



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

**To/
Councillor Jane Harris,
Cabinet Member for Services for
Adults & Vulnerable People**

BY EMAIL

*Please ask for:
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SPC/2014-15/10

11 February 2015

Dear Councillor Harris,

Cabinet Member Question Session – 19 January

Thank you for your attendance at the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 19 January 2015 and answering questions on your work. As stated we are writing to you in order to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the committee, and raise any outstanding issues / actions for your response.

We were aware that this was your first appearance before the Scrutiny Programme Committee as Cabinet Member. We felt it was a good opportunity to learn about your responsibilities, priorities, and your approach to taking forward improvement in services for adults and vulnerable people.

Thank you for preparing a handout which gave us a summary of your portfolio objectives, activities and achievements and impact in relation to your areas of responsibility, as well as challenges.

You talked about the increasing demand for adult social care, pressure on budgets. You also spoke about implementing the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the transformation that is required in order to improve the wellbeing of people who need care and support, and promote people's independence to give them stronger voice and control.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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The main issues discussed are summarised below:

Local Area Coordinators

At our meeting we had earlier heard from Councillor Mark Child, Cabinet Member for Wellbeing & Healthy City, and discussed the new approach involving the establishment of Local Area Coordinators. You reinforced the importance of this approach, calling it a 'cornerstone', in helping to reduce the demand for social services thought admitted it may not be easy to achieve. You stressed the need to manage the tipping point between care being able to be provided within the community and social services intervention. Much of this will depend on resources and take up of domiciliary care, as well as effective partnership working with health and the third sector. As well as that we felt that this depended a lot on community awareness and public engagement, especially as this approach places and emphasis on co-production.

Budget

You explained that you were looking in detail at spending across the whole of adult services. You informed the committee that you were focussed on reviewing services before proposing any big budget decisions, including looking at what is happening in the private sector. However, the committee shared some concern that there were perhaps mixed messages about what is happening within social services as far as staff may be concerned, and suggested better communication about the financial situation and your plans (short and long term) to make services more effective and sustainable. The committee was also concerned that increasing financial pressures may drive changes through prematurely, though you assured us that decisions would not be taken until ready to do so.

Areas for Scrutiny

As you know we have already established a Panel to look at the Transformation of Adult Social Services. We were pleased to hear you welcomed scrutiny and contribution of ideas for improvement. We asked about the benefits from the recent independent review of older people's services. You stated that it had helped the authority to reflect and it confirmed that the direction of travel was right, however recognised significant challenges ahead.

We would be grateful for your comments on the issues raised in this letter. It would be helpful to receive your reply to this letter by 4 March so that it can be included in the agenda of a future committee meeting at the earliest opportunity.

We look forward to meeting you again to follow up on portfolio developments and hearing about achievements and impact.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Jones".

COUNCILLOR MARY JONES

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

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