

Mark Child – Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Healthy City

Scrutiny Programme Committee 19th January 2015

What is Wellbeing?

It is not exactly clear what Wellbeing is, and even less clear how to measure it. In the Dictionary it may be “A contented state of being happy and healthy and prosperous”, an individual may say “Getting up in the morning and looking after myself; having friends and family”. There are various attempts at measuring by ONS, OECD, and ideas of how to build towards it, happiness index, or the senses framework. I have tried to see the effect of Well-being in Swansea as reduced, delayed or prevented need for direct NHS or Social Services intervention in someone’s life, through individual’s health measures, people being part of a wider network in which they can give and receive support, and communities having capacity to welcome, give a sense of security and pleasure to all who live in them.

Local Area Co-ordinators

A key factor in keeping people healthy is addressing the needs of those who are vulnerable, and increasing community’s capacity to support vulnerable people. An approach called Local Area Co-ordination is being adopted in Western Bays to provide key professional staff to work in areas across Swansea. This approach originated in Australia and is evidenced has having a significant effect. It seeks to support disabled, older people and those with mental health issues to be strong, safe and contributing, be in control of their lives and build solutions for them within their communities. If successful it will prevent, delay or reduce the need for Social Services or Health intervention. The model suggests about 15 needed for Swansea, of which 3 are soon to be appointed and the areas they will work in determined. An exciting and innovative approach.

Parks

There has been progress with Community Asset Transfer, which will enable the ownership and potential improvement of land and facilities for community use as well as the reduction in costs to the Council.

Discussions are well underway with regards to the transfer of the Authority’s 23 bowls greens to clubs or Community Councils, the Council has terminated the lease of the current Gymnastic centre building and the Community Sport and Recreation service is assisting the club to move to new accommodation and Cabinet has given approval to enter into lease negotiations with Mumbles Community Association for Underhill Park. This has involved discussions with clubs and public meetings.

There are also a number of other projects and sites currently being progressed or considered for transfer to the third sector, namely;
Graig y Coed in Penclawdd to Llanrhidian Higher CC
Cwmbwrla Park - pitches and changing rooms to Ragged School AFC

Ynystawe Park - pitches, changing rooms and bowling green to Ynystawe Cricket and Football club
Cefn Hengoed Community Leisure Centre to Eastside Sports Academy
Transfer of the Indoor Bowls Centre to the indoor bowls club

The Authority's Transformation fund is assisting in this work.

This year has seen the completion of Cwmdonkin Park restoration project, and Brynmelin Park improvement project, 5 new/upgraded play areas installed in target areas as part of Administration's £300k commitment.

National Fields in Trust award won by Secretary of Friends of Coedbach Park

Creating an Active and Healthy Swansea

This year we have worked with health partners to develop the Creating an Active and Healthy Swansea Action Plan, with the Vision for Swansea to be: "The most Active, Healthy and Informed city in the UK, where a healthy lifestyle is the norm". This aims to increase the numbers of people, especially children and the most inactive, making use of sport and leisure activities.

The plan has been reviewed and updated so that the outcomes are clearer in how the Authority is aiming to improve levels of physical activity and reduce obesity.

The updated plan has Strategic Priorities with a focus on;

- Sport and Physical Activity
- Access to Facilities and Opportunities
- Community approach to Health and Wellbeing

Giving every child the best start in life

Successfully held an event to decide on the Strategy to giving every child the best start in life in Swansea. Well attended with assistance from University College London. An understanding of the problem and an agreement to act and acceptance of the principles on how we will act was achieved.

Now developing a citywide Strategy to involve and influence Council departments, schools, private childcare providers and Health visitors, GPs and all others in Health to lower the development assessment gap between children in the bottom deciles, vs. the top deciles by approximately 6 months. This is hugely ambitious, but so important as where a child is at 3 is a major determinant on how long they will live, how healthy their lives will be, what their educational attainment and earning capacity will be, and so many other things we ignore it at our peril.

Community Safety

Our application for the Purple Flag Award has had great initial feedback from the assessors regarding our healthy nightlife offer in the Purple Flag area of the city centre, now waiting for the final decision.

As part of the Night time service Help Point Plus was launched in November on the Strand, which is preventing over 50 A&E cases per month from Wind St, and has been welcomed by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Drop off point, to managing people coming into and leaving Wind St has been improved including adding excellent notices regarding safety and common sense.

We are currently undertaking a review of all CCTV across Swansea. Have reduced in a number of areas already and will soon be consulting with Councillors about more. Looking at alternative ways of monitoring these as well as the absolute numbers needed.

Gambling

The Gambling policy changes and resolution not to issue casino premises licences were introduced following extensive consultation with the relevant bodies and other interested parties.

Smoking

Participated in Stoptober campaign, and working to reduce smoking as the biggest cause of differentials in life expectancy and healthy life years in Swansea. Includes delivering the Tobacco control action plan for Swansea in accordance with Welsh Government requirements, and building on initiatives such as the voluntary ban on smoking at all council owned designated playgrounds in place, the smoke free homes pack/DVD in place together with supported training for Flying Start teams, and the smoke free homes calendar for families produced as a result of working with Blaenymaes Primary School, the Parent Guardian Council and Flying Start.

Urban Environment

Within the context of a changing city centre, I will be seeking to have imaginative spaces for people and greenery, to have cycling and walking as core and in general to ensure development is healthy and people friendly.

Budget

With parts of the portfolio due to have over 40% cuts in funding there are some very challenging times ahead. Wherever possible we will be looking for partners, organisations willing and able to take on facilities. We will learn as we go, and the pre-decision scrutiny of the Underhill proposals was very welcome addition to this. There is a need for the community to build capacity, not just for playing fields, public toilets and grit bins, but for other areas of mutual support, for the more vulnerable people in the community too. Without this capacity there is a serious danger that some things will be lost, that some of our over-riding efforts to reduce poverty and to narrow the gaps across our city will not happen.