



## EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 AT 5.30 P.M.

#### PRESENT:

Councillor T. Parry - Chair

#### Councillors:

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

#### Cabinet Members:

Councillor C. Andrews (Education and Communities).

#### Together with:

Officers: R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement), P. O'Neill (Youth Service Manager), S. Mutch (Early Years Manager) A. West (21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

#### Also present:

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

#### Also in Attendance:

L. Davies (Chair, Youth Forum).

## 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 M.P. James and J. Rao (Vice Chair), together with Mrs P. Ireland (NEU).

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

## **3. MINUTES – 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 be approved as a correct record. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 10 for, 0 against and 3 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (minute nos 1- 8) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **4. MINUTES – 19<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the special meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be approved as a correct record. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 12 for, 0 against and 2 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the special meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 (minute nos 1- 3) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **5. 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.

## **6. EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Manager presented the report which outlined details of the Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the period February 2023 until March 2023 and included all reports that were identified at the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

A Member sought clarification and further details on an e-mail received regarding the delay of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Manager addressed the Committee to highlight a number of factors which have resulted in the delay, both internally and externally. Members were informed that the supply chain, contractors and the building trade have been impacted by COVID, Brexit and the war in Ukraine, which has resulted in tenders coming in significantly higher than anticipated. Members were also informed that there had been some legislative changes which have come into effect, such as requirements for sustainable drainage where consultation has to take place on the pre-planning process.

In conclusion, a request was made for a report on the reasons for the delay of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme to be scheduled on the Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

Following consideration of the report, and subject to the additional report proposed, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 14 for, 0 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

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

## **7. CABINET REPORTS**

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

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

## **8. EARLY YEARS - EXPANSION OF FLYING START AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet Member for Education and Communities introduced the report to present the plans for Flying Start expansion phase 1 and Flying Start Childcare expansion phase 2 as well as the capital plans required to meet the full implementation. A presentation was delivered by the Early Years Manager to provide an overview of the Flying Start expansion and Capital Programme which highlighted how you can help to increase the take up of Flying Start Childcare places.

In response to a Members query, the Early Years Manager explained how childcare settings will be brought onto the Dynamic Purchasing System and how families can check for providers. Members were informed that the Early Years Hub have offered to go out into communities with iPads to help families complete the forms and support is also provided over the telephone.

A Member commented on the delay of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme and raised concerns regarding the impact to nursery and childcare provision, particularly in relation to the Welsh language. The Early Years Manager explained that this is part of the reason why refurbishment and reconfiguration has been mainly opted for in Phase 2, rather than new builds. It was highlighted that there are a lot of existing private providers, including childminders and day nurseries, who own their own buildings and grants are available to support settings to meet the requirements for quality provision and expansion of places.

In response to a Members query regarding eligible postcodes, the Early Years Manager gave examples to explain how areas have tried to be shaped to prevent splitting a road or street with different postcodes where possible, however this may happen on occasions.

Clarification and further information were provided on the Gwent Midwifery and Early Years Strategy. The Caerphilly Early Years team has worked with partners in the other Local Authorities and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to develop the Midwifery and Early Years Strategy and core programme under the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme, which is a universal programme of support for all families across Gwent.

In response to a Members query, clarification was provided on funded childcare placements.

The Early Years Manager outlined the complexity of funded childcare places which included the Flying Start funded childcare for 2-3 years olds which is based on postcode and the childcare offer for 3-4 year olds for working families and for families who are in higher or further education.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there was 15 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee received the report and commented on the plans to expand delivery of the Flying Start programme and Flying Start childcare placements from April 2023.

## **9. WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN - 5YEAR ACTION PLAN**

The Cabinet Member for Education and Communities introduced the report to present a summary of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032, 5year action plan to enable scrutiny and accountability towards the target by 2032 throughout the life of the plan. The Committee received a presentation from the Early Years Manager who provided an overview of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032. The presentation outlined priority areas for the five year plan 2022-2027, the role of the Communication Task Group, the Latecomer Immersion Unit, the expansion of Flying Start childcare and sustainable communities for learning.

In response to a Members query, clarification was provided on the Latecomer Immersion Unit. The Committee was informed that the idea of the Latecomer Immersion Unit will be for primary age school children to start with but if a child wanted to move into Welsh medium education they would receive an intensive term and a half of Welsh language, where 4 days a week they will attend the Latecomer Immersion Unit and their host school for 1 day a week.

In response to a Members question it was confirmed that funding for a pupil in Welsh medium education is the same as English medium education.

