



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **People Policy Development Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday, 22 September 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor C R Evans (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J P Curtice
M Jones

Councillor(s)

P R Hood-Williams
G J Tanner

Councillor(s)

Y V Jardine

Officer(s)

Amy Hawkins
Simon Jones

Interim Head of Adult Services
Social Services Strategy and Performance Improvement
Officer

Allison Lowe
Jo Veck
Elliott Williams

Democratic Services Officer
Senior Solicitor
External Funding Manager

Also Present:

Julia Manser, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): S J Gallagher, E T Kirchner, H Lawson and L V Walton

15 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

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

16 Minutes:

Resolved that the Minutes of the People Policy Development Committee held on 28 July 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

17 Young Carers Strategy. (Verbal update)

The Chair, in the absence of Gavin Evans, Principal Officer for Early Help, Partnership and Young People provided a verbal update on the Young Carers Strategy as follows:

- The Young Carers Forum was up and running and the first meeting had been held in July;

- The Chair had been unable to attend the August meeting, however he had been invited to provide an update at the September meeting to outline how the Young Carers Forum could inform the Young Carers Strategy;
- The Chair had also attended the Young Carers Steering Group at the start of September;
- The Principal Officer would provide a full update at the next meeting of the People Policy Development Committee in October.

The Chair commented that any Councillor that wished to be involved in attending the Young Carer meetings or being more widely involved should contact Gavin Evans who would provide the relevant meeting dates.

Resolved that the verbal update be noted.

18 Swansea Council Volunteering Strategy Development. (Verbal update)

Amy Hawkins, Interim Head of Adult Services, supported by Julia Manser, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS) provided a verbal update on Swansea Council's Volunteering Strategy.

Unfortunately the workshop referred to at the last meeting had not taken place, however a date would be scheduled in the near future.

She confirmed that Welsh Government had approved the use of the surplus regional volunteering funding to support partners in Swansea Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS) and Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services for a Regional Project Manager and also to re-commission the work with the external evaluator.

Julia Manser explained that the role of Regional Project Manager for the West Glamorgan Volunteering project had been split between herself and Gemma Richards of Neath / Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services.

She explained that this exciting regional item of work had already commenced with both the Regional Transformation Team and other external partners. The work would continue until 31 March 2022 and would focus on the development of a Volunteering Strategy and / or framework to consider how volunteering could be developed regionally. Following the success of the response to Covid-19 they would build on the lessons learnt and develop processes regionally to be able to deal with future crisis as and when they arose.

Further to the resources that had been developed in Phase 1, Phase 2 would build on that development and it was hoped to develop information sheets on "Is it volunteering or work experience?" and "Is it volunteering or a placement?" Work would also commence in order to develop a resource to support volunteers in care homes.

Amy Hawkins explained that the work currently being undertaken regionally would build on and assist the work on Swansea Council's Volunteering Strategy.

The Interim Head of Adult Services outlined the key principles of the Strategy which included:

- Feedback from those volunteers who currently worked with Swansea Council;
- A digital version of the strategy, video interviews and links to the benefits of volunteering;
- Details of the journey during the pandemic, the use of volunteers and what impact it had on us as an organisation and our communities;
- Vision & key objectives – this would include the workshop with officers and members of the Committee;
- Work would continue with volunteer mapping to ensure there was a baseline of volunteers and opportunities within the organisation;
- The strategy would be focussed on the benefits of volunteering in its many forms and the conditions of supporting volunteers, standardised forms, induction, supervision etc and how it would be undertaken consistently.
- Training and support for both volunteers and those managers who supported volunteers.
- Status of volunteers, particularly those who were long term including the references we provide, training and support;
- A baseline of volunteers to assess the strategy and the impact of the strategy;
- Identify pressures so that volunteers could assist during difficult times;

The next steps would include:

- A workshop with officers and members of the People Policy Development Committee via a co-productive approach;
- Background work in relation to the legislation including HR, Social Services & Wellbeing Act, Future Generations Act, etc.
- Mapping which other stakeholders should be involved whilst ensuring that there were representatives from various groups around protective characteristics;
- Work on standardised paperwork based on good practice.

Julia Manser explained that whilst this was an extremely large piece of work, it had been carried out successfully in various Councils, including Monmouthshire Council. She explained that the intended outcome was that the number of volunteers would be recorded to establish who was doing what in order to add value to the volunteers' commitment. Information collected could be utilised more accurately whilst supporting the volunteers ethically. It was important to establish a baseline and a good quality safeguarding standard amongst the volunteers, as they were supporting those most vulnerable in the community. Managing volunteers was very different to managing staff and relevant staff would need to be trained in volunteering management.

Resolved that:

- 1) The verbal update be noted;
- 2) A workshop (officers & the Committee) be set up prior to the next People Policy Development Committee scheduled for 26 October 2021.

19 Swansea Council - Employability Provision. (Verbal update)

Elliott Williams, External Funding Manager provided a verbal update on Swansea Council's Employability Provision.

He explained that the Cam Nesa project previously delivered by Swansea Council had now ended and they were in the process of finalising the project and submitting the final claims to the funding body. The project had supported those farthest away from the employment market and was a European funded project delivered in conjunction with the Youth Service. During the life of the project, over 620 young people had been supported with 130 of those gaining employment.

In relation to the gap in provision that the project would create, they were looking to utilise funding that was still available in our services and would continue to explore other grant opportunities as and when they arose.

Impact Assessment were being progressed and he would report on these at a future meeting of the People Policy Development Committee.

The External Funding Manager went on to state that the employability mentors and liaison officers had re-commenced their work in the community (risk assessed) and each officer had been working with communication officers in a bid to generate more input.

In terms of future employability projects they were investigating other projects with the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) or via the UK Government Community Renewal Fund and they were awaiting a response to a bid that had already been submitted. Part of that bid would provide resources to deliver an element of support for the cohort that Cam Nesa would previously have supported. There would also be future opportunities for the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund later in the year.

In relation to the 6 employability projects that had been delivered by the Local Authority, over 1200 people had been supported during the pandemic and over 500 had been supported into employment.

He outlined details in relation to the Kickstart provision, a DWP project that Swansea Council administered as both a gateway and as an employer. He explained that the gateway was where we established paid placements with external businesses and subject matters experts (SME'S), whilst as an employer we established placements ourselves within the Council. To date 260 placements had been set up with 32 employers and 60 internal placements had been set up. At any one time there were 50 placements in existence, made up of young people aged 16-24 who had benefited from 25 hours per week fully paid placements. This process has provided them with valuable experience within their preferred area of work. Placements had been made in Building Services, Parks and Waste Management as well as a range of placements with various external sectors. It was hoped that work placements would also be created within Social Services.

In terms of the current situation, the employability landscape had changed over the last 18 months. Furlough would end at the end of the month and whilst there was an abundance of job vacancies, they were not seeing many people engaging in the process in order to access these opportunities. He explained that other external partners and the Job Centre were also encountering the same issues.

As had been reported recently there were shortages in Health & Social Care, retail, hospitality, construction and in respect of the shortages with HGV drivers they were currently investigating some funding that might be available for those eligible, however he did acknowledge that it was still quite expensive. Links had been made with various HGV companies in an attempt to fill the gaps.

He went on to say that support was in place, should there be a surge of people coming through the system when Furlough ends and they would need to be proactive to promote the relevant projects and opportunities. As a result, work had progressed with the Regional Learning & Skills Partnership (RLSP) in order to set up events in both Carmarthen and Swansea to promote opportunities and develop some pathways for those who wished to apply.

In addition, other initiatives such as a recruitment fayre for ATG who were the operators of the new Arena and further work around developing various pathway programmes was ongoing.

Any employer interested in being involved in the Kickstart gateway scheme should contact Kickstart@swansea.gov.uk.

Resolved that the verbal update be noted.

20 Work Plan 2021-2022.

The Chair outlined the Work Plan for 2021-2022.

Resolved that the Work Plan be noted subject to the addition of the following:

Add to the agenda for 27 October 2021:

- Young Carers Strategy (Update);
- Swansea Council Volunteering Strategy (Update)

The Chair thanked all the Councillors and Officers, particularly Democratic Services for their time and assistance.

The meeting ended at 4.44 pm

Chair