



City and County of Swansea

Notes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Equalities**

Committee Room 3A - Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 21 January 2019 at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor L S Gibbard (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

T J Hennegan
L R Jones

Councillor(s)

Y V Jardine
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)

S M Jones

Co-opted Member/s

Dr G Calder

Officer(s)

Martin Nicholls
Dave Howes
Jane Whitmore
Rachel Moxey

1 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests

None

2 Place Directorate

The Director of Place, Martin Nicholls attended and gave a PowerPoint presentation on the core questions sent in advance of the meeting. The following points were noted over and above that presentation.

- Commissioning reviews have been an effective way to engage and identify areas that need improvement.
- We must be open minded and engage with groups to improve what we do and increase visibility.
- NEAT teams very good.
- Important for us to see how we are overlapping with other services and projects so that we can improve practices. Standing item on our senior management team meetings to share the good and the bad and learn from it. Agree it is important to have wider dialogue across the department.
- Council wide tracking of EIAs and monitoring of these and their outcomes monitored to actually understand benefits needed.
- Questions was asked about swings and equipment in parks for children with disabilities. The Panel heard that there is currently no budget for this but a crowd funding app is being developed. Any new provision should include equipment like this.

- Have equality reps in department and yes it is an add-on to the current job and not a stand-alone role. How effective is this given that they already have a full time role? Do recognise that will vary in different departments depending on who is doing that role, for some people it is part of their wider role as that involves consultation type activity while others it will be on top of their role like for example waste operatives. It is difficult but it is still better to have people doing the role from within the department and who understand the departmental issues as well and the equalities aspects.
- Training for equalities reps is internal not accredited.
- Do we have a communication strategy for people with different disabilities or protected characteristics, so we are ensuring we have a joined up approach as a council (public).
- Co-producing training around equalities with people from those areas of protected characteristics including disabled people would be the way to move forward. Some joint training also between service users and staff. (public)
- Disability Liaison Group, has no terms of reference, no invite list given and no clear structure around it. It needs lots of work for it to work properly. (Public)
- In relation to apprenticeships, not all are looking for special services but would like to have the same opportunity as everyone else. (Public)
- Would like to see any planning permission for buildings to have at least the bear minimum of accessibility and particularly for public buildings like schools. Need to think much bigger and build into policies. Need to speak to the people who are effected to develop this. (Public)
- Every local school should be able to take every pupil in their catchment and provide the facilities to do that. (Public)

3 Social Services Directorate

The Director of Social Services, Dave Howes along with Rachel Moxey and Jane Whitmore attended the Panel giving a powerpoint presentation on the core questions sent in advance of the meeting. The following points were noted over and above that given in the presentation.

- Co-production and how is it working? Step change means doing things significantly differently. It is different because working together as equal partners. To do it properly it takes a lot of time, it requires a certain skill and need to build up a certain amount of trust between all those involved. Must be sure about what can and cannot be done. Managing expectations is key. If done well it means real decisions being made collectively. It is early stages and we are learning as we go along. We will be developing a co-production strategy which will be written co-productively.
- Co-production should make the finished product better and more likely to provide services people want and well. The difference this will make to individual moving forward is to be tested.
- Co-production could also be the answer to removing barriers but it can be difficult to find and include the really excluded people in communities. It is a challenge for us in terms of whether we are sufficiently open to finding and engaging with the most excluded individuals. This is absolutely a work in progress. We do tend

to work with the same people over and over again, we will need to reach out more.

- We are at the very early stages with co-production and have the ambition to do this much better but can come across a number of barriers when doing it. We recognise that we are learning ourselves and trying to be an organisation that is constantly developing. Moving our engagement to something more constructive and engaging is difficult but ambitious.
- Arising from a scrutiny inquiry into poverty a couple of years ago, we are setting up a Poverty Truth Commission. It will include working with people who are experiencing poverty. This will include not just the council but other key service providers. We are working with the Policy Development Committee to move this forward.
- In Swansea in Social Services we are supporting our staff through reflective practice. Really looking at why something may have worked or not worked. Looking at the key factors that lead to the outcome you and the family have achieved, including barriers and how overcome. It is really useful also when you ask the family at the end, we are trying to do more of that although it can be difficult especially if outcome is not what they hope.
- Recognise the workforce in social services is not reflective of communities and the need to be able to relate to those people who are marginalised and/or vulnerable. The social services childcare staffing tends to be young, white and female with adult services staff be the mirror opposite, predominantly older females. Do we have a sufficiently robust strategy for staffing, no not robust enough, in reality it is not a particularly attractive job. We are struggling to overcome this perception but it is hard.
- It is one of our priorities moving ahead to make our workforce more reflective, it is definitely an area we could strengthen.
- Poverty and Prevention Team more diverse but not necessarily where we want to be, could be a better gender balance. The diversity of this team developed through the previous communities first programme.
- If we want a more diverse workforce we as an authority have to change our approach to recruitment and employment practice. It is also difficult to look at how diverse our workforce is because the data collected is not a reliable indication.
- Not enough time and funding to carry out co-production at the moment (public)
- Can be difficult to find EIA's on council website and not easy to understand the process used. Should they involve people who are affected by decisions? (public)
- Only 1% target for staff with a disability for Swansea Council, is that too low, Welsh Government have 5% target. (public)
- We want a co-productive approach to service provision and happy to work with people to progress this. It has started but not embedded. Resources are an issue. But we are starting from a default position to do it.
- Need more documents to be in Easyread (public)

4 Work Programme

Noted

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

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