



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
ON TUESDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY 2015 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor W. David - Chair
Councillor J. Pritchard - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

P.J. Bevan, Mrs A. Blackman, H.R. Davies, D. Havard, M.P. James, G. Johnston, G. Oliver,
D.W.R. Preece, J. Roberts, R. Saralis and Mrs M. Sargent.

Cabinet Member for Education and Leisure: Mrs R. Passmore

Together with:

S. Aspinall (Acting Deputy Chief Executive), K. Cole (Manager, Learning, Education and Inclusion), G. Evans (Senior Manager- Planning & Strategy - Library Services), C. Jenkins (Principal Human Resources Officer), A. West (School Admissions and Exclusions Manager), B. Hopkins (Assistant Director for Education), T. Maher (Assistant Director Planning & Strategy), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

Co-opted Members: Mr A. Farina-Childs (Parent Governor), Mrs A. Goss (Parent Governor) Mrs P. Ireland (NUT) and Mr M. Weston (Cardiff ROC)

Also Present:

E. Everson and E. Pryce (Education Achievement Service)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillors C. Durham, C. Gordon and D.M. Gray.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members, as Governors for various schools across the borough, sought advice on Agenda Item 8 (Governor Training and DBS requirements). Officers advised that as no specific school or Governors were referenced within the report, a declaration would not be necessary.

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

3. MINUTES – 4TH NOVEMBER 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13th January 2015 (minute no. 1 – 13) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. SANDRA ASPINALL – ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chair advised that this was the last meeting of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee that Sandra Aspinall (Deputy Chief Executive) would be attending. Members paid tribute to the manner in which she has carried out her duties during the last 6 years and referred to the high esteem in which she was held by Members and Officers alike and wished her every success and happiness for the future.

5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THIS 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. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Councillor Mrs R. Passmore, Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, highlighted that, as a result of the work undertaken as part of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Review, a satellite class has been established in Cwm Ifor Primary School. The 'Hub and Spoke' arrangement aims to improve opportunities and educational outcomes for identified pupils from Trinity Fields as well as further developing Trinity Fields role as a forward looking centre of excellence, which provides professional support and training to specialist resource bases across the Borough.

The Cabinet Member detailed that following on from the highly successful Real Opportunities project, Caerphilly has been invited by the Welsh European Funding Office to progress to the business case stage for funding to lead on a continuation of the initiative to support transition into employment for young people with disabilities or Autism.

Caerphilly County Borough Library Service took part in the first Harry Potter celebration evening on 5th February. Libraries were decorated in Harry Potter imagery, some staff dressed as characters and various activities took place. 690 children and adults attended the evening; Bargoed Hanbury Chapel had 400 visitors, Caerphilly Library had 140 visitors, Blackwood had 100 and 50 at Risca Palace facility. It is hoped that the event can be repeated on an annual basis.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Cabinet Member for the update and sought further information on the capacity within (ALN) settings. The Acting Deputy Chief Executive highlighted that a review of ALN is underway to ensure that sufficient provision is available to meet increasing needs and demand in the future.

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. CONSULTATION - PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2016/2017

B. Hopkins (Assistant Director for Education) and A. West (School Admissions and Exclusions Manager) provided an overview of the report, which proposed changes to the schools admission arrangements for the academic year 2016/17.

The Scrutiny Committee are consulted annually regarding the proposed admission arrangements and are provided the opportunity to comment on proposals as part of the consultation process before recommendations are considered by Cabinet. Members noted that the only significant changes proposed for 2016/17 related to Secondary School Rationalisation Phase 1 – Islwyn West (addressed in Appendix 1). Consultation was conducted with all Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and neighbouring Local Authorities, as well as CCBC's Admission forum.

Members noted that, in accordance with paragraph 2.10 of the Code, the admission arrangements must be determined by 15th April 2015 and would be considered by Cabinet on 1st April 2015.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

A Member sought further information on the admission arrangements for nursery placements within schools across the Borough. Officers highlighted that Nursery provision is a non-statutory requirement, however guidance suggests that provision should be made available, which could include private provision, provided it is Estyn registered/ approved.

Members discussed the process and capacity within nursery. It was noted a "Starting School" information booklet is provided to all parents, which explains the admissions process. Upon application, 3 placement choices are required and in the instance where provision is over subscribed, alternative provision would be offered, within a reasonable distance of the home. In addition, the Committee noted that Officers check the applications carefully to ensure that fraudulent details were not provided in order to obtain more desirable provision.

Having fully considered the report and appendix, it was moved and seconded that the Scrutiny Committee support the proposed Admission Arrangements 2016/17 prior to the reports consideration at Cabinet on 1st April 2015. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

9. EDUCATION CAPITAL 2015/16

B. Hopkins (Assistant Director for Education) presented the Scrutiny Committee with the proposals for the 2015/16 Education Capital Programme, which are planned to be considered by Cabinet on 1st April 2015.

The report identified proposals for the allocation of Education capital budgets for the 2015/16 financial year in the context of the 3-year capital programme 2014/15 – 2016/17.

Members noted the proposed budget allocations for electrical rewiring works, Asset Management, School Boiler Replacements and Flying Start Capital Bids and discussions ensued around the Asbestos Removal Programme. Officers highlighted that the programme aims for the identification and removal of Asbestos in Schools throughout the borough. Registers are kept and maintained within schools, highlighting where Asbestos can be located and a programme for its removal.

Having fully considered the report and appendix, it was moved and seconded that the Scrutiny Committee note the proposals to utilise the Education capital budget for 2015/16 as outlined in the report prior to the reports consideration by Cabinet on 1st April 2015. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

10. GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DBS REQUIREMENTS

E. Everson (EAS) and C. Jenkins (HR Officer) provided the Scrutiny Committee with information on the legal framework in respect of CRB/ DBS checks for Governors and mandatory training requirements.

In September 2013, the Welsh Government (WG) introduced mandatory training requirements for Governors in respect of Chair training, Induction training and School Performance Data training and introduced suspension and disqualification of Governors where these are not met.

Governing bodies are ultimately responsible for suspending and possibly disqualifying Governors who do not attend mandatory training, and protocol was developed to support governing bodies through the process. The protocol is anticipated to be circulated to Headteachers and Chairs of Governors in Spring 2015.

In 2013/14, 9 Data, 11 Induction and 10 Chair training sessions were offered across the EAS area. All Chairs (except one) in have attended training, meeting the mandatory training requirement and training sessions on Data and Induction are being arranged, in venues across the EAS area, to meet the mandatory training requirements.

C. Jenkins (HR Officer), informed the Scrutiny Committee that under certain circumstances Governing Bodies (GB's) and Local Authorities (LA's) can require Governors to have enhanced DBS checks, although the position is not straightforward.

From 2012, following the introduction of the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups act 2006 and the Protection of Freedom Act 2012 the types of checks which can be taken changed to three types, Standard DBS Checks, Enhanced DBS check and Enhanced DBS check with barred list checks.

Enhanced DBS checks can only be applied for if the individual undertakes 'regulated activity'.

Governors used to be required to be CRB checked, with checks also being undertaken of the barred lists. However, under the new system, Governors will not generally be engaged in 'regulated activity' unless they are undertaking some 'work' at the school, on a regular basis, that is not supervised. As a result, whilst Governing Bodies and Local Authorities can require Governors to have enhanced DBS checks, Governors Wales state that they do not believe that they can insist on all governors being checked under the barred lists unless they can establish that the governor in question is engaged in regulated activity. Governors Wales further state that they understand that the DBS may well decline applications for checks on this basis.

Members thanked Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

Mandatory training was discussed and further details were sought around the recording of Governor attendance at training sessions and location of training. Officers highlighted that a database records all of the attendance and completion information and Members would be issued with certificates over the coming weeks. In addition, it was noted that all Governors are asked to complete a Training Needs Analysis, where possible, schools and Local Authorities are asked to host training sessions, during the daytime and evening, to ensure maximum accessibility of the training.

Discussions around the DBS process ensued and clarification was sought on CRB and DBS and it was highlighted that DBS checks had replaced the traditional CRB check.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the Officers report.

11. PUPIL ATTAINMENT AT FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2, KEY STAGE 3 AND KEY STAGE 4 (2014)

The report informed members of pupils' attainment in teacher assessment at Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and final Key Stage 4.

All schools are subject to rigorous reporting and monitoring of standards each year, with the principal focus in key stages 2 and 3 being on English/Welsh first language, mathematics and science, and the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in all three core subjects (core subject indicator – CSI).

Members considered the report, which provided data and analysis of attainment, across an all Wales basis, and requested that future reports on Attainment be provided in Colour to the Committee.

Members raised concerns around the performance of secondary schools in comparison to primary schools within the Borough. Officers highlighted that there are a number of complex factors which have an impact on the results between primary and secondary school, for example, socioeconomic factors and deprivation have a more prominent impact after Key Stage 3 and children often have difficulty with the transition from Primary to Secondary School.

Members discussed Free School Meals (FSM) recording, and the impacts on the schools and pupils. Officers highlighted FSM is a contentious issue, which is used to measure deprivation. Schools are undertaking significant works with children and families to minimise the impact of deprivation on attainment and improve the performance of individuals and schools.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the Officers report.

12. REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE PLACED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA

The following requests for reports were received.

- (1) Councillor D.W.R. Preece requested a report/ further information on the Contractors used as part of the Asbestos in Schools Removal Programme.
- (2) Councillor J. Roberts requested a report on the teaching of Modern Languages in all schools within Caerphilly.

13. INFORMATION ITEMS

The Committee noted the following items for information, full details of which were included within the Officers reports. They were not brought forward for review.

1. Education Scrutiny.
2. Budget Monitoring 2014-15.
3. Interim Report – Asbestos in Schools Removal Programme.
4. Education for Life Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 7.31 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 24th February 2015, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR