

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - WEDNESDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2019

**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, 30 OCTOBER 2019 AT 09:30**

Present

Councillor – Chairperson

TH Beedle
KL Rowlands

JPD Blundell
RME Stirman

NA Burnett
A Williams

RJ Collins
AJ Williams

Apologies for Absence

PA Davies, J Gebbie and KJ Watts

Registered Representatives

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Officers:

Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
John Fabes	Specialist Officer Post 16 Education & Training

Invitees:

Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Megan Lambert	Youth Mayor
Councillor Charles Smith	Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration

85. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Review of Post 16 Education Provision Across Bridgend, Phase 4 Report.

Cllr T Beedle declared a personal interest in this item for the following reasons:

- Member of Post 16 Working Group
- Chair of Bridgend Governors Association
- LEA Governor at Maesteg Comprehensive
- His granddaughter was a pupil at Brynteg Comprehensive
- He had grandchildren in feeder schools – Nantyllyllon and Garth Primary Schools.

Cllr JP Blundell declared a personal interest in this item for the following reasons:

- LEA Governor at Bryntirion Comprehensive
- Community Governor at Cefn Glas Infants

Cllr N Burnett declared a personal interest in this item for the following reasons:

- Child in Brynteg
- LEA Governor of Brynteg Comprehensive and Penybont Primary.

Cllr K Rowlands declared a personal interest in this item because she had a child attending one of the schools that could be discussed in the meeting.

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Cllr C Smith declared a personal interest in this item because he was a Governor at Bridgend College.

Cllr R Stirman declared a personal interest in this item because she was a non LEA Governor at Tynyrheol Primary School.

Cllr Alex Williams declared a personal interest in this item because he was an LEA Governor at Pencoed Comprehensive.

Cllr Amanda Williams declared a personal interest in this item because she had a son in Brynteg Comprehensive.

L Morris, Registered Representative, Secondary Schools Sector declared a personal interest in this item because her son attended Maesteg Comprehensive School.

86. REVIEW OF POST-16 EDUCATION PROVISION ACROSS BRIDGEND PHASE 4 REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Megan Lambert, Youth Mayor to the meeting.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training presented a report informing the committee of the progress made on the proposals for Post 16 provision (Phase 4) and asking them to consider the draft consultation paper before the matter went before Cabinet for a decision. He outlined the background to the review and how Cabinet had approved for further analysis, three options from the original six concepts.

The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training explained in detail the strengths and weaknesses of the various options and the key drives for an effective sixth form provision. He outlined the issues in relation to both the existing local development plan (LDP) and the new LDP to cover the period from 2021-2033.

Members were invited to ask questions on the individual options.

Option 1

A member asked if in the event of two schools merging, would pupils from those schools have prior access to sixth form places over pupils from other schools? The Corporate Director Education and Family Support explained that the admission arrangements had yet to be determined but he envisaged that they would cater for learners from those schools first but they had to be mindful of legislation. The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training added that he expected this to be picked up when the admissions criteria was redrafted.

A member asked how the balance between academic and vocational specialisms would be addressed in sixth form centres. The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training explained that of the 30 level 3 subjects, 5 had to be vocational however they would like to see a greater mix and parity. New subjects were available through twilight sessions at Bridgend College and with larger settings they could provide more options. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support explained there could be an increase in school transport costs and that Post 16 Transport was currently out for consultation and there was an overlap between both issues.

A member referred to transport, the outcome of the Post 16 Transport Consultation and acceptable travel time. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support

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acknowledged that some groups of learners would find it difficult if transport was removed. He added that they tried to limit travel times to less than 40 minutes.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration stated that looking to the future, e-learning would play a significant part in future plans. A member stated that he welcomed e-learning and could not understand why travel would be an issue if a student could participate in a lecture from their own home. The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training reported that work was already being done to deliver a maths project online and they needed to consider models that had been adopted successfully.

A member asked the Youth Mayor if she thought blended learning was the way forward. She replied that the rapport she had with her teachers could not be built online and that this had allowed her to do really well. It also depended on the subject matter and on occasions students benefited from face to face discussion and debate.

A member referred to the IT system and said that it was not of a sufficient standard in many schools for blended learning. The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training acknowledged this and said that students with access to both materials and resources 24/7 achieved a full grade higher than their compatriots. The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration explained that maximum collaboration was required to include common timetabling, investment in technology, staff and new teaching methods.

A member asked if students would still have the opportunity to represent their sixth form centre or school in sport. She also asked if the implications of the 7000 new homes in RCT had been taken into account. The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training explained that lack of sport had been identified as an issue and he expected this to be addressed in any future models. He then explained that what had been identified in the LDP did not always transfer into houses. This was a complex matter and they worked closely with planning and neighbouring authorities to address these concerns.

A member challenged the accuracy of the data. He said that he had discussed the matter with the head teacher and there was some confusion regarding the data. The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training explained that they used set formulas to generate data based on the most up to date information available.

A member asked how moving the 6th form out of Bryntirion Comprehensive School would ease the problems and added that he believed that catchment areas were part of the problem. The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training explained that the problem was over capacity with new developments exacerbating the problem. They had to be able to guarantee sufficient numbers before building a new school. By taking the sixth form out, they could release capacity for pupils aged 11 -16 within the school.

Option 2

A member asked the Youth Mayor what she thought of the town centre proposal. She replied that there could be a benefit from improved transport links but also the clash between students from different backgrounds could have an impact on results.

Members discussed the possible outcome of the transport consultation, the possible removal of the discount and other options including the provision of a transport pass. A member was concerned that the message to potential students in the valleys was it takes four buses to get into town so don't bother. The Specialist Officer: Post 16 Education and Training replied that there had been robust conversations with parents and there was a willingness to travel. Over 50% of 16 year olds did not stay on at school and many travelled to Bridgend College using public transport. It was important to

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reduce the number of links wherever possible. The member replied that Bridgend College was in the town centre and easier to get to than Pencoed.

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support explained that they were considering a number of options for Maesteg and were keen to seek the citizen voice for various models before feeding back to Cabinet.

A member added that many sixth form students could drive and had access to cars and this should be taken into consideration particularly when looking at town centre sites.

Option 3

The Youth Mayor explained that the importance of being taught in your own school had to be weighed against a wider choice of subjects. Knowledge of the school, the area, the teachers and the culture helped with the sixth form experience. The twilight zone provided more options and the chance to work in the evenings which suited some students. This was her preferred option.

A member raised the issue of resources being divided in a fair way rather than a more insular approach. The Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration explained that he was very open to collaboration and open to suggestions regarding different training options. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support referred to the Festival of Learning which, for a cost of less than £10,000, facilitated over 1500 experiences for both teachers and pupils. There would be a similar event this year and next year.

A member asked if a plan was in place to mitigate the risks with any of the options. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support replied that the primary concern was around performance. Following the recent Estyn inspection, a plan had been developed and Post 16 outcomes was one of the recommendations.

The Corporate Director Education and Family Support stated that they had talked to head teachers and various stakeholders and there was a general feeling that the status quo, with further development in order to improve the delivery of this option would provide every school the opportunity to retain something in some shape or form. It would depend on a massive investment in technology and teaching to achieve blended learning and he welcomed any feedback.

Conclusions

Option 1

- Members recommended that if this option is taken forward then vocational training should be reviewed and promoted so the stigma around this route is removed
- Members recommended that a transport feasibility study is carried out before the report goes back to Cabinet with recommendations in the Spring to understand the full impact of costs of this option on the learner
- Members recommended if this option is carried forward that the use of E— Learning and interactive blended learning also be looked at to investigate if this could be a viable option to support learners in addition to them attending classroom learning
- A review of the Catchment areas should be undertaken where there are new housing developments to relieve the pressure on schools that are at capacity

Option 2

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- Members were concerned about the transport arrangements for transporting students to and from different centres
- Members expressed concern that Town Centre FE arrangements would take away education opportunities from the valley areas and would make it difficult for learners from these areas to attend town centre for their classes. Members were concerned that learners from these areas would be deterred from attending Post 16 Education if they were concentrated in these areas as they would potentially have to catch several buses, early in the morning and at a high cost.
- Members recommended that if this option was taken forward that the transport infrastructure around the town centre would need to be looked at as there was a potential of a large increase of buses and cars concentrated in those areas with potential for parking issues also

Option 3

- Members of the SOSC1 recommended this as their favoured option as arrangements could be reviewed and a more collective way of working could be taken forward.
- Members suggested that this option would allow for a collective use of resources also if the schools and FE centres worked together to plan Inset days on the same days then the training and development of teachers could be taken on as a collective approach too.
- Members recommended that if this option was taken forward that a combination of vocational and academic settings would be preferred so learners have more choice and they are treated as individuals.

Members also recommended that when the consultation goes out that it is sent to ALL primary schools to participate in.

87. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Forward Work Programme and informed the Committee that following a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, there would be budget meetings the first week of January and the Committee would consider a report on Education Outcomes at its 3rd February 2020 meeting. Members suggested that Post 16 Education be added to the February meeting subject to the report being ready in time.

88. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 12:28