



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Service Improvement & Finance**

Committee Room 5, Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 16 September 2019 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor C A Holley (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

P Downing
L James
C E Lloyd

Councillor(s)

R Francis-Davies
M H Jones
I E Mann

Councillor(s)

P R Hood-Williams
J W Jones

Other Attendees

Robert Francis-Davies
Clive Lloyd

Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism
Cabinet Member - Business Transformation & Performance (Deputy Leader)

Officer(s)

Kim Collis
Bethan Hopkins
Tracey McNulty
Chris Williams

County Archivist
Scrutiny Officer
Head of Cultural Services
Head of Commercial Services

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): P K Jones, B J Rowlands and D W W Thomas

Other Attendees: Councillor Peter Black

1 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

- None

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

- None

3 Minutes

- Approved

4 Public Questions

- None

5 Archives

- Archives is one of the few services which survived after the breakup of West Glamorgan
- Based in Civic Centre Swansea but with a branch in Neath
- There is a joint archives committee which is advisory and the focus is on the service itself which is very beneficial
- Sits within Cultural Services within the Council
- Meet with Neath Port Talbot (NPT) colleagues quarterly
- The relationship between Swansea and NPT works very well
- Records management is managed by legal services
- Welsh Government has requirements on accreditation standards for archives
- Archives hold magistrate court records on behalf of central government
- Archives are records of institutions and individuals – they can be administratively important or culturally important
- Archives are a hybrid service combining legal and cultural importance
- Often used by the public for boundary disputes
- Archives are a record of facts so are very useful in a world of conflicting perceptions of reality
- Half of the records in archives have been donated
- 2.5 miles of shelving in the Civic Basement
- Some high value items and one collection recognised by UNESCO
- 95% full and not in a position to accept a major collection
- Ongoing practical working relationship with the University
- Can't digitise records and get rid of the original documents – part of people's heritage
- Local authority are custodians of collections on behalf of all society
- Storage environment essential – must be temperature and humidity controlled, with protection against flood and fire. All of these are major risks
- University have the same storage requirements and standards as us
- 15th busiest archive in the UK – all over the UK attendance figures are declining and hence we have kept our position in the UK league table as ours have declined at the same rate.
- people access online services in line with the expansion of online information
- The service is very customer focused with very high satisfaction responses
- Team also do outreach in schools, social media information, special events and portable exhibitions
- These are very successful and inspiring
- Team also produces publications, latest is on the post war re-building of Swansea)
- Send data to CIPFA but Council is no longer a member of CIPFA due to budget restrictions
- If only taking small items, there is about 5 years left of storage in Civic basement
- Civic Centre is under review and Corporate Property along with Cultural Services are looking at future options for archives

- Open to relocation to create a more sustainable service but must have proper storage – paramount for future generations and in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015
- There needs to be a proper timescale and plan to create a more sustainable and public facing archive service
- Does not necessarily have to be City Centre – just be correct storage conditions
- Purpose built may be the only option due to the building specifications required
- There is currently no specific project or dedicated timeline to address the issue of archives – budget restrictions
- There needs to be proper plan in the event that the Council move from Civic
- Suggestions a project board is in place to start to explore and apply for external funding now
- The archive service and support needs to be in the same building as the documents themselves
- No realistic scope to fully control the family history resources online due to the cost and infrastructure needed to load all of the information online initially

6 Charges

- Increases of charges are kept as reasonable as possible
- Always looking for potential ways to produce additional income
- Social services has a separate policy and separate legislation which governs its charges
- Each department is responsible for its own fees and charges
- There is lots of legislation which needs to be considered when a council sets its charges
- Discussed boat charges and will send last year's response to the Panel
- Marina berthing fees discussed – who is this cost benchmarked with? Have these fees changed payment structure as no information is available for 15/16, 16/17 and 17/18. - Request info in letter
- Swansea still offer free garden waste collection where other Councils do not
- Council tax does not extend to pay for everything
- Internal charging –open dialogue between departments is promoted to resolve issues if any arise
- Moving toward digitalising payment services to reduce transaction costs

7 Exclusion of the Public

8 Charges

- Exempt items discussed

9 Work Plan 2019/20

- Potential Commissioning Review scoping reports to go to panel
- Potential for another completed Commissioning Review update in a future meeting

The meeting ended at 11.40 am

Chair



**To/
Councillor Clive Lloyd
Cabinet Member for Business
Transformation and Performance**

BY EMAIL

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Overview & Scrutiny

01792 636292

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

24th September 2019

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Performance following the meeting of the Panel on 16th September 2019. The letter concerns the report on Charges.

Dear Councillor Lloyd,

On the 16th September 2019, the Panel met to discuss Charges.

The Panel are grateful to all who attended to provide information and answer questions. The Panel do have some thoughts and observations to share with you.

The report we received was extremely thorough and we appreciate the effort that went into compiling it. From a scrutiny perspective we found it helpful to have an overview contained within the written report which could then highlight any major changes which need to be brought to our attention. Spreadsheets can be provided on an exceptional basis if there is anything the Panel needs to see.

You told us how each department is responsible for their own fees and charges and any increase is kept as reasonable as possible. We heard there is a lot of legislation which needs to be considered when a Council sets charges. You also explained social services have a separate policy and separate legislation which covers its charges.

We heard how the commercial team are always looking for new ways to produce additional income.

We were told how Council Tax does not cover all of the expenses the Council has so there has to be ways to cover costs. You told us how Swansea still does not charge for garden waste collection when other Councils do.

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU
SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE
GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE**

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

We discussed the issue of Marina Berthing Fees and we would like to know who this cost is benchmarked with? Can you also tell us have the fees changed payment structure as there is no information available for 15/16, 16/17 and 17/18. If so, can you provide us the previous payment information?

We have asked previously about the effectiveness of internal charging and you assured us that there is an open dialogue between departments to resolve any issues if they arise. We hope this continues to make this process as efficient as possible.

You said that there will be a move toward digitising payment services going forward to reduce transaction costs. Whilst simplifying services is important, we hope that there is consideration of the people using them as not everyone is computer literate. We also want to see reasonableness applied, for example, automatically generated letters, for tiny amounts (£1 for example) are reviewed before they are sent to assess the cost/benefit ratio.

We would be grateful if you could respond to the following question by 15th October 2015 and welcome any thoughts you may have.

- We discussed the issue of Marina Berthing Fees and we would like to know who this cost is benchmarked with? Can you also tell us have the fees changed payment structure as there is no information available for 15/16, 16/17 and 17/18. If so, can you provide us the previous payment information?

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
✉ cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk



**To/
Councillor Robert Francis-Davies
Cabinet Member for Investment,
Regeneration and Tourism**

BY EMAIL

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Overview & Scrutiny

01792 636292

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

1st October 2019

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism following the meeting of the Panel on 16th September 2019. The letter concerns the report on Archives.

Dear Councillor Francis-Davies,

On the 16th September 2019, the Panel met to discuss the Archives Service.

The Panel are grateful to all who attended to provide information and answer questions. The Panel do have some thoughts and observations to share with you.

We heard how archives is one of the few services that survived the break up of West Glamorgan. We were told the Archive Service is based in Civic Centre in Swansea with a branch in Neath and the service comes under Cultural Services. We heard how there 2.5 miles of shelves of filing in the Civic Basement with some high value items and one collection recognised by UNESCO.

You told us that there is an Advisory Joint Archive Committee and the focus of the group is on the service which is very positive. We heard how the relationship with colleagues in Neath Port Talbot was very good and quarterly meetings take place to discuss any issues.

We were told that Archives is a hybrid of legal services and cultural services. It stores records of institutions such as Magistrates Court records and minutes but also individual items of historical or cultural significance. Because Archives are a records of fact, they are particularly important to maintain, and can be used for a range of research and queries such as boundary disputes.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

We heard how Welsh Government has requirements relating to Archive storage standards. The environment is essential and there must be protection against humidity, water damage and fire. You explained how we have an ongoing relationship with the University to share some of the storage requirements. We were assured that the University and anywhere else who stores archives have to meet the same storage standards.

We asked about the capacity of the current Archive Service and were told that currently the storage space is 95% full and there is no capacity currently to accept a major collection. Many items which need archiving are now digitally stored such as Magistrates Court records but others cannot be made digital and we need to keep items of historical and cultural importance.

You told us how we have approximately the 15th busiest archive service in Wales and although attendance figures are declining, user figures are maintaining as people access online services in line with the expansion of online information. This is very encouraging and shows the public continue to be interested in archives.

It was interesting to hear that half of the records within the Archive Service have been donated and it is important to note that we as a Council are the custodians of these works on behalf of the public. It was pleasing to hear that the service is very customer focused with very high satisfaction responses from the public which demonstrates the passion and knowledge of the team. We were told that the team undertakes outreach in schools, cascades information on social media and runs special events and portable exhibitions and publications. It is most impressive that one of these exhibitions was recognised by the National Assembly. It is encouraging that the team try to recognise issues of both local and national importance such as the post-war rebuild of Swansea and the suffragette movement. We look forward to seeing more of these inspiring works in the future.

We discussed the future prospects of the Archive Service and you told us that Civic Centre and its future are under ongoing review by Corporate Property. As a result, the future venues for the Archives Service is under constant consideration. We heard how a relocation would not necessarily be negative but the new venue would have to create sustainable storage and meet the correct requirements.

The future venue need not be in the City Centre but a purpose built building may be the only solution due to the strict physical requirements of the rooms (e.g. no mains water pipes can run over the top of the buildings). We also feel that the archives themselves and the team who support this service should be in the same building so members of the public can have support to access the resource. This also fits in with requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

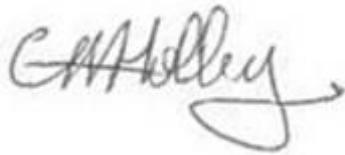
We are concerned about the pace at which the future of the Archives Service is being addressed. Although we were told about an officers working group, which is continuously looking at potential options, we feel there should be a dedicated team of people looking at the issue. A plan and timescale needs to be put in place to deal with the relocation of the Archive Service and an established project board could start to research and apply for external grant funding to support this. If a decision is

made about Civic Centre, there may not be adequate time to find a suitable venue for archives and this may jeopardise the future of the service.

We would like to see a working group be established now to explore funding applications and potential venues ahead of any decisions being made on the future of Civic Centre. Can you let us know your thoughts on this?

We would be grateful if you could respond to this letter by 22nd October 2019 and welcome any thoughts you may have.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Holley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
✉ cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk



**To/
Councillor Robert Francis-Davies
Cabinet Member for Investment,
Regeneration and Tourism**

BY EMAIL

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Overview & Scrutiny

01792 636292

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

1st October 2019

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism following the meeting of the Panel on 16th September 2019. The letter concerns the report on Archives.

Dear Councillor Francis-Davies,

On the 16th September 2019, the Panel met to discuss the Archives Service.

The Panel are grateful to all who attended to provide information and answer questions. The Panel do have some thoughts and observations to share with you.

We heard how archives is one of the few services which survived the beak up of West Glamorgan. We were told the Archive Service is based in Civic Centre in Swansea with a branch in Neath and the service comes under Cultural Services. We heard how there 2.5 miles of shelves of filing in the Civic Basement with some high value items and one collection recognised by UNESCO.

You told us that there is an advisory joint archive committee and the focus of the group is on the service which is very positive. We heard how the relationship with colleagues in Neath Port Talbot was very good and quarterly meetings take place to discuss any issues.

We were told that Archives is a hybrid of legal services and cultural services. It stores records of institutions such as magistrates court records and minutes but also individual items of historical or cultural significance. Because Archives are a records of fact, they are particularly important to maintain, and can be used for a range of research and queries such as boundary disputes.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWA

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWA, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

We heard how Welsh Government has requirements relating to Archive storage standards. The environment is essential and there must be protection against humidity, water damage and fire which are all risks. You explained how we have an ongoing relationship with the University to share some of the storage requirements. We were assured that the University and anywhere else who stores archives have to meet the same storage standards.

We asked about the capacity of the current Archive Service and were told that currently the storage space is 95% full and there is no capacity currently to accept a major collection. Many items which need archiving are now digitally stored such as Magistrates Court records but others cannot be made digital and we need to keep items of historical and cultural importance.

You told us how we have approximately the 15th busiest archive service in the UK and the busiest in Wales and although attendance figures are declining, user figures are maintaining as people access online services in line with the expansion of online information. This is very encouraging and shows the public continue to be interested in archives.

It was interesting to hear that half of the records within the Archive Service have been donated and it is important to note that we as a Council are the custodians of these works on behalf of the public. It was pleasing to hear that the service is very customer focused with very high satisfaction responses from the public which demonstrates the passion and knowledge of the team. We were told that the team undertakes outreach in schools, cascades information on social media and runs special events and portable exhibitions and publications. It is most impressive that one of these exhibitions was recognised by the National Assembly. It is encouraging that the team try and recognise issues of both local and national importance such as the post-war rebuild of Swansea and the suffragette movement. We look forward to seeing more of these inspiring works in the future.

We discussed the future prospects of the Archive Service and you told us that Civic Centre and its future are under ongoing review by Corporate Property. As a result, the future venues for the Archives Service is under constant consideration. We heard how a relocation would not necessarily be negative but the new venue would have to create sustainable storage and meet the correct requirements.

The future venue need not be in the City Centre but a purpose built building may be the only solution due to the strict physical requirements of the rooms (e.g. no mains water pipes can run over the top of the buildings). We also feel that the archives themselves and the team who support this service should be in the same building so members of the public can have support to access the resource. This also fits in with requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

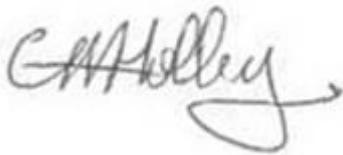
We are concerned about the pace at which the future of the Archives Service is being addressed. Although we were told about an officers working group which is continuously looking at potential options, we feel there should be a dedicated team of people looking at the issue. A plan and timescale needs to be put in place to deal with the relocation of the Archive Service and an established project board could

start to research and apply for external grant funding to support this. If a decision is made about Civic Centre, there may not be adequate time to find a suitable venue for archives and this may jeopardise the future of the service.

Could a working group be established now to explore funding applications and potential venues ahead of any decisions being made on the future of Civic Centre?

We would be grateful if you could respond to this letter by 22nd October 2019 and welcome any thoughts you may have.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Holley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
✉ cllr.chris.holley@swansea.gov.uk