

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

COMMUNITIES CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

At: Committee Room 5, Guildhall

On: Thursday, 2 April 2015

Time: 2.00 pm

AGENDA

Page No.

- 1 **Apologies for Absence.**
- 2 **Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.** 1 - 2
- 3 **Minutes:** 3 - 7
To approve, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Communities Cabinet Advisory Committee held on 5 March, 2015.
- 4 **Feedback from the Task and Finish Group on Tackling Poverty. (Verbal)**
The Chair will lead a discussion following a briefing by the Head of Poverty and Prevention to the Task and Finish Group on 24 March, 2015.
- 5 **Work Plan 2015/2016. (Verbal).** 8
The Chair will lead a discussion on items covered during the 2014/2015 Municipal year and potential items for future consideration by the Committee.



Patrick Arran
Head of Legal, Democratic Services & Procurement
Friday, 27 March, 2015

Contact: Democratic Services - Tel: (01792) 637292

COMMUNITIES CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Labour Councillors: 9

R A Clay	B Hopkins
D W Cole	H M Morris
J P Curtice	A S Lewis (Chair)
P Downing	G J Tanner
T J Hennegan (Vice-Chair)	

Liberal Democrat Councillors: 2

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Independent Councillor: 1

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Conservative Councillor: 1

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Officers and relevant Cabinet Members :

Councillor D H Hopkins	Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Councillor W Evans	Cabinet Member for Anti Poverty
Chris Sivers	Director of People
Lee Wenham	Head of Marketing, Communications & Scrutiny
Lee Morgan	Head of Housing and Public Protection
Democratic Services	
Archives	

Total Copies Needed:

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Disclosures of Interest

To receive Disclosures of Interest from Councillors and Officers

Councillors

Councillors Interests are made in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea. You must disclose orally to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest.

NOTE: You are requested to identify the Agenda Item / Minute No. / Planning Application No. and Subject Matter to which that interest relates and to enter all declared interests on the sheet provided for that purpose at the meeting.

1. If you have a **Personal Interest** as set out in **Paragraph 10** of the Code, you **MAY STAY, SPEAK AND VOTE** unless it is also a Prejudicial Interest.
2. If you have a Personal Interest which is also a **Prejudicial Interest** as set out in **Paragraph 12** of the Code, then subject to point 3 below, you **MUST WITHDRAW** from the meeting (unless you have obtained a dispensation from the Authority's Standards Committee)
3. Where you have a Prejudicial Interest you may attend the meeting but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, **provided** that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise. In such a case, you **must withdraw from the meeting immediately after the period for making representations, answering questions, or giving evidence relating to the business has ended**, and in any event before further consideration of the business begins, whether or not the public are allowed to remain in attendance for such consideration (**Paragraph 14** of the Code).
4. Where you have agreement from the Monitoring Officer that the information relating to your Personal Interest is **sensitive information**, as set out in **Paragraph 16** of the Code of Conduct, your obligation to disclose such information is replaced with an obligation to disclose the existence of a personal interest and to confirm that the Monitoring Officer has agreed that the nature of such personal interest is sensitive information.
5. If you are relying on a **grant of a dispensation** by the Standards Committee, you must, before the matter is under consideration:
 - i) Disclose orally both the interest concerned and the existence of the dispensation; and
 - ii) Before or immediately after the close of the meeting give written notification to the Authority containing:

- a) Details of the prejudicial interest;
- b) Details of the business to which the prejudicial interest relates;
- c) Details of, and the date on which, the dispensation was granted; and
- d) Your signature

Officers

Financial Interests

1. If an Officer has a financial interest in any matter which arises for decision at any meeting to which the Officer is reporting or at which the Officer is in attendance involving any member of the Council and /or any third party the Officer shall declare an interest in that matter and take no part in the consideration or determination of the matter and shall withdraw from the meeting while that matter is considered. Any such declaration made in a meeting of a constitutional body shall be recorded in the minutes of that meeting. No Officer shall make a report to a meeting for a decision to be made on any matter in which s/he has a financial interest.

2. A "financial interest" is defined as any interest affecting the financial position of the Officer, either to his/her benefit or to his/her detriment. It also includes an interest on the same basis for any member of the Officers family or a close friend and any company firm or business from which an Officer or a member of his/her family receives any remuneration. There is no financial interest for an Officer where a decision on a report affects all of the Officers of the Council or all of the officers in a Department or Service.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 3C, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA
ON THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2015 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor A S Lewis (Chair) presided

Councillor(s):

R A Clay
D W Cole

Councillor(s):

J P Curtice

Councillor(s):

T J Hennegan

Officers:

H Morgan - Divisional Environmental Health Officer
S Jones - Technical Officer, Housing and Public Protection
M Wade - Community Housing Services Manager
S Porter - Housing Options Manager
J Parkhouse - Democratic Services Officer

30. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Downing, B Hopkins and G J Tanner.

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

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interest was declared:

Councillor D W Cole - Minute No. 33 - empty property work in Swansea - dealing with an empty property in Gorseinon - personal.

32. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Communities Cabinet Advisory Committee held on 5 February 2015 be approved as a correct record.

33. **EMPTY PROPERTY WORK IN SWANSEA**

The Technical Officer and Community Housing Services Manager, supported by the Divisional Environmental Health Officer, provided a detailed and informative presentation on empty property work in Swansea. Details provided in the presentation included:

Minutes of the Meeting of the Communities Cabinet Advisory Committee
(05.03.2015) Cont'd

- Empty property work in Swansea;
- Empty property figures for the Swansea area;
- Measures to bring empty properties back into use;
- Annual mailshot;
- What legislation allows;
- Enforced sale of empty properties;
- Informal actions;
- Houses into homes, including examples;
- Role of registered social landlords.

The Committee asked a number of questions of the Officers who responded accordingly. Discussions centred around the following:

- Advice provided to owners especially regarding signposting;
- The criteria required for dealing with properties and problems surrounding listed buildings;
- The difficulties in finding “ghost” landlords;
- The methods used to tackle properties in poor repair that are still occupied by owners;
- The success of enforced sales in bringing in extra income to the Authority;
- Occupiers at risk would always be the priority for the Authority;
- The role of Councillors in identifying empty properties and how they can assist the process in the future;
- The possibility of the Authority improving empty properties and renting them accordingly, similarly to RSL's;
- The need to communicate this aspect of the Council's work to a wider audience, e.g. Community/Town Councils;

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- The need to have more Officers undertaking this work in order to increase the income of the Authority.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the contents of the presentation be noted;
- (2) an email be circulated to Councillors highlighting how they can assist in identifying empty properties within their Wards;
- (3) the Committee highlights to the Cabinet Members the need for further resources in this area in order to provide additional income to the Authority.

34. **HOMELESSNESS: HOW WE PROVIDE FOR THE FUTURE**

The Community Housing Services Manager and Housing Options Manager provided a detailed and informative presentation regarding Homelessness: How We Provide For The Future. Details provided in the presentation included:-

- The Housing Options Service - An Overview;
- Role of Housing Options;
- Causes of homelessness;
- Homelessness myths;
- Preventing homelessness;
- Options for moving into permanent housing;
- Housing Options and the voluntary sector;
- Assessment Team;
- Assessment myths;
- Key issues.

The Committee asked a number of questions of the Officers who responded accordingly. Discussions centred around the following:-

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- The numbers and assistance provided to rough sleepers in Swansea and the numbers of families currently supported in bed & breakfast accommodation;
- Methods used to encounter issues surrounding homelessness and the fact that landlords were not directly getting their money;
- The provision of homelessness figures and reasons to Welsh Government;
- Background regarding the current points system being used in Swansea;
- The difficulties encountered by the Authority in housing individuals under 35 years old, particularly single people who were on a lower rate of Housing Benefit and had very little option other than to share due to the lack of one bedroom accommodation in the area;
- Temporary accommodation usage across the Authority;
- The involvement of Councillors in local housing meetings and the information provided;
- Minimum standards of repair to properties before they can be let to tenants;
- The services provided by Housing Options with regards to support, advice and mediation;
- The need to assist elderly people to move from two and three bedroom accommodation to sheltered housing, especially assisting with removal of furniture, etc;
- The introduction of a private sector letting scheme by the Authority where the Council acts as agent and works in partnership with landlords;
- Cases of possible Housing Benefit fraud within communities and methods used to address such problems.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;

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- (2) details of homelessness figures and reasons provided to Welsh Assembly Government be provided to the Committee;
- (3) the numbers currently on the waiting list for single bedroom accommodation be provided to the Committee;
- (4) figures relating to temporary accommodation being provided across the Authority be provided to the Committee;
- (5) details of the private letting scheme being undertaken by the Authority and of changes in policy be reported to the Committee when completed;
- (6) details of individuals who live outside the Authority and who have no link who are currently on the waiting list be provided to the Committee.

35. **WORK PLAN 2014/2015**

The Chair presented the Work Programme 2014/2015.

RESOLVED that the following proposals for the Work Plan be approved:

- (1) feedback be provided to a future meeting on the private rented sector lettings team and change in policy;
- (2) a briefing regarding rent recovery and Housing Benefit fraud be provided to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (3) the Task and Finish Group on Poverty report their findings to the scheduled meeting in April 2015;
- (4) feedback from site visits to RSL's sheltered accommodation in Kenfig Hill, Carmarthen and Crymach be reported to the Committee meeting scheduled for April 2015.

The meeting ended at 4.40 p.m.

CHAIR

Agenda Item 5

Report of the Chair

People Cabinet Advisory Committee – 2 April 2015

PEOPLE CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

Date	Subject Area	Lead
8 January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice re:- Task and Finish Group on potential changes to the member role in Tackling Poverty Strategy To discuss this suggested work programme To be advised of suitable sheltered Housing Complexes to visit and to identify members who wish to undertake these site visits. 	Cllr W Evans and C Sivers List to be provided by Jane Harris
27 & 28 January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Visit by certain CAC Members to Sheltered Housing Complexes 	Jane Harris/ Sarah Jordan
28 January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness Raising Seminar – Universal Credit (including Welfare Reforms) 	Jane Storer
5 February 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from Site Visits to RSL & Council Sheltered Accommodation (Councillor J E C Harris and U Clay to attend) Void Properties Councillor M Thomas to attend to outline his policies and key areas of responsibilities 	Chair K Anderson
5 March 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empty Properties Homelessness 	Huw Morgan, Sally Jones Mark Wade/ Steve Porter
24 March 2015	Task and Finish Group Meeting re: Poverty	
2 April 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task and Finish Group to report back on the briefing by the Head of Poverty and Prevention on 24 March, 2015. Discussion on items covered during the 2014/2015 Municipal year and potential items for future consideration by the Committee. 	Chair Chair