

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

5 January 2017

Chairperson: Councillor A.R.Lockyer

Councillors: R.Thomas, R.G.Jones, J.D.Morgan,
Mrs.K.Pearson, D.Whitelock, Mrs.L.G.Williams
and Mrs C.Edwards

**Co-opted Voting
Members:** Mrs.M.Caddick and Ms.D.Vaughan

**Co-opted Non Voting
Members:** R.De Benedictis and A.Hughes

**Officers In
Attendance** C.Millis, A.Jarrett, J.Hodges, Ms.L.Clement-
Jones, Ms.A.Harris, N.Thomas, R.Morgan and
Mrs A Saunders and Mrs.J.Woodman-Ralph

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees and P.D.Richards

1. **MEMBERS DECLARATIONS**

The following Members made a declaration of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Councillor R.G.Jones Report of the Head of Transformation re: the Establishment of a Temporary Governing Body for the Proposed New All Through School Replacing Dyffryn Comprehensive School and Groes Primary School as he is Chair of Governors at Dyffryn Comprehensive School and his name has been submitted for consideration for the shadow Governing Body of the New All Through School;

- Councillor D.Whitelock Report of the Head of Transformation re: the Establishment of a Temporary Governing Body for the Proposed New All Through School Replacing Dyffryn Comprehensive School and Groes Primary School as his name has been submitted for consideration for the shadow Governing Body of the New All Through School;
- Councillor M.Protheroe Report of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing re: Hillside Secure Children's Home CSSIW Inspection and Estyn Inspection as he is a Governor at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School;
- Councillor P.A.Rees Report of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing re: Hillside Secure Children's Home CSSIW Inspection and Estyn Inspection as he is a Chair of Governors at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School.

2. **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2016.**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 1 December were noted with the following amendments:

- M.Caddick, D.Vaughan and A. Hughes were present at the meeting but they were omitted from the attendance record on the minutes;
- Under Better Schools Brighter Prospects Highlight Report Clarification was given that due to the economic climate at present and the decline in the housing market the developers plans for the next phase at Coed Darcy had been delayed which has impacted on the plans for the new school;
- Members asked that the following should have been recorded in the minutes. Members asked that a safer route to schools assessment should be undertaken on the route to Ysgol

Gymraeg Gwaun Cae Gurwen. Officers explained there was not a need to carry out an assessment because free school transport was already provided on that route due to the hazardous nature of the road.

3. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17**

Noted by the Committee.

4. **PLAY SERVICE REPORT CARD**

Members asked the following questions on the Play Development Service Report Card 2016-2017 as detailed in the circulated report.

- In the report it states that the service is funded from the Welsh Government Families First funding. Does this mean that the service could be lost if the changes to funding proposed by the Welsh Government are implemented?

Officers explained that the current play service could be at risk if the proposed funding changes were implemented by the Welsh Government. Discussions are on-going with Officers and Welsh Government on the proposals and the implications.

- What was the reason for three team members leaving and did they complete exit questionnaires?

Officers said that the employees did complete exit questionnaires which stated that the reason for leaving was for further career opportunities and progression.

- Has there been any redundancies in the service?

It was explained that 3 posts became vacant in the early part of 2016 but were filled by April 2016 and there have been no redundancies within the service.

- In the report it states there was a 13% cut in the budget. What effect did this reduction have on the service?

Officers said that the grant from the Welsh Government was reduced by 13% but this was shortfall was made up by Neath

Port Talbot County Borough Council so there was no impact on the service.

- Will there be further reductions in the grant from the Welsh Government?

Officers explained that the grant has continued at a 13% reduction from the Welsh Government with the Council evaluating whether the shortfall can be made up from future Corporate budgets.

- Are there any specific qualifications needed by the team?

Officers said that Play Working or Child development qualifications are needed.

- Is the service available in Port Talbot or only in Communities First areas in Neath?

Officers explained that the funding is provided through the Families First grant which is available throughout Neath Port Talbot.

- In the light of the Welsh Government's aim to increase the number of people that speak Welsh by 2050. Are there any Welsh Speakers within the service?

There is a fluent Welsh speaker in the team which Officers want to sustain.

- Have any enquiries been made to find out if the service could access any external funding eg. Community Councils?

Officers are currently looking at other sources of funding to help support the service.

- Why on the score cards is the Comparative Performance data not available?

This is a new measure and will be available in future.

Following Scrutiny, the report was noted.

