

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 5, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON
THURSDAY, 14 JANUARY 2016 AT 2.00 PM**

PRESENT: Councillor R A Clay (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

D W Cole

T J Hennegan

Councillor(s)

A M Cook

B Hopkins

Councillor(s)

J P Curtice

G J Tanner

Officer(s)

C Williams – Head of Commercial Services

S Woon – Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): N J Davies

49 **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.

50 **MINUTES:**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Communities Cabinet Advisory Committee held on 10 December 2016 be approved as a correct record.

51 **COMMERCIALISATION.**

Chris Williams, Head of Commercial Services provided an overview of Commercialisation.

He stated that he joined the Authority in October 2015 having previously worked in the private sector in London.

He referred to the plan to move the Authority to generate additional income of its own with the Commercial Strategy being adopted to provide value to residents. The plan was to adopt a 'business like' innovative approach to service delivery, exploiting every opportunity to increase income to offset loss of grants and ultimately to protect service delivery.

He stated that his work was linked to the Sustainable Swansea agenda, which aimed to reduce costs in all aspects of service delivery. The Commercial Services Unit is a trusted business partner, working with and giving advice to departments to help them achieve their goals. The Commercialism Strategy supports the aims of Council's Corporate Plan providing suitable services which are viable.

Areas being examined include rationalisation of the manner in which buying is undertaken, reducing costs, maximise assets, realising potential from training, avoiding duplication; identifying and overcoming the legal barriers/limits of freedom to doing this.

He referred to work being progressed with the Commercial Panel which comprises the Heads of Finance, Legal and IT and other Heads of Service with responsibility for raising income for the Authority or controlling areas of spend. The Panel meet regularly and share ideas.

It was noted that specific pieces of work were ongoing in respect of Design Print; Knotweed Service; Outdoor Pursuits; Swansea Leader; Grand Theatre; Parking Services (hiring unused parking spaces at key locations in the City); Waste Management; Corporate Property and Facilities Management.

Discussions are also taking place with the Health Authority in relation to distribution of grants.

In response to a Member question, Chris Williams stated that Members could contact him via email at Chris.Williams4@swansea.gov.uk if they had any ideas for money saving they wished to share.

Key issues arising from Member discussions included:

- Comparisons with other local authorities in relation to Section 106 Agreements;
- The measurement of success of the Commercial Service in financial terms;
- Use local authority specialist staff to train and offer services (i.e. cleaning and gardening services) to other organisations or individuals;
- Dealing with resistance to change within the Authority;
- Providing more effective channels of communication and marketing to the public (in respect services currently available);
- Offering Civic Centre staff catering facilities to members of the public;
- Expand and promote 'Grow your Own Schemes';
- Develop a 'Food Enterprise Policy' (similar to the Scheme in Liverpool Council) which encourages individuals to cooking good quality, healthy food, thus reducing reliance on food banks

In response to Member questions, Chris Williams stated that his Unit was tasked with contributing toward a net change in the Authority's financial position as part of the Sustainable Swansea agenda and that the Unit's focus would be on emphasising that the Authority was classed as a 'trusted brand' which would provide a reliable service.

The Chair thanked the Officer for his attendance and the work he had undertaken.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the update be **NOTED**; and
- 2) Chris Williams provide a progress update at a future meeting.

52 **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING.**

Councillor W Evans, Cabinet Member for Anti-Poverty, advised that one objective in tackling Anti-Poverty was to embed Community Development into Ward Members roles.

He referred to feedback from the previous training session where Members had felt that the training had been of an introductory level and too lengthy.

He stated that the purpose in his attendance today was to develop ideas on what Members would like as part of the second community development training session.

He stated that the second training session could explore:

- The issues, barriers and concerns from the communities' perspective in engaging with the Council/Councillors. The implications this raises for the Council/Councillors.
- What impact can a Ward Councillor have in tackling poverty in their ward? Building on existing good practice.
- What the Council/Councillors need to consider for community engagement to become a strategic function and process. What needs to be developed/in place?
- What tools, techniques and approaches are available to give Councillors more choice in how they engage and measure success. This could include an exploration of what is available, old and new, and a scenario exercise to put the learning into practice

Members discussed their current roles within the community and the difficulties in identifying individuals who would readily admit that they required assistance.

It was also noted that in some areas, Councillor surgeries were poorly attended.

The areas that convened PACT meetings were beneficial as the Police provided information regarding crime levels in adjacent wards.

Members discussed the benefits of running pilot sessions, with adjacent wards grouped together with no more than 10 members for each group in attendance. Each group could focus on the poverty issues in those wards.

Members felt that the provision of data about income within their specific wards would be beneficial in identifying hotspots.

RESOLVED that the Chair write to the Cabinet Member for Anti-Poverty detailing the suggestions for the second Community Development session.

53 **WORK PLAN 2015-2016.**

The Chair referred to the Work Plan and the items scheduled for the meeting on 11 February, 2016.

He stated that he would speak to the Leader and Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services regarding the Council developing their own energy company (similar to Nottingham Council).

RESOLVED that

- 1) The work plan and items scheduled for the 11 February meeting be **NOTED**;
- 2) The Chair liaises with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services regarding plans to develop a Council energy company.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm

CHAIR