

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

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

Members Present:

26 January 2017

Chairperson: Councillor A.R.Lockyer

Vice Chairperson: Councillor H.N.James

Councillors: R.G.Jones, J.D.Morgan, Mrs.K.Pearson,
A.L.Thomas, 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** A.Jarrett, C.Millis, Ms.N.Bray, Burge, C.Glover,
Mrs.N.Hire, N.Thomas, P.Williams and N.Evans

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards and
E.V.Latham

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillor C. Edwards - Report of the Head of Transformation – NPT Draft Response to the Welsh Government Consultation Document 'Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework' – as she is a Member of the Governing Body for Blaengwrach Primary School.

- Councillor.J.D.Morgan - Report of the Head of Transformation – NPT Draft Response to the Welsh Government Consultation Document 'Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework' – as he is a Member of the Governing Body for YGG Cwm-Nedd Primary School.
- Councillor.P.D.Richards - Report of the Head of Participation – Childcare Facilities within Schools on Neath Port Talbot – as his wife is the manager of Baglan Buddies afan School Club Blasn Baglan Primary.
- Councillor.H.N.James - Report of the Head of Transformation – NPT Draft Response to the Welsh Government Consultation Document 'Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework' – as he is a Member of the Governing Body for LLansawel Primary School.
- Councillor.A.R.Lockyer - Report of the Head of Transformation – NPT Draft Response to the Welsh Government Consultation Document 'Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework' – as he is a Member of the Governing Body for Gnoll Primary School and YGG Castell Nedd Primary School. School.
- Councillor. R.G.Jones - Report of the Head of Transformation – NPT Draft Response to the Welsh Government Consultation Document 'Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework' – as he is a Member of the Governing Body Dyffryn Comprehensive School and Coed Hirwaun Primary School.
- Councillor. L.G.Williams - Report of the Head of Transformation – NPT Draft Response to the Welsh Government Consultation Document 'Reform of School Governance:

Regulatory Framework' – as he is a Member of the Governing Body for YGG Gwaun Cae Gurwen Primary School.

Councillor. A.L.Thomas - Report of the Head of Transformation – NPT Draft Response to the Welsh Government Consultation Document 'Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework' – as he is a Member of the Governing Body for Rhos Primary School.

Councillor. K.Pearson - Report of the Head of Transformation – NPT Draft Response to the Welsh Government Consultation Document 'Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework' – as he is a Member of the Governing Body for Craenant Primary School and Llangatwg Community School

2. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2017**

The minutes were noted by the Committee.

3. **TO RECEIVE THE SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

4. **SKILLS AND TRAINING SERVICE REPORT CARD**

Members considered the service report card for the Skills and Training Unit.

Members asked what were Achiever/Learner Numbers contained within the report and it was confirmed that an achiever is someone who has left the scheme and achieved what they set out to. Leavers on the other hand have left the scheme and not achieved what they set out to.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

5. **DATA UNIT SERVICE REPORT CARD**

Members considered the report in relation to the Data Unit Service Report Card.

Members asked whether it would be possible for a staff survey to be undertaken to identify any issues within schools. Officers confirmed that it would be too onerous to undertake a survey however, Members were advised that a national workforce survey was currently be undertaken and when completed it would be reported back to the Committee.

Officers were asked who the customers of the service area were. It was confirmed that the customers are Headteachers and teachers who receive the data from the data unit.

Members asked whether the summary sheets of the data will remain in existence as they are easy to understand from a governor perspective and officers confirmed they would remain but would shortly also include information on Free School Meals.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

6. **PRESENTATION OF THE EDUCATION THROUGH REGIONAL WORKING CONSORTIUM DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2017-2020**

Members received a presentation on the Education through Regional Working (ERW) Consortium in conjunction with the ERW Business Plan that was part of the Cabinet Board agenda.

7. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:-

Cabinet Board Proposals

7.1 Education through Regional Working (ERW) Business Plan 2017 – 2020

Members considered a presentation from the Chief Executive of ERW in conjunction with the draft business plan.

Members asked if there were any specific problems within the workforce and were advised that if there was a local problem then it was probably a national problem also. Officers advised that there is a need to reduce negative social media coverage particularly in relation to the perceived standard of teaching.

Officers advised that it was thought that the recent ESTYN inspection report was deemed to be fair and whilst some schools had scored highly it was essential that all schools received support so that all schools move along.

Members asked how the morale levels with teachers and teaching staff were and officers stated that there are occasions when they feel devalued due to the blame culture associated with ESTYN Inspections in relation to teaching.

Members asked how the cross boundary relationships were working and whether challenge advisors were working cross boundary. Officers confirmed that within the Executive Board individual Council's Directors challenge each other at regular meetings. It was also confirmed that it is possible for Challenge Advisors to work across boundaries but it must be manageable and sensible.

Members asked were the Challenge Advisors still undertaking two visits a year to schools unlike other areas where visits have ceased to some schools. It was confirmed that ERW will still undertake at least two visits to schools within the area and schools that require more support will receive more visits if required. It was confirmed that other areas had ceased visiting schools that were classed as green and this has seen those schools deteriorate due to a reduction of support.

Members asked what is going to be the impact of the reform of Additional Learning Needs and it was confirmed that as yet the impact could not be known but more information will become evident when Welsh Government explain the impacts of the Bill at the end of February.

It was noted that ESTYN had suggested an evaluation of ERW being good for school improvement and leadership and Members asked why ESTYN were asked to comment. Officers stated that there is a requirement for comments from ESTYN because the consortium can evaluate itself as good but there needs to be an external agreement

of this to show that there has been an objective review and evaluation also.

Members asked why some of the outstanding actions from 2015/2016 had not been brought forward to 2016/2017. Officers confirmed that a decision was taken that in the previous business plan there was too much detail and some of the actions including those that have not been carried forward are the daily tasks of the consortium.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

7.2 Childcare Facilities within Schools in Neath Port Talbot

Members considered the report on Childcare facilities within schools in Neath Port Talbot that sought to develop facilities in additional schools.

Officers advised that the report also acted as a progress report that was presented on an annual basis. Members asked why should it be the Council's responsibility to take this forward and officers confirmed it was taken forward because if it wasn't then there was a danger it could come unregulated plus there is a statutory duty on the Council.

Members asked what the difference was between established child care facilities and those arranged by Flying Start it was confirmed that only one element was Flying Start and these were provided for 2.5 hours a day for 42 weeks a year.

Members asked for clarity in relation to the recommendation on providing the relevant officer with delegated powers. Officers stated that this had always been the case but this report was passing that authority to another officer.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

7.3 NPT Draft Response to the Welsh Government Consultation Document 'Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework'

Members considered a report that highlighted the Council's draft response to Regulatory Framework for School Governance.

Members noted that they wished for the inclusion of minor authorities to continue which would allow community councillors to become

governors of schools. Officers stated that they would reflect this in the consultation and agreed that it would add to the skills mix of respective governing bodies.

Members stated that there is nothing within the framework in relation to the skills required by Governors and suggested that this should be included within the framework. Officers responded by suggesting that it should be down to each governing body to decide on what skills are required.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

7.4 Pupil Attendance Update

Members considered a report that they had requested in relation to Pupil Attendance.

Members asked whether penalty notices are still being issued and officers confirmed that because there are still some issues and penalty issues continue to be issued. However it was confirmed that a third of those who had received a fixed penalty notice had showed significant improvement in their attendance.

Members asked where the fixed penalty notice sat in the process and it was confirmed that it is the step prior to court action and offenders generally pay the fixed penalty of £60 as opposed to the court fine of potentially around £600 to £700.

Members noted that the attendance figures for Ystalyfera had improved and Members asked what they are doing within the school to improve. Officers stated that because individuals wish to attend the school this has a bearing on attendance but where there is best practice this is shared across the County Borough.

7.5 Agreement of the proposals for the updating and implementation of the Route 16 (16 and Leaving Care) Team Financial Policy

Members considered the report that sought agreement to implement an amended financial policy in relation to Route 16.

Members raised concern that of over 190 consultation booklets were circulated but none were returned and asked officers if they knew

what the reasons for this were. Officers confirmed that they were unaware of any reasons why they were not returned but it may be because there was no incentive for the service users to complete them.

Members suggested that in future it may be better for the support workers to have a short questionnaire that they can ask the service users during consultation periods.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of recommendation one contained within the report 'The revised Route 16 Financial Policy with the Participation Premium retained and amended Qualification payments for implementation from 1st April 2017'.

7.6 Children's Services Annual Staff Survey

Members considered a report that highlighted the findings of the 2016 survey of the Children and Young People Workforce.

Members enquired if there had been improvements made within the Adoption Service. Officers stated the Improvement Member Panel have visited the team and following this discussions had been held with the Director of Social Services in the City and County of Swansea. It was confirmed that the Improvement Member Panel will be revisiting the team shortly to hear of the improvements that have been made.

Members asked had the survey identified improvements across the Department and it was confirmed that overall the responses were positive but there were pockets which require further work.

Members noted that that within the Team around the Family there appeared to be issues and asked whether they were in the process of being addressed. Officers stated that the team had recently moved from the Education Directorate and following a visit by the Improvement Member Panel issues had now been addressed.

Members asked how was it possible to identify the service areas affected if the surveys were completed anonymously. Officers stated that there was a mixture of anonymous and non anonymous completion so identification of the respective areas was possible.

Following Scrutiny the report was noted.

CHAIRPERSON