



To:
Councillor Robert Smith
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Michelle Roberts
Gofynnwch am:
Scrutiny Office 01792 637256
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrchol:
e-Mail scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
e-Bost:
Date 23 May 2024
Dyddiad:

Summary: This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 9 May 2024. The Panel discussed updates on Sustainable Communities for Learning and the Swansea Skills Partnership.

Dear Cllr Smith,

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 9 May 2024

We would like to thank you and the officers from the Education Directorate for attending the meeting and providing information for the Panel. We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and to share the views of the Panel.

Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme

We thanked the Team Manager for Education Capital for providing a detailed PowerPoint presentation updating us on progress with Sustainable Communities for Learning. We heard about how the programme has been delivered to date both in relation the Band A and B, the remaining Band B programme and the new rolling strategic outline programme revision. We were told about the associated key risks to the programme including capacity and resilience both within and outside of the council, funding risks and developer contributions with associated timing uncertainty.

We were also interested to hear about the progress being made in relation to the provision for universal free school meals, community focused schools and additional learning needs. Hearing that 74 of the 80 schools works have been completed or have no works required, there are 2 remaining schools plus 5 where major projects are due to be completed by March 2025.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TRUSLOW A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

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

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

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

We were pleased to hear about the continued delivery of the capital maintenance programme including under both the Band A and B period and the continued maintenance on 68+ schools but did note that Welsh Government funding for education assets has been reduced from £3.6m to £0.83m.

We were interested to hear about the Local Development Plan Strategic Sites including potential new builds included in the strategic masterplans for Swansea. We look forward to seeing how these progress.

We asked about the ownership and funding arrangement for the Bishop Vaughan and Daniel James sites, including the reasons for how things are going to be done, hearing that after much consideration the most cost-effective option was chosen.

We were also interested to hear about how Swansea is looking to fund its new school builds in the future. You told us that there are not plans to use the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) here in Swansea.

Swansea Skills Partnership Annual Update

We thanked the Strategic Co-ordinator Education Skills for a comprehensive report updating us on progress with the Swansea Skills Partnership. He gave us an update on the new strategic priorities for the partnership which include three new workstreams, namely

1. Develop stronger collaboration partnerships with employers
2. Develop collaborative partnerships to explore the delivery of 14-19 vocational programmes from a place and provision perspective
3. To establish collaborative partnerships to develop and deliver a wider range of high-quality post 16 programmes

We were told that the refreshed approach to the partnership with new workstreams has seen a strong level of engagement from partners from all organisations. The workstreams have already had a positive impact to support vocational and employability skills, enhance progression opportunities and support learner aspirations.

We welcome and congratulate the work being done by the Swansea Skills Partnership feeling that it is inspiring and groundbreaking and will put Swansea ahead in Wales making a real difference to young people here. Although we felt for it to be fully inclusive there needs to be a higher level of business engagement on the Partnership itself. We were told that this is the aspiration but nominations from businesses are needed to be able to progress this further.

We recognise and support the work around vocational learning and were pleased to hear about the new suite of vocational qualifications called VCSE's. Hearing that VCSE courses will be fully accessible to all pupils including those with additional learning needs.

We were also interested to hear about the development of a number of courses that can be accessed online. We did emphasise the importance of being mindful of young people's ability to access the equipment needed to complete an online course.

Your Response

We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter but on this occasion do not require a formal response.

Yours sincerely

COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk