

No.

LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote Meeting held on 7th July 2022.

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

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor R.R. Thomas (Chair); Councillors A. Asbrey, R.E. Godfrey, W. Gilligan, E.J. Goodjohn, W.A. Hennessy, H.P. Hodges, J. Lynch-Wilson, N.B. Marshallsea, J.M. Norman,

Co-opted Members: R. Morteo (Church in Wales), Dr. M. Price (Roman Catholic Church), L. Barrowclough (Parent Governor – Primary Sector) and I. Cramb (Vale Youth Forum).

Also present: Councillors L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources) and R.M. Birch (Cabinet Member for Education, Arts, and the Welsh Language).

121 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chair read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing”.

122 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors H.M. Payne (Vice-Chair) and E. Penn.

123 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

124 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

125 CURRICULUM FOR WALES: JOURNEY TO 2022 – SUMMER TERM 2022 UPDATE –

The Assistant Director for Curriculum and Professional Learning for the Central South Consortium (CSC) provided a presentation to the Committee on Educational

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Reform in Wales following the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 becoming law following Royal Assent in April 2021. The Act stated the new curriculum requirements for all learners aged 3 to 16 in maintained or funded non-maintained nursery education in Wales.

In support of the presentation, a Headteacher from a Primary school and a senior assistant headteacher from a Secondary School within the Vale of Glamorgan made representations on how their schools had designed, adopted, and would be implementing a curriculum that would fulfil the Welsh Curriculum requirements set out in legislation and provide the learning it defined.

By September 2022, schools would be legally required to design a curriculum, adopt their curriculum, and publish a summary of it, implement their curriculum and assessment arrangements and keep their arrangements under review and follow additional duties around the curriculum. In conclusion the Assistant Director advised that Welsh Government did not expect schools to have perfected or completed all aspects of curriculum design reform by roll-out.

Following the Assistant Director's presentation with representations from the guest Headteachers and subsequent questions from the Committee, the presenter and guests added

- In terms of funding to cover teacher time outside of the classroom to support the development of the curriculum, schools had originally felt a financial burden however, this was eased with the introduction of the Welsh Government (WG) Professional Learning Grant which was often ringfenced to cover supply cover and learning resources. In the current context, teaching staff often saw the value of taking time out and would often support each other which would further reduce supply costs. All schools were also provided with collaboration funding via the CSC grant system which was in addition to the WG Professional Learning Grant. The base rate was approximately £6k per school plus £100 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teacher.
- Even teaching staff based within well performing schools saw the benefits of national reform and considered the new curriculum as a positive change. Thanks to the commitment of staff, the benefits of developing the curriculum was often seen first-hand which, in turn, built support for engaging with the process. The financial and mentoring support provided by CSC to schools was absolutely crucial. The Curriculum for Wales was unique in that it had been developed over a very long period of time; therefore, the inherent proactive and immediate attitude of teaching staff was a barrier at first. However, staff were now able to see the positive results centred on the four purposes of the curriculum that were everything schools wanted for their pupils and the wider society. This meant that pupils were actively engaged in their own learning.
- Pupil feedback on the curriculum had been very positive. Schools would often undertake various forms of Pupil Task Groups, on a regular basis, which provided the opportunity for pupils to inform staff on aspects of the curriculum they most liked and approaches to teaching that worked well.
- With regards to the reform in qualifications that ran alongside the curriculum and the subsequent impact on pupils, the changes were being led by

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Qualifications Wales. A huge consultation exercise had taken place and was still ongoing with changes not due for implementation until the current year 10 pupils hit roll-out. Aside to formal qualifications, there was more school planning and assessment work going on alongside the curriculum to ensure that pupil success within each school reflected the requirements of the curriculum. Schools were moving forward in a very measured way in terms of assessment to ensure that the methods and approaches to assessment were appropriate and prepared pupils accordingly for formal qualifications.

With no further questions or comments, the Committee subsequently

AGREED – T H A T invited guests be thanked for their thorough representations on the Curriculum for Wales: Journey to 2022 – Summer Term 2022 Update and that the content of the presentation be noted.

126 ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT: 2021/22 (REF) –

The Head of Additional Learning Needs and Wellbeing presented the biannual reference from Cabinet raised on the 9th of June 2022 Cabinet Meeting.

The Council had a corporate responsibility to ensure that there were effective arrangements in place for safeguarding children and adults who required specific Council services. Therefore, the Annual Report for 2021/22 provided an overview of the Corporate Safeguarding activities that had taken place across the Local Authority since the mid-year report was presented to the Committee.

Following the Officer's presentation, and subsequent questions from the Committee, Officers further advised:

- Pupil isolation was included within the Restrictive Practices and Physical Interventions Policy which was designed to safeguard pupils. Pupil isolation practices were much less common in schools today.
- Estyn undertook a thematic review called "We don't tell our teachers." The review focused on experiences of peer-on-peer sexual harassment among secondary school pupils in Wales. Several recommendations were made as a result of the review and, in response, the Council had requested schools to report against the Estyn review to better understand where schools were in terms of dealing with the matter. The report advocated a culture change away from misogynistic behaviour in schools and it was widely recognised that there was a long road ahead to identify and implement an effective culture change in schools.
- Everyone had a corporate parenting responsibility to raise awareness of and tackle instances of bullying in schools to ensure that all pupils could be educated in a safe environment. This would need to be tackled in a sensible and appropriate way given the culture of each school.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language added that it was good to see extensive safeguarding training being offered in schools especially as adequate training was an Estyn inspection requirement however, it was

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disappointing that safeguarding training was not mandatory for school governors. On a separate point, it was good to see the report refer to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and it was important that all pupils were seen as a product of their home environment by teachers in terms of their culture background. The Estyn review was a depressing read and it was shocking to see what was deemed as acceptable “banter.” It would therefore be interesting to see a case study on how a school had successfully tackled the culture change.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the reference and report, subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the content of the Cabinet reference and appended Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2021/22 be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the covering and appended report on work that had been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults.

127 CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO TRANSFER SPECIALIST RESOURCE BASE AT LLANDOUGH PRIMARY TO YSGOL Y DDRAIG (REF) –

The Operational Manager for Strategy and Resources presented the reference and appended Cabinet report which sought Cabinet approval to consult on the proposal to permanently relocate the Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Llandough Primary School to Ysgol Y Ddraig from January 2023.

The proposal was presented under section 2.3 of the School Organisation Code (2018). Section 2.3 of the School Organisation Code referred to Regulated Alterations of a school, and if accepted by Cabinet, would be subject to the relevant statutory consultation as set out in the body of the report. The Cabinet reference and appended report had been received by the Committee as part of the proposed consultation exercise.

The current SRB provision at Llandough Primary School moved to Ysgol Y Ddraig on a temporary basis during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure social distancing and a safe learning environment could be maintained. The Council investigated the options available to deliver the provision from an alternative school site which had the space that would allow social distancing, good ventilation, and safe use of pupil toilets. That space was found at Ysgol Y Ddraig primary in the west of the Vale of Glamorgan. The agreed arrangement was temporary and reviewed regularly, with a view that the base would return to Llandough Primary School when COVID restrictions eased.

Local authority officers from Building Services had surveyed the accommodation at Llandough and concluded that extensive re-modelling of the ground floor section of the school would be required in order to provide a functional space for the provision going forward. In addition, because of the limitations of the site, any remodelling would not create the same standard of environment as could be offered at Ysgol y Ddraig which was a newly built facility with all the benefits of a 21st Century school.

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Following the presentation and subsequent questions from the Committee, the Operational Manager added

- The SRB was a Vale of Glamorgan wide provision and therefore some families were already making significant journeys to access the provision. It was impossible to conclude that one site was preferable over the other as the relevant transport costs involved were the same.
- Transport to and from the new proposed site was the primary issue for the Council to consider and therefore, the Council was very interested to hear what future consultation responses set out on the matter. The provision was offered on a part time basis and therefore journeys were not required on a 24/7 basis.
- ALN pupils would be eligible for free transport if they were assessed as having severe and/ or complex difficulties and were attending a special school or specialist resource base as directed by the Complex Needs Team or a class in a mainstream school which was 2 miles or further (primary aged pupils) from the parental home address as measured by the shortest available walking route. Pupils attended the SRB from all areas of the Vale of Glamorgan and all pupils were currently being transported to the temporary accommodation at Ysgol Y Ddraig. The criteria for assessment were based on the ALN Transport Policy and centred around the accessibility of the provision for the pupil based on their physical capabilities.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language added that the proposal was welcomed as the provision would therefore be offered in a more central location in terms of the Vale of Glamorgan area as a whole. It also allowed the pupils to attend a more modern facility. The subsequent additional space at Llandough Primary School would be utilised to increase the number of pupils on roll within the school so the proposal was seen as being beneficial to all parties.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the reference and report, subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the content of the Cabinet reference be noted and the proposal, as set out in the appended Cabinet report, be endorsed.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the Cabinet report to carry out a statutory consultation in compliance with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018 on the proposal to transfer the Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Llandough Primary to Ysgol Y Ddraig from January 2023.

128 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST MAY 2022 (DLS) –

The Finance Support Manager advised that the revenue position for 2022/23 would continue to be challenging for the Council both operationally and financially due to

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the ongoing implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Emerging pressures during 2022/23 related to energy standing charges, general inflation particularly in areas such as school transport and cost of living and staffing pressures were being experienced across services and would need to be carefully monitored during the financial year.

It was early in the financial year however the forecast for the Learning and Skills Directorate was a breakeven position following a transfer from the rationalisation reserve of £50k to fund the cost of renting a demountable unit at Ysgol Y Deri for the Learning and Wellbeing Class. There may also be a further transfer required from the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reserve to fund a shortfall on budgeted Out of County income with regards to pupils from Outside of the Vale of Glamorgan at Ysgol Y Deri.

An efficiency target of £68k was identified for the Directorate in the final proposals for the revenue budget which was approved by Cabinet on 28th February 2022 the Strategy, Culture, Community Learning and Resources saving of £32k would be found from savings against the historical pensions budget, the balance of the savings would be identified by the service as the year progresses.

With no comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the position with regard to the Authority's 2022/23 Revenue Budget, within the remit of the Committee, be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the content of the report and the projected revenue outturn for 2022/23.

129 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST MAY 2022 (DLS) –

The report provided an update on the progress of the Capital Programme for the period 1st April to 31st May 2022. Details by scheme were set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Finance Support Manager advised that the report set out any requested changes to the 2022/23 and future years' Capital Programme. There were three (correction to paragraph 2.5 of the report) requests within this report that fell within the remit of the Committee. A request to include a new scheme in the Capital Programme in relation to playground paving in Colcot Primary School, a request to add the Community Focused School's grant to the Capital Programme to safely and effectively open schools to the community outside traditional hours and Penarth Pavilion.

With no comments or questions, the Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

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- (1) T H A T the progress made on delivering the 2022/23 Capital Programme for the schemes within the remit of the Committee be noted.
- (2) T H A T the use of Delegated Authority in relation to projects set out at Recommendation (2) of the report be noted.
- (3) T H A T the use of Emergency Powers as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report be noted.
- (4) T H A T the changes to the 2022/23 and future years' Capital Programme, as set out at Recommendation (4) of the report, be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1-4) Having regard to the content of the report on Capital Programme progress, the use of Delegated Authority, the use of Emergency Powers and changes to the Capital Programme.

130 SUMMARY OF ESTYN INSPECTION OUTCOMES FOR SPRING TERM 2022 (DLS) –

The Principal Improvement Partner for the Central South Consortium advised that, following a public consultation, a revised Estyn inspection framework had been developed by Estyn for piloting with schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the spring term 2022.

Estyn invited all maintained schools and PRUs to put themselves forward for a pilot inspection using the revised framework. Three schools from the Vale of Glamorgan (Llandough Primary, Stanwell School and Whitmore High) had been involved in the pilot and were inspected during spring term 2022. None of the three schools were in statutory follow-up (Significant Improvement and Special Measures) or Estyn Review.

The Officer added that, with the revised framework, the notice period for schools had been reduced from 15 to 10 working days. All schools chosen for the pilot inspections in spring term 2022 received early notification of around five working days prior to the formal notification period. The inspection reports from spring term 2022 would not include summative grades but instead there would be greater detail on strengths and areas for improvement to support stronger evaluation and promote improvement.

Where Estyn identified interesting or innovative practice during an inspection, schools were invited to prepare a written case study which would be published by Estyn and shared with other schools. Both Stanwell School and Whitmore High were invited to write two case studies each.

During the spring term 2022, one non-maintained nursery setting, Swallow Playgroup, was also inspected jointly by Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales. No

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follow up activity had been identified by Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales in relation to Swallow Playgroup.

Following the Officer's presentation and subsequent Committee questions, the Officer added that the Welsh Government operated a colour coding to indicate the levels of support received by a school from regional consortia. However, the coding was suspended back in March '20 with the start of the national pandemic and the current system now differentiated between 'core' support and 'enhanced' support which was well received by schools. To support parents with gauging standards of a school, from September '22, schools would publicly advertise summary guidance on self-evaluation findings as well as the school's key priorities and support the school received.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the report, subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the inspection outcomes of the three schools and the one non-maintained nursery setting inspected during the spring term be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the content of the report on Estyn findings about local schools and non-maintained nursery settings.

131 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE 2021/22 (DLS) –

The performance report, as presented by the Director of Learning & Skills, set out the Council's progress at quarter 4 (Q4) (1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022) towards achieving its Annual Delivery Plan (2021/22) commitments as aligned to its Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

All 4 Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives were attributed a Green performance status at Q4 to reflect the good progress made to date. This was positive given the ongoing challenges arising from the pandemic.

Appendix A to the report outlined the Council's performance against its Annual Delivery Plan commitments for 2021/22 as aligned to the remit of the Learning & Culture Scrutiny Committee.

Following the Director's presentation, and subsequent questions from the Committee Officers added

- Welsh Learner numbers had decreased during the national pandemic and the Council was actively trying to re-recruit. The online learning provision, established in response to the pandemic, was well received and therefore the provision would be continued. Recruitment efforts were also being made via a 'whole family' approach under the 21st century schools programme.
- It was acknowledged that further efforts to engage with the home-schooling community was required and the Council would ensure that efforts were made

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to engage home educators in Welsh Language provision going forward. This would involve sign-posting individuals to the various free resources available.

- Tablet devices were also available to loan in Vale of Glamorgan libraries to support individuals to access digital Welsh language learning resources.
- The library service had fully utilised a £10k direct grant to run activities for the Winter of Wellbeing (WOW) from public libraries. A key objective for the Council going forward was to advertise the multiple services, events, and facilities available within Vale of Glamorgan libraries and information would continue to be available online via the council's website and social media channels.

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

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the performance results and progress made towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan 2021/22 commitments, as aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives within the remit of the Committee, be noted.

(2) T H A T the remedial actions to be taken to address areas of under-performance and to tackle the key challenges identified within the remit of the Committee be noted.

(3) T H A T the progress being made through the Council's recovery strategy and Directorate Recovery Plans in response to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) To ensure the Council clearly demonstrated the progress being made towards achieving its commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan 2021/22 aimed at making a positive difference to the lives of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.

(2) To ensure the Council was effectively assessing its performance in line with the requirement to meet its performance requirements as outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and reflecting the requirement of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that it maximised its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.

(3) To ensure Members maintained an oversight of the recovery issues impacting on the work of the Council and their respective Scrutiny Committees