

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

Please ask for: Councillor Rob Stewart
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Our Ref: RS/KH
Your Ref:
Date: 24th January 2018

Dear Councillor Holley

Thank you for your letter dated 9th January 2018 regarding the Annual Review of Performance 2016/17 and Quarter 2 2017/18 Revenue and Capital Monitoring.

Annual Review of Performance 2016/17

The self-assessment of progress meeting each of our corporate priorities in 2016/17, which is set out in our Annual Review of Performance, uses a standard methodology that has been in place over the last few years and is aimed at ensuring a level of consistency.

Each self-assessment is an evaluation of progress made against the steps set out within the Corporate Plan. This judgement is made by the responsible service or services based on an assessment of the available evidence.

Taking into account the specific points that you make about each priority. I agree with you that it is difficult to self-assess against the broader issues of tackling poverty and building sustainable communities, which is why we only self-assess against the specific commitments set out within the corporate plan. The *'Building Sustainable Communities'* priority has been replaced by *'Transformation and Future Council development'* for 2017 onwards.

The evaluation of our performance and prospects related to the *'Creating a vibrant and viable city and economy priority'*, like all the self-assessments, has been based on a holistic view of the achievements and confidence of future plans. It would be unrealistic to award Grade 1 for performance as clearly our work is not fully successful, but is mainly successful. Hence the award of Grade 2.

Likewise, a Grade 3 for prospects does not properly reflect the true potential of the opportunities and the steps taken to reduce barriers to a manageable level. Although some barriers do remain, on balance, a Grade 2 is considered more appropriate on this occasion.

The Chief Education Officer and other officers meet with Estyn's Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) on a termly basis. Progress and issues in both schools and the Education Department are discussed with the LALI. Schools produce annual School Improvement Plans, which are reviewed throughout the academic year. Schools now receive three Core

Support Visits from their Challenge Advisers. These visits closely align to National Categorisation guidance and to the new Estyn framework in order to respond to changes in expectations and behaviours nationally. Categorisation shows that the majority of Swansea schools are in a green or yellow support category, which demonstrates that schools' capacity to improve is good.

In addition to the annual review of performance of the Corporate Plan, the Education department undertakes a detailed annual self-evaluation exercise, which looks at the department's performance against Estyn's Common Inspection Framework. The draft self-evaluation is shared with Estyn and schools (via the School Improvement Partnership). The timing of producing the annual review of performance in July/August means that it is difficult to share the document with schools and Estyn, however, we could work with the corporate performance team to begin this process earlier to allow this to take place.

However, I believe that the Grade 2/Grade 2 rating is an accurate assessment of performance/prospects for improvement. Attainment results for the 2015-2016 academic year show the majority of indicators reaching their targets. Priorities going forward have been reviewed and plans have been developed to reach these. Where barriers have been identified, e.g. other organisations, work is ongoing to resolve these. The Corporate Priority 'Improving Pupil Attainment' has been revised to 'Improving Education and Skills' for 2017 onwards.

Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2nd Quarter 2017/18

I agree entirely that the budget pressures facing Adult Social Services are immense, and growing and indeed driven predominantly by demand as a result of an ageing population.

I would draw your attention to the draft budget proposals out to consultation for 2018-19 where we are investing cash directly into Adult Social Services to address current overspending and also looking to progress much of what is suggested. Early intervention and action to remodel services in line with the commissioning reviews which seek to align packages of care to ensure early intervention and the right level of care packages to those who need them now, to avoid potentially more costly interventions at a later stage.

In terms of the very specific example around sheltered housing, that thinking is very much in line with Cabinet's aspirations to look at how best to align services more seamlessly, and see how once we have addressed our spending on meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard we make use of the headroom in the HRA to roll out more housing provision including potentially more sheltered housing, as well as more standard new council housebuilding and energy efficient innovative housing solutions.

If you need anything further please let me know.

Yours sincerely



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