



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Service Improvement & Finance**

Committee Room 5, Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 16 September 2019 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Councillor C A Holley (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

P Downing  
L James  
C E Lloyd

**Councillor(s)**

R Francis-Davies  
M H Jones  
I E Mann

**Councillor(s)**

P R Hood-Williams  
J W Jones

**Other Attendees**

Robert Francis-Davies  
Clive Lloyd

Cabinet Member - Investment, Regeneration & Tourism  
Cabinet Member - Business Transformation & Performance (Deputy Leader)

**Officer(s)**

Kim Collis  
Bethan Hopkins  
Tracey McNulty  
Chris Williams

County Archivist  
Scrutiny Officer  
Head of Cultural Services  
Head of Commercial Services

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): P K Jones, B J Rowlands and D W W Thomas

Other Attendees: Councillor Peter Black

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

- None

**2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

- None

**3 Minutes**

- Approved

**4 Public Questions**

- None

## 5 Archives

- Archives is one of the few services which survived after the breakup of West Glamorgan
- Based in Civic Centre Swansea but with a branch in Neath
- There is a joint archives committee which is advisory and the focus is on the service itself which is very beneficial
- Sits within Cultural Services within the Council
- Meet with Neath Port Talbot (NPT) colleagues quarterly
- The relationship between Swansea and NPT works very well
- Records management is managed by legal services
- Welsh Government has requirements on accreditation standards for archives
- Archives hold magistrate court records on behalf of central government
- Archives are records of institutions and individuals – they can be administratively important or culturally important
- Archives are a hybrid service combining legal and cultural importance
- Often used by the public for boundary disputes
- Archives are a record of facts so are very useful in a world of conflicting perceptions of reality
- Half of the records in archives have been donated
- 2.5 miles of shelving in the Civic Basement
- Some high value items and one collection recognised by UNESCO
- 95% full and not in a position to accept a major collection
- Ongoing practical working relationship with the University
- Can't digitise records and get rid of the original documents – part of people's heritage
- Local authority are custodians of collections on behalf of all society
- Storage environment essential – must be temperature and humidity controlled, with protection against flood and fire. All of these are major risks
- University have the same storage requirements and standards as us
- 15<sup>th</sup> busiest archive in the UK – all over the UK attendance figures are declining and hence we have kept our position in the UK league table as ours have declined at the same rate.
- people access online services in line with the expansion of online information
- The service is very customer focused with very high satisfaction responses
- Team also do outreach in schools, social media information, special events and portable exhibitions
- These are very successful and inspiring
- Team also produces publications, latest is on the post war re-building of Swansea)
- Send data to CIPFA but Council is no longer a member of CIPFA due to budget restrictions
- If only taking small items, there is about 5 years left of storage in Civic basement
- Civic Centre is under review and Corporate Property along with Cultural Services are looking at future options for archives

- Open to relocation to create a more sustainable service but must have proper storage – paramount for future generations and in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015
- There needs to be a proper timescale and plan to create a more sustainable and public facing archive service
- Does not necessarily have to be City Centre – just be correct storage conditions
- Purpose built may be the only option due to the building specifications required
- There is currently no specific project or dedicated timeline to address the issue of archives – budget restrictions
- There needs to be proper plan in the event that the Council move from Civic
- Suggestions a project board is in place to start to explore and apply for external funding now
- The archive service and support needs to be in the same building as the documents themselves
- No realistic scope to fully control the family history resources online due to the cost and infrastructure needed to load all of the information online initially

## **6 Charges**

- Increases of charges are kept as reasonable as possible
- Always looking for potential ways to produce additional income
- Social services has a separate policy and separate legislation which governs its charges
- Each department is responsible for its own fees and charges
- There is lots of legislation which needs to be considered when a council sets its charges
- Discussed boat charges and will send last year's response to the Panel
- Marina berthing fees discussed – who is this cost benchmarked with? Have these fees changed payment structure as no information is available for 15/16, 16/17 and 17/18. - Request info in letter
- Swansea still offer free garden waste collection where other Councils do not
- Council tax does not extend to pay for everything
- Internal charging –open dialogue between departments is promoted to resolve issues if any arise
- Moving toward digitalising payment services to reduce transaction costs

## **7 Exclusion of the Public**

## **8 Charges**

- Exempt items discussed

## **9 Work Plan 2019/20**

- Potential Commissioning Review scoping reports to go to panel
- Potential for another completed Commissioning Review update in a future meeting

The meeting ended at 11.40 am