

No.

LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 6th January, 2025.

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

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

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

Co-Opted Members: Dr. M. Price (Roman Catholic Church), G. Van Der Burgt (Parent Governor – Secondary Sector) and G. Scott (Welsh Medium Education).

Also Present: Councillors R.M. Birch (Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language), C.P. Franks, G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing), Dr. I.J. Johnson and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

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”.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from M. Werrett (Church in Wales), L. Barrowclough (Parent Governor – Primary Sector), E. Woodfield and I. Da Silva (Vale Youth Council).

MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 9th December, 2024 be approved as a correct record, subject that in relation to the Quarter 2 Revenue Monitoring report for 2024/25 Councillor E.J. Goodjohn raised a comment regarding the good value and work provided by the Council Youth Service and also referenced the good work undertaken through the POD activity.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

No.

PRESENTATION: CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM – CURRICULUM FOR WALES UPDATE – AUTUMN TERM 2024 –

The presentation on assessment and feedback for Years 7 to 9 was introduced by the Central South Consortium's Principal Improvement Partner: curriculum, teaching and assessment, and involved the Deputy Headteacher for Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg.

Councillor Marshallsea commented that there were some children that faced challenges with their learning despite trying hard and having high attendance, and she queried how were parents helped to understand the difficulties. The Deputy Headteacher replied that there were pupils that unfortunately achieved lower grades despite trying as hard as others, so it was important to capture that. This was done in the school through the use of a banding system, so the aim would be to work with those bands carefully to ensure that issues were reflected within the expected progress. There would also be additional narrative within written reports.

In reply to a query from Councillor Asbrey regarding how the assessment process would becoming embedded with staff and children so that they understood, the Deputy Headteacher stated there was an initial trial last year which resulted in a few tweaks, and so far, it appeared that most children understood it. The assessment would be explained to each new intake for Year 7, and any new staff member would receive training. Feedback from staff was that they were pleased with the new assessment as it was clearer.

Councillor Payne queried difficulties with literacy for Year 7 and whether that was as a result of Covid. In response the Deputy Headteacher advised that for the current Year 7, the standard of literacy appeared to be a bit lower than previous years. Therefore, there are had been an adjustment to the way that classes were organised to concentrate more on literacy. In addition, there was a special curriculum and there would be work with the primary schools on a cluster basis to try and address some of the issues. Regarding the special curriculum, the Deputy Headteacher clarified that the school had to plan for different levels of ability and different speeds and progression within it, but it was found that the plan for last year needed to be adapted for the pupils that came in this year. The school was working with the Learning Support Department to show how resources could be adapted to ensure that the curriculum was inclusive for all pupils. The Principal Improvement Partner added that there would be a report to the Scrutiny Committee later in the year regarding how schools were trying to meet the challenges around literacy, which is a Welsh Government priority.

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Birch with permission to speak, stated what was of interest was the use of exams and assessments, that may in some ways disadvantage some pupils that preferred continual assessment throughout the year. Councillor Birch queried how were both types of learning accommodated. The Deputy Headteacher advised that learning descriptors was an important factor. The vast amount of assessment was formative assessment so that would capture different types of learning throughout the year.

No.

There being no further queries or comments, the Chair thanked the guest speakers for their valuable input and contributions.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the presentation be noted and officers and invited guests thanked for their update report.

Reason for recommendation

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

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES ANNUAL PLACEMENTS REVIEW (REF) –

The reference from the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee of 3rd December, 2024 as contained within the agenda was presented by the Operational Manager – Care Planning.

Councillor Payne commented that it would be interesting for the Committee to receive a case study to show the journey of child looked after including a breakdown of costs. In reply the Operational Manager stated that case study could be provided in the next update report and that some of the complex cases could cost between £200k to £500k per year.

In regard to potential costs following the Welsh Government's Eliminate agenda, the Operational Manager advised that the Council would incur some initial short term costs around setting up new residential provision. There was grant funding available through the Regional Partnership Board for capital expenditure, and Welsh Government was currently considering whether a revenue budget stream would be made available around the ongoing running costs.

Subsequently, the Committee

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the Children and Young People Services Annual Placements Review report be noted.
- (2) T H A T a further Annual Placements Review report be received in December 2025.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.
- (2) To ensure that Members from the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee have opportunity to consider the matters set out in both the covering report and appended report which related to their portfolio area.

No.

CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING MID-YEAR SUMMARY REPORT –
NOVEMBER 2024 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet of 19th December, 2024 as contained within the agenda was presented by the Safeguarding Officer – Additional Learning Needs.

Councillor W. Hennessy queried the uptake of safeguarding training for school governors, and he asked whether there were any plans to make the safeguarding module mandatory. In response, the Safeguarding Officer stated that there were no plans to make the training mandatory, which had been discussed at length by the Corporate Safeguarding Group. A piece of compliance work was planned to take place shortly, and there had been discussions around training undertaken by Elected Members who were also on school governing bodies.

Councillor H. Payne commented why wouldn't a committed school governor undertake safeguarding training. She also queried whether there were any recruitment delays because of the need to complete safeguarding training. In reply, the Safeguarding Officer stated that he could only respond on the basis of Learning and Skills, and that there were not any delays as the department would complete risk assessments.

It was noted that all Vale of Glamorgan Councillors had completed the relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, and it was noted that roles within a school required a separate DBS check to be completed, as a check may not be up to date.

The Committee agreed that safeguarding training should be mandatory for all school governors.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the Corporate Safeguarding Mid-Year Summary Report – November 2024 be noted.
- (2) T H A T Cabinet be advised of the view of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee that it should be a mandatory requirement for all School Governors to undertake safeguarding training.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.
- (2) To advise Cabinet of the view of the Scrutiny Committee that safeguarding training should be mandatory for all School Governors.

No.

3RD QUARTER RECOMMENDATION TRACKING 2024/25 AND UPDATED COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2024/25 (DCR) –

The report advised Members of progress in relation to the Scrutiny Committee's historical recommendations and the updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2024/25:

- 3rd Quarter Recommendation Tracking October to December 2024 (Appendix A);
- 2nd Quarter Recommendation Tracking July to September 2024 (Appendix B);
- Updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2023/24 (Appendix C).

It was advised that a visit to Ysgol Y Deri had been scheduled for Friday, 24th January, 2025.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the status of actions listed in Appendices A and B to be the report be agreed.

(2) T H A T the updated Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2024/25 attached at Appendix C to the report be approved and uploaded to the Council's website.

Reason for recommendations

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