

City and County of Swansea



Performance Plan

2000/2001

Summary

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Summary Performance Plan

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Message from Councillor Mike Hedges, Leader of the Council

The Vision for Swansea.

As the largest single employer in the area, a major provider of services and a large contributor to the success of the local economy, the City and County of Swansea has an enormous role to play in helping all in the local community to flourish, but also to care for those who are experiencing difficulty.

The Council has a Vision for Swansea which, I know, is shared by members of the local community. We want people to be proud of Swansea as a place that:

- **prosperous, caring and self confident;**
- **safer and healthier;**
- **supportive;**
- **where everyone has somewhere to live;**
- **which provides high quality education;**
- **where old people, young people and people from vulnerable groups are valued and protected;**
- **where we can all enjoy leisure, education and work opportunities in vibrant communities and a thriving city centre;**
- **where the contribution of the Council is recognised in making all of this happen.**

I do not underestimate the enormity of the challenges that lay ahead for all of us. As Leader of the Council, I will ensure that every effort is made by all Councillors and employees of the Council to continue to strive to make improvements to all the services that the Council is responsible for. As with all organisations, there are things that the Council does well and there are others that need to be improved.

I look forward to working with representatives from all parts of our community to ensure that this vision becomes reality.

Mike Hedges

Leader of the Council

What is a Performance Plan?

The City and County of Swansea is producing this Performance Plan in accordance with the Local Government Act 1999 to set out how the Council has performed over the past 12 months. The Plan also identifies all service areas to be critically reviewed together with any Action Plans produced for reviews that have taken place in the previous 12 months.

The data available in this plan is available for any member of the public to inspect. Users of services will be able to see the targets the Council sets for its services and whether these targets are achieved. Using this data and the other parts of the Performance Plan, members of the community in Swansea will be further encouraged to help shape and improve the services provided by the Council.

Why have a Summary?

This Council provides a wide range of services (in excess of 200) and to report on performance across all services has meant that the main Performance Plan is a very lengthy document – over 350 pages long.

It was decided that a summary would help readers get a view of the Council’s performance and let them determine any areas of interest that they may wish to investigate further. This Summary, available in Welsh and English, focuses on the key elements of the Performance Plan in a more readable format and is also useful for the Council’s employees.

The main document is available for inspection at the Guildhall and County Hall or can be issued on request. You can also access the document on the Council’s Web-site at:

www.swansea.gov.uk/bestvalue/

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Questions and Comments

If you have any questions or comments about this Summary Performance Plan, or require a copy in Welsh, or would like a copy of the main Performance Plan, please write to:

Steve White, (Performance Plan) Room 2.5.2, County Hall, Oystermouth Road, Swansea SA1 3SN

Or

send an email to bestvalue@swansea.gov.uk

Your views are important to the Council and will be passed to Councillors and Departments for their attention.

Translating the vision for Swansea into action

Corporate Objectives and Strategic Aims

Understanding the needs of local people, businesses and visitors to Swansea is key to developing and delivering appropriate services. For these reasons, the City and County of Swansea has, over the years, developed extensive consultation mechanisms to ensure that every Councillor, manager and employee of the Council is able to understand the services that users want, need and can afford.

To achieve the Vision for Swansea, ensure that all resources are focused where they are most needed and reflect the needs of the local community, all Council departments will work to a common set of concise Corporate Objectives each of which has a Strategic Aim. In other words, the Corporate Objective is the “headline” with the Strategic Aim acting as the “first paragraph of the story” as set out below

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIC AIMS
1. Caring for Customers and Best Value.	We will deliver quality and cost effective services informed by customer needs and expectations and the Best Value process.
2. Supporting Life Long Learning.	We will provide and promote opportunities for learning experiences which are accessible to everyone throughout their lifetime.
3. Increasing the Success of the Local Economy.	We will improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the community to ensure a successful local economy to give maximum benefit to the people of Swansea.
4. Promoting Social Inclusion.	We will ensure that all of the Council’s strategies and plans have a positive impact; that all of the Council’s day to day services have a positive impact; that we recognise, promote, encourage and help to improve existing work; that we encourage the development of new initiatives; that we learn from our partners and from local communities in order to promote best practice and to raise issues of concern.
5. Promoting Sustainability.	We will seek to achieve the right balance between human activity, economic development and environmental integrity so as to avoid compromising the needs of future generations.
6. Improving Health and Well Being.	We will aim to ensure that Swansea is a place where people can live, work and visit in safety, that promotes health and healthy lifestyles to prevent illness and recognises the need to work with partners to reduce health inequalities.
7. Making Swansea Safer.	We will make Swansea safer by working in partnership with all relevant agencies, implementing the Council’s agreed Strategic Priorities for Crime and Disorder and by ensuring effective co-ordination within and between service Departments.
8. Revitalising Local Democracy.	We will encourage increased participation by individuals and organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors in the local governance of Swansea.

