

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 7TH MARCH, 2016

REFERENCE FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (LIFELONG LEARNING):
8TH FEBRUARY, 2016

“821 UPDATE REPORT ON BARRY ELIM CHURCH “CAN DO” PROJECT
(REF) –

The Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee on 14th October, 2015 had referred the report to the Committee for its information. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee advised that in order to manage the items on previous agendas, he had deferred consideration of the reference to this evenings meeting as a result.

The Children and Young People’s Partnership Manager, in presenting the reference and the report, provided an update on the progress made to date in respect of the “Can Do” project. This had been a three year pilot project working with pupils who were at risk of poor attendance and who had a difficult time adjusting at secondary school due to anxiety and confidence issues. It was considered that these young people were in danger of becoming disengaged from education, employment and training in the long term. The desired outcome of the project was to give pupils the tools to improve self-confidence, increase resilience and reduce anxiety related behaviour resulting in overall improvement in school life, happiness and therefore achievement. The project had commenced part way through summer term 2013.

The project worked with two secondary schools, Barry Comprehensive and Bryn Hafren, with all pupils being Year 8 pupils. The Heads of Year had identified pupils to put forward for the project using their respective schools management systems (NBAR / PASS) and using their personal knowledge of the pupils.

The project ran from April to March and during 2014/15 47 pupils were put forward for the Can Do course, with the attendance on the course at 93%. Feedback had been received from 40 pupils, all indicating some or great improvement in their self-esteem. For the coaching and mentoring element of the project, 41 pupils had been put forward with 39 completing the provision and 36 providing feedback. Two pupils did not participate after the first session as they did not believe it was right for them.

Pupils received a minimum of four sessions, initially developing their own goals and agreeing an action plan – pupils set a wide range of goals, 28 pupils put forward for coaching / mentoring self-identified having behaviour and confidence issues in class and feelings of boredom. Some identified family issues as the place where they wanted to bring change. The programme focussed on finding solutions for these. In addition to this all pupils self-assessed their self-image and carried out an additional questionnaire to identify the “coaching gaps” in school performance. It was at the fourth coaching session all parties assessed how to continue or whether to end the relationship based on achievement of goals or needing further support.

Feedback from the pupils found the coaching and mentoring relationship good to excellent (34) and helpful (30). When asked if they would like to be coached or mentored at a later date, 58% responded positively. 26 of those completing wanted a 4-6 months’ review on their progress. The self-image exit assessment suggested the main improvements were in being less cheeky (31), feeling more intelligent (30) and less moody (29). Between 25-28 individual pupils reported improvements in confidence, kindness, happiness, being less lazy and less bossy.

Feedback from pupils demonstrated positive engagement and benefiting from the provision, this was further supported by teacher comments that identified areas of improvement in pupil confidence and improvements in individual pupil self-esteem.

Funding of £60k had been agreed for the project, which had been split as £20k per annum for the three years commencing 2013/14. Sources of funding were being explored to continue the project from April 2016, including the individual school’s “Pupil Deprivation Grant”. If however these funding opportunities are unsuccessful, the project would cease.

Members raised concern in relation to the possibility of the project ceasing from April 2016 and an Observer Member advised that the project worker who undertook the project had been a valuable asset to the school and that the school they were at was currently looking at other avenues in order to support the project worker further. The Partnership Manager advised that other funding opportunities had and were being explored, for example Communities First, but as their budgets were tight, it was not considered an option at this stage.

Committee was also of the view that such work played an important part in the prevention agenda and mitigated issues in the longer term and that in their view it was a small amount of money in the initial stages that could save a lot in the future.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Committee’s appreciation be extended to all involved in the project in respect of the work undertaken to date.
- (3) T H A T the report, the appendices and the Committee’s comments be referred to Cabinet for consideration, to highlight the Committee’s concern that such a valuable project could cease as at 1st April, 2016 due to lack of funding with the request that Cabinet consider whether there were further options to sustain the service.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) That the progress made to date on the Barry Elim Church “Can Do” project be noted.
- (2) In order that those involved in delivering the project can be thanked for the work that has already been carried out.
- (3) That the report be referred to Cabinet in view of the Committee’s concerns and to ask Cabinet to consider other ways of funding such a successful project.”

Attached as Appendix – [Reference to Scrutiny Committee \(Lifelong Learning\): 8th February, 2016](#)