



City and County of Swansea

Notes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Tackling Poverty**

Committee Room 6 - Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 15 October 2018 at 11.00 am

Present: Councillor S E Crouch (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
C A Holley
T M White

Councillor(s)
L James

Councillor(s)
Y V Jardine

Officer(s)

Rachel Moxey, Head of Poverty and Prevention

Anthony Richards, Poverty and Prevention Strategy and Development Manager

Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A M Day, J A Hale, S M Jones, J W Jones, D Phillips and G J Tanner

1 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

2 Tackling Poverty Inquiry Impact Report and Follow Up

- Cllr Mary Sherwood the Cabinet Member for Better Communities People, Rachel Moxey the Head of Poverty and Prevention and Anthony Richards attended the Panel to update on the impact and progress with the agreed recommendations resulting from the Tackling Poverty Scrutiny Inquiry.
- The panel were told that the main impact of the inquiry had been to generate and bring clear focus to tackling poverty activity. The Cabinet Member was particularly pleased with progress made in relation to cross departmental/cutting working. She believes the real positive difference will come out of the Poverty Truth Commission work and this will help us set directions for the future.
- The strategy now in place goes a lot further than previously. There is better buy in and tie up across departments and in how we are working collectively across the local authority.
- The scrutiny process was really helpful by developing a good starting position particularly the important points made. Many of which matched the councils our emerging developments.
- Good progress has been made with most of the scrutiny recommendations in the action plan.

- Consultation Tackling Poverty Strategy - a consultation summary report has been produced that has put together 11 key items from the consultation which will address those issues. An action plan to deliver on these has been developed. The panel would like to see a copy of the summary this summary. Councillors were also interested in seeing the different perspectives expressed by those whose responded.
- The consultation received 128 responses, some of which were single responses from organisations on behalf of anime of users. An easy read version was made available and a large number of responses were received through that (82 of the 128). Children and young people were consulted via Big Conversation and Pupil Voice.
- Poverty Truth Commission - this has not been completed but good progress made. In July, it was agreed that the participation study for Swansea will be taken forward using the poverty commission model, after looking at good practice elsewhere. In moving this forward will be working with others like Leeds Poverty Commission to develop important next steps. It will then be important to buy in from stakeholders. The panel felt it important that ward councillors were involved. It was also felt that more information on what is happening in relation to tackling poverty would be useful and have asked that the minutes of the Poverty Partnership Forum be put online for Councillors to access.
- The next steps for the Poverty Commission will include involving three sets of people
 1. Deputy Leader, senior business leaders, faith leaders etc.
 2. Range of stakeholder organisations
 3. People who have direct experience of poverty
- Councillors also felt that it was important to ensure there is good buy in from those members on the PSB. The panel also felt that those involved from the organisations represented on the PSB must have the appropriate level of knowledge and ability to commit. Councillors also recognised that not all partner organisations are on the PSB and the PSB is only one part of this.
- Delivery/Action Plan – There is a new whole Council delivery plan which every Cabinet Member has actions within. Progress on this is reported quarterly. The Panel would like to see this published online so that they can follow progress made. The Plan pulls together a large amount of information, it is the delivery of the three year strategy that is linked to the Wellbeing and Corporate Plan. It has 80+ objectives. The Panel would like to see the full strategies action plans for Poverty and for Prevention available online and these kept up to date as progress is made as and when Cabinet members and Directors actively contribute to the plan. This would provide improved visibility for Councillors and others. The Panel recognise and were pleased to hear that it is a fluid document.
- Measuring Poverty is difficult as measures change and influences on it change – the Cabinet Member explained that the only real measure we have is the minimum income standard levels. Important to look at the barriers to improving this like people's ability to access work through for example transport availability and cost.
- Vision and definition of poverty – Cllrs were pleased to hear that the Strategy now contains a Swansea vision and clear definition in the strategy itself.
- European Funding and impact of Brexit – a number of funding streams are funded this way. It is a concern but not the change the concept behind the

schemes involved in. Principles will be the same and will work with the money that is available.

- Procurement – Cllr Sherwood told the panel about work by Preston Council to maximise the use of social procurements in its activities and through its partnerships. The Panel were interested in this concept recognising that some work is done in relation to this within Swansea in the Beyond Bricks and Mortar but this way of working could be extended much further here. It can be a key driver to regenerating the local economy. The Panel agreed to refer this issue to the Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel to consider further.

3 Panel to discuss and agree feedback

The Panel agreed to write a letter to the Cabinet Member for Better Communities People with views on progress and to write to the Leader and Chief Executive with regard to where Poverty and Prevention sits on the management structure of the Council.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm