



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Monday, 26 July 2021 at 3.30 pm

Present: Councillor P Downing (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C R Doyle
D Phillips
L V Walton

Councillor(s)

P K Jones
C Richards

Councillor(s)

L R Jones
K M Roberts

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden
Amy Hawkins
Anthony Richards

Democratic Services Officer
Interim Head of Adult Services
Poverty and Prevention Strategy and Development
Manager

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): D W Helliwell and E T Kirchner

8 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

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

9 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting of the Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee held on 28 June 2021 were approved as correct record.

10 Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy Revision.

Anthony Richards, Poverty and Prevention Strategy and Development Manager presented a report which sought to revise and update the Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy 2017 - 2020.

He outlined the background and rationale behind the introduction of the original strategy and indicated that the revised document outlined was a starting point for discussions and consultation through co-production with partners and the public.

He outlined and detailed the current basis for the strategy across the council, referred to the three main definitions of poverty outlined in paragraph 2.2 to the

report, and the outlined the six main areas that the new strategy establishes a vision for the future.

He referred to the nine areas to be included/added to the new document as outlined in paragraph 2.4 to the report.

Members discussed the proposed revised strategy and suggested the additions around the following areas: - add higher education and vocational training (2.4.2), add paragraph detailing a summary of the main areas of successes/initiatives added during the lifetime of the strategy and refer to ideas that have proved less successful, in order to give context to the report.

Members also asked questions and raised queries around the structure of the authority and cross departmental working on poverty matters and the impact of Covid on service provision, to which the Officers responded accordingly.

Officers then referred to the main developments over the years, and indicated that the relevant information could be circulated to Members and added to the report as suggested. The proposed revised strategy would then come back to this committee for discussion following the consultation process in the new year.

Resolved that the Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee approve the Swansea Council Tackling Poverty Strategy Revision as set out in Section 2 of this report,(subject to the amendments/additions outlined above) be approved as a starting point to coproduce a final version with our partners and communities

11 Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy Development.

Anthony Richards, Poverty and Prevention Strategy and Development Manager presented a report which sought to work towards the adoption of a policy which embeds a corporate approach to the collection of personal debt.

The report set out some of the types of personal debt that would be covered by any new policy, and referred to the issues of debt collection that the authority has to undertake legally.

Members discussed the issues around the manner in which the council should be applying to collect debts, particularly around the wording of the initial letters, and indicated that the giving of advice and options for payment and the non-escalation of debt are key issues to be looked at.

The Chair outlined the proposal to hold a series of working groups with relevant officers to look into the issue. Members of the committee supported this and requested that copies of relevant letters sent to debtors are made available for discussion at the first meeting.

Resolved that

- 1) a Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee Working Group be established together with relevant service representatives invited to develop of a Corporate Personal Debt Recovery Policy.
- 2) the first meeting of the Group be held at 2.30pm on Wednesday 23 August 2021.

12 Work Plan 2021-2022.

The Chair referred to the committee work plan for 2021-2022, subject to the addition of the working group on 23 August as outlined in minute 11 above.

Resolved that the work plan be noted.

The meeting ended at 4.36 pm

Chair