



**To/
Councillor David Hopkins
Cabinet Member for Delivery and
Performance**

BY EMAIL

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrchol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Overview & Scrutiny

01792 636292

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

29 January 2020

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Delivery and Performance. The letter concerns the meeting on 20 January 2020 and the Quarter 2 Corporate Performance Monitoring.

Dear Councillor Hopkins,

On the 20 January 2020, the Panel met to discuss the Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring Report 19/20. The Panel are grateful to Corporate Performance Manager for attending to discuss the report.

We heard that overall 49% of indicators have meet their targets and 39% are showing improvements. This is showing a decline in performance from the corresponding quarter last year. Fewer indicators are showing improvement overall compared with this time last year.

Some of the individual indicators we discussed include:

- *AS13a Number of carers (18+) who received a carer's assessment in their own right during the financial year.* 52 fewer carer's assessment were completed compared to 2018/19. We heard that this was attributed directly to the sickness levels within the integrated hubs, these are being managed and it is hoped the next quarter will see an improvement.
- *AS9 - The percentage of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) assessments completed in 21 days or less.* We heard that performance has dipped compared to previous quarters but this will improve with permanent staff rather than staff rotating. We want to find out more about when this will happen.
- *CFS18 - The rate of looked after children (LAC) per 10,000 of the 0-17 Swansea population at the end of the period and CFS2 – The number of Looked After Children (LAC) at end of period.* We heard there has been a recent reduction in the LAC population and it is stabilising. There is a safe LAC reduction strategy in place, which is monitored monthly through the strategic LAC meeting. The current pressures relate to children under 2 years of age.

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SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

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- Measure 19 – *The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 and over.* We heard that staff shortages within the domiciliary care sector continue to impact on this service. However, they have recently re-tendered the service splitting the providers into geographical zones, which is expected to have a positive impact on delays.
- BBMA4 – *The number of apprenticeships or trainee starts in the Council.* We heard this indicator records new starts and is currently under review to include a wider apprentice and trainee strategy. This will include the recruitment of trainees and in work apprentices which are currently not recorded.
- EDU015b – *The percentage of final statements of Special Education Needs (SEN) issued within 26 weeks excluding exceptions.* We heard that this quarter covers school holidays when there are less staff, however, there are capacity issues within the team due to the volume of operational day to day work as well as a backlog of statements which are affecting the ability of the team to reduce the backlog and improve the PI. Secondly, the system is largely paper drive and there is not capacity to review systems to improve efficiency without compromising the LA statutory duties further.
- POV07 – *The number of training and employment person weeks created by Beyond Bricks and Mortar for unemployed and economically inactive.* We heard this is 27% lower than last year. There has been a delay in the start of a number of projects, which has reduced the number of opportunities for training work. It is envisaged they will catch up on this delay in the weeks and months ahead.
- HBCT01a – *Housing Benefit speed of processing, average time for processing new claims.* We understand there has been a drop in performance, but as expected, due to reduced resources and because the more complex cases remain in housing benefit and easier cases transfer to Universal Credit.
- HBCT01b – *Housing Benefit speed of processing, average time for processing notification of change in circumstances.* A minor dip in performance as expected due to reduced resources.
- HBCT02a – *Council Tax reduction speed of processing, average time for processing new claims.* As expected, performance has dipped due to a process change, which increased Council Tax Reductions granted to individuals at the cost of an apparent decrease in performance stats. In reality, no worsening of the service to applicants.
- HBCT02b – *Council Tax speed of processing, average time for processing notification of change in circumstances.* A minor dip in performance as expected due to reduced resources.
The panel wished to find out more about the decline in the processing of Housing Benefits and Council Tax shown in the above four indicators and have asked for more information.
- CHR002 – *The number of working days/shifts per full time equivalent lost due to sickness absence.* We heard that the data is currently under review and in a new Management of Absence Policy is underway. Proposals have also been sent to CMT for targeted objectives to reduce sickness in the longer term. The Panel would like to see at breakdown of this indicator by department and by issue.
- FINA6 – *Percentage of identified forecast General Fund Revenue savings and income for the year compared to originally approved budget.* We understand the Corporate Management Team continues to expect that both service and overall

net expenditure be held within the relevant limits for the current year's budget as set by Council.

We heard about the four indicators that will be reported to Cabinet annually relating to the natural environment and biodiversity. We heard that these will include indicators on carbon reduction, trees planted, areas of wildflower sown and water quality. We would like to see the descriptors for these including how they were chosen and put together.

We were concerned to hear that the Corporate Biodiversity Working Group had no direct reporting mechanism into any Councillor meetings. The Convener of the Natural Environment Scrutiny Panel plan will follow up upon this in his panel.

We are interested in any thoughts you may have on the contents of this letter but can we please have a written response to the following points by 19 February 2020

- 1) Indicator AS9 - *The percentage of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) assessments completed in 21 days or less.* We heard that performance has dipped compared to previous quarters but this will improve with permanent staff rather than staff rotating. Can you tell us when this will happen?
- 2) The panel wished to find out more about the decline in the processing of Housing Benefits and Council Tax shown in the four indicators HBCT01a, HBCT01b, HBCT02a, HBCT01b. Can you please provide us with more information about the reasons for this decline?
- 3) CHR002 – *The number of working days/shifts per full time equivalent lost due to sickness absence.* We heard that this data is currently under review and in a new Management of Absence Policy is underway. The Panel would like to see a breakdown of this indicator by department and by sickness reason.
- 4) We heard about the four indicators relating to the natural environment and biodiversity that will be reported to Cabinet annually, which include indicators on carbon reduction, trees planted, areas of wildflower sown and water quality. Can you provide us with the descriptors for these including how they were chosen and put together?

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Jeff Jones

Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

✉ Cllr.jeff.jones@swansea.gov.uk