



EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.00 PM THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2020

VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

All mobile telephones to be switched to silent for the duration of the meeting

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest
2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 5 - 36*)
 - 24 October 2019
 - 18 December 2019
 - 16 January 2020
 - 23 January 2020
 - 23 January 2020
3. Blended learning in key stage 4 and examinations for 2021
(*Pages 37 - 42*)
4. Neath Port Talbot Youth Service - Summer Support Programme
(*Pages 43 - 52*)
5. Inclusion Service Report on Overview of Support for Children and Young People with Additional learning Needs (*Pages 53 - 62*)
6. Verbal Update on the Impact from Covid-19 on Youth Unemployment and Disengagement - Youth Hub Work
7. Forward Work Programme 2019/20 (*Pages 63 - 64*)

8. **Urgent Items**
Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972
9. **Access to Meetings**
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

10. **Inclusion Service Report on Overview of Support for Children and Young People with Additional learning Needs - Appendix 1 (Exempt under Paragraph 13) (Pages 65 - 74)**

S.Phillips
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Thursday 12 November 2020

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: **Councillor S.H.Reynolds**

Vice Chairperson: **Councillor R.Mizen**

Councillors: M.Crowley, S.Harris, J.Jones, D.Keogh, S.Miller, J.D.Morgan, R.Phillips, M.Protheroe, S.Renkes, A.J.Richards, D.Whitelock, R.W.Wood and J.Hale

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

***Co-opted Non Voting Members** 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.*

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EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

24 October 2019

Chairperson: Councillor S.H.Reynolds

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.Mizen

Councillors: M.Crowley, S.apDafydd, S.Harris, J.Jones, D.Keogh, S.Miller, M.Protheroe, S.Renkes, A.J.Richards, D.Whitelock and J.Hale

Officers In Attendance: C.Millis, A.Thomas, I.Guy, P.Walker, D.Holder-Phillips, M.Daley, J.Haeney, A.Herbert, H.Lewis, A.Spooner-Cleverly, C.Davies and T.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees and A.J.Taylor

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Councillor S.apDafydd Re: Item 4 of the Cabinet papers re Home to School Travel Appeals procedure, and item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as he is a Governor at St Joseph's Catholic Comprehensive School and Sixth Form Centre and Ysgol Bae Baglan.

M.Caddick Re: Item 4 of the Cabinet papers re Home to School Travel Appeals procedure, and item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re

Admission to Schools, as she has grandchildren in schools within Neath Port Talbot, a grandchild using school transport and is a governor of a school within Neath Port Talbot.

Councillor M.Crowley

Re: Item 4 of the Cabinet papers re Home to School Travel Appeals procedure, and item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as he is a governor at schools within Neath Port Talbot.

Councillor S.Harris

Re: Item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as she is governor at Creunant Primary school.

Councillor J.Jones

Re: Item 4 of the Cabinet papers re Home to School Travel Appeals procedure, and item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as she has grandchildren in schools within Neath Port Talbot and she is a governor at Pen Afan Primary school.

Councillor D.Keogh

Re: Item 4 of the Cabinet papers re Home to School Travel Appeals procedure, and item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as he is a governor at Ysgol Cwm Brombil.

Councillor S.Miller

Re: Item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as she has grandchildren in Melin Primary school and is Chair of governors at Melin Primary school.

- Councillor R.Mizen Re: Item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as he is a governor at Ysgol Cwm Brombil and Cwmavon Primary school.
- Councillor M.Protheroe Re: Item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as he is a governor at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive school and Melin Primary school.
- Councillor P.A.Rees Re: Item 4 of the Cabinet papers re Home to School Travel Appeals procedure, and item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as he is a governor at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive school and Crynallt Primary school, and he has a granddaughter who uses school transport.
- Councillor S.Renkes Re: Item 4 of the Cabinet papers re Home to School Travel Appeals procedure, and item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as she is a governor at Baglan and Blaen Baglan Primary schools.
- Councillor S.Reynolds Re: Item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as she is a governor at Ysgol Gwaen Cae Gurwen.
- Councillor A.J.Taylor Re: Item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as he is a governor at Eastern Primary school and has children in Ysgol Cwm Brombil.
- Councillor D.Whitelock Re: Item 4 of the Cabinet papers re Home to School Travel Appeals

procedure, and item 4 of the Scrutiny Committee papers re Admission to Schools, as he has grandchildren in schools within Neath Port Talbot who use school transport and is a governor of Ysgol Cwm Brombil.

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the minutes of the 12 September 2019, be approved.

Valleys Champion

The Chair sought nominations from the Committee for the new role of Valleys Champion. Councillor D.Whitelock volunteered for the role.

3. **MINUTES OF EDUCATION THROUGH REGIONAL WORKING (ERW) JOINT SCRUTINY COUNCILLOR GROUP**

Committee was pleased to note that Members nominated from Neath Port Talbot had attended every meeting they had been invited to, and were providing challenge.

That the minutes of the 3 June 2019, be approved.

4. **ADMISSION TO SCHOOLS**

Members received information and data in relation to the admission of pupils to Neath Port Talbot schools, and were pleased to note that every child who had applied for a school place within Neath Port Talbot had received a place.

There had been a large scale movement of pupils, following in year transfer applications totalling 925, in 2018/19. Members queried whether each of these transfers had been relocated successfully and as per their first choice. Officers explained that not all had got their first choice, some had had their second choice and some had stayed in their original school, or chosen to appeal the decision.

The new school in the area of Coed D'Arcy was discussed, and it was noted that it had not yet been designated as an English or a Welsh medium school. Welsh medium capital grants were expected within the next couple of years which would ease current pressures in existing Welsh medium schools. It was hoped the new school in Coed D'Arcy would be built in 2021 – the admissions figures would be included in the report following the opening.

Members queried what support was available to parents regarding the appeals process, and noted that the appeals procedure was clearly set out for parents who chose to make an appeal, and information was also available from education and legal officers.

The high number of pupils in Dwr Y Felin comprehensive school was discussed, and members noted that various factors influence where children are placed, including parental choice, siblings in the same school, the appeals process and the proximity of the homes of looked after children.

Contingency plans were discussed should any local schools reach their capacity – catchment areas could be altered, schools could be expanded, and the new school at Coed D'Arcy, would all be taken into account.

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

5. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The Committee chose to scrutinise the following Cabinet Board items:

Home to School Travel Assistance Appeals Procedure

Officers highlighted a typing error on page 14 of the Cabinet board papers, regarding the Council's Transport Group. The figures relating to the makeup of the Group were incorrect, and would be amended prior to implementation.

The new second stage of the appeals process was explained. Members noted that although it would increase the workload of officers within the Education directorate, officers were there to help families.

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

Annual Report on Young People who are not in Education, Employment or Training

The large amount of work that went into identifying young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) was noted. The figures in front of Members were very transparent.

Members requested better clarity of labelling of graphs on subsequent reports.

Following Scrutiny, the report was noted.

Curriculum for Wales 2022 – Presentation

Members received a presentation on the new curriculum which would be introduced to Wales from 2022. It was noted that each school would design their own curriculum which would be suitable for the community the school was in. A Curriculum Advisory Group had been established within Neath Port Talbot, with the purpose of advising schools on dealing with the radically different requirements.

It was as yet, unclear what the end point would be – whether there would be still be GCSEs and so on. There would, however, need to be a change to the exam structure, as there would be a change to the teaching. There was cross party support for the proposals which would not be affected by a potential change of government at Westminster.

Collaboration between teachers across different schools would be encouraged to widen the knowledge base, instead of the traditional method of going on a course. Professional learning money was still available per member of staff, should schools still feel courses were of benefit.

It was noted that additional learning needs (ALN) pupil's curriculum would also be changing – this change would be presented in the yearly ALN update, as well as in an all Member seminar on ALN reforms scheduled for February 2020

Following Scrutiny, the presentation was noted.

6. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

Site visits for Committee Members to Ysgol Bae Baglan and Ysgol Bro Dyr were discussed. The Scrutiny officer would liaise with Members to arrange.

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for 2019/20.

CHAIRPERSON

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EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

18 December 2019

Chairperson: Councillor S.H.Reynolds

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.Mizen

Councillors: S.apDafydd, S.Harris, J.Jones, D.Keogh,
S.Miller, J.D.Morgan, M.Protheroe, S.Renkes,
A.J.Richards, D.Whitelock and J.Hale.

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

**Officers In
Attendance** A.Thomas, C.Millis, P.Walker, R.Crowhurst,
W.John, P.Doyle, I.Guy, C.L.Davies, and
J.Woodman-Ralph

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

1. **LEISURE AND CULTURE SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES**

That the minutes of the Leisure and Culture Sub Committee of the 29 January, 3 May, 5 September and the 22 November 2019 be noted.

2. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The committee chose to scrutinise the following cabinet board items:

Quarterly Performance Management Data 2019-2020-
Quarter 2 Performance (1 April – 30 September 2019)

Members received the quarter 2 performance management data, complaints and compliments for the period 1 April 2019 to 30

September 2019 for Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate as detailed in the circulated report.

The decrease in attendance figures was discussed, and members noted that the recent sickness virus in schools had impacted on these figures.

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

Library Service Review

The committee received an overview of the review of the Library Service in Neath Port Talbot as detailed in the circulated report.

Clarification was given that the proposal to move the library headquarters to Ynysmaerdy School would not impact on other libraries in the area. As the headquarters would be a storage facility and would be an Education Library Resource Centre for Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

The committee heard that the review was a comprehensive one which included community libraries. As a result officers would be meeting with all community libraries in January 2020 to find out what support they needed going forward. Members asked that their appreciation be given to library staff, communities (who took over the running of libraries) and volunteers for all the commitment and dedication they had shown over the past few years in ensuring the library service continues to thrive.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the cabinet board.

Strategic School Improvement Programme – Proposal to establish specialist provision for secondary age pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Information was received on the the proposal to establish a specialist provision for secondary age pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School as detailed in the circulated report.

It was highlighted that 17 consultation responses had been received all of which expressed support for the proposal.

The school would receive additional funding to support the proposal. Specialist staff would be recruited which would benefit all schools, by sharing their knowledge and practice as the strategies for children who were not stated were the same.

Concern was expressed at the plan to allow the bus bringing children to this specialist provision into the school yard as there were already issues with vehicles accessing this area. Officer explained that measures had been put in place to ensure children's safety and that the children would be supervised in the controlled area on arrival and departure.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the cabinet board.

3. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

Members noted the Forward Work Programme 2019/20. It was highlighted that site visits to Bae Baglan and Bro Dur would take place on the 3 February 2020. In addition, the All Member Seminar on Additional Learning Needs Reform would take place on the 6 February 2020. All members were encouraged to attend.

4. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

RESOLVED: That pursuant to Section 100A (4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

Pre-Decision Scrutiny

The committee chose to scrutinise the following private cabinet board items:

Celtic Leisure Six Monthly Performance Review 2019-2020
and
Celtic Leisure Performance Review 2019 -20

The committee was reminded that both items had previously been scrutinised by the Leisure and Culture Scrutiny Sub Committee and that they were not being considered again but the Chairperson on behalf of the committee wanted to brief the wider committee on their findings.

It was agreed that Celtic Leisure would attend the Leisure and Culture Scrutiny Sub Committee on a quarterly basis and attend Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis.

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

CHAIRPERSON

EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

16 January 2020

Chairperson: Councillor S.H.Reynolds

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.Mizen

Councillors: M.Crowley, S.apDafydd, S.Harris, J.Jones, S.Miller, J.D.Morgan, R.Phillips, M.Protheroe, A.J.Richards, D.Whitelock and J.Hale

Officers In Attendance C.Millis and A.Thomas, S.Curran and J.Woodman-Ralph

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees and C.Clement-Williams

1. **CONSULTATION ON EDUCATION, LEISURE AND LIFELONG LEARNING BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS 2020/21**

An overview was received on the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Budget and Draft Savings 2020/2021, as detailed in the circulated report.

It was explained that the budget before members today was a positive budget compared to previous years, but that the council still had to make savings of £2.148 million to ensure there was a balanced budget for 2020/2021.

Members raised the following points:

- Budget Line ELLL 1003 – Cleaning Services (Schools)
Members were concerned at the impact on school budgets if this cost was to transfer to schools and the impact this might have on the current excellent standard of cleanliness within schools, if schools had to save money to meet this additional budget pressure. Officers explained that savings still had to be made and that it would be an extra pressure on school budgets

but that it could be absorbed by schools. The current cleaning service had received many compliments for the standard of cleanliness and schools understood the need of this standard to continue.

Members asked that officers consider phasing the transfer of cleaning costs to schools over a 3 years period.

- Budget Line ELLL1004 – School Transport – Out of County
Members asked how officers could forecast that there would be a reduction in the need for transportation to special schools out of county. Officers explained that the forecast was based on the current numbers of children in out of county placements who would reach the age of 19 in July 2020 whose placements would end.
- Budget Line ELLL 1001 – Leisure Trust
Members queried was this saving achievable. Officers confirmed that discussions were currently taking place with the provider to maximise their income which would result in a reduction of the subsidy.
- Budget Line ELLL 707 – Pontardawe Arts Centre
Members asked whether the projected income from the Cinema project at the centre was feasible to result in a reduction in subsidy. Officers confirmed that the increased income from establishing the cinema which was scheduled to open in January 2021 would be able to allow the subsidy to reduce. In addition, a capital investment had been agreed by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, with a further investment being sought from the Arts Council for Wales and the Friends of Pontardawe Arts Centre to support the development.

Members asked that officers consider reducing the subsidy to the Arts Centre over a 3 year period rather than 2 years as detailed in the circulated report.

The committee was pleased that the work previously undertaken to strengthen the Library Service had resulted in a sustainable service going forward.

Members asked that the officers ensure that the points raised today be included in the consultation on the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Budget and Draft Savings 2020/2021.

CHAIRPERSON

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EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

23 January 2020

Chairperson: Councillor S.H.Reynolds

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.Mizen

Councillors: M.Crowley, S.apDafydd, S.Harris, J.Jones, J.D.Morgan, M.Protheroe, D.Whitelock and J.Hale

Officers In Attendance C.Millis and A.Thomas, J.Burge, J.Haeney, C.L.Davies, C.Plowman and J.Woodman-Ralph

Co-opted Members: M.Caddick

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

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following members made declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

Councillor C.M.Crowley Re: School Attendance Report as he is a governor at Twyn and Awel y Mor Primary School and confirmed he has dispensation to speak and vote.

Councillor S.Harris Re: School Attendance Report as she is a governor at Crynant Primary School and confirmed her dispensation to speak and vote.

Councillor D.Whitelock Re: School Attendance Report as he is a governor at Ysgol Cwm Brombil and confirmed his dispensation to speak and vote.

Councillor S. Ap Dafydd Re: School Attendance Report as he is a governor at St. Joseph's School and sixth form centre and at Ysgol Bae Baglan and confirmed his dispensation to speak and vote.

Councillor M.Protheroe Re: School Attendance Report as he is a governor at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive and Melin Primary School and confirmed his dispensation to speak and vote.

Councillor R. Mizen Re: School Attendance Report as he is a governor at Cwmafan Primary School and Ysgol Cwm Brombil and confirmed his dispensation to speak and vote.

He also has grandchildren who attend Neath Port Talbot schools.

Councillor S. Reynolds Re: School Attendance Report as she is a governor at Ysgol Gwaun Gae Gurwen and confirmed her dispensation to speak and vote.

Councillor J.D.Morgan Re: School Attendance Report as he is chair of governors at YGG Cwm-Nedd and confirmed his dispensation to speak and vote.

Councillor J.Jones Re: School Attendance Report as she is a school governor at the Afan Valley Federation of Schools and confirmed her dispensation to speak and vote.

M.Caddick Re: School Attendance Report as she is a school governor and confirmed her dispensation to speak and vote.

Councillor A.R.Lockyer Re: School Attendance Report as he is chair of governors at Gnoll Primary School and governor at YGG Castell Need and confirmed his dispensation to speak and vote.

He also has grandchildren who attend school in Neath Port Talbot and a relative who works within those schools.

Councillor P.A.Rees Re: School Attendance Report as he is a governor at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive and at Crynallt Primary School and confirmed his dispensation to speak and vote.

He also has grandchildren who attend schools in Neath Port Talbot.

2. UPDATE ON PUPIL VOICE/ YOUTH COUNCIL

Members received an update on Pupil Voice which was included in the Youth Service Update as detailed in the circulated report.

The committee was pleased with the success of the Duke of Edinburgh and Open Gold Award Scheme with over 400 young people gaining the award and asked that their appreciation be cascaded to staff who support the young people undertaking the award.

Discussion took place on the increase in attendance at Youth Clubs and asked if the latest data on these numbers could be circulated to the committee.

Clarification was given that the format of the data contained within the report was compiled and submitted as a requirement of the Welsh Government and that the data was not used to compare performance year on year.

It was highlighted that the current youth club provision was based on need and established in areas of deprivation but historically some

clubs had been established in areas that would not meet the current criteria but those clubs would continue.

In addition, surveys/mapping take place every 3 years and takes into account groups that are arranged by voluntary organisations and the council works in partnership with those groups to support them, to try to increase the current provision.

Confirmation was received that any new youth clubs could only be arranged at the expense of losing an existing provision, as there was no additional funding available to increase the current council provision. Funding was always a concern especially in regard to the format of the grant provision from Welsh Government being based on an annual basis. This results in long term planning being difficult as the criteria for each funding stream can change and cease in some cases. The committee reiterated the importance of this vital service continuing.

Further data was requested on the provision for young people who are NEET (not in employment, education or training). Officers explained that the youth service aims to work with the young people who not engaging with services.

Officers in future reports to consider identifying the reason why there was no impact on the valleys.

At members request consideration be given to inviting a young person to become a scrutiny member of this committee.

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

3. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The committee chose to scrutinise the following cabinet board items:

School Attendance

Members received information and data in relation to Neath Port Talbot pupil attendance and persistent absenteeism as detailed in the circulated report.

Discussion took place on decrease in attendance compared to the same period last year and asked if the impact was mainly on schools

in deprived areas. Officers explained that in the latter part of 2019 a number of schools were affected by the Norovirus which impacted on both children and staff but no schools within Neath Port Talbot closed. Also, schools not in deprived areas can have a higher level of unauthorised school absence due to the increased number of holidays taken. At the request of Members in future, data would include the area and reason for absence.

Further discussion took place on the importance of members who were school governors to keep raising attendance at governing body meetings so that it was constantly on school agendas.

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

Longlands Lane Playing Fields and Changing Rooms

The committee received information on the proposal to declare the playing fields and changing rooms at Longlands Lane, Margam, Port Talbot, as being surplus to the ongoing strategic and operational requirements of the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Service as detailed in the circulated report.

Discussion took place on the lack of sports facilities in the area and asked that this be a consideration during future proposals for the use of the site. Officers explained that any decision on the future use of the site would fall under the remit of Regeneration and Sustainable Cabinet Board.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by cabinet board.

4. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

Confirmation was given that the site visit to schools would take place on the 3 February and not the 27 January 2020 as stated in the Forward Work Programme.

CHAIRPERSON

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Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

23 July 2020

Chairperson: Councillor S.H.Reynolds

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.Mizen

Councillors: J.Jones, S.Miller, J.D.Morgan, R.Phillips,
M.Protheroe, S.Renkes, D.Whitelock and J.Hale

Officers In Attendance A.Evans, A.Thomas, S.Burgess, S.Blewett,
M.Daley, C.Furlow-Harris, T.Davies,
A.Manchipp, C.Davies and C.Plowman

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees

1. **Recovery Strategy**

Members were presented with a draft strategy on stabilisation, the period between response and recovery, following the COVID 19 outbreak. The strategy set out a general framework that would support a consistent and co-ordinated approach as the Council moved towards recovery. It was noted that the draft strategy was being presented to all Scrutiny Committees for comments before presentation to Cabinet on 30th July 2020 for approval.

Officers gave a brief overview of the content of the strategy, explaining that it was split into three sections which consisted of looking back at what the Council did during the response phase of the crisis, looking forward as the UK moved out of the response phase and a road map of actions.

When looking back at what the Council did during the response phase, it was highlighted that a number of key actions were undertaken including setting up a seven day a week communication service so that guidance from UK Government, Welsh Government and Public Health Wales could be sent out as and when it was available. It was added that the Council closed down services to

assist in reducing the spread of the virus and changed the way some critical services operated in order to operate safely, for example the refuse service. Officers mentioned that the first part of the strategy also set out the changes that were made in relation to leadership and governance, including the use of the Urgency Action provision set out in the Constitution, to ensure that key decisions were still being taken during the response phase.

The second part of the strategy was explained to Members, which consisted of looking forward as the UK moved out of response phase into a stabilisation period which is the stage before moving into the recovery phase. It was explained that there were three areas identified as a focus as the Council moved forward:

1. The Test, Trace and Protect Programme
2. Standing up of Council services and functions
3. Understand and respond to the effect and impact that the virus has had on citizens, organisations and businesses across Neath Port Talbot

It was added that the second part also set out the changes required to be made in terms of leadership and governance, as well as some of the risks and issues identified that will need to be managed as the Council goes through the implementation of the strategy.

The third part of the strategy was presented as a road map of actions which was framed on the basis of a traffic light system, which set out how to move from a position of total lockdown, through the traffic light system, to a position where services are back up and running. It was noted that a number of services on the road map fall within the remit of the Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee.

Members asked for feedback on how the remote working with young people had been going, to which it was noted that the feedback had been positive, although the youth service had staff who were redeployed into the Safe and Well service, so the remaining staff had to manage the capacity within the youth service, therefore prioritised the most vulnerable young people. It was added that the staff completed weekly phone calls to ensure that the young people felt safe and had issues, with anxiety for example, addressed. Members were informed that a self-referral system was also set up for young people to use, so that if they felt under pressure they could self-refer

into the service. It was noted that Officers were satisfied with the level of engagement, however the benefits of meeting face-to-face with young people was missing.

Officers were asked if any details regarding travel arrangements for pupils had been confirmed, in particular if pupils would need to wear face masks on school buses and how the face masks would be purchased. It was stated that Welsh Government had published operational guidance for schools reopening in September, however some areas had not been developed to date, including home to school transport so the outcome was not known as of yet. It was added that the expectation was that if face masks were to be mandated, it would only be for pupils in secondary school (Key Stages 3 and 4) and not primary school pupils. Although Officers weren't aware of how the face masks would be purchased, it was noted that they were aware that approximately 3,000 secondary aged pupils were being transported every day, twice a day, therefore 6,000 face masks would need to be provided every day which estimated a significant cost of around £4million. The Committee was informed that once Officers were aware of the position of home to school transport in Wales, they would report back to Members.

The 'green' column on the Road Map was highlighted to be blank for early years, youth service and adult learning services, to which Members asked if this was due to no recent update from Welsh Government. Members also mentioned that they were aware that there had been an increase in mental health problems with young people and asked were there any considerations going forward to tackle these issues before schools opened in September.

Officers provided an update on the service areas mentioned, including the community learning services who were currently operating via Microsoft Teams and through other technological provisions, and due to the two meter social distancing measures in place, face to face delivery wasn't likely to be re-introduced any time soon.

In terms on child care providers, it was noted that there were currently 79 out of 129 providers operating in Neath Port Talbot (around 61%) but the need to ensure that all 129 providers are brought back to serve the communities where they operate from was highlighted.

In relation to funding, it was stated that the Council had two significant funding streams:

1. Summer support for vulnerable learners, which involves working with Social Services, schools and other agencies such as the police and health, to identify the most vulnerable learners. It was confirmed that £75,000 has been allocated to provide respite and other similar support over the summer.

2. Summer enrichment activities which will take the place of SHEP, as due to the current restrictions it would be difficult to run such an extensive programme. Instead, the summer enrichment activities will be provided from six of the Councils facilities over a fortnight and will be targeted at schools with a Free School Meal (FSM) profile of over 17%. It was confirmed that around £46,000 had been allocated to provide the activities.

Members noted that remote emotional health and wellbeing support for children was being provided and would continue over the summer for those who need it. It was added that the school based counselling service was still active, but was also being delivered remotely.

2. **Education, Leisure and Lifelong learning - Current Service Delivery and Recovery Planning (Presentation)**

Members received a presentation on the current service delivery and recovery planning from the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate.

It was highlighted that throughout the lockdown period, Neath Port Talbot had provided a weekly payment of £19.50 to each registered child who was entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) to ensure that there was a significant and greater reach into the community. It was noted that previously, grab and go bags were provided, however they were only accessed by 20% of FSM pupils and now through the payment scheme, 95% of FSM pupils were accessing meals. Officers confirmed that to date, £1.1million in total had been paid out to eligible families and that this would continue through summer and possibly into the first fortnight of the new term.

As detailed in the circulated presentation, Officers expect that almost all members of staff would be able to return to work in September, although there were currently 12 teaching staff who were shielding. It was highlighted that risk assessments would be undertaken by each school to clarify the arrangements for the teaching staff who were shielding, being able to return to work in September. It was added that schools will go through risk assessments for all activities and the

risk assessments would be delivered sometime in late August (with a deadline of 27 August 2020).

