

Councillor Chris Holley
Convener – Service Improvement &
Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Rob Stewart
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Our Ref: RS/KH
Your Ref:
Date: 17 May 2018

Dear Councillor Holley

Thank you for your letter dated 27th April 2018.

I respond to the points you raised as follows.

1. The performance of free school meals remains stable at key stages 2 and 3. However, the gap in performance for free school meals pupils had widened in 2017 at key stages 4 and at foundation phase. We would like to find out if there are any underlying issues and what is being done to address this?

The gap has widened at key stage 4 primarily because of changes to qualifications in Wales. There are now fewer options for pupils to take vocational qualifications than in previous years. In schools with high FSM pupils, there has generally been higher uptake of vocational courses at GCSE, up until 2017. For pupils to achieve the L2+, only 2/5 of the 5 GCSEs could be non-GCSEs, down from 60% in previous years.

In addition, the English component of L2+ and CSI became English language only, as opposed to English language or literature. There were also changes to the English language which made written accuracy more demanding. In mathematics, 2017 saw the introduction of an additional maths GCSE – maths/numeracy. Therefore this increased the exam load, and furthermore, the maths/numeracy is very language heavy, which probably impacted on FSM performance as these pupils performed 3% points lower than normal maths nationally.

Overall, these factors impacted on all pupils, but more for those eligible for FSM.

In order to support schools with the qualification changes, regional Leaders of Learning have been appointed to support core subjects at secondary schools.

The last three year 2 cohorts show small reductions in FSM and SEN but a small rise in EAL:-

Year	Cohort	FSM	SEN	EAL A-C	% FSM	% SEN	% EAL A-C
2015	2827	604	864	288	21.4%	30.6%	10.2%
2016	2656	569	806	302	21.4%	30.3%	11.4%
2017	2692	544	799	293	20.2%	29.7%	10.9%

FSM is falling slightly. Eligibility rules have since changed due to universal credit so it's difficult to compare after 2017. SEN for Year 2 is higher than County average each year (about 25% overall in Swansea). EAL is also high for Year 2 – about 3% higher than County average each year due to large numbers of early stage English learners who catch up later.

- We read that commercial floor space continues to be delivered via the Vibrant and Viable Places funded schemes with public and private sector partners across the City Centre. Can you provide us with the figure relating to the amount of floor space which is due to be delivered?

In the 2017/18 financial year 11,802m² of commercial floor space was delivered via the Vibrant & Viable Places funding scheme.

- Training and employment person weeks are being created by the Council's Beyond Bricks and Mortar scheme for the unemployed and economically inactive. Can you provide us with the number of training weeks being created?

In 2017/18 in excess of 2300 Training and employment person weeks have been created by the Council's Beyond Bricks & Mortar scheme for the unemployed and economically inactive.

- The number of new housing units created in Swansea City Centre (as a result of V&VP realizing the Potential funding) is below target due to delay of one scheme. Can you provide details of the delay?

The number of new housing units created in Swansea City Centre (as a result of V&VP funding) was 80 units. The delay of one scheme, 15-20 Castle Street, owing to 3rd party delivery issues, has now been overcome and the scheme is now actually on site. When completed in early 2019, it will deliver an additional 22 units.

- The selected operators for the Arena project are very close to signing the legal agreement. Can you provide a timescale for this?

The selected operator for the Arena project, Ambassador Theatre Group, have now signed the legal agreement and a launch event has been held in London.

- We read that demolition of 232 and 233 Oxford street was due to commence in February. Could you please provide us with a breakdown of the demolition? Firstly as a breakdown for each property, then as an overall cost if the combined figure is different.

The pre-start removal of Licensed Asbestos from 232/233 Oxford Street cost £13,836. The tender figure for demolition of 232/233 Oxford Street and soft strip of Barclays Bank is £346,434. This tender includes for building works to Party Walls 231/232 and 233/234, basement infill to 232/233, basement protection to 231/232 and 233/234, site surface water drainage and surfacing the footprint.

7. Can you provide us with an update on the funding review which took place in March relating to the mid-term Heritage Lottery Funding review for the Hafod Copperworks?

The Development Review meeting (mid-term review) held on the 9th March with the Project Team and HLF Case Officer, and HLF Appraiser was well received. Some constructive feedback was received to further refine some documents to support the application in readiness for the Stage 2 submission by the deadline, 24th May 2018 to HLF. The Project Team is therefore progressing at haste the Stage 2 submission by the deadline.

Yours sincerely



**COUNCILLOR ROB STEWART
LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY & STRATEGY**

