

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - THURSDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2023

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1
HELD IN HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET,
BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2023 AT 11:00**

Present

Councillor A Williams – Chairperson

RJ Collins	M J Evans	H Griffiths	D M Hughes
M Jones	J Llewellyn-Hopkins	T Thomas	JH Tildesley MBE
AJ Williams	E D Winstanley		

Registered Representatives

Ms Angela Clarke	Church in Wales Representative
Ms Samantha Rachel Lambert-Worgan	Special School Parent Governor Representative

Officers:

Lucy Beard Scrutiny Officer

Invitees:

Councillor Jon-Paul Blundell	Cabinet Member Education
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director – Education and Family Support
Mark Lewis	Group Manager - Integrated Working
Susan Roberts	Group Manager – School Improvement
Neil Arbery	Lead Officer, Strategic Development (Primary Sector)
Kathryn Morgan	Principal Educational Psychologist
Joanne Bendon	Whole School Approach to Health and Well-being Coordinator
Christina Morgan	CAMHS Senior Nurse
Michelle Joyner	Head, The Bridge Alternative Provision
Helen Jones	Headteacher, Maesteg School
Mike Stephens	Headteacher, Porthcawl Comprehensive School
Sarah Johns	Headteacher, Cefn Glas Infants
Carmen Beveridge	Headteacher, St Robert's
Ashley Howells	Headteacher, Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Ian Spiller

Invitees:

Emma Davies, Early Intervention Locality Manager
Stuart Farrow, Assistant Headteacher, Archbishop McGrath

29. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Amanda Williams – Personal – children attend a Bridgend County Borough Council School, Local Education Authority (LEA) Governor at two schools.

Councillor Heather Griffiths – Personal – Chair of Governors Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen and Granddaughter attends a Bridgend County Borough Council School.

Councillor Johanna Llewellyn-Hopkins – Personal – Governor at Cynffig Comprehensive School, a teacher and child attends a Bridgend County Borough Council School.

Councillor Melanie Evans – Personal – Child attends a Bridgend County Borough Council School, Governor at Croesty Primary and Pencoed Comprehensive School.

Councillor Tim Thomas – Personal – Governor at Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen and Brynmenyn Primary School and children attend Bridgend County Borough Council Schools.

Samantha Lambert-Worgan – Personal – Governor of Heronsbridge School and children attend Bridgend County Borough Council Schools.

30. **WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING**

The Whole School Approach to Health and Well-being Coordinator presented the report, the purpose of which was to update the Committee on the progress on the whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing and provide background information on the statutory Welsh Government guidance document and how this had been implemented with Bridgend schools as a whole-school approach.

The Chairperson thanked the Officer and Invitees and Members discussed the following:

- The current position on the recruitment and retention of School Governors and exploring what could be put in place to support the recruitment and retention of School Governors in order to attract the best candidates in the communities to support schools.
- The Welsh Government Guidance and the support available, referred to in the report, the need for assurance that all governing bodies had the skills and ability to be able to monitor schools' performance in improving emotional health and mental well-being of both pupils and staff, and the Bridgend Governors Association which had restarted and gave all Governing Bodies the opportunity to come together, be involved and access training required.
- Concern over the loss of school support staff to higher paying vacancies that could offer a more blended working environment, whether employment routes could be made more attractive, and how the issue was being raised with the Minister and Welsh Government were looking at how this could be changed and how teachers could be recruited.
- The initial analysis of the self-evaluation process findings were about children and young people's emotional and mental well-being across the county borough, the national evaluation which had shown leadership and commitment to be a priority, the focus on staff well-being training and the impact of low morale on learners.
- Concern regarding the pressures on teachers which could result in absence due to stress and anxiety and what further support was needed from the Local Authority to support teachers and ensure their well-being.

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- On a practical basis Schools adopting the sickness absence procedures consistently and the importance of recognising and valuing education as a public service.
- The lack of breakfast club facilities at some schools, which meant at times some of those most in need were not receiving breakfast and given the cost-of-living crisis and going into Winter it was imperative for children to receive breakfast.

The Chairperson advised that there were no further questions for the Invitees, thanked the Invitees for their attendance and, advised that they may leave the meeting.

RESOLVED: Following detailed consideration and discussions with Cabinet Members and Officers, the Committee made the following Recommendations:

1. That an audit of schools be undertaken to identify the significant level of School Governor vacancies along with an audit of School Governor skills to assist Members in understanding what can be done to attract more people with the right skills to becoming Community School Governors, and the outcome of the audits be made available to the Committee for information in the first instance.
2. That the Bridgend Governors' Association be requested to clarify that all School Governing Bodies are included on distribution lists for their upcoming meetings and that all Local Authority and Community Governors are circulated with the promotion of their upcoming training sessions.
3. That the Committee write a letter to Welsh Government requesting that more be done at a national level to raise the profile of / incentivise recruitment and retention of school support staff, as these important roles are significant in delivering requirements and ensuring well-being is at the forefront, however support staff are leaving to work in jobs outside the sector.
4. That the invaluable practice of requesting appropriate Headteacher Invitees to attend for the reports being considered by this Committee, be continued.

Information requested:

Following consideration and discussions, the Committee requested:

5. The document being constructed by Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Health Team to analyse the Perform and Grow Programme linked to their self-evaluation tool, for Members to get an understanding of mental well-being across the county borough.
6. A breakdown of the Welsh Government: Whole-School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Grant received by the Local Authority referred to in the report, to include:
 - a. The reasons for the increase in Activity funding during 2022-23 and the decrease in 2023-24.
 - b. What the funding provides, including how many sessions of counselling and if this is sufficient.
 - c. Whether there are any alternative funding streams for the Activities listed in the tables and whether they are adequately funded.
 - d. The Council's contribution towards the Activities listed in the tables.

7. The outcomes and evaluation of the review of the framework referred to in the report which was planned to ensure it was fit for purpose during late 2022.
8. Information regarding support mechanisms and the sickness absence procedures for staff and headteachers and their role in supporting the recruitment and retention of staff.
9. An update on those schools that did not have breakfast clubs and the plan going forward for their provision to ensure that all learners can receive breakfast, particularly given the cost of living and the colder weather.
10. The Committee requested an update on the timescale of the publication of the Welsh Government Home to School Transport review.

A copy of the recently published Welsh Government Guidance and summary relating to elective Home Education, that sets out the requirements and how the interface with local authorities and parents in this area works.

31. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Following detailed discussions, the Committee made the following recommendations:

- That the Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) and Operational Issues within the Catering Services reports be brought forward to the 4th December meeting with the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision report to be moved to the Spring.

RESOLVED: The Committee approved the FWP in Appendix A, subject to the above, noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet in Appendix B and noted that the FWP, Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet and any updates from the Committee would be reported to the next meeting of COSC.

32. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 14:20.