



EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER 2021 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

Mrs E. M. Aldworth, C. Andrews (Vice-Chair), P. J. Bevan, A. Collis, A. Farina-Childs, Ms J. Gale, D. Havard, M. P. James, B. Miles, Mrs T. Parry (Chair) and J. E. Roberts.

Councillor R. Whiting (Cabinet Member for Learning and Leisure).

Together with:

Officers: R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement), A. West (21st Century Schools Manager), L. Thomas (21st Century Schools - Principal Officer), P. O'Neill (Senior Youth Service Manager), S. Mutch (Early Years Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer).

Also present:

Co-opted Members: Mr M. Western (Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education Representative) and Mrs T. Millington (Parent Governor Representative).

Also in Attendance:

Representatives of the Youth Service.

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click here to view.](#)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W. David, D. T. Hardacre, Mrs B. A. Jones, Mrs G. D. Oliver and J. Simmonds.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 21ST SEPTEMBER 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21st September 2021 (minute nos 1- 10) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report which outlined details of the Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the period November 2021 to March 2022 and included all reports that were identified at the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21st September 2021. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services outlined the Vocational Offer report, scheduled for the special meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee to be held on 2nd December 2021.

During the course of discussion, it was proposed that a report on the provision of Welsh Medium teachers be added to the Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme. Members also requested a report on pupil welfare post lockdown, including mental health and wellbeing.

Following consideration of the report, and subject to the additional reports proposed, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be published on the Councils' website.

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. YOUTH SERVICE PILOT UPDATE - PRESENTATION

The Scrutiny Committee received a presentation on how the Caerphilly Youth Service supported young people during the Covid pandemic. The Senior Youth Service Manager gave an introduction to the Youth Service, outlined their Covid response and the impact of their work and highlighted where the differences had been made. It was also highlighted that the Youth Service had focussed on the vulnerable young people that were already being supported. Members were shown a film which was produced by the young people and their youth workers which highlighted the experiences of the young people during Covid, from a selection of the youth service projects.

The Senior Youth Service Manager introduced two young people to the Scrutiny Committee, who shared their experiences of what it was like being supported by the Youth Service during lockdown. Members thanked the young people for attending the meeting and sharing their experiences.

In response to a query regarding vocational opportunities, the Senior Youth Service Manager informed the Scrutiny Committee that there are plans to centralise information on vocational development for young people and also confirmed opportunities, such as traineeships and apprenticeships, are increasing.

In response to a Member's query, the Senior Youth Service Manager provided an update on the new Caerphilly Youth Service building at Virginia Park in Caerphilly. Members were informed that the building will be very significant for the Youth Service as it will be the hub of youth work for the Caerphilly Basin area, servicing around 5,000 young people. In response to a Member's question, the Scrutiny Committee was informed that the Youth Service has a standing partnership with the Urdd and Menter Iaith. It was noted that funding has been secured from Welsh Government to take forward a Welsh Language Youth Work Strategy and a dedicated Welsh language Youth Club will be opened in Virginia Park.

Members of the Scrutiny Committee noted the presentation and thanked the Senior Youth Service Manager and his team for all their hard work in supporting young people, and particularly vulnerable young people, during Covid.

8. 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES BAND B PROGRAMME - CONSULTATION IN RESPECT OF PROPOSALS FOR LLANCAEACH JUNIOR SCHOOL/LLANFABON INFANTS SCHOOL, PLASYFELIN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND A CENTRE FOR VULNERABLE LEARNERS

The Cabinet Member for Learning and Leisure introduced the report to officially consult with Members in respect of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme proposals for Llancaeach Junior School / Llanfabon Infants School, Plasyfelin Primary School and a Centre for Vulnerable Learners (Pupil Referral Unit). Members were advised that more detail on each of the proposals are contained in the full consultation documents appended to the report.

In response to a Member's concerns regarding plans for a 2-storey building as part of the Llancaeach Junior School/Llanfabon Infants School merger proposals, the 21st Century Schools Manager provided assurances that the 2-storey building would be for the Junior Department and advised Members that the plans for the new building had been made in order to safeguard the amount of outdoor space at the site to meet the needs of the children and the curriculum. Reference was made to the impact on other schools in relation to Faith Medium provision and the Scrutiny Committee was advised that there is adequate demand for Faith and Welsh medium Schools in Caerphilly and it is not envisaged that the proposal would further impact upon these schools as they were specialised in their area of delivery.

During the course of debate the Chairperson sought clarification and further information on a number of matters and Officers responded to the points raised. The 21st Century Schools Manager provided clarification in relation to the decommissioning of Llancaeath Junior School and the impact on Welsh medium provision.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that a condition survey had not been carried out at the former Pontllanfraith School site (proposed site for the CVL) because the school was declared surplus to education at the time, however Members were advised that a condition survey would take place when the provision is in operation. An inspection of the proposed site had been undertaken in order to ascertain the cost of the proposal.

Further information was requested in relation to the current cohort of students currently receiving home tuition. In response, the Chief Education Officer advised Members that the information related to community tuition rather than elective tuition and reasons for accessing the service were provided. Members heard how the Centre for Vulnerable Learners would provide a facility to reintegrate such pupils into small and larger groups with a view to some pupils being able to return to school.

A Member asked if the future Centre for Vulnerable Learners would mean provision by referral units out of County would no longer be required. The Chief Education Officer advised that it was difficult to predict but that the approach adopted would certainly help to ensure that provision was sufficient.

The Education Scrutiny Committee noted the information contained in the report and consultation packs. Members provided their views in their capacity as 'consultees' as part of the consultation processes being followed for all 3 proposals.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. The Education Scrutiny Committee voted on each proposal separately, which will be included in the relevant reports for each proposal to be presented to Cabinet as part of the decision-making process. By way of Microsoft Forms voting, each proposal was unanimously agreed.

RESOVLED that the Education Scrutiny Committee supported the individual proposals outlined below:

- (i) The amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School to create a new Primary School provision on the existing Llanfabon Infants School site.
- (ii) A new replacement Plasyfelin Primary School on the existing site.
- (iii) The establishment of a Centre for Vulnerable Pupils (Pupil Referral Unit) on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive site.

9. WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2032

The Cabinet Member for Learning and Leisure introduced the report present the proposed Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 and asked for comments regarding the sufficiency of information and targets in order to recommend the report to Cabinet. Members were informed that the WESP is a statutory requirement and is aimed at contributing towards the Welsh Government's minimum targets of 26% for learners in year 1 by 2032 in order to meet the one million Welsh speakers by 2050 target. In order to meet this ambitious target, the need to build a new Primary School and expand others to create the places was highlighted. The Scrutiny Committee was also informed that a communication plan will be needed to increase the take up of those places starting with additional opportunities and additional provision in early years. Members were advised that Welsh Government has

created additional capital funding alongside the 21st Century Schools Band B Programme which will be carefully planned to ensure any impact on English medium schools is minimised. The Cabinet Member for Learning and Leisure placed on record his thanks to the Early Years Manager and her team and also to Members of the Welsh Education Forum.

Reference was made to Outcome 2 of the Caerphilly Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and a query was raised in relation to the categories of school. The Early Years Manager pointed out that there was an error in the document and confirmed that there are currently 2 main categories of school, either Category 1 English language school or Category 3 Welsh language school. There are no Category 2 English / Welsh language schools delivering 50% English and 50% Welsh.

A Member requested an update on the work being undertaken with the Education Achievement Service and the National Academy of Educational Leadership to promote Education as a career to young people leaving Secondary school and developing sufficient Welsh speaking staff entering the workforce. In response, the Early Years Manager highlighted work being done in this area by teaching institutions which had been instigated by the Welsh Government. Members heard about difficulties addressing this issue at a local level but received assurances that Caerphilly would feed into the work being done at a national level.

The Scrutiny Committee commented on the sufficiency of information and targets to achieve the outcome areas and meet the minimum 26% target in year 1 cohort by 2032.

10. A.O.B

Members were informed of a book written by Dr Elin Jones of Ystrad Mynach, which takes readers on a visual journey through over 5,000 years of history around the whole of Wales. It was highlighted that the book will be published in Welsh medium and English medium.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2022 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR