



EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER 2020 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

E. M. Aldworth, P. J. Bevan, A. Collis, C. Cuss, W. David, A. Farina-Childs, D. Havard,
M. P. James, B. Miles, J. E. Roberts

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

Together with:

Officers: R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), A. West (21st Century Schools Manager), J. Lougher (Sport & Leisure Development Manager), E. Pryce (Education Achievement Service), J. Williams (Assistant Director Adult Services), M. Williams (Interim Head of Property Services), S. Ellis (Lead for Inclusion and ALN), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

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

Also in Attendance:

Mr O. Francis (Director of Turley Planning Consultancy representing Penallta RFC and Save Ystrad Green Spaces Group), Mr. M. Cook (Chair of Governors at Trinity Fields School)

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms J. Gale, D. T. Hardacre, Mrs G. D. Oliver and J. Simmonds. Apologies were also received from Mr D. Davies (Caerphilly Governors Association).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 22ND SEPTEMBER 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday the 22nd September 2020 (minute nos 1- 9) 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

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the reports planned for the period November 2020 to May 2021 and included all reports that were identified at the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday 22nd September 2020. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

The Scrutiny Officer outlined proposed changes to the Forward Work Programme. Members were advised of additional reports to be added to the Forward Work Programme for the meetings to be held on 11th January 2021 and 22nd February 2021. It was also proposed that the Phase 2 21st Century Schools Proposal report scheduled on the Forward Work Programme for 11th January 2021 be moved to 22nd March 2021.

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

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

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. OUTCOMES 2019-2020: FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2, KEY STAGE 3, KEY STAGE 4 AND KEY STAGE 5.

Consideration was given to the report which informed Members of Welsh Government school performance reporting arrangements for 2019-2020. The report also provided Members with an overview of national outcomes as context and provided anonymised local data where available.

Members were made aware of the significant changes to the way data was collected. In response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the Welsh Government cancelled all

statutory data collections that would have been due to take place in Summer 2020. It was highlighted that no end of key stage data was submitted, therefore there is no data available for this report for FP through to key stage 3. Members were advised that outcomes are only available for key stage 4 and key stage 5 and in line with agreements between each LA and headteachers, made prior to the collection of the data, these should not be used for school accountability purposes.

The content of the scrutiny report provided a contextual view of anonymised school outcomes, rather than analysed performance at Local Authority (LA) or individual level. Members were advised that Welsh Government do not intend to provide any updates or checking of this data because there is no process to do so.

Points of clarification were requested on various aspects of the report and Officers responded to the points raised. In response to a query Members were advised that, in terms of measuring in 2021, the Minister has made announcements but there is a Headteachers Strategy Group examining how the data will look in 2021, which will be in school assessments but in a much more managed way. It was emphasised that, moving forward, the important information to consider is the information that emerges from the schools causing concern process. The Chief Education Officer advised Members that a Schools Causing Concern report is scheduled for the summer term. It was highlighted that whilst Estyn have suspended their activity, they have not suspended revisits to schools which are in follow up categories. Those schools will be identified from local intelligence and work with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and will continue to be supported to improve.

Having fully considered the report, the Education Scrutiny Committee noted the contents.

7. 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION BAND B PROGRAMME - CONSULTATION REPORTS.

Consideration was given to the report which updated the Scrutiny Committee in relation to the 21st Century Schools Band B proposals in respect of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon and Trinity Fields School. Members were asked to consider the information contained in both consultation reports and endorse the recommendations to Cabinet to proceed to Statutory Notice in relation to both proposals.

The Chair agreed to a request from two external contributors to be allowed to speak to the Scrutiny Committee in relation to the proposal for Trinity Fields School. Mr Owen Francis, Director of Turley Planning Consultancy representing Penallta RFC and the Save Ystrad Green Spaces Group, addressed the Scrutiny Committee to object to the proposal. He advised that he was objecting to the proposal because the preferred delivery option would result in the repurposing of a pay-to-use rugby pitch that was used by Penallta RFC. The pitch is referred to as Trinity 1 in Appendix 1 of the report. Mr Francis claimed that input from his clients had not been fully represented in the Consultation Report and he raised, in particular, an objection from Sport Wales that had not been addressed. He suggested that a decision on the proposal should be deferred so that options could be fully assessed. Mr Mike Cook, Chair of Governors at Trinity Fields School, advised Members that Trinity Fields was a very successful school and that this had been recognised in a recent Estyn report. Members heard how the proposed expansion would create an additional 80 places for children and that currently there was no more space available. Mr Cook advised Members that the proposal would create improved facilities for children with special needs and their families. Mr Cook also outlined how the proposal would allow essential services to be delivered locally and that community use could be further accommodated to that already in existence.

The 21st Century Schools Manager delivered a presentation with regards to the Trinity Fields School proposal. As part of the presentation it was highlighted that the process being followed is a Statutory Process prescribed in the Welsh Government's (WG) School Organisation Code 2018. The code sets out the policy context, general principles and factors that the Council must

follow when bringing forward proposals to reconfigure school provision. It was emphasised that there are separate statutory processes in relation to planning which would be led by the Property Services Department. Members were advised that the consultation process is one stage of a larger process and the steps involved were outlined in detail. The consultation exercise carried out between September/October was to gain the views of the prescribed consultee cohort and support Cabinet in considering the proposal. In addition, as a matter of courtesy Penallta RFC and Sports Wales were advised of the proposal.

Points of clarification were requested on various aspects of the report and Officers responded to the points raised. During the course of the ensuing debate, one Member queried why there were no responses for the Trinity Fields School proposal received in Welsh during the Consultation Process and questioned if there was equal access for Welsh speakers. The 21st Century Schools Manager advised that all documents were produced bilingually and that a Welsh Language Equality Impact Assessment had also been carried out in the planning stages of the consultation.

Concerns were raised as to how repurposing a rugby pitch was consistent with the Council's commitment to tackle obesity at a local level. The 21st Century Schools Manager advised that the Council is currently working with Penallta RFC to provide an alternative replacement pay-as-you-use facility, off site and within convenient access by foot (0.5 miles / 10 minute walk), consisting of one enhanced existing pitch and an additional pitch to mitigate the loss of Trinity 1. A Member queried the term 'community usage', informing that junior rugby teams could not use the Centre of Sporting Excellence because priority was given to senior and professional rugby teams. The Sport and Leisure Development Manager outlined that from 5pm the centre was for community use only, he advised that partners used the facility during the day and that this was an important source of revenue.

Members heard how children are kept at the centre of all proposals. Through robust assessment and the latest data analysis, this enhanced facility would enable the Authority to discharge its duties under the current and new ALN Act and in conjunction with the wider hub and spoke model deployed in Caerphilly would ensure a sustainable site at Trinity Fields for the future. The Chair suggested that areas at neighbouring sites such as Ystrad Mynach Primary School could also be considered as part of the mitigation for the loss of Trinity 1. Officers agreed that other nearby green sites owned by the Council could be considered as options to further increase the provision available to the community in Ystrad Mynach.

Following consideration of the report, in relation to Trinity Fields School, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of a roll call voting process this was agreed by the majority.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Education Scrutiny Committee endorsed the recommendation to proceed to Statutory Notice in relation to the Trinity Fields School proposal.

Following a presentation from the 21st Century Schools Manager with regards to the Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon proposal, points of clarification were requested on various aspects of the report and Officers responded to the points raised. One Member asked about current provision of Special Resource Base (SRB) education in the Welsh language. The Lead for Inclusion and ALN advised Members that there was SRB education in Welsh at Primary Level for children with complex needs and that the proposal would allow the Council to enhance this provision and meet the requirements set out in the ALN Act. Concerns were raised regarding a feasibility report by the NRW which highlighted a flood plain at the site in Cwmcarn. The Client Manager with Property Services advised that there were no concerns as the flood plain is on the lower football pitch and did not affect the school site, but that it would be investigated in further detail as part of the planning process.

Following consideration of the report, in relation to Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of a roll call voting process this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Education Scrutiny Committee endorsed the recommendation to proceed to Statutory Notice in relation to the Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon proposal.

The meeting closed at 8:20pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2021 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR