

LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 19th September, 2019.

Present: Councillor G.C. Kemp (Chairman); Councillor Ms. R.M. Birch (Vice-Chairman); Councillors N.P. Hodges, T.H. Jarvie, Mrs. J.M. Norman, Mrs. S. Perkes and N.C. Thomas.

Co-Opted Members Present: Mrs. J. Lynch-Wilson (Parent Governor – Primary Sector).

Non-voting Observers: Mr. H. Gapper (Welsh Medium Education)

301 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors A.R.T. Davies, S.J. Griffiths and A.C. Parker. An apology for absence was also received from Co-Opted Member Dr. M. Price (Roman Catholic Church) and Dr. C. Browne (Parent Governor – Secondary Sector).

302 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July, 2019 be approved as a correct record.

303 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillors Ms. R. Birch, G.C. Kemp, Mrs. S. Perkes, Mrs. J.M. Norman, N.P. Hodges and T.H. Jarvie all declared an interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 6 – Governor Training Report 2018/19 Academic Year. The nature of the interests was that these Councillors were themselves Governors of various schools appointed by the Local Education Authority. All these Councillors had received dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak and vote of such matters and all remained for the duration of the meeting.

304 ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2018/19 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet, highlighted that historically, safeguarding activity by different parts of the Council had been reported separately to Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committees and Corporate Management Team.

Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was the annual report that brought together safeguarding activity undertaken by the Social Services, Learning and Skills, Managing Directors Office and Resources, Environment and Housing Directorates and also an overview from Corporate Safeguarding Group. This provided a more holistic representation of safeguarding activity across the Council. The report

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provided a composite update of activity across the directorates. Scrutiny Committees should particularly consider the elements of the report in line with their portfolio areas.

The Wales Audit Office undertook a follow-up review in February 2019 of their 2014 review, and issued their final report in May 2019 (attached at Appendix 2). The purpose of the review was to seek assurance that the Council had effective corporate arrangements in place and had addressed the findings and recommendations from their 2014 report and the subsequent recommendations made.

The 2018-19 review found that overall the Council had implemented most of the previous recommendations and proposals for improvement, some areas needed further attention. They had identified five proposals for improvement to strengthen aspects of the Council's safeguarding arrangements. The areas for improvements would be addressed within the CSG work plan, at Appendix 3, which would be referred to Audit Committee.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) remained a key priority area for both the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board and the Vale of Glamorgan Council. There was a Lead Manager for Child Sexual Exploitation who ensured there was appropriate identification, response and co-ordination in CSE cases. The role facilitated multi agency safety planning when required and contributed to the networking and intelligence meetings that regularly took place.

In 2018/19 there were four Child Practice Reviews published by the Regional Safeguarding Board, one relating to a child in the Vale of Glamorgan. During this time there was a concentrated focus on addressing the backlog of 12 Child Practice Reviews that were required. There were now a further 6 reviews in progress however only one of these reviews related to a child in the Vale of Glamorgan, and this was a widely publicised review. Following the completion of that review an action plan was developed that detailed the recommendations for learning. Each agency was required to implement these recommendations and report back their progress to the Regional Board.

The Learning and Skills Directorate continued to invest considerable effort in supporting schools to achieve compliance with Safer Recruitment. Compliance rates had improved significantly since 2014 with schools recording 100% compliance in recent months. The Directorate had been clear that anything less than 100% compliance was unacceptable.

Recent recommendations to the Corporate Safeguarding Group (CSG) would strengthen the Corporate Safer Recruitment Policy. This was monitored through the CSG to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the Corporate Safer Recruitment Policy across all the Directorates and school appointments.

In the last few months HR had recently implemented an electronic transfer system for DBS checks. This would speed up the DBS checking process which formed part of the pre-employment checks. The system provided an electronic portal where applicants were able to apply for a DBS check online, allow checks to be approved

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and tracked by the Council, and the disclosure outcome would be available in the majority of cases within 24/48 hours.

In commenting on the Annual report, the Head of Additional Learning Needs and Wellbeing referred to sections relevant to the Learning & Skills Directorate.

In respect of Safer Recruitment, a Committee Member queried whether checks and risk assessments were being carried out for all staff including those on a temporary contract. In reply, the Head of Additional Needs and Wellbeing advised that there had been historic challenges around Disclosure and Barring Services checks, which had been addressed, although the rate was still not 100%. He offered reassurance that no staff member would work unsupervised with children, and that there would be staff who would have been fully checked.

A Committee raised the issue of Female Genital Mutilation stating that there were some schools in the Vale where this may be more prevalent. The Head of Additional Needs and Wellbeing advised that a new project with the Police was underway.

A Committee Member queried whether schools would be aware of pupils that would have been subject to Parental Investigation for Domestic Abuse. In reply, the Head of Additional Needs and Wellbeing stated 'yes', as information would be shared as wide as possible and this would be covered within the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).

Having considered the report, it was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the work that had been undertaken to improve Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding and protecting children and adults be noted.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that the Committee is aware of recent developments in Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding.

305 SUPPORT FOR CARERS IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN (REF) –

The Team Manager for Performance and Information presented the reference from the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee which provided an update on the Regional Work Stream for Carers that had been introduced in the Director of Social Services' report in April 2018 together with the Plan for a Regional Strategy for Carers. The report also provided an update overview of the current services and support available to carers in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Team Manager for Performance and Information highlighted:

- that the Cardiff and Vale Young Carers Working Group had met regularly in order to look at ways to improve the support available to young carers;

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- seven out of the eight Council's Secondary Schools had engaged in the Young Carers in School Programme, which provided schools with tools and resources to support young carers;
- there had been an increase in the number of identified young carers, which had jumped from 18 to 117;
- a new referral process to assess young carers had been agreed and single point of access established;
- the Young Carers project, funded through Families First, which currently supported 80 young carers; and
- extra respite and activity breaks was available through additional funding.

A Committee Member, as Vice-Chairman to the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, stated that the report had been referred on in order to highlight the scope of the programme which had generally been successful as 7 out of the 8 secondary schools had engaged in the Young Carers Programme. The Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee wanted to flag up the one remaining school that had disengaged from the school support programme. The Member highlighted the importance to identify carers, most of which did not recognise themselves as being young carers. Some of these young people would suffer hugely, practically affecting their educational attainment. The key question was why a secondary school was not engaging. In response, the Head of Additional Learning Needs and Wellbeing stated that he supported the words of the Elected Member as the importance of this was highlighted by the increase in the number of recognised carers in the Vale of Glamorgan. He stated that a lot of work to promote the support available to young carers had been actioned and more was being planned. He stated that identification of young carers was complex as not all would want to be formally recognised. Furthermore, he outlined, that it was compulsory for all schools to undertake a young carer's survey, the importance of which was emphasised to all schools. This was an ongoing process. He also added that the views of the Committee would be taken back to the school in question.

The Committee queried whether there was a waiting list to join the Young Carers project, and it was agreed for information on this to be emailed to the Members. Members also noted that schools were encouraged to identify any educational challenges that young carers were experiencing. Additional support would be provided, which could include assistance through a Youth Club, help with I.T. and a quiet space being allocated.

A Committee Member stated that the age of young carers was concerning and he queried whether the project could be expanded to a lower school age. In reply, the Team Manager for Performance and Information confirmed that the Young Carers Project covered the ages of 6 – 18 with most carers aged between 11 and 16. She was unclear as to why not more young carers had been identified, but it was important to recognise that the project was grant funded and would require additional resources in order to target more primary school pupils.

The Committee discussed the need to expand training for school staff in order to help identify young carers. This should also include behavioural issues. It was recognised that there was no specific training available, but this would be a module within the Safeguarding training. It was commented that it was important to have

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the right training available, which should be emphasised to Primary Schools in order to help identify young carers at an earlier age. Identification was far more difficult in Secondary Schools, given that Primary School teachers would have better chance to get to know their pupils.

A Committee queried how much would the budget have to increase in order to identify more young carers (estimated to be 15% of the school population). In reply, the Head of Additional Learning Needs and Wellbeing stated that it was difficult to put a figure to this. There was also a balance in relation to the capacity of the service, and other vulnerable groups vying for additional resources. Further to these comments, the Team Manager, Performance and Information advised that the Young Carers Project would not be the right solution for all young people. Other types of support was available, but the biggest challenge was identification.

In response to a question as to what family support was available, the Team Manager, Performance and Information stated that this would be considered through the formal assessment process and following a referral to Social Services.

The Committee held a consensus that early identification of young carers was key, for which sufficient training for staff was required. The Committee requested for a further update to be provided in February 2020, which would provide further information on the number of young carers in Primary and Secondary Schools. The report would also detail the Council's strategy to identify young carers at an earlier age.

Subsequently it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Annual Report on Support for Carers and work undertaken to support carers in the Vale of Glamorgan be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Scrutiny Committee receives a further update for its meeting in February 2020.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Following consideration of the Annual Report and support for carers and work undertaken to support carers in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- (2) In order to highlight the number of Young Carers identified in all schools in Vale, and to outline in greater detail the Council's strategy to identify carers at a younger age.

306 GOVERNOR TRAINING REPORT FOR 2018/19 ACADEMIC YEAR (DLS) –

The Head of Governor Support presented the report which provided an annual review of Governor training for the 2018/19 academic year.

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In the 2018/19 academic year a total of 32 courses were held covering 18 different topics ranging from the twice yearly education update and briefing sessions for Chairs and experienced governors to Induction training for newly appointed governors. Most courses were run at the Civic Offices, Barry at no cost and were delivered at various times, mostly during the evening to maximise attendance as many governors worked during the day. Courses lasted around 2 hours each and whilst the method of delivery varied by course and trainer, interaction and sharing of good practice was positively encouraged to ensure the maximum benefit for attendees.

A summary table of the data from the 465 completed evaluation forms for 32 governor training courses during the 2018/19 academic year was given below:

Question	% of good or very good evaluations
How well did the course meet its stated aims and objectives?	96.30
How useful was the course content to your needs?	95.80
How effective were the course providers?	97.80

As can be seen from the above table and Appendix 1, analysis of the completed evaluation forms indicated that a very high number of governors had rated the training (both mandatory and other topics) as either good or very good against each of the 3 questions asked on the form. An example of the evaluation form was given at Appendix 2.

Data was now held for the 5 previous academic years and it could be seen from the table below that the average percentage performance on each of the three questions had been consistently maintained at a very high level (94.30%+) throughout that time. These levels had been maintained from a consistently high number of evaluations received during this time, well over 460 in the past 2 years and from a response level of 85-90% of attendees from the previous 4 years. At least 29 courses each year had been provided and the number of governors attending training had exceeded 530 in each of the past 2 years.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Courses held	Governors attended	Evaluations received
2014/15	97.20%	94.30%	95.80%	29	457	359 (78.6%)
2015/16	97.60%	96.30%	97.30%	31	490	437 (89.2%)
2016/17	98.50%	97.30%	98.60%	30	437	397 (90.8%)
2017/18	98.10%	97.60%	97.80%	39	565	484 (85.7%)

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2018/19	96.30%	95.80%	97.80%	32	535	465 (86.9%)
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Following the 2016/17 academic year's report the Chairman requested that this information also be presented in a mandatory/non mandatory course split format and a table was included at the end of Appendix 1 accordingly.

Since September 2016 the Central South Consortium (CSC) had delivered all the mandatory training elements (induction, data, chair and clerk) but the courses were still being delivered on a local basis i.e. within each Local Authority.

E-learning for all the mandatory training elements continued to be available to any governors who could not attend training sessions so every opportunity was available for governors to fulfil the mandatory requirements. Termly briefing sessions and an Annual Governor Conference on topical areas of interest would continue to be run by the CSC and details would be circulated direct to governors when available.

In respect of mandatory training, a Committee Member queried what would happen to those who had not yet completed courses. In reply, the Head of Governor Support stated that close monitoring was undertaken with prompts sent to governors to remind them that training was still required. In most cases, governors would have to undertake the training by the end of the academic year and a log was kept of those who needed to attend. He added that performance was improving. In terms of disqualifying governors from attending meetings, this would be the responsibility of the Governing Body.

The Committee considered safeguarding training and there was a consensus among Members that this should be mandatory. It was therefore agreed for the Chairman to write a letter to Welsh Government expressing the view that Safeguarding Training for governors should be mandatory.

Having considered the report, it was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the contents of the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

Following consideration of the Governor Training report for 2018/19 academic year.

307 1ST QUARTER SCRUTINY DECISION TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND UPDATED WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2019/20 (MD) –

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer presented the report which provided progress in relation to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations and confirmed the updated Work Programme schedule for 2019/20.

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Attached at Appendix A was the 1st Quarter decision tracking for April to June 2019 while at Appendix B was the updated Work Programme schedule for 2019/20.

The Committee considered a suggestion for a Sub-Group to be formed in order to undertake a mini-review which covered the Affordability of Education to Parents. This included two items on the Committee's Work Programme in relation to affordability of school uniforms and the affordability and accessibility of out of school activities. It was agreed that Councillors G.C. Kemp, Ms. R.M. Birch, N.P. Hodges, S.D. Perkes, J.M. Norman and N.C. Thomas be appointed to the Sub-Group to undertake the review.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the recommendations listed below be deemed completed:

9 April, 2019	
Min. No. 923 – Welsh Public Library Standards Performance 2017-2018 (DLS) – Recommended	
(4) That a letter of thanks be forwarded by the Chairman on behalf of the Committee to the Library Service as outlined above.	Letter sent 9 th May 2019. Completed
(5) That the report be referred to Cabinet for its consideration.	Cabinet, on 17 th June, 2019, resolved - [1] That the Annual Return for 2017-2018 to be submitted to the Welsh Government at Appendix A to the report be endorsed. [2] That the performance of the Library and Information Service in relation to the quality framework for Welsh Public Libraries be noted. [3] That the new National Performance Indicator for Libraries be noted. [4] That a letter be sent to the Welsh Government Minister advising that future performance indicators should take account of new working practices such as 'Open Plus' and should also include greater recognition of the work of volunteers. (Min. No. C6 refers) Completed
20 June 2019	
Min. No. 70 – Summary Of School Inspection Reports For Spring Term 2018 (DLS) – Recommended	

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(2) That the Chairman on behalf of the Committee write a letter of congratulations to Cowbridge Comprehensive School.	Letter sent 16 th July 2019. Completed
Min. No. 71 – 4th Quarter Scrutiny Decision Tracking Of Recommendations And Proposed Work Programme Schedule 2019/20 (MD) – Recommended	
(2) That subject to the inclusion of the following item of business, the work programme scheduled attached at Appendix C be approved and uploaded to the Council's website, the additions being as listed above.	Work programme amended and uploaded to the Council's website. Completed

(3) T H A T a Sub-Group be formed to undertake a review into the affordability of education.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To maintain effective tracking of the Committee's recommendations.
- (2) To maintain effective tracking of the Committee's recommendations.
- (3) In order to review the affordability for parents for education.