



**To/  
Councillor Clive Lloyd  
Cabinet Member for Business  
Transformation and Performance**

**BY EMAIL**

*Please ask for:  
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:  
Llinell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail  
e-Bost:*

*Date  
Dyddiad:*

Overview & Scrutiny

01792 636292

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

24<sup>th</sup> September 2019

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Performance following the meeting of the Panel on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The letter concerns the report on Charges.

Dear Councillor Lloyd,

On the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2019, the Panel met to discuss Charges.

The Panel are grateful to all who attended to provide information and answer questions. The Panel do have some thoughts and observations to share with you.

The report we received was extremely thorough and we appreciate the effort that went into compiling it. From a scrutiny perspective we found it helpful to have an overview contained within the written report which could then highlight any major changes which need to be brought to our attention. Spreadsheets can be provided on an exceptional basis if there is anything the Panel needs to see.

You told us how each department is responsible for their own fees and charges and any increase is kept as reasonable as possible. We heard there is a lot of legislation which needs to be considered when a Council sets charges. You also explained social services have a separate policy and separate legislation which covers its charges.

We heard how the commercial team are always looking for new ways to produce additional income.

We were told how Council Tax does not cover all of the expenses the Council has so there has to be ways to cover costs. You told us how Swansea still does not charge for garden waste collection when other Councils do.

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We discussed the issue of Marina Berthing Fees and we would like to know who this cost is benchmarked with? Can you also tell us have the fees changed payment structure as there is no information available for 15/16, 16/17 and 17/18. If so, can you provide us the previous payment information?

We have asked previously about the effectiveness of internal charging and you assured us that there is an open dialogue between departments to resolve any issues if they arise. We hope this continues to make this process as efficient as possible.

You said that there will be a move toward digitising payment services going forward to reduce transaction costs. Whilst simplifying services is important, we hope that there is consideration of the people using them as not everyone is computer literate. We also want to see reasonableness applied, for example, automatically generated letters, for tiny amounts (£1 for example) are reviewed before they are sent to assess the cost/benefit ratio.

We would be grateful if you could respond to the following question by 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and welcome any thoughts you may have.

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Yours sincerely,



**Councillor Chris Holley**  
**Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel**  
✉ [cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk)