



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PENALLTA HOUSE,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY 29TH MAY 2012 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor W. David – Chairman
Councillor D.W.R. Preece – Vice Chairman

Councillors:

H.R. Davies, C. Durham, C. Gordon, D.M. Gray, D. Havard, G. Johnston, D.W.R. Preece,
J. Pritchard, J.E. Roberts, R. Saralis, Mrs. M.E. Sargent

Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning - Councillor Rhiannon Passmore
Performance and Asset Management - Councillor D.T. Hardacre

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Corporate Director - Education, Lifelong Learning and Leisure), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Property), B. Hopkins (Assistant Director Our Schools Our Future), T. Mayer (Assistant Director Planning and Strategy), L. Travis (Interim Manager Community Education), G. Evans (Interim, Manager Community Education), D. Phenis (Community Development Manager), K. Cole (Interim Manager, Learning, Education and Inclusion), J. Rowe (Leisure Services Manager), H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.J. Bevan, Mrs. A. Blackman, M.P. James and Mrs. G.D. Oliver, Mr. P. Jones (UNITE) and Mrs. P. Ireland (NUT)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - THE ROLE OF SCRUTINY

The Head of Policy and Performance detailed the requirement to manage performance in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Local Government (Wales) - Measure 2009 and confirmed that it is necessary to have effective arrangements in place to secure and monitor improvement. He referred to the requirement to produce, for the Wales Audit Office, a corporate assessment (on what should be approved) and an annual inspection report (outlining how services have performed against targets and previous years performance where known) and detailed how the processes are managed and measured.

Working with Corporate Management Team, Cabinet identifies its key priorities which are developed into the key improvement objectives. A three/four year improvement plan (which is revised annually) is subsequently produced and service improvement plans are developed annually. The Wales Audit Office can access the objectives, the likelihood of improving and the expected outcome.

The Performance Management Unit measure and manage performance with the use of the Ffynon system - a balanced scorecard which can measure and analyse performance. Details are reported to Corporate Management Team, the Cabinet Member for Performance and six monthly Performance Management meetings of each respective scrutiny committee in order that members can scrutinise the information provided.

Members were reminded that the management of performance is used to recognise achievement, identifies where improvement may need to be made and monitors and compares performance of council priorities and other service delivery. The role of the scrutiny committee is to scrutinise the targets that have been set against the actual targets, to recognise those that have been achieved, to hold local decision makers and policy makers to account and to challenge Officers to drive forward improvements in service delivery.

Reference was made to the assessment of the objectives and it was confirmed that the statutory guidance advises that if the scrutiny processes are sufficiently developed to carry out the assessment and there is clear evidence of this, then this activity can be used by the Auditor General and relevant regulators to decide whether council scrutiny processes are sufficiently robust to be relied upon. As such, there will be less need for auditors to scrutinise the improvement objectives if they believe there is an effective in-house scrutiny and therefore will not duplicate effort, which could also result in a reduction in audit fees. There are certain of the objectives are also appraised by a number of other organisations. An Estyn Inspection is to take place early July, the result of which will be presented in due course.

A query was raised as to how performance will be managed for the Integrated Achievement Service and it was noted that governance arrangements would need to be put in place to address this. A seminar would be arranged for all Members as the project progresses.

During the course of the debate that followed the presentation it was requested that further information be provided on the use of the Ffynon system and agreed that it would be incorporated as part of the Members induction programme.

3. SERVICE PRIORITIES - DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING AND LEISURE

The Corporate Director - Education, Lifelong Learning and Leisure outlined the directorates planning framework which identifies the local, operational, strategic and borough wide initiatives for the community plan, the corporate plan and corporate strategies, directorate plans and strategies, service improvement plans, operational improvement plans and the individual staff performance development reviews which are used to inform the process and develop service priorities.

The planning cycle (objectives, targets, actions, implementation, monitoring, feedback and review) are all part of the performance management process to ensure that there is continuous improvement in all performance areas.

The Director advised that the key priorities for 2012/13 are to establish and implement robust quality assurance processes between the local authority and the Integrated Achievement Service to ensure statutory requirements are met, to embed the culture of performance management to drive continuous service improvement and to improve levels of skills, health and wellbeing in schools and communities.

The Officers in attendance then presented their specific service area's key priorities and challenges and demonstrated how these will be tackled.

Members were advised that the Learning, Education and Inclusion Service comprises of six key areas, educational improvement, performance and ICT, social inclusion, additional learning needs, Children and Young People's Partnership and finance and administration. The key priorities for 2012/2013 are to review current processes and agree the South East Wales Consortium approach for the monitor, challenge, support and intervention programme, to improve further the rise in standards of the development of skills and implementation of the Caerphilly Skills Strategy. There will be a review of provision for pupils with additional learning needs and inclusion and for pupils aged 14 to 19. It is intended to further improve the use of data to allocate resources to schools, thereby reducing exclusions and increasing attendance and to improve the use of data to allocate resources to schools, thereby reducing exclusions and increasing attendance. The Interim Manager, Learning, Education and Inclusion outlined the key actions and performance indicators which will be used to achieve these priorities.

With regards to Planning and Strategy the key priorities for 2012/13 include managing the medium term financial plan, the transition to the new Integrated Achievement Service, grant reduction, staff issues, performance management, data regarding free school meals pupils and school balances. The Assistant Director Planning and Strategy outlined the key actions and performance indicators which will be used to achieve these priorities

The Community Development Manager referred to the priorities within Community Development in relation to arts development, sports development, health development, healthy schools, PE and school sport and connecting communities. The key priorities for 2012/2013 are to increase volunteers, improve collaboration, improve the evidence base, increase community engagement, being to recruit, train and retain, through Partnership Agreements, the provision of evidence of impact and school/community links.

The key priorities within Leisure Services (leisure centres, Blackwood Miners Institute, outdoor education service, Islwyn Indoor Bowls Club) are to increase participation, improve asset management, seek Quest Accreditation, undertake an options appraisal and to develop an outdoor education strategy. The Leisure Services Manager outlined the key actions and performance indicators which will be used to achieve these priorities.

The Assistant Director, Our Schools Our Future, then detailed the 21st Century School programme and gave an overview of the current position. He advised that Officers have met with Welsh Government Officials regarding the bid 'Challenge' phase, and have just submitted an outline business cases for Band 'A' projects. Once this has been approved as full business case will be submitted and the statutory consultation process will commence. He referred to the performance indicators, surplus places in both primary and secondary schools and the number of in-year school toilet upgrade schemes completed to date

With regards to Community Education and Libraries, the Interim Managers for Community Education made reference to Adult Community Learning (including European Projects, youth service, library service and community centres) and highlighted the need to maintain and increase participation, review asset management (including new developments) and community facilities, undertake the performance assessment of systems and standards, ensure that the medium term financial plan savings are achieved and meet European Project targets. They outlined the key actions and performance indicators which will be used to achieve these priorities.

Members thanked the Officers for their informative presentations and noted that they would have the opportunity to scrutinise the performance indicators at future performance management meetings. In the meantime they requested that a copy of the presentations be forwarded to them.

They then sought clarification on a number of points including the skills strategy and the new Families First programme (details of which will be presented in due course) and the changes to the Cymorth project. Reference was also made to free school meals and the use of the cashless system (details to be provided) and the 21st Century schools programme.

With regards to the latter it was confirmed that Council had agreed the scheme, and, with reference to the increased demand for secondary Welsh medium and the projected decrease in English Medium secondary pupil numbers it had been accepted that there will be a need to undertake secondary rationalisation (the criteria for which would need to be determined in the event that the bid is successful). The English Medium secondary rationalisation proposals provide for a reduction in English Medium secondary schools from 13 to 10 and a reduction overall in surplus places. It was noted that whilst there is a strategy in place to deal with surplus places, the rationalisation potential of school buildings and reduction in surplus places will be further developed with a school place planning strategy.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their informative presentations and for responding to issues raised by Members.

The meeting closed at 6.40pm

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2011, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR