

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - WEDNESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2018

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB
ON WEDNESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2018 AT 09:30**

Present

Councillor CA Webster – Chairperson

JPD Blundell	NA Burnett	RJ Collins	DK Edwards
J Gebbie	M Jones	JC Radcliffe	B Sedgebeer
LM Walters	AJ Williams		

Registered Representatives

Tim Cahalane	Roman Catholic Church
Rev Canon E J Evans	Church in Wales
William Bond	
K Pascoe	

Apologies for Absence

Cairon Jackson	Parent Governor Representative
Councillor Jefferson Tildesley	Committee Member
Councillor Alex Williams	Committee Member
Nicola Echanis	Officer

Officers:

John Fabes	
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Mandy Paish	Senior Challenge Advisor, Central South Consortium

Invitees:

Councillor Charles Smith

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal declarations of interest were made in respect of Agenda item 5:-

Councillor N Burnett – School Governor at Brynteg Comprehensive School
Councillor C Webster – Has a child that studies at Brynteg Comprehensive School
Reverend Canon Evans – School Governor at Brynteg Comprehensive School
Tim Cahalane – Member of Central South Consortium
Kevin Pascoe – School Governor at Archbishop McGrath Comprehensive School, and a Member of Central South Consortium
Councillor JP Blundell – School Governor at Bryntirion Comprehensive School.

24. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Subject O&S Committee 1 dated 4 December 2017, be approved as a true and accurate record.

25. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services submitted a report, the purpose of which, was to present the items prioritised by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee; to present Committee with a list of further potential items for comment and prioritisation, and finally to ask the Committee to identify any further items for consideration using the pre-determined criteria form.

Attached at Appendix A to the report was the overall FWP for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which included the topics prioritised by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the next set of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees in Table A, as well as a list of topics that were deemed important for future prioritisation at Table B.

The Scrutiny Officer advised, that if Members required any further items for considering as part of the FWP going forward, then these could be forwarded to the Scrutiny Unit by email outside of the meeting.

Members agreed to accept the items as detailed in the attachments of the report, subject to the following:-

1. To prioritise the item detailed on page 19 of the report, ie Budgetary Impacts of Parc Prison.
2. To invite to the meeting that considers the subject of Emergency Housing, a representative from the Wales Audit Office.
3. That a site visit be arranged to St. David's 6th form College in Cardiff

RESOLVED: That the report be accepted and noted, subject to points 1. to 3. above.

26. A REVIEW OF THE FUTURE OF POST-16 PROVISION ACROSS BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Chairperson welcomed into the meeting the Invitees, and the Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training gave an introduction to the report on the above, following which the Chairperson invited questions from Members.

A Member advised that whilst the introduction given by the above Officer to the report had explained quite considerably what the Review would entail, the report she felt lacked detail as to what Officers required the Committee to do, ie what input to have from the Overview and Scrutiny process, and more notably what to scrutinise.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training referred those present to the report's Appendices, which detailed the final report in respect of the Post 16 Operational Board Final Report and proposals going forward. He added that these documents had been considered previously by the Post 16 Statutory Review Board as part of Phase 1 of the review. Phase 2 was now underway and further information and documentation would be presented to the Board on 15 January 2018. He added that the new project initiation document, terms of reference and project milestones would be available following this date. A previous report on this topic had been considered by Cabinet, prior to it being considered today by Overview and Scrutiny.

He added however, that future proposals regarding Post 16 Education and Training would not formally go out to consultation until a further report on the next stages of the process was due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in April 2018. Presently, appropriate data was being collated for inclusion in this report.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration added that it would assist Cabinet in their future deliberations on this matter, if Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members paid particular attention to paragraphs 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 of the report, as these were the available options to the local education authority moving forward which would form part of a future Options Strategy. He informed Members that Cabinet were due to visit Pencoed Campus this Friday, following which visits would be made to other schools, including those that offered special provisions, in order that options for the future could be shared.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training referred to the different phases of work that had been undertaken, outcomes of which were detailed in the supporting information contained within the Appendices to the report, and various elements of these had been scored against, details of which were also shown in the report's supporting information.

The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support, advised that the Post 16 Board as part of its deliberations had reviewed a range of concepts for the future of post 16 provisions across BCBC, which included:-

- The retention of the status quo;
- The merger of sixth forms into a BCBC sixth form centre, or the development of a new independent sixth form college, or the development of one or more sixth-form centres as part of the FE college
- A mixed model with some school sixth forms being retained, and others merged in line with the three models described above, or
- A full tertiary model.

A Member asked if any data could be shared regarding the percentage of schools within the County Borough that were under capacity in terms of pupil numbers, not just for Year 16 plus but for all ages within schools.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training advised that information such as this and future estimated growth of pupils in schools, would form part of Phase 2 of this Initiative, and be included in the report to Cabinet for its April meeting. Other data would also be looked at, such as demographics and certain geographical concepts. Grant funding arrangements for both pre-16 and post-16 pupils, would also be subject to some changes he added, in that there would be no significant change to pre-16 age, whilst post-16 would by and large be funded through Welsh government and allocated to different schools fairly, ie based on the schools size and number of pupils on role, etc.

