



EDUCATION FOR LIFE (PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT) SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
ON 27TH JUNE 2013 AT 5:00PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor D.W.R. Preece - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

P.J. Bevan, H.R. Davies, C. Durham, C. Gordon, D. Havard, G. Johnston, Mrs G.D. Oliver, J. Pritchard, D. Rees, J.E. Roberts, R. Saralis,

Cabinet Member for Education and Leisure: Mrs R. Passmore

Observing:

Councillor A. Lewis

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), B. Hopkins (Assistant Director, Our Schools Our Future, 21st Century Schools), K. Cole (Manager, Learning, Education and Inclusion), Strategy, L. Howse (Performance Management Officer), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager) and E. Sullivan (Democratic Services Officer).

Co-opted Members: Mr M. Western (Cardiff ROC), Mr A. Farina Childs (Parent Governor), Mrs A. Goss (Parent Governor), Mrs P. Ireland (NUT) and Mr P. Jones (NAHT)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from W. David (Chairman), D.M. Gray, M.P. James, and Mrs M.E. Sargent.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor D.W.R. Preece presided as Chairman for the meeting.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

2. IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE IO4 - IMPROVE THE SKILLS LEVEL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The report outlined the progress made on Improvement Objective IO4 to improve the skills level of Children and Young People in order to identify the progress made and demonstrate the outcomes achieved.

The progress made was detailed and Officers confirmed that an increase had been noted in the percentage of young people reporting NEET. This had risen from 4.5% to 5.9% equating to 131 young people not in education, employment or training. Officers confirmed the partnership role of Careers Wales and advised that improvements would be made to the pupil tracking systems. Once in place this system would allow the destination of individual pupils to be tracked providing early identification of those at risk of becoming NEET. Improved information sharing protocols would also be developed to allow the Council and Careers Wales to share data effectively.

The intervention programmes currently in place were detailed and the changes made to referral systems were noted. Officers confirmed that young people would be assessed in order to ensure that their place at college or with an alternative training provider met their individual needs. Provision for 'hard to reach' pupils was currently out to tender and a framework of providers had been established in order to provide a greater choice of specialist provision. Changes to support provision were outlined and included the introduction of 'learning coaches'. Trigger mechanisms were explained and the way in which barriers to learning would be approached was detailed.

The Chaired thanked the Officers for the report and Members questions were welcomed.

Members acknowledged the efforts made in order to mitigate the increased NEET's figures and welcomed the interventions detailed.

Clarification was sought in relation to the quality of the Learning Coaches and assurances were given that those Officers undertaking the role would have all the necessary skills to support young people overcome any barriers to learning and work with those who had become disengaged with learning.

Clarification was also sought with regard to reducing the achievement gap between boys and girls. Officers confirmed that this varied year or year depending on the particular cohort. Support programmes were in place and the different interventions under consideration were explained and were noted to include the increased use of IT facilities.

The report was moved and seconded and by a show of hands the Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed the recommendation that the Improvement Objective IO4 had been partially successful for the reasons stated in the Officer's report.

3. PROGRESS OF THE POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

The presentation provided an update on the progress of the Post Inspection Action Plan focusing on the improvements made against Recommendations 3 and 4.

In terms of Recommendation 3, the progress made to improve the robustness of self-evaluation and target setting was noted. Officer's confirmed that the Self Evaluation Report had been revised twice and the summative document complete with judgements would be submitted to Estyn for feedback prior to its presentation to Scrutiny in September 2013. Additional training on effective data analysis had been provided for staff within the Directorate together with guidance on the use of supporting evidence. All services now had a self-evaluation timetable and Lead Officers were required to prepare a 200-word summary, together with a judgement on their service. This would then be presented to a Challenge Team and any improvement actions arising identified and agreed in order to improve the service. The Leadership and Management Team were also incorporated into the challenge model and followed the same cycle of challenge. Officer's confirmed that the EAS would also be challenged in relation to services for school improvement. The improvements made against school target setting were noted and Officers confirmed the challenge processes involved. Targeted provision maps would be used in order to evaluate individual interventions and plot what worked and what didn't, in order to inform planning going forward.

As a result the quality of self-evaluation throughout the Directorate had been improved by strengthening existing processes, accountability had increased and the process of challenge had been embraced. Lead Officers now had a greater understanding of how other services areas functioned and in doing so allowed them to share practice and work collaboratively.

In conclusion, Officer's were of the view that there had been significant improvement in the robustness of self evaluation and target setting and this recommendation had been met and would presented with supporting evidence of challenge when Estyn revisit.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the presentation and Members questions were welcomed in relation to Recommendation 3.

Clarification was sought with regard to the role of the EAS. Officer's fully explained the difference between the remit of the EAS and that of the Directorate of Education. Reassurances were given that there would be no duplication of effort although certain elements of internal challenge and target setting were interlinked.

Members commended Keri Cole and her team for the hard work and commitment required in order to meet Recommendation 3.

In relation to Recommendation 4, the progress made to align corporate and partnership strategic planning processes in order to make best use of available resources to improve the outcomes for children and young people was noted.

The planning processes implemented in response to the recommendation were confirmed and how the Single Integrated Plan aligned with and reflected the Directorate Improvement Plan and Service Improvement Plans was fully explained. Members noted that planning process had been firmly embedded and provided a single-track system, which was now sharper and much more focused.

Members noted the improvements made in relation to Recommendation 4.

In relation to Recommendation 5, to take urgent action to reduce surplus capacity in schools generally and secondary schools in particular, Members were advised that a fully report would be presented to the meeting on the 9th July 2013.

Officers confirmed that the evidence in relation to Recommendation 3 would be forwarded to Estyn on the 5th July 2013, to make the final determination as to whether it had been met. In relation to Recommendation 4, Estyn would be revisiting in September to make their determination and hoped that the evidence put forward for this, along with the proposals for Recommendation 5 would be sufficient for Estyn to determine that these had also been met.

The meeting closed at 18:12 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 24th September 2013, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIRMAN