



**CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA**  
**DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE**

**Cllr Rob Stewart**  
**Chair of Swansea Public Services**  
**Board**

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**31 January 2017**

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Chair of the Public Services Board following the meeting of the Panel on 18 January. It contains feedback from the Panel's Q & A session with the Director of Swansea Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS) and provides comments on the draft Wellbeing Assessment.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

This letter is to provide you and the members of the Public Services Board (PSB) with feedback from the meeting of the Public Services Board Scrutiny Panel (the Panel), which took place 18 January 2017.

**Q&A session with the Director of SCVS**

As you are aware we are undertaking a series of Q & A sessions with all the core group members in order to understand the contribution their organisations are making to the work of the PSB. As result of our discussion with Amanda Carr, Director of SCVS, we would like to raise the following points for consideration by the PSB.

We were encouraged to hear the view of the Director that the key role of the PSB is to look at service delivery for the key objectives and focus on co-ordinating the resources that are already in place in order to avoid duplication and ensure they are used effectively. We will continue to look for examples of how this is being achieved as we take forward our scrutiny of the PSB.

We were pleased to hear that the PSB is establishing a working group to develop a communication strategy, as it is important that the work of the board is clear, transparent and understood by the public. We believe that this strategy needs to be community focused and look for ways to encourage greater public involvement in the development of the PSB's work and priorities. We support SCVS's view that the communication strategy needs to focus on engagement and ways of taking forward co-production, and not just focus on promoting key messages. However we also acknowledge that resources need to be in place to develop and deliver this, and believe the PSB should consider how this will be supported.

We discussed the uncertainty of funding faced by SCVS and other third sector organisations, which can impact on its ability to support the work of the PSB and to forward plan. We were disappointed to hear that there is no longer a specific Partnership Officer based in SCVS, who had a key role in connecting the work of the third sector with public sector bodies. Whilst it is within the remit of the Director to attend key strategic meetings, we were advised that SCVS is often not always able to provide or coordinate representation to sub, working and task and finish groups. We therefore recommend that the PSB considers the option of agreeing some pooled funding to facilitate the involvement of the third sector in its work.

### **Consultation on the draft Wellbeing Assessment**

We discussed the draft Wellbeing Assessment, in our role as statutory consultees, and have the following comments that we wish to be taken into account as part of the formal consultation process:

- There is a need for a plain English summary to make the Wellbeing Assessment more accessible.
- It appears that the comparative data used to inform the scores for the drivers is based on a comparison only with other Welsh authorities, however the Panel felt that the comparative data should be widened to include best performing authorities from across the UK for a more accurate picture of how well Swansea is performing, given that Wales is not necessarily best performing. Similarly, strategy/objectives should be set against best in class – particularly where we have scored ourselves highly.
- We felt that the score given for E2 (children, young people and adults have good mental health and wellbeing) was too high, based on the findings from the scrutiny inquiry into CAMHS (Children's and Adolescents Mental Health Services), which found a concerning lack of service provision for children and young people with mental health issues. Similarly the Panel expects that findings from other scrutiny work/inquiries should inform the Wellbeing Assessment.

- Statements within the Wellbeing Assessment should be clear whether they are based on fact or opinion and if based on data then clearly referenced, for example, outcome D states that the majority of people living in Swansea are not in income poverty. We do not dispute this statement however we believe that the statements such as these should reference the evidence on which they are based.

Panel members will also contribute to the consultation process individually via the survey.

### **Forthcoming meetings**

Continuing our Q & A sessions with PSB core group members, we will be meeting with you and Andrew Davies (ABMU) on 15 February.

### **Your response**

In your response we would appreciate your comments on the issues raised in this letter. We would be grateful however if you could specifically respond to the following recommendations:

- The PSB's communication strategy should focus on engagement and ways of taking forward co-production, and not just on promoting key messages.
- The PSB should confirm how the development and delivery of its communication strategy will be resourced.
- The PSB should consider the need to facilitate the involvement of the third sector in its work, for example the option of agreeing pooled funding to support this.
- Confirm that our comments in relation to the Wellbeing Assessment will be considered as part of the revised draft.

I would be grateful if you could reply to this letter by 21 February 2017.

Yours sincerely,



**Councillor Mary Jones**

**Convener, Public Services Board Scrutiny Performance Panel**

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