Council moving to the Cwm Taf Partnership.

The questions from the member of public focussed on the availability of the minutes and agendas for the Western Bay Regional Partnership Board as well as knowledge, accessibility and transparency of the work being undertaken and allowing for greater public engagement. You undertook to provide a written response to the questions received, and we are happy to see that you have already done so.

### **Relationship with the Public Services Board**

On the subject of multi-agency working we asked you about your role and involvement in the work of the Swansea Public Service Board (PSB) and whether it is adding value to areas of your cabinet portfolio. We heard that you sit on Swansea PSB's Partnership Group. You reported that closer links are currently being forged between the PSB and Western Bay, and that current governance reviews of both Western Bay and Swansea PSB will explore the relationship further.

You explained how the work within your portfolio was critical to the delivery of the PSB's Well-being Plan. In particular, the 'Live Well, Age Well' objective takes a whole life approach to ageing well and aims to help people to plan and live well in order to age well, and the 'Stronger Communities' objective is supported by approaches such as Local Area Coordination.

You told us that:

- Ageing Well takes a partnership approach across all its work.
- The Making Every Contact Count pilot has been developed and delivered by public and voluntary sector partners in Swansea. You felt that credit for progress can be attributed to the PSB.
- All public services in Swansea have been promoting the Dementia Friends approach and working towards being dementia friendly.

You felt that greater collaboration between public service partners, backed by the Well-being of Future Generations Act, was a help to tackling the issues under your responsibility as well as wider well-being goals, and commented positively about the engagement of partners to the priorities. However, you acknowledged some difficulties for partners where there are differences in regional footprints, and ideally the same regional footprints for public services would be more effective to improving integrated working.

### **Funding for Health & Social Care**

We discussed the Welsh Government's funding of Social Services and the Health Service and whether there was a fair balance / distribution of funding between the two.

You stated that whilst seamless working between health and social care was a Welsh Government objective, the balance of funding has not been right in recent years. The cuts in funding for councils, in real terms, have put pressure on the social services budget, whilst health services have seen an increase in funding. We heard that considerable pressure has been put on Welsh Government by local government to redress the balance. We noted that Welsh Government have acknowledged this and that you were positive about the situation improving.

One particular concern that the Committee had was about resources to promote and support independent living. Your paper stated that Welsh Government will implement a super grant in 2019/20 which will bring several grants together and enable increased flexibility. We wanted to know whether you were satisfied about the resources available to support independent living. You highlighted that success in supporting people should in the long-term mean reduced need for resources.

### **Local Area Coordination**

Following up on previous discussion with you we discussed progress with Local Area Coordination.

It was disappointing that the Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service have withdrawn a secondment for the Local Area Coordinator, which covered Gowerton, Loughor and Penllergaer areas, a year early. However, you stated

that it remains the ambition to expand Local Area Coordination provision to all in Swansea. You reported that this approach was expanding, with funding in place for Coordinators secured from sources including Pobl and ABMU Health Board, using Welsh Government's Transformation Fund. We heard that this investment has enabled two new posts in the Llansamlet and Blaenymaes / Portmead areas and a new recruitment process had been used for their appointment. We asked about the involvement of local councillors in this process.

With regard to the loss of the Local Area Coordinator in the north west of Swansea you expressed regret at the situation particularly at the timing because of the amount of effort it takes to develop local knowledge and build up relationships. You assured the Committee that this gap will be filled as soon as funding is secured.

We asked you about the benefits, effectiveness and value for money of the Local Area Coordination approach. Whilst not a panacea for everything, you talked about support for Local Area Coordination from partners and the wider benefits to increasing independence and community resilience, and reducing demand for services. You welcomed councillors contacting you about the scope of Local Area Coordination should they have ideas about possible ways in which Local Area Coordinators could help local communities.

We noted that ongoing work includes the development of a performance framework to demonstrate return on investment from Local Area Coordination. You also reported that it was hoped a pilot area, focusing on Blaenymaes, will ensure effective performance and reporting mechanisms are developed. You referred to positive reviews of Local Area Coordination in Swansea, as well as powerful individual stories showing how this approach is making a difference. We heard that other Councils have begun to express interest in the work going on in Swansea. You also referred to the examples in other areas of the UK providing good evidence of what is considered a proven method of return on social investment.

We asked you to share with us the evidence which shows the impact / outcomes of Local Area Coordination specifically for Swansea, and financial impact in terms of reducing demand / costs for Social Services.

## **Your Response**

In your response we would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter. We would be grateful, however, if you could specifically refer to our request for you to provide copy of evidence / links to studies regarding the effectiveness of Local Area Coordination.

Please provide the response to this and any other comments about our letter by 7 February. We will then include both letters in the agenda of the next available Committee meeting.

We will arrange to follow up on portfolio developments and invite you to a future Committee meeting in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Jones

**COUNCILLOR MARY JONES**

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

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