

Ms. Sophie Howe
Future Generations Commissioner for
Wales

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Rob Stewart
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Our Ref: RS/KH
Your Ref:
Date: 2nd January 2018

Dear Ms. Howe

Advice to Swansea Public Service Board (PSB)

Thank you for your letter dated 31st October 2017 providing us with advice and feedback regarding our draft Wellbeing Objectives. You have provided us with much to consider in your feedback letter. We have reflected as a partnership on the issues you have raised with us and will ensure that those considerations are part of our thinking in developing our final objectives and steps in our Wellbeing Plan. Clearly, we have made additional progress in developing our objectives and recognise that your feedback was at a particular point in time.

Your letter suggests that you welcome feedback on your advice and any suggestions for improvements and Swansea PSB are keen to provide such feedback to you.

The Partnership had been expecting advice and information based on our draft Wellbeing Objectives, our needs and the maturity of our partnership here in Swansea. We were therefore disappointed to find your letter does not reflect the Swansea experience, resembles a document that has been cut and pasted and indeed at one point actually refers to us as Bridgend!

For example, we were surprised and disappointed to read your comments about children's rights. Swansea is rightly known as a leader in this area in Wales and also internationally. Swansea Council has imposed a 'due regard duty' on itself by embedding the UNCRC into its policy framework and is the first in the world to do so; ABMU is the only health board to have embedded children's rights into its planning process with a Children's Charter and a Youth Forum and more recently South Wales Police has also adopted the UNCRC. Collectively, this area has an outstanding commitment to and record on supporting and enhancing children's rights. We would have been interested in an analysis that recognised these developments and provided information and advice to take us to the next level to provide world-renowned approaches to consideration of children's rights.

Further, you mention that we should 'go beyond traditional consultation and engagement and involve people with lived experience'. Again, Swansea partners do this both

individually and collectively on a regular basis. Our existing priority areas have all had an element of coproduction and whilst recognising that there is more to do and that we can learn more, it seemed there was little recognition of our existing work. For example, you mention the potential for social prescribing and it is worth reflecting that this is a part of our existing work to Give Children the Best Start in Life and the existing action plan.

We also believe that you have misunderstood how we work here in Swansea. You make numerous comments about our structures, but these are both contradictory and unhelpful. There seems to be a lack of clarity about the role of the operational leads being a temporary one to produce the Wellbeing Plan, and there is also a lack of understanding that there are a series of subgroups delivering on wider operational objectives through the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership Group, the Safer Swansea Steering Group, Healthy City Board, Poverty Forum and Regeneration Partnership. You mention that you hear conflicting information about the structures – we would have been more than happy to provide you with additional information if asked, that is based on the evidence of what happens locally. We recognise that there is a balance between a focused accountability structure and the involvement principle and whilst recognising that we think we have good arrangements in Swansea we will be reviewing them as a matter of course once the Wellbeing Plan is completed, as we had intended to do. Your comments about the Partnership being too ‘Council-led’ and at the same time referencing throughout the improvements needing to be made to ‘public services’ fails to recognise the breadth of the membership of our Partnership.

I recognise that it has been some time since the officers initially met with you and that further actions have been delivered since then. For example, the Best Start in Life Steering Group has hosted a First 1000 Days conference as a first step to undertaking a full mapping of work taking place in Swansea and a full action plan. We have also held a number of events on Adverse Childhood Experiences to encourage partners to become more ACE-aware.

We also have a good history in Swansea of partnership working on Healthy City work, achieving the World Health Organisation designation of Healthy City. Our work on Healthy Nightlife with the Help Point has proven to be a strong example that has been picked up across Wales as good practice in partnership working between the Police, Health Board, Council and voluntary sector partners.

I am aware that the officers have found the references to additional information – both from yourself and from wider sources – to be most helpful and would have been even more helpful had they been in the form of a reading list, to which we can regularly refer.

I look forward to addressing these issues with you and your office in the months and years to come. I’m happy to meet with you to provide further clarity on the progress of the Swansea partnership if that is helpful.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR ROB STEWART
CHAIR OF SWANSEA PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD
On behalf of Swansea PSB