

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 5, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON
THURSDAY, 9 JULY 2015 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A S Lewis (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)
R A Clay D W Cole	A M Cook J P Curtice	T J Hennegan

Officers:

J Harries	-	Landlord Services Manager
D Samuel	-	Operations Manager
M Wade	-	Community Services Housing Manager
P Williams	-	Strategic Planning and Enabling Manager
S Woon	-	Democratic Services Officer

13 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Hopkins, H M Morris and G J Tanner.

14 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

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

15 **MINUTES:**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Communities Cabinet Advisory Committee held on 2 June, 2015, be approved as correct records.

16 **LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY: (CHAPTER 5)**

The Strategic Planning and Enabling Manager assisted by the Landlord Manager, Operations Manager and Service Manager provided a presentation regarding the Local Housing Strategy. The purpose of the presentation was to review Chapter 5 of the strategy which encompassed:-

- Improving and Making the Best Use of Housing Stock;
- Managing and Improving Council Housing;
- Letting and Managing Council Housing;
- Anti Social Behaviour; and
- Private Sector and Energy Efficiency.

Details within the presentation included:-

- Improving Council Housing;
- Letting and Managing of Council Houses;
- Anti-Social Behaviour;
- Private Sector Housing; and
- Energy Efficiency.

In response to Member questions, Officers stated that:

- It was the intention to achieve the WQHS by 2020 in the vast majority of housing stock;
- A cost benefit options appraisal analysis was being undertaken in relation to other options, specifically for those properties that would not be able to achieve the standard;
- The budget figure of £332 comprised capital and revenue expenditure (capital had decreased over the years whilst revenue had increased);
- The use of community groups was an option that could be investigated further;
- Comparison work had been undertaken with Authorities across the board in order to compare the WQHS with other Schemes;
- Inspections of Council properties are regularly undertaken and if issues are identified Officers work with support agencies in order to resolve the problem;
- Officers had been proactive in supporting tenants who are affected by Welfare Reform;
- The Family Intervention Partnership (FIP) had been successful in achieving two awards in relation to partnership working with families who are perpetrators of anti social behaviour;
- Integrating waiting lists with Registered Social landlords (RSL's) was examined by Scrutiny in 2014 and found not to be beneficial to the Council or the RSL's at the time;
 - Issues relating to Anti Social Behaviour are generally dealt with by using Swansea's four stage process ranging from an early warning letter through to legal sanction at the fourth stage. However, more serious incidents can be escalated when it is proportionate to do so. are escalated,
 - Where a vacancy arises due to the anti- social behaviour of a previous tenant, officers will seek to ensure that the next letting takes this into account especially where the neighbour may be vulnerable.
 - If anti-social behaviour is reported on dial "101" it is likely that call will be answered in Port Talbot police station where the police ASB team and the current Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator are based. Council Tenants in Swansea however have the option to call the Neighbourhood Support Unit which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- PCSO's who are based in different parts of the City are likely to have different tasking priorities dependant on where they are based.
- In relation to absent landlords, checks can be undertaken to determine ownership. A WG consultation is ongoing involving Local Authorities regarding the introduction of landlord registration and licensing this autumn. Landlords will have to register and nominate an agent if not managing the property themselves;

- The manner in which RSL's report voids is not comparable to the Council's system;
- Timescales for DFG's were discussed. Priority cases, for example hospital discharges, are fast tracked through the process but waiting times can be lengthy due to demand and resources, particularly in relation to Occupational Therapy causing delays of up to 8 months ;
- Awareness raising had been undertaken with new tenants in relation to energy efficiency, however further work was required;
- the ongoing work in relation to SAP Ratings;
- The 'Max Your Money' (MYM) Project had been overtaken by other Schemes and the value in including this past project in the strategy was questioned;

The Chair thanked Officers for their informative presentation.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the contents of the presentation be noted;
- (2) Chapter 5 of the Local Housing Strategy be approved subject to the removal of reference to the 'Max Your Money' (MYM) Project;
- (3) The Chair write to the Cabinet Member for Services and Adults and Vulnerable People regarding the negative knock on effect of delays with DFG's.

17 **WORK PLAN 2015-2016.**

The Chair presented the updated Communities Cabinet Advisory Committee Work Programme 2015-2016.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) the Democratic Services Officer contact the Senior Welfare Rights Officer requesting that an update on the Universal Credit Briefings be scheduled for the September 2015 meeting and;
- (3) The Democratic Services Officer contact the Principle Revenues Officer requesting that an update on the changes to Council Tax in respect of Empty Properties be provided for the September, 2015 meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.27 pm

CHAIR