



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **People Policy Development Committee**

Council Chamber - Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 18 September 2019 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor C R Evans (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
M B Lewis

Councillor(s)

P R Hood-Williams
T M White

Councillor(s)

E T Kirchner

Officer(s)

Chris Francis

Principal Business Development and Commissioning Lead

Simon Jones

Social Services Strategy and Performance Improvement Officer

Allison Lowe

Democratic Services Officer

Lisa Thomas

Senior Lawyer

Also Present:

Heidi Lythgoe – Parent / Carer Forum

Chris Law – Parent / Carer Forum

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): S J Gallagher and G J Tanner

14 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

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

15 Minutes:

Resolved that the Minutes of the People Policy Development Committee held on 17 July 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

16 Transition for Children and Young People with a Disability. (Verbal)

The Chair welcomed Heidi Lythgoe and Chris Law of the Swansea Parent Carer Forum to the meeting and thanked them for taking the time to speak to the Committee. He explained that the Committee had been considering the item of Transition on an ongoing basis since the previous Municipal year. The purpose of the invitation was to further understand the role of the Parent Carer Forum and to

ensure there continued to be sufficient feedback from the children / young people and their families to improve and update the Policy accordingly.

Chris Francis, Lead Officer outlined the background and outlined that the funding to establish the first newly constituted independent Parent Carer Forum in Wales had been provided by the Local Authority. It was hoped that the scheme would be replicated in other parts of Wales.

He explained progress to date as follows:

- Work to improve arrangements re Carers Assessments;
- Working closely with the Education Department in relation to Additional Learning Needs (ALN) & the Tribunal Act;
- Working with the Swansea Offer Group to develop an online platform for children with disabilities and their families to promote and inform them of the services in Swansea. It was acknowledged that some of the pathways and processes could be complicated;
- A multi-agency Task and Finish Group which included 2 members of the Parent / Carer Forum had been created to look at the subject of transition. The membership would be reviewed to ensure an equal split between officers and parents / carers;
- The views of Schools and Head teachers of Special Schools and SDF's along with the Health Board would be obtained to better understand their opinions;
- Tom Jones, Participation & Children's Rights Worker had been leading on a piece of work to capture the voice of the young people.

Heidi Lythgoe, Chair of the Swansea Parent Carer Forum explained that she had been working on the Forum for 18 months. Their main role being to improve engagement with parent / carers of disabled children. The Forum had been initially led by Swansea Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS), Action For Children and Contact for Families with Disabled Children, who had been supporting the group in order to develop its own identity. They had also developed their own priorities, which were similar to those of Swansea Council but more focussed on what was important to the parent / carers and their families. The membership of the Group had been fluid as there were considerable caring obligations but they had made steady progress. They had initially focused on the setting up of the group and were currently working with the Local Authority on Transition / ALN / Carer Assessments.

Chris Law notified the Committee of the launch of the Swansea Parent Carer Forum that would take place on Friday, 18 October at Swansea Grand Theatre. Carrie Grant had been secured as the guest speaker. She had personal experience of children with special needs. He commented that it would be a great opportunity for the Committee to attend the launch and meet other parent / carers from Swansea. Local Assembly Members had also been invited.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee, the Parent / Carer Forum representatives stated:

- Initial conversations had taken place with the Health Board in relation to their involvement. Some parent / carer representatives had also been involved via

links with West Glamorgan Regional Board (formerly Western Bay). The Local Authority would continue to act as a conduit;

- In addition, together with the Local Authority, the Forum had been liaising with Schools regarding the ALN Act and the New Curriculum, both of which would be “game changers” for some families. However, work had commenced in preparing for these changes. It was acknowledged that ALN was a tricky area and difficult for parents and schools to manage. It would require a culture change and co-production at this level would make a huge difference. Consideration should be given to what life would look like for children with disabilities. General inclusion should also be happening in every school;
- There was a role for Councillors to assist. Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel had considered various elements and would continue to contribute and provide support;
- A Task & Finish Group had been working on mapping the process of the Carers Assessments. A survey was in the process of being drafted to capture views on processes in order to improve it going forward;
- It was acknowledged that communication between service users and Social Services was inconsistent. The survey would identify problem areas which would be considered by the Task & Finish group;
- The funding provided by Swansea Council would cease in April 2020. The future intention being for the group to be in a position to be self-sustainable, however the Authority would continue to assist the group with applying for funding from relevant sources. It was noted that it was important that carers should not be “out of pocket” in relation to attending Forum meetings and cost of care implications. This would be considered by the Strategic Stakeholder Group;
- Conversations should continue with Welsh Government in terms of funding streams and promoting the Forum due to the Welsh Government’s focus on co-production;
- Work had commenced in relation to communicating with those hard to reach parent / carers;

The Chair thanked the representatives of the Swansea Parent Carer Forum for their attendance at the Committee.

Resolved that the invitation to the launch of the Swansea Parent Carer Forum be forwarded to the Chair for wider circulation.

17 Work Plan 2019-2020.

The Chair presented the Work Plan for 2019-2020.

He reported that unfortunately the item on the Council’s approach to Strategic Commissioning had been postponed until 16 October 2019 meeting due to officer unavailability.

As a result, future monthly items on this subject matter would all be re-scheduled accordingly.

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Cont'd

In addition, the Interim Head of Adult Services had requested that the Committee receive a report on the Mental Capacity Act amendment Bill (2019) at its November meeting.

Resolved that the Work Plan be updated accordingly.

The meeting ended at 10.45 am

Chair