

Janet Finch-Saunders AM/AC

Shadow Minister for Local Government
Gweinidog yr Wrthblaid dros Lywodraeth Leol

Assembly Member for Aberconwy
Aelod Cynulliad dros Aberconwy

Mr Carl Sargeant AM
Minister for Local Government and Communities
Welsh Government
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National Assembly for Wales,
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Dear Minister, Carl,

I am writing with regards to the underestimated population figures for Conwy - shown to be some 2,500 less than the census results have now revealed. This of course has led to Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) receiving £1m less in Revenue Support Grant in this year's local government settlement (2012/13) and many years previously.

As you will be aware, the issue of the RSG as funding relating to demographics is one that I raised with you at the time of the local government settlement announcement and I am most disappointed to learn that there is an additional sum of one million pounds outstanding to Conwy as a result of this under estimation to the Conwy population figures.

It is my view that the demographics of Conwy are slightly skewed in terms of balanced proportionality in that we have previously lost out on school surplus place numbers, yet we have not attracted sufficient in terms of our older people service needs.

For many years as a Conwy County Borough Councillor, both within the Cabinet and more recently as the previous Chairman of the Principal Overview and Scrutiny Committee, I showed great interest and was involved with work of the Task and Finish Group on the transient population of Conwy, a topic that is perhaps more pertinent in Conwy than other areas due to the large number of caravan parks and the legislation loopholes that allow for rather more permanent accommodation as opposed to holiday stay.

The Group established significant evidence to prove the underestimated population mass and advised the WG accordingly. Assurances were given at that time that this would be addressed once the census updates had materialised.

Additionally, Conwy has the largest proportion of over-65 year olds and older residents requiring complex care need packages, and homelessness is increasingly becoming a more prominent issue in the area, therefore any additional revenue outstanding is essentially required.

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Janet Finch-Saunders will treat in confidence any personal information which you may pass on to her, and she will normally allow her staff to see it, so that they can consult with relevant authorities in order to help and advise you. We may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed on issues which you may find of interest. Please let us know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.

Mi wnaiff Janet Finch-Saunders cadw unrhyw wybodaeth bersonol yn gwbl gyfrinachol, ac fel arfer mi fydd rhaid iddi rannu'r wybodaeth 'efo aelodau o staff i'w galluogi nhw i ddelio 'efo'r awdurdodau perthnasol er mwyn eich helpu a'ch cynorthwyo chi. Efallai mi fydd angen i rywun ysgrifennu atoch er mwyn darparu'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf o bwys. Gadwch wybod i ni os nad oes diddordeb gennych mewn cael eich cysylltu at y diben hwn.

Clearly, there is a need for full and proper recognition of the true population figures in the borough, as indeed, there is for all local authorities across Wales.

Whilst I am acutely aware that this particular local authority is striving to achieve efficiency savings in the region of some 10 million pounds as they strive to deliver essential services, I understand that the £1m that is now outstanding to C.C.B.C. will not be available this financial year, and so it remains the case that the residents of Conwy are to be short-changed once again,

My purpose in writing today is to seek some assurance from yourself that, as the Minister for Local Government and Communities, you will review this situation with the utmost priority in order to alleviate the potential hardship that these outstanding monies would address. I would hope that in consultation with the Minister for Finance, you will both recognise the immediate need for this balance to be redressed.

I would politely request that you would ensure that these monies become available to CCBC as a matter of some urgency and would ask for some further reassurance that there will be the required additional adjustments made to the 2013/14 settlement, and of course the same for the 2014 / 2015 settlement of which, I understand, is to fully take into account the updated and more accurate census population figures.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

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