

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HELD AT CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA ON THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER
2014 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A S Lewis (Chair) Presided

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

Also Present:

Councillor W Evans - Cabinet Member for Anti Poverty
Councillor D H Hopkins - Cabinet Member for Housing
and Communities

Officers:-

C Sivers - Director of People
L Morgan - Head of Housing and Public Protection
J Tinker - Democratic Services Coordinator

12 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B Hopkins.

13 **DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

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

14 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the People Cabinet Advisory Committee held on 30 September 2014 be approved as a correct record.

15 **PRESENTATION BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES AND CABINET MEMBER FOR ANTI POVERTY.**

Councillor D H Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities and Councillor W Evans, Cabinet Member for Anti Poverty had been invited to this meeting to outline their policies and key areas of responsibilities and areas of work that could be undertaken by this Cabinet Advisory Committee.

Councillor D Hopkins suggested that the following topics could be incorporated into the workplan:-

- Sheltered Accommodation
- Provision of Homelessness within Swansea
- Empty Private Sector Properties
- Rent collection

Each of these areas were discussed. An explanation was given of what was meant by sheltered accommodation. It was considered that this could be looked at jointly with the Cabinet Advisory Committee that was responsible for Adult Services. It was suggested that it could be beneficial if site visits were undertaken by some members. Hazel Court was considered to be a good example, together with Plas Melin. Clarity was sought regarding the qualifications for sheltered accommodation. Councillor D Hopkins stated that he thought it would be important if this Committee investigated how we deliver this service currently and how we envisage we will in the future together with increasing the demand for this. It was suggested that Jane Harries (Shelter Manager) be invited to a meeting.

It was thought that homelessness was a huge issue and that a presentation could be made by Mark Wade (Community Housing Manager) or Steve Porter (Housing Options Manager) regarding how we work with other organisations e.g. The Wallich. The Committee requested statistics from Housing Options regarding the current waiting list on a regular basis, the number of homelessness and the reasons for this. It was suggested that appropriate Environmental Health Officers present an overview of statistics in relation to void properties and the measures being taken to bring them back into use, together with a written report on council void properties indicating why they are void and how long they have been empty. It was suggested that rent collection could be considered later on in the work programme after universal credit had been introduced.

Councillor W Evans suggested that the following topics could be incorporated into the workplan:

- Welfare Reforms
- Council Management Framework for Tackling Poverty

It was thought helpful if all members have an awareness training session to explain what the changes are in respect of universal credit, what these mean and how they are going to be implemented. Karen Grunhut Anti Poverty Policy Coordinator and Jane Storer Senior Welfare Rights Officer to give a presentation. It was considered that the Council Management Plan for Tackling Poverty could be discussed at a future meeting.

Councillors D Hopkins and W Evans were thanked for attending the Committee and providing the Committee with important and relevant areas to incorporate onto the action plan.

16 **FURTHER DISCUSSION REGARDING THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE FORTHCOMING MUNICIPAL YEAR(VERBAL).**

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

- (1) Jane Harries Landlord Services Manager and the Shelter Manager be invited to give a presentation to the next meeting on 8 January 2015 regarding the sheltered accommodation service that we provide.
- (2) Following this meeting site visits be undertaken to relevant Sheltered Housing Complexes and a joint meeting if necessary take place with the CAC responsible for Adult Services.
- (3) A report be submitted to the meeting on 8 January regarding the number of voids and a relevant officer from environmental health be invited to give a presentation regarding empty properties.
- (4) Finance to be asked to provide a written report on Council Tax Charges for empty properties.
- (5) Mark Wade Community Housing Manager or Steve Porter Housing Options Manager be invited to the meeting on 5 February 2015 to provide an overview presentation on homelessness.
- (6) An Awareness Raising Session for all members regarding Welfare Reform be arranged in January 2015.
- (7) Welfare Reform be discussed further to this session at the meeting on 5 February 2015 and Councillor W Evans, Jane Storer Senior Welfare Rights Officer and Karen Grunhut Anti Poverty Policy Coordinator be invited to this meeting.
- (8) the Council Management Framework for Tackling Poverty be considered further at the meeting on 5 February 2015.

The meeting ended at 3.45p.m.

CHAIR