

No.

LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 15th April, 2021

The Committee agenda is available [here](#)

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

Co-opted Members: Dr. M. Price (Roman Catholic Church) and Mrs. J. Lynch-Wilson (Parent Governor – Primary Sector).

Also present: Councillors L. Burnett (Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Legal, Regulatory and Planning Services).

551 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillor L.O. Rowlands and Mr. H. Gapper (Welsh-Medium Education).

552 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chairman read the following statement:

“May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing.”

553 MINUTE SILENCE - HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH

The Committee observed a minute’s silence to mark the passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

554 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

555 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

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556 ESTYN THEMATIC REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS AND PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (REF) -

Cabinet, on 8th March, 2021 had referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

The Director of Learning and Skills presented the report which advised of the outcome of Estyn's review of the Council's support for learning communities in schools and the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) during the period March to October 2020. The outcome of this work in the Vale of Glamorgan was outlined in Estyn's letter which was shown in Appendix A to the report.

Although Estyn had not formulated a judgement in relation to the support provided to schools and the PRU in the Vale of Glamorgan, several noteworthy practice cameos were highlighted in the letter.

Members praised the report, noting that the work carried out in the context of the previous twelve months had been excellent and that residents should be proud of the effort made. In response to queries raised, the Officers advised of the following:

- Regarding a lack of contact time for Primary pupils reported by some families, no survey of parents had been carried out by the Council itself as it was recognised that what worked for one family might not be suitable for others, and schools were therefore taking bespoke approaches and were encouraged to refine these by surveying parents themselves. The Council was also relying on Improvement Partners for feedback, none of which had been negative so far.
- It was acknowledged that allocating fixed times for registration, lessons etc, was beneficial for Secondary level pupils as it afforded more structure to the school day, however at a Primary level it was challenging to ensure there was support for all pupils to access lessons at the same time, and flexibility was a help for working parents.
- No parents should be accessing their children's online lessons, and the Council had issued clear guidance on such matters.
- Opportunities to highlight and share good and poor practice would be discussed with the Senior Improvement Partner, and it was also possible that representatives from schools could be invited to address Committee regarding this matter. A number of positive examples which would be carried forward had been identified, including:
 - Many schools had reported that digital access to lessons had improved engagement amongst pupils who had previously been school-phobic or had previously had low attendance.
 - Operating an online system for parent feedback had suited parents, as sessions had run smoothly and had kept to scheduled times.
 - Schools had been working on pupil wellbeing, with some running entire days of wellbeing activities which were linked to the curriculum.
 - In one school the whole curriculum was now available for pupils online.

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- Hospitalised pupils could now have continuation of the same level of education as their peers.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration, with permission to speak, wished to express that it was good to have an independent report which reflected the collaborative working between the Council's Education services and schools.

The Chairman praised the report and the work of Officers, and indicated that it would be a good idea to invite representatives of schools to a future meeting in order that they could share their experiences.

Having fully considered the report it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the report regarding the outcome of Estyn's Review of the Council's work to support learning communities in its schools and the Pupil Referral Unit be noted.

Reason for Recommendation

To ensure Committee was aware of the support provided to learners between March and October, 2020.

557 SUPPORT FOR CARERS IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN (REF) -

The Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee on 9th March, 2021 had referred the report to this Scrutiny Committee for its consideration, in line with Committee's request that they receive an update report on young carers on an annual basis.

The Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Service Outcomes presented the Report, drawing Members' attention in particular to matters relating to young carers in the Vale of Glamorgan, including engagement with the Young Carers in Schools Programme, the upcoming launch of the Young Carers Identity Card, and examples of collaborative working between the Council's Learning and Skills Directorate and Social Service.

In response to queries from Members, particularly regarding the difficulties of identifying young carers, Officers clarified the following:

- Engagement in identifying young carers had been continuing in schools, with all schools having appointed a Young Carers Lead to help identify and support young carers. Moreover, within the Vale of Glamorgan each young carer had an immediate point of contact within a given school who wasn't necessarily the appointed Lead but the best person for that particular young carer.
- It was recognised that due to COVID-19 lockdowns, increased isolation and responsibility had impacted on all areas of young carers' lives. The YMCA Young Carer's Project had been working with the service to assist in this regard, identifying young carers in need of additional equipment and

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distributing 40 Chromebooks and associated data bundles to young carers in the Vale. Vulnerable Children's Groups had also assisted in providing immediate one-to-one contacts for more vulnerable young carers and their families.

- Within the Learning and Skills Directorate, a Pupil Level Annual Survey Census (PLASC) was due to be carried out. Each term the Council wrote to schools reminding them to identify young carers on their PLASC.
- Young Carers were required to self-identify, meaning that while schools could provide information to pupils, young carers themselves needed to step forward, and those under the age of 14 required parental consent to do so.
- The YMCA were praised for the work they had undertaken with young carers and the creative ways in which the team had provided support during the pandemic.

Having fully considered the report it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the reference and relevant Cabinet Report be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

To ensure that Committee was updated regarding provision of support for young carers in the Vale of Glamorgan.

558 REVIEW OF STATUES, MONUMENTS, STREET NAMES AND BUILDING NAMES – REVIEW PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE (REF)

Cabinet, on 22nd March, 2021 had referred the report to Committee for its consideration. In February 2021, Committee had endorsed Cabinet's proposed Terms of Reference for the Review Panel to assist in the review of statues, monuments, street names and building names in the Vale of Glamorgan, in light of the Black Lives Matter movement.

The Panel had met for the first time and had proposed that Cabinet consider making changes to the Terms of Reference to amend the membership which would further enhance the inclusivity and independence of the Panel. The suggested changes included the removal of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council from the Panel's membership, the inclusion of representatives from other political groups and consideration of whether a standing representative from a history society should be included, or specific advice be sought from individual experts on individual matters.

In response to a query regarding how quickly the Panel's work would progress, the Head of Policy and Business Transformation, who had presented the report, advised that while no date would be set for the Panel's next meeting until nominations for membership had been received from each of the Council's political groups, almost all nominations had been received and the Panel were keen to progress their work as soon as possible. The Officer also clarified that following the re-issuing of correspondence to Town and Community Councils

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regarding the review at Committee's request, the Panel were continuing to receive representations for consideration.

The Chairman praised the suggested changes, noting that they afforded the Panel more independence and the opportunity to hear a wider variety of input from their membership.

There being no further queries from Members it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the revised Terms of Reference for the Review Panel as described in the report and at Appendix A to the report be endorsed.

Reason for recommendation

To enable Committee to consider the panel's proposals regarding the membership of the Review Panel.

559 WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARIES STANDARDS 2019/20 (DLS) –

The Library Services Manager presented the report which informed Members of the feedback on the Library and Information Service performance received from the Welsh Government, recommended that Committee approve the Annual Return for 2019 - 2020 submitted to the Welsh Government and informed Members about discussions regarding the reporting to Welsh Government for 2020 – 2021.

The report advised that the Vale of Glamorgan had met ten of the twelve core library entitlements in full during 2019-2020, with one not being achieved (CE12) and one being partially achieved (CE11). The Library Service had met six of the nine quality indicators with targets. The service, in common with every library service in Wales only partially met the staffing levels target QI 13, while along with 15 other authorities the Vale did not meet the acquisitions or materials per capita target QI 9 and were one of seven who did not meet the opening hours per capita target QI 16.

In terms of benchmarking the Vale of Glamorgan Library Service against others in Wales, the service had a mixture of higher and lower rankings for performance indicators, with the majority being at the positive end of the scale. The Vale achieved one of the highest levels of active users, one of the highest levels of library visits per capita and the lowest number of unplanned closures.

The Officer continued by presenting to Committee some of the service's highlights for both 2019-20 and 2020-21, including the numerous ways in which the service had responded and adapted to the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to Members queries, the Officer clarified the following:

- Open+ would operate through each library card having a bar code which, when scanned, would allow users to access libraries during later hours,

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subject to the individuals in question receiving an introductory session explaining the library's systems and emergency procedures to them.

- In the context of Open+ usage, an 'adult' would be an individual of 18 years of age or older, however this could be subject to review following the extension of the vote to 16 and 17 year olds.
- The service was currently making a record of what the uptake had been for 'Online Storytime'.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration wished to formally record her thanks to the Library Service for their huge effort and their innovation and creativity in responding to the pandemic, providing a friendly face during a lonely time. The Cabinet Member and the Library Services Manager also wished to praise staff members within the service who had volunteered to repurposed and had supported the finance and regeneration teams as well as the track and trace service.

The Chairman wished to thank the service for the support provided within his own Ward, Dinas Powys, and with there being no further queries it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Annual Return for 2019 - 2020 submitted to the Welsh Government be endorsed.
- (2) T H A T the current and anticipated performance of the Library and Information Service in relation to the Welsh Public Libraries Standards framework be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To comply with the requirements of the Welsh Government for formal approval of the Annual Return for 2019 - 2020.
- (2) To keep Members informed of progress.