New political structure for the City and County of Swansea

To ensure that these Corporate Objectives are achieved and to comply with the Government's agenda for modernising local government, the Council has been actively considering and developing its approach to new political management structures for over 12 months.

In November, Council launched *Swansea 2000*, an awareness raising and consultation programme on the Government's modernisation proposals with individuals, other public bodies, voluntary sector agencies and the business sector. In addition, Community News delivered to every household in Swansea also asked for Resident's views on the options available. The results of consultation showed a majority in favour of the Leader with a

Cabinet option. The portfolio of responsibilities for Cabinet Members was agreed in May. Cabinet meets every week and Council will meet fortnightly. The main aim of these new arrangements is to ensure that important decisions are taken with the minimum of delay and that services delivered meet the needs of all users.

Scrutiny of Council decisions (to see what works, could be improved etc) will form an important new role for Councillors. Scrutiny Committees are being established and comprise Members from all parties.

Implementation of the new arrangements will continue throughout the next 12 months and be reviewed in the light of experience.

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Corporate Planning and Managing Performance

To ensure the Vision for Swansea and the Corporate Objectives are achieved the Council is refining and developing its Corporate Planning Processes. The aim of this process is to ensure that all activity is targeted where it is most needed and that all employees understand their role in achieving the Council's Objectives.

The simple diagram below outlines the stages for ensuring the Vision is translated into actions delivered by front-line services.



When implementing this Corporate Planning process, the Council will take account of its statutory obligations and consider 4 other main factors:

- Views and requirements of service users and the local community;
- Reviews of services conducted to ensure that best value is achieved;
- Feedback from Council employees;
- Funding available from central government and Council Tax revenue.

Full details of the Corporate Planning Process are contained in the main Performance Plan.

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Measuring the Council’s Performance

One of the main purposes of the Performance Plan is to show how the City and County of Swansea is performing in relation to the objectives that it sets for itself or that are set by central government. As the Council is a large and complex organisation, the system of measures put in place is diverse, but all are known by a common term - Performance Indicators.

Performance Indicators to help to measure how well local authorities are working.

In addition to these National Performance Indicators, all of the Council’s services are also measured by a variety of Local Performance Indicators. These relate specifically to the services delivered in Swansea and are used by the Council’s employees to measure how well services are being delivered. Full details are provided in the main Performance Plan available on request or on the Council’s Web-site.

Both the Welsh Assembly and the Audit Commission, on behalf of the Government, have established a range of National

How are National and Local Performance Indicators used?

Performance Indicators provide a broad view of the performance of a service in relation to a target that has been set. For example, a Performance Indicator might be used to measure “Speed of response to questions from house-holders”. The target time might be 3 days and the service is meeting this target on 80% of occasions. The Performance Indicator shows that although the target is met on the majority of occasions, there is room for improvement.

Not only do Performance Indicators provide an opportunity to compare performance against targets, they also help to compare with the performance of other local authorities. In time, they will enable us to compare with the performance of providers in other sectors – private and voluntary.

What are the performance indicators telling the Council?

In broad terms, there are some things that the Council does very well, some that are average and some that must be improved. It is the Council’s intention that all services are subject to an improvement regime. However, using performance indicators helps to highlight real problem areas and enable resources to be targeted accordingly.

The following provides a brief overview of good and poor service performance. A more detailed analysis is provided by the main Performance Plan.

Regardless of whether performance is poor, average or already good, the Council is committed to further improving them to benefit all users and residents of Swansea.

Council performance over the last 2 years

The City and County of Swansea comprise some 200 service areas. Many of these services are “front-line” and are delivered direct to the public, businesses and other users. Other services provide the backup necessary for the front-line services. These include matters such as Finance, Information Technology, Personnel, Health and Safety, Property Consultancy and Legal Services. Whilst the main Performance Plan provides details of performance against all services, this summary concentrates on the front-line services.

Taking each front-line service in turn, the following provides a brief overview of good and bad performance based on a summary of audited National Performance Indicators for 1998/99 compared to the average across all local authorities in Wales. Figures in brackets show the Council’s performance in 1999/2000 which, to date, have not been audited and comparisons across Wales are not available.

Some data against Local Performance Indicators is also shown.

Analysis by Service

Housing

The Council has almost 17000 tenanted properties and is the major landlord in Swansea with property extending across most parts of the City and County.

✓ 88% (83% in 1999/2000) of all Council House repairs are completed within agreed timescales - this compares favourably with the Welsh average of 72%.

✓ Average time taken to accept individuals as homeless is 6 days (also 6 days in 1999/2000) in Swansea – Welsh average is 18 days.

✓ Average time in Bed and Breakfast accommodation is 5 weeks (7 weeks in 1999/2000) – Welsh average 7 weeks.

Average re-let times for Council Houses is 7 weeks (9 weeks in 1999/2000) against a Wales average of 5.4.

4.5% of Swansea tenants have rent arrears in excess of 13 weeks – Welsh average 3.3%.

It costs £11.07 per dwelling in Swansea to manage the Housing service. The Welsh average is £7.84.

Education

Swansea has over 113 primary, secondary and special schools, the Education service extends beyond just schools and includes the Library Service, Community Education and support functions including cleaning and catering plus the range of services provided from County Hall.

✓ The Council spends £2761 per pupil on Nursery and Primary under 5 education. Welsh average is £2148.

✓ Just 0.25% of all children educated are taught in special schools. Across Wales, this figure averages at 0.58%

✓ The number of books and other items available per head of population is 2.75 in Swansea compared with 1.87 across Wales.

£1670 net expenditure is spent per pupil (primary 5 and over) in Swansea against an average of £1794 in Wales.

Only 22% of pupils buy a school meal – Welsh average is 37%.

Social Services

This department supports the most vulnerable people by assessing and reviewing their social care needs and providing information, advice and practical help to enable them to have, as far as possible, an ordinary pattern of life in the community.

- ✓ The department helps 100 out of every 1000 older people to live at home. The Welsh average is 90.
- ✓ Number of places in residential care for people with mental health problems is the 3rd highest in Wales.
- ✓ Looked after children – Swansea has the third best result for the number of children in care who had unplanned moves three or more times in the year. It supports placements to prevent breakdown and minimise the disruption caused to children by moving home.
- ✓ The department carries out 100% of the inspections of residential homes required as an essential safeguard for the people who live in them.

65% of adults in residential care are offered single rooms – Welsh average 92%

19% of equipment required to help disabled people to remain in their own homes is provided within three weeks. Across Wales the figure is 72%. Swansea's result for 1999/2000 has improved to 32%.

79% of people receiving help are given a statement of their needs and how they will be met (their care plan) compared with the Welsh average of 88%.

Technical Services

This large department is responsible for building and highway repair and maintenance, refuse collection and street sweeping and the provision of professional engineering services.

- ✓ It costs £23.86 per household to collect and dispose refuse – the Welsh average is £31.74.

- ✓ 1.3% of waste is used for heat and power recovery (generated on site) – the Welsh Average is zero.

- ✓ It takes an average of 1.6 days in Swansea to remove fly-tipped waste compared to the Welsh average of 3.1 days.

- ✓ An additional Civic Amenity site was opened in 1999/2000 for all residents to use- now 7 in total.

3.6% of household waste was recycled in 1998/1999 against the Welsh average of 6.2%. **However, in 1999/2000, the Council's performance has improved two-fold to 7.2%**

71.6% of Street Cleaning was at an acceptable level – Welsh average is 84.3%.

64% of repairs to roads where damage has been identified as dangerous are carried out within 24 hours. The Welsh average is 89%.

