

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 31ST OCTOBER, 2016

REFERENCE FROM LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
3RD OCTOBER, 2016

“ REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS PROGRESS MEETINGS (MD) –

The report had been prepared as a result of the Committee's decision in June 2014 to monitor the action plan within 12 months of the review of the arrangements for the School Progress Panel Meetings that were established during 2013.

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer advised that the reports of all Panel findings had been submitted for consideration to the Scrutiny Committee and subsequently referred to Cabinet for their consideration. In total, Panel meetings had been held within five Secondary schools and two Primary schools, namely

- Barry Comprehensive
- Bryn Hafren Comprehensive
- Llantwit Major Comprehensive
- St. Cyres Comprehensive
- St. Richard Gwyn R/C High School
- Eagleswell Primary School (now defunct)
- Fairfield Primary School.

The Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) had received an update report at its meeting on 7th December, 2015 which had detailed progress on the implementation of the action plan, along with an evaluation of the impact of the Panels and also an evaluation of responses received to a survey sent to Panel Members, senior officers, Challenge Advisors and the schools' representatives. It was planned that a further survey be undertaken during March 2017.

Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was an update of the action plan and showed the progress that had been made with each individual action for visits held between April 2013 and June 2014. The majority of these that were reported on at the previous update report had been completed, although a number were still ongoing.

Appendix 2 to the report illustrated further improvement actions observed by panel visits conducted over the period July 2014 to September 2015. A summary of progress made to date was contained within the appendices, it being noted that as part of the previous review it had been identified that schools needed to ensure that proper teachers' planning was completed in the correct manner and in the correct format. Another aspect for improvement was noted as the development of shared

accountability for those schools which were part of the Schools Challenge Cymru programme. Officers had considered that there needed to be a strengthening around the sharing of information and consultation between the School Challenge Cymru Advisor and the Learning and Skills Directorate.

Members noted that the links established with the School to School initiative had been fairly positive but considered that this should be assessed to ensure that a similar level of support and improvement had been observed across other schools in the Vale.

Since the last update on the action plan, four additional actions had been included as a result of Panel visits to Barry, St. Richard Gwen and Bryn Hafren Secondary Schools and Fairfield Primary School. These were detailed at Appendix 3 to the report.

Good practice had been identified in relation to raising pupil attendance within Secondary schools and the Panel had recognised the improvements made at Barry and Bryn Hafren. The improvements that would be shared as 'best practice' related specifically to:

- The creation of an "Inclusion Room" to support the learning of excluded pupils;
- Outreach Service set up in local community area to engage with hard to reach parents;
- Schools' attendance policy and individual pupils' attendance are shared with parents and pupils;
- Incentives given to reward high attendance;
- Attendance Panels made up of key staff and Governors set up to consider cases where pupils' attendance is low i.e. below 80%.

Recent Panel visits had also shown that an important consideration for schools was to have a programme in place around teacher development. It was therefore recommended that these be shared across the Vale as 'best practice':

- The appointment of a dedicated Teaching and Learning Coach to actively consider and promote teacher development.
- Use of IRIS Connect (or similar) to visually record and share individual lessons considered to be excellent.
- All teachers to have a Personal Development Programme.

The current approach of selecting three Panel Members from 14 Members of the Scrutiny Committee had been considered as a result of the review with the recommendation that this be continued, it being noted that this approach had allowed for a number of Members to be involved in the process, gaining knowledge and experience.

The report noted that it was anticipated that any future visits to Fairfield Primary School would be considered after the school's categorisation and benchmarking

positions were known, with further visits to Barry, Bryn Hafren and St. Richard Gwyn being considered following publication of the GCSE results.

In specifically referring to St. Richard Gwyn, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Education stated that at a Cabinet meeting that afternoon, the Cabinet had considered a report on school performance for 2015-16, Foundation Phase and Key Stages 2 to 5. Cabinet having been advised that strong performance improvements in the August 2016 results had allowed the formal warning notice to be removed for the school, had therefore recommended that St. Richard Gwyn be removed from the formal warning process due to the strong performance and improvement. Therefore there would be no need to reconvene a Panel visit to the school. However, the Cabinet had resolved that the Scrutiny Committee be invited to reconvene the individual School Progress Panel for Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School.

The Chairman referred to the role of the Panels and advised that they had been established in order that schools could demonstrate that they had up to date and authoritative improvement plans and that they had in place arrangements to monitor the impact of the plans, to amend them as appropriate and to establish what progress had been made against each action within the plan. The Panels also considered what further progress was required and sought to approve the accountability of schools for pupil attainment.

In response to a query as to how the issues raised by Panels were being communicated to all Governors, it was noted that report and the letters in relation to school Performance Panels were forwarded to the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher with the intention that Governors are informed accordingly.

Mr. Burke, Co-Opted Member, confirmed that when his school St Richard Gwyn had received a Panel visit the letters were sent to all Governors before and after the visits and Governors provided with an update by means of a verbal presentation at the Governors' meeting.

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer advised that the Governors Support Unit received minutes of Governing Body meetings which, although not monitored for such detail, was an avenue that could be checked if necessary. It was also important that the Challenge Advisors raised these issues at Governing Body meetings, with the Chairman advising that he would be prepared to attend Governing Body meetings to provide verbal reports if necessary.

Having fully considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the current approach of selecting Panel Members when appropriate be continued.

- (2) T H A T the contents of the report and the Action Plan at Appendices 1, 2 and 3 detailing the lessons learned to date in respect of the School Progress Panel meetings be accepted.
- (3) T H A T the Action Plan continues to be monitored and reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee in 12 months' time.
- (4) T H A T all reports of School Progress Panel meetings continue to be referred to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration.
- (5) T H A T the report and appendices be referred to the Central South Consortium's Managing Director for consideration.
- (6) T H A T the Chairmen of Progress Panels provide feedback to Governing Body meetings, if invited to do so.
- (7) T H A T the report and the above recommendations be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1-5) In recognition of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation in 2013 that a review of the process be undertaken in 12 months.
- (6) In order that the recommendations of the Panel may be presented to the appropriate Governing Bodies.
- (7) To allow Cabinet consideration of the lessons learned to date in respect of the Progress Panel meetings and the views of the Committee."

Attached as Appendix – [Report to Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee: 3rd October, 2016](#)