5. **FLYING START SERVICE REPORT CARD**

Members asked the following questions on the Neath Port Talbot Flying Start Service Report Card 2016/17 as detailed in the circulated report.

- Why was there an underspend and what happens to the underspend can it be spent on something else?

Officers explained that any underspend has to be sent back to the Welsh Government at the end of the financial year it cannot be used for other costs other than what has been specified in the grant. The grant is very prescriptive in what it can be used for. The underspend was in the staffing allocation which falls under the health authority as well, our aim is always to spend 100% of the grant allocation.

- Is the Flying Start criteria still based on postcodes and will this continue in future ?

Officers explained that Flying Start interventions are based on postcodes and there is no indication of change at the moment. Other programmes have used different criteria and it is on the agenda for the Welsh Government in future.

- Why did the Welsh Government use postcodes for designating Flying Start areas?

It was explained that the criteria was introduced by the Welsh Government and originally based on historical data.

- Why is there no record of Compliments and Complaints?
Members felt that there a lot of information that can be derived from Complaints on how well a service is working and it was a priority to collect this data.

Officers explained that because the service is run through private providers they don't record Compliments or Complaints but Officers are looking at this to try to develop a process of corporately recording this data.

- It was queried why was the private sector used to provide this service and not schools?

Officers explained that there are different qualifications needed for childcare and Flying Start concentrates on preparing the child for school. Also, very positive feedback is received from schools on how well Flying Start children adapt to school and there is a difference between children who have attended Flying Start and children who have not. Officers also highlighted that by utilising private providers the Council is supporting local businesses and schools have not expressed an interest in taking on the additional work. In Neath Port Talbot Flying Start also uses the voluntary sector to provide services.

- How is the programme monitored because some schools have highlighted issues from children who have attended the Flying Start programme?

Officers explained that they had not received any negative feedback from schools, schools have been very positive of how prepared the children are for school who have taken part in the programme and that Head Teachers don't have the capacity to take on any additional responsibilities. If any Member is aware of issues please could they contact the Participation Co-ordinator. The Head of Participation agreed to ask at his next meeting with LLAN. Also, Flying Start has to achieve targets set by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales. In addition, Flying Start also have its own guidance which providers have to meet. Flying Start also measure children's attainment to ensure that the programme has positive outcomes. This is currently being developed further to track the child's progress throughout school. Schools are also sent questionnaires to establish if they are experiencing any issues.

Following Scrutiny, the report be noted.

6. **EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE UNIT SERVICE REPORT CARD**

Members asked the following questions on the Early Years and Childcare Service Report Card 2016-17 as detailed in the circulated report.

- It was queried whether there were 3 grants or as listed 4?

Officers confirmed there were only 3 grants, Childcare Strategy Grant, Out of School Childcare Grant and the Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme Grant.

- Members highlighted that in today's scorecards the authority was accessing grants that equate to £6 million. Did Officers have any assurances that these grants would not be cut in future by the Welsh Government?

Officers explained that there were no assurances from the Welsh Government on the future of any grant funding which has always caused difficulties and uncertainties for staff who are paid through grant funding which in many cases was only issued on a yearly basis. It was highlighted that the Welsh Local Government Association has been asking Welsh Government to include the grant funding monies into the Revenue Support Grant. It was agreed that the Chair on behalf of the Committee would write to Assembly Members making them aware of these difficulties and the potential risks to the services if the grants are withdrawn.

The Head of Participation was asked to supply Members with the number of services that are funded by grants within Education and the total of amount of grant monies for Members to have an understanding of the impact on the Authority if grant monies were withdrawn by the Welsh Government.

Following Scrutiny, the report was noted subject to a letter being forwarded by the Chair to Assembly Members.

7. **PRE- SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:-

Cabinet Board Proposals

7.1 Hillside Secure Children's Home – Estyn Inspection

Members received an overview of the Hillside Secure Children's Home – Estyn Inspection which took place between the 19

September and the 22 September 2016 as detailed in the circulated report.

It was highlighted that there has been a significant improvement within the education provision in Hillside Secure Centre since the direct management of the provision was taken over by Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School, with the improvement continuing with the aim to achieve an excellent grade from Estyn.

Members asked the following questions:

- Will Members be kept updated on the progress of improvement?

Officers agreed to provide reports on a 6 monthly basis to committee to keep Members updated on progress.

- In our current climate do staff receive any training to enable them to identify young people who could have been radicalised.

Officers explained that staff receive all the training necessary to undertake their role but no issues have been identified that need any specific training. It was noted that Raising Awareness and Prevent training has been arranged to commence shortly and is offered to all staff.

Members thanked Officers for all the work that had been undertaken to improve the education provision at Hillside and asked that their thanks be cascaded to all the staff concerned.

Following Scrutiny, the report was noted.

7.2 Annual Pupil Performance Report 2015/16

The committee received an overview of the Annual Pupil Performance Report 2015/16 as detailed in the circulated report.

It was highlighted that Neath Port Talbot schools have achieved excellent results especially when considering the high levels of children with special educational needs (SEN). Neath Port Talbot has the 4th highest proportion of pupils with a special

educational needs. At Key Stage 4 Neath Port Talbot has had its best performance since 2013 with 9 of 11 schools in benchmark quartiles 1 or 2.

Members asked the following questions:

- At teacher assessment stage our outcomes are not as good as other Local Authorities. How do we know if the teacher assessments are being too critical within Neath Port Talbot compared to other Local Authorities?

Officers explained that at Key Stage 4 there is a huge improvement in the results because they are all standard examinations, prior to this it is a teacher assessment which could vary between local authorities.

- Was there any data available on the reasons for school exclusions?

It was noted the Overall Attendance and Penalty Notices Report contains a detailed breakdown of this information which is reported to Committee on a 6 monthly basis.

Following, Scrutiny the report was noted.

7.3 Establishment of a Temporary Governing Body for the Proposed New All Through School Replacing Dyffryn Comprehensive School and Groes Primary School.

(Cllr.R.G.Jones and Cllr. D.Whitelock re-affirmed their interest in this item and withdrew from the meeting for this item only.)

Members received a verbal update that at the last meeting of Cabinet held on the 4 January 2017, the decision to publicise the statutory notice to create a new (3 –16 age range) school that would replace Dyffryn Comprehensive (Upper and Lower) and Groes Primary Schools was approved which would become operational on the 1 September 2018. As a result the authority has to establish a temporary governing body to conduct the business for the new school before setting the permanent governing body when the school becomes operational. It was highlighted that the composition of the Governing Body is

prescribed by the Welsh Government as detailed in the circulated report.

Members asked the following questions:

- Did Officers take into account when setting up school governing bodies the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) because the Welsh Governments ambition is to increase the number of Welsh Speakers by 2015 and as part of this there needed to be a bilingual representation on school governing bodies?

Officers confirmed that the WESP is taken into account but the response to the request for school governor representatives does not always result in a great deal of interest from applicants.

Members also noted that the Welsh Government is currently seeking views from Local Authorities on the Reform of School Governance Consultation. The draft response will be considered by the next meeting of this committee prior to being submitted to Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board.

Following Scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals.

7.4 Neath Port Talbot Draft Young Carers Strategy

Members received an overview of the Neath Port Talbot Draft Young Carers Strategy (2016-19) as detailed in the circulated report.

Members were pleased to see that the draft strategy had been developed to try to ensure that the correct support was put in place for young people who carry out a caring role and it will be interesting to see the feedback from the Consultation to confirm that the correct areas are being targeted.

Officers confirmed that the consultation is available on-line. In addition, focus groups and youth clubs have been targeted to ensure that we try to capture all the information necessary. In addition, the consultation is available in Welsh and a Welsh speaker will attend all the focus groups. Also, the

Communication and Engagement Plan will accompany the final version of the Young Carers Strategy on its return to Committee for Members to see the detail of consultees.

Following Scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals.

7.5 Hillside Secure Children's Home – CSSIW Inspection

The Committee received an overview of the CSSIW Inspection Report (2016) as detailed in the circulated report.

Officers confirmed that the Inspection continued to show steady progress and that the quality of care had continued to improve. In addition, young people were encouraged to express an opinion but this could be developed further.

It was also highlighted that an area that needed to improve was Staff Supervision. Members noted that in the last year there had been a number of staff changes which had an impact of Staff Supervision but this should improve in future. Also, identified in the Inspection was the improvement in Training and Clinical Supervision.

Members asked the following question:

- In the report it identified an issue with not enough TAITH support has this been improved?

Officers explained that currently this was provided on a 3 day week basis but the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing was aware of the issues and work was on-going to increase the support from TAITH.

Chair asked that Members appreciation be cascaded to Hillside staff for all the hard work they undertake at Hillside on a daily basis.

CHAIRPERSON