



City and County of Swansea

**Minutes of the Poverty Reduction Policy  
Development Committee**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 27 March 2019 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor A Pugh (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**  
P Downing  
L R Jones

**Councillor(s)**  
D W Helliwell

**Councillor(s)**  
B Hopkins

Also Present: - Councillor M Sykes

**Officer(s)**

Amy Hawkins  
Jeremy Parkhouse  
Joanne Portwood  
Lyndsay Thomas

Adult Prosperity and Well-being Service Manager  
Democratic Services Officer  
Strategy and Policy Officer  
Principal Lawyer

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): C R Doyle and L V Walton

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**55 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

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

**56 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee held on 27 February 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**57 Council Letters to Residents. (Verbal)**

Joanne Portwood, Strategy and Policy Officer provided the Committee with a presentation on Council letters to residents. Details provided included: -

- Council Letters - Using Plain English, Easy Read and Nudge Theory to improve communication;
- The Need for Change;
- Benefits of Change;
- Examples of the impact of poorly written letters;
- Good practice: Plain English;

- Good practice: Easy read;
- Nudge theory;
- Example 1: Trial by HMRC;
- Example 2: Colchester Borough Council;
- Example 3: Wigan Council;
- Next steps.

The Committee discussed the following: -

- Simplifying the message and improving the look of letters with e.g. artwork;
- The need to make letters easier to understand and looking at sample letters sent out by the Council;
- How not understanding letters leads to residents being prosecuted;
- How Shelter Cymru had identified the issue of residents being prosecuted, wanted to address the situation and how a change to simplified wording could avoid prosecutions, court costs and debt.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) A presentation be provided by Finance providing examples of letters sent to residents;
- 2) The Adult Prosperity and Well-being Service Manager reports back to the Committee on discussions with Shelter Cymru and Housing and provides sample letters for consideration.

## **58 Human Rights for the City and County of Swansea. (Verbal)**

Councillor Mo Sykes provided the Committee with an update regarding progress on Swansea becoming a Human Rights City. She tabled an update containing the definition of a Human Rights City, its mission and objectives. It also highlighted the declaration for the City of York, who was involved, what they did and the four key elements of their strategy.

The considerations for Swansea were also highlighted, including the action agenda which detailed the outcomes and resources required.

She commented that if Swansea wished to become a Human Rights City it would have to undertake things differently and engagement was required at the top level of the Authority.

The Committee discussed the following: -

- The need to introduce an overarching mission statement;
- Schools looking at the Human Rights issue, asking them to outline what they think a Human Rights City should look like and discussing the issue directly with a Swansea school;
- Involving other groups / individuals in Swansea and including them in discussions;
- Discussing the issue with officer groups within the Council;
- Having Cabinet / Corporate Management Team 'buy in'.

The Chair thanked Councillor Mo Sykes for providing her report.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) The Adult Prosperity and Well-being Service Manager drafts a letter to Cabinet / CMT and circulates to the Committee for approval;
- 2) A joint visit to a Swansea school with Education & Skills Policy Development Committee be investigated further.

**59 Work Plan 2018-2019.**

The Chair presented an updated Work Plan 2018-2019.

The Adult Prosperity and Well-being Service Manager also provided an update on progress regarding High Interest Lending. She outlined the actions to the High Interest Lending Action Plan that been undertaken.

She highlighted that Councillors had requested additional loan shark awareness / scam awareness training.

**Resolved** that: -

- 1) The contents of the updated Work Plan 2018-19 be noted,
- 2) The Adult Prosperity and Well-being Service Manager circulates a summary of progress made in respect of the High Interest Lending Action Plan;
- 3) Options for loan shark awareness / scam awareness training be investigated further.

The meeting ended at 5.00 pm

**Chair**