

## START WELL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2025.

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

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

Present: Councillor R.R. Thomas (Chair); Councillors A. Asbrey, J. Aviet, W. Gilligan, E. Goodjohn, S.M. Hanks, W.A. Hennessy, N.P. Hodges, J. Lynch-Wilson, H.M. Payne and E. Penn.

Co-opted Members: M. Werrett (Church in Wales), Dr. M. Price (Roman Catholic Church), L. Barrowclough (Parent Governor – Primary Sector), G. van der Burgt (Parent Governor – Secondary Sector), R. Davies and P. Bond (Vale Youth Council);

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), G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing) and Dr. I.J. Johnson.

### 41 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”.

### 42 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T Councillor H.M. Payne be appointed Vice-Chair for the Municipal year.

### 43 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This were received from Councillor S.J. Haines.

### 44 MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH, 2025 –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

## 45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

## 46 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2025/26 (DCR) –

The report requested Members to consider the draft Annual Forward Work Programme items and topics of investigatory (Task and Finish Review) for 2025/26 for the new Start Well Scrutiny Committee.

An amended draft Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2025/26 had been forwarded to all Members as an updated Appendix A, and Members of the Committee were asked to consider the contents for approval.

In addition, the Committee was asked to note the remit of the Start Well Scrutiny Committee, as shown in paragraph 1.2 of the report.

Councillor W. Hennessy suggested that a review or discussion on school budgets and how schools were affected would be useful. The review or discussion should also include the Headteachers and representatives of the Budget Forum. Councillor Hennessy also requested a report on the impact of the closure of the Vale's People First programme and how parents would be assisted.

Councillor H. Payne stated that one topic for suggestion as a task and finish review was; what impact did the Council have on educational achievements for children and young people. In addition, Councillor Payne requested a report detailing sports facilities available to children and young people in the Vale, and a report on the current active travel arrangements for school staff in the Vale. Councillor Payne also commented that a program of Committee visits to schools would also be of benefit to showcase good practice.

Councillor S. Hanks suggested a task and finish review into Additional Learning Needs in the primary school sector.

Councillor E. Goodjohn put forward a review into school transport.

Councillor N. Hodges commented that a task and finish review into the running of school buildings should be undertaken, which would also look at new builds and good practice.

Councillor A. Asbrey advised that she had a number of suggestions and would email them through to the Chair. The Chair stated that emailing suggestions was acceptable.

Councillor E. Penn commented that it would be good to consider schools that had good pupil and parent engagement and how they have improved communication with disengaged pupils/parents, for example, Cadoxton Primary School had an excellent record in that area.

R. Davies and P. Bond, Co-opted Members from the Vale Youth Council, commented that Task and Finish review work relating to educational attainment and ALN funding would have the biggest impact upon children's lives.

It was noted that a visits to schools to showcase good practice would be devised and Democratic Services would explore the possibilities of holding some Committee meetings at schools.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the proposed changes to the draft Forward Work Programme for 20525/26 (Amended Appendix A to the report) be agreed.

(2) T H A T the remit of the Start Well Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reason for recommendations

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

47 MATTER WHICH THE CHAIR HAD DECIDED WAS URGENT –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the following matter which the Chair had decided was urgent for the reason given beneath the minute heading be considered.

48 SHARING OF PUPIL LEVEL ATTAINMENT DATA (DCR) –  
**(Urgent by the reason for the need to consider the response from Welsh Government in a timely manner)**

At its meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2025, the former Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee received a report outlining work being done by the Central South Consortium (CSC) to improve reading across schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.

During the debate it was highlighted that data on pupil attainment levels could only be accessed by schools and could not be shared further with the Scrutiny Committee, the CSC or the Learning and Skills Directorate of the Council.

The Scrutiny Committee considered that the sharing of this data was vital for the Council to assess pupil progress and to identify areas requiring improvement, and it therefore agreed for the Chair to write to the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary requesting that the decision to restrict access to data of this kind be reviewed and changed, so that the Council and improvement bodies such as the CSC could have full access to data which would assist with the primary objective of improving the levels of attainment of pupils across Wales.

A copy of the response letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2025 from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education was attached at Appendix A to the report for the Committee's consideration.

Councillor R. Birch (Cabinet Member for Education), with permission to speak, advised that she would raise the matter with Welsh Government to ask them to look at the decision again.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the response letter from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education as attached at Appendix A to the report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

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