

## Building Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Inquiry Panel

Summary: This is an agenda pack for a meeting for the Building Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Inquiry Panel taking place on the 3 March 2016. The main item is looking at community action.

**Date:** 3 March 2016      **Time:** 10.30am

**Venue:** Committee room 5, Guildhall, Swansea

### Members of the Panel:

Cllr Terry Hennegan ( <b>Panel Convener</b> ) Cllr June Burtonshaw Cllr David Cole Cllr Chris Holley Cllr Wendy Fitzgerald Cllr Keith Marsh	Cllr Lynda James Cllr Anthony Colburn Cllr David Lewis Cllr Gloria Tanner Cllr Mike White Cllr Phil Downing
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### Copies of Agenda for information to:

Alex Williams – Head of Adult Services (Lead for Building Sustainable Communities priority)  
 Tracey McNulty – Head of Culture and Tourism (Lead for Community Action Strand)  
 Dean Taylor, Director Corporate Services

## AGENDA

No.	Item
1.	Apologies and declarations of interest*
2.	Notes from meeting on 3 February 2016
3.	<b>Roundtable meeting with front line staff</b>  <i>Those invited to participate today include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Tenancy Support Officer – Jonathan Esqulant</li> <li>• Communities First Officers including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Andrew Chapman – CF Cluster Manager</li> <li>- Gemma Bevan – CF Learning Communities Project Officer</li> <li>- Peter Beynon – CF Engagement Officer</li> <li>- Anthony Richards – Tackling Poverty Partnerships Officer</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3.	Work Programme Timetable

\*Please note members should declare personal and prejudicial interests and party whipping in the usual manner

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## Building Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Inquiry

### Notes / evidence summary

3 February 2016

#### **In attendance, Councillors**

Terry Hennegan (Convener)

David Cole

June Burtonshaw

Keith Marsh

Lynda James

Chris Holley

Gloria Tanner

Anthony Colburn

Mike White

Phil Downing

*Scrutiny Officer:* Michelle Roberts

*Apologies: Cllr Wendy Fitzgerald*

Discussion with:

- Jane Tonks, Manager Local Area Co-ordinators and Community Connectors
- Ronan Ruddy, Local Area Co-ordinator
- Amanda Carr, Director Swansea Council for Voluntary Services
- Elinor Evans, Disability Development Officer
- Alyx Baharie, Development Officer / Compact

#### **Discussion points noted**

##### **JB**

- Panel had concerns that there is a lot of duplication within wards with groups doing the same thing. This may include community groups, charities or services provided by local authority.
- Communities First, some panel members felt that CF are not as visible in communities as the used to be and that communications needed to be improved.

##### **AB (SCVS)**

- Swansea Council for Voluntary Service is the umbrella organisation for voluntary activity throughout the City & County of Swansea, supporting, developing and representing voluntary organisations, volunteers and communities in the County.
- They work to support and develop the Third Sector by providing a wide range of information, advice and support services and by representing the views of the sector to government and policy makers.
- They also have information on voluntary services in Swansea, help voluntary groups to seek advice on available funding, help new groups to set up, provide a volunteering service for individuals and community or voluntary group wishing to

recruit volunteers. Also provide some informal training in a number of aspects for the third sector.

## **RR**

- Role of the Local Area Co-ordinator is to be a single point of accessing the community, including what groups and services exist and in signposting to different advice and services. Help people to connect to for example claiming benefits and housing.
- Some people who are more vulnerable need more help than others.
- Talk to people about what they would like to do and achieve and to build relationships within the community.
- Work with any age in community, work at two levels: with community groups/organisation and with individuals.

## **JT**

- Community Connectors help to get people involved with groups, organisations and activities in their local area.
- Social Services gets many enquiries from or about people who do not need formal social care services, but whose wellbeing is at risk because they are lonely or isolated. Some people simply aren't aware of things that are going on in their local area; others lack the confidence to go along to groups, or don't know how to get there. There are also people who would like to find an opportunity to use their skills or experience to help others, but don't know where to start.
- Community Connectors know their areas well and have information and contacts for a wide range of organisations and activities. They also have a role in developing community projects and initiatives which create social opportunities and promote wellbeing.
- Many people are referred to their local Community Connector by a social worker or their GP, but people can self-refer.
- Each Community Connector is linked to a [Health Community Network area](#)

## **AC (SCVS)**

- The third sector have faced drastic cuts to their funding. Funding is often year on year so difficult to plan ahead.
- Difficulty for third sector organisations this time of year because they often do not know what their funding will be until from April until the councils budget is agreed in February/March. Funding often comes from a number of different departments.
- The third sector covers a wider variety of organisations.
- Find some things that are done by community organisations are duplicated by the local authority. Organisations often work on behalf of the local authority and funded by LA but then do that service themselves as well (for example the local authority developing volunteering opportunities when they fund SVCS to do this).

## **JT**

- Aware of asset transfer and the transformation fund but not been involved with it.

## **EE**

- SCVS and Communities First dovetail in many aspects which is of benefit in supporting people in communities.

## **JT**

- Community Connectors for example get a referral about someone who is lonely. They will meet or speak with them and connect them to a group they are interested in.

## **KM**

- Need for greater communication between Council departments and SCVS, so things are not being set up that are already happening.

## **AC (SCVS)**

- Would like clarity around the local authority valuing its third sector, little evidence of this. A lot of what happens across Swansea depends upon the third sector services.
- Need a clear strategic lead and commitment to third sector.

## **PD**

- Many organisations grants are diminishing, SCVS has important role in assisting organisation to apply for monies.
- Asset transfer is difficult for people to get involved in. Needs to be easier to do.
- Must also ensure people are solid not want in a couple of years to have to take it back.
- Must all work together to make it happen.

## **JB**

- Directory of volunteer groups would be beneficial. Panel were informed that an online third sector directory is close to completion. It will also be linked to the 111 service and the Healthy Cities Directory.

## **AB**

- SCVS give advice and support but do not police, so can be frustrating when there are a number of groups doing similar thing that do not work together but cannot make them.

## **EE**

- More and more groups are recognising the benefits of doing more things collaboratively and pulling expertise.

## **TH**

- Important that front line staff working in communities know about the transformation fund and support from Council and SCVS so they can signpost people when need arises.

## **AB**

- Friends of Parks Groups a good example of working together. All Friends groups come together regularly but they enhance the work of parks rather than taking on the responsibility. Good partnership currently between Parks and Friends Groups.

## **MW**

- Important to let people know and to get the message out there that assistance is available for groups.

## **PD**

- Many do not understand what they need to do so need advice early on.

## **TH**

- There is a lot more to it than just taking on the asset and people must understand what is involved early on in the process.

## **AC (SCVS)**

- A list of assets made publically available would be useful. Groups themselves can then explore what's on offer and consider the implications.
- Maybe need more of a mixed economy some groups/organisations may not be able to take on services fully themselves but if they do it in combination with others it may be more feasible.
- SCVS would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to co-produce the asset transfer strategy. SCVS have a lot to contribute on this issue.

## **TH**

- Important role of Communities First to raise capacity in communities.
- Must work to develop capacity in communities including how to raise funds. Vital they have the ability to raise funds...if they take on an asset they need to have the ability to pay and maintain it.
- Succession planning a major problem for third sector groups and organisations. Need financial bedrock support and succession planning for organisation to be viable in the longer term.

## **JT**

- Things do not happen overnight especially succession planning, need to develop and sustain expertise, for example, governance. Needs to be built into groups overall strategy.
- Important to have frontline staff and communities involved in developing the asset transfer strategy.

## **RR**

- Highlighting the importance of being on the ground and developing what is needed, huge benefits to groups developing in the community and keeping this local. People in the community know what they want and what they need day to day, so important to work locally.

## **PD**

- Need to think about how the process can be simplified.
- How are we connecting across organisations on this and ensuring we work together?

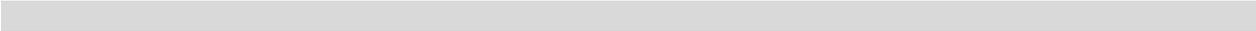
## **KM**

- Must use wealth and knowledge of others on this i.e.: SVCS to help us to connect and use community groups and for training etc. Use SCVS to develop and access interest in the community.

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## **Next Steps...**

- The next meeting will be held on the 3 March and will be a roundtable meeting with Officers working in Communities First and a Tenant Support Officer.



**Roundtable meeting on 3 March 2016**

**Points of Discussion**

The following points have been sent to those invited for consideration prior to the meeting and in readiness for the roundtable discussion.

The following points (based on your inquiry Terms of Reference) have been sent to those invited for their consideration prior to the meeting and in readiness for the roundtable discussion.

1. What challenges/barriers do you think there might be in developing services that are run by communities/community action?
2. How do you think the council could support/help communities to run certain services?
3. How do you think interest in running certain services could be created or developed in communities?
4. What do you think are the best ways to raise awareness and develop interest in running services in the community/community action?
5. Do you have any experiences of being involved with or working with services that are currently run by a community organisation/group? Do you have any good examples that the panel could learn from?

## Item 4

### Building Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Inquiry Panel Timetable of Work

When / Where	What / Who
<b>Pre Inquiry Working Group</b> 26 November 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of service by Tracey McNulty, Lead for Community Action Strand</li> <li>• Discuss whether to hold inquiry</li> </ul>
<b>Planning the Inquiry</b> 14 Jan, 10.30am Councillor Meeting Room 235 Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of key question, lines of inquiry and evidence gathering</li> <li>• Call for evidence</li> <li>• Survey questions and email questions for councillors</li> </ul>
<b>Survey</b>	Sent out survey to councillors, community councils, community groups (with closing date for receipt of survey of end of March)
<b>Evidence gathering</b>	
<b>Meeting 1</b> <b>27 Jan, 10.30am</b> Councillor Meeting Room 235 Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Transformation Fund and how the project is connecting with poverty agenda - <i>Sarah Crawley</i></li> <li>• Legal – how we are preparing for and currently dealing with the legal aspects of community action (given that this will increase) – <i>Patrick Arran</i></li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 2</b> <b>3 Feb, 10.30am</b> Committee Room 6 Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roundtable meeting with different people working in the community including: community connectors, local area co-ordinators and SCVS</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 4</b> <b>3 Mar, 10.30am</b> Committee Room 5 Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roundtable meeting with different people working in the community including:            Communities First community engagement officer, community development officer, area co-ordinator and a housing tenancy support officer</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 5</b> <b>15 Mar, 10.30am</b> Councillor Meeting Room 235 Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at wider aspects of building sustainable communities including understanding the national influences on the local agenda. Discuss corporate view and policy priorities (Cabinet Member and relevant corporate priority lead officer)</li> <li>• Desk based research examples elsewhere in Wales and wider</li> </ul>
<b>March</b> – awaiting notification of date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Buildings Forum - Slot on agenda for representatives from panel to attend and consult with forum</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 6</b> <b>14 Apr, 10.30am</b> Committee Room 6 Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities First – how connecting with and using communities first in relation to community action.</li> <li>• Consider the results of Panels survey of community councils and community groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Date TBA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Property Services Asset Transfer - Geoff Bacon</li> <li>• Representatives from Community Centres (council and non-council)</li> </ul>
<b>Finalising Inquiry</b>	
<b>Meeting 7</b> TBA	Draw together evidence and discuss emerging themes arising from the inquiry. (Start to put together final report to Cabinet).