



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 24 January 2018 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor P B Smith (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

D W Helliwell  
A Pugh

**Councillor(s)**

P Jones  
C Richards

**Councillor(s)**

L R Jones  
L V Walton

**Officer(s)**

Sian Bingham  
Allison Lowe  
Sandie Richards  
Chris Sivers  
Paul Thomas  
Jane Whitmore  
Alison Williams

Early Intervention Services Strategic Manager  
Democratic Services Officer  
Principal Lawyer  
Director of People  
Community Integration Partnership Manager  
Partnership & Commissioning Manager  
Family Resource Manager

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): None.

The Chair wished those present a Happy New Year and thanked the Vice Chair, Councillor Alyson Pugh for Chairing the meetings in her absence.

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**34 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

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

**35 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Poverty Reduction Policy Development and Delivery Committee held on 20 December 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**36 Childcare - Government Funded Pilot Scheme for 3-4 Year Olds. (Presentation)**

Sian Bingham, Early Intervention Services Strategic Manager and Allison Williams, Family Resources Manager provided a presentation on the Government's Funded Pilot Scheme for 3-4 Year Olds.

The Welsh Government's (WG) "Taking Wales Forward" Programme identified free childcare as one of its main pledges for the next 5 years.

The Childcare Offer:

- Provides working parents with 30 hours of government-funded childcare and early education for 3 and 4 year olds for 48 weeks of the year;
- Combines the successful minimum of 10 hours a week of Foundation Phase provision during term times, with additional childcare up to 20 hours;
- Provides 30 hours of childcare to support working families with the costs of holiday care.

The government funded childcare is available:

- From the term following the child's third birthday and will continue until the child starts reception class in their primary school the September after their fourth birthday;
- If all parents in the household work the equivalent of at least 16 hours at national living wage or national minimum wage, therefore earning at least £116 per week.

Swansea had been selected as 1 of 7 Local Authorities to work with the WG to pilot the new Childcare Offer, with full national rollout expected before the end of the current Assembly term. Across all 7 pilot areas, WG had made funding available for 2,600 3 and 4 year olds during year 1, Swansea's proportional share of this being 258 children for the Autumn term.

The Childcare Offer Pilot went live in Swansea during July 2017 across 7 wards that were approved by Cabinet in March 2017. The areas chosen fell into 2 categories:

1. Testing "all on one" sites – a selection of wards with schools that provided the Foundation Phase as well as already registered CSSIW wrap around, after school and holiday childcare on site. These areas were Duvant, Penclawdd, Llangyfelach and West Cross;
2. Testing wards with high levels of childcare providers / places in the wider community provided (via day nurseries, childminders, out of school childcare and playgroups etc) and low levels of school on-site childcare. These areas were Morrision, Pontarddulais and Gorseinon.

The Offer had been widely publicised and promoted with a particular focus on raising eligible parents awareness of the fact that they can access holiday care under the "Offer" as well as term time care.

To date 235 applications had been received as follows:

- 147 eligible for the Autumn Term;
- 27 for the Spring Term;
- 54 awaiting further information to confirm eligibility;

- 7 ineligible.

According to WG there has been a 66% take-up of the Offer in Swansea, which compares favourably to the national average of 59%.

To date there have not been any known issues in relation to the lack of available childcare places.

Whilst no formal evaluation, customer feedback has is as follows:

- Anecdotal evidence suggested that there was less reliance on informal childcare amongst parents eligible for the Offer;
- Some parents were in a position to increase the number of hours their children attended formal childcare;
- Parents were able to increase the number of hours worked;
- There was evidence of WG initiatives dovetailing eg Pace and the Childcare Offer;
- Eligible parents were able to improve quality of living with the reduction of their childcare costs;
- 2 full day care settings in particular had reported that brand new children had accessed their settings.

In addition, it should be noted that the Pilot had been a good example of effective collaborative working across a number of departments and sections within the Council, as well as a variety of external stakeholders.

The expansion to new areas had been approved by Cabinet and WG on 14 December 2017. Llansamlet, Penllergaer and Gowerton wards went live on 2 January 2018, whilst Upper Loughor, Lower Loughor, Kingsbridge, Penyrheol, Penderry and Cockett wards went live on 22 January 2018. Capital funding for the Children Offer of £60 million across Wales over 3 years (2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20) has been included in the WG's draft budget. The commitment is for the Offer to be available to all areas across Wales by the end of the current Assembly term. A further 2-3 cluster of areas remained in Swansea. It was hoped that when the funding was received that these clusters would be included in the scheme and rolled out via a further 2 or 3 phases.

She explained the next steps that would need to be undertaken before they went live in any area. The lessons learnt were also outlined to the Committee.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their informative presentation.

**Resolved** that:

- 1) Information regarding the scheme be forwarded to all;
- 2) The presentation and link to the information regarding the offer be emailed to all members of the Committee.

### **37 Childcare - Session to Identify Potential Options to Include in Report to Cabinet. (Discussion)**

In order to draft a report to Cabinet on the Committee's progress regarding Childcare issues, they were asked to consider:

1. How can Swansea ensure that families and children that need the childcare can most benefit;
2. Can therefore employability programmes be further aligned to ensure that they are focused on preparing parents to capitalise on the Offer?
3. Should further considerations be given to childcare within Council developments such as the City Centre Development?
4. Any feedback to Welsh Government to influence future development of the Offer?

Need to take a holistic view as the Childcare Offer only one part of a wider continuum for supporting people to move on.

Comments from the Committee:

- The criteria used for the pilot was discussed, in particular why data from the "area of deprivation" hadn't been utilised to identify where the highest levels of deprivation were? Officers clarified that this had been taken into consideration however that this was a pilot and the purpose was to learn as much as possible and given the eligibility criteria it was important for the pilot that the areas selected would have the best chance possible of having healthy numbers of eligible families as well as having a healthy supply of childcare provision.
- It was concerning that no new children had come on board, rather they were existing children who now met the criteria. This was important in order to assist more people into work. We do not have the information to confirm this or indeed to what extent this is the case. As provided in the presentation there is anecdotal evidence of families accessing the scheme who have been able to increase their working hours, parents that have been able to take up work as well as families reporting that life is more affordable.
- It was important that the scheme was 'joined up' with other schemes such as Flying Start. Officers confirmed that this would be tested in the Penderry ward when this area joined the scheme. In addition there is already evidence of join up with for example PACE.
- Some Councillors were not aware of the Offer even though it was being piloted in their ward area. Officers will send an e-mail to Ward Members of the eligible areas as they become live.
- It was acknowledged that getting parents into work was the best way to get people out of poverty.
- Parents had a choice in relation to the provision they could use eg childminders, day nursery on school provision or wrap around provision. They

also had the choice to utilise providers in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot or Carmarthenshire.

- Comparison with the provision in England was discussed. As the scheme in England was a year ahead there had been a lot of commentary nationally. That WG had commissioned research in England which we would learn from in order to understand what would work in Wales in terms of hourly rates for providers.
- Single parents were eligible to apply, provided they worked 16 hours.
- There was a need for quality childcare to be available.
- If / when the scheme ended, there would need to be a gradual withdrawal of the funding rather than the funding stopping immediately as families were starting to make longer term plans.
- It was queried whether childcare providers had been approached to ensure they comply with the hours being offered to parents? Officers confirmed that there had been a number of stakeholder events for providers. WG aware of this however providers are running businesses and parents/carers can choose from any registered provider.
- How did parents who work 30 hours cope? Officers confirmed that it depended on the individual – 10 hours education in Swansea was provided by 2 / 2 ½ hours per day am or pm with the remaining hours being flexible for the parents. Some parents chose to 'top up' any other hours using informal childcare.
- It would be useful to ask the WG what the benefits / uplift of people getting into work was and therefore having more money. Officers commented that WG has commissioned longitudinal research however that was not due to be reported for a number of months.
- Parents often need to travel to and from their work after dropping their children off, will this impact on the number of hours parents can work? The scheme has been designed by WG to be flexible for parents/carers and it is for parents/carers to choose the provider so that it supports their work commitments as much as possible.
- Work to be done via development officers of the Umbrella Childcare Organisations, in relation to supporting the development and registration of further childcare providers utilising available grants to assist where required.

**Resolved** that any other comments be forwarded to Sian Bingham, Early Intervention Services Strategic Manager.

### **38 Community Safety Strategy. (Verbal)**

Jane Whitmore, Partnership and Commissioning Manager and Paul Thomas, Community Integration Partnership Manager provided a presentation on the draft Safer Swansea Partnership Strategy 2018-2021.

The Safer Swansea Partnership had been established in 1998 as a result of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It is a multi-agency partnership chaired alternatively by the Council and Police.

Welsh Government's Vision for Community Safety in Wales is:

- Every community is strong, safe and confident in a manner that provides equality of opportunity and social justice, resilience and sustainability for all;
- The shared responsibility of government, public and third sector agencies to work together with the communities they serve and the private sector to address activity or behaviour that is unlawful, anti-social, harmful to individuals and society and to the environment;
- Sharing knowledge and ensuring early intervention with prompt, positive action tackles local issues and addresses vulnerabilities.

This vision will be achieved through collaborative and integrated multi-agency activity.

The strategy reflects the changing community safety landscape. The new and emerging challenges include domestic violence, substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, modern day slavery, radicalisation and extremism.

The strategic priorities are:

1. Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
2. Substance misuse;
3. Safe, confident and resilient communities;
4. Evening and Night Time Economy;
5. Hate Crime and Community tension monitoring.

In relation to the next steps:

- The strategy will go out for public consultation in February 2018 with a view to sign off by all partners involved in March 2018;
- Ongoing work is continuing through the rationalised partnership working groups that sit under the Safer Swansea;
- Following consultation a Delivery Plan would be developed to monitor action and delivery on the priorities.

The Chair thanked the officers for the presentation.

Members comments centred on:

- The flagship help point project at the bottom of Wind Street to take the pressure off A&E had been a success;
- Newly elected Members used to have meetings with the Sector Inspector on an annual / 6 monthly basis to discuss local issues. These were extremely useful but appear to have ceased over recent years;
- Contact with the Police is now reactive rather than proactive.
- The increasing instances of organised crimes groups coming to Swansea and engaging vulnerable people in participating in their crimes was becoming more concerning;
- Could Local Area Co-ordinators be utilised to assist?;

- Councillors had not been informed of a meeting that had been organised in the ward by the Police – were informed by Youth Workers;
- There was a need for skilled people to help certain people with complex needs who did not want to report issues to the Police or Social Services.

In response to Member comments, the officers would liaise with the Chief Superintendent regarding their concerns. In addition, together with Chris Sivers, the Chief Superintendent would be attending Scrutiny Programme Committee on 5 March 2018, which was open to the public to attend and ask any questions.

**Resolved** that:

- 1) The presentation be noted;
- 2) The link to the consultation be forwarded to the Committee once published so that Members can comment and promote within their electoral wards.

### **39 Work Plan 2017-2018.**

The Chair presented the current Work Plan 2017-2018.

She stated that Scrutiny had indicated that they would be considering the Homelessness Strategy. The Director of People stated that if there was no overlap in content, then both bodies could look at this item, however if both would be considering it as a whole then the Poverty Reduction Police Development and Delivery Committee would need to reconsider its agenda items for the March meeting (and beyond). If Homelessness proceeds on the agenda for the March meeting, then the meeting would need to commence an hour earlier at 3 pm.

**Resolved** that an amended Work Plan be provided at the next meeting scheduled for 28 February 2018.

The meeting ended at 5.51 pm

**Chair**