



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 3A, Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 27 September 2017 at 3.00 pm

Present: Councillor P B Smith (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

P Downing
L G Thomas

Councillor(s)

D W Helliwell
L V Walton

Councillor(s)

P Jones
T M White

Officer(s)

Allison Lowe
Julian Morgans
Rachel Moxey

Democratic Services Officer
Benefits Training & Quality Manager
Head of Poverty & Prevention

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): D Phillips, A Pugh, C Richards and G J Tanner

14 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

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

15 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Poverty Reduction Policy Development and Delivery Committee held on 23 August 2017 be signed and approved as a correct record.

16 Feedback / Presentations from Members on their Research - Communities First Transition

Item deferred to a future meeting as the Committee were only today receiving a briefing on Communities First Transition.

17 Communities First Transition.

The Head of Poverty and Prevention provided a 'for information' report in relation to the Communities First Transition.

It outlined details of the Cabinet Secretary's statement of 14 February 2017, detailing the phasing out Communities First.

As part of the announcement, funding of nearly £12m across Wales from April 2018 for employability support, supporting the Communities for Work programme. Local Authorities would have the opportunity to introduce this new infrastructure before April 2018. This funding would ensure infrastructure for the ongoing delivery of Communities for Work as well as continued support for management, premises costs and additional mentoring and engagement posts – known as Employability Grant.

Swansea had been confirmed as one of four local authorities across Wales to become an 'early adopter' of the Employability Grant and we are currently working with Welsh Government to phase out the Communities First Programme by 31 December 2017 and implement a structure for the delivery of the Employability Grant from 1 January 2018.

She outlined the key principles and considerations of the plan which were as follows:

- Timescales,
- Staffing;
- Third Party Organisations (Faith in Families and Bonymaen Kids Play Initiative);
- Premises.

She also provided details in relation to the Lift Programme, which had been running in the North West Cluster (Penderry). Welsh Government had confirmed that as an Early Adopter, the LIFT Programme in Swansea should be part of the wider transition process so that staff had fair and equal opportunity to potentially access available roles made available through the Employability Grant.

Although the Communities First programme had been designed to deliver agreed 'projects' at a local level, the forthcoming Employability Grant would not deliver such projects. The Employability Grant would provide intensive one-to-one mentoring for participants.

Councillors with Community First Clusters in their Wards had been invited to a meeting in October to receive an update in relation to the transition process, with bi-monthly meetings also scheduled.

The Committee felt it would be beneficial if the Poverty Reduction Policy Development and Delivery Committee kept updated on the progress of the transition process and be invited to relevant update meetings.

18 Swansea Council and the wider Swansea Partnership response to the implementation of Universal Credit Full Service.

The Head of Poverty and Prevention and the Benefits Training & Quality Manager presented a briefing note, which provided information about the transition to Universal Credit (UC) in Swansea. It included:

- Background about the transition, key dates and exceptions;

- The service response from the Housing Benefit Section and Welfare Rights Team;
- The way we are working with internal and external partners to provide further support;
- Briefing information from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), which describes their local response.

The Benefits Training & Quality Manager stated that claimants would require digital support in order to help them to complete the UC claim on-line as well as help in maintaining their UC going forward in relation to providing evidence in respect of job applications, etc.

The Adult Prosperity and Well-Being Service, Housing Benefits Team, Welfare Rights Team and Adult Community Learning will explore opportunities to provide two levels of Digital support from the Contact Centre, building on the existing support that is currently available. Digital support would broadly consist of:

- Immediate help with UC claims and commitments;
- Further training and support including referral to other partner services to build individuals capacity.

Housing Benefits staff training would take place in mid-November prior to the December roll out.

The wider partnership work identified to support the issue included:

- Mapping provision across the partnership;
- Understanding duplication and working jointly to maximise the use of resources, save cost and redirect to fill gaps in services;
- Taking a wider partnership approach to delivering Personal Budgeting Support;
- Providing joint advice and looking at joint promotional materials to ensure consistent messages;
- Working proactively with local DWP management and personnel to help them to provide advice and work on joint solutions to alleviate the issues faced by claimants.

The Committee asked various questions of the officers, who responded accordingly. A lengthy discussion ensued with various suggestions being made including ideas on how advice be disseminated to the public as widely as possible.

19 Work Plan 2017-2018.

The Chair presented the Work Plan for 2017-2018.

Resolved that the Work Plan be noted.

20 Timing of Future Meetings for the Remainder of the 2017/2018 Municipal Year.

Item withdrawn as the Committee had already agreed that meetings would commence at 4 pm.

The meeting ended at 4.40 pm

Chair