

## LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2021.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

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

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

Also present: Councillor L. Burnett (Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration).

### 96 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

### 97 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor Mrs. S.D. Perkes declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 4 – Estyn Case Studies of Effective Practice in Vale of Glamorgan Schools and Agenda Item No. 5 – Development in Blended and Remote / Distance Learning Practice in Vale of Glamorgan Schools. The nature of the interest was that the Councillor was a Local Authority appointed Governor for Holton Primary School, in accordance with Section 18.3.3 (b) of the Members' Code of Conduct.

### 98 ESTYN CASE STUDIES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IN VALE OF GLAMORGAN SCHOOLS (DLS) –

The report updated Members on the effective practice case studies identified in Vale of Glamorgan schools by Estyn since the introduction in September 2017.

The Principal Improvement Partner presented the report which advised that since September 2017, 20 schools in the Vale of Glamorgan had been inspected, and where Estyn had identified excellent practice during an inspection, schools were invited to prepare a written case study which would be published by Estyn and shared with other schools. Estyn had also identified examples of interesting or innovative effective practice that were worthy of sharing with others, even if the Inspection Area overall had not received a judgement of excellent. In such cases,

Estyn invited the school to prepare a written case study on the agreed areas of effective practice.

Twelve case studies of effective practice from Vale of Glamorgan schools had been published and information about the case studies was included in Appendix 3 to the report. Two further schools had been invited to write case studies and had not yet been published, however information about the effective practice identified in the schools was included in Appendix 4 to the report.

The Principal Improvement Partner subsequently invited representatives from Cogan Primary School and Ysgol Sant Curig to address Committee, and Members were provided with a presentation from each school outlining their case studies in further detail.

Following their presentations, the Principal Improvement Partner formally thanked the representatives from both schools and noted that the examples of effective practice discussed were to be celebrated. The Chairman referred to the contents of the presentations as being inspirational and important.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration, with permission to speak, wished to add her thanks to those of the Principal Improvement Partner, stating that she was amazed at the work which had been undertaken and recognising the level of support schools had provided to learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Cabinet Member hoped that Committee saw how productive it could be to hear from those schools and queried whether Members might welcome schools becoming more directly involved in feeding back to Committee as part of the Scrutiny process. The Chairman agreed that this would be helpful as schools and learners were a large part of the Committee's remit.

Further Members praised the report and presentations, commenting as follows:

- Not all pupils arrived at school from a good home background and ready to learn, and it was therefore gratifying to see schools had systems in place to support these pupils, with teachers often prepared to not only teach but act as counsellors or substitute parents;
- The examples of effective practice outlined in the report should be disseminated and rolled out as widely as possible;
- Members would welcome more teachers making representations to Committee as part of the Scrutiny process.

Committee, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

#### RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the examples of effective practice identified by Estyn be noted.
- (2) T H A T Committee's thanks to staff in all Vale of Glamorgan schools for their hard work and commitment be noted.

### Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

#### 99 DEVELOPMENT IN BLENDED AND REMOTE / DISTANCE LEARNING PRACTICE IN VALE OF GLAMORGAN SCHOOLS (DLS) –

The report updated Members on development in blended and remote learning practices in schools during autumn 2020 and spring 2021. Appendix A to the report summarised the findings from meetings undertaken between Improvement Partners from the Central South Consortium (CSC) and school leaders and staff in the Vale of Glamorgan during the autumn term 2020 and spring term 2021, during which time there was a strong focus on approaches to continuing learning and blended learning practices, and how schools were providing support for learner wellbeing and engagement.

The report also outlined findings in relation to developments in provision, wellbeing, support for vulnerable learners, engagement of pupils and parents as well as quality assurance activities undertaken by schools, and included a number of ‘cameos’ that exemplified provision from a number of schools across the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Principal Improvement Partner subsequently invited representatives from Wick and Marcross CiW Primary School and St. Cyres School to address Committee, and Members were provided with a presentation from each school outlining the work they had undertaken in developing blended and remote/distance learning practice.

Following their presentations the Principal Improvement Partner thanked the representatives from both schools and acknowledged that it was difficult to cover the full extent of the work undertaken in a presentation to Committee.

Councillor N.C. Thomas raised concerns regarding the children whose attendance of live learning sessions was poor, how this was affecting schools’ record keeping and how schools were addressing instances of poor attendance and engagement.

In response to a query from a Member regarding the distribution of technology to learners, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources advised of the following:

- Over 7,500 end user devices had been distributed to learners across the Vale of Glamorgan. This constituted a 3:1 device ratio of brand new equipment for pupils, and usage of the equipment varied between Primary and Secondary education. It was hoped this would widen access to learning for pupils who had not had this previously.
- There were legacy opportunities for families with regard to the wireless broadband functionality which the Local Authority had made available to learners who had required it, with some national telephone companies now offering specific deals for qualifying families, to ensure that there wasn’t a regression to how things had been before the pandemic.

- The next stage of the Hwb programme included looking at Teaching and Learning tools that would allow pupils to engage in blended learning across the spectrum of being at home and in classroom.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

#### RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the findings of the report and the approaches developed by schools to ensure the continuing of learning and support for learner wellbeing and engagement be noted.

(2) T H A T Committee's thanks to staff in all Vale of Glamorgan schools for their efforts in supporting learners be noted.

#### Reason for Recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

#### 100 CARDIFF AND VALE TEST TRACE PROTECT SERVICE SUPPORTING ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES (MD) –

The report informed Members of the work of the Council as part of the Cardiff and Vale Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) service in supporting ethnic minority communities in accessing COVID-19 testing and vaccination. The work had achieved significant positive outcomes and had established effective mechanisms for public health messaging to a number of communities which historically public sector organisations had found it hard to reach.

The report advised that the Cardiff and Vale region had one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Wales. Throughout the response to the pandemic there had been a clear need to actively engage ethnic minority communities in Cardiff and the Vale to support the delivery of public health messages, the work of the TTP service, and more recently, the mass vaccination programme. In July 2020 an TTP Ethnic Minority Subgroup was established.

The work of the group was a demonstration of the Vale of Glamorgan Council delivering on its Strategic Equality objectives through collaboration with a range of regional partners.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration, with permission to speak, wished to praise the hard work of the Communications Manager and the Head of Policy and Business Transformation who had presented the report. The Cabinet Member highlighted the success of the service, stating that it had been a phenomenal strategy and that she wished to publicly thank the Officers and their teams for the work carried out.

Members echoed the Cabinet Member's thanks, and Officers addressed Members' subsequent queries as follows:

- A key part of tackling anti-vaccine misinformation was highlighting the voices of credible community leaders, who members of a given community would trust and listen to;
- Other work to tackle anti-vaccine misinformation had included making vaccines available within faith settings and holding drop-in sessions where those with doubts regarding the vaccine could discuss their concerns and, if they wished, be given the opportunity to have the vaccine;
- A regional 'myth-busting' communications network had been established which worked to understand what myths were affecting communities and to develop a targeted approach to dispelling them;
- There was data regarding which age groups which had been most hesitant in receiving the vaccine, Officers would circulate this information to Members following the meeting;
- Work was being carried out to break down uptake of the vaccine amongst ethnic minority groups, although the health service's systems did not always record ethnicity. The information that was available, however, would be triangulated with other data available to the service in order to form demographic profiles and assist in drawing some conclusions from the work undertaken.

Having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

#### RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the work of the Cardiff and Vale Test, Trace, Protect service in supporting ethnic minority communities in accessing COVID-19 testing and vaccination be noted.
- (2) T H A T the report be referred to Cabinet for their information and awareness.
- (3) T H A T following consideration of the report by Cabinet, the report be circulated to all Councillors, members of the Public Services Board and members of the Equalities Consultative Forum for their information and awareness.

#### Reasons for Recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the presentation and discussions at the meeting.
- (2) To enable Cabinet to consider the contents of the report.
- (3) To provide Members and partners with information on the work in this arena of activity.

## 101 WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2020-21 (MD) –

The report apprised Committee on the progress made against the Welsh Language Standards in the Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2020/21 (Appendix 1 to the report) and against the actions in the Council's Promotional Strategy for the Vale of Glamorgan during 2020/21 (Appendix 2 to the report) and summarised the main areas where progress had been made and provided annual updates as required by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The report requested Committee's views on the appendices to refer to Cabinet for their consideration and approval prior to publishing the Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2020/21 by 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2021.

Following the Head of Policy and Business Transformation's presentation of the report, Councillor Hodges thanked the Officer and noted it was good to see progress had been made despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The Councillor then referred to action 3.5 within the Council's Welsh Language Promotion Strategy, to 'Consider the possibility of establishing a Welsh Language Centre in the Vale', and noted that a target had been set to carry out a feasibility study by September 2018. The Councillor asked whether the Officer had any further information regarding this matter, and suggested it was an action which Cabinet needed to progress more strongly. The Officer confirmed that he would obtain further information on this matter and ensure it was circulated to Members.

In response to further queries from Members, the Officer advised of the following:

- A Linguistic Skills audit of the Council was due to be undertaken during the next quarter and this would feed into the next version of the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy;
- According to the report 122 of 1572 (6%) Council employees who responded to the previous Linguistic Skills survey (2018) had indicated they had Welsh language skills, in comparison to 21% of Vale of Glamorgan residents. This highlighted the need to refresh this information in order to inform the Strategy.

There being no further comments or queries it was subsequently

### RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report and Appendices 1 and 2 be noted.
- (2) T H A T the report (including appendices) be referred to Cabinet for consideration and approval of the Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2020/21 (Appendix 1) for publication by 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2021.
- (3) T H A T Committee's comments regarding the need to progress more strongly the consideration of establishing a Welsh Language Centre in the Vale be forwarded to Cabinet for their consideration.

Reasons for Recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the presentation and discussions at the meeting.
- (2) To allow the Council to meet its reporting duty to the Welsh Commissioner as part of the Welsh Language Standards by publishing the Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2020/21.
- (3) To ensure the views of the Committee are considered prior to approval of the Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2020/21 (Appendix 1).