



EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 21ST MAY 2019 AT 5.30PM.

PRESENT:

Councillor T. Parry - Chair
Councillor C. Andrews – Vice Chair

Councillors:

P.J. Bevan, A. Collis, S. Cook, A. Farina-Childs, D.T. Hardacre, D. Havard, M.P. James, B. Miles, J.E. Roberts, R. Saralis, J. Simmonds and R. Whiting.

P. Marsden (Cabinet Member for Education and Achievement).

Together with:

R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), S. Ellis (Lead for Inclusion and ALN), C. Jones (Youth Forum Co-Ordinator), S. Mutch (Early Years Manager), R. Roberts (Performance Manager), J. Southcombe (Finance Manager), P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement), A. West (21st Century Schools, Admissions and Exclusions Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

Also Present:

Co-opted Members: M. Barry (Parent Governor), Mr R. Morgan (Parent Governor), Mrs P.J. Ireland and Mr M. Western (Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education Representative).

Youth Forum Representatives: Imogen Jones (Chair), Luke Parker (Vice-Chair), Ewan Kinsman (Learning Representative), Councillor M. Evans (Youth Champion).

1. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHAIR

The Chair opened the meeting and thanked Councillor D. Havard for his work as Chair of Education for Life Scrutiny Committee for the previous year. The Chair welcomed those in attendance to the meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W. David, J. Simmonds, Mr D. Davies (Caerphilly Governors Association) and S. Richards (Head of Education, Planning &

Strategy).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 2ND APRIL 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday the 2nd April 2019 (minute nos. 1- 10) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair wished it noted that under Agenda Item 8 – Terms of Reference of Post 16/ Single Sex and Surplus Places, the second representative nominated for the Plaid Cymru Group is Councillor T. Parry.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE

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

5. EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report which outlined the draft Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme from May 2019 to May 2020.

The Committee were asked to note that since the last meeting Officers have requested that the Schools Capital Report and Library Standards Report be moved from 31st March 2020 to 24th February 2020. In addition, it was noted that the Purpose and Key Issues for each of the reports have now been updated.

A Member sought further information on the Additional Learning Support Review Report, which has been scheduled for May 2020, and the reason for the report being presented so late in the programme. Officers explained that a review is being undertaken of the Additional Support Provision, which has started with a consultation with Teaching Assistants. Due to the nature of some staff deployment, it has been agreed, in consultation with Trade Unions and Head Teachers that a smaller review will be undertaken with Teaching Assistants from Special Resource Bases (SRB's). Following this the outcome would be reported through Scrutiny and Cabinet, and, should the process be effective and successful, the same method be applied to the larger group of Teaching Assistants. It was noted however that work is underway to build on Education Other Than At School (EOTAS), with a post being advertised with the hope to appoint shortly.

Following consideration, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report and the changes proposed by the Officer be approved.

RESOLVED that subject to the aforementioned changes, the Forward Work Programme appended to the report be approved.

6. CABINET REPORTS

None of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda had been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. 2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT ON WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE 1 OF THE CORPORATE PLAN 2018-23

The report provided Members with an update on the progress towards achieving Well-being Objective 1 Improve Education Opportunities for everyone in the Corporate Plan 2018-23.

It was noted that Well-being Objective 1 aims to improve education opportunities for everyone. The report and appendix highlighted the progress in the first year of implementation.

During 2018-19 progress has been made towards meeting the Well-being objective to improve education opportunities for everyone. A number of actions have been completed and there are a number of action areas in this first year of implementation, where substantial preparatory work has been undertaken involving stakeholders, to ensure collaborative models are developed to improve education opportunities for everyone.

The measurable impact has been limited to date, although an example of the collaborative approach involving stakeholders in developing long-term delivery models has enabled significant success in securing capital funding for infrastructure, for example, £5,458,495 for the development places in Welsh medium schools plus £850,000 for expanding places in Welsh Medium childcare settings; £5,110,989 for childcare setting development across the borough; and £194,750 Flying Start capital maintenance work for several sites.

It was noted that this significant Welsh Government investment over the coming years will enable an increase in both Welsh and English medium provision, improving accessibility for families and children as well as providing purpose built provision to meet the needs for all children and young people supporting an improvement in education opportunities for all. The progress to date demonstrates that services are on track to deliver the action steps towards delivering the Well-being objective. The overall objective continues to be fit for purpose, although there are changes required in steps or actions completed.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

A Member thanked the Officer for the report and the work of Flying Start and sought further information on additional plans to expand the service. Officers explained that the additional funding received has been allocated for Capital works to improve and develop current Flying Start sites across the borough in need of repairs and investment.

Discussions took place around the additional capital funding for the development of places in Welsh medium schools and expanding Welsh medium childcare settings. Officers explained that there are 2 funding pots available, 1 specifically to expand services to offer more places to Welsh speakers and meet Welsh Government targets and another to improve the facilities in which provision is provided.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the Appendix to the report and raised a number of concerns around the correlation between the covering report and appendix in relation to targets and performance, wording, abbreviations, acronyms and layout, and felt that the

document was difficult to read and understand. Officers took the points on board and agreed to re-send the Acronym Glossary and use fewer acronyms where possible in future documents.

Finally, the Scrutiny Committee, in noting the success of the Live Vacancy Events, wished to extend their gratitude to the Lead Officer and colleagues for such an impressive and well attended event.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report the content of the report be noted and the progress made in the first year in respect of Well-being Objective 1 Improve Education Opportunities for everyone be approved.

8. YOUTH FORUM – UPDATE ON PREVIOUS PRIORITIES

The report, which was presented to Cabinet on 24th April 2019 and previously presented to Education for Life Scrutiny Committee on 2nd April 2019, informed Members of the issues raised by Children and Young People via the Youth Service's Junior and Youth Forums. The Scrutiny Committee noted that the Youth Forum Representatives were unable to attend and present at the last meeting, however have been invited back to present the report on previous priorities and future priorities.

The Chair welcomed representatives from the Youth Forum who informed Members of the issues raised by Children and Young People via the Youth Services Junior and Youth Forums.

Scrutiny were provided with a video and presentation, which outlined the progress made in the last 12 months by the Junior and Youth Forum's against priorities identified last year. In addition, the report noted the priorities voted on that were set out in paragraph 5.2 and 5.3 in the report. It was confirmed that the overall priority issue for the Youth Forum is 'Mental Health' – Services should be improved with young people's help and young people should receive mental health first aid education. The Junior Forum's overall priority issue is 'more awareness of support for drugs and alcohol support'. The process that follows the identification of issues was set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Youth Forum for attending the meeting and delivering their informative and professional presentation.

Members discussed the priorities and were saddened to note that Mental Health has been chosen as priority for another year for the Youth Forum and more work is required in this area. However, it was noted that there has been extensive improvements made for support provisions for adults and young people struggling with mental health issues, but there is a lot of pressure on support services and sought suggestions on how this can be remedied. It was noted that service improvements can be made simply by updating young people on their place on a waiting list for services, which is something the Youth Forum will be looking into.

Discussions took place around the work being undertaken to tackle Period Poverty and the Committee were asked to note that a Task and Finish Group has been set up to tackle this issue, and as a result have launched a campaign within schools and youth groups to provide products in Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Youth Settings and Libraries and a film has also been produced for use in schools and youth groups to educate around period dignity.

Members discussed the holistic approach and work undertaken around tackling bullying and raising awareness and support for the bully as well as the victim. A Member sought further information on resources and strategies to reduce bullying. It was noted that Cyber Bullying is

an increasing issue for young people and a recommended strategy is a “Digital Detox” in which a person does not use Social media for a specified period of time, which can also improve wellbeing. In addition, the Junior and Youth Forums have launched a campaign to “Don’t be a Bystander, be an Up stander” to encourage more people to report bullying.

The Scrutiny Committee commended the work of the Junior and Youth Forums and requested some of the resources developed to be sent to Members for use in groups in their wards. Officers agreed to send the information available and also asked Members to note that a lot of the resources are available on their social media pages.

It was moved and seconded that the report be noted. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 18:58pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2019 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR