



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Anti-Social Behaviour

At: Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

On: Tuesday, 16 May 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Convenor: Councillor Terry Hennegan

Membership:

Councillors: S Bennett, A Davis, A M Day, R Fogarty, V A Holland, Y V Jardine, A J Jeffery, M H Jones, M Jones, C L Philpott, B J Rowlands and M S Tribe

Agenda

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| 2 | Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests
www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests | |
| 3 | Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips | |
| 4 | Minutes | 1 - 2 |
| 5 | Public Questions
Questions can be submitted in writing to scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk up until noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Written questions take precedence. Public may attend and ask questions in person if time allows. Questions must relate to items on the open part of the agenda and will be dealt with in a 10-minute period. | |
| 6 | Roundtable Meeting with Local Business Community and Swansea Council for Voluntary Service | 3 - 8 |
| 7 | Inquiry Project Plan / Work Programme | 9 |

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 23 May 2023 at 10.00 am

Huw Evans

Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Date: 9 May 2023

Contact: Scrutiny Officer

Agenda Item 4



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Anti-Social Behaviour**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

Thursday, 13 April 2023 at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor T J Hennegan (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

S Bennett
A S Lewis
M S Tribe

Councillor(s)

V A Holland
C L Philpott

Councillor(s)

Y V Jardine
B J Rowlands

Other Attendees

Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member
Jon Tumelty, Pobl Housing Association
Serena Jones, Coastal Housing Association
Sarah Davies, Coastal Housing Association

Officer(s)

Jane Whitmore Strategic Lead Commissioner
Judith Williams Operations Manager and Landlord Services

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A M Day, A J Jeffery, M H Jones and M Jones
Other Attendees: Stuart Middleton, Caredig Housing Group

35 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

36 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

37 Minutes

The minutes were accepted by the Panel.

38 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

39 Roundtable Meeting with Registered Social Landlords / Housing Associations

The Panel thanked Jon Tumelty from Pobl Housing Association and Serena Jones and Sarah Davies from Coastal Housing Association for attending the Panel and discussing the set of questions that had been sent to them in advance of the meeting, these included:

- a) What is the role and key objectives of your organisation in relation to tackling and reducing ASB?
- b) What are the key challenges you are facing and how are you addressing these (what more could be done to help you as an organisation to address them...especially from a council or partnership perspective)?
- c) Do you feedback to the victims/reporters of anti-social behaviour about what is being done to address ASB, either in terms of the specific incident they were involved in or reported, or more generally? Do you use this feedback to improve inform and improve your services?
- d) Does your organisation meet its regulatory obligations in relation to the services represented today? If not, why is that and what can be done to help you to do this from a council or partnership perspective?
- e) How well do you feel the Council and its partners are working together to tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour in Swansea from the perspective of your organisation and in partnership. How could it be improved further?
- f) How is your organisation working with the Council and other partners to address the causes of anti-social behaviour. Strategies, tools, interventions and work happening in communities, an example would be helpful to give context. How could this be improved further?

We are looking at the extent of the issue across Swansea and would greatly appreciate if you could provide us with some data, if that is possible, to help us with this, namely: For each of the years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022:

- How many reports of ASB have they received from tenants?
- How many cases have they progressed through their processes?
- How many notices of eviction have they issued?
- How many tenants have actually left their properties?

The full notes taken from this discussion will form part of the Inquiry Findings Report. The Findings Report will be brought back to the Panel at the end of the evidence gathering phase of the inquiry. Today's evidence will then be considered alongside all the evidence gathered when the Panel discuss and formulate the inquiries conclusions and recommendations to Cabinet.

40 Inquiry Project Plan / Work Programme

The Project Plan/Work Programme was noted.

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Convener of the Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Panel 16 May 2023

Consultation with SCVS and Local Business

Purpose	To gain the views of SCVS and Local Business in Swansea in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour
Content	Key questions sent to SCVS and Local Business leaders in advance of a Q&A at the meeting
Councillors are being asked to	To consider and discuss the issue as part of the scrutiny inquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour
Lead Councillor(s)	Terry Hennegan, Convener of the Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry Panel
Lead Officer(s)	Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer Michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk

1. Context

The Panel agreed, as part of their inquiry into anti-social behaviour in Swansea, to speak to voluntary sector, equality forum and business community.

2. Key Issues and Questions

The following questions/issues were sent to the representatives in advance, in preparation for the scrutiny meeting:

1. How do you feel about Anti-Social Behaviour in Swansea? (your perceptions)
2. Do you believe it is dealt with appropriately and effectively in Swansea?
3. Do you think that the council and its partners work together effectively to both prevent and tackle ASB?
4. How would you like to see Swansea Council and its partners improve how it prevents and tackles ASB in Swansea?

3. People attending

An email was sent to a wide number of business networks and individuals in Swansea. A small selection of people/organisations have responded to our invitation to attend the meeting while others have submitted a written submission (see attached).

Written Submission 1

I answer this as a member of Swansea Against Business Crime and refer to the City Centre and indeed the area covered by Swansea BID.

Regards

Steve Gallagher | Business Crime Reduction



1. **Effectiveness of strategies, policies and procedures in tackling anti-social behaviour and is the council meeting its regulatory obligations in this area.**

It appears there is a lack of effective policies/ procedures etc in place – experience is showing that the Council obligations in this area may not be followed – I do not refer to ASB and Housing. For any policy/strategy to work there has to be effective scrutiny and clear actions as a result of complaints.

2. **The Council's role in tackling and reducing anti-social behaviour.**

The Council has a clear regulatory role in this area (Crime and Disorder Act etc) – however there are other stakeholders in this process. Having said that there also has to be ownership of issues and response in any meetings attended. Some I have attended just appear to be talking shops.

3. **Partner roles in tackling and reducing anti-social behaviour.**

Partners in this process should not be restricted to Statutory Partners. The legislation does allow for third party organisations (should they add value) such as Swansea Against Business Crime (SABC) who represent businesses in Swansea.

4. **How well are the Council and its partners working together to tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour in Swansea.**

From experience it does not work. There are numerous meetings that deal with the same named persons with no one organisation actually taking ownership. I must say that the first PSG (Problem Solving Group) which is chaired by the police was an absolute waste of time. There was no clear and succinct information available. Since this first attended meeting the City Centre NPT Inspector has changed the structure of the meeting (for the better) and it does call for accurate and updated information. However, then there must be scrutiny of this group and clear lines of responsibility. Which do not appear to be in place or if they are then not shared.

5. **Tools available to use to help the Council and its partners tackle ASB.**

Talk and take cognisance of those affected by ASB – I refer this comment to the City Centre Swansea BID area.

6. **How good is the information provided to, and communication with, the public.**

Difficult to comment on this, however as a member of the Public albeit also the Manager of SABC communication is very poor.

7. Monitoring and managing performance.

I refer to number 4 above

8. How are the Council and our partners addressing the causes of anti-social behaviour.

Very slow and which often is to the detriment of those affected by ASB – I can give examples but this is the wrong forum. There are processes in place e.g. PSPO – which in my view are not working and not adding value.

Documentation to prove breach is patchy and the numbers of FPN are very few. There may be several reasons for this which need to be managed. The process can prove invaluable when moving into areas of CPN/CBO.

There is an increase in ASB in the City Centre from youths, drink/drug users and beggars. It is accepted there are those begging that need diversion routes and strategies to help as against those who do so to feed their drink/drug habits.

CCTV in the City Centre does not help in the cause as either it appears it is not working correctly or indeed issues are not being witnessed and reported upon.

Reliance is being put on the PSPO – but in simple terms this does not work. SABC have in place a system called SentrySIS which allows for our business users to report issues. One may say this is a duplicate and reports should be made direct to the police, however if you talk to business owners, they will say what is the point as issues are not acted upon. I have taken this up with the police as one agency and measures are being put in place to address the issue.

I am sure that our businesses and users of the City Centre want to feel safe and secure and able to go about their business feeling safe. We do need to take a more proactive stance to deal with ASB /Drug/Alcohol abuse.

Written Submission 2

Bridal Shop

- Ban on alcohol on the streets and smoking weed.
- Take benches away from by wilkinsons.
- Ensure rangers remove the persons or get the police too not just walk past and ignore them.
- More police presence in target areas like wilko, bus depot, quadrant car park, gardens.
- Sick of the fowl language and stink of weed entering my premises makes me want to leave the city which I will be when the right premises come up out of town, and so are a lot of other traders I've spoken to thinking the same.

Written Submission 3

ASB Scrutiny Inquiry – Victim Support Response

How do you feel about Anti-Social Behaviour in Swansea?

It is my belief that there is definitely an issue with ASB. I support many service users within the Swansea area and have heard their personal experiences and how they have been affected. I am often told by service users that there is often little or no support or they are unaware of any help that they may be entitled to. My service users have expressed their frustration at this and often feel that they have nowhere to turn. The anxiety and drip effect can be torture for the person living with it and the victim often adapts their day to accommodate the perpetrator.

The issues are prevalent with neighbours, as well as within the town centre. I feel as though ASB has increased over the last few months, consequently leaving service users feeling intimidated and vulnerable when entering the city centre. Some service users have informed us that they will avoid particular areas of the town centre and have changed their routines to only enter the city at certain times. (This is more so the older and more vulnerable service users)

It is often not seen as a 'priority' amongst the list of crimes that SWP are having to respond to in Swansea. ASB is often very difficult to evidence and can be perceived as an 'invisible' crime as perpetrators are often not caught in the act, nor leave behind a trail of evidence. Although we experience high levels of referrals of ASB for the Swansea area I do feel that there is an equally high proportion of ASB in the city going unreported.

Do you believe it is dealt with appropriately and effectively in Swansea?

Through experience of supporting service users, I can see that there have at times been support that has often been given to people, this has usually come from the police. Service users have expressed at times that the police have been 'helpful' but everything seems to take so long. I believe that many service users who are in council/social housing accommodation are unaware of their rights and if the council/housing can provide additional advice/ support. I feel that perpetrators are not dealt with a heavy enough deterrent in the first instance leading to ongoing ASB or progressively more violent behaviour.

Having attended various meetings, I was surprised at both the lack of rehabilitation and resources available for those behaving in an "anti-social" manner and the amount of victim blaming that occurs within these meetings. I don't believe the root cause is being addressed and I feel victims' needs are being neglected. Having said that, I have worked with some committed ASB workers who are doing everything they can to tackle the problems.

I think that in the main SWP and the LA are doing their best to combat ASB reports in the City. Our service-users regularly report that these agencies are doing 'nothing' to resolve their issues but looking at the facts it would be very difficult for them to make arrests or bring other resolutions when there is very little or no evidence. I do feel that they do not treat the victims of ASB in an efficient way in

terms of often not keeping them updated on cases or being far too slow to respond to complaints.

The majority of my cases in Swansea involve housing associations so I don't have much experience of working with Swansea Council's ASB team so I don't know how well I can answer this question. I would say that I do think it is very useful that Swansea Council has Local Area Coordinators as I can signpost victims who have become isolated as a result of ASB and the Coordinators have a good local knowledge to help our clients recover.

Do you think that the council and its partners work together effectively to both prevent and tackle ASB?

From my current experience I can see that there are steps in place to help prevent/tackle ASB but I do believe there could be greater help for people who are victims of ASB. I believe that more support groups maybe beneficial and more information to help guide people who have been victims of ASB. I believe that working together is crucial to preventing ASB and can be a great way of sharing knowledge through organisations.

I have worked with various council staff and partners over the years and I feel they are doing everything possible in an attempt to tackle the issue. However, they are under-resourced and not able to make enough of an impact. In my experience, the council and partners have a better attitude towards ASB.

However, feedback from service users is that messages are often conflicting between partners, i.e. stating that the ASB is a police matter/ police stating it's a local authority matter. This at times becomes frustrating for the service users who then stops reporting.

My experience of PSG meetings is that the LA and its partners have strong appetite to reduce instances of ASB but may be hindered by a lack of resources to actually put plans into action.

