

LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote Meeting held on 10th November, 2022.

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

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

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

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

Also present: Councillors R.M. Birch (Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language), L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), C.P. Franks, Dr. I.J. Johnson and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

432 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.”

433 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor W. Gilligan.

434 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the reconvened meeting of 6th September, 2022 and the ordinary meeting, both held on 6th October, 2022, be approved as a correct record.

435 DECLARATION OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

436 DRAFT CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24 AND INITIAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2023/24 – 2027/28 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 6th October, 2022 as contained within the agenda was presented by the Finance Support Manager.

Following a query from the Vice-Chair, the Finance Support Manager advised that unsupported borrowing was that on which the interest costs were not provided by Welsh Government, and therefore the Council needed to cover these costs whilst also having ensured they were affordable.

With the permission of the Chair, Councillor Franks addressed the Committee and asked for further information regarding the location of proposed redevelopment sites for St. Richard Gwyn and Sully Primary schools. In response, the Director for Learning and Skills emphasised that these proposals were currently in the bid process and had not yet been finalised, but advised that they were likely to remain on the current sites of both schools, with no alternative sites identified.

The Leader of the Council further clarified that while the St. Richard Gwyn redevelopment bid was being moved forward, the others within the Committee's remit currently had no status, and therefore no sites or further details to report on.

Having considered the reference and report, Scrutiny Committee subsequently:

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Cabinet Reference and appended Draft Capital Strategy 2023/24 and Initial Capital Programme Proposals 2023/24 -2027/28 report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference and report on the Council's Initial Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 and Capital Bids.

437 FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN REFRESH (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 6th October, 2022 as contained within the agenda was presented by the Finance Support Manager.

Following a question from Councillor Penn, the Finance Support Manager advised that while the Council having a good level of reserves was helpful in terms of facing significant forthcoming cost pressures, these funds were only accessible once, and not on an ongoing basis.

The Chair subsequently queried what form any potential lobbying of Welsh Government for an appropriate settlement could take. In response, the Leader advised that Local Authority and Welsh Government Leaders met regularly, currently fortnightly, and discussed this matter in detail. They advised that as Welsh

Government received its funds from the UK Government, Welsh Local Authorities had lobbied at a UK level jointly through the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), however indications were that the Welsh Government settlement would be poor. Local Government would be expected to make cuts across the board and therefore when budget proposals were brought to Scrutiny Committees, there would be difficult choices to be made. They advised that Local Authorities across Wales were in the same challenging financial position.

Having considered the reference and report, Scrutiny Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Cabinet reference and appended Financial Strategy 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Plan Refresh report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference and report on the Financial Strategy assumptions made on costs and funding in the Medium Term Financial Plan refresh.

438 UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND SUSTAINABILITY OUTCOMES OF BAND B OF THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 20th October, 2022 as contained within the agenda was presented by the Project Manager for Strategy.

The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources added that the Council's website contained further information which illustrated the community benefits of projects in the programme.

With permission from the Chair, the Leader highlighted the ground-breaking and award-winning work undertaken with regards to community benefits under the programme. They advised that the team had more than trebled Welsh Government targets on the project, and explained that skills within contracted companies were used to deliver positive outcomes for communities in an unprecedented manner. Benefits delivered included creation of work, training and work experience opportunities, and use of local construction businesses.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language praised the holistic approach taken to building and development under the programme, which encompassed all opportunities and stakeholders so that the impact was as wide ranging as possible. They offered their thanks to the Officers involved for their hard work on the scheme.

Following a query from the Chair regarding the programme's Net Zero carbon targets and obligations, The Project Manager for Strategy advised that the Council were the first Local Authority in Wales to deliver the Net Zero model at South Point Primary School. The Council was building upon that model and rolling it out into new schools being developed. These schools were all meeting their embodied target for 2022.

Ysgol Y Deri was improving on the embodied target, and exceeding requirements. Performance against targets was monitored and addressed with schools to ensure targets were continually met.

The Vice-Chair echoed previous comments congratulating the Officers on the community benefits of the programme, and particularly the involvement of young people in construction works as building social capital locally.

Councillor Penn subsequently highlighted the ecological measures proposed for the new Ysgol Y Deri site as a positive example of how schools could approach their environmental impact. On this point the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources directed the Committee to information on the Council's website regarding work undertaken by the Council around preserving The Vale of Glamorgan's ecology, as part of the programme and beyond.

In relation to the proposed expansion of Ysgol Y Deri, The Chair queried whether the environmental impact of constructing a new site, and additional travel for pupils and teachers worked against environmental protection measures. In response, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources explained that as this proposed development was a Wales-wide provision, it would incur additional travel for pupils in any location. They advised that work was also being undertaken to strengthen Additional Learning Needs (ALN) resource base provision within mainstream schools, to avoid travel to specialist schools, where possible.

The Project Manager for Strategy further advised that travel for pupils was considered when planning the development, including a Transport Assessment which focussed on reducing private car travel, but that there were restrictions to this around the facilities required for pupils, and active travel provision opportunities. They informed the committee on a number of elements of the new Ysgol Y Deri development that addressed sustainable construction, drainage, heating and energy efficiency.

Following a query from Councillor Godfrey, The Project Manager for Strategy updated committee on the redevelopment of St. Nicholas Primary School and advised that alternative sites were reviewed. A wide-ranging search for alternative sites within the catchment area was carried out, however, the rural locations of these would have created limitations. Sites located outside of St. Nicholas settlement boundaries would have also incurred planning considerations. They advised that staff parking spaces and pupil drop off and collection points were moved within the school site in the proposed designs, to alleviate pressure on narrow roads accessing the school. It was decided that the existing site had the least constraints and was more acceptable in planning terms.

Having considered the reference and report, Scrutiny Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Cabinet reference and appended Update report on the Community Benefits and Sustainability Outcomes of Band B of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of both the Cabinet reference and Update report on the Community Benefits and Sustainability Outcomes of Band B of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

439 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2022 (DLS) –

The report was presented by the Finance Support Manager and provided an update on the progress of the Capital Programme for the period 1st April to 30th September, 2022. Details by scheme were shown in Appendix 1.

Appendix 2 provided a summary of the position of the Capital Programme by Directorate from approval at Council on 7th March, 2022 to 30th September, 2022, including any changes requested within the report.

The report set out any requested changes to the 2022/23 and future years' Capital Programme.

Capital schemes were facing challenges due to significant cost increases, which could necessitate scheme re-engineering or re-tendering, resulting in delays to projects. Project officers were also reporting long lead time on the delivery of materials and a shortage of skills in some areas.

Having considered the report, Scrutiny Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the progress made on delivering the 2022/23 Capital Programme schemes within the remit of the Committee be noted.

(2) T H A T the use of Delegated Authority as set out in the report be noted.

(3) T H A T the use of Emergency Powers as detailed in the appendix to the report be noted.

(4) T H A T the following changes to the 2022/23 and future years' Capital Programme be noted:

- Street Lighting along Frampton Lane – Increase this scheme budget by £5k in the 2022/23 Capital Programme, to be funded by a contribution from S106 monies.
- Dinas Powys Library Bridge – Include this scheme in the 2022/23 Capital Programme with a budget of £2k to be funded from an Environment and Housing revenue contribution.
- Cosmeston Play Area – Vire £13k from the Cosmeston Play Area scheme to the Porthkerry Play Area Scheme.

- The Knap Gardens – water and biodiversity project – Include this scheme in the 2022/23 Capital Programme with a budget of £6k, to be funded from a contribution from S106 monies.
- Ysgol Sant Curig – Lighting renewal – Carry forward £56k into the 2023/24 Capital Programme.
- Review alterations of parking permit schemes - Carry forward £55k to 2023/24 Capital Programme.
- Penarth Leisure Centre – High Level Glazing - Carry forward £1,546k into the 2023/24 Capital Programme.
- Barry Regeneration Partnership Fund - Carry forward £689k into the 2022/23 Capital Programme.
- Murchfield Community Sports Facilities - Carry forward £178k into the 2023/24 Capital Programme.

Reason for recommendations

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

440 SUMMARY OF ESTYN INSPECTION OUTCOMES FOR SUMMER TERM 2022 (DLS) –

The report was presented by the Principal Improvement Partner for the Central South Consortium (CSC). Estyn inspected quality and standards in education across Wales. Following a public consultation, a revised inspection framework had been developed by Estyn for piloting with schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the spring and summer terms 2022. In the summer term, four primary schools (Ysgol y Ddraig, Peterston Super Ely Church in Wales Primary, Ysgol Iolo Morganwg and Sully Primary) were inspected. None of the four schools were in statutory follow-up (Significant Improvement and Special Measures) or Estyn Review.

Following a query from Councillor Goodjohn, the Principal Improvement Partner agreed they would consider how examples of interesting or innovative practice identified in schools by Estyn could be fed back to the Committee in future. In response to a query from the Vice-Chair, they advised that staff members from schools inspected had provided their feedback on the new inspection framework, and some had found the shorter notification period in advance of an inspection was appreciated and useful. In addition, some staff had appreciated the move away from a summative judgement and towards greater evaluation and feedback on their strengths and areas for development. Schools had also valued having an input into the design of the framework itself.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language, Councillor Marshalsea and Councillor Godfrey welcomed the shortening of the notification period as it gave a truer reflection of school activities and presented a shorter period of heightened stress and performance anxiety for staff. On their request, the

Principal Improvement Partner agreed they would pass on the Committee's congratulations on the inspection outcomes to the four schools inspected.

With no further questions or comments from the Committee, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the inspection outcomes of primary schools Ysgol y Ddraig, Peterston Super Ely Church in Wales, Ysgol Iolo Morganwg and Sully Primary, inspected during the summer term, be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

441 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRESSION UPDATE (DLS) –

The report was presented by the Engagement Manager for the Youth Service and the Lead Officer for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing. They informed Members of the reduction of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the Vale of Glamorgan as well as updates to the NEETs agenda from Welsh Government and the work being done locally within the Vale of Glamorgan.

The data highlighted the level of young people classified as NEET had reduced in National Curriculum Year (NCY) 12 and 13, whilst remaining below the Welsh average for NCY groups 11 and 13. There was an increase in the percentage of Year 11 young people classified as NEET by 0.10% from previous year:

- Year 11 young people classified as NEET in the Vale was 1.00%, below the Welsh average of 1.60%;
- Year 12 young people classified as NEET in the Vale was 0.40%, on par with the Welsh average of 0.40%;
- Year 13 young people classified as NEET was 2.25%, below the Welsh average of 2.29%.

The reduction of NEET young people in the Vale had been a result of strong partnerships with Careers Wales, Council departments, education, training providers and European Social Fund (ESF) projects.

Following questions from the Vice-Chair, the Engagement Manager advised that Vale of Glamorgan schools identified young people at risk of becoming NEET when post-16, and the Youth Service then intervened to support such learners. They advised that the aims of their NEET prevention programme were clear, that young people needed to opt-in to the programme, and that parental consent was required. Alternative accredited training was provided by the service where learners had problems in particular school lessons, with the aim of reducing and preventing exclusions from school. Schools were also supported to offer alternative learning provision in conjunction with commercial and third sector partners.

The Engagement Manager advised that participants were supported throughout years 10 and 11 and contact was made with them after year 11 finished to support

them with moving on from school. All young people involved in the project both pre- and post-16 worked towards an individual action plan, and viewed the programme as a positive support mechanism. Where young people would not engage with the programme, after-school clubs and youth clubs provided an avenue for youth workers to build positive relationships with them, with a view to them then accepting support in school. If this was unsuccessful, a collaborative approach could be taken to supporting a young person, which may involve the Youth Wellbeing Service, Youth Homelessness Team or Law Enforcement Officers. They confirmed that a breakdown of participants by gender was appended to the report and although figures were slightly lower than target for female participants, overall the results of the programme were good.

Following queries from Councillor Goodjohn, the Lead Officer for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing advised that provision for young people who were not educated at school included the setting up of a weekly drop-in service at the YMCA hub in Barry where young people from such backgrounds could access support. The Engagement Manager added that Elective Home Educated (EHE) young people could access support through the Council's Engagement Wellbeing and Attainment Teacher and their team, who would engage with families as soon as they informed a school that they are willing to home-educate. It was ensured that the child would have a package of education they would receive at home, and that the family were supported as much as possible. They advised that if young people are unable to sustain full time attendance at a mainstream school, the service may be involved with more bespoke offers of training or placements out of county with independent schools. Learners with relevant issues were supported by referral to a Social Emotional Mental Health Panel to either sustain their attendance in mainstream schooling or with specialist placements, if appropriate.

With permission from the Chair, Councillor Johnson drew Committee's attention to appendix B to the report, and the Council having outperformed all other beneficiaries in the East Wales area in its Inspire to Work programme. In response to subsequent queries from Councillor Johnson, the Engagement Manager advised that the relationship with Llamau had been very positive in reaching young people further from the job market. They added that although the service faced forthcoming challenges, for example around changes in funding sources, joint work was underway with partner agencies such as Careers Wales and the Youth Offending Service to ensure a successful future.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the progress made in the last 12 months of the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee receives a further progress update report in 12 months.

Reasons for recommendations

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

(2) To keep Members apprised of work and progress on the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and the NEETs agenda.