Planning

This department provides the Council's town and country planning and landscape services including matters such as Development Control, Nature Conservation and Rights of Way.

- ✓ 98.3% of searches of the land register were completed in 10 working days – Welsh average is 80.6%.

- ✓ The Council's Development Plan that broadly establishes what development is acceptable, covers 100% of the local population – Welsh average is 71% coverage.

- ✓ Swansea is at the Welsh average for determining planning applications within 8 weeks.

26% of footpaths and other rights of way are sign-posted where they leave the road. Across Wales this figure is 48%.

41% of all Appeals against planning decisions are upheld. Welsh average is 34%

Environmental Health and Trading Standards

This department's main purpose is to protect and promote health and consumer

interests of people living, working or visiting Swansea.

- ✓ 100% of high risk premises preparing and distributing food were inspected – Welsh Average 84%.
- ✓ The average number of Consumer protection visits to medium or high-risk premises was 0.67 in Swansea – Welsh average of 0.38.
- ✓ In 1999/2000 we responded to 98% of all complaints about noise within 5 working days – our target is 100% for next year.
- ✓ All requests for pest control or animal impounding services are responded to within 3 days.

71.8% of all other Food Safety inspections (not high or medium risk) were undertaken – Welsh average 82.2%.

Whilst we respond to 95% of complaints about hackney cabs and private hire vehicles within 5 working days – we have set ourselves a target of 100%.

Leisure Services

The City and County of Swansea aim to provide, maintain, develop and encourage a wide range of Leisure, Recreational and Cultural facilities.

- ✓ Swansea has 135 sports pitches against a Welsh average of 66.
- ✓ The net cost per swim/visit to a swimming pool and sports centre is £1.52 – Welsh average £1.81.
- ✓ In 1999/2000 over 44,000 school pupils visited the City's museums and galleries.
- ✓ In 1999/2000 over 80% of all customers using the Brangwyn Hall, Dylan Thomas

Centre and Grand Theatre were satisfied with the service they received. In each venue this has shown improvement on previous years.

The city has 2.9 playgrounds per 1000 children under the age of 12 – Welsh average is 4.9.

Staff costs in the Brangwyn Hall, Dylan Thomas Centre and Grand Theatre has increased by an average of 9% over the previous 12 months. **However, cost per users at these venues has remained almost static over the 2 years.**

Finance

This department provides a mixture of front-line and support services. The front-line services include Council Tax collection and Council Tax/Housing Benefit payments.

- ✓ 92.2% (92.5% in 1999/2000) of all Council Tax due was collected which compares favourably with the experience of a group of similar sized local authorities (known as the Big 11) that record an average of 92.4%.
- ✓ 95.6% (96.8% in 1999/2000) of all Business Rates due was collected. Again, this compares favourably with the Big 11 local authorities that record an average of 96%.
- 50% of new Council Tax Benefit claims are processed within 14 days – Welsh average is 78%.
- 51% of new Housing Benefit claims are processed within 14 days – Welsh average is 77%.

Council services - ensuring access for all

The City and County of Swansea strives to ensure that all users and potential users of services have equal access to those services and are not discriminated against or excluded in any way. The Council has adopted and implemented an Equal Opportunities Policy, which covers employment, service delivery and community leadership. In addition, a Race Policy has also been published and all revised and new legislation is reviewed and translated into practical policies and action for all services.

The Council is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the principle that the Welsh and English languages should be treated on the basis of equality. The City and County of Swansea's Welsh language scheme was approved in March 1997 and is now fully operational. The provision of a bilingual service is monitored through an annual report submitted to the Welsh Language Board.

Councillors and Directors take the lead in ensuring that this commitment to all equality issues is fulfilled. The Equalities and Access Policy Development Team and Anti-Poverty Policy Development Team provide strategic direction with officers of the Corporate Action Teams responsible for the development of practice and implementation across departments. Each department is required to produce an Action Plan to fully implement all equality policies. The Council works with a range of partner organisations to ensure the maximum impact of equality policies and strategies.

This Council has recognised that such commitment is meaningless without continuous review and improvement and extensive training of employees. Each of these elements has and will continue to be undertaken. As new legislation emerges, the mechanisms that are already in place will operate to ensure that we comply with all requirements.

Ensuring quality services meet Corporate Objectives.

Seeking to improve the services delivered by the Council is a key theme for all Councillors and employees. To help ensure that this happens it is important to have a well-trained workforce and systems in place that provide for a consistent approach to service delivery. All departments strive to achieve this and the following have gained recognition by national quality awarding bodies.

Department	Quality Initiative/Standard
Environmental Health and Trading Standards	ISO 9000 and Investors in People
Technical Services (design and Construction)	ISO 9000
Economic Development - Business Connect	ISO 9000
Management Services.	Investors in People
Planning	Investors in People
Chief Executives	Investors in People
Catering Services - Education Department	Investors in People
Legal & Committee Services	Investors in People and LEXCEL

All other departments are in the process of pursuing similar awards to demonstrate continuing commitment to quality services.

Reviewing services delivered by the Council

In the quest to continually improve all services and to ensure that service users receive best value, all services (front-line and support) will be reviewed over the next five years. These are known as Best Value Reviews and will involve Councillors and employees critically examining services to identify ways of improving their efficiency, effectiveness and economy via practical Action Plans.

These reviews will be conducted rigorously and we will apply the regime set out in the Local Government Act 1999, to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted. There are 4 main elements to this regime:

- i. Challenge - we will challenge the current standards, methods and systems for delivering a service to identify whether a better way can be found.
- ii. Consult - we will consult with service users and employees to gain their views on how well the service is provided, is it provided at the right time and cost, and is it needed at all. *Your views are extremely important to us. If you are asked to comment on any service that the Council provides, please spare a little time to help us make improvements.*
- iii. Compare - we will compare our services with the best available to identify where improvements in performance can be found.
- iv. Compete - we will ensure that the costs of our services are at the most advantageous rate for all users.

A range of services (including the support services) will be reviewed during 2000/2001 and some are outlined below. In particular, the reviews undertaken will have a focus on the areas where performance must be improved as identified above by the performance indicators. Reviews identified below concentrate on the front-line services.

Housing

Amongst the services being reviewed in Housing, attention will be paid to Allocations and management of Housing and the work of the Neighbourhood Support Unit.

Social Services

Four main areas of the service will be examined; Domiciliary Support to older and physically disabled adults, HIV/AIDS Services, Children's accommodation services and Receivership.

Education

Support services will be examined – Catering, Cleaning and associated areas. Each has an impact on the overall education service.

Technical Services

Having already reviewed Highways Maintenance in 1999/2000, the service will examine a wide range of services including Highway Maintenance Assessment and Programme Management, Roads Design and Improvement and Building Maintenance (Council Houses).

Leisure Services

Children's Play areas will be one focus of attention alongside reviews of some sports venues (St. Helen's Swimming Pool, Swansea Tennis Centre etc), Community pools and buildings plus the general area of Sports Development.

Planning

Forward Planning systems and approaches will be reviewed this year.

What's happening in 2000/2001

There are many schemes and projects already underway, and more to be launched in the next 12 months that are aimed at helping the Council achieve the Objectives set out earlier in this Performance Plan. Many schemes are already widely reported, but others receive little attention despite the positive contribution that they can each have.

The following gives a flavour of the “high-profile” and not so well publicised projects and schemes that will be underway in the coming months.

Improving the local economy

One of the Council's major objectives is to improve the success of the local economy with a range of measures and actions. In 2000/2001 this will include:

- Development projects such as Morfa, Castle Quays and Wind Street being positively pursued to secure investment and jobs to reinforce Swansea as the capital of South West Wales.
- As the lead partner in the local Business Connect (which links the Council, businesses, training organisations and other providers) we will continue to develop products and services which enable local businesses to compete effectively.

However, improving the local economy does not mean that the Council concentrates all its efforts on industry and commerce. Over the years, the Council has taken a lead in developing mechanisms and assistance for helping members of the community who are experiencing poverty today.

Over the next 12 months this work will continue and includes:

Developing and delivering a Fair Debt Strategy which will involve a large number of agencies working together to:

- ensure those people who have difficulty paying debts are treated with

sensitivity and offered appropriate advice and guidance;

- identify individuals with multiple debts and establish ways to help
- refer appropriate individuals to one of the four advice services which are involved in the project (CAB, Shelter, Housing Options and the Welfare Rights Unit).