I know in other areas of South Wales the police and local authority regularly attend Problem Solving Group meetings, I find these are useful to tack ASB and ensure that victims are receiving the appropriate support (I'm not sure if these meetings are in Swansea already but if not they would be helpful I believe).

How would you like to see Swansea Council and its partners improve how it prevents and tackles ASB in Swansea?

I would like to see more support for victims as well as advice/drop in centres for people who are suffering with the effects of ASB. I would also like to see more training groups/courses available to help with the awareness and understanding of ASB which could be run via the local community. I believe that educating people at a younger age may also be of benefit (courses in schools). I believe that the council have a duty to impose stricter rules for tenants who are ASB perpetrators.

I think there needs to be a review of all services supporting ASB across South Wales. For an issue that is so prevalent, there is a definite lack of support

available. From a SWVF perspective, we are one of few agencies that offer support to victims of ASB.

It would be good to see a more proactive approach to ASB rather than reactive and to give a consistent message to those reporting and being impacted by ASB. Feedback from service users has also highlighted that more CCTV maybe required around the outskirts of the city centre. Some service users have advised they have reported incidents whereby they thought there was a camera but have been told that the CCTV camera is no actually in use.

An improved communication process with victims: One of the big issues reported to us by victims is that they have not been contacted to discuss the issues or that there is no ongoing dialogue.

I (Hate Crime Team) haven't received any referral's from Swansea Council so I would like this to be addressed so that more victims are able to access our service. I think to be able to prevent and tackle ASB in Swansea we all need to improve our partnership working within the area.

If the behaviour doesn't meet the criminal threshold in individual incidents, such as staring to intimidate, taking images of a person's daily life, comments or behaviour that are made to provoke a reaction, relentless commenting, noise making or tampering with property without damage, using animal faeces in letterboxes, on door steps etc. or purposely blocking in cars to create an opportunity for interaction in which to use to be abusive. For these incidents it would be good if there could be more severe first warnings or injunction style reprimands issued to the perpetrator by the council. In my experience the victims of ASB just want to be left alone and to be able to use their gardens freely. I also think that the council should use the tenancy agreement more often to remind people that they may be compromising their accommodation if they continue to attack neighbours.

Cardiff Local Authority fund a specific ASB Champion that works alongside Victim Support and Cardiff Council ASB team to provide tailored support to victims of ASB for Cardiff Council housing tenants. If this could be mirrored in other Local Authorities then it would help with the efforts to support victims of ASB across South Wales.

14 March 2023

Agenda Item 7

Project Plan – Scrutiny Inquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour

Date/Venue	Evidence Gathering Activity
Pre-Inquiry Scrutiny Working Group 24 Nov 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of subject area with Lead Council Officer/s and Lead Cabinet Member. They will provide a strategic overview of Anti-Social Behaviour including details of the legal frameworks we work under and identifying who the key influencers are. • Discuss and agree the Terms of Reference and Project Plan for the Inquiry. • Agree public call for evidence and IIA for inquiry
Evidence gathering	
Session 1 17 Jan 23 2pm	Community Inclusion Community Safety Anti-Social Behaviour Officer
Session 2 2 Feb 23 2pm	Police and Community Policing
Session 3 27 Feb 23 10am	Education
Session 4 1 Mar 23 10am	Youth Offending EVOLVE
Session 5 9 Mar 23 10am	Council Housing Neighbourhood Support Unit Public Protection services including noise abatement; and Place/environmental services including fly tipping
Session 6 13 Apr 23 10.30am	Registered Social Landlords / Housing Associations <i>Confirmed</i>
Session 7 9 May 2023 6.00PM	Hearing the Voices of Children and Young People CMET youth panel and young people from youth clubs. <i>In Person only meeting at East Early Help Hub, 495 Llangyfelach Rd, Brynhyfryd, Swansea SA5 9EA</i>
Session 8 16 May 23 10am	Round table meeting with Voluntary Sector SCVS rep and Local Business <i>Confirmed</i>
Session 9 23 May 23 10am	Roundtable meeting with Equalities Forums/Groups <i>Confirmed</i>
Concluding Inquiry	
Meeting 10 June - tba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk based research – some practice elsewhere • Findings report and discussion
Meeting 11	Final report