

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1 - CIVIC CENTRE ON WEDNESDAY, 24
SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT: F M Gordon (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)
J C Bayliss	V M Evans	T H Rees
A C S Colburn	E T Kirchner	L V Walton
D W Cole	S M Jones	

Officers:

E Owen - Access to Services Manager
J Whitmore - Partnership, Performance and Commissioning Manager
N Havard - Directorate Lawyer
H Clancy - Principal Community Regeneration Projects Officer
J Parkhouse - Democratic Services Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

A Khalil - Swansea Bay Asylum Seeker Support Group (EYST)
S Kiki - Asylum Seeker and Refugee Advocacy Forum
M Shafayat - City of Sanctuary

24 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Y Jardine and C L Philpott.

25 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

In accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

26 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Equalities Committee meeting held on 27 August 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

27 **PRESENTATION - ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES, IMMIGRATION AND COMMUNITY COHESION.**

H Clancy, A Khalil, S Kiki and M Shafayat provided a detailed and informative presentation on Asylum Seekers, Refugees AND Immigration. Details provided in the presentation included:-

- BME Population of Swansea.
- Who is an asylum seeker, refugee, economic migrant?
- Everyone has a right to seek protection.
- Wales has been a dispersal area for asylum seekers since 2001.
- Swansea asylum seeker profile.
- Overview of the asylum process.
- Asylum support.
- On receiving a decision.
- No recourse to public funds.
- Local housing provision for asylum seekers.
- Asylum seeker accommodation in Swansea.
- Why do people seek sanctuary here?
- What are the issues that asylum seekers and refugees in Swansea face?

The Committee asked a number of questions in relation to the presentation which were responded to accordingly. A workshop discussion took place and matters discussed included the following: -

- Issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees.
- Opportunities/lack of opportunities to study, particularly learning English.
- The need to make people more aware of the situations facing asylum seekers/refugees.
- Housing needs in Swansea and quality control of housing stock.
- Signage in public buildings to assist those asylum seekers/refugees who do not speak English.
- The need to improve the service to asylum seekers/refugees provided by the Job Centre.
- Additional in-depth training to be provided for Members.

It was added that a visit to a drop-in centre at St Phillips Community Centre/Brunswick Church Hall, St Helen's Road will be arranged for Councillors to attend as required.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the contents of the presentation be noted;
- (2) visits be scheduled to either St Phillips Community Centre or Brunswick Street drop-in centres;
- (3) Members be provided with additional more in-depth training in relation to asylum seekers/refugees, if required.

28 **MEMBER CHAMPIONS REPORTS.**

There were none.

29 **WORK PLAN TIMETABLE.**

The Chair presented the revised Work Plan Timetable for 2014/2015.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

30 **NEXT MEETING - 5 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2014.**

NOTED that the next meeting of the Equalities Committee is scheduled for 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday 22 October 2014.

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm

CHAIR