The pilot will commence in June 2000 for six months.

In addition, the Swansea Poverty Action Network (**SPAN**) will launch the SPAN Web-site that will include information about SPAN, up to the minute news and a discussion area. The web-site will complement the existing network services, which will continue as before.

Housing services

The Council is a major landlord in Swansea and constantly seeks ways to improve services to tenants. One aspect of this work will involve strengthening the role of tenant participation in managing and improving housing estates in Swansea. Already well established in Swansea, Tenant participation is seen to be key in ensuring that good quality housing is provided and best possible value is achieved for all concerned.

Health and well-being

The council will continue its wide-ranging work on health and environmental matters and amongst many other initiatives will:

- Further develop a "fast-track" noise complaints service to provide a more rapid response to the increasing number of complaints about noise.
- Pilot a Co-ordinated Response Team in conjunction with the Police to provide a better response to incidents of neighbourhood nuisance.
- Fully implement the "Validate" Proof of Age Scheme that involves working with schools and retailers to provide a voluntary proof of age card to reduce the sale of goods eg. cigarettes, videos, alcohol, etc to people underage.

The Social Services Department will be working to implement the new "flexibilities" - legislative changes that enable us to work more closely with the Health Service and to deal more effectively with the demands on us both to provide a more "seamless" service to the public.

Working with the Community

The work of the Townhill and Mayhill URBAN Initiative, which is funded by the European URBAN Programme, will continue to develop and improve both the physical aspects of the area and training and employment opportunities of residents. One example of this is the **Phoenix Centre** that is still on course for completion in December 2000.

Another example of on-going work is the NEWID Community Development Project. This Community Development Project is coordinated by the Department of Housing at the City and County of Swansea and covers the whole of the Bonymaen ward. Work is underway to establish a Youth Advice Centre, a Healthy Living Centre and a partnership project with the Health Authority, Local Health Workers and

Communities that Care to bring an initiative to tackle teenage pregnancy.

Under the **"People in Communities"** banner, Blaenymaes and Portmead have been selected as one of 8 pilot areas in Wales to take part in his national initiative to address social exclusion.

This initiative has a clear focus on people, partnership and community involvement. As a starting point, extensive research has been undertaken for the imminent publication of the Community Profile which has been designed to be an accessible, updateable and multi functional document which will give a true picture of local feelings and services.

Lifelong Learning

The Council is committed to providing learning opportunities for all, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity or ability. To build upon the work already undertaken, there will be a number of projects and events over the coming months including:

- Basic skills projects in literacy, numeracy and ICT continue to develop in all schools;
- The 'Arts for All' project will bring art and culture activities into all schools in Swansea;
- The Early Years and Child Care Partnership Toy Library will begin lending;
- The Bookstart (Books for Babies) scheme in partnership with the Health Authority continues to develop across Swansea;
- Projects which help share good practice between schools will continue to develop and help teachers.

Finally – remember, your views help make the difference

The views of the users of the Council's services are very important to us – whether you are passing a comment, complaining about a service, take part in one of the Council's surveys or are part of the citizens' panel "*Swansea Voices*".

Last year members of the "*Swansea Voices*" panel received 5 questionnaires to be answered and will receive a further 4 in 2000/2001 and these will cover:

- Leisure Services
- Housing
- Environmental Health
- Education
- Planning.

If you are asked to take part in any of the Council's surveys please make every effort to participate. Your views, comments and suggestions will help us to improve our services and help all managers and employees to focus on what you require them to do.

Questions and Comments

About the Plan:

If you have any questions or comments about this Summary Performance Plan, or require a copy in Welsh, or would like a copy of the main Performance Plan, please write to:

Steve White, (Performance Plan) Room 2.5.2, County Hall, Oystermouth Road, Swansea SA1 3SN

Or

send an email to bestvalue@swansea.gov.uk

About Council Services:

If you have comments that you wish to make about any of the services that this Council provides, please write to the Chief Executive at:

Chief Executive's Office, County Hall, Swansea SA1 3SN.

Your views are important to the Council and will be passed to Councillors and Departments for their attention.



City and County of Swansea