

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - MONDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2024

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON MONDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 11:00

Present

Councillor A Ulberini-Williams – Chairperson

HJ David

AJ Williams

Present Virtually

H Griffiths

D M Hughes

J Llewellyn-Hopkins

T Thomas

Apologies for Absence

JPD Blundell, RJ Collins, I M Spiller and E Winstanley

Angela Clarke - Church in Wales Registered Representative

Invitees / Registered Representatives:

Councillor Martyn Jones

Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services

Lindsay Harvey

Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People

Mark Lewis

Group Manager - Integrated Working

Megan Apsee

Interim Manager Education Engagement Team

Gail Biggs

Group Manager, Learner Support

Rhian Davies

Education Welfare Officer

Jonathan Lewis

Headteacher Coety Primary School

Iwan Jones

Headteacher Llangynwyd Comprehensive School

Darren Jones

Principal Improvement Manager – Central South Consortium

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Officers:

Lucy Beard
Stephen Griffiths

Scrutiny Officer
Democratic Services Officer – Committees

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Amanda Williams - Personal - Item 4, Chair of Governors at Coety Primary School
Councillor Tim Thomas - Personal - Item 4, Parent Governor at Llangynwyd Comprehensive School

58. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	<u>Resolved:</u> That the minutes of a meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 dated 16 September 2024, to be approved as true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	18 November 2024

59. Pupil Attendance

Decision Made	<p><u>Resolved:</u> Following consideration of the report and detailed discussion with the Cabinet Member, Officers and Invitees, the Committee made the following Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Members discussed the inconsistent approaches taken by schools within the county borough to authorised and unauthorised pupil leave during term time and the All Wales Attendance Framework not permitting local authorities to impose a blanket policy across all schools, highlighting that the Framework was 12 years old.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. The Committee recommended that the Authority explore whether Welsh Government planned to update their Attendance Framework and the cost of fixed penalty notices.b. The Committee also recommended that an exercise be undertaken to ascertain the approach taken by schools in other local authorities, to understand whether there is a consistent approach within those authorities.2. Members discussed the extent to which mental health was a contributory factor to poor attendance
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	<p>within schools and Officers explained how they worked with health professionals, utilising the Welsh Government NEST Framework, which aims to ensure a whole system approach for developing mental health, well-being and support. The Committee recommended that Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board be approached for their view regarding the range of issues or reasons for pupil absence including analysis of this information for groups of learners with particular characteristics / backgrounds / circumstances e.g. care experienced children.</p> <p><u>Additional information:</u></p> <p>Following detailed consideration and discussion with the Cabinet Member, Officers and Invitees, the Committee made the following requests for information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Members discussed the complex reasons for pupil absenteeism and that it was important to work with parents on individual needs, recognising that there was not a one-size-fits-all solution. The Committee expressed their support for the work of the Education Welfare Service and requested more information to further understand the work they carried out including how many Officers had been deployed to support and interact with families and any anonymised case studies that could be provided.4. With reference to Table 1 on page 12 of the agenda pack relating to pupil attendance during the period 2018-2019 to 2023-2024, Members queried how much of the attendance percentage was for authorised or unauthorised absence and how much was linked to children who were suspended from school at that time. The Committee requested a further breakdown showing how schools record attendance and clarifying leave that was authorised and unauthorised.5. Members discussed grades and levels and heard about the use of progress points, enabling learners to see and work towards their own personal targets, reducing stress and frustration that some learners may feel, however the Committee expressed concern regarding Year 11 pupil attendance levels and requested a written update that the Corporate Director had offered to provide to Members of the Committee, following analysis of the attendance data for Year 11 pupils.
Date Decision Made	18 November 2024

60. Forward Work Programme Update

Decision Made	<p><u>Resolved:</u> The Committee considered and approved the Forward Work Programme (FWP) in Appendix A, subject to inclusion of the items below, noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet in Appendix B and noted that the FWP as approved by the Committee would be reported to the next meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The Committee requested the following be included in the FWP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The Committee requested that Attendance be included within the scope of the Behaviour and Exclusions report scheduled for the March meeting to see what progress has been made as a result of some of the measures which would have been implemented.ii. Given the numerous references made during the meeting to the importance of mental health and wellbeing support to helping learners attend school and achieve an education, the Committee requested that this topic be included on the forward work programme for future consideration. The Committee requested the scope of this report include a holistic focus on the mental health and wellbeing support provided to learners to assist them to attend education, including information regarding any support available from Social Services, General Practitioners, the Health Board and the Third Sector.iii. The Committee requested that representatives from the Health Board and the Youth Council be invited to the above relevant meetings.
Date Decision Made	18 November 2024

61. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None.
Date Decision Made	18 November 2024

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#)

The meeting closed at 13:40.