



**To/
Councillor Clive Lloyd
Cabinet Member for Service
Transformation & Business
Operations (Deputy Leader)**

BY EMAIL

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SPC/2017-18/4

29 September 2017

Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation & Business Operations following the meeting of the Committee on 11 September 2017. It is about Sustainability, Pension Fund, Data Protection, Strategic Estates & Property, Poverty Reduction and Policy Development & Delivery Committees.

Dear Councillor Lloyd,

Cabinet Member Question Session – 11 September

Thank you for attending the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 11 September 2017 and answering questions on your work as Cabinet Member for Service Transformation & Business Operations.

Firstly, congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Leader of the Council. Although you have a new cabinet portfolio title we noted that this represented little change from previous responsibilities.

We wanted to explore priorities, actions, achievements and impact, in relation to your areas of responsibility. Thank you for providing a written paper, giving headlines from the cabinet portfolio, in support of your appearance.

You took the opportunity to highlight the following:

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- Challenging budget & finances - you told us to expect another poor settlement from Government which is likely to mean a £16m funding gap for the next year. We noted that there will be detailed discussions between Cabinet Members and officers during October, and that difficult decisions lay ahead.
- A revised Corporate Plan had been agreed recently by Council and there would be quarterly performance monitoring reports on the key priorities, including measures against the five wellbeing objectives identified in the Plan.
- Progress with the Sustainable Swansea Fit for the Future Programme, including development with the Business Support Programme, and investment in digital to improve services.
- Recent APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) awards won by our Waste Management service and the Highways team for the pothole repair initiative. Swansea was also shortlisted for the council of the year award.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the committee, and, where necessary, raise any outstanding issues / actions for your response. The main issues discussed are summarised below:

Sustainability

There was concern amongst committee members about the effect of changes agreed by Cabinet to the Sustainable Development Team, following the Planning & City Regeneration Commissioning Review. When we considered that report the Committee had argued against splitting up the existing team and function given the importance of this work.

You assured the Committee that although sitting within different parts of the organisation the staff will not be working in isolation, and will benefit the aim to further embed sustainable development and long term thinking across the Council, and focus on compliance with Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. You were confident that the cabinet decision did not represent a backward step and that the Council would continue to be at the forefront of this agenda. We agreed that sustainable development was everyone's business and not just down to two members of staff. Furthermore we were told that the plan is to create a stronger larger pool of people, through the new Strategic Delivery Unit, so that sustainable development is embedded in all that we do and part of the culture of the organisation e.g. developing sustainable development champions across the council.

You spoke highly of the Sustainable Development Team and recognised their work and role in developing forward thinking within the Council, which placed Swansea in an advanced position in comparison with other authorities. The work of the team also helped the council to be recognised as the most

sustainable public sector organisation in the UK (Public Sector Sustainability Awards 2015).

We asked about objectives and you told us that sustainable development objectives were reflected in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Pension Fund

We asked you about progress with divestment of the Council's Pension Fund from fossil fuel companies. We felt this would demonstrate the Council's commitment to combating global warming and associated climate change, and supporting renewable energy.

You confirmed that the Pension Fund Committee will be carefully considering this matter this year, balancing the need to seek best returns with the importance of ethical and sustainable investment. We noted the Pension Fund Committee will be having workshops to ensure full understanding of the issues and due diligence, and any decision would need to stand up to challenge. You told us that a possible decision on the matter could follow in the New Year.

Data Protection

We invite all scrutiny councillors to suggest questions that we should raise with cabinet members. We were asked on this occasion to find out about the council's plans and steps being taken to prepare for changes, and ensure compliance with the new framework for data protection laws (European General Data Protection Regulation / UK Data Protection Bill) which come into force in May 2018.

You told us that work is underway for the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation, and would provide a fuller response in writing.

Strategic Estates & Property

Community Asset Transfer Policy:

We discussed the council's role in facilitating community asset transfer and recognised that the process has not been as effective as it should be. We asked what steps have been taken to address problems and make things easier for the public.

You reiterated that this remained an important part of overall strategy in relation to sustainability and savings, and cited positive examples of 'Friends of' groups developing around the city and county. Your report stated that a Community Asset Transfer Policy is in place enabling clearer and quicker response to requests and proposals. You were happy to talk further with individual councillors interested about any issues within their area.

Universal Review of all Council Land:

We noted that small sites have been identified in a universal review of all council land to be marketed to generate capital and reduce revenue costs. You told us that this work has been carried out by officers in liaison with local councillors. Some members, however, appeared to be unaware that this work has taken place. You asked members to contact you if there has been no consultation with them regarding this work.

Poverty Reduction

We noted that poverty reduction is in all cabinet member portfolios, reflecting its priority within the council. You reported some statistics about outcomes achieved between Communities First, Communities for Work, and Lift Programmes.

We asked about the future of Communities First and transition plans. You told us that the council is liaising with the Welsh Government regarding new programmes that will focus on helping people into employment, and considering the impact regarding funding linked to the Communities First programme. You also talked about the role of the Public Services Board in developing a shared Wellbeing Plan which will need to consider poverty reduction.

You recommended a fuller discussion on this matter with the lead cabinet member, Councillor Will Evans. We were interested in the wider strategy, the measures of poverty, and measurable targets that will show progress and achievements.

Policy Development & Delivery Committees

We asked you about the Council's new Policy Development and Delivery Committees (PDDCs). We were interested to know who was responsible for these committees and managing their effectiveness.

You highlighted their role in helping to develop policies / strategies which would lead to reports to Cabinet. You stressed the role of the chair of the committees in overall responsibility for the work carried out, and talked about the benefits of involving and engaging members in the work of the executive.

We remarked that scrutiny produces an annual report to reflect on their work and achievements. We asked whether there ought to be something at end of the year to show the effectiveness of PDDCs.

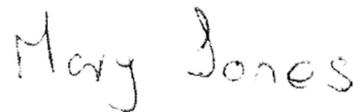
Your Response

In your response we would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter. We would be grateful, however, if you could specifically refer to our request for you to tell us about preparations ahead of the General Data Protection Regulation.

Please provide your response by 20 October. We will then include both letters in the agenda of the next available committee meeting.

We will arrange to follow up on portfolio developments and hearing about achievements and impact in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

COUNCILLOR MARY JONES

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

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