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Welsh Conservative Assembly Member for South Wales West

Aelod Cynulliad Ceidwadwyr Cymreig De Orllewin Cymru

Cllr Rob Stewart and Cabinet
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Dear Cllr Stewart and Cabinet

Swansea Council Cabinet meeting on Thursday 20th December 2018, Agenda Item 8, Small School Review – Proposal to Close Craigcefnparc Primary School

I wrote to each of you on 20th June 2018 about the consultation for the proposed closure of Craigcefnparc Primary School.

I am disappointed that despite writing to you six months ago, have still not received a response.

Having considered the consultation documents and reports relating to Agenda Item 8 for your Cabinet meeting when you will consider further closure of Craigcefnparc School, I can see that a number of matters do not appear to have been fully considered by the Cabinet.

Within the consultation document it is stated that:

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to have a say in decisions that affect them and to have that view taken seriously. Therefore, throughout the process, we will ensure that children and young people have a chance to have a say on the proposals and on how they think it will affect their rights under the convention.

However, at no point does there appear to be any further reference made to Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The consultation documents confirms that two meetings were held with “learners” however this in fact was with the School Council only, as opposed to with all learners at the school.

While a number of meeting and drop in sessions were held with parents and guardians, this does not appear to comply with Article 12.

A number of requests from learners, parents, teachers, and elected representatives were made to Cabinet members for them to personally visit Craigcefnparc School before making a decision on whether to consider consulting on closure. This did not appear to take place and, additionally, it does not appear that Cabinet members have visited the school prior to the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 20th December 2018 either.

Had Cabinet members visited the school in person this could have gone a considerable way to fulfilling your requirements under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as Cabinet members could have heard the views of all learners directly.

With this in mind, could you please explain how you as a Cabinet have fulfilled your duties under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?

I ask that this is made clear prior to you making a decision on Thursday 20th December 2018.

Cabinet have also been reminded of Swansea Council's duty under the Future Generations Act.

It is concerning that the response to this in the documents from is:

The objectives definition of communities is not restricted to specific physical communities of any particular size but includes communities of interest too. The council's plans support the development of a new community which will be created at Clydach Primary School. Arguably, this is an opportunity to be part of a more diverse community with potential benefits in terms of experiencing a wider range of cultures, languages and communities that can enrich pupils' experience. The most relevant of the 3 steps under the objective is 'individuals are connected and feel a sense of belonging' and, while this is true of a small school community, it is also true of larger school communities which tend to benefit from greater intercultural opportunities.

Craigcefnparc has its own Community Council and as such is a community in its own right. It does not appear that you have considered the future impact that this decision could have on the community of Craigcefnparc.

With this in mind, could you please explain how you as a Cabinet have fulfilled your duties to the community of Craigcefnparc under the Future Generations Act?

I ask that this is made clear prior to you making a decision on Thursday 20th December 2018.

In addition to this, it is concerning that within the documents for this agenda item it is also stated:

This proposal has been made for educational reasons and these must be paramount over a perceived impact on the community

This statement appears to go directly against the requirements of Welsh Government's Future Generations Act.

Could you please explain how, considering this statement, you have fully complied with the Future Generations Act?

Finally, it is also concerning to see that you have noted:

Counsellor commented – Wellbeing of Future Generations Act not taken into account in papers in June, will it be taken into account at next stage?

There does not appear to be a response from Cabinet regarding this comment.

I hope that all these concerns and questions are fully answered and, importantly, fully demonstrated prior to you making a decision on whether to close Craigcefnparc Primary School at your Cabinet meeting of 20th December 2018.

Should these not be fully demonstrated I can confirm that your decision will be referred to both the Childrens' Commissioner for Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner.

I look forward to hearing from you.

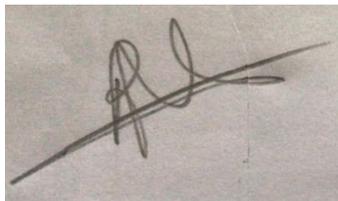
Yours Sincerely,



Suzy Davies AM/AC

Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Education & Welsh Language

Ysgrifennydd Cabinet yr Wrthblaid dros Addysg a'r Iaith Gymraeg



CLlr Brigitte Rowlands

Mawr ward