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For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Sharon Hughes
(Tel: 01443 864281 Email: hughesj@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Date: 6th September 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Education Scrutiny Committee** will be held in Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams on **Monday, 12th September, 2022 at 5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days. A simultaneous translation will be provided on request.

Members of the public or Press may attend in person at Penallta House or may view the meeting live via the following link: <https://civico.net/caerphilly>

This meeting will be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy'.

Christina Harrhy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

Pages

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

A greener place Man gwyrddach



To approve and sign the following minutes: -

- 3 Education Scrutiny Committee held on 5th July 2022. 1 - 6
- 4 Consideration of any matter referred to this Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.
- 5 Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme. 7 - 22
- 6 To receive and consider the following Cabinet Report*: -
1. Shared Ambitions Strategy 2019-2022 – 27th July 2022.

**If a member of the Scrutiny Committee wishes for the above Cabinet report to be brought forward for review at the meeting please contact Sharon Hughes, 01443 864281, by 10.00 a.m. on Friday 9th September 2022.*

To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports: -

- 7 Safeguarding. 23 - 32
- 8 Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme - Trinity Fields School Expansion Update Report. 33 - 38

Circulation:

Councillors Mrs E.M. Aldworth, C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, A. Farina-Childs, A. Gair, C.J. Gordon, M.P. James, B. Miles, T. Parry (Chair), L. Phipps, M. Powell, J. Rao (Vice Chair), J.E. Roberts, J. Winslade and K. Woodland

Co-opted Members:

Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education Representative (with voting rights on educational matters)

Mr M. Western

Parent Governor Representatives (with voting rights on educational matters) G. James (Parent Governor Representative) and Tracy Millington (Parent Governor Representative)

Outside Body Representatives (without voting rights)

Mrs J. Havard (NEU) and Mrs P. Ireland (NEU)

Caerphilly Governors Association (without voting rights)

Mr D Davies

And Appropriate Officers

HOW WE WILL USE YOUR INFORMATION

Those individuals that attend committee meetings to speak/give evidence will be named in the minutes of that meeting, sometimes this will include their place of employment or business and opinions expressed. Minutes of Meetings including details of speakers will be publicly available to all via the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk. except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items.

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Agenda Item 3



EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 5TH JULY 2022 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT:

Councillor T. Parry - Chair
Councillor J. Rao - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

E. M. Aldworth, C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Pettit, M. Chacon-Dawson, A. Farina-Childs, C. Gordon, B. Miles, L. Phipps, M. Powell, J. E. Roberts, J. Winslade and K. Woodland.

Cabinet Member:

Councillor C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities)

Together with:

Officers: R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), S. Mutch (Early Years Manager), J. Southcombe (Finance Manger), E. Pryce (Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy, Education Achievement Service), J. Kent (Assistant Director: Curriculum, Education Achievement Service), S. Speedy (School Improvement Partner, Education Achievement Service), P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) and M. Afzal (Committee Services Officer).

Also present:

Co-opted Members: Mrs T. Millington (Parent Governor Representative), Mr G. James (Parent Governor Representative) and Mr D. Davies (Caerphilly Governors Association).

Also in Attendance:

Councillors: J. Pritchard and S. Morgan.

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting would be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items - [Click here to view](#). The Committee was advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Gair and M. P. James together with Mrs P. Ireland (NEU) and Mr M. Western (Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 15TH FEBRUARY 2022

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th February 2022 be approved as a correct record. By way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15th February 2022 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 July 2022 to September 2022 and included all reports that were identified at the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15th February 2022. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of a roll call this was unanimously agreed.

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

6. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE CABINET REPORTS LISTED ON THE AGENDA

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

7. UPDATE REPORT ON THE CURRICULUM FOR WALES

Consideration was given to the report which sought to update the Committee on the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales within schools across the county borough.

The requirement for all primary schools to introduce the Curriculum for Wales (2022) from September 2022 was noted. Members were advised that secondary schools had the

opportunity to opt into the curriculum or defer until September 2023, to provide greater time for preparation, due to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It was highlighted that the Curriculum for Wales provided schools with greater flexibility, with less prescribed content. This would give schools greater freedom to select approaches and contexts for learning that best suits the developmental needs of learners within each school's community.

Clarification on the qualification reforms was sought, with one Member querying progression opportunities for learners who did not study the new topics at GCSE level. It was confirmed that Natural Pathways would facilitate the progression into higher education.

With schools being given greater autonomy as part of the reforms, clarification on the composition of the new curriculum was sought. The Member was assured that despite the degree of flexibility in terms of the context for learning and teaching methods, knowledge and skills across the board/schools were to remain consistent.

Reference was made to 5.9 of the report – the decisions to combine Welsh language and literature for learners in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools. The Member queried whether the same changes would apply to the English GCSE. It was confirmed that arrangements had been made to combine English language and literature to give students greater choice in respect of selected pathways.

Further clarification on the changes was sought, with a Member querying whether the merger would reduce workloads for students. The Member was advised that although the changes would reduce guided learning hours, the option to select subjects from other aspects of the curriculum would increase variety in respect of topics. The Member was assured that an array of stakeholders had been consulted upon in respect of the decision to combine languages and it was hoped that the merger would lead to a greater uptake in traditionally marginalised subjects including international languages and the expressive arts.

A Member sought further information on the decision to combine language and literature and whether the merger would apply to Advanced Level qualifications (A-Levels). It was confirmed that the merger would apply to A-Levels. The Member was assured that the combining of languages was the best approach forward.

The Committee queried whether schools were expected to incorporate every aspect of the qualifications reforms or whether they were permitted to specialise in certain subjects due to the complexities surrounding the hiring of specialist subject teachers. It was advised that partnership work in respect of this area was underway across the borough to deliver the specialist subjects in a collaborative manner.

Clarification on section 5.12 of the report was sought, with one Member querying whether the Education Achievement Service (EAS) had received self-assessment reports, information Headteachers were requested to provide in the spring term of 2022. It was confirmed that the reports had been received and an update would be provided by members of the EAS.

In light of the critical situation with supply teachers, a query was raised in relation to the support for professional learning. It was confirmed that the EAS and local authorities would continue to facilitate access to professional learning and development to meet the needs of teachers and professionals across the region.

The EAS were referred to section 5.1 of the report which listed the schools that had opted to incorporate mandatory aspects of the new curriculum for pupils in year 7 from September 2022, and clarification on the schools that did not make it to the list was sought. Members were advised that schools were given the option by Welsh Government to take the additional time if they felt that they would benefit from it for planning purposes. The Committee was assured that pupils would not be placed at a disadvantage by the delayed implementation of the new curriculum.

A query was raised in respect of the support mechanisms in place to prevent duplication of errors in collaborative working. The Committee was advised that school improvement partners were on hand to mitigate any errors and work was being undertaken in conjunction with schools to ensure that educational institutions were acquiring meaningful knowledge from collaborative working. Members were assured that in spite of the possible errors, the advantages of partnership working outweighed its disadvantages.

Following consideration of the report, the Education Scrutiny Committee noted the contents.

8. SHARED AMBITIONS STRATEGY 2019-2022

Consideration was given to the report which sought to update the Committee on the outcome of the report completed on progress since the Peer Review in 2018. It was noted that the original peer review had been led by Aled Evans together with a team that consisted of three Directors of Education, one Assistant Director and Welsh Local Government Association representatives.

The review highlighted the priorities within the draft 'Shared Ambitions Strategy'. Mr Evans was commissioned again to conduct a review of the progress made since January 2019 and this was carried out between November 2021 and February 2022.

Reference was made to page 29 of the report which detailed the risk in respect of the authority not holding access to the information and intelligence on the performance and management of schools held by the consortium, and the Committee sought clarification on the measures in place to minimise this risk.

The Committee was advised that the information was accessible, and that work was underway to identify the best use of the information and the best method of storage. It was confirmed that a working group, comprised of head teachers, was due to commence a pilot in September to assess the self-evaluation of teachers. It was hoped that a report would detail the outcome of the pilot in the near future. The Committee was assured that the work in respect of access to information would increase transparency and clarity with headteachers and officers working on the project to combine the material.

Clarification on the support mechanisms for marginalised learners was sought. The Committee was advised that schools had policies in place and that headteachers were keen to engage with marginalised learners. Reference was made to Trinity Fields School & Resource Centre, an exceptionally challenging school and the sophisticated mechanisms it had in place to engage with disadvantaged groups. Headteachers were commended for their efforts and the collaborative work with Youth Service in respect of marginalised learners was noted. The Committee was advised that reports detailing the focus of the next stages were available for further information.

It was noted that the voices of pupils across Caerphilly were fed into the new strategy and the importance of having support mechanisms in place for marginalised learners was recognised by members of the Committee.

Clarification on the comments made by school leaders in respect of support for marginalised learners was sought. The Committee was advised that the comments derived from the high standards which schools had set themselves. Members were assured that schools across the borough were striving to foster inclusivity within their institutions.

A query was raised in relation to the comments made by Governors as part of the interview process, with the Committee seeking clarification on why governors did not feel a part of the priorities set out in the Shared Ambitions Strategy. The Committee was advised that a handful of Governors were consulted as part of the process. However, it was acknowledged that more work could have been undertaken to improve Governor engagement levels. The Committee

was assured that engagement levels had improved, and the Strategic Lead for School Improvement updated Members on the work in respect of this area.

The Committee was advised that Officers had met with a range of stakeholders and the outcome of those discussions were overwhelmingly positive with conversations centring around training, safeguarding and skills. Members were assured that feedback had been taken on board and it was hoped that engagement with stakeholders would continue into the near future.

Clarification on the recruitment of supply teachers was sought, with a Member querying whether the authority intended to hire temporary staff as previously the recruitment had taken place through agencies which did not offer a pension scheme or the teacher salary in full. Members were advised that the recruitment of supply teachers had been debated in full and extensively during the pandemic due to the substantial demand for cover work. Members were assured that Welsh Government was carrying out work in respect of this area and the Committee would be updated on the progress in the coming months.

The Chair requested an update from school leads and the Chief Education Officer was called on to facilitate the arrangements. The Chair's request was noted, and it was agreed that the Committee would benefit from a face-to-face discussion with head teachers.

Following consideration of the item, the Education Scrutiny Committee reviewed the attached document (Appendix 1) and discussed, challenged, and scrutinised the information contained within it.

9. CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT REPORT 2022-2027

Consideration was given to the report which presented a summary of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2027 to enable the governance process. The report also sought approval to submit the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2027 to Cabinet prior to its submission to Welsh Government.

The Education and Scrutiny Committee noted that the Childcare Act 2000 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations requires local authorities to prepare assessments of the sufficiency of childcare provision in their area and to keep these under review. It was noted that data had been collected over the Summer and Autumn in 2021 and analysed to write the assessment. The assessment report was subject to a 28-day public consultation and is required to be submitted to Welsh Government by September 22.

Reference was made to section 2.7 of the report, with a Member seeking further clarification on the commitment to extend childcare provision to 3 and 4 year-olds in part-time nursery to students in further education and higher education from September 2022, specifically the reasoning behind the delayed extension. It was advised that existing childcare offer was centred around working families, thus, both parents working and earning the equivalent of 16 hours at minimum wage per week which meant that students did not meet the eligibility criteria.

However, this was due to change with the recent commitment from Welsh Government to extend the provision. It was hoped that the provision would also extend to students undertaking vocational qualifications following the successful completion of a pilot scheme.

With the expansion of the Flying Start programme taking place from September 2022, a Member sought further information on what Phase 1 of the development scheme would entail. The Committee was advised that the expansion was due to roll out in stages as a result of the requirement to build up sufficient childcare places. Members were informed that Welsh Government were due to release information pertaining to Phase 2 of the programme in the Autumn period and it was hoped that all four elements of the scheme would expand and roll out to the New Tredegar area in September 2022.

Clarification on the eligibility criteria was sought. The Officer explained that the Flying Start programme was based on postcodes which were ranked using data from the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP). Essentially, the scheme was based on areas of deprivation and Members were advised that the areas were ranked according to concentration of 0-3-year-olds residing in income benefit households. For those residing in non-Flying Start areas, it was confirmed that speech, language, child development and parent support was available through the Families First and Flying Start funding scheme.

A query was raised in relation to the prioritisation of Lower Layer Super Output areas (LSOA) of deprivation. It was reiterated that regions were prioritized using data from the DWP and that the additional three LSOA's would be given the greatest priority. Although a number of additional postcodes, which had previously missed out, had now been included in the St James' ward. In terms of numbers, it was advised that an additional 171 children aged 0-3 would be included in the Flying Start programme from September 2022.

Clarification on Pontllynn was sought, with a Member querying its status in terms of LSOA's. The Committee was advised that the region ranked low in terms of the number of income benefit households. However, for many years it had been surrounded by districts which met the eligibility criteria for the Flying Start Scheme.

Members were updated on the work which was underway in respect of Idris Davies. It was hoped that a new provider would be secured, which would enable the authority to expand provision within the region over an extended period of time.

The Officer was asked to confirm whether there were any plans in place to gather the views of shift working parents in respect of the provision. The Committee was advised that Welsh Government had undertaken a nationwide parent survey which fed into the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, the survey gathered the views of parents in respect of shift work and flexible childcare arrangements transpired as a common theme. It was acknowledged that flexibility in terms of opening hours would result in challenges for the scheme due to the limitations surrounding opening hours. However, Members were assured that the authority was working on an appropriate balance, and it was hoped that the balance would meet the needs of all service users.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms voting and verbal confirmation this was agreed by the majority.

RESOLVED that the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Report 2022-2027 be considered and submitted to Cabinet for approval.

The meeting closed at 7.36 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 12th September 2022.

CHAIR



EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2022

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK
PROGRAMME**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE
SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report the Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Forward Work Programmes are essential to ensure that Scrutiny Committee agendas reflect the strategic issues facing the Council and other priorities raised by Members, the public or stakeholder.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Members consider any changes and agree the final forward work programme prior to publication.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The Education Scrutiny Committee forward work programme includes all reports that were identified at the scrutiny committee meeting on Tuesday 5th July 2022. The work programme outlines the reports planned for the period September 2022 until March 2023.

5.2 The forward Work Programme is made up of reports identified by officers and members. Members are asked to consider the work programme alongside the cabinet work programme and suggest any changes before it is published on the

council website. Scrutiny committee will review this work programme at every meeting going forward alongside any changes to the cabinet work programme or report requests.

5.3 The Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1, which presents the current status as at 22nd August 2022. The Cabinet Work Programme is attached at Appendix 2. A copy of the prioritisation flowchart is attached at appendix 3 to assist the scrutiny committee to determine what items should be added to the forward work programme.

5.4 **Conclusion**

The work programme is for consideration and amendment by the scrutiny committee prior to publication on the council website.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions are necessary.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 As this report is for information only an Integrated Impact Assessment is not necessary.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising as a result of this report.

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no specific personnel implications arising as a result of this report.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been included in this report.

11. **STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Mark Jacques, Scrutiny Officer jacqum@carphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/ Monitoring Officer
Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer,

Legal Services
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Jo Rao, Vice Chair Education Scrutiny Committee

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 2 Cabinet Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 3 Forward Work Programme Prioritisation Flowchart

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Forward Work Programme - Education

Date	Title	Key Issues	Author	Cabinet Member
12/09/22 17:30	Safeguarding Update report.		Cole, Keri;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
12/09/22 17:30	Trinity Fields update	To update members on the Expansion of Trinity Fields School	West, Andrea;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
12/09/22 17:30	Information Item - ALN Update Report.		Ellis, Sarah;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
12/09/22 17:30	Information Item - Revenue Budget Monitoring Reports for Education and Miscellaneous Finance (Period 3)		Southcombe, Jane;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
12/09/22 17:30	Information Item - Update on the Caerphilly Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values & Ethics (RVE)		Warren, Paul;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
19/10/22 17:30	Education strategy	To seek Cabinet approval for the Council's new Education Strategy	Warren, Paul;	Cllr. Andrews, Carol;
07/11/22 17:30				
16/01/23 17:30				
14/02/23 17:30				
28/03/23 17:30				

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Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
07/09/2022 13:00	Rapid Rehousing Strategy 2022	Rapid rehousing is based upon a systematic approach to understanding what housing is needed, how that housing is going to be funded developed and allocated to people who find themselves homeless. This approach, when properly applied, means the need for many forms of temporary accommodation will diminish and where it is needed, is for a shorter period than currently. CCBC’s strategy will outline how this will be achieved through various route and partnerships over the term of this 5 years strategy.	Nick Taylor-Williams	Cllr. Shayne Cook
07/09/2022 13:30	Review of Asylum dispersal and Afghan Relocation Scheme	To consider the findings of the review and agree a way forward.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Kathryn Peters, Kath Thomas	Cllr. Shayne Cook
21/09/2022 13:00	Trinity Fields update	To update members on the expansion of Trinity Fields School	Sue Richards, Andrea West	Cllr. Carol Andrews
21/09/2022 13:10	Car Parking Charges 2022	To update Cabinet on the outcome of the car parking scrutiny task and finish group and to seek decisions on future strategy for town centre car parking charges	Marcus Lloyd	Cllr. Julian Simmonds

Meeting date: **Report title:** **Key issue:** **Presenting Officers:** **Cabinet Member:**

21/09/2022 13:20	Cost of living Crisis	To provide Cabinet with an update with regard to work undertaken and future travel	Dave Street	Cllr. Carol Andrews
21/09/2022 13:30	Shared Prosperity fund	To update Cabinet on the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund as part of the UK Government’s Levelling Up programme following submission of the regional investment plan and to seek Cabinet approval of the Caerphilly local investment plan.	Rhian Kyte	Cllr. James Pritchard
21/09/2022 13:40	2021/22 Provisional Outturn Report	To provide Cabinet with details of the provisional revenue budget outturn for the 2021/22 financial year prior to the completion of the annual external audit of the accounts by Audit Wales.	Stephen Harris	Cllr. Eluned Stenner
21/09/2022 13:50	Bryn Carno, Rhymney Remediation Works	To update Members on a business case submitted to WG to undertake remedial works to address issues associated with failed external wall insulation to both Caerphilly Homes’ and private residential properties at Bryn Carno, Rhymney, and to seek approval for an HRA contribution towards the project should the business case be approved.	Nick Taylor-Williams	Cllr. Shayne Cook

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
21/09/2022 14:00	Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme	To make members aware of the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme, and officer views on potential sites within the county borough and to understand the possible financial implications for the authority and possible grant assistance with the scheme.	Nick Taylor-Williams	Cllr. Shayne Cook
05/10/2022 13:00	Outline Business Case for Cwm Ifor Solar Farm Proposal	To seek Cabinet approval to proceed with the planning application, initiate the consultation processes and to sign the option agreement and lease that sits behind the proposed Solar Farm development	Anna Lewis, Sue Richards, Allan Dallimore	Cllr. James Pritchard
05/10/2022 13:10	Agile Working Update	To receive an update on the Councils approach to Agile Working.	Lynne Donovan	Cllr. Nigel George
05/10/2022 13:20	Shaping the Policy on cash collection	To receive an update on the payment methods currently available to our residents and service users and to consider recommendations in respect of the future policy on cash payments.	Stephen Harris	Cllr. Eluned Stenner
05/10/2022 13:30	Authorisation of Officers in Public Protection	For Cabinet to note the introduction of new legislation relevant to the responsibilities of the Public Protection service and to approve additional authorisation so that Officers may carry out their duties.	Robert Hartshorn, Jacqui Morgan	Cllr. Philippa Leonard