In relation to inclusion and wellbeing, it was stated that support was given to pupils throughout lockdown; this was continued with the help of the Councils IT service, who put provisions in place very quickly and provided the teams with the essential equipment to allow them to be able to continue their service to the vulnerable children in Neath Port Talbot.

Officers highlighted that the inclusive service had worked closely with Social Services to develop the vulnerable learners register and staff had worked collaboratively as part of a multi-agency group, to discuss provision, address issues and ensure the register was updated on a weekly basis. It was added that this work was very important due to the concerns that staff had with vulnerable children at home; the register incorporated a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) basis of the children's risks and what support they were receiving on a weekly basis, so that staff were able to put sufficient support in place where it was needed.

A discussion took place in regards to leisure facilities which included libraries, Margam Park and Celtic Leisure. It was noted that staff had taken a very cautious approach in the re-opening of libraries and Margam Park and had at all times, followed guidance from Welsh Government. Officers highlighted the re-opening programme for libraries which was detailed in the presentation, as well as mentioning the re-opening arrangements of Margam Park, which was dealt with in stages.

In regards to Celtic Leisure, it was mentioned that on 17 March 2020, Members had agreed for a procurement process to be undertaken which consisted of finalising an invitation to tender for the provision of leisure services in Neath Port Talbot in line with the current specification of service and to embark on a tender process as detailed in the report; it was noted that the process was still ongoing and there had been a series of meetings with the consultant, which had been challenging to do remotely. It was added that 95% of the documentation was ready and that it was proposed to go to the market in September 2020, for a procurement to secure a new provider, with the intention of going back to Members in January 2021 for a final decision.

Due to the crisis, it was stated that putting plans in place to re-open facilities was very difficult as circumstances could change, however Officers stated that they had understanding that the First Minister would be announcing shortly that leisure facilities could re-open from 10 August 2020. Members were informed that Officers had asked Celtic Leisure for an opening plan, which would be split into phases and contain the necessary risk assessments; it was added that if the announcement takes place then the major urban facilities would open first and within a week, the valley and community facilities would be expected to re-open.

Cleaning and catering were highlighted to be key services in ensuring that there was confidence in re-opening schools safely and hygienically. It was mentioned that the processes would continue going into the autumn term, particularly in regards to PPE.

Members asked how staff established which pupils needed extra equipment during lockdown, in particular the Chromebooks and laptops. It was explained that schools had a great understanding of pupils needs, therefore had been making the decisions in regards to where the provision of the equipment was needed. It was mentioned that the additional investment, available through Welsh Government grant aid, meant that hundreds of laptops and Chromebooks had gone out to children. Officers highlighted that there were currently 1,500 laptops, iPads and Chromebooks in store, which would be provided to schools and there was a plan in place to order £1.3million worth of IT equipment from the same grant source. It was noted that discussions were taking place with schools to decide what equipment was needed, with secondary schools hoping to provide all children with a Chromebook to enable them to plan for continuous learning, however Officers mentioned that the cost of this would need to be established before this could be confirmed. In regards to primary schools, discussions were surrounding what level of provisions each key stage would need and it had been recognised that there was currently no need for all children to have their own piece of equipment.

Officers were asked if schools were in a position to cope with any new sudden changes of direction and whether they were expected to accommodate more blended learning, and if so could this be done with a quick turnaround. It was explained that the current expectation was that by 14 September 2020, all schools would have opened to all pupils, from nursery through to the end of key stage 5. Officers

highlighted that schools had recently opened the past few weeks, and attendance was around 55-60% of the pupil population; it was noted that the worrying aspect of this was that pupils entitled to FSM were not attending at the same rate as the pupils who were not entitled to FSM and from September onwards, assessments of needs for those children would need to take place. In relation to blended learning, Officers stated that what matters most is that technology is used as a platform to allow effective teaching to take place, and it should always relate back to the core principles of good learning which include strong engagement between pupils and the teacher, good feedback in terms of ensuring progress of learning and making sure next steps are planned based on the understanding of each individual pupil. It was added that these principles should be in place regardless of the method of how the teaching is delivered.

It was asked whether a date had been set for the reopening of the valley and community libraries, in particular for the access to their internet facilities. Officers clarified that a date had not been set at the moment, as previously mentioned a cautious approach was being taken in the re-opening of services and there were limitations around staffing due to some staff receiving shielding letters. It was agreed that Andrew Thomas, Head of Transformation, would find out further information in relation to the re-opening of the valley libraries and confirm with Councillor Del Morgan.

Members asked if there were any plans in place to re-open theatres in Neath Port Talbot. It was confirmed that there were currently no plans to open theatres, however there were plans to re-open the Gwyn Hall as a cinema facility on 17 August 2020. It was stated that it would not be financially viable to re-open theatres with current social distancing measures in place. Following on from this, it was asked whether there were any options to open facilities, such as Pontardawe Arts Centre, that could be used as community centres instead. Officers clarified that there was capacity to do this and it could be planned over time with significant risk assessments in place; however, all the staff at Pontardawe Arts Centre had been redeployed to the Test, Track and Protect service, which was a crucial service to support. It was mentioned that new staff were currently being recruited for this service, and as this was taking place re-deployed staff could start to return to their original jobs.

Officers were asked who facilitates the Aberavon Aqua Splash and were there plans for it to re-open this year. It was noted that Celtic

Leisure facilitates the splash park and had no plans to open it at the moment due to the time it takes for it to be commissioned (around three weeks), and the fact that the splash park closes for the autumn/winter in the middle of September. Officers highlighted that they had asked for re-opening plans from Celtic Leisure for all facilities and that a view would be taken when Officers were presented with these plans.

The high take up of the summer provision was discussed. It was noted that the first provision was targeted to around 150 children, based on the vulnerable learners register, who were most at risk according to the joint assessment. Officers explained that the provision was split into three sections, with the first being the most intensive which would include phone calls from Social Services and being brought out of the home on a daily basis and the third being targeted at those who would only need to be brought out of the home perhaps once a week and take part in more specific activities. It was noted that the summer enrichment programme targets year 5 and 6 pupils of the primary sector, with the potential to involve around 900 children. Members were informed registration for the programme was ongoing, however the take up was not as high as Officers had hoped, with the take up currently at around 50%. It was confirmed that Officers would be liaising with schools to contact the families of children to try and increase the take up, as the registration process would be closing at the end of the week; however, if the numbers had not changed significantly, the deadline could be extended to be able to target a broader range of pupils.

Members asked for further information on the current situation and future focus for Communities For Work (CFW) and the Rural Development Programme (RDP). Officers stated that they were very concerned of the impact of the crisis on youth unemployment and disengagement. It was noted that last year, there were 43 young people who were Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), and Officers believed that this figure could increase by 300%. It was mentioned that Officers were concerned about a number of issues including the fact the young people hadn't been in school since the end of March 2020, would not be sitting their exams and would be receiving their grades based on teacher assessments. It was highlighted that grade inflation could have an impact on some pupils progressing into further education, as the WJEC and Qualifications Wales put an algorithm in place that looks at past performance of each school over the past three years, and if they believe that grade

inflation had taken place, they will deflate the grades. Officers also mentioned that the re-sitting of exams was not going to be as extensive as it had been in the past, as it was only going to apply to the core subjects and not the broader subject areas. Another concern was stated to be with the young people who would be seeking employment and/or apprenticeships in the labour market, as it was currently a very challenged market and young people weren't likely to get the same range of choice as they would have previously. However, Members were informed that Officers were working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to set up a youth forum for the Local Authority, which will bring together the youth service, colleges and departments within the Council to try and maximise learning and employment opportunities for young people. It was added that they were also looking to maximise apprenticeship opportunities for young people including within the Police and Health sector.

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

The Committee thanked the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning service for all their hard work during the COVID 19 crisis.

CHAIRPERSON

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee

19 November 2020

Report of the Head of Participation

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Blended learning in key stage 4 and examinations for 2021

Purpose of the Report:

To provide Members with an update on Blended Learning in Key Stage 4 and examinations for 2021 following a request from the Members Forward Work Programme session.

Background:

Since March 2020 all schools in NPT have had to evolve their teaching to incorporate a range of approaches including distance learning, live streaming, recorded lessons and more regular face to face. Collectively these approaches are referred to as blended learning. All schools have developed blended learning policies, with guidance for pupils and parents. Many schools have developed parent help sheets that are clear and outline expectations. There are positive examples of where pupils have clearly influenced the way this policy has been constructed, with a real feeling of co-construction. At key stage 4 all schools are relying on a blend of these approaches with a clear focus on 'catching-up' for lost time.

Schools face an additional challenge in that social distancing and other national guidelines designed to keep pupils safe can limit certain approaches in the classroom such as one to one work and small group work so much of the teaching tends to be very direct. All schools managing a new set of operational measures, including staggered break and lunchtimes, reorganised lesson times to support this, and reduced pupil movement around the school. In some cases pupils are remaining in one base room and teachers are moving around the school. This approach has often seen improved behaviour, but is challenging for staff who do not teach in their own base rooms, with all their resources readily available. A minority of schools report that this model can be difficult in delivering all areas of the curriculum without the access to specialist rooms and facilities.

A good example of how schools have adapted is where a school has recently created a Live Lesson protocol for staff, pupils and parents. This has been shared and staff have had professional learning and time to trial leading live lessons. During the 'firebreak', a few staff have trialled the live lessons with pupils in years 9, 10 and 11. Initial feedback is that there is greater engagement in live lessons compared to asynchronous (learning that pupils engage with in their own time and not 'live') tasks that pupils have to complete independently.

Staff have had to develop their understanding of how pupils learn remotely so that they can gauge the amount and type of tasks that pupils can complete without the face to face interaction and guidance. Leaders have trained staff in the use of different platforms and tools to create interesting asynchronous sessions. This includes voice overs using video, PowerPoint with voice recordings and streamed videos. Pupils have been set a range of tasks to engage and motivate them to continue to learn in challenging situations.

An example of a schools documents and guidance videos are available via the school Blended Learning Website:

<https://sites.google.com/hwbcymru.net/dyfbledlearning/home>

One of the main challenges is delivering face to face lessons to a class where 1 or 2 pupils are absent. The expectation to then set work for remote learning for individuals places a strain on staff. Despite using a variety of platforms extensively, it is very difficult to replicate a lesson face to face and remotely. All schools have mobilised resources to ensure pupils have access to equipment and connectivity, however engaging all pupils in learning has been an issue, particularly those in the higher deprivation groups. Following up non-engagement of pupils in the remote learning is adding another task that is increasing the workload of teachers (to phone home or email parents). It is also adding to the workload of admin staff to contact home to check pupils are well and that they are learning. One school is trying to ensure that all pupils participate in the home/school learning. Where pupils have not engaged, the Youth Workers at the school contacted the parents of these specific pupils in order for them to try and encourage their children to engage in their learning. They are offered help and support in every way.

There is enhanced support for individuals and small groups of learners. Many schools are employing additional members of staff as a result of the Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards (RRRS), accelerating learning programme so that additional classes can be created particularly in Mathematics and English/Welsh but also around pupil wellbeing. This is particularly the case in Welsh medium schools where pupils from homes where Welsh is not the first language need additional support. Many schools are operating additional mentoring for pupils. This provides additional support to vulnerable pupils who may require a greater level of additional support (e.g. children who are looked after, those eligible for free school meals and pupils with additional learning needs). One innovative approach has seen a teacher designated with the task of supporting the hardest to reach pupils through a 'virtual school' approach to try and re-engage these learners. This has provided school-phobic pupils with an opportunity to access their learning.

It is worth noting that there has been considerable disruption to learning due to the need for year groups to self-isolate as the result of positive tests within the school. All schools have been affected in some way. Also there are individual learners who have to isolate due to household positive cases. These have sometimes been up to 3 weeks in length. These periods of time away from school have caused difficulties in pupils being able to engage in their learning. Finally, not being able to find a suitable replacement for a subject specialist who has to self-isolate is very disruptive and can have a considerable negative impact on pupils. However, when a period of self-isolation begins, schools have adapted extremely well to moving towards a blended approach.

On November the 10th The Education Minister outlined that in place of exams, the Welsh Government intended to work with schools and colleges to take forward teacher-managed assessments. This should include assessments that will be externally set and marked but delivered within a classroom environment under teacher supervision. The Minister's expectation is that this work will form the basis for centre-based outcomes which will be linked to an agreed national approach to provide consistency across Wales. The announcement has been made after considering detailed advice published by Qualifications Wales on the delivery options available as well as the interim findings of an independent review into this year's exams process.

The Minister said Welsh Government would work with teachers to take forward teacher-managed assessments and that they should include assessments that will be externally set and marked, but delivered within a classroom environment under teacher supervision. Teachers would have flexibility when it is best to undertake them, in the context of results timelines. The situation for Vocational Qualifications is more complex and is still being worked on. The Minister confirmed Welsh Government officials would continue to support Qualifications Wales as they work closely with other

regulators to ensure a 'pragmatic approach that works in learners' interests and gives them clarity about the way forward.'

Financial Impacts:

No Implications

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Implications

Workforce Impacts:

No Implications

Legal Impacts:

No Implications

Risk Management Impacts:

No Implications

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item to include the full consultation report as an appendix.

Recommendations:

That Members note the report

Appendices:

None

List of Background Papers:

None

Officer Contact:

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee

19 November 2020

Report of the Head of Participation

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service and Partners – Summer Support Programme

Purpose of the Report:

To provide Members with an update on the Summer Support Programme the Neath Port Talbot Youth Service with partners delivered.

Background:

Neath Port Talbot Youth Service and partners delivered the Summer Support Programme on Monday to Thursday on weeks commencing 17th August and 24th August.

The programme was run over 3 separate venues Cymmer Primary School, Ysgol Bae Baglan and Llangatwg Community School. In total 66 young people expressed an interest in attending.

Cymmer 40 young people, YBB 17 young people and Llangatwg 9 young people;

The number of young people who attended was lower than expected, the bad weather was a key factor to this. There were a total number of 41 young people who attended

Cymmer 23 young people, YBB 14 young people and Llangatwg 8 young people.

Most of the young people attending didn't know each other at the start of the programme and one of the success stories of this provision was that they gained new friends by attending.

Activities and Feedback:

The young people were organised into small groups and each day they were offered a range of activities with Sgiliau providing a range of sporting activities, the NPT Music Service providing music based sessions including dance, singing, writing and performances as well as putting on "mini gigs" for the young people to enjoy.

The youth service delivered a range of arts and crafts and team building activities such as spray painting, making wind chimes etc.

Evaluations:

YBB

The 14 young people from YBB completed evaluations with 12 rating the provision excellent/very good. 10 young people said that the programme has helped them make new friends and 10 stating that it has made them feel better about going back to school. 11 of the young people stated that the youth workers made them feel comfortable whilst attending.

When asked what their favourite part of the programme was, the staff was the highest rated followed by spray painting.

Cymmer:

The young people from Cymmer carried out a more informal evaluation and spoke to the Youth Workers about their feelings.

Young people's feedback on how the Summer Programme made them feel included - "I really enjoyed. Happy, enjoyed. I feel better, I was able to talk to people. Connected, confident, had fun. Excited, happy, learnt how to play hockey and archery. Happy and excited. Happy, enjoyed socialising, confident. I feel I have improved my skills. Alright, I spoke to other people that I didn't know."

The Youth Workers in Cymmer were able to talk to young people about their concerns and anxieties during the summer school. Two girls were both worried about starting comprehensive next week. One was especially scared. When asked why they were scared, they answered because they don't really know many people because they are now going to be attending Cwm Brombil which is everyone from around the Afan Valley. They also said they felt weird to go back to school in a pandemic.

One girl was especially worried about bullying because her sister was bullied in school and had a lot of problems with the bullies.

When talking through it, we asked if they knew who to turn to or who to ask for help. She said to talk to an adult, that her form teacher was lovely too. We talked about youth clubs they could attend and that the youth service are often in the comprehensives and if they see us to come over and say hello.

The Youth Workers will keep in touch with both girls to see how they get on and work with the school based staff if needed.

Llangatwg:

Llangatwg evaluations showed:

When asked if they felt if the programme has helped them feel better about themselves, the young people told us – "Yes, I feel happy, Yes, Yes because I have learnt how to do new stuff, I can do more, I have spent more time with friends." The young people also stated that the programme has helped them deal with any concerns they had about

going back to school. Feedback included – “it has made me less scared, it has helped me build confidence and yes because I’ve learnt more music and arts.”

Parents Feedback:

During the second week, we contacted parents to see if they would consent to us using photos, marketing and publicity and their replies also included feedback, these included:

- Thank you for summer club AXXXX thoroughly enjoyed, you’re amazing and he has loved every minute.
- Thank you ever so much for the scheme and a massive thank you for the staff also, my daughter very much enjoyed.
- Just to let you know, LXXXX has been really happy coming home from the sessions and said that she’s having so much fun. Getting her up in the mornings to go has become a doddle and she does so with a smile on her face looking forward to the day ahead.
 - LXXXX has said many times that she can’t get over how friendly the staff are so I thank you for this. You’re obviously doing a great job so well done and thank you very much for putting a smile back on her face as the lockdown and being away from her friends for so long did really affect her mood. Thank you.
- AXXXX is loving going so much she doesn’t want it to end, thank you so much
- Firstly I'd like to say thanks to the team this week for going ahead and providing this program within this school holiday and these unprecedented times.

Both my children have thoroughly enjoyed all activities provided and I definitely think this has helped in their motivation and confidence of getting introduced to comprehensive schooling starting next week.

It would be great if it was a regular school holiday programme as I'm sure children would most certainly benefit from all activities provided.

Both children were happy leaving each day and looking forward to the following day's activities.

Well done and thanks to all involved.

- These sessions have really helped MXXXX get ready for return to school he feels better about seeing everyone again after such a long time

He has now realised he can make friends easier than he thought so hoping this will help on his return to school as he isn't in class with any of his friends

I think this programme is amazing and MXXXX has thoroughly enjoyed it thank you for the opportunity it's been amazing he now loves spray painting and wants a kit

- I just wanted to say thank you for running such a fab course. My son had a wonderful time, got to try tons of new things and has made new friends. He came out smiling ear to ear and couldn't wait to show me what he has been making.

Thank you so much for his art and crafts goodie too.

Childcare & Play

In July 2020, Welsh Government made £1.6m available for Welsh local authorities to support childcare and play opportunities for vulnerable children in line with local need and priorities. NPT was allocated £75,000 to provide childcare and play opportunities for childcare aged 5-16 years in the priority groups below:

- i. Children on the child protection register
- ii. Looked after children, where there is risk of placement breakdown
- iii. Children receiving care and support (but not looked after or on the child protection register)
- iv. Children with Special Educational Needs
- v. Other looked after children

A plan was submitted to WG to provide the following utilising the funding.

	No. children	No. of Sessions
Childcare places	50	250
Interplay	20	5
Ysgol Maes y Coed Summer Play	10	5
Summer Youth Scheme	26	25

Outcomes:

Childcare Places

Ten childcare places per day were purchased at five childcare settings (250 sessions per week), offering play opportunities for children aged 5-11 years for five weeks of the summer holidays.

A total of 256 sessions per week were offered to 84 children across the five settings. Children were offered three days a week each unless otherwise requested by the family's social worker/TAF worker. Childcare providers were able to increase the offer to the families where spaces allowed.

Spaces Offered

Childcare - ABC	16
Childcare - Aberafan ICC	20
Childcare - Canolfan Maerdy	9
Childcare - Lots of Tots	12
Childcare - PALS	27

On average, 140 sessions per week were attended with a further 50 being booked and not attended.

Interplay

A week of play and social opportunities were arranged, to be delivered by Interplay who specialise in providing inclusive play opportunities.

14 children aged between 7 and 16 years with disabilities or additional needs were identified from our Children's Disability team, and these were invited to attend the activity sessions.

Contact was made with the social workers and with the family beforehand to understand the specific needs of each child to ensure that these could be met by the staff. Five of the children required 1:1 support and additional staff were recruited in order to provide this.

Of the five children requiring 1:1 support, all accepted the offer of the activities; only three attended but they attended all of the sessions.

The children enjoyed a lot of outdoor play and non-contact games, such as hide and seek, hockey, and obstacle courses, and indoor activities such as treasure hunts, drawing competitions, and imaginary play. The children needing 1-1 support were able to join in with two cooking activities that had been prepared, making pizza and brownies.

Ysgol Maes Y Coed

The school successfully ran a Summer Programme which saw 48 pupils access a wide range of learning activities over its duration. Pupils attended on different days, dependent on their individual needs and were supported by staff from the school. Staff organised activities to support pupil's social, emotional and physical development, provide new learning experiences and allow opportunities to renew relationships with staff. All the activities in the programme were devised and delivered by highly trained staff, with expert knowledge of pupil needs. The school has received positive feedback from parents and carers, whilst staff and pupils enjoyed the experience, as all activities were carried out with a smile on their face.

The school has also operated a very successful resource development service for parents/careers during lockdown and through the summer. This involved staff contacting the home of particular pupils on the Monday of each week. Staff would then discuss pupils progress in their home learning programmes and agreeing any additional resources that pupils may need, as next steps in their learning. Staff would then devise, develop or purchase the relevant resources required. Examples included purchasing/providing physio or occupational therapy equipment, sensory and/or communication resources or enhancing augmentative communication systems used by pupils. These resources would then be delivered by staff on the Thursday of each week, to allow staff to

explain to parents/carers how these resources can be used. Staff were then available at the school to provide any additional support to families, should it be required.

Financial Impacts:

No Implications

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Implications

Workforce Impacts:

No Implications

Legal Impacts:

No Implications

Risk Management Impacts:

No Implications

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item to include the full consultation report as an appendix.

Recommendations:

That Members note the report

Appendices:

None

List of Background Papers:

None

Officer Contact:

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NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee

19 November 2020

Report of the Head of Transformation

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Inclusion Service Report on Overview of Support for Children and Young People with Additional learning Needs

Purpose of the Report:

To provide Members with an update on the continued safe and effective service that the inclusion service has provided during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Background:

The Inclusion Service has continued to provide a safe and effective service during the Covid 19 pandemic. Teams across all services have worked both physically in schools as well as remotely, to support children and young people (CYP), school staff and families. The service has also evolved and expanded in order to meet the needs of children, young people and their families who may have experienced mental health issues as a result of the pandemic.

The service has co-ordinated work across teams and with wider agencies to support schools, Children, Young People and their

families. This has included providing specific support, advice, strategies and resources relevant to the needs of the children and young people. Online training, advice clinics and new telephone helplines have been created and continue to operate, to ensure support continues to be accessible during any future periods of lockdown.

Grant funding made available by Welsh Government for pupils with complex needs and for school based counselling has been utilised to extend the offer of appropriate counselling and support to primary age pupils and to develop outdoor provision and opportunities for further education. This additional grant money has enabled the service to significantly reduce the waiting times for children and young people to access counselling support.

Overview of service delivery

All statutory services for pupils in receipt of a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), continue to be delivered within schools following appropriate risk assessments and protocols. These include provision such as speech and language therapy (SaLT) and support for pupils with hearing and visual impairment (HI & VI). There has been close collaboration with colleagues within Health to ensure that therapies are delivered effectively.

All teams have prioritised support for the transition of pupils who have changed placement and/or those who are experiencing difficulty in returning to the school environment. Resources have been developed including transition packs and social stories, to assist in alleviating anxieties and preparing Children and Young People for a successful return to school. Cynnydd in particular continued to support post 16 transition over the initial lockdown. The team ran virtual sessions with Careers Wales, facilitated interviews, liaised with college and work based learning providers, helped set up bank accounts, enabled young people to apply for EMA and provided equipment (see appendix A; case study 1).

School visits have been undertaken to advise school staff on how best to adapt the school and classroom environment to reduce anxieties and behaviours, including advice on structure of the day and individual visual timetables. Team Teach training, delivered by the Wellbeing Service, has continued taking a blended learning approach. The Wellbeing Service has continued to provide forest/coastal school sessions to children and young people. The service are now supporting schools to develop their outdoor areas and providing support on activities so that outdoor learning can be embedded even more into the curriculum going forward.

The Educational Psychology Service developed lesson plans, to help staff and pupils manage the return to schools following the initial lockdown. The lesson plans were developed as a reflective resource to enable and support any concerns that children and young people wanted to discuss following the crisis. The feedback regarding these resources from schools was very positive.

The School Based Counselling Service (SBCS) has delivered face-to-face counselling for children and young people and three new services have been created, including support for staff, parents and telephone counselling to children and young people.

- The staff service has worked with 11 clients and provided 16 counselling sessions
- The parent service helped 26 clients and provided 42 counselling sessions
- The telephone serviced worked with 228 clients and provided 1394 counselling sessions
- The total number of clients who have been supported is 265, based on 1452 counselling sessions.

The SBCS is also piloting a peer support programme with three school clusters, with the aim of providing well-being support and advice to schools staff, including Head Teachers.

In addition to this, the SBCS has worked collaboratively with the Wellbeing Service to utilise grant funding to extend the offer of counselling to primary school pupils from year 1. The counselling offered is age appropriate in the form of play therapy and drama therapy.

The Inclusion Service has also created a telephone service for parents / carers of children with Additional Learning Needs. To date, 34 families have received