

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - THURSDAY, 8 MAY 2025

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, 8 MAY 2025 AT 11:00

Present

Councillor A Ulberini-Williams – Chairperson

JPD Blundell

HJ David

D M Hughes

Present Virtually

T Thomas

AJ Williams

E D Winstanley

Apologies for Absence

RJ Collins, H Griffiths, J Llewellyn-Hopkins and I M Spiller

Michelle Joyner - Head of the Bridge

Andrea Williams - Senior Educational Psychologist (and Local Authority CAMHS link)

Invitees:

Councillor Martyn Jones

Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services

Lindsay Harvey

Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People

Mark Lewis

Group Manager, Early Years and Young People

Gail Biggs

Group Manager - Learner Support

Lloyd Hughes

Lead Communications and Relationships

Megan Apsee

Education Engagement Team Manager

Clare Shears

Health and Well-being Promoting Educational Settings Programme Co-ordinator for
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

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Headteachers:

Ravi Pawar	Head of Bryntirion Comprehensive School and Chair of Bridgend Association of Secondary Headteachers
Kath John	Head of Brackla Primary and Chair of the Primary School Federation
Ryan Davies	Head of Brynteg Comprehensive School
Rachel John	Head of Newton Primary
Helen Ridout	Head of Ysgol Bryn Castell
Jonathan Lewis	Head of Coety Primary

Officers:

Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Stephen Griffiths	Interim Scrutiny Officer

Declarations of Interest:

None.

72. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> That the minutes of the meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 dated 31 March 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	8 May 2025

73. Pupil Behaviour, Attendance and Exclusions

Decision Made	<u>RESOLVED:</u> Following detailed consideration and discussions with a Cabinet Member, Senior Officers, Headteachers and Invitees, the Committee made the following recommendations and requests for additional information:
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	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Committee discussed the financial challenges for the local authority, the number of schools with deficit budgets and the impact these are having on the reduction of therapeutic and other support staff. a. Members expressed concern regarding the impact the complex budgetary situation was having on counselling and early intervention services and recommended that a referral be made to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) to ensure that these matters are prioritised for funding in the next budget round and that if budgetary savings are required that these are found elsewhere. b. In addition, given the adoption of a minimum operating model across all projects funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund, the directorate's Inspire+ projects, which provide vital support to vulnerable pupils and young people, many of whom face behavioural challenges and/or attendance issues in both school and community settings, Members requested the figures on how the fund is split between directorates be shared with COSC / Scrutiny Budget Working Group.2. The Committee recommended that the local authority, through the Communication and Relationships Team, other agencies and schools to explore and share best practice in respect of pupil behaviour, attendance, and exclusions. In particular, Members expressed a need to embed trauma-informed practice in schools and to promote an understanding of boundaries, values, and what it means to be part of a good school community. Members highlighted that this should take account of findings in the latest Estyn thematic report, "<i>Fostering mutual respect – promoting positive behaviours in secondary school</i>", that strong leadership, consistent behaviour management, and community engagement were key to helping improve pupil behaviour across secondary schools in Wales.3. The Committee recommended that training in classroom management and conflict resolution be provided as part of a programme of continuous professional development for teachers including strategies and techniques to handle disruptions and to strengthen relationships and foster a positive culture.4. Members expressed concern about the '<i>disparities across schools in Bridgend which suggests uneven implementation of effectiveness of attendance strategies across different school settings</i>' and heard from headteachers that a positive school culture was best built from within at each school and an example was provided of the 'Bryntirion Way' developed at Bryntirion
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	<p>Comprehensive. The Committee therefore recommended that consideration be given to providing schools with an opportunity to share best practice and strategies and to develop a 'Bridgend Way' to improve the consistency of implementation of attendance strategies across the borough.</p> <p>5. The Committee expressed concern regarding the impact of the long waiting lists for specialist provision at Ysgol Bryn Castell and the Bridge on the mental health, safety and wellbeing of learners awaiting such provision and learners and staff in mainstream schools and recommended that this issue be added to the Corporate Risk Register.</p> <p>6. The Committee expressed their disappointment that given the importance of integrated working, there was no attendance from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) at the meeting and recommended that correspondence be sent to the Health Board expressing their disappointment and requesting the following information:</p> <p>a. The referral route and criteria for support from CAMHS; and b. The current waiting lists and capacity.</p> <p>7. The Committee acknowledged that the number of fixed-term exclusions in relation to care-experienced children were disproportionately high for the year 2023-24 and recommended that a report be presented to the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting regarding the support and guidance to learners in this situation.</p> <p>Additional information requested:</p> <p>8. The Committee acknowledged that missing data in the Tables throughout the report were due to issues of General Data Protection Regulations and requested that the missing data be shared with Members of the Committee on a confidential basis. Members also requested that the data be broken down into year groups, to assist their understanding of the extent to which these issues were affecting younger and / or older pupils.</p> <p>9. The Committee requested available data regarding the extent to which violent incidents are impacting on teaching staff sickness absence or leaving the profession.</p> <p>10. The Committee requested written feedback be circulated to Members of the Committee on the outcomes from the National Behaviour Summit taking place on 22 May 2025.</p> <p>11. The Committee requested that the slides shared by the Health and Well-being Promoting</p>
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	<p>Educational Settings Programme Co-ordinator for Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board during the meeting be circulated to Members.</p> <p>12. The Committee expressed concern that despite Welsh Government guidance advocating for trauma-informed schools, only 22% of educators in Wales reported receiving related training and requested the corresponding percentage of Bridgend educators trained, highlighting the risk that untrained staff may misinterpret trauma symptoms as defiance; potentially triggering exclusionary procedures.</p> <p>13. The Committee were advised that a new Managed Moves Protocol has recently been launched so there is little data available, however, a previous Protocol was in place and Members requested those historical figures.</p> <p>14. The Committee requested regular updates be provided on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The work of the Weapons-Related Incidents in Bridgend Educational Settings Strategy Group; andb. Directorate-level management information on pupil behaviour, attendance and exclusions that is provided to monthly senior management team meetings.
Date Decision Made	8 May 2025

74. Forward Work Programme Update

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>That the Committee approved the Forward Work Programme (FWP) in Appendix A subject to the inclusion of the recommendations 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 the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The Committee requested that the following items be added to their FWP:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Bridgend Youth Justice Service and Youth Services.b. The future school modernisation planning process (to include an update on the progress of increasing specialist provision) and school maintenance.c. Digital learning and online safeguarding (to include the use of mobile phones/devices).d. A closure report on the Education and Family Support Strategic Plan, 2023-2026.e. Validated exam outcomes (due in January 2026).f. School budgets.
Date Decision Made	8 May 2025

75. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None.
Date Decision Made	8 May 2025

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

The meeting closed at 14:00.