



**CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA**  
**DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE**

Councillor Mary Jones  
Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

Please ask for:  
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Our Ref / Ein Cyf: WE/SH  
Your Ref / Eich: SPC/2014-15/13  
Cyf:  
Date / Dyddiad: 30 April 2015

**If you require this or any other information in another format e.g. Braille, audio tape or a different language, please contact me**

Dear Councillor Jones

**Cabinet Member Question Session – 16 March 2015**

Thank you for your letter dated the 10 April 2015 regarding the above. I would like to respond as follows:

**Our question about the position with regard to the Target Areas approach previously agreed - if / when / how the policy has changed and what strategies are in place instead to tackle poverty and deprivation in the areas worst affected, with the greatest need;**

The Target Area approach was agreed within the Labour Manifesto and became part of Council policy in July 2012 with the adoption of the Manifesto commitments. The wording in the Manifesto is; 'A Labour Council will seek to develop a 'target area' approach, bringing together departments.

A further Cabinet Paper was agreed on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013 explaining the designated target areas, the process for delivery and the initial actions.

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The target area approach focussed on three Wards of the City & County of Swansea which were Penderry, Castle and Townhill. This Cabinet understands that Poverty is to an extent everywhere and therefore we meet need and tackle poverty where it exists. Part of this approach is learning from the more intensive support in the most deprived areas enabling the Council to identify support mechanisms for those living in poverty elsewhere in the City & County of Swansea.

The Council is therefore taking a needs based approach whether those needs are within specific geographical areas, or within communities of interest. The Council's tackling poverty strategy will work alongside the existing WG tackling poverty programmes of Flying start, Families First and Communities First. These are delivered and focus on the highest areas of need, and therefore the geographical areas with the highest levels of deprivation.

**• Our request for further information about the difference in life expectancy between east and west Swansea;**

In 2011, the Public Health Wales Observatory published their report 'Measuring Inequalities 2011, Trends in mortality and life expectancy in Wales'. Local authority profiles were also published. The reports can be found here:

[http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PubHObservatoryProjDocs.nsf/\(\\$All\)/2089ABAC2C7D658B8025795E005818F1/\\$File/InequalitiesProfilesLA\\_Swansea\\_v1.pdf?OpenElement](http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PubHObservatoryProjDocs.nsf/($All)/2089ABAC2C7D658B8025795E005818F1/$File/InequalitiesProfilesLA_Swansea_v1.pdf?OpenElement)

The reports tell us that life expectancy in Swansea, as in Wales is increasing. However, increased life expectancy is not experienced equally across all areas. This inequality exists between the most and least deprived areas both nationally and locally. The Slope Index of Inequality measures the absolute gap in years of life expectancy between the most and least deprived. This index tells us that in the period 2005 – 2009, the gap in life expectancy in Swansea between our most and least deprived areas is 12.2 years for males and 7.4 years for females. The gap in healthy life expectancy for males is 22.9 years while females 14.8 years.

The gap has grown since the 2001 – 2005 figures which showed a life expectancy gap of 10.9 years for males and 7.3 years for females while healthy life expectancy was 22.1 years for males and 14.7 years for females.

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The recording of the statement made at the Scrutiny Programme Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> March is inaccurate. The 23 year gap is the rounded Healthy Life Expectancy gap for males between our most and least deprived areas, not life expectancy which is 12 years for males.

This data sources are based geographically on Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). In Swansea there are 148 LSOAs, 36 of which form the five Communities First Clusters in Swansea. These Clusters represent the most deprived communities in Swansea according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The data represents the gap between the most and least deprived areas rather than a geographical divide of Swansea east and west. The figures should not be used to describe the gap between the east and the west of the city.

• **Our concern about when the Local Delivery Framework will be available given the roll out of Universal Credit is planned for July 2015. We also wanted to know more about the identified role of all Ward Members in the development and delivery.**

We are currently taking a two-phase approach in terms of being ready for Universal Credit.

Phase one is focused on the imminent introduction of Universal Credit in Swansea on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015. This initial introduction will be for single people who would previously have been making new claims for Job Seekers Allowance. Learning from the trial areas suggests that these are the most straight forward of benefit claims and therefore the least likely to require any complex support. Early indications from colleagues in the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP), based on previous years claimant numbers, suggest we will see something in the region of 120 – 200 people in Swansea being signed up for Universal Credit during the period July 2015 – March 2016.

At this stage the focus of planning is to ensure technical alignment with Housing Benefit Systems etc as those are required by colleagues in DWP to support claims.

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A key area of focus at the moment is completion of a District Partnership Agreement (DPA) between DWP and City & County of Swansea. The content of this agreement is very prescriptive from the DWP and will form the basis of the work that will be undertaken at this introduction phase. Again, learning from LA's who have trialled this process suggest that requests for additional support from this specific group are small.

Phase two, which will commence in April 2016 will see an expansion of Universal Credit to couple households, and is the point at which any agreement under the DPA ceases and a more formal local plan will need to be in place. Early discussions in the regional Universal Support Delivered Locally (USDL) group suggests that a minimum requirement at this stage to access funding via the USDL fund will be an electronic facility that claimants can access via the Local Authorities website that offers links to organisations that provide advice and support with issues like digital exclusion, personal budgeting and basic skills.

The Financial Inclusion Steering Group, a multi-agency group supported by CCS staff is in the process of identifying the range and levels of support Universal Claimants are likely to require to ease the transition over to Universal Credit, The first stage of this work has been to identify potential risks to claimants under the headings of the USDL framework outlined by the DWP; Digital Inclusion, Personal Budgeting, Partnership working and Triage. Follow up work is being undertaken to identify planned activity that contributes to mitigating these risks. The next stage will be to identify those risks that will require a holistic response.

This is the aspect which Ward Members will have a role and will emerge more clearly as the framework develops. It is likely to be concerned with ensuring that people with particular needs are signposted to the best support our partnerships can offer, given their whole set of circumstances.

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• **Our request for information about achievements directly related to the LIFT (Lifting people into work)**

**Programme;**

The LIFT Programme (which operates in the Communities First North West Cluster) has been successful in its first year of operation:

23 LIFT participants have entered into employment,  
30 LIFT participants have taken part in essential skills learning,  
LIFT has worked with organisations such as Gwalia, NHS and Boots to create 26 work experience placements for participants.  
LIFT has created 106 vocational training opportunities in its first year for its participants.

The City and County of Swansea has received funding to continue to run the programme in its current format until March 31st 2016. It will continue to be based in the Communities First North West Cluster (All of Penderry Ward and Gendros in Cockett Ward), until this date. The Swansea LIFT programme continues to perform strongly when compared with the other pilot areas in Wales.

It is thought (albeit this is at an early stage) that although the full project may not be rolled out fully, elements of the LIFT programme will be introduced into the other Communities First cluster areas. However these elements of good practice will be delivered under the newly proposed Communities4work scheme, which supports residents with learning and training to get back into work.

• **Our concern about changes to the Community Food & Growing team and rationale for a different service model. Could you also provide confirmation whether responsibility for allotments will revert to the Parks Service.**

The Community Food and Growing Team have been exploring alternative business models for the past three years. In light of Sustainable Swansea Fit for the Future, it was felt that the time is now right to progress this work further in order to generate a sustainable source of income to tackle food poverty and create a service that is fit for purpose for the citizens of Swansea.

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Two members of staff will transfer employment to the new enterprise and the Authority will be represented on the board.

The allotment provision is currently subject to a rent review, which the Community Food and Growing Team are completing and implementing.

As the allotment provision makes no direct contribution to the tackling poverty agenda and as the future remit of the team will focus increasingly on tackling food poverty, it is felt that responsibility for the management of allotments should revert back to Parks. Parks currently conduct the maintenance of allotments and discussions are ongoing with regards to future management.

Yours sincerely

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