



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 6TH MARCH 2014 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor W. David - Chair
Councillor D. Preece - Vice Chair

Councillors:

Mrs. A. Blackman, H.R. Davies, C. Gordon, D. Havard, M.P. James, G. Johnston,
Mrs. G.D. Oliver, J. Pritchard, J.E. Roberts.

Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning: Councillor Mrs R. Passmore.

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), K. Cole (Manager, Learning, Education and Inclusion), T. Cunnick (Manager - Community, Youth Service & Adult), A. Davies (Advisor, ALN), J. Elias (Service Manager – ALN), C. Jones (Youth Forum Coordinator), T. Maher (Assistant Director Planning & Strategy), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

Co-opted Members: Mr. M. Western (Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan), Mr. A. Farina-Childs (Parent Governor) and Mrs. A. Goss (Parent Governor Representative).

Also Present: Mia Hughes (Education Rep, Youth Forum), Sophie Jones (Vice Chair, Youth Forum), Debbie Hartevelde and Ruth Salisbury (Education Achievement Service).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.J. Bevan, C. Durham, D.M. Gray, R. Saralis, Mrs. M. Sargent and from P. Ireland (NUT).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mrs A. Blackman, W. David, M.P. James and Mr Jonathan Jones declared an interest in agenda item 7(5) as it relates to Welsh Government Secondary School Banding 2013 and Education Achievement Service School Categorisations. Details are minuted with the respective item.

2. MINUTES – 14TH JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED that subject to it being noted Councillor J.E. Roberts was present at the meeting and had been recorded as being absent, that the minutes of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee held on 14th January 2014 (minute nos. 1-13, on page nos. 1-5) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

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

4. CABINET REPORTS

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

5. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEISURE

Councillor Mrs. R. Passmore, Cabinet Member for Education and Life Long Learning provided Members with a verbal update. Members noted that a report has been scheduled on this agenda, which highlights the progress of the Estyn Inspection. It was confirmed that the Estyn Inspection Team were very happy with the progress made and praised many aspects of the work undertaken by the Education Directorate. The Inspection Team stressed that their work would be subject to moderation by the Inspectorate but a strong recommendation would be that the Authority be removed from the category of Estyn monitoring. Written confirmation from Estyn is pending.

The Cabinet Member referred to the Reduced Funding for Adult Community Learning 2014/15. Adult Community Learning is facing significant reductions to the budget in 2014/15 academic year amounting to circa £134K. A report detailing more information from the Welsh Government (WG) and franchise partners will be presented at the next Scrutiny Committee.

Members noted that Tidy Wales Awards 2013 were held on 22 January 2014 in Cardiff Bay. Caerphilly did very well at these awards; three schools in Wales were finalists, 2 of which were from Caerphilly. Pentwynmawr Primary School won overall Eco School in the community in Wales and Deri Primary was a finalist.

Finally, the Cabinet Member detailed Lewis School Pengam's Intergenerational Group's Nomination for the Local Delivery Award (An annual award presented to groups or people who have made an outstanding contribution to the lives of older people). The school project that brings local school children and older people together has earned a nomination and the winner of the Age Cymru Awards will be announced in due course.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. CAERPHILLY YOUTH FORUM PRIORITIES

Mia Hughes (Education Rep, Youth Forum) and Sophie Jones (Vice Chair, Youth Forum) presented the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee with the Youth Forum Priorities through a Digital Story by the Junior Forum, and a Presentation from the Youth Forum. The

presentations outlined the issues effecting Young People, such as lighting and dog fouling on the Cycle Paths, Reduce Drinking Campaign and People using drugs in the Community.

In addition, the Youth Forum priorities included a proposal to make a hard hitting, yet effective film, which demonstrates how easy it is to obtain drugs, a wish to make Police Stations more approachable and less intimidating, to see more police officers on the streets and to see an improvement in PSE lessons, with the presentation of more practical life skills.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning and Members of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee thanked the Youth Forum representatives for their excellent presentation and the valid and important priorities identified. The Committee offered their full support to their priorities, however, raised concerns about the barriers to achieving these in light of the recent budget cuts experienced by all Local Authorities.

Members sought further information on the current curriculum in PSE lessons. The Young People confirmed that in some schools, local representatives such as Police Officers and Careers advisers provide presentations at the lessons, and that Young People would like to see this, along with more practical life skills such as information on budgeting, voting and opening bank accounts to be available within all schools. The Interim Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that discussions have been conducted with the Youth Forum to tackle this issue and it has been proposed that this will be raised at Head teachers meetings.

A member agreed that alcohol and drug issues are a concern. The Youth Forum felt that alcohol and drugs are an issue that go hand in hand for young people. Discussions took place around the Outreach Programmes in place, which have assisted in tackling drug and alcohol issues and the difficulty in families where parents have an issue with alcohol and drugs.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Youth Forum and Junior Forum for their presentation.

7. CAERPHILLY YOUTH SERVICE STRATEGY 2014-2019

Tony Maher and Tanis Cunnick presented the Committee with an overview of the report, which highlighted the vision and 12 key priorities for the Youth Service for the forthcoming 5 years. The statutory Youth Service in Caerphilly currently engages over 70,000 young people predominantly between the ages of 10 to 19, which is equivalent to 20% of the youth population. Youth provision is managed and delivered by 31 full-time and 200 part-time staff, operating in up to 100 different locations, 28 of which are premises that house youth club provision. The current core budget is £1,637,309 and is innovatively matched by a range of external grants that total to £1,225,681. A review of the Youth Service was conducted in December 2012 by an independent contractor in order to identify good practice, areas for improvement, opportunities for innovation and the potential risks associated with failing to ensure quality delivery.

Members thanked Officers for the report and sought further information on the level of provision in the borough. Officers confirmed that there is youth provision throughout the Authority, however, the draft Caerphilly Youth Service Strategy provides a framework for the development of fit for purpose, quality and progressive personal and social education that is tailored to deliver directly to meet young peoples' needs.

A Member queried the consultation process and the level of consultation anticipated with the local Community Organisations. Officers confirmed that the Consultation process would be conducted for a 3-month period on the contents of the Strategy and the priorities outlined within it. It was also confirmed that the Community Organisations would receive the opportunity to consult on and provide feedback on the strategy and officers urged members to assist in the process.

Members noted that the review of the workforce is being conducted to identify what qualifications and experience would be required in order to provide the best service to the young people of the borough. Staff are being consulted to gather their views on what they feel is the appropriate level of qualifications and skills.

Members discussed at length and endorsed the content of the Youth Service Strategy.

8. CONSULTATION – PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2015/2016

The report sought to consult Members on the proposed changes to the Schools Admission Arrangements for the academic year 2015/16 and to provide Members the opportunity to comment on proposals as part of the consultation process before recommendations are considered by Cabinet at its meeting 19th March 2014.

The report highlighted proposed changes in relation to School Admission Arrangements for the academic year 2015/16 ensuring that the Authority complies with the statutory requirements in carrying out the appropriate consultation.

Members were reminded that annual consultations are conducted regarding the proposed Admission Arrangements. The only significant changes proposed for 2015/16 related to the Secondary School Rationalisation Phase 1- Islwyn West. Members noted that, in the absence of Bleddyn Hopkins, an Officer has been assigned to the post and the consultation process has been conducted and came to a close on 1st March in accordance with the Code. Consultees included all Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and neighbouring Local Authorities as well as CCBC's Admission Forum and Scrutiny Committee.

In accordance with paragraph 2.10 of the Code, the admission arrangements must be determined by 15th April 2014 and will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 19th March 2014.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the report and noted that comments received, as part of the consultation process will be presented to Cabinet on 19th March 2014.

9. PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS RECOMMENDATIONS WITHIN THE POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN (PIAP)

The Education for Life Scrutiny Committee noted that previous reports had referred to progress made since the Estyn Inspection in July 2012. Members noted, as per the Cabinet Members update, that a letter is pending from Estyn, outlining the Estyn Inspection Teams satisfaction with the progress made and the work undertaken by the Directorate to meet the recommendations within the Post Inspection Plan. Members also noted that the Inspection Team, subject to moderation by Estyn, recommended that CCBC be removed from the category of Estyn Monitoring.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report and in noting the positive feedback that has been received would await the arrival of the letter from Estyn outlining their post Inspection outcome.

10. WELSH GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL BANDING 2013 AND EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE SCHOOL CATEGORISATIONS

Councillors Mrs A. Blackman, W. David, M.P. James and Jonathan Jones declared a personal interest in the item (family Members working at/ educated within CCBC Schools), which enabled the Members to stay and take part in the discussion and voting thereon.

Ruth Salisbury and Debbie Hartevelde, Education Achievement Service (EAS) presented the report that informed Members of Secondary School Banding published in December 2013 and the EAS school categorisations 2013/14, which determines the level of support, challenge and intervention required by the school.

The Welsh Government (WG) introduced Secondary School Banding in December 2011, with the third year of banding results published on 12 December 2013. Banding is a way of using national data on school performance in context to group schools according to where they are on their improvement journey relative to other schools in Wales. Banding uses relative performance of schools across four sets of data to group them into one of five bands- those in Band 1 show good overall performance and progress and those in Band 5 show weak performance and progress relative to other schools. Within each band relative performance is measured to take account of actual performance, progress over time and performance relative to context and cohort. The EAS Intervention Framework has been developed for use across South East Wales Consortium (SEWC). The Framework is based on a model of support for building the capacities of schools to self improve.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the data supplied and the information in the report and raised concerns that the schools in Caerphilly are the categories for improvement or concern. Members felt that this would be misleading to parents, as a good school would be portrayed as a 'bad school'. Concerns were expressed that the WG are continuing to support the School Banding Process. Officers from EAS explained that the data demonstrates final year data, however, the results are purely based around data and on a statistic formula to reach the outcome.

Members queried the position of Caerphilly Schools against other Local Authorities within Wales. Members were informed that further information would be brought to a later Scrutiny Meeting to demonstrate Caerphilly's Performance.

A Member expressed their concerns around the fairness of the WG Banding, the formula used and the impact the road closure in the North of the Borough has had on school attendance in the area and the impact on the data for the school. Members were asked to note that, although the highway issues are causing difficulty within the borough, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure children attend school.

It was moved and seconded that the concerns of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee around School Banding be expressed to the Welsh Minister for Education and Leisure. By show of hands, this was agreed by the majority present.

11. ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS REVIEW

Jacquelyn Elias and Andrea Davies presented the Members with a progress update on the Additional Learning Needs Review; the implementation times for ongoing work and identified future priorities.

The aim of the ALN review is to identify strengths and areas for development of the current services and to provide options for the delivery of services for children and young people with additional learning needs.

Members thanked the Officers for the presentation and discussed the information provided. Further information was sought on the average cost to support pupils in specialist facilities both within and out of County. Officers explained that there is an obligation to provide support and meet the needs of every child in the Authority. It is difficult to calculate an average cost of support per child as the needs vary, however Trinity Fields School has developed a funding Matrix, which can calculate the costs per child dependent on the level of need and resources required. The matrix has been praised by the Wales Audit Office (WAO), and is anticipated to be adopted in other resource bases.

Concerns were raised that the excellent school support in place within Caerphilly for children with Additional Learning Needs would attract families from outside the County, which could have a negative impact on the budget. Officers assured Members that any movement of children and their families in and out of the County are tracked and the implications on the budget monitored.

Members noted that the schools and competency of the staff are consistently good, however there is an aim to improve this further. Lesson Observations are conducted and feedback and recommendations are provided to the staff, and where necessary, intensive support is provided to broaden skill set. There is also a requirement that any agency staff provided are qualified to the high standard CCBC expects in order to meet the needs of the pupils.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report and presentation and the exceptional work being conducted by all staff.

12. INFORMATION ITEMS

The Committee noted the following items for information, full details of which were included within the Officers reports. There were no items brought forward for review.

1. Summary of Members Attendance- Quarter 3 – 1st October 2013 to 31st December 2013;
2. Budget Monitoring 2013-14;
3. Proposed Review of the Gwent Visual Impairment Service, the Educational Advisory Service for Hearing Impaired and the Communication Intervention Team (ComIT);
4. Outcome of Consultation on Secondary Rationalisation: Phase 1 Islwyn West;
5. SACRE Minutes- 14th November 2013;
6. Forward Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 19.42p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th April 2014, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIRMAN