

**Matter which the Chair has decided is urgent, by the need to consider the response from Welsh Government in a timely manner.**

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| Meeting of:   | <b>Start Well Scrutiny Committee</b>  |
| Date of Meeting:  | <b>Monday, 19 May 2025</b>  |
| Relevant Scrutiny Committee:  | Start Well Scrutiny Committee   |
| Report Title:   | Sharing of Pupil Level Attainment Data  |
| Purpose of Report:  | To consider the response from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education in relation to the sharing of pupil level attainment data. |
| Report Owner:   | Director of Corporate Resources   |
| Responsible Officer:  | Gareth Davies, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer   |
| Elected Member and Officer Consultation:  | Director of Learning and Skills<br>Head of Standards and Provision  |
| Policy Framework:   | The recommendation of this report is within existing policy framework and budget.   |
| <p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At its meeting held on 3rd 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The Scrutiny Committee considered that 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 is reviewed and changed, so that the Council and improvement bodies such as the CSC could have full access to data which will assist with the primary objective of improving the levels of attainment of pupils across Wales.</li> <li>• A copy of the response letter, dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025, from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education is attached at Appendix A, for the Committee’s consideration.</li> </ul> |   |

## **Recommendations**

1. That the Committee considers the response letter from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education as attached at Appendix A and makes recommendations as it sees fit.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

1. To consider the response letter from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education is attached at Appendix A.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The former Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee considered a report on Reading in the Vale of Glamorgan at its meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025. The report can be viewed via the link below:

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Scrutiny-LC/2025/25-03-03/Reading-in-the-VoG.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Scrutiny-LC/2025/25-03-03/Reading-in-the-VoG.pdf)

- 1.2 The report provides the response from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education in relation to a letter sent to by the Chair of the former Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee regarding the sharing of pupil level attainment data.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The Scrutiny Committee considered that 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 is reviewed and changed, so that the Council and improvement bodies such as the CSC could have full access to data which will assist with the primary objective of improving the levels of attainment of pupils across Wales.

- 2.4 A copy of the response letter from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education is attached at Appendix A, for the Committee's consideration.
- 2.5 In their letter the Cabinet Secretary refers to Welsh Government's, 'School Improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability', which explains its approach to data and information to support learning and improvement, the guidance can be accessed via the following link: <https://hwb.gov.wales/evaluation-improvement-and-accountability/school-improvement-guidance-framework-for-evaluation-improvement-and-accountability/>
- 2.6 The Director of Learning and Skills has indicated that, as a local authority, the Vale of Glamorgan Council will continue to follow national guidance on the use of data and work closely with Welsh Government as they look at how to better facilitate local authorities in their use of evidence to support their knowledge of their schools.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1 The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 ("the 2015 Act") requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities, and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 3.2 Support for learners contributes to the Council's Wellbeing Objectives drawn from the Corporate Plan 2020-25. There is specific alignment with the Council's wellbeing objectives to work with and for our communities and to support learning, employment, and sustainable economic growth.
- 3.3 This report recognises the importance of reading in schools and effective provision to develop pupils' reading skills.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1 None as a direct result of this report.

### **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

#### **Financial**

- 5.1 None as a direct result of this report.

#### **Employment**

5.2 None as a direct result of this report.

**Legal (Including Equalities)**

5.3 None as a direct result of this report.

**6. Background Papers**



Eich cyf/Your ref GD/L&C Reading - MS 210325  
Ein cyf/Our ref LN/00388/25

Councillor R.R. Thomas  
Chair  
Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee

gjdavies@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

6 May 2025

Dear Rhys,

Thank you for your letter of 31 March requesting greater sharing of pupil level attainment data to support local improvement efforts.

Accountability in the system is vital and this should be informed by evidence. I am clear that the use of both quantitative and qualitative data is important to understand how our system is performing and how our learners are being supported.

Our *'School Improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability'* explains our approach to data and information to support learning and improvement. It seeks to protect schools and learners from a high-stakes approach which over-focuses on narrow quantitative data, which has previously hindered our workforce from focussing on the best interests of learners.

The guidance sets out that the majority of the energy and focus in the system should be on delivering school improvement, guided by effective self-evaluation, improvement planning and support in all schools. Schools should use the widest and richest possible range of evidence available to inform their self-evaluation processes, while retaining a constant focus on learner progress.

To ensure independent oversight of the system, Estyn is now undertaking more frequent inspection activity - all schools receive a core inspection and an interim visit within a 6-year period. This provides clear accountability and transparency for the school system.

Moving forward, we have committed to working with local authorities and school leaders to review our approach to sharing learner attainment and wider information to support improvement. As we progress with our work on the data and information ecosystem in

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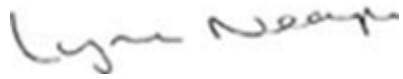
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

education, we will be looking at how we better facilitate local authorities in their use of evidence to support their knowledge of their schools. Alongside this, I have made a commitment to provide further information on age-related expectations related to literacy and numeracy. We are conscious of the risks associated with sharing learner attainment data and remain clear that the interests of learners and learning are paramount.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynne Neagle', written in a cursive style.

**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education