



Swansea Public Services Board Joint Committee – 17 June 2021

Human Rights City

Purpose:	Reconfirm commitment, identify resources and agreed process to support Swansea's ambition to become a Human Rights City:
Link to Well-being Objective:	Cross cutting, links to all objectives
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that:
1)	PSB consider and agree the next steps outlined in the report and reconfirm commitment to Swansea becoming a Human Rights City

1 Human Rights City

- 1.1 Human Rights Cities are cities where local government, local parliament, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders are committed to ensuring the use and application of international human rights standards. The concept has existed for decades, and generally means that local governments have adopted the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as guiding norms of governance.
- 1.2 A human rights city places the individual in the centre. This means that people are empowered to understand and claim their rights, as well as participate in decisions that affect them. All inhabitants, especially those marginalized and socially vulnerable, are fully able to take part in decision-making and policy-implementation processes that affect them, in accordance with human rights principles.
- 1.3 There are more than 100 cities worldwide reporting as Human Rights Cities with the City of York being the only one in the UK, having adopted their declaration in April 2017. Each Human Right City have prioritised areas of human rights based on what is important to their local populations. They are marked by a partnership that makes a formal declaration about their approach and then a series of actions to implement them. The intentions relate to both improving the situation of disadvantaged citizens and also make the concepts of human rights more accessible and meaningful to local people.

2 Swansea's Commitment to Human Rights City

- 2.1 In June 2019 Swansea Public Services Board agreed a Statement of Intent to work towards becoming a Human Rights City:

“We aim to become a Human Rights City and recognise that this means embracing a vision of vibrant, diverse, fair and safe communities built on the foundations of universal human rights.

This vision is shared by all members of the Public Services Board. It is a vision we want to share with our local communities and citizens in the City region. We will ensure that this takes place by engaging our communities and those we serve in the realisation of their human rights.

In moving toward becoming a Human Rights City we want to build on work which is taking place across the City informed by a commitment to human rights and social justice.

We recognise that in order to meet our ambition to become a Human Rights City we will need to make human rights the foundation of our service planning and delivery.

This statement marks our ambition and is a significant point in a journey. It is not our final destination but instead represents our commitment to recognise human rights as fundamental to our policies and our actions individually or collectively.”

- 2.2 It was also agreed that the Statement of Intent be shared with each of the 4 Work Streams for incorporating into the Wellbeing Plan.

3 Where we are now

- 3.1 There has been little progress on Swansea becoming a Human Rights City. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that resource and priorities were directed elsewhere.
- 3.2 We are now starting to recover from the pandemic and reshape the way we deliver our services. This presents the opportunity to reconfirm our commitment to becoming a Human Rights City and place Human Rights are the heart of what we do

4 Learning from York

- 4.1 York is the only Human Rights City in the UK and we asked them to come and speak to officers within the Council about their experience.
- 4.2 Key things we learnt were:
- Council must not lead, must be a partnership approach
 - Wide range of partners involved from the start
 - High level of civil society involvement
 - Provided more focus and energy in reshaping service with a Human Rights approach
 - Declaration only the start of the Journey, they admit they have a long way to go
 - Independent Human Rights City Network set-up to work towards the declaration

5 Next Steps

It is clear from York that a strong partnership approach is needed to achieve the ambition of being a Human Rights City. As a PSB we need to reconfirm our commitment to Swansea becoming a Human Rights City.

We are asking PSB partners to:

- **Each statutory** or invited statutory member sign the declaration of our ambition to be a Human Rights City (appendix 1)
- Agree to the development of a body to oversee the HRC
- Commit a resource to lead on Human Rights City for their organisation and sit on the governance group and help shape how we are going to achieve it.
- To agree to oversee the development of the Human Rights City approach through the PSB.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Statement of Intent – June 2021

STATEMENT OF INTENT - June 2021

We aim to become a Human Rights City and recognise that this means embracing a vision of vibrant, diverse, fair and safe communities built on the foundations of universal human rights.

This vision is shared by all members of the Public Services Board. It is a vision we want to share with our local communities and citizens in the City region. We will ensure that this takes place by engaging our communities and those we serve in the realisation of their human rights.

In moving toward becoming a Human Rights City we want to build on work which is taking place across the City informed by a commitment to human rights and social justice

We recognise that in order to meet our ambition to become a Human Rights City we will need to make human rights the foundation of our service planning and delivery.

This statement marks our ambition and is a significant point in a journey. It is not our final destination but instead represents our commitment to recognise human rights as fundamental to our policies and our actions individually or collectively.

Swansea Council _____

Swansea Bay University Health Board _____

Natural Resources Wales _____

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service _____

South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner _____

South Wales Police _____

Swansea University _____

HM Prison & Probation Service _____

Swansea Council for Voluntary Service _____