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
05/10/2022 13:40	Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership	For Cabinet to note an update on the work of the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership, to endorse the latest Terms of Reference, and to approve the Cabinet Member as a voting representative on the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership.	Robert Hartshorn	Cllr. Philippa Leonard
19/10/2022 13:00	Workforce capacity and associated challenges	For members to consider the recruitment and retention challenges	Lynne Donovan	Cllr. Nigel George
19/10/2022 13:10	Bryn Community Engagement Proposal	To propose a terms of reference for a Community Group to be established.	Mark S Williams	Cllr. Philippa Leonard
19/10/2022 13:20	Annual Corporate Complaints Report	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the complaints dealt with under the Corporate Complaints policy for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 together with the outcomes and lessons learned.	Robert Tranter, Lisa Lane	Cllr. Nigel George
02/11/2022 13:00	Caerphilly Homes (Development) Forward Work Programme	To discuss the next set of sites that will be brought forward as part of the Caerphilly Homes development programme and Caerphilly Homes governance arrangements	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook

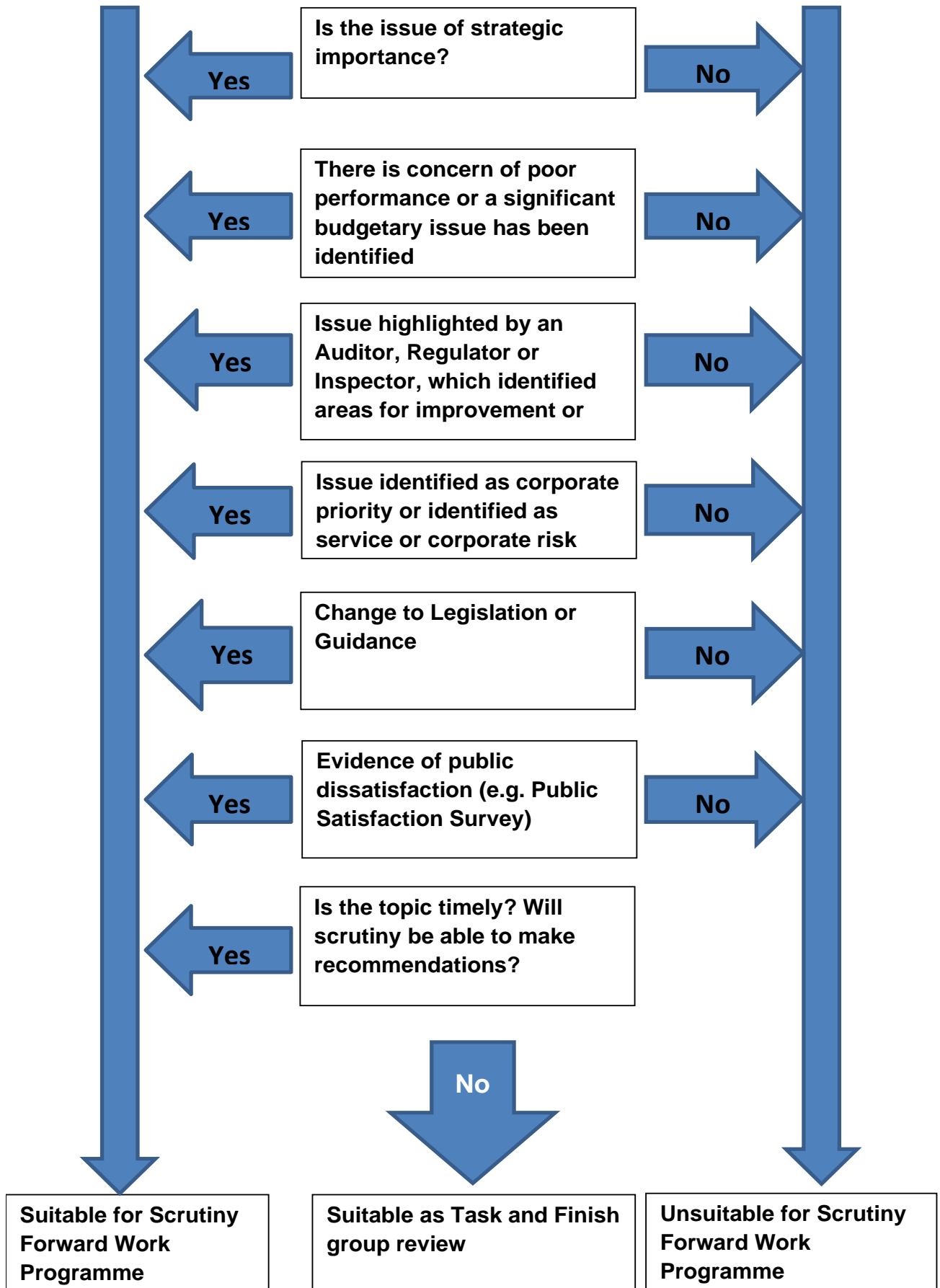
Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
02/11/2022 13:10	Low Cost Home Ownership (Decision)	The LCHO (Low Cost Home Ownership) report will document the formulation, implementation and the publication of a new policy which governs the process by which the Council will sell homes to people living and/or working in the borough wanting to access homeownership but cannot afford to do so without some form of public subsidy.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook
16/11/2022 13:00	Street lighting	Review of current street lighting part night lighting policy in view of increasing carbon reduction targets and the declared climate emergency.	Marcus Lloyd	Cllr. Julian Simmonds
16/11/2022 13:00	The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Ecosystem Resilience Duty	To consider and approve a report on the actions taken to help maintain and enhance biodiversity prior to publication in accordance with the biodiversity duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.	Robert Hartshorn, Philip Griffiths	Cllr. Chris Morgan
30/11/2022 13:00	Redevelopment of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site by Caerphilly Homes	For Cabinet to approve the contract, cost plan, design and environmental credentials of the scheme, along with continuation of the SCAPE framework agreement, social value plan and sales & marketing strategy.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
30/11/2022 13:10	Redevelopment of the former Ty Darran Care Home by Caerphilly Homes	For Cabinet to approve the contract, cost plan, procurement, design and environmental credentials of the scheme.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook
30/11/2022 13:20	Cyber Security Strategy	To recommend endorsement and implementation of the Strategy	Lucas, Liz, Ian Evans	Cllr. Nigel George
30/11/2022 13:30	Programme for Procurement	To extend the Council’s existing Programme for Procurement, which is due to expire in May 2023 for a period of up to 12 months to consider and where applicable incorporate aspects of the UK Procurement Bill and Social Partnership & Public Procurement (Wales) Bill in the Council’s new Procurement Strategy (the new Procurement Strategy will replace the existing Programme for Procurement).	Liz Lucas, Ian Evans	Cllr. Nigel George
14/12/2022 13:00	Waste Strategy Proposals	Consideration of options to achieve compliance with Welsh Government statutory recycling targets and other waste service improvements.	Mark S Williams, Marcus Lloyd	Cllr. Chris Morgan

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
14/12/2022 13:10	Local Housing Market Assessment	The Delivery Plan sits underneath the Local housing Strategy which was approved in October 2021. It is designed to be a collaborative document that contains a number of key actions designed to take forward the objectives of the strategy.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook
14/12/2022 13:20	Updated Welsh Government Prospectus (Decision)	Cabinet are asked to approve the principle of residential development on identified sites (subject to viability) and acquisition policy, the principle of package deals and new governance arrangements to underpin the development programme.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook
14/12/2022 13:30	Empty Property Grant Approval (Decision)	The new Welsh Government National Empty Property Grant Programme will launch in September 22 and ask for bids from LAs to issue grants up to a Max of £25K to owner occupiers to bring empty properties back into use. Caerphilly Homes will administer the grant for Caerphilly with an expectation that in years 2 and 3 of the 3 year programme, there will be a 35% contribution from each participating LA. The grant will be awarded on a first come first served basis.	Nick Taylor-Williams, Jane Roberts-Waite	Cllr. Shayne Cook

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Presenting Officers:	Cabinet Member:
14/12/2022 13:00	HRA Charges (Rent Increase) (Dec)	Members to agree the level of rent increase for council tenants effective from April 2023	Nick Taylor-Williams, Lesley Allen	Cllr. Shayne Cook

Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme Prioritisation



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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: SAFEGUARDING

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members regarding safeguarding developments in 2021/2022.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Safeguarding children and young people is a key statutory duty of the Council and is embodied in the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 & Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019).

2.2 The Local Authority has a responsibility to promote a culture of safeguarding by ensuring that its range of statutory responsibilities and non-statutory responsibilities are met. The LA works in partnership with Children's services and EAS and can demonstrate that safeguarding is everybody's business through thorough review of safeguarding practice at all levels within the Council.

2.3 The Local Authority (LA) has clear policies and procedures linked to safeguarding children in education services, which are reviewed and updated when required. Safeguarding underpins priorities within the Directorate Plan (2018 – 2023) and in all related plans, is reflected in Cabinet commitments and reflects the introduction of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) within its principles and practices.

2.4 The LA works in partnership with Children's Services, Health, Police, education providers, HR, parents/carers and other partners to ensure that there is a robust multi agency approach towards safeguarding arrangements.

2.5 The LA has a pivotal role in safeguarding activities at a national, regional and local level for example the National Safeguarding in Education Group (SEG), the regional South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) SEG, in conjunction with Caerphilly Local Safeguarding Network (LSN) and Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) groups. This ensures that policy and practice are well informed.

- 2.6 Education continues to be an integral part of the multi-agency Safeguarding Hub. Schools/education settings continue to take part in strategy discussions to share pertinent information and contribute to the multi-agency safety planning for children who are deemed vulnerable or 'at risk'.
- 2.7 The LA has a clear system of self-evaluation in relation to safeguarding (linked to ESTYN guidance and broader self-evaluation, such as the Corporate and Education Directorate Safeguarding Self Evaluation documents. This informs developments in processes and practice.
- 2.8 The LA Safeguarding Policy for schools/education settings directly reflects the 'Keeping Learners Safe' Circular 270/2021 & Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019).
- 2.9 Post COVID-19, the LA continues to adopt the Welsh Government guidance and expectations in relation to all pupils, specifically supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged learners in the aftermath of the pandemic. Schools and Education settings are slowly adapting and reverting to normality, implementing risk assessments where necessary and in line with any updated guidance.
- 2.10 Allegations against professionals are managed robustly with engagement from education, social services, HR and other relevant professionals.
- 2.11 The LA provides robust training and support to schools/education settings, LEI & Governors. The LA has revised the model of training for schools recognising the need to ensure that there is a sustainable model in place that will enhance the capacity for schools to effectively manage safeguarding issues.
- 2.12 There are robust monitoring arrangements in place with regards to the scrutiny of restricted physical interventions. This ensures that the LA exercises its duty of care in relation to pupils and staff members.
- 2.13 Operation Encompass alerts from Police are shared with schools daily in order that the wellbeing of learners is adequately supported in schools following a domestic incident. Fortnightly updates resulting from Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee (MARAC) meetings are also provided to schools to strengthen this process and assist with risk management and safety planning. This aligns with the VAWDASV National Framework.
- 2.14 There are robust systems in place regarding the recording and monitoring of discriminatory incidents. Guidance is updated to reflect any new categories as they are defined. The LA has been recognised by Stonewall as developing good practice in this area.
- 2.15 The LA has a good system of audit for schools and maintained child care settings to audit their responses to safeguarding responsibilities. Additional checks are built into this process to ensure that the audits themselves are robust, which now align with the 'Estyn' model of audit and scrutiny. Any actions arising from the audits are undertaken and checked by managers.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are requested to note the contents of the report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Safeguarding is a priority and it is important that Members are apprised of relevant work undertaken in this area.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Safeguarding children and young people is a key statutory duty of the Council and is embodied in the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. Processes and procedures are identified within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (previously All Wales Child Protection Procedures).
- 5.2 The LA has a clear Corporate Policy for Safeguarding outlining the intention of the council in relation to safeguarding. As part of the Council's commitment to safeguarding, we work proactively with our partners under the auspices of the Gwent Safeguarding Board to ensure that statutory guidance is followed, awareness and good practice is promoted and the workforce practices safely and effectively
- 5.3 Safeguarding is a priority in the Education and Corporate Services Directorate and is central to priorities in the Education Plan for 2018 – 2023.
- 5.4 Safeguarding runs as a theme through the Education Directorate Service Improvement Plan which is reviewed annually. This includes a review of roles and responsibilities linked to the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act 2018 and the associated changes to the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 Part 4.
- 5.5 The LA has a clear definition of safeguarding linked to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and clearly defined responsibilities as outlined in the Corporate Policy including areas such as Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDA&SV) and Counter-terrorism and risk of radicalisation (Prevent).
- 5.6 The LA makes effective contributions to the regional Gwent Safeguarding Board Subgroups, CSA National Action Plan, as well as Corporate Safeguarding Board, Local Safeguarding Network and the Designated Safeguarding Officer practice development group.
- 5.7 The LA have contributed to a number of revised protocols for emerging broader safeguarding issues, such as the Gwent wide Child Exploitation Toolkit (replaces the SERAF scoring), are working closely with Stonewall/Umbrella regarding the policy around LGBTQ.
- 5.8 Each of the LAs across South East Wales Consortia (SEWC) is represented at the National Safeguarding Education Group (SEG). Engagement in this group facilitates regional and local developments. The SEWC SEG meets to promote consistency, share good practice and contribute to national consultations.
- 5.9 There is excellent partnership working across Education, HR, Children's Services and other key stakeholders in safeguarding to ensure that there is a robust approach towards safeguarding arrangements. There is on-going representation from education in the broader context, in relation to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee meeting (MARAC), Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting (MASE), Child Practice Review's (CPR'), Procedural Response to Unexpected Deaths In Childhood (PRUDIC) and Operation Encompass Task & Finish Group.

- 5.10 Education is an integral part to the new multi-agency Safeguarding Hub, which sits within IAA. Schools/education settings are required to take part in strategy discussions to share pertinent information and contribute to the timely multi-agency safety planning. Feedback from management within IAA and school representatives suggests that education participation within this process has been pivotal in this approach when risk assessing and planning a response to school age children when a safeguarding report is made. To ensure a consistent approach between key Gwent partner agencies, representation is made by Education Safeguarding at the bi-monthly West Delivery Group meetings, jointly chaired by Social Services and Gwent Police.
- 5.11 Designated managers (Lead for Inclusion and ALN and Children's Safeguarding Service Manager) work closely together to ensure that there is consistency across the services in terms of advice, support, training and challenge. The managers also fulfil an auditing role ensuring an additional layer of evaluation and challenge where necessary, e.g. sampling school audits, monitoring child protection referrals and practitioner concerns.
- 5.12 The LA provides effective advice regarding individual needs via the Information, Assistance and Advice Team (IAA), Child Protection Coordinator, Lead for Safeguarding in Education, Education Safeguarding Coordinator, and HR (where appropriate). The role of the Education Safeguarding Coordinator will continue to ensure there is an appropriate level of ongoing support and guidance to schools, LEI and Youth Services in relation to safeguarding and provide challenge where necessary. The additional appointment of a new Safeguarding Officer will seek to strengthen existing safeguarding process and assist in the development of new safeguarding initiatives. The CLA Co-ordinator will ensure there is clear communication with all settings regarding improving outcomes for looked after children.
- 5.13 The LA has a clear Safeguarding Children in Schools/Education Settings Policy, adopted by all schools/settings in the Borough; this is currently under review and will be circulated in readiness for the new academic year in September. This directly reflects 'Keeping Learners Safe' Circular 270/2021.
- 5.14 The local authority manages its responsibilities for safe recruitment through pre-employment checks for local authority staff, and for all school staff (including any directly recruited and paid through the school). The Safer Recruitment Policy (agreed October 2020) places greater emphasis on safeguarding responsibilities for recruiting officers. The Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Policy was ratified by Cabinet in October 2020, referencing DBS checks for Governors and volunteers. Education Safeguarding will collaborate with HR colleagues to promote and deliver training to schools, setting and LEI staff around Safer Recruitment so all education staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities. There will also be awareness raising sessions arranged through Procurement around the new safeguarding protocols for contractors/suppliers who may come into contact with children in our learning environments.
- 5.15 The LA has a robust process of self-evaluation and specifically follows the Estyn framework for self-evaluation of safeguarding within education. Schools are required to submit an up to date SER to the LA as part of their routine 3 yearly safeguarding Audit. For those schools/settings who are not due for audit, the LA will request a copy of their SER on an annual dip sample basis. There is also a Corporate Safeguarding assessment tool and associated action plan. The LA's contribution to

this reflects all education service areas development, identified within the Education Directorate self-evaluation. The Corporate safeguarding self- assessment was completed in May 2022.

- 5.16 Post pandemic, all learners continue to be supported by a range of education service areas, with 'wellbeing' remaining a focus.
- 5.17 Allegations against professionals are managed robustly with engagement from Education, Social Services, HR and other relevant professionals. Processes and decision making are reviewed on a half termly basis, which informs the evaluation of thematic trends and learning outcomes. Following allegations schools are supported by the LA to ensure appropriate risk management plans are in place and that disciplinary investigations are conducted robustly. Education Safeguarding also support with bespoke training and reflective practice sessions to improve outcomes and learning. Commissioned providers or agencies are also provided, with pre-meetings held to establish clear guidance and terms of reference regarding the expectation of employer investigations.
- 5.18 Working with partners in Social Services, training materials have been revised and a '*train the trainer*' model for Heads/DSP's in schools and education settings have been implemented since January 2020. The LA has recognised the need to review the method of delivery to ensure that there is a sustainable model in place that will enhance the capacity for schools to effectively manage safeguarding issues. School/settings are requested to update the LA when whole school training has then been delivered so accurate records can be kept and monitored.
- 5.19 Robust & bespoke Tier 2 equivalent Safeguarding training is delivered to all Learning Education and Inclusions staff, teaching and non-teaching staff, governors and other partners. All schools/settings are up to date with their safeguarding training currently; this is delivered to Heads/DSP's at least 2-3 months in advance of their three-year rolling due date. There is a continued commitment to ensure all schools/education settings/LEI/Youth Services staff are up to date with Corporate/Government recommended/mandatory training framework.
- 5.20 The Education Safeguarding Coordinator delivered specific DSP training in July 2021, which is aligned with SEG/other Local Authorities, so this can be rolled out in addition to the Level 2 equivalent Safeguarding training. This will be aimed at school's SLT members to enhance their knowledge of local/regional guidance/legislation and wider safeguarding issues. This will continue to be developed, to include a hybrid model of training modules and workshops in a blended learning approach.
- 5.21 Within the broad remit of safeguarding there are several key areas of focus such as Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDA&SV) and Counter-terrorism and risk of radicalisation (Prevent). Schools/education setting staff are encouraged to complete the mandatory VAWDASV Level 1 training and front facing staff will complete Level 2 Ask & Act live virtual training sessions. PREVENT online training sessions have also been provided to education staff. Education is represented at strategic groups such as the Whole School Approach to VAWDASV & Operation Encompass Task & Finish Group to ensure that senior managers are well informed of the LA's responsibilities and that information is cascaded to all staff. The safeguarding policy for schools also reflects this key information.
- 5.22 A system has been developed in collaboration with EAS for delivering safeguarding training to school Governors. Education Safeguarding Coordinator will provide dates

in advance for the Governors annual schedule to deliver safeguarding training to Governing Body 2 x annually via the Governor Network and 3 x annually to Designated Governors.

- 5.23 The National Safeguarding Training Framework is due out in November 2022 and training will be reviewed to ensure it is compliant with the expectations of the framework
- 5.24 Evaluations are undertaken following each training; evaluation forms are received by Education Safeguarding to record/evaluate the views of those attending. Evaluation forms received indicated that the objectives, usefulness, standard and use of anti-discriminatory practice by the trainer were in the range of 'excellent' or 'completely met'.
- 5.25 Learning Education and Inclusion staff, Head Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSP) are regularly updated by the Education Safeguarding Coordinator of relevant documentation, training resources and available safeguarding courses e.g. Stop it Now, County Lines, Human Trafficking, Safety On-line, Hwb on-line courses and any new local/national guidance/legislation. All schools/settings are aware that further information/courses can be accessed via the Gwent Safeguarding Board.
- 5.26 There is a robust system for recording and monitoring physical interventions. The LA has adopted the Team Teach model of de-escalation and restricted physical intervention. There is an effective process for monitoring incidents of physical intervention and restraint in schools/settings. There are clear criteria to trigger follow up visits with schools. Physical interventions are received by Education Safeguarding within 24 hours of the intervention taking place; these are subsequently reviewed on a weekly basis by Education Safeguarding & CLA Coordinators (both Team Teach trained) to ensure the correct Team Teach approaches are used and any safeguarding concerns are identified/followed up. Schools are regularly contacted for clarity and offered guidance/advice or bespoke reflective sessions from a safeguarding or Team Teach perspective. Monthly meetings with the Lead for Inclusion & ALN support the process and provide an oversight of the learning/outcomes of the weekly meetings as an additional layer of scrutiny. The Use of Physical Intervention and Reasonable Force to Restrain Pupils Policy, along with the Time Out Policy are currently being reviewed and will be ready for schools/setting to adopt by the new Autumn term in September 2022. A central database is kept of school/setting staff's Team Teach training dates, with reminders sent when this is due for renewal.
- 5.27 In response to Everyone Invited, it is the LA's expectation that all schools and education settings in Caerphilly should be actively reviewing the culture and processes they have in place to safeguard learners, including fostering a culture where incidents of sexual harassment and abuse are not normalised and learners are encouraged to, and feel confident in, reporting incidents. In relation to specific schools, education safeguarding has been working directly with those schools to undertake an earlier audit, reviewing policies, safeguarding self-evaluation and safeguarding practices more broadly. There is a range of current Guidance and training resources, which has been made available to schools and education settings on issues relating to peer sexual harassment and abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour which are routinely promoted and distributed by education safeguarding; schools are also provided with advice on practical tools to prevent and respond to instances of peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual

behaviour taking place both inside and out of the settings, including on-line and digital abuse.

- 5.28 As a result of Estyn's thematic review Autumn 2021, a number of recommendations were made to consider the prevalence of peer-on-peer sexual harassment and how schools' safeguarding culture encourages and empowers pupils to keep safe, stand up to their peers and report all forms of sexual harassment. The LA leads meet on a regular basis to develop a local education action plan in relation to Peer on Peer Sexual Harassment/ Harmful Sexual Behaviours, bringing together support from education safeguarding, healthy schools and the wellbeing team to identify, implement and monitor 'sexually motivated behaviour' as a specific type of behaviour through school bullying / discriminatory recording and reporting procedures.
- 5.29 In partnership with Gwent Police, the LA has engaged with Operation Encompass since 2019, regularly attending quarterly Task & Finish Groups. The LA has developed a robust process of ensuring that schools receive daily information regarding incidents of domestic abuse so that they are able to fully support the needs of their learners in a safe environment; feedback continue to indicate that this is welcomed by schools and enables them to identify potentially vulnerable pupils. The LA contributes to the regional group to review current practice and identify areas for future development. The performance data available to the LA will be used to inform local developments. An additional layer of audit will be built into this process so there are 2 x annual check-ins with schools/settings to gather information re: impact and outcomes for pupils subject to an Operation Encompass alert.
- 5.30 There is a robust system for recording and monitoring a range of discriminatory incidents requiring schools to submit returns to the LA on a termly basis which are scrutinised by LA officers. This is updated with any additional characteristics linked to discrimination as required. Schools are offered support and guidance as required.
- 5.31 The LA has a good system of audit for schools and maintained child care settings to examine their responses to safeguarding responsibilities. This aligns with the 'Keeping Learners Safe', using the Estyn model of audit. Additional checks are built into this process to ensure that the audits themselves are robust. The LA rates audits using a traffic light system and undertakes follow up actions with schools as required. Any actions arising from the audits are undertaken and checked by managers. As an example between 01.04.21 – 31.03.22:
- 45 schools/settings have been audited
 - 43 schools/setting were rated green across all aspects of the audit
 - 1 school/setting had one amber action relating which was rectified immediately
 - 1 school/setting had two individual actions rated red which were addressed and followed up to check the LA were satisfied. This involved:
 - meeting with the Head, lead for safeguarding and safeguarding coordinator following the audit to discuss the concerns/areas for improvement
 - devising an action plan
 - following up actions
 - undertaking a follow-up audit ensuring actions were completed
- 5.32 **Conclusion**
Safeguarding underpins all priorities within the LA. The LA contributes to national and regional groups to ensure up to date practice across the Education Directorate

and schools. There are several areas of focus for the work of education safeguarding including advice and support, training, audit, and support for professional concerns.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 In considering the recommendations the following assumptions have been made:

- Safeguarding children and young people is a key statutory duty of the Council and as such must be reported to scrutiny to ensure that members are kept informed.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 This report provides information and therefore an integrated impact assessment has not be completed at this time.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees based on consultations undertaken to date.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Social Services and Wellbeing Act
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Education (Wales) Act 2014
Education Act 1996 - Equality Act 2010
Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act 2018

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Consultees: Christina HARRY, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services and Housing
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Jo Rao, Vice Chair Education Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2022

**SUBJECT: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME –
TRINITY FIELDS SCHOOL EXPANSION UPDATE REPORT**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE
SERVICES**



1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Scrutiny Members on a proposed amendment to the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme Band B proposal for the expansion of Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre.
- 1.2 The proposal seeks to amend the previously endorsed decision of Cabinet on the 7th April 2021 to expand the school on to the Council owned sports pitch adjacent to the existing school site.
- 1.3 A report will be considered by Cabinet on the 21st September 2022 and as key consultees, the Scrutiny Committees views are sought on the amended plans.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The decision taken by Cabinet on the 7th April 2021 approved the expansion of Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre on to the Council owned sports pitch adjacent to the School and set aside circa £300k to create an alternative pitch and enhance the spectator and changing facilities at the nearby Sue Noake Leisure Centre.
- 2.2 The proposed expansion of the school formed part of the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Strategic Outline Plan and would enable the school to continue to provide first class learning facilities for existing learners as well as creating 80 additional places at the school to manage with future demand.
- 2.3 Over the years the school has established an excellent reputation as a provider of education to our most vulnerable learners, many of whom have a wide range of learning difficulties and physical and medical needs. A 2019 Estyn Inspection awarded the school five 'Excellent' judgements with inspectors making a number of very positive comments about the school, its leadership and its inclusivity.

- 2.4 As the Schools reputation has grown, so too have the number of pupils on roll. The school and the LA are already employing a number of strategies to cope with this additional demand. Without additional capacity there is a risk that vulnerable children will not have their needs met locally and out of county provision would be required. There is also a risk that placements can be directed by Tribunal for children within or outside the locality.
- 2.5 The decision taken by Cabinet in April was taken in the face of significant community opposition to the scheme. The opposition was largely from members of the Rugby Club that are the main user of the sports pitch and a group established to save Green Spaces within Ystrad Mynach. The proposal was placed under further pressure as a result of an untimely series of sewage breaches at the Sue Noake Leisure Centre, close to the location of the proposed new pitch.
- 2.6 The Council recognised that the progression of the scheme to expand Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre relied heavily on Welsh Water resolving the sewage issues at Sue Noake Leisure Centre and so placed the expansion on hold in June 2021 in lieu of remedial action. Work has continued since to resolve those issues and Welsh Water have been very supportive in this regard, undertaking surveys, carrying out desilting works and clean ups on extended sections of the sewer.
- 2.7 That aside, a year has now been lost in this crucial development and the school is facing further demand for places in September. The pressure to provide additional places and facilities at the school has never been more acute and a proposal now needs to progress at pace.
- 2.8 On this basis, a compromise solution that enables the additional places to be provided in the most time efficient manner was sought with Officers revisiting the original expansion proposal, with a view to developing some innovative alternatives that did not involve the loss of the sports pitch. A suggestion was identified that seeks to develop a two storey extension on part of the Schools Car Park, which would create an additional ten classrooms and some additional facilities (see 5.6).
- 2.9 However there are a number of features that have been asked for by learners and would have been available to the wider community that will not be possible should the school be expanded in this manner. These are set out in bold text in table 5.6. This proposal is also likely to require the development of an additional Special School as part of the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning Band C proposals although this will of course require approval at a future point.
- 2.10 While the designs continue to be refined, the proposal has received unanimous support from the School and its Governing Body and Welsh Government have also verified that no further consultation for this proposal would be required. Being able to provide the places without losing the sports pitch is also considered likely to be favourably received by the Community.
- 2.11 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the revised proposals to expand Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre and support a recommendation to Cabinet to proceed on this basis.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Prior to a report being presented to Cabinet, Scrutiny Members are asked to: -

- a) Consider and scrutinise the information contained in the Report
- b) Endorse the recommendation to Cabinet to expand Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre via a two storey extension on part of the School Car Park
- c) To ask officers to investigate a longer term option to create a 2nd Special School in the Borough under Band C of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise an amended proposal to expand the Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre as part of its Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme
- 4.2 To seek Member endorsement on the recommendations to Cabinet outlined in 3.1 prior to Cabinet consideration.
- 4.3 To assist the Council in discharging its duties in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Alternative Configuration for Build

- 5.2 The Council recognises that there are many routes to realising transformational change and investment in key projects is important in order to meet the strategic vision of the Band B programme.
- 5.3 As referenced in the Summary section above, there are a number of external factors that reduced the chances of the successful delivery of the original scheme in a timely manner. Factors such as community opposition, the sewage breaches associated with the development of a new pitch at Sue Noake and the ever increasing demand for pupils to attend the school, have all contributed to the need for an alternative configuration for the expansion of the school to be developed.
- 5.4 The original proposed location and layout to expand the school onto the adjacent Trinity 1 pitch was planned on a single storey with additional classroom places, a wide range of additional indoor and outdoor facilities for the pupils as well as enhanced community provision (see 5.6).
- 5.5 The potential alternative configuration now proposed is a two storey extension that makes use of part of the existing car park. It should be noted, however, that whilst the alternative configuration for the build will still deliver an expansion of the school, a number of features that were asked for by learners and would have been available to the wider community, will not now be possible.

5.6 When comparing the two options, the table below outlines the differences between the two proposals:

Original Option	Alternative Configuration for Build
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new single storey extension onto the adjacent pitch • Opportunity for further expansion on site given size of area and potential for Two-Storey in future or build onto Carpark area • 80 additional places <p>New facilities in Single-Storey extension to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 x classrooms with changing facilities and toilets • Hydro-therapy Pool and changing facilities • Hall • Rebound/Therapy room • Extended seating for Café Oren • 9 x multi-use areas • Family Room • 2 x Sensory Rooms • Spaces for Holistic services – Social Services, Health • 1 x Soft play • Staff Room, offices • Internal Courtyard with Sensory Garden, Play and animal area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new two storey extension within the curtilage of the current school • No further opportunity for expansion on site after this development has been undertaken • 80 additional places <p>New facilities in Two-Storey extension to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 classrooms (although requires reconfiguration of existing school to accommodate 2 of these) • No additional Pool, but upgrade to the existing pool • No additional Hall • No designated Rebound/Therapy room • Limited additional seating for Café Oren • 6 x multi-use areas Usage to be determined by the school • No designated Family Room • Significant Reduction in space for Holistic services • 1 x Soft play • Staff Room, offices and Training area on first floor • Outdoor area with no sensory garden or animal area • Access to adjacent sports pitch during the day • Lift <p>*Note: Bold indicates differences in Facilities through new configuration</p>

The school to be given access to the adjacent sports pitch during the school day to compensate for the loss of outdoor facilities as a result of the reconfiguration of the proposed extension.

5.7 A decision will also be sought from Cabinet at a future point on how to treat the previously set aside £300k for an additional pitch and upgrade to facilities at the Sue Noake Leisure Centre. Members will be aware that this funding was set aside to provide a mitigation for the loss of the pitch at Trinity 1. As this pitch will no longer be required to support the expansion of the school Cabinet may be minded to invest this elsewhere.

5.8 The alternative configuration option in this report would not require any further Statutory Consultation as prescribed under the School Organisation Code 2018. However, the proposal has limited potential for further development and a longer term option would therefore need to be investigated to create a 2nd Special School in the Borough under Band C of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme. This would come with an element of risk as any future proposals would require separate Welsh Government approval, its own consultation process and at present a site for a new build has not been identified.

5.9 It is anticipated that the alternative option would be deliverable by September 2024 albeit this builds in very little contingency.

5.10 **Conclusion**

Members are asked to consider the contents of this report and the potential for an alternative reconfiguration of the build to deliver the proposal for the expansion of the existing Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre, and to endorse the recommendation to Cabinet to progress to planning and full business case submission based on this alternative way forward.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 That the scheme is deliverable within the allocated budget.

6.2 That the scheme will achieve statutory approvals.

6.3 That the alternative scheme will be delivered by September 2024.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment and Post consultation Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for this proposal was undertaken alongside the original Consultation processes forming part of the outline consultation pack which are both published on the Council's website.

7.2 The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come to light since the final determination was made and to reflect consideration of environmental factors which has resulted in the alternative option being presented.

[Link to Updated IIA \(July 2022\)](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Welsh Government and Members have previously agreed in principle to earmark a total of £12,588,573 for the Trinity Fields School expansion. The Authority's contribution within this sum is £3,147,143.

8.2 Currently market forces are indicating a significant inflationary increase within the construction sector. This is being kept under close review but the current projected costs for the 21st Century Schools Programme will be subject to change. Members will be updated further as matters progress.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This will be dependent on specific proposals and will be considered as part of the process.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in this version of the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government)
School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

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Background Papers:

None