



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY 4TH APRIL 2012 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

L. Hughes - Chair

Councillors:

H.W. David, W. David, D.T. Hardacre, Mrs. G.D. Oliver, Mrs R. Potter, D. Rees, J.E. Roberts and J. Taylor

Cabinet Member for Education and Leisure: Councillor P.J. Bevan

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Director of Education and Leisure), K. Cole (Interim Manager, Learning, Education and Inclusion), E. Pryce (Service Manager School Effectiveness Unit), D. Phenis (Community Development Manager), J. Rowe (Leisure Services Manager), L. Bosanko-Williams and E. Sullivan (Committee Services Officer).

Co-opted Members: Mrs. J. Havard

In Attendance:

Mr. D. Holdcroft (Platinum Young Ambassador)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Elsbury, D.M. Gray, M.P. James, D.W.R. Preece, G.D. Simmonds, Mr J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager) Mr L. Horrocks (NASUWT) and P.J. Ireland (NUT)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were received during the course of the meeting: Councillor D. Rees and J.E. Roberts (Agenda Item 5(3)) Caerphilly Children and Young People's Partnership - Families First, details are minuted with the respective item.

2. MINUTES – 28TH FEBRUARY 2012

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee held on 28th February 2012 (minute nos. 1 - 15, on page nos. 1 - 8), be approved as correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. CALL - IN PROCEDURE

There were no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

4. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEISURE

Councillor P.J. Bevan, Cabinet Member for Education and Leisure, circulated a written report and reported verbally on the following:

Olympic Torch - Members were advised that local runners would not be running in their home areas, which was a disappointment. Officers had sought clarification on the reasoning behind the decision and been informed that it would be too organisationally difficult to match runners with their home locations.

A Member requested that consideration be given to purchasing a replica Olympic Torch for the Authority. The Corporate Director agreed to feed this request back to the Corporate Management Team.

Integrated Achievement Service - Members were advised that Mr Steve Davies had been appointed as the new Lead Director for the Integrated Achievement Services. Mr Davies has held senior officer roles in Cumbria, West Sussex, Havering and Southwark. The professional interviews took place prior to the Cabinet Member interviews and all five Cabinet Members felt that an appointment could be made after two hours of scrutiny.

Inspection of Caerphilly Authority Education Services for Children and Young People - Members were advised that the inspection would commence on the 2nd of July 2012 until the 6th of July 2012.

5. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. AGENDA SUMMARY

Members of the Scrutiny Committee noted the proposed agenda for the meeting.

7. LEADERSHIP AND THE YOUNG AMBASSADORS MOVEMENT PROGRESS REPORT

The report provided an update to Members on the Leadership Continuum and the Young Ambassadors Movement. The Continuum provides young people with opportunities to develop key life skills through the medium of sport and physical activity.

Members were introduced to Darryl Holdcroft, Platinum Young Ambassador who provided a first-hand insight into the positive impact the programme can have.

Darryl attended St Martin's Comprehensive School and was chosen by Mr Huw Daniels for the programme because of his confidence. Completing the numerous courses available allowed him to develop as a role model and coach building his confidence further and inspiring him to go on to study Music at UWIC University. The skills he developed in terms of public speaking and presenting to an audience were a direct result of the scheme and he would not have achieved his many successes without the confidence and inspiration it gave him. This support and mentoring has continued on, even through he is now in university.

Officers confirmed that young people from primary and secondary schools and colleges had access to the Sports Leaders UK courses. Courses were designed to engage pupils in sport through positive activities that build confidence and inspire respect, friendship, determination and excellence.

The Chair thanked Darryl for speaking to the Scrutiny Committee and congratulated him on becoming a Platinum Ambassador and wished him every success at University.

Members commended Darryl on the way in which he addressed the Scrutiny Committee and special note was made of a presentation that he gave to Sports Wales.

The Scrutiny Committee having fully discussed its content noted the report.

8. CAERPHILLY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIP - FAMILIES FIRST

Councillor D. Rees declared a personal interest due to his involvement with Advocacy Services in Blaenau Gwent and J.E. Roberts declared a personal interest in that he is associated with St Cenydd Youth Drop in Centre.

The report informed Members of the work of the Children and Young People's Partnership in relation to the Families First Programme and the projects commissioned.

Families First had three strategic objectives; to reduce the number of families living in workless households, improving the skills of parents/carers and young people in low-income households and reducing inequalities that exist in health, education and economic outcomes for children and families by improving the outcomes of the poorest. Through interventions at the preventative and protective stages the programme aims to reduce the numbers of families developing more complex needs.

To take the programme forward 7 new projects had been commissioned and rolled out in November 2011 with an additional project starting in March 2012 focusing on advocacy for children and young people. A further £700,000 of grant funding had been made available and its spend would be based on need within the local authority.

Members noted that programme had been met with great enthusiasm by staff within the projects leading to greater partnership working through the sharing of good practice and joint planning. Overviews of the projects were given and noted to include family engagement, integrate family learning, family play, health inclusion, as well as parenting programmes and individual family support.

Projects complement each other and were working towards providing a holistic service for families. As a result there is an increase in the sharing of resources, a reduction in duplication and the input for families maximised. Projects have clear targets and programme outcomes are already being realised by children, young people and families in the borough.

The Chair thanked the Officer for her report and presentation and Members questions were welcomed.

Clarification was sought in relation to the provision of advocacy services and whether consideration would be given to a universal service rather than a targeted provision via referral. Officers confirmed that funds had been put aside for advocacy and services would be reviewed in order to establish need and how best it could be met.

Clarification was sought in relation to project performance and how outcomes and successes could be measured. Members were advised that this report provided an overview of the projects; further reports would be brought forward on individual projects detailing their outcomes and the difference they were making on ground level. Members were pleased to note the holistic approach being taken and that the new programme would prevent duplication.

Councillor R. Potter advised Members that this would be her last Scrutiny Committee before her retirement and she wished the programme and its projects every success. The Chair wished Councillor Potter a long and happy retirement on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Committee having fully considered its content noted the report and presentation.

9. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND BANDING

The presentation outlined banding and school performance monitoring.

The data groups were defined and Members noted the 12 indicators that contribute to the measurement of performance. Members noted the impact that performance in English, Welsh and Maths had on banding and noted that the calculations used were based on the premise that all cohorts were the same. As a result a schools movement within the banding width was dependent on the performance of the English, Welsh and Maths departments.

Banding methodology was explained and noted that for each of the 12 sub indicators schools would be put into rank order and then split into quarters 1-4. Band boundaries were outlined along with a breakdown of the distribution of schools across Wales within each of the bands 1-5.

Members expressed grave concerns that this system would be detrimental to schools and very confusing for parents when assessing a schools performance. Officers acknowledged Members concerns on the banding methodology and where this could lead in terms of the potential for oversubscription.

The position of Caerphilly Schools was detailed along with their movement within the banding width. Members were asked to note that Primary School Banding had been postponed until September 2014 and would be likely to use data from the new national reading and numeracy test. Concerns were expressed that the position of small schools within the banding width could fluctuate dramatically according to the performance of individual cohorts. Officers confirmed that Special Needs Bases were also being counted within the cohort and would have an impact on scores.

The presentation moved on to monitoring school performance and detailed the benchmarking groups for both primary and secondary schools, according to the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. Subject tracking and performance relative to deprivation was explained and Members noted the actions being taken by the authority with identified schools.

The Chair thanked the Officer on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee and the presentation was noted.

10. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

11. REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA

No requests were received.

12. INFORMATION ITEMS

The Committee noted the following item for information, full details of which were included within the Officers reports:

- (1) Delegation of Insurance Results - The Possible Delegation of Insurance Services to Schools.

The meeting closed at 18:17 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2012, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR