Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr
Bridgend County Borough Council

Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich dewis iaith.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh.

Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate
Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643147 / 643694
Gofynnwch am / Ask for:

Ein cyf / Our ref:
Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Tuesday, 4 October 2022

Dear Councillor,

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

A meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 will be held remotely - via Microsoft Teams on **Monday, 10 October 2022** at **11:00**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
   To receive apologies for absence from Members.

2. Declarations of Interest
   To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008 (including whipping declarations)

3. Approval of Minutes   3 - 6
   To receive for approval the minutes of the meeting of 04 07 22

4. Pupil Attendance, Exclusions, Health and Safeguarding   7 - 30

   Invitees:

   Councillor Jon-Paul Blundell – Cabinet Member Education
   Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help

   Lindsay Harvey - Corporate Director – Education and Family Support
   Nicola Echanis - Head of Education and Family Support
   Claire Marchant - Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing
   Iain McMillan – Deputy Head of Children's Social Care
   Michelle Hatcher - Group Manager Inclusion and School Improvement
   Mark Lewis - Group Manager - Family Support
   David Wright – Group Manager Vulnerable Groups Support
   Raeanna Grainger – Group Manager, IAA & Safeguarding

By receiving this Agenda Pack electronically you will save the Authority approx. £0.80 in printing costs

Robin Davies – Group Manager, Business Support

Andrew Williams – Assistant Director for Partnerships and Improvement – Central South Consortium
Andy Rothwell – Principal Improvement Partner – Central South Consortium
John Welch – Strategic Lead for Equity and Well-being

Kathryn John - Headteacher, Brackla Primary School and Chair of Primary Federation
Richard Bailey – Headteacher, Bryncethin Primary School
Ryan Davies – Headteacher, Brynteg School

5.   Conclusions/Recommendations

6.   Forward Work Programme Update   31 - 40

7.   Urgent Items
      To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in
      accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person
      presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be
      transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Note: Please note: Due to the current health and safety requirements this meeting will not be held at
its usual location. This will be a virtual meeting and Members and Officers will be attending remotely.
The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will
be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you have any queries regarding this, please
contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643147 / 643148.

Yours faithfully
K Watson
Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

Councillors:	Councillors	Councillors
RJ Collins	M Jones	JH Tildesley MBE
M J Evans	J Llewellyn-Hopkins	A Williams
H Griffiths	E Richards	AJ Williams
D T Harrison	T Thomas	E D Winstanley

Registered Representatives
Rev Canon Edward Evans - Church in Wales
L Morris - Secondary School Sector

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 4 JULY 2022 AT 09:30

Present

Councillor A Williams – Chairperson

RJ Collins	M J Evans	H Griffiths	D T Harrison
M Jones	T Thomas	AJ Williams	E D Winstanley

Apologies for Absence

J Llewellyn-Hopkins, Rev Canon Edward Evans and E Richards

Officers:

Lucy Beard	Scrutiny Officer
Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Jessica Mclellan	Scrutiny Officer

1.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Melanie Evans declared a personal interest as a member of the Task Force for 21st Century Schools in her capacity as a Town councillor for Pencoed Town Council and as a School Governor for Croesty Primary School and Pencoed Comprehensive School.

Councillor Elaine Winstanley declared a personal interested as her Employer sits on the Public Service Board.

2.   APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 dated 20 January 2022 be approved as a true and accurate record.

3.   CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION NOMINATION

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report which requested the Committee to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

The Chairperson invited nominations, following which it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Tim Thomas be nominated to represent Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 as an invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

4.   NOMINATION TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY PANEL

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report, which requested the Committee to nominate one Member to sit on the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

The Chairperson invited nominations, following which it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Richard Collins be nominated
                 by Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 to sit on
                 the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

5.   FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny presented the Committee with the proposed draft outline Forward Work Programme (FWP) in (Appendix A) for discussion and consideration, requested any specific information the Committee identified to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wished to attend, requested the Committee to identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.6 and asked the Committee to note that the Forward Work Programme for the Committee would be reported to a meeting of COSC, following the July cycle of SOSC meetings.

The Committee requested the following reports be added to the Forward Work Programme:

- Upgrading of older school facilities that are not being replaced under School Modernisation and improving their energy efficiency in line with the 2030 Decarbonisation Agenda.
- English Language Schools' catchment areas / capacity.

That with regard to the Pupil Attendance, Exclusions, Health and Safeguarding report scheduled for the meeting on 12 September, the Committee look at:

- Pupil wellbeing from an attendance perspective and support in schools from Education Welfare Officers;
- How the Free school meal programme is being rolled out in schools across the county borough.
- What support schools are getting particularly for care experienced children and are there effective lines of communication between schools and social services support.
- In relation to increased referrals to Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the way in which referrals from schools to IAA are dealt with and the support in the team (and specifically requested representatives from IAA and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in relation to pupil attendance/safeguarding), for the September report.

In addition, the Committee recommended:

- Wellbeing be revisited within a suitable time frame to monitor progress and support.
- Sight of the Corporate Management Dashboard for the Education Directorate on a quarterly basis at the appropriate time.
- That Pupil Wellbeing be included and monitored as part of the Directorate Performance Dashboard in future.

RESOLVED: That the Committee considered and agreed the proposed
             draft outline Forward Work Programme in Appendix A,
             subject to the inclusion of the above requested
             reports and invitees and noted that the Forward Work

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Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be reported to a meeting of COSC, following the next cycle of SOSC meetings.

6.   URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 10:00

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

10 OCTOBER 2022

PUPIL ATTENDANCE, EXCLUSIONS, HEALTH AND SAFEGUARDING

1. **Purpose of report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 (SOSC1) with further detail as to how the Education and Family Support Directorate is responding to and addressing issues related to pupil attendance, exclusions, health and safeguarding.

2. **Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities**

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective/objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.

- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.

- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human, and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. **Background**

3.1 Following the COVID-19 pandemic and the disruption to education for children in Bridgend, this school year has been the first one, for over two school years, where schools have remained open throughout the full school year.

3.2 This has enabled learners to return to classrooms and access education consistently on a face-to-face basis. Over the course of this school year, there has continued to be a number of challenges and pressures that schools have had to face, demonstrating that although the normal life of the school has resumed, the true impact of COVID-19 is now beginning to be seen in terms of pupil attendance, exclusions, health, safety and safeguarding.

4. Current situation/proposal

Safeguarding in schools

4.1   Safeguarding is a priority for the Education and Family Support Directorate. To ensure schools are discharging their safeguarding responsibilities effectively and efficiently and support them in their efforts, the Education Engagement Team undertook a joint piece of work with all schools in June 2021 to audit their safeguarding approach across a wide range of areas and activities. This entailed schools using an audit tool devised by Estyn to explore and satisfy themselves that their approach to safeguarding learners was robust.

4.2   The audit tool has a total of 50 questions across the 5 domains. 78% of all the questions in the audits were rated as green, 18% were rated as amber and 4% were rated as red.

4.3   Once schools had completed their audits, the audits were shared with the Education Engagement Team to allow for further analysis. The Education Engagement Team undertook a comprehensive review of the audits to ensure that they were completed in a robust manner.

4.4   Findings from the audits reflect many strengths within schools in areas related to the safety of their setting, the effectiveness of their safeguarding practices and how they work with partner agencies around safeguarding issues. Specific strengths that have been recorded within school audits include the breadth of policies in place which safeguard children including the widespread adoption of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board safeguarding, anti-bullying and online safety policies.

4.5   All schools have a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who has undertaken and is up to date in relation to advanced safeguarding training. All schools are compliant with their whole-school, face-to-face safeguarding training.

4.6   Schools are utilising the safeguarding recording system (My Concern) to document low-level concerns as well as any safeguarding incidents that occur within schools. This enables schools to monitor patterns of concerns.

4.7   There is good reference to partner agencies supporting schools in relation to safeguarding issues. Schools have worked closely with Early Help, Calan, Police, and Barnardo's for specific support when required or to raise awareness with pupils and staff alike.

4.8   There is good evidence of schools undertaking surveys and consultations with learners and their parents. This has assisted schools in considering the type of support required linked to both safeguarding and broader wellbeing.

4.9   There is strong evidence of schools having a wide range of emotional support systems in place for learners including emotional literacy support assistants (ELSA), Thrive and pastoral support.

4.10   Areas schools identify they need to develop relate to how robust their safeguarding approach is and how effectively they communicate their safeguarding policies and procedures to staff, school governing bodies, children, parents and carers.

4.11   The one school rated as red relates to the leadership of the school, in particular around implementation of safeguarding process, procedures and behaviour management. This school has been supported significantly by the local authority and this support is currently ongoing. Significant improvements have been noted since this support has commenced.

4.12   There is evidence in the audits that school governing bodies need to be clearer on their roles and responsibilities linked to safeguarding within their schools. The majority of schools highlighted that training for governors was a gap and needed to be addressed. The local authority have strengthened this area by providing training to governors on safeguarding but also by developing governor support services through the Pupil Services Team. This is a priority identified in the Education and Family Support Directorate business plan.

4.13   Increasing the voice of children, parents and carers was another key area that is needed to be developed. Even though several schools had mechanisms in place to capture the voice of the child, parents and carers, schools acknowledged that more could be done within school councils, consultation, suggestion boxes to inform the development of the new school curriculum or the promotion of wellbeing support. Schools highlighted that the communication of safeguarding issues, policies and support could be improved across staff and governing bodies. Schools noted that they needed to add safeguarding to all team meeting agendas and school governing body meetings as standard agenda items.

4.14   Finally, an area that the local authority will be exploring with schools relates to the impact of their safeguarding work and to provide further evidence as to how schools can demonstrate safeguarding is embedded across their school settings.

4.15   It is now an expectation of the Education and Family Support Directorate that all schools complete an annual safeguarding audit and that audit is being developed annually to take account of new developments and learning in the area. Annual reviews of those audits will be undertaken by the Education Engagement Team at the end of each school year.

Pupil behaviour in schools

4.16   Pupil behaviour is becoming an increasing concern for schools and for the local authority. There is evidence that behaviour is becoming more problematic leading to increases in both fixed-term and permanent exclusions. The behaviours being witnessed within schools are predominately increases in verbal and physical aggression towards adults and other children along with persistent and disruptive behaviour.

4.17   This past school year (2021-2022), there has been a 100% in the number of permanent exclusions in comparison to the previous 2 years (which included COVID-19 and school closures during those periods). However, prior to COVID-19, the number of permanent exclusions is still increased.

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4.18 Fixed-term exclusions are also a concern with behaviours being recorded regarding verbal, physical aggression, persistent and disruptive behaviour. Fixed-term exclusions in secondary schools are higher than in previous whole school years. There were 707 incidents recorded in secondary schools up until April 2022.

4.19 In 2018-2019 (the last whole school year prior to COVID-19), there were 544 fixed-term exclusions. This is a significant increase and represents the challenges for schools following the pandemic.

4.20 These incidents and issues linked to permanent and fixed-term exclusions, and behaviour issues are also being noted in other parts of the Central South Consortium region and across Wales. It is believed that it is partly due to the impact of the pandemic. Anecdotally, it appears that children's behaviour and communication skills have been negatively affected leading to more disruptive and challenging behaviour within the school environment.

4.21 Ongoing work is being delivered to ensure schools consistently follow the graduated response, utilise their resources linked to behaviour and access local authority resources in a timely way. The local authority is also planning to introduce a training and workshops to support schools in using this process proportionately and in line with Welsh Government guidance. The manager of the Communication and Relationships Team (CART) has also been invited by the School Support Team to speak to their professional networks of pastoral leads/heads of year to help share strategies to assist with the above issues.

Mental health support in schools

4.22 The Educational Psychology Service continues to work at three different levels to support the mental health and wellbeing of our children, young people, school staff and families across the local authority.

Strategic/systems level

4.23 The Educational Psychology Service is supporting schools using the Department for Education (DfE) and Association of Educational Psychologists 'Recovery, Re-introduction, and Renewal: Safe and Successful Returns to School *A Handbook for Schools and Education Settings following Critical Incidents'*. The handbook uses the five key principles of recovery based on psychological models of resilience to support children and young people:

- Put emotional wellbeing first – for everyone

- Place relationships front and centre

- Acknowledge loss, change and bereavement

- Reaffirm school's strengths and core values

- Reaffirm safety and routines

4.24 The Educational Psychology Service is progressing the roll out of the online profiling tool 'The PERMA profiler' which is used within schools to identify, monitor, and improve the 'wellbeing profiles' of pupils and staff. The PERMA project was formally launched to all schools across the Central South Consortium region in November 2019. Currently, 23 Bridgend schools have been set up by the Educational Psychology Service since September 2020. The service is currently revisiting schools to support their progress and evaluate the programme before further roll-out to the remaining schools in Bridgend but respond to all new school requests to set up the profiler.

4.25 The Educational Psychology Service continues to train ELSAs in schools, having moved to an online training platform because of the pandemic. ELSAs work with groups and individual pupils to provide emotional literacy support and programmes to support wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people. Through a consortium model, over 120 ELSAs are trained every year to support emotional literacy in schools.

4.26 In collaboration with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, Rhondda Cynon Taf Educational Psychology Service, Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Bridgend Educational Psychology Service, we are supporting the roll-out of the whole-school approach 'In Reach' project providing mental health teams to support children and young people and schools across Bridgend.

School level

4.27 The Educational Psychology Service has continued to provide support in the following ways:

- the provision of direct contact and consultation support for schools and families using a telephone support line, emails, virtual and in-person meetings;

- the development and distribution of 11 packs of materials to schools to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff, pupils and families during spring, summer, and autumn term 2020;

- well-being surveys for school staff across BCBC and follow up all the respondents who requested support during lockdowns and the national pandemic;

- whole-school and tailored staff training sessions on wellbeing and loss and bereavement; the establishment of two school projects in autumn term 2020 as follows:

  o Year 11 support for pupils in Brynteg School;

  o Year 7 transition support for vulnerable pupils in Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School; and

      o   following the pandemic, online ELSA supervision increased by 100% which focused on recovery and well-being (this was very well received and has continued into the 2021-2022 school year and is ongoing.

Individual level

4.28   The Educational Psychology Service continues to respond to requests for support and develop bespoke solutions for children and young people.

Some examples of recent work include:

- individual and group wellbeing sessions;

- whole-school and setting, staff groups and individual bespoke training;

- counselling and therapeutic sessions for pupils;

- staff and parent consultations;

- loss and bereavement and sad event support for schools;

- loss and bereavement support for staff to directly support identified learners;

- mindfulness sessions for children and young people and staff;

- solution-focused, brief therapy sessions for individuals;

- supporting wellbeing and reducing anxiety with a sixth form group of learners;

- direct assessment work with individual pupils; and

- advice and support for parents including strategies around supporting the complex mental health of their children.

4.29   The Educational Psychology Service is acutely aware that there is an increased focus on wellbeing and recovery moving forward, in addition to the projects specified above. Well-being and good mental health will continue to underpin all their consultation and intervention work.

4.30   There are a wide range of preventative services that schools can access via the family support portfolio to support better mental health for children and young people. These include:

- Three early locality hubs located in the north, west and east of the county borough. These include family support workers, family engagement officers, school-based counsellors, lead workers (youth workers), education welfare officers, emotional wellbeing workers and community counselling.

- An Edge of Care service delivering support to those children who are at risk of entering the care system.

- Bridgend Youth Justice Service delivers emotional and wellbeing support through a directly funded health practitioner to reduce risks related to offending behaviour.

- Youth Development Service (for example, youth workers, participation workers and part-time youth service); specifically, who provide support to children and young people aged 11 to 25-years-old based on an assessed need.

- In addition, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board has commissioned an online counselling service called Kooth which 11 to 25-year-olds can access support.

Attendance

4.31 School attendance has always been a high priority in Bridgend. However, during the pandemic, we have seen a reduction in attendance levels. A large number of pupils have been affected by the pandemic due to lack of routine impacted by school closures and remote learning. Many pupils have also presented with anxiety and wellbeing issues. Addressing these issues is key in ensuring pupils reach their full potential in all aspects of life, including achieving a good education.

4.32 School attendance data for the periods 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 is highlighted in the table below.

	2018-2019	**2021-2022**
Primary attendance	94.8%	90.1%* **
Secondary attendance	94.1%	86.5%* **

* *Figures may be subject to change following validation in new school year.*

** *National attendance data for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 not available due to pandemic.*

4.33 As illustrated in the table above, school attendance levels across primary schools have reduced by 4.7 percentage points from 2018-2019 to 2021-2022.

4.34 A more significant reduction (7.6 percentage points) has been recorded for secondary schools' attendance for the same period.

4.35 While these reductions are concerning, this reflects a national position which has clearly been influenced by the pandemic.

4.36 The Education Welfare Service, schools, and the wider Early Help resource, have been working in close partnership to address the reduction in attendance levels. Some of these approaches and interventions are outlined below:

- Education welfare officers support and advise schools on attendance including ensuring statutory legal functions are used consistently and appropriately.

- A task and finish group chaired by the Group Manager (Family Support) with headteachers, education welfare officers and legal representation has been established to revise the local authority's attendance strategy.

- School attendance audits to be completed by all schools to evidence good practise and areas for development.

- Truancy patrol to be rolled out with the Police during the autumn term.

- A marketing campaign is being explored to ensure a consistent message is relayed to parents/guardians about the Importance of attending school.

- Encourage a 'buddy system' for pupils in all schools to promote confidence and wellbeing.

- Schools to reintroduce the Central South Consortium 'Callio' system of letters to parents to ensure a consistent graduated response to highlight and improve attendance levels.

- Continue with regular Welsh Government and Central South Consortium meetings.

4.37   The work of the task and finish group will result in a revised local authority attendance strategy, which will cover the period January 2023 to December 2025. Relevant stakeholders will be consulted prior to publication and presented to Cabinet in December 2022 for approval.

Care-experienced children's education

4.38   The local authority provides bespoke support to schools in terms of care-experienced children's education via the Education Engagement Team. Each school has a dedicated co-ordinator who provides advice, information, training and signposting to assist schools and their learners in accessing education that meets individual needs.

4.39   This team oversees the implementation of the personal education plans (PEPs) for each care-experienced learner and reviews these alongside Children's Social Care colleagues to ensure that the specific elements of the education identified as being required for the learner to archive is being offered and accessed in accordance with the requirements of the PEP.

4.40   The Education Engagement Team oversees the Welsh Government funding provided specifically for care experienced learners in relation to the Pupil Development Grant (PDG). This funding is used to provide schools and their designated care experienced leads with training, resources and access to additional tutoring where required. Further to this, the funding will be used this year to undertake a consultation event with learners to understand their experiences in education and whether there is any learning for schools and the local authority.

4.41   More recently, a senior education engagement co-ordinator has been appointed to provide even further detailed oversight of care-experienced children's education to ensure their individual progress is meeting their individual targets.

4.42	Schools are actively involved in the care planning process for care-experienced children via the reviewing process. .

Referrals from schools into Early Help and Children's Social Care

4.43	Over the past 12 months, with greater continuity in children attending schools, there has been a significant increase in the number of referrals being received into both Early Help and Children's Social Care. In 2021-2022, Children's Social Care received almost 5,500 individual referrals with Early Help receiving 3,500 family referrals. Over the course of the year, demand continued to increase into both service areas from a variety of agencies requesting support for children and families.

4.44	The number of referrals from Education and Family Support services have almost doubled in quarter 1 of 2022-2023 into Children's Social Care. Many of these referrals relate to behaviour issues similar to those referenced earlier in the report around fixed term and permanent exclusions.

4.45	There has also been a 20% increase in the number of referrals being submitted into Early Help from Education and Family Support services in quarter 1. Once again, requests for support relate to behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

4.46	From an Early Help perspective, additional resources have been secured to assist increases in demand and a revised process has been developed to ensure children and families access support in a timely way. Further to this, work has been undertaken on the council website to raise awareness of Early Help support and external services that can assist children and families without the need for intervention from the local authority.

4.47	Ongoing reviews of this process and the demand will be undertaken over the course of the next 12 months to ensure that families continue to access Early Help support in a timely way.

Universal primary free school meal (UPFSM) implementation

4.48	In December 2021, Welsh Government announced that all primary school children in Wales will get free school meals by September 2024. This commitment is in response to the rising cost-of-living pressures on families and the ambition of tackling child poverty and ensuring no child goes hungry in school.

4.47	In Bridgend, work has commenced to be able to offer all Reception pupils universal free school meals from September 2022 and then Year 1 and Year 2 from September 2023 with the aim of offering all primary school pupils meals by September 2024. There are challenges to achieving this, primarily due to staffing and resources available. However, the local authority is committed to achieving this within the timescales set by Welsh Government.

**5.	Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

5.1	There is no effect upon policy framework and procedure rules related to this report.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an EIA in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 Summary on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment is listed below:

Long-term	Children and families are enabled to take control and responsibility for the care and protection without intervention from the local authority.
Prevention	Schools having robust, effective and efficient safeguarding procedures that are understood across the school will ensure children are protected from harm.
Integration	The service is a multi-agency partnership where integration is key to good service delivery arrangements.
Collaboration	Collaboration is a key approach to ensure the protection of children and families.
Involvement	Participation and engagement arrangements will be strengthened to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities linked to safeguarding.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications related to this report.

9. Recommendation(s)

9.1 SOSC1 is asked to consider the content of the report.

Lindsay Harvey
Corporate Director (Education and Family Support)
4 October 2022

Contact officer:	David Wright (Group Manager - Vulnerable Groups Support)
Telephone:	(01656) 815424
Email:	david.wright@bridgend.gov.uk
Postal address:	Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

Background documents: Estyn safeguarding audit tool

Safeguarding audit tool

The purpose of this safeguarding audit tool is to support all education settings to review their safeguarding arrangements. The audit tool is intended to help education settings to identify strengths and weaknesses in their safeguarding arrangements and to ensure they are exercising their legal safeguarding obligations in line with the *Keeping learners' safe* statutory guidance. This tool can be adapted for different types of education setting as appropriate, and work-based learning (WBL) providers may find the WBL toolkit more suitable.

What is safeguarding and child protection?

In the context of this audit tool, safeguarding is the action taken to promote the well-being of children. Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children are provided with safe and effective care
- taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of a safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering, or likely to suffer abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm.

All education settings have statutory duties to operate in a way that considers the need to safeguard and promote the well-being of learners. When reviewing safeguarding arrangements education settings should consider how effective they are in the following:

- creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for learners
- identifying where there are well-being concerns and taking action to address these, where appropriate, in partnership with other agencies
- the development of learner's understanding, awareness, and resilience through the curriculum.

Achieving this objective requires systems designed to robustly:

- prevent unsuitable people from working with learners
- promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice
- identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a learner's well-being arising from home, community, school or college, and initiate or take appropriate action to keep them safe
- contribute to effective partnership-working between all those involved with providing services for learners.

How to use this audit tool

The audit tool **should not** be used as a checklist, but rather to support a whole-setting approach to safeguarding and provide a benchmark against which to work to continually develop and improve. Effective safeguarding arrangements must be about the ethos, character and culture of an education setting, rather than any finite set of actions or

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policies. The audit tool encourages education settings to go beyond checking that a policy is in place, for example, to reviewing what impact that policy is having. The Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) for child protection should support the education setting's safeguarding approach. Everyone working in an education setting, whether employed by the local authority or otherwise, who comes into contact with children and their families has a role in safeguarding children. They form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent issues from escalating. This audit tool seeks to help education settings to promote this ethos.

The audit tool is intended as an exemplar, against which to review current safeguarding arrangements in education settings. Your education setting may have a current assessment tool that enhances and supports this work and that helps in how you audit the education setting's approach. There is currently no expectation that you should duplicate your assessment or that this tool takes precedence over your existing approach. It simply provides you with a robust option that has been widely tested and aligns with the pre-inspection expectations of Estyn.

The tool has been developed with input from Estyn and meets the requirements expected by Estyn, but is not designed to be completed for inspection purposes only. The tool should be a continuous assessment of the effectiveness of an education setting's safeguarding arrangements.

The audit tool requires a process of evidence-gathering, including talking with learners and their families, discussing safeguarding with staff in the education setting and reviewing safeguarding incidents to learn what is working well and what needs development. This should be an ongoing process, so that there is a constant reflection, learning and updating of processes. You can use this audit tool either as part of a peer-review process, or for self-assessment. The tool encourages a peer-review approach, where settings offer 'critical friend' support to each other. Having someone from outside the education setting come in and go through the audit tool provides a valuable independent perspective that can enhance effective practice and highlight gaps.

As well as checking on whether you have robust safeguarding policies and practices in place, the tool asks you to make professional judgements on how effective and comprehensive they are. In order to make those judgements you will need to collect evidence, including talking to learners, colleagues, governors and parents/carers.

The summary sheet at the beginning is intended to allow you to provide a quick overview for staff, learners, parents/carers and governors on the strengths and weaknesses of the education setting in relation to safeguarding; the actions page will show them what steps are being taken to build on the strengths and address the weaknesses.

The guidance notes below have been written in line with *Keeping learners safe*.

1.   How safe do learners feel?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out that children have a right to be safe and protected from harm, and have the right to express their opinions and participate in decision-making. In accordance with the UNCRC, the best way to understand how safe an education setting feels to learners is to ask them and observe how they and staff interact. A positive learner–staff relationship provides evidence that

staff are friendly and positive about the education setting, and that learners are listened to and able to speak with confidence in the education setting.

The general atmosphere of the education setting is also a good indicator of how safe people feel. The kind of evidence that can help form your judgements include the physical environment and protocols for visitors but these measures alone are not enough to justify the feeling of safety. Reviewers should consider how the ethos and atmosphere of the education setting demonstrates a safeguarding culture and a level of care for each learner.

Equally, education settings should not assume that their learners are able to keep themselves and others safe. Appropriate site security measures should be taken to ensure the site feels safe and that parents/carers feel confident that appropriate measures have been taken.

2. How effectively do you communicate safeguarding issues and policies?

Effective communication is, in essence, an exchange of information that allows all involved to listen to and learn about each other. Therefore, it involves more than knowing that staff have access to, or have read, policies. It is important to check that learners, and those who come into contact with them, understand the purpose of information-sharing in order to safeguard and promote learners' well-being. It is also useful to assess how comfortable they feel about sharing information by reviewing, for example, recent communications.

It is important that all learners, parents, agency staff, support staff and governors are aware of the education setting's safeguarding policy, and that the policy sets out safe practices for all involved with the education setting. An indicator of effective communication is that learners, parents, carers and staff all understand what constitutes an unsafe situation and are aware of what they would need to do to keep themselves and others safe, and what to do if they have a concern. Checking that information is in a format and language that can be easily accessed and understood by all of the education setting's users is important, as is the regular review and updating of relevant information.

Education settings can also enable stakeholders, including children and young people, to participate in the development of policies through consultation approaches in line with the National Participation Standards (see www.childreninwales.org.uk/our-work/participation/participation-standards/). The whole community should also be aware of the human rights of children as laid out in the UNCRC.

3. How effective is your approach to safeguarding?

This section requires a review of the education setting's approach to safeguarding and its ability to effectively manage a safeguarding concern. This involves reviewing the extent to which staff members are confident about recognising signs of abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm, and their understanding of the steps to take in response and the need to act quickly. This should not be a matter of going through a checklist of issues and symptoms, but rather of assessing how confident people are about safeguarding learners, how alert they are to what is happening to individual learners and how open communication channels are. Reviewing recent incidents can help, looking at how long it took before a concern was raised, what happened, what action was taken and how quickly, and what the outcome was.

Incidents should be collected and recorded systematically so that the process is easily accessible to all staff, including a record of concerns (allowing, for example, people to spot multiple concerns about an individual), action taken and the outcomes. There should be a consistency of approach throughout the education setting for identifying and managing incidents. In particular, records for children identified as at risk should be up to date and of a high quality.

Check for a coordinated approach across the education setting around planning and delivering personal and social education (PSE) and relationships and sexuality education (RSE). The approach to RSE should be proactive in supporting learners to be aware of risks to their well-being and safety. The curriculum should support existing policy within the education setting on important issues and provide sufficient information on managing risk, e.g. in: sex and relationships; drug, alcohol and tobacco education; accident prevention; anti-bullying; online safety; extremism and radicalisation. Gathering evidence on how these issues are explored will help in assessing the effectiveness of the education setting's approach to safeguarding. It is also important to review the education setting's approach to physical intervention.

4. How robust are your safeguarding practices?

Robust safeguarding practices involve both whole-setting approaches that make safeguarding everyone's concern, and the specific focus of named people responsible for ensuring safeguarding policies and practices are being carried out. There should be a DSP with responsibility for safeguarding in the education setting whom everyone is aware of.

All staff should be competent and feel confident about implementing the protocols for securely managing incidences and dealing with disclosures. Safeguarding procedures should form a part of supervision and management processes. Staff should feel supported in taking responsibility for safeguarding, knowing that any concerns they raise will be taken seriously, and that senior managers will back them up if needed.

The DSP should be aware of appropriate training and be given the time to attend training. All staff working with learners (including temporary, peripatetic and agency staff) should be aware of safeguarding procedures and have child protection training and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Any training and assessment of staff should be appropriately recorded and updated. It is also important that governors or board members know enough about safeguarding to be able to sufficiently challenge the education setting's safeguarding practices and satisfy themselves that safeguarding procedures are robust, particularly with regard to taking action and recruitment.

5. How effectively are you working with others to safeguard children?

Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (see www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/part/7) includes provisions aimed to help promote more effective leadership and inter-agency collaboration, as well as ensure all agencies give sufficient priority to safeguarding. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures (see https://safeguarding.wales/) also emphasise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and that the effective protection of children cannot be achieved by a single agency acting in isolation. The procedures clarify how individuals and agencies should communicate and work together in partnership to identify and keep children safe.

The education setting should be able to show clear records with the names of any staff or external agencies that the DSP has shared information with, what information was shared and the rationale for this. The DSP needs to ensure that parents/carers understand the education setting's need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's well-being.

When commissioning a service from another organisation, there should be robust mechanisms in place to ensure that these organisations have appropriate policies and procedures in place for safeguarding children and child protection.

Gathering evidence to inform your judgements

This section provides some examples of how you might form your judgements and the evidence you can collect to underpin them. It is not intended to be ticked off; but rather as a prompt to recognise what you do, and what more you could do.

