

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA ON
THURSDAY, 8 JANUARY 2015 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A S Lewis (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)
R A Clay	T J Hennegan	H M Morris
D W Cole	B Hopkins	G J Tanner
P Downing	H M Morris	

17 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R V Smith.

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

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

19 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the People Cabinet Advisory Committee held on 4 December, 2014, be approved as a correct record.

20 **TO RECEIVE ADVICE REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON POTENTIAL CHANGES TO THE MEMBER ROLE IN TACKLING POVERTY STRATEGY.**

The Director of People presented a draft scoping paper on the establishment of a task and finish group on the potential changes to the Member role.

She referred to the Poverty Strategy which was approved by Council on 4 November, 2014. One of the key actions within the Strategy was to embed community development in ward member roles, develop Pathfinder training and develop a full training programme was part of the Member training programme.

The purpose of the Group was detailed which included identifying:

- how ward members can take a lead in delivery of the poverty strategy locally;
- ways in which community development can be more fully embedded and developed in ward member roles;
- good practice in community development by ward members, both locally and elsewhere;
- need to any changes in how ward members operate locally; and

- practical steps to make these happen.

The scope of the Group was detailed as follows to:

- research practice in other local authorities;
- research appetite and practice locally and throughout Swansea;
- take advice from officers on key issues (likely to be in the People directorate and in the Legal and Democratic Services team to start); and
- Produce a report outlining a proposal for the Cabinet Member to consider.

In relation to organisation, Committee Members were asked to agree who the lead CAC member would be (to Chair the meeting, ensure progress and production of the report) and which other Members wished to be involved, either from the existing Committee or wider membership.

It was proposed that the Group meet at a time and place and with frequency to suit their needs and the job to be done. The report could be produced for the April meeting of the Cabinet Advisory Committee.

In response to a Member question, the Director of People suggested that examining procedures in other local authorities would be beneficial in so far as identifying best practice.

A discussion ensued regarding the purpose and mechanics of the operation of food banks.

In response to a Member question, the Director of People, stated that there was not one action alone that would reduce poverty and its causes. There were a series of strands mainly concerned with changing cultures. Work was being undertaken with partners (e.g., the Local Service Board) regarding the collective approach to tackling poverty. The Council Plan has three overriding work streams one of which is empowering local people by allowing people in communities to develop resilience. The role of ward Members were valuable and deemed as a huge resource signposting people out of a crisis. The emphasis was upon making the most of resources.

The Director of People, stated that further information would be provided on the mechanics of food banks. Whilst food banks provide a vital role, people are not getting sufficient support to become resilient and manage debts effectively. Food banks are seeing themselves too often as simply providing the food and not supporting families to no longer need such an emergency service. Negotiations were ongoing with the food banks to ensure people get the right advice (e.g., debt advice) but have not yet produced sufficient advice provision.

Members' discussed the membership and timescales in respect of the task and finish group.

RESOLVED that:

- a. The Task and Finish Group comprise the Chair, Vice Chair, Councillor G J Tanner and Councillor H M Morris.
- b. The Chair to liaise with the Director of People to arrange a suitable date for an in-depth overview presentation.

21 **TO BE ADVISED OF SUITABLE SHELTERED HOUSING COMPLEXES TO VISIT AND IDENTIFY MEMBERS TO UNDERTAKE THIS VISIT.**

The Democratic Services Officer reported that the Landlord Services Manager had recommended two sites for site visits at Plas Melyn in Portmead and Heol y Gors in Townhill.

Members' enquired why these venues had been chosen and discussed their requirement for a comprehensive list (which included an outline of each of the premises), sheltered accommodation provided by the Authority and Registered Sheltered Landlords (RSL's) in order that the Committee may chose suitable venues for a site visit. They discussed the timescales for the site visits and time allocation at each venue. It was agreed that ward members would be advised of site visits in their wards and offered the opportunity to attend.

RESOLVED that:

- a. The Landlord Services Manager provide a comprehensive list (including an outline of each venue) of sheltered accommodation provided by the Authority;
- b. The Landlord Services Manager also provide a comprehensive list of RSL sheltered accommodation;
- c. The Chair and Vice Chair choose 3 varied premises to visit;
- d. The Chair, Vice Chair and Councillors R A Clay, P Downing and B Hopkins undertake the site visit;
- e. The site visit programme to allow for flexibility with a 15 minute tour and 30 minute discussion with residents and carers (if available);
- f. Ward Members be invited to attend.

22 **WORK PROGRAMME.**

The Chair presented the Work Programme 2014/2015.

RESOLVED that the following proposals for the action plan be approved:-

- a. A comprehensive list of RSL sheltered accommodation be provided in order to undertake site visits;
- b. An seminar on universal credit (including welfare reform) be provided before the end of January, 2015;
- c. Feedback from site visits to sheltered accommodation and RSL sheltered accommodation be scheduled for 5 February, 2015;
- e. Homelessness and Empty Properties be discussed at the meeting on 5 March, 2015;

Minutes of the People Cabinet Advisory Committee (08.01.2015)
Cont'd

- f. An invitation be extended to John Puzey, Director of Shelter Cymru (Swansea) to attend the 5 March, 2015 meeting in relation to Homelessness;
- g. The Cabinet Member and Policy Convenor be invited to the meeting on 5 February to discuss Adult Social Services; and
- h. The task and finish group examining Poverty report back in April, 2015.

The meeting ended at 2.50 pm.

CHAIR