



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Programme Committee**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 16 August 2022 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
E W Fitzgerald
M Jones
F D O'Brien

Councillor(s)
R Fogarty
H Lawson
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)
T J Hennegan
W G Lewis
T M White

Statutory Co-opted Member(s)

Elizabeth Lee

Councillor Co-opted Member(s)

C A Holley
P R Hood-Williams

S M Jones
L R Jones

Officer(s)

Geoff Bacon
Kim Collis
Brij Madahar
Pamela Milford
Samantha Woon

Head of Property Services
County Archivist
Scrutiny Team Leader
Lead Lawyer
Democratic Services Officer

Also present

Councillor E King – Cabinet Member for Equalities & Culture

Councillor R C Stewart – Leader of the Council

Councillor R Francis-Davies – Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): V A Holland, P N May and M S Tribe

Statutory Co-opted Member(s): Beth Allender

11 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interest.

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

12 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips.

In accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, no declarations of Whipped Votes or Party Whips were declared.

13 Minutes.

Resolved that the minutes of the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on 19 July 2022, be signed and approved as a correct record.

14 Public Question Time.

The Chair reported that two public questions had been received. Neither Members of the Public were present and they had requested that the Chair raise the questions on their behalf. As the questions related to minute no. 15 they would be dealt with during those discussions.

Further correspondence from a member of the public regarding the recent road closures as a result of the Triathlon and other events had been referred to the relevant Cabinet Member for response.

15 Scrutiny of Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities – Archives / Community Hub.

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture introduced his report which covered progress in relation to the development of the Community Hub in the City Centre, which will house, amongst other things, the Archive Service, information on Archive Service performance and current position with the move to a new home. The Leader and the Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism, were also in attendance to contribute and answer relevant questions.

Attending to support the Committee discussion were Geoff Bacon, Head of Property Services, and Kim Collis, County Archivist. Both were invited to provide an overview of progress in relation to the Community Hub Project, and implications for the Archive Service. The Head of Property Services took the Committee through the report that was submitted, to understand the background to the Community Hub and objectives, and work carried out to date.

The Committee took the opportunity to question Cabinet Members and hear from the lead officers.

The Chair referred to the public question from Susan Thomas regarding the Archive Service/Community Hub, who had concerns about any reduction in public access to the Archive service / available space for users.

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture stated that as part of the consultation process, users had been afforded the opportunity to detail their main requirements. Whilst space would be limited, the public would be directed to other areas where

they could access the information (for example libraries) and the service would continue to provide a good service in the new location.

The Chair referred to the second public question from Elisabeth Bennett regarding the Archive Services/Community Hub and a reduction in the capacity of the search room, and in particular the effect this may have on educational services able to be provided by the Archive Service.

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture referred to his previous response in so far as the overall availability of space would enhance the offer that schools are able to use. It was noted that large classes of children could pre-book appropriately sized areas to accommodate their needs.

The Leader of the Council referred to the development of the one stop shops/community hubs. These community hubs would enhance the service to the public by combining key services such as housing/libraries in one accessible area.

In response to a Member question regarding which Council Services and Stakeholders would be working out of the new City Centre Community Hub, the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture stated that the stakeholders working from community hubs would include internal council services (archives, housing options, lifelong learning, contact centre etc) and discussions were on-going with external partners, although he was not able to reveal the details of the external partners at this time due to commercial sensitivities.

In response to a question regarding the level of commitment from external partners in relation to providing services from the Community Hub, the Leader of the Council stated that the lead taken by the public sector in the City Centre would create confidence within the private sector to do the same. He provided comprehensive details of proposals from a major regeneration organisation who were actively investing in sites within the City Centre.

In response to a question regarding whether any alternatives had been considered regarding re-location should there be an issue with achieving necessary accreditation/certification for the Archive Service, the County Archivist stated that the Archive Service would need to change the way they provide services to schools and adapt to the new environment. He referred to the current system whereby schools experience original documents. However, given the constraints of the archives search room, they would need to develop a different way of doing this as original documents could not be brought into public areas. The Archive Service would need to work around the constraints of a multi-use building and the current service would not be replicated in the new building.

In response to a Member question regarding the City Centre Community Hub allowing an opportunity for expansion of the Archive Service, the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture stated that it does provide opportunities to change the service and for schools to access better facilities.

In response to a Member question regarding the Archive space meeting a certain criteria and whether there were alternative plans should this not be the case, the

Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture referred to the consultation that had taken place with major stakeholders which had, in turn, informed the design process. There were no alternative arrangements at the moment and it was envisaged that this would not be required.

In response to a Member question regarding the number of public consultation responses received regarding the Community Hub and whether these were all positive, the Head of Property Services stated that of the 500 responses received, the majority of submissions were positive.

In response to a Member question regarding disabled parking and access, the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture stated that consultation had informed the design. Disabled parking facilities would be available at the rear of Marks and Spencer and in the surrounding area.

In response to a Member question regarding any variation in project costs from the previous estimate reported to the Committee and Cabinet in December 2021, the Head of Property Services stated that the Scheme and costs associated with it had increased from the original scheme, he advised that increased costs were to be expected bearing the current inflationary pressures but he re-iterated the aim to deliver a scheme that was sustainable and cost effective.

In relation to project costs, The Leader of the Council stated that the scope of the Scheme had changed considerably but additional finance had been secured from the Welsh Government, who were supportive of the project. The Council were looking to sign a fixed price contract and value engineer the costs to ensure the best deal for the tax payer. He stated that the Team had done a good job in developing the Scheme which now provided a lot more for the money compared with when the Scheme was in its first stages.

In response to a Member question regarding the need to publicise the costs of the Scheme, given the cost of living crisis, the Leader of the Council advised that he was aware of the need to publicise final costs and would do so in due course, taking into account any restrictions on reporting due to commercial sensitivity. The Head of Property Services stated that the appointment of the contractor would be announced very quickly. The fixed price would be announced towards the end of the year with completion of the Community Hub before the end of 2023/early 2024. It was noted that other considerations, such as a business process analysis (which included determination of reception areas, opening days and times and staffing levels etc) were still being developed with Council as it was clear that the public still require a 'face to face' service.

In response to a Member question regarding pilot community hub schemes in Gorseinon and Clydach, the Leader of the Council stated that the COVID pandemic had interrupted the development of the Schemes however, the pilot community hubs schemes in Gorseinon and Clydach had delivered varying levels of success. He re-stated desire to develop Hubs, utilising community buildings, more widely across Swansea, building upon the City Centre Community Hub.

In response to a Member question regarding the space available to the Archive Service within the new Community Hub, the County Archivist stated that the current archive would fit into the archive area. He referred to the building being shared with the South Wales Miners library with a joint storage area.

The Chair referred to the minutes of West Glamorgan Archives Committee held on 11 March, 2022, regarding the move to the city centre Hub, to be the first phase of a longer term project to relocate the service to a new facility close to Swansea Museum and the National Waterfront Museum. The minutes had referred to a sub group of archivists and Swansea council officers working together to further progress this idea. The proposal has yet to be discussed by Cabinet in Swansea. The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture confirmed that the sub group were still working to progress the idea and should this be feasible the siting of the Archive Service in the City Centre Community Hub would effectively be a temporary move. The Leader of the Council stated that the Council were under an obligation to identify a state of the art facility and there existed wider opportunities for universities to be part of that. However, there were no plans in place at the moment, and work needed to be progressed to relocate the Archive Service out of the Civic Centre.

The County Archivist stated that work was being progressed (in the form of an invitation to tender) for a more ambitious plan for the Archive Service, depending on funding. He stated that he viewed the current proposal as being a temporary solution. He stated that he would be providing a report to the West Glamorgan Archives Committee by the end of March 2023.

The Chair thanked the Leader, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture and Officers for their input. A letter would be sent to the Cabinet Member for Equalities & Culture reflecting on the session and Committee views.

16 Membership of Scrutiny Panels and Working Groups.

The Chair introduced the report and stated that having invited expressions of interest from all non-executive councillors, proposed membership was being reported for Committee agreement. This included Councillors identified to act as convener for the Inquiry Panel and Working Groups, as follows:

- Cllr Terry Hennegan – Anti-Social Behaviour Inquiry Panel
- Cllr Hazel Morris – Road Safety Working Group
- Cllr Lyndon Jones – Co-production Working Group
- Cllr Mary Jones – Healthy City Working Group
- Cllr Rebecca Fogarty – Customer Contact Working Group

In an update to the printed report Councillor Allan Jeffery would be added to the Adult Services Performance Panel.

Resolved that the membership of the Panels and Working Groups, as reported, be agreed.

17 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Chair presented the agreed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 which the Committee is responsible for monitoring.

As per the Committee work plan, the next meeting on 13 September was scheduled to have a session on Cabinet Member Portfolio Responsibilities with the Cabinet Member for Community (Services), Councillor Cyril Anderson, focussing on Fly Tipping. The Chair stated that questions to the Cabinet Member may cover related issues on litter and community cleansing.

18 Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22.

The Chair presented the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22.

Resolved that the Scrutiny Annual Report be submitted to Council on 1 September, 2022.

19 Date and Time of Upcoming Panel / Working Group Meetings.

The Chair referred to the date and time of upcoming Scrutiny Panel/Working Group Meetings, for information.

The meeting ended at 5.01 pm

Chair