



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Building Sustainable Communities**

Committee Room 5, Guildhall, Swansea - Guildhall, Swansea

Tuesday, 17 October 2017 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor T J Hennegan (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
P Downing
T M White

Councillor(s)
C A Holley

Councillor(s)
G J Tanner

Officer(s)
Sue Reed
Bethan Hopkins

Community Buildings Development Manager
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): E W Fitzgerald and L James

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interest

None

3 Building Sustainable Communities Inquiry Impact Report and follow up

- Sue Reed – Community Recreation Development Manager came to brief the Panel on the work which has taken place since the Building Sustainable Communities Inquiry
- Sue's role looks at supporting volunteers in the community to establish groups to facilitate the running and maintaining of open spaces and community buildings. There are still 41 community buildings running in Swansea
- All of the recommendations which were put forward after the Building Sustainable Communities Inquiry have been completed
- The department has reduced from 9 staff members to 3, but the needs are just as great as the department covers open spaces and parks and community buildings supporting both the existing groups and the any new ones who wish to establish themselves
- The role of the officers is about supporting volunteers to sustain projects in their communities with issues such as risk assessments, health and safety information, appropriate documentation and guides on constituting groups

- There are a number of support guides, model constitutions and information packs which have been developed by the department and are available free of charge to the community
- In addition to the guides, community volunteers can now access Council training such as Health and Safety and can have support in relation to food hygiene for events such as coffee mornings
- Swansea Council has an excellent relationship with the volunteers it supports
- There has been a change in how community action is measured. It is very difficult to put a Key Performance Indicator against this because it is a process supported by volunteers rather than a service. There is no desire to pressure volunteers by holding them to performance measures
- Interest free loans are available for community groups. These loans can assist with a range of things. The loans need to be applied for via the Council and there is a stringent application process including the legal and finance departments
- The community centres get no financial support from the Council. Any grants they previously received which helped with fuel costs have now ended. This means that all centres need to be completely self-funding. There is also no special rate available for Council employees or elected members. Everyone has to pay

4 Panel to discuss thoughts on progress and agree feedback

The meeting ended at 11.15 am

Chair