The Member asked a follow-up question, namely if the future post-16 proposals would result in there being empty classes at certain schools.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 and Education and Training, advised that data such as this was presently being analysed, the results of which should be known by end of February coming.

A Registered Representative stated that the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff had yet to be consulted regarding the report's proposals, and he asked if/when this would take place.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training advised that informal discussions had taken place with the above, and further consultations were intended with the Faith School contingency in due course as matters developed.

A Registered Representative referred to governance arrangements that were being considered for any possible future models being proposed, particularly in respect of the process regarding school admissions. He noted that Bridgend College were looking at the admissions as part of their further educational protocols, and that 6th forms were intending to look at introducing their own admissions policy. If they introduced this however, they would be contravening the School Admissions Code Of Practice.

The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support advised the Member that he would look into this issue and come back to him outside of the meeting.

A Member asked if the proposals in respect of the future of post-16 provision within the County Borough had the support of the various School Governing bodies.

The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support, advised that governance support and other arrangements had not been looked at as it was too early in proceedings for this to take place. As soon as the Authority had decided firmer proposals regarding the route it was going to take in respect of Post-16 education, this would be closely considered as part of the overall proposals he explained.

A Member referred to paragraph 4.5.3 of the report, and noted that one of the proposals to be considered in respect of future post-16 provision, was a mixed model with some school sixth forms being retained and others merged in line with the three other models that were described in paragraph(s) 5 of the report. She asked if this meant that if some 6th form age students were not merging to form FE Colleges.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training confirmed that this was also to be considered further as part of the consultation exercise and the results of which would be included as part of the narrowed down feasible options that will form part of the report to Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration advised that he was of the opinion, as were his fellow Cabinet Members, that there was merit in all schools being catered for age 11-18 years of age students, and there were some reasons for this as shown in the table detailed on page 26 of the report, that would include improved teaching arrangements.

The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support, reinforced the fact that proposals being put forward, would be a lot more clearer in terms of what would eventually be put in place, after the consultation was concluded, and the views of all relevant consultees had been collated. This he added would also be shared once more with Overview and Scrutiny, in due course.

A Registered Representative stated that he had some concerns with regard to staff recruitment and retention for any changes that transpire whereby schools would be teaching age range pupils 11 – 18. He was aware from previous experience that it was already difficult to recruit teachers with expertise in teaching subjects such as Science and Mathematics. He felt that schools without 6th form education would struggle in this area, and therefore he considered that some secondary schools should retain 6th form education.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training advised that this would be considered as part of the consultation.

A Member pointed out that he appreciated the fact that there was a “one size fits all” solution when considering all the possible proposals for change, and that issues such as the demographics of different areas that comprise Wards needed to be considered as part of any changes. He felt that it was always necessary to raise the aspirations of children, in order to achieve continuous improvement, especially for children/families that resided in the more deprived areas of the County Borough, and for those children who unfortunately had learning needs, and to ensure that consideration is given to make them feel comfortable in the environment they are accustomed to being in. He finally added, that transport arrangements/costs would need to be carefully looked at in conjunction with changes introduced for post-16 education, and possibly also terms and conditions of staff.

The Chairperson noticed that there was no reference in the report to the ALN Bill, and a provision that allowed for an extension of schooling for young people up to the age of 25.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training confirmed that post-16 education proposals when finalised and implemented, would be supportive of ALN children and their individual needs.

A Member reiterated that the mental health of young students should be closely borne in mind when considering any changes in post-16 education.

The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support advised that the wellbeing of both pupils and school staff was critical, and that the Education Department had been involved in engaging with key public partners regarding this in terms of the overall scheme of things. He added that transport issues would also be closely looked at as was any mitigation regarding pupils transferring schools, etc.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration added that around 50% of students did not have that many options to pursue whilst being educated at schools, and therefore, some of the 6th form changes proposed would address this issue. He felt that all schools should have, for example, more equality in terms of options available for both vocational and academic categories of learning opportunities.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training added that there was still the intention in the future for vocational qualifications to be pursued in a FE college, as there was more expertise to study for this type of qualification there, than in schools. As an example of this, the Pencoed Campus site were looking at introducing engineering and other areas of expertise that supported apprenticeships.

A Member advised that for reasons of continuity, she would wish for her child to continue their education in the same school that continues to provide for pupils studying for A levels. She hoped the proposed models would improve post-16 educational opportunities for learners, she added.

The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support, advised that recruitment of teaching staff was a national as well as a County Borough issue, particularly with regard to teaching subject areas, such as for example, Science, Engineering and Mathematics for post-16 age pupils. This was compounded by the fact, that there were fewer teacher training opportunities currently in Wales than there used to be, an issue that Welsh Government were looking to challenge. He further added that Education Authorities were bound to look for ways to improve educational opportunities at schools,

under the Schools Education Code, hence the introduction of the project subject of the report.

A Member made the point that BCBC were held in high regard in terms of its standards of education provision, and that the review of post-16 provision needed to balance what was required from a statutory perspective; what the Council's preferred option was in order to secure improvements, and if there were any funding avenues available to assist in the financial support of the changes.

A Registered Representative confirmed that he was worried that the changes would result in surplus pupil capacity in some schools. He hoped that any changes could encapsulate further promotion of the Welsh language for pupils aged post-16, as well as promoting other more minority subject areas, such as those referred to in paragraph 4.8.3 of the report, ie through the development of vocational and blended type education opportunities, as well as more conventional higher educational learning.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration confirmed that he was in agreement with this proposal.

A Member also felt it was important to maintain scope for sports/physical activity provision to be provided at schools and/or places that provided education opportunities for learning at age post-16, and at higher educational levels, for young people to maintain their wellbeing for work life balance reasons.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration advised that consideration could be given to arranging a regular half day slot for sporting activities for young people going into full adulthood, across the County Borough.

A Member, whilst appreciating all the work that would be generated from the post-16 proposals, urged caution to transport arrangements for pupils subject to moving from one place of Education to another, particularly when considering up and coming budget cuts faced by Directorates.

The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support, advised that there would be the option of moving staff as well as pupils to accommodate any changes subsequently agreed upon, and that adequate transport provision would be considered as an integral part of what is eventually implemented.

The Chairperson felt, that consideration could be given to, wherever possible, combining school transport provision with that used by Social Services.

As this concluded business on this item, the Chairperson thanked the Invitees for attending, following which they left the meeting.

Conclusions:

1. The Committee determined that for Cabinet to make any future decision regarding the proposed concepts for Post-16, evidence of the following aspects having been considered needs to be provided:
 - a) The Governance route for any future proposal particularly since it was reported that it is currently difficult to recruit new Governors. The Committee requested that evidence be provided as to how this will be addressed;
 - b) How proposals aim to raise the aspiration of those pupils from the most deprived backgrounds;

- c) How the needs of vulnerable pupils such as those with ALN, who often struggle with change, are being met;
 - d) How Pastoral Care will be ensured in any provision going forward. The Committee recommended that whether in a school or a college, students needed a stable base for academic continuity where they could access support should they need to;
 - e) Evidence of where good practice has been considered in both England and Wales in relation to opst-16 education;
 - f) How e-learning will be utilised in any of the proposals;
 - g) How sports can be greater encouraged and incorporated into post-16 education;
 - h) Whether vocational learning should be provided in schools as well as colleges? What evidence is there from other LAS?
 - i) How any transition will be structured and managed;
 - j) How transport costs are going to be met – particularly the different implications there would be with transport depending on whether post-16 education was through a FE maintained college or school sixth forms;
2. The Committee also recommend that the Local Authority maintain control of the admissions process to ensure that it continues to be carried out in line with the code.
3. Members stressed the point that had been discussed during the meeting; that one size did not necessarily fit all, however the Committee felt that the political stance seemed to be that all schools maintain 11-18 provision. The Committee stressed the need to listen to the community and the experts particularly following consultation.

Additional Information

The Committee requested that they receive data regarding schools in the county borough that are under capacity.

27. **MEMBER AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report, the purpose of which, was to present the Committee with the findings and recommendations from a Member and School Engagement Panel (MSEP) meeting with Maesteg School.

The report gave some background information, highlighting that the schools performance had been previously questioned, especially in the combined English and Mathematics threshold indicator. This had been possibly compounded by the fact, that there were also a number of changes that all schools have had to address over the recent academic year, which may have impacted on this year's performance at all schools, including Maesteg, and these were outlined in more detail within the report.

The report then advised that in respect of Maesteg School, a joint local authority and Central South Consortium enquiry, conducted alongside the school was undertaken in May 2017, and some suggested recommendations set for the school in order that it may achieve improved performance, were shown in bullet point format at paragraph 3.5 of

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the report. A review of the school's performance had indicated that the school had made a positive start to addressing these recommendations.

In terms of the latest developments at the school, and in order to further gauge the improvements that have been made there, the Member School Engagement Panel met with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors, together with Officers from the Education and Family Support Directorate in November 2017.

Following this the Panel highlighted a series of key points and recommendations, and these were highlighted in bullet point format, in the first section of paragraph 4.1 of the report. The Panel also highlighted certain further points, in terms of key methods the school had identified for improvement as well as some possible areas for sharing best practice with others.

Paragraph 4.2 of the report then gave three recommendations the Panel also put forward at/following its meeting.

The Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support, advised that he would act appropriately on the recommendations put forward, and ensure these are implemented. He added that he would also arrange for these improvements to be monitored accordingly.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration supported the comments made by the Interim Corporate Director Education and Family Support.

RECOMMENDED: That the Committee:

- (1) Accepted the comments and recommendations of the Member and School Engagement Panel in relation to Maesteg School.

Determined to send the comments and recommendations to Cabinet, the Directorate and the Consortium for any suitable response.

28. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 12:40