

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - THURSDAY, 11 APRIL 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 THURSDAY, 11 APRIL 2024 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor A Williams – Chairperson

M Jones

E D Winstanley

Present Virtually

M J Evans

J Llewellyn-Hopkins

T Thomas

AJ Williams

Apologies for Absence

RJ Collins, D M Hughes and I M Spiller

Officers:

Lindsay Harvey  
Becca Avci  
Susan Roberts  
Rachel Keepins  
Lucy Beard

Corporate Director Education and Family Support  
Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Co-Ordinator  
Group Manager (School Support)  
Democratic Services Manager  
Scrutiny Officer

Cabinet Members

Councillor Huw David  
Councillor Jon-Paul Blundell

Leader of Council  
Cabinet Member for Education

Invitees

Clara Seery  
Andrew Williams

Managing Director – Central South Consortium  
Assistant Director – Central South Consortium

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Darren Jones	Principal Improvement Manager – Central South Consortium
Natalie Gould	Assistant Director for Curriculum and Professional Learning
Neil Davies	Headteacher, Mynydd Cynffig Primary School
Nicola Kelly Fisher	Headteacher, St Marys and St Patricks Catholic Primary School
Ryan Davies	Headteacher, Brynteg Comprehensive
Catrin Evans	Assistant Headteacher, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd
Ms Angela Clarke	Church of Wales Registered Representative

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Amanda Williams – Personal – LA Governor. Three children at a comprehensive school in the borough.

Councillor Melanie Evans – Personal – Governor at Croesty Primary and Pencoed Comprehensive Schools. Son attends Pencoed Comprehensive School.

Councillor Johanna Llewellyn-Hopkins – Personal – Governor. Children attend local schools.

Prejudicial – In the process of setting up a Welsh speaking nursery.

**40. Approval of Minutes**

Decision Made	<u>Resolved:</u> That the minutes of a meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 dated 26 May 2023, 11 September 2023, 12 October 2023 and 18 January 2024, be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	11 April 2024

**41. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2022-2032)**

Decision Made	<u>Resolved:</u> Following consideration of the report and detailed discussion with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers the Committee made the following comments and recommendations:  1. Whilst acknowledging that the WESP Annual report 2022-23 predated the recent approval of the MTFS 2024-25 to 2027-28, the Committee expressed strong concern over the significant financial implications that now faced the Local Authority, which could potentially compromise the delivery of the ambitions
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and commitments contained in the WESP.

An example of this relates to the proposal to increase capacity at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr and Ysgol Y Ferch o'r Sgêr as well as the development of a seedling school in Porthcawl, given the proposal in the current MTFS to reduce nursery provision to the statutory minimum from 2025-26. There was further concern relating to the Welsh medium childcare hubs and the fact that two hubs already built in Bettws and Blackmill still lay vacant and if providers could not be sought, would remain vacant. Not only was there a reputational risk to the Local Authority but also a financial risk to the Capital expenditure for further nursery provision and Welsh childcare provision, the latter of which also had ongoing revenue implications for the Local Authority.

The Committee therefore recommended that:

- a) The Five- and Ten-Year WESP plan be amended and updated (if possible), to reflect the recent financial implications including the impact of any proposed changes to Nursery provision and Home to School Transport provision, which was also highlighted within the future MTFS budget reductions.
  - b) That both plans be amended to reflect the current situation of the childcare hubs, as the plan implies that those in Bettws and Blackmill are already open.
  - c) That the concerns of the Committee relating to the reputational risk of having vacant Welsh childcare hubs as well as the ongoing financial risk of revenue funding required for this provision, be brought to the attention of the Cabinet Secretary for Education.
2. The Committee considered the timescales of the Annual WESP report and recommended that they receive an update containing the draft Annual WESP report 2023-24, before it is approved by Cabinet in September 2024, in order that they can undertake pre-decision scrutiny and have a greater impact.
  3. Whilst appreciating that the individual sub-group reports contain the latest updates, the Committee recommend that the larger Five-Year WESP Plan needed to contain those updates so that a full picture could be provided to the Scrutiny Committee alongside the Annual Report. If this was not possible, the Committee requested that they receive the subgroup plans with these updates.
  4. The Committee recommended that the Annual report contain figures and information relating to the work being undertaken with English speaking nurseries to encourage the use of Welsh language.
  5. Members discussed the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh in regard to the school workforce annual census, which showed teachers skills

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	<p>across the board from basic to proficiency. The Committee noted that the statistics were in isolation and recommended that a comparison be undertaken with other Local Authorities of similar characteristics to assist Members in understanding the level of skills for teachers.</p> <p><u>Additional information requested:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee requested clarification on the four new funding streams that have been agreed by Welsh Government as priorities in relation to Welsh Language.</li><li>• Members discussed the subject of parental support as well as the decisions behind parents choosing to send their children to an English medium or Welsh medium school. The Corporate Director of Education and Family Support advised he would confer with the School's Admission Team as to what information was available or could potentially be gathered.</li><li>• The Committee supported the work being undertaken and support provided to pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Welsh Medium education and felt that Members would benefit from receiving anonymous case studies where children with ALN have really excelled and achieved high educational attainment.</li><li>• The Committee requested further information on what incentive schemes were currently being run by Welsh Government to encourage and increase the number of Welsh-medium teachers.</li></ul> <p><u>Forward Work Programme</u></p> <p>The Committee agreed to consider Welsh Medium Education under their future item on School Modernisation and requested that they receive evidence that the Local Authority had gathered on the 'demand' for additional Welsh education and childcare provision, as part of this report, particularly in those areas such as Porthcawl where there were proposed developments.</p>
Date Decision Made	11 April 2024

**42. Annual Local Authority Scrutiny Report Central South Consortium 2022-23**

Decision Made	<p><u>Resolved:</u> Following consideration of the report and detailed discussion with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers the Committee made the following comments and recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Members discussed their consideration of the last annual report brought to the Committee from the</li></ol>
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	<p>Central South Consortium (CSC) and recommended that pre decision scrutiny of the 2025-2028 Business Plan be built into the CSC planning process to enable the Committee to provide some value into the process.</p> <p>2. The Committee recognise the restrictions that Welsh Government has placed on the sharing and publishing of performance data in the public domain. It was however recommended, and agreed by representatives from the Central South Consortium, that it would be useful to include further detail of some of the ALPs performance analysis, such as the number of 'A' level entries, in future reports, as this would provide a more informed picture.</p> <p><u>Additional information requested:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members requested additional information on CSC grant funding; how it is divided up and allocated, as well as clarification on the associated funding formula.</li></ul>
Date Decision Made	11 April 2024

**43. Information Report for Noting - Adult Community Learning**

Decision Made	<p><u>Resolved:</u> The Committee acknowledged the publication of the information report on Adult Community Learning.</p>
Date Decision Made	11 April 2024

**44. Information Report for Noting - Quarter 3 Performance 2023-24**

Decision Made	<p><u>Resolved:</u> The Committee acknowledged the publication of the information report on Quarter 3 Performance 2023-24.</p> <p>The Committee also commented on the Corporate Plan having seven well-being objectives and between 220 and 230 aims with Red Amber Green (RAG) ratings, suggested that this was too many and needed to be streamlined. Members requested that this be referred to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for future consideration.</p>
Date Decision Made	11 April 2024

**45. Forward Work Programme Update**

Decision Made	<p><u>Resolved:</u> The Committee considered and noted the Forward Work Programme Report and its appendices, agreeing that there was a need to consider key priorities for future items.</p> <p>Members also resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consideration be given to the impact on the WESP when looking at the Home to School transport item including transport policy and any changes going forward.</li><li>• Information to be requested regarding the childcare hubs, facilities on the areas in need based on the LDP evidence to be made available for the School Modernisation Update scheduled on the FWP.</li><li>• A deep dive scrutiny panel be established from the membership of the Committee to be able to consider the subject of Governing Body support and funding in more detail with any recommendations reported back to the main committee.</li></ul>
Date Decision Made	11 April 2024

**46. Urgent Items**

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	11 April 2024

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

The meeting closed at 14:27.