Section 1
How safe does the education setting feel? **Evidence includes:** • learner/parent/carer questionnaires, discussions, suggestion boxes, school/student council sessions, NUS • site security checklist and how it is used (e.g. do all visitors sign in and out and wear a visitor badge? Is proof of identity secured through photo ID?) • listening education to break and lunchtime supervisors • monitoring and evaluation systems to gauge the extent to which learners keep safe, adopt safe and responsible practices and deal sensibly with risk • how risk is managed within the education setting (e.g. through discussion, risk assessments, role play and skills rehearsal) and what difference this makes • risk assessments of external provision • peer mediation and/or buddy programmes and their impact • random checks with learners to see if they are confident they know how to access a trusted adult if they have any concerns • reports/records on how the education setting acts on reported concerns raised by learners, parents/carers or other people (including feedback from those who have raised concerns) • face-to-face participatory techniques to find out about children's and young people's experiences, e.g. facilitating a school mapping or community mapping activity with young people to find out where they feel safe and where they perceive risk.
Section 2
How effectively do you communicate safeguarding issues and policies? **Evidence includes:** • survey/questions to staff, governors, learners, parents/carers on awareness of safeguarding policy and approach • curriculum content (e.g. in PSE and RSE) • posters displayed relating to safeguarding and child protection themes with helpline numbers (e.g. for external agencies) and how helpful learners think they are

- training, advice and guidance given to learners on online exploitation (including commercial and sexual exploitation) and its impact
- assemblies, class discussions, etc., where safeguarding-related issues have been addressed, e.g. bullying, LGBT bullying, substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, online safety, absence/truanting, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, preventing radicalisation, extremism, etc., and what learners say about them
- records of initiatives and promotional and awareness-raising activities and their impact, including lesson plans, assembly notes and circle time records
- a clear, accessible reporting and progressing system for raising and acting on safeguarding concerns and how effectively they are used
- minutes from staff meetings where safeguarding issues have been discussed
- minutes/records from school/student council meetings that have raised safeguarding issues
- copies of newsletters/website content
- letters/communications with parents/carers
- records of parent/carer meetings.

Section 3

How effective is your approach to safeguarding?
Evidence includes:

- records of concerns raised and how they are acted on
- asking learners who they would talk to if they had concerns and what concerns they have/would raise
- listening to vulnerable learners (e.g. care-experienced children, those with a care and support plan, young carers, those with additional learning needs) and those who have suffered abuse about how supported they feel
- listening to learners about experiences of bullying, harassment, prejudice and discrimination and how the education setting has/could support them
- asking staff about who they would talk to if they had concerns (including about colleagues, headteacher/principal, proprietor)
- reviews of any concerns raised in the past year, how they were recorded, how they were acted upon and the outcome
- behaviour management strategies and their implementation.

Section 4

How robust are your safeguarding practices?

Evidence includes:

- attendance records kept as evidence
- regular audits of training records to ensure all staff members have received safeguarding training (or induction in the case of new staff members)
- confirmation from external agencies that appropriate training has been provided, including refresher training
- records of the induction new staff received on the education setting's safeguarding procedures

- records on the induction and training that new staff, contracted/temporary staff have received
- audit trail of training for staff and governors and of when updates are due
- policy and practice on recording and storing child protection and safeguarding concerns, and actions arising
- policy and practice relating to transferring records when a learner moves education setting
- IT/paper storage safety policy
- minutes of governors' meetings where safeguarding is discussed
- a DBS audit
- analysis of any complaints and the education setting's response.

Section 5

How effectively are you working with others to safeguard children/learners?

Evidence includes:
- referral records to external agencies
- records/minutes of multi-agency meetings attended by the DSP or other staff
- records of information-sharing
- the quality of safeguarding/child protection files and records on vulnerable learners (e.g. up to date; accessible; accurate)
- examples of lessons delivered by the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme and their impact
- activities undertaken during anti-bullying week and their impact.

Policies

The school or college is likely to have a range of policies that are relevant to its approach to safeguarding and these can all help to provide evidence for the evaluation tool. They may include:

- anti-bullying
- online safety
- behaviour
- use of time out/use of physical restraint
- travel to and from school
- attendance
- inclusion/SEN/ALN
- meeting needs of children with medical conditions
- health and safety
- school equality plan
- safer recruitment
- professional conduct/communication protocols for staff
- dealing with allegations of professional abuse
- whistleblowing

Safeguarding audit
Summary

Completing this should be the final stage in the assessment process

Section 1	Red (action needed)	Amber (some action needed)	Green (no action needed)
How safe does the education setting feel?			
Section 2	**Red (action needed)**	**Amber (some action needed)**	**Green (no action needed)**
How effectively do you communicate safeguarding issues and policies?			
Section 3	**Red (action needed)**	**Amber (some action needed)**	**Green (no action needed)**
How effective is your approach to safeguarding?			
Section 4	**Red (action needed)**	**Amber (some action needed)**	**Green (no action needed)**
How robust are your safeguarding practices?			
Section 5	**Red (action needed)**	**Amber (some action needed)**	**Green (no action needed)**
How effectively are you working with others to safeguard children/learners?			
Actions summary	**Priority 1**	**Priority 2**	**Priority 3**
Section 1: Making the education setting safe			
Section 2: Improving how we communicate in relation to safeguarding			

	Red (action needed)	Amber (some action needed)	Green (no action needed)
Section 3: Developing our approach to safeguarding			
Section 4: Working better to safeguard learners			
Section 5: Working better with others			

Section 1	Red (action needed)	Amber (some action needed)	Green (no action needed)
How safe does the education setting feel?			
Do learners feel safe in the education setting?			
Are you effective in listening to and acting upon learners' safety concerns?			
Do parents/carers have confidence about safety in this education setting?			
Are there site security measures, including secure entry and exit points that help you feel safe?			
Are there good measures in place to ensure effective safeguarding for extracurricular activities or off-site provision?			
Are the identities of all visitors checked, and do they sign in and out?			
Are visitors made aware of your commitment to safeguarding?			
Actions: what needs to change?			

Section 2	Red (action needed)	Amber (some action needed)	Green (no action needed)
How effectively do you communicate safeguarding issues and policies?			

Is your safeguarding policy updated annually?			
Do you review annually how well your safeguarding policy and procedures work?			
Has everyone (learners, parents/carers, agency staff, support staff, governors) been given information on what is in the policy?			
Do the policies set out how, through teaching and pastoral support, staff can help to strengthen safeguarding and prevent abuse and neglect?			
Is safeguarding treated as a priority issue in the senior management team?			
Is safeguarding a regular item in staff meetings?			
Is safeguarding a regular item in student council meetings?			
Is safeguarding covered regularly in your newsletter?			
Are you confident that everyone recognises the child protection and safeguarding responsibilities placed upon them by *Keeping learners safe?*			
Are safeguarding policies and practices easily accessible and explained on your website in a user-friendly way?			

Actions: what needs to change?

Section 3	Red (action needed)	Amber (some action needed)	Green (no action needed)
How effective is your approach to safeguarding?			
Are you confident that you are effectively identifying, recording and acting on safeguarding concerns?			
Are you satisfied with the level of pastoral and additional support available to learners, including any who are at particular risk or vulnerable?			
Are you confident that enough support is provided to learners who have experienced abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm?			
Do all staff know about the procedures for reporting absences or exclusions of			

learners who are looked after, on the child register or who could be at risk?			
Are you satisfied that the curriculum provides learners with sufficient information about safeguarding?			
Do you have an anti-bullying policy that is in line with the statutory Rights, Respect, Equality guidance (see gov.wales/school-bullying)?			
Do you have policies that address how to deal with the range of issues learners may be faced with?			
Do you have a policy on the use of photography and video recording? Are permissions collected from parents/carers and adhered to, and are images used and stored in accordance with safeguarding advice?			
Are safeguarding issues embedded into policies and practices that support attendance and behaviour?			
Are you confident about your processes for addressing abuse, prejudice, discrimination and harassment?			
Are you confident that your approach to physical intervention and restraint is appropriate? Is this reflected in your behaviour policy or a separate school policy?			

Actions: what needs to change?

Section 4	Red (action needed)	Amber (some action needed)	Green (no action needed)
How robust are your safeguarding practices?			
Is there a DSP and a deputy responsible for safeguarding?			
Do staff/learners/parents/carers and outside agencies know who these people are (e.g. are they named on your website?)			

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Are you confident that all learner's voices are heard?			
Are all staff clear about what to do if a child protection disclosure is made and how it must be reported, recorded and monitored?			
Would all staff know what to do if a concern was raised about a colleague, including about the headteacher/principal?			
Have all staff and volunteers had child protection and safeguarding training to help them identify signs of abuse? Do they know how to report concerns about abuse, whether it is in the learning setting, in the home or in other education settings? Is this regularly refreshed with suitable training, in line with your policy?			
Have the DSP and relevant governor(s) had recent safeguarding training that is relevant to their role?			
Are sufficient arrangements made for staff and volunteers absent during training?			
Are temporary, peripatetic and agency staff made aware of the education setting's safeguarding/child protection procedures?			
Is there a central register that records the safeguarding training that all staff have undertaken, including an assessment of effectiveness and impact with appropriate updates?			
Are safeguarding concerns shared securely with the DSP?			
Are records stored securely with controlled access that protects confidentiality?			
How well do staff understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping referrals confidential?			
Are all staff clear about how to discuss a safeguarding concern or issue with a learner?			
Do all staff (including temporary staff and unsupervised volunteers) have DBS checks, and are these updated as required by your policy?			
Is there a record that all staff appointed after 2002 have a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)/DBS check and at the appropriate level?			
Are you confident that governors have sufficient knowledge to question and			

challenge safeguarding provision in the school?			

- Actions: what need to change?

Section 5	**Red (action needed)**	**Amber (some action needed)**	**Green (no action needed)**
How effectively are you working with others to safeguard children/learners?			
Do you inform parents/carers and learners of the support available within your education setting and via other services or community links?			
Have parents/carers and learners been informed of the education setting's need to share information with other agencies if necessary?			
Do you work with outside agencies to develop learners' awareness of safeguarding issues?			
Have relevant staff had training on working with other agencies in line with your policy?			
Are you confident that your education setting works effectively with other agencies in regard to child protection concerns?			
Actions: what needs to change?			

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

10 OCTOBER 2022

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER - LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

1.   Purpose of report

1.1   The purpose of this report is to:

a) Present the Committee with the Forward Work Programme (**Appendix A)** for consideration and approval;

b) Request any specific information the Committee identifies to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;

c) Request the Committee to identify whether there are presently any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3;

d) Present the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet **(Appendix B)** to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at the previous meetings;

e) Advise that the Committee's updated Forward Work Programme and Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet will be reported to the next meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC).

2.   Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

2.1   This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.

- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.

- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently

as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

3.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.

3.2 The Council's Constitution also provides for each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard to the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework, for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have oversight.

<u>Best Practice / Guidance</u>

3.3 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's (CfGS) Good Scrutiny Guide recognises the importance of the Forward Work Programme. In order to 'lead and own the process', it states that Councillors should have ownership of their Committee's work programme, and be involved in developing, monitoring and evaluating it. The Good Scrutiny Guide also states that, in order to make an impact, the scrutiny workload should be coordinated and integrated into corporate processes, to ensure that it contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.

3.4 Forward Work Programmes need to be manageable to maximise the effective use of the limited time and resources of Scrutiny Committees. It is not possible to include every topic proposed. Successful scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members need to be selective, while also being able to demonstrate clear arguments for including or excluding topics.

3.5 The CfGS guide to effective work programming 'A Cunning Plan?' makes the following reference to the importance of good work programming:

'Effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well it can help lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal.'

<u>Forward Work Programme</u>

3.6 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 18th May 2022, the scheduling of standing statutory reports to Scrutiny Committees upon: the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Performance, the Corporate Plan, Budget Monitoring, etc. were mapped to the appropriate timed COSC meeting dates into a draft Forward Work Programme.

3.7 The draft Forward Work Programme for each Scrutiny Committee has been prepared using a number of different sources, including:

- Corporate Risk Assessment;
- Directorate Business Plans;

- Previous Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme report topics / Minutes;
- Committee / Member proposed topics;
- Policy Framework;
- Cabinet Work Programme;
- Discussions with Corporate Directors;
- Performance Team regarding the timing of performance information.

3.8 There are items where there is a statutory duty for Policy Framework documents to be considered by Scrutiny, e.g. the MTFS including draft budget proposals scheduled for consideration in December 2022, following which the COSC will coordinate the conclusions and recommendations from each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees in a report on the overall strategic overview of Cabinet's draft Budget proposals to the meeting of Cabinet in February 2023.

3.9 An effective FWP identifies the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provides a clear plan. However, at each meeting the Committee will have an opportunity to review this as the Forward Work Programme Update will be a standing item on the Agenda, detailing which items are scheduled for future meetings and be requested to clarify any information to be included in reports and the list of invitees. The FWP will remain flexible and will be reported to each COSC meeting with feedback from each SOSC FWP and any updated information gathered from FWP meetings with Scrutiny Chairs and Corporate Directors.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 The Committee approved its Forward Work Programme at its previous meeting.

4.2 The Committee's Forward Work Programme will also be reported to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for coordination and oversight of the overall FWP.

Identification of Further Items

4.3 The Committee is reminded of the Criteria Form which Members can use to propose further items for the FWP which the Committee can then consider for prioritisation at a future meeting. The Criteria Form emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation and to maximise the impact scrutiny can have on a topic and the outcomes for people. Criteria which can help the Committee come to a decision on whether to include a referred topic, are set out below:

Recommended Criteria for Selecting Scrutiny Topics:

PUBLIC INTEREST: The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;

ABILITY TO CHANGE: Priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence, and add value to;

PERFORMANCE: Priority should be given to the areas in which the Council is not performing well;

EXTENT:	Priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the County Borough; or a large number of the Authority's service users or its population;
REPLICATION:	Work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

Reasons to Reject Scrutiny Topics:

- The issue is already being addressed / being examined elsewhere and change is imminent.
- The topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and can be referred there).
- Scrutiny involvement would have limited / no impact upon outcomes.
- The topic may be sub-judice or prejudicial.
- The topic is too broad to make a review realistic and needs refining / scoping.
- New legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year.
- The topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change / reconfiguration.

Corporate Parenting

4.4 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a Local Authority towards looked after children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'corporate parent', therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for the children and young people looked after by Bridgend.

4.5 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how each item they consider affects children in care and care leavers, and in what way can the Committee assist in these areas.

4.6 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.

4.7 The Forward Work Programme for this Committee is attached as **Appendix A**.

4.8 The Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations at the previous meeting is attached as **Appendix B**.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council's Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the planning of Scrutiny business in both the short-term and in the long-term on its policies, budget and service delivery.

- Prevention - The early preparation of the Forward Work Programme allows for the advance planning of Scrutiny business where Members are provided an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are made by Cabinet.

- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.

- Collaboration - Consultation on the content of the Forward Work Programme has taken place with the Corporate Management Board, Heads of Service, Elected Members and members of the public.

- Involvement - Advanced publication of the Forward Work Programme ensures that the public and stakeholders can view topics that will be discussed in Committee meetings and are provided with the opportunity to engage.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

a) Consider and approve the Forward Work Programme attached as **Appendix A**;

b) Identify any specific information the Committee wishes to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;

c) Identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3 of this report;

d) Note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at the previous meetings, attached as **Appendix B**;

e) Note that the Forward Work Programme, Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet and any updates from the Committee will be reported to the next meeting of COSC.

Kelly Watson
Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy
4 October 2022

Contact Officers: Meryl Lawrence
Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny

Lucy Beard
Scrutiny Officer

Jessica McLellan
Scrutiny Officer

Telephone: (01656) 643515 / 643613 / 643263

Email: scrutiny@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal address: Democratic Services - Scrutiny
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Background documents: None.

Forward Work Programme
Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1:

Date of Meeting:	Report Topics:
Monday 4 July 9.30am	- Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination report; - Nomination to the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel report; - Draft Outline Forward Work Programme
Monday 12 September 2.30pm	Meeting postponed for national period of mourning ~~Pupil Attendance, Exclusions, Health and Safeguarding~~
Monday 10 October 11am	**Pupil Attendance, Exclusions, Health and Safeguarding** ~~Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)~~
Thursday 1 December 11am	**Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)** Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-23 to 2025-26 and Inflationary Pressures *
Thursday 19 January 11am	Curriculum for Wales and the New Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability
Monday 13 March 11am	Early Help Service Pressures
Date to be scheduled	Upgrading of older school facilities that are not being replaced under School Modernisation and improving their energy efficiency in line with the 2030 Decarbonisation Agenda.
Date to be scheduled	English Language Schools' catchment areas / capacity.

* If the Budget Settlement is received late as in recent years, the scrutiny of the Draft MTFS and Budget Proposals will need to be moved to the meeting on 19 January 2023.

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Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1

RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING ACTION SHEET

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
4 July 2022	Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination	Councillor Tim Thomas was nominated to represent Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 as an invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.	Scrutiny / Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy	**ACTIONED** – Membership of Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee updated and formally reported to Cabinet 19 July 2022.
4 July 2022	Nomination to the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel	Councillor Richard Collins was nominated to sit on the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.	Scrutiny	**ACTIONED –** Membership of Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel updated and initial Briefing session arrangements underway.
4 July 2022	Forward Work Programme Update	With regard to the Pupil Attendance, Exclusions, Health and Safeguarding report scheduled for the meeting on 12 September, the Committee wished to look at: • Pupil wellbeing from an attendance perspective and support in schools from Education Welfare Officers; • How the Free school meal programme is being rolled out in schools across the county borough.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director – Education and Family Support	**ACTIONED** - Feedback provided to Corporate Director – Education and Family Support to include focussed aspects in the scope of this report.

		• What support schools are getting particularly for care experienced children and are there effective lines of communication between schools and social services support. • In relation to increased referrals to Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the way in which referrals from schools to IAA are dealt with and the support in the team (and requested representatives from IAA / CAMHS in relation to pupil attendance /safeguarding), for the September report.		
4 July 2022	Forward Work Programme Update	The Committee recommended: • Wellbeing be revisited within a suitable time frame to monitor progress and support. • Sight of the Corporate Management Dashboard for the Education Directorate on a quarterly basis at the appropriate time. • The Committee requested that Pupil Wellbeing be included and monitored as part of the Directorate Performance Dashboard in future.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director – Education and Family Support	Acknowledgement of Recommendations circulated requesting response received and information being collated - to be provided.