



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 26 June 2019 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor M Sherwood (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
C R Doyle
L R Jones

Councillor(s)
D W Helliwell

Councillor(s)
P K Jones

Officer(s)
Amy Hawkins
Jeremy Parkhouse
Joanne Portwood
Lyndsay Thomas

Tackling Poverty Service Manager
Democratic Services Officer
Strategy and Policy Officer
Principal Lawyer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): E T Kirchner, H M Morris, D Phillips, C Richards and G J Tanner

5 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

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

6 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee's held on 24 April and 9 May 2019, be approved and signed as correct records.

7 Terms of Reference. (For Information)

The Terms of Reference for the Committee were reported 'for information'.

8 Work Plan 2019-2020. (Discussion)

The Chair outlined the proposed topics for the Committee to consider during the 2019-2020 Municipal Year and circulated a Draft Work Plan for discussion. Detailed discussions regarding the Work Plan followed and included -

- Communications – The Chair requested that a Microsoft Team Group be set up in order to share information regarding the Committee, particularly all letters to Cabinet and presentations provided during the previous Municipal Year.

- Poverty Truth Commission

It was requested that this topic be included as a standing item going forward following Cabinet approval to implement the next steps. A start up group meeting had been scheduled for 17 July 2019.

- High Interest Lending

The Chair proposed that the current Action Plan be transferred into a draft policy, to be discussed at the next scheduled meeting. Staff training regarding the topic was also discussed.

- Food Poverty

Details of food poverty: hunger and food insecurity were circulated. The Chair highlighted individuals who were entitled to meals not claiming, the role of the Authority / 3rd Sector in providing support, service provided by Fairshare Cymru, Welsh Assembly cross-party working group considering recommendations for local councils.

- Increasing Green Infrastructure in Deprived Neighbourhoods

The Chair proposed that Andrew Davies, Chair of Swansea Bay University Health Board be invited to be co-opted onto the Committee for this topic only / the remainder of the Municipal Year. She added that there was a clear link between health inequalities and lack of green space / infrastructure. It was also proposed that Natural Resources Wales / NHS provide presentations on health inequalities. The Committee discussed community involvement in schemes / projects and the work of 'friends of' organisations.

- Benefit Take Up

The Committee discussed the EU Payment Directive (2014 /92/EU) / banks not allowing individuals to open bank accounts, individuals not claiming their entitlements due to shame, financial checks being undertaken by the Council, aiming for mandatory staff training on the topic, living wage accreditation,

- Letters to Benefits Claimants

The Committee highlighted the use of jargon, amending the wording to allow recipient to understand / lessen the message being presented, targeting Council Tax / Housing Benefits letters, using examples from other organisations and how some, e.g. HMRC had made savings by simplifying their correspondence.

Resolved that: -

- 1) The Democratic Services Officer organises a Microsoft Team Group and shares all letters / presentations provided during the previous Municipal Year;
- 2) Poverty Truth Commission be included as a standing item on future agendas;
- 3) The Chair writes to the Chair of the Welsh Assembly cross-party working group for further information on their proposals on food poverty;
- 4) Food Poverty be discussed at the next scheduled meeting;
- 5) Examples of letters be discussed at the meeting scheduled for 25 September 2019;
- 6) Andrew Davies, Chair of Swansea Bay University Health Board be invited onto the Committee for this topic only / the remainder of the Municipal Year;
- 7) NHS / NRW be invited to provide presentations on health inequalities at the next scheduled / future meeting;
- 8) Feedback from the Internal Poverty Forum be included as a standing item on future agendas;
- 9) A draft Living Wage Policy be added to the Work Plan;
- 10) The Principal Lawyer provides feedback to the Chair regarding EU Payment Directive (2014/92/EU).

The meeting ended at 5.40 pm

Chair