

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - FRIDAY, 26 MAY 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 FRIDAY, 26 MAY 2023 AT 11:00**

Present

Councillor A Williams – Chairperson

RJ Collins
I M Spiller

M J Evans
T Thomas

D M Hughes
AJ Williams

J Llewellyn-Hopkins
E D Winstanley

Apologies for Absence

M Jones

Registered Representatives

None

Officers:

Lucy Beard
Rachel Keepins
Michael Pitman

Scrutiny Officer
Democratic Services Manager
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services

Invitees:

Councillor Jon-Paul Blundell

Cabinet Member Education

Lindsay Harvey
Robin Davies
Susan Roberts
Michelle Hatcher
Gaynor Thomas
Mark Lewis
David Wright

Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Group Manager - Business Strategy and Performance
Group Manager – School Improvement
Group Manager – Inclusion
School Programme Manager
Group Manager - Integrated Working
Group Manager - Vulnerable Groups Support

Clara Seery
Natalie Gould

Managing Director - Central South Consortium
Assistant Director for Curriculum and Professional
Learning - Central South Consortium
Principal Improvement Manager – Central South
Consortium

Mike Street
Nicole Goggin-Jones

Headteacher, Penyfai Church in Wales Primary
Headteacher, Nantyllyllon Primary School

16. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 dated 10 of October 2022 and 19 January 2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.

17. **EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT DIRECTORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026**

The Corporate Director, Education and Family Support presented the report, the purpose of which was to provide the Committee with an opportunity to view and comment on the draft Education and Family Support Directorate Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

The Chairperson thanked the Corporate Director, Education and Family Support and Invitees and Members discussed the following:

- The 15 strategic themes identified that underpin the three-year strategic plan, discussing:
 - The narratives of those themes
 - The success indicators: how they were measured accurately, and processes standardised for schools
 - The detail in the plan and how themes were achieved, and support increased
 - The understanding of the new curriculum
 - Collated data for comparison
 - Training of Officers
- Pupil attendance, absence levels, the ownership of attendance and the responsibility.
- School Governors statutory training modules and additional training available and whether more training should be mandatory.
- Backlog of maintenance work in some older school buildings, increases in utility bills and what support was available.
- Uplift in proficiency in the Welsh language among younger people and adults, the consideration of the introduction of Welsh medium catchment areas, the Local Authority's aspiration to drive up the number of learners in their Welsh medium schools and the provision of home to school transport.
- RAYG self-evaluation guidelines and how the status of each theme could improve over the course of the strategic plan's timeframe.
- The demand for counselling services for children and parents and the waiting times, expert support for these learners and the map and gap analysis undertaken to see what support was offered and identify any gaps.

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. Members expressed concern regarding the retention of school staff and their wellbeing. They discussed the importance of the support pupils received for their wellbeing and felt that staff wellbeing should be of equal priority. Members recommended that the narrative regarding the support for staff in ***T1 Pupil and staff wellbeing*** be strengthened to reflect this.

2. During discussions regarding pupil attendance and levels of absence, Members requested a breakdown of the reasons for and the numbers of absence and recommended that these be included in the Plan.
3. Members considered the success indicators relating to ***T2 Support for pupil behaviour, attendance, and exclusions*** and highlighted that assessing progress towards the achievement of the objective 'a reduction in fixed term and permanent exclusions' would only be meaningful if all schools were following the School Attendance Policy to ensure consistency. Members recommended there be a standardised Exclusion Policy referenced in the Plan to ensure assurance in the data provided and accurate measurement of the improvements.
4. Members recommended that there be more granular detail in the Plan on how the ambition for completion of the statutory training modules by School Governors could be measured annually and that a baseline be provided in the Plan to demonstrate the target to be achieved.
5. Members noted the plan to increase the support for parents with vulnerable children under ***T3 Support for vulnerable children and young people*** and recommended that there be more detail in the Plan to include how this was to be achieved, how the current support could be measured and how to ensure that the support increases in the future.
6. Members discussed how a video produced by Brynteg Comprehensive School in relation to ***T5 Curriculum for Wales and assessment*** gave a better understanding of the new curriculum and recommended that this be made available to other schools and to the Members themselves.
7. Members discussed the importance of the safeguarding training module for School Governors and made a recommendation to support the Directorate in advocating Welsh Government to consider making it a statutory requirement.
8. Members expressed concern regarding potential increased utility bills and impact on pupils, due to outdated facilities in existing older schools. Whilst Members noted that refurbishment and maintenance of older schools was within the remit of the Property Team and not the EFS Directorate, it was recommended that this should still be referenced in the Plan.
9. Members discussed ***T14 Effective Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to promote the Welsh language and Welsh-medium education*** and felt that the objective appeared to be tailored towards younger learners and improving Welsh speakers and recommended the objective be expanded to include what was being done to promote and improve the use of the Welsh language in secondary schools.
10. Members expressed concern that without definitions of the three numbered parts in each stage of the RAYG (Red (unsatisfactory), Amber (adequate), Yellow (good) and Green (excellent)) statuses, it was difficult

to understand the criteria for the top, middle and bottom score in each RAYG status. Members recommended that the RAYG Self-evaluation guidelines be revisited and that a discussion take place with partners to ensure that the targets set were achievable, for example an ambition to achieve a rating of 8 by August 2026 from a current rating of 4 in **T2 Support for pupil behaviour, attendance, and exclusions** and 9 by August 2026 with the current rating of 6 in **T5 Curriculum for Wales and assessment** and other examples in the Plan.

The Committee requested:

11. A detailed breakdown of the individual grants once all grants were consolidated and available which was offered by Officers, in response to Members questions regarding the financial implications of the report including what external grants and capital funding were expected for 2023-24.
12. The anonymised data for the Food for Fun Programme collated from the previous year and the available data from this year, when available, for the Members of the Committee to compare, which Officers offered to provide to Members in response to Members' questions whether records had been kept of the participants of the Food and Fun programme within the 'Successes to date' and 'Improvement objectives' of **T1 Pupil and staff wellbeing**, and what the plans were going forward.
13. Figures and data regarding the length of waiting times for school-based counsellors, that Officers offered to provide in response to Members' concerns regarding the length of waiting list times for school-based counsellors, although Officers were not aware of the lists being significant.
14. Recent data from the annual monitoring undertaken by the Educational Psychology Service that Officers offered to provide in response to Members' referring to **T1 Pupil and staff wellbeing** in the report which outlined the well-established support from the Educational Psychology Service and highlighted the emotional and social wellbeing support role of Learning Support Assistants and their continued training, asking whether the roles were undertaken by dedicated staff and if every school had them.
15. Links from Central South Consortium regarding the staff wellbeing service funded by Welsh Government.
16. More information on when Officers expected to meet the objective in **T4 Support for children and young people with additional learning needs**, that 60 Additional Learning Needs Co-Ordinators would receive bespoke training to meet the needs of pupils.
17. In relation to **T11 Effective childcare and early years offer**, a timeline in relation to the Flying Start roll out and which childcare providers are included across the County Borough.

18. An update on recruitment of staff for school breakfast clubs and kitchens.

Forward Work Programme Proposals

Members requested the following be added to the FWP and consideration be given to their scheduling:

- An update on the Additional Learning Needs reform implementation once the evaluation has been undertaken.
- An update on the upgrading of existing school buildings – a list of options being compiled after area reviews are completed to be reported to the schools Modernisation Strategic Board and assessed.
- A report regarding ***T13 Meaningful adult learning in the community offer*** - the offer to be explored in more detail by the Committee along with, following inspection, the Adult Community Learning Partnership report due back in June 2023.
- Regulatory inspection reports reported to Governance and Audit Committee will be reported to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee six months later to monitor the implementation of recommendations from the reports and progress of resulting action plans.

Information report

Members expressed concern over the support for the wellbeing of children and felt it was responsible and proactive to have services in place and for them to be available in a timely manner for the children and parents who needed them. Officers advised there was a wide range of support available and discussed the Whole School Approach to emotional health and wellbeing that they had piloted in conjunction with the Health Board. This pilot was coming up for its second year so there would be data pilot analysis should the Committee wish to have an information report to consider if needed as a Forward Work Programme item.

18. 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 Richard Collins be nominated to represent Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 as an Invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

19. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 14:43.