



EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3.00 pm THURSDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2018

COUNCIL CHAMBER - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE

PART 1

1. To receive any declarations of interest from Members
2. To receive the Minutes of the Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee held on 12th January 2018. *(Pages 5 - 14)*
3. To receive the Minutes of the Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee held on 25th January 2018. *(Pages 15 - 18)*
4. To receive the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2017/18. *(Pages 19 - 22)*
5. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).
6. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972
7. Access to Meetings to resolve to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

PART 2

8. To select appropriate private items from the Cabinet Board Agenda

for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board Reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Friday, 9 February 2018

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor A.L.Thomas

Vice Chairperson: Councillor M.Crowley

Councillors: S. ap Dafydd, M.Ellis, S.Harris, N.T.Hunt, H.N.James, S.Miller, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan, M.Protheroe, S.Renkes, R.L.Taylor, D.Whitelock and A.J.Richards

***Co-opted Voting Members** M.Caddick and A. Amor

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

Notes:

- (1) *If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) *If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*
- (3) *For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised - though Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.*
- (4) *The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.*
- (5) *Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.*

EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

12 January 2018

Chairperson: Councillor A.L.Thomas

Councillors: S. ap Dafydd, M.Ellis, S.Harris, N.T.Hunt, H.N.James, S.Miller, R.Mizen, J.D.Morgan, S.Renkes, R.L.Taylor, D.Whitelock and A.J.Richards

Co-opted Voting Members: M.Caddick and A. Amor

Co-opted Non Voting Members: A.Hughes

Officers In Attendance A.Thomas, R.Gordon, J.Merrifield and Miss.C.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees, D.W.Davies and D.Jones

1. **MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

Cllr. A.R.Lockyer Re: Report of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools – Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as he is a school governor within the County Borough but has dispensation to speak and vote and also has grandchildren who attend schools within the County Borough.

- Cllr. P.A.Rees Re: Report of the Head of Transformation on the Strategic School Improvement Programme – Proposal to Establish Specialist Provision for Primary Age Pupils with Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties as he is a governor at Crynallt Primary School but has dispensation to speak and vote.
- Re: Report of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools – Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as he is a school governor within the County Borough but has dispensation to speak and vote and also has grandchildren who attend schools within the County Borough.
- Cllr. H.N.James Re: Report of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as he is a Govenor at Llansawel Primary, a Shadow Governor at Ysgol Newydd Carreg Hir and a Shadow Govenor at Ysgol Cymraeg Bro Dur but has dispensation to speak and vote.
- Cllr. R.L.Taylor Re: Report of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as she is a governor at Eastern and groes Primary School but has dispensation to speak and vote and also has a Relative working in Baglan Primary School.
- Cllr. M.Ellis Re: Report of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as he is a Governor of Ysgol Newydd Margam but has dispensation to speak and vote.
- Cllr.J.D.Morgan Re: Reports of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing

the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as he is the Chair of Governors at Ysgol Gynradd Cymraeg Cwm-Nedd but has dispensation to speak and vote.

Cllr. R.Mizen Re: Reports of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as he has grandchildren who attend schools in the County Borough.

M.Caddick Re: Reports of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as she has a Grandchild who attends schools in the County Borough

Cllr.S.Miller Re: Reports of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as she is a School Governor of Melin Primary School but has dispensation to speak and vote and also has Grandchildren in Melin Primary School.

A.Amor Re: Reports of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as he is a Governor of YGG Rhosafan and YGG Ywern but has dispensation to speak and vote and also has a child in YGG Rhosofan.

Cllr. S.Renkes Re: Reports of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as she is a School Governor but has dispensation to speak and vote

Cllr. D.Whitelock Re: Reports of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as he is a Governor at Ysgol Newydd Margam but has dispensation to speak

and vote and has a Grandson at Sandfields Primary School.

Cllr. A.L.Thomas Re: Reports of the Head of Transformation on the Financing Schools - Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards as he is a Governor at Rhos Primary School but has dispensation to speak and vote.

2. **MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2017**

The Committee noted the minutes

3. **MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7TH DECEMBER 2017**

The Committee noted that the Co-Opted Members did not appear on the minutes as attendees. The Democratic Services Officer apologised for the administration error and would rectify the minutes so that accurate attendance is portrayed.

With the above amendments the Committee noted the minutes.

4. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18.**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

5. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following Cabinet Board items:

Cabinet Board Proposals

5.1 **Education Lifelong learning Directorate Delivery Plan**

Members were provided with information on the business plan for the Directorate of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning 2017-20 as detailed in the circulated report.

Members asked how the number of Seven year old children were going to be encouraged to be educated through the Medium of Welsh. It was noted that it was a legal requirement

to teach children through the Medium of Welsh and one way of meeting this requirement was by providing free transport to a Welsh School through the Home 2 School transport. Officers highlighted that the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is due to come to a future meeting which will make information more clear.

Members asked that Welsh Language Skills be included in the Adult Education targets.

Members queried about the provision of Nursery Education and to look to involve Flying Start when impacts are investigated in the School Improvement Programme. It was asked for the impact to be looked at when considering the Strategic School Improvement Programme. Officers confirmed that updates on Flying Start is scheduled in the Forward Work programme to be reported back to a future meeting and that the Strategic School Improvement Programme report is due to come to a future meeting and officers will consider the impact on flying start.

Members asked who is invited to attend the well-being conference. Officers confirmed that every head teacher is invited to attend.

Members were concerned that the performance measure on page 32 of the circulated report 'Improve the performance of boys in L2 by 2018 to 89%' had reduced to 58.3%.

Members highlighted that the surplus places in Ysgol Newydd Briton Ferry and Ysgol Newydd Maram were not totalling correctly. Officers highlighted that when a new school is planned the catchment area is what is considered as opposed to the number of pupils that go to that school. The Officer agreed to explore this further with the relevant member.

Members asked if officers were confident that the standards are being met with the budget pressures. Officers confirmed that they are confident, however, if pressures get difficult then officers would relook at the priorities and targets.

Members asked for the Participation and Sport target to be increased.

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

5.2 Strategic School Improvement Programme - Proposal to Establish Specialist Provision for Primary Age Pupils with Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Members received information on proposed specialist provision for primary age pupils with social emotional and behavioural difficulties. The specialist provisions are to be located at Coedffranc Primary School and at Crynallt Primary School as detailed in the circulated report.

Members highlighted that staff would need to be suitably skilled and that appropriate training would have to be anticipated and that the impact would need to be evaluated over a 5 to 10 year period.

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

5.3 Financing Schools – Reviewing the Funding Formula to Raise Standards

(Cllr. P.A.Rees re-affirmed his interest at this point and withdrew for this item only)

(Cllr.A.R.Lockyer re-affirmed his interest at this point and withdrew for this item only)

(Cllr.S.Miller re-affirmed her interest at this point and withdrew for this item only)

(Cllr.D.Whitelock re-affirmed his interest at this point and withdrew for this item only)

(Cllr.R.L.Taylor re-affirmed her interest at this point and withdrew for this item only)

(Cllr.R.Mizen re-affirmed his interest at this point and withdrew for this item only)

(M.Caddick re-affirmed her interest at this point and withdrew for this item only)

(A.Amor re-affirmed his interest at this point and withdrew for this item only)

Members received information on proposed changes to the formula for allocating funding to schools. It was highlighted to members that Option A was the preferred option following consultation, as detailed in the circulated report.

At the meeting, members received a paper copy of the funding formula options that were consulted upon.

Members queried how often the funding formula is reviewed. Officers reported that the requirement is to review the funding formula annually, however, it doesn't follow that there will be changes made to the formula at each annual review.

Members queried the longevity of the smaller Schools. Officers highlighted that maintaining standards at smaller Schools can be challenging, however, school organisation matters are considered on an area by area basis and sometimes a small School is the most appropriate option.

Members queried whether class size grants would be available within option A. Officers reported that head teachers proposed the removal of class size grants allocations in favour of a fairer way of distributing money. Officers also reported that under a Welsh Government initiative there is a small Rural School Grant available.

Members asked whether officers are comfortable with the detrimental impact of the proposed funding formula on some schools and whether support and help would be provided to those schools that need it. Officers confirmed that they are and that schools would be appropriately supported.

Members were concerned about the accumulation of reserves in some Schools and asked for specific plans for reclaiming money from excessive reserves held by schools. Officers highlighted legislative procedures that enable an Authority to challenge schools with reserves in excess of 50k in respect of Primary Schools and 100k for Secondary Schools. Officers will explore the potential for reclaiming excessive reserves and will report to members on this matter at a later date.

Members queried whether excessive reserves could be calculated as a percentage of a school's budget rather than a financial sum. Officers reported that, whereas percentages could be used in future proposals, to do so in this proposal could adversely affect the intended outcome.

Members asked whether the 75k threshold had been modelled. Although the Welsh Government has set a reserve guide of 50k for primary schools, officers consider 75k represents a reasonable threshold given that there are fewer small schools within the county borough than was the case when the Welsh Government figure was issued.

Members were disappointed with the 65% turn out on the consultation.

Members asked for a report to be brought back to a future meeting on a proposed mechanism for managing excessive school reserves.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that Cabinet Board be asked to consider the following recommendations:

Having given due regard to the impact assessment approval be granted for:

- a) Option A as detailed in the circulated report to be the basis for funding primary school budgets for the 2018/2019 financial year;
- b) the withholding of financial benefits resulting from Option A to schools with reserves above the £75K threshold as at 31 March 2017;
- c) the methodology in the circulated report for the redistribution of withheld funds to schools with a reduction in their budget share allocation of more than £20K;
- d) the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning (or his nominated representative) and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture be granted delegated authority to make alternative funding arrangements where, specifically in relation to the £75K reserve threshold, the financial circumstances of individual

schools warrant further consideration and that any use or refusal of an application be reported to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

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EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

25 January 2018

Chairperson: Councillor A.L.Thomas

Councillors: S. ap Dafydd, S.Harris, N.T.Hunt, H.N.James, R.Mizen, M.Protheroe, R.L.Taylor, D.Whitelock and A.J.Richards

Co-opted Voting Members: M.Caddick and A. Amor

Officers In Attendance A.Evans, C.Millis, J.Burge, I.Guy and Miss.C.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.R.Lockyer and P.A.Rees

1. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18.**

The Chair requested a workshop session in the next Cycle of Meetings, for the Committee to populate the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme for 2018/19.

2. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following Cabinet Board items:

2.1 **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan**

Members received information on the draft Neath Port Talbot Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017/2020 as detailed in appendix to the circulated report, following re-consultation and for Cabinet Board to commend to Council.

Members highlighted that the Welsh Governments aim of achieving a million Welsh Speakers by 2050 is ambitious and

asked whether the officers were confident in the Primary Sector reaching the standards of the Welsh Government. Officers explained that the Welsh Language Strategy would be key at looking in to this.

Members asked whether the Parental Survey for Coed Darcy had been produced in a form of a letter. Officers confirmed that it had not yet been configured.

Members highlighted to officers that there is no education in the Medium of Welsh in the Afan Valleys and asked officers to include in the broader strategy to explore schools taught through the Medium of Welsh in the Afan Valleys.

Members highlighted that Children being educated through the medium of Welsh is not just within school, it also can be done at home and queried how parents and guardians can have help and support for this. Officers highlighted that they are currently working with Mentair Iaith and would want the the background and culture of welsh to be taught to make it more appealing. It was noted that there will be a pop up shop in Port Talbot Swansea University opening soon which would be of interest to parents and adults.

Members commended the comment on having Welsh Language being taught in a more appealing way and asked if there was any flexibility on the curriculum. Officers mentioned that there is flexibility and may increase with models going forward, however, it takes confidence and therefore would need to consider training for staff.

Members asked how officers will aim to reach the action 'increasing current take up of pre-school Welsh Medium provision by 100% during the lifetime of the plan' as detailed on page 24 of the circulated report. Officers said that they would look to work with Flying Start and Cylch, look at where the current demand is for Pre School and look at decisions to meet that demand.

Members asked that with the new School coming to the county there will be a surge interest for welsh Medium School in the Afan Valley. Officers highlighted that they are aware of pupils crossing the border to go to Ysgol Maesteg and would look in to this.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that Cabinet Board be asked to consider the following recommendations:

That having given due regard to the responses to the consultation and the impact assessments in relation to equality risk, Welsh Language, legal and workforce. Approval be granted for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020 to be commended to Council for approval prior to submission to the Welsh Government and for implementation on the 1 April 2018 subject to the inclusion that exploration is undertaken into the use of Starter classes in English Medium Schools as a measure to increase Welsh Medium Education.

2.2 Annual Pupil Performance

Members were provided with a summary of the Performance of Neath port Talbot Schools and its pupils during 2016/17.

Members asked officers if they have a broader movement of Pupils. Officers confirmed that, that would be included in the admissions policy.

Members commended that Schools celebrate that children receive a GCSE and not if they have Grade's A/B or C, as all grades equal a GCSE.

Members queried why Key stage 4 level 2 had dropped from 1st to 14th over the last 5 years. Officers highlighted that there had been major changes to exams and qualifications with limited support from WG to our schools.

Members asked for a breakdown of the data for each school. Officers confirmed this could be done through a workshop session.

Officers highlighted to the members of this committee that they are invited to attend the School Standards Partnership Group to engage with the presentations that are delivered by each School.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

2.3 Pupil Attendance Update

Members were provided with information and data in relation to Neath Port Talbot Pupil attendance covering the 2017/18 academic year to date.

Members queried whether the data caters for sickness bugs that may affect pupil attendance. Officers highlighted that there was a sickness bug that affected numerous schools in December 2016 and that every illness will effect figures.

Members asked whether the authority can encourage good attendance by offering rewards. Officers confirmed that some schools do offer awards for good attendance however would raise it in a Senior Management team meeting and inform members of the discussion.

Members queried whether the traveller unit affected the attendance percentage in Llansawel Primary School. Officers highlighted that it did affect the figures slightly, however, as there are a small number of children if 1 or 2 children are off sick for a week it really affects their figures.

Members asked how Rhyd-y-fro Primary School had such a high percentage. Officers confirmed that their attendance had decreased significantly the autumn before which has shown an increase this year.

The Cabinet Member for Education highlighted to Members to make Attendance the top of their discussions to improve attendance.

Members queried that some parents take their children abroad for cultural and education reasons and asked do schools take this in to consideration. Officers confirmed that it is the Head Teachers discretion on each Childs own merit for absence.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

CHAIRPERSON

**Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme 2017/18**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Officer
15 June 2017		
29 June 2017		
20 July 2017	School Funding Formula - presentation	
14 Sept 2017		

12 October 2017		
9 November 2017	Celtic Leisure Annual Report (Cabinet Paper)	Paul Walker
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme	Andrew Thomas
7 December 2017		
12 January 2018		
25 January 2018	Numbers of Welsh pre-school places within Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (Report coming to Cabinet Board with the WESP in January 2018)	Aled Evans/Andrew Thomas

15 February 2018		
15 March 2018	Taxi Driver Training update	
	Report on the Educational Achievements of Looked After Children in Schools and Further Education (being considered initially by Corporate Parenting and then to ESC Scrutiny Committee.	Aled Evans/ Andrew Jarrett
	Report on the Mechanism on how to handle excessive school reserves	Andrew Thomas
12 April 2018	Review of Music Service following recent changes to service delivery	Chris Millis
3 May 2018	A report highlighting the successes of new school builds in terms of education and Lessons Learnt	Aled Evans
	Report on the results of the combating poverty pilot	Andrew Jarrett/ AledEvans
	Results of the Youth Service Mapping Exercise of the current	Chris

	provision.	Millis/A.Spooner- Cleverly
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** Schools Budget

- Work shop session – new cycle 2018/19 to populate scrutiny FWP