In response to a Members query regarding non-Welsh speaking families, the Early Years Manger outlined ways to help and encourage more Welsh speaking in English speaking settings which included adult learner courses, support documents and providing online resources for families.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 15 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee received the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan's 5year action plan and commented regarding sufficiency of information and targets to achieve the minimum 26% target in year 1 cohort by 2032.

## **10. FORMALISING THE YOUTH SERVICE MODEL.**

The Cabinet Member for Education and Communities presented the report to seek the views of the Education Scrutiny Committee on a proposal to Cabinet to formalise the blended approach to youth work that has gained prominence and delivered success throughout and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Youth Service Manager provided an overview of the report and introduced L. Davies (Chair of the Youth Forum) to the Scrutiny Committee, who was also available to answer any questions.

A Member commented that although the Covid pandemic required the more immediate and ultimately very successful repositioning of youth work to meet the sudden changes of need by young people and communities to a much more flexible and responsive position, some of these changes were already taking place before the Covid-19 pandemic. The Scrutiny Committee was advised that before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Youth Service had been experimenting with different ways of delivering youth work, which included online and outreach work. The Youth Service Manager explained that outreach work provided the flexibility to go out and meet young people, especially those young people who would not walk into a youth club. It was highlighted that young people are more sophisticated and require a broader means of engaging with Youth Workers. They want a service that is responsive to their needs with more flexibility, that is offered throughout the year and relevant to young people all year-round.

A Member commented on the advantages of a youth club style provision and raised a number of concerns regarding the blended approach. The Youth Service Manager advised the Committee that there will be three cluster areas with a large scale, fit for purpose youth centre. Young people will be transported from different areas across the borough to access the youth centres, where they will get the benefit of really good facilities. It was explained that the Youth Service Model will reach out to young people wherever they choose to be, year-round. Members were informed that the online version of youth work uses a wide variety of social media platforms, and it was highlighted that some young people are more comfortable meeting this way. Members were also informed that building based youth work can exclude young people who are not comfortable attending a youth club and interacting in that way. Assurances were provided that the Youth Work Model was subject to consultation with young people.

During the course of discussion, a number of queries were raised relating to financial implications, the re-training of staff and the percentage of staff who are Welsh speaking. The Youth Service Manager advised that MTFP requirements will have to be met, but other than that the savings will be used to provide resources for young people. The Scrutiny Committee was assured there has been a substantial investment in the training of staff, and not just during lockdown, to make sure they are comfortable working in a blended environment. It was highlighted that staff can provide youth work in a building, but now also in parks and street corners etc. There are also opportunities to work with the Youth Homelessness Team and to support vulnerable young people. Members were advised that in terms of a bi-lingual service a workforce exercise has been carried out where 15% of staff identified they can speak Welsh. Reference was made to the Welsh language youth facility and the Committee was informed that Welsh Government funding has been secured to expand the Welsh language youth work offer. An example of joint work with SYDIC at Virginia Park was provided where this work has been developed to ensure it is relevant for young people.

Assurances were sought in that the engagement was sufficient to fully comprehend and demonstrate service users views. In response, the Youth Service Manager provided assurances and it was highlighted that during the recent Youth Forum Cabinet elections a number of young people stood for Cabinet who would not have been reached if the blended approach to youth work had not been introduced. Members were informed that the aim is to have steering groups for each cluster area with young people, key partners and others to advise the Youth Service in that area. Members were assured by L. Davies (Chair of the Youth Forum) that the blended approach is great as it allows young people, who wouldn't have been able to get involved in opportunities, to take part.

In response to a Members query, the Scrutiny Committee was advised that parental engagement is a big factor in making changes. It was explained that staffing has been

reconfigured in order to carry out engagement with families on a permanent basis. The aim is to deal with any local issues through contact and discussion in order to seek a resolution.

A question was raised as to how staff engage with young people through the blended approach model. Members were advised that there are a set of protocols for outreach work, with staff working in pairs. It was explained that there will be a period of reconnaissance where staff will explore an area and get to know the young people, shop keepers and key community people. Then they will use their youth work skills to build those relationships and identify and respond to issues that young people may have. It was highlighted that this type of work can lead to better local relationships and less school disengagement. This work can also lead to further engagement with colleges and training courses.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and particularly thanked L. Davies (Chair of the Youth Forum) for attending and the Senior Youth Service Manager for his responses.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation (and in noting there were 16 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

The Education Scrutiny Committee considered the recent adaptations to the youth service and commented on the proposed refinements to formalise this new way of working.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet: -

1. That the Youth Service formalises this new way of working and moves forward with the changes required to achieve further service improvement.

The meeting closed at 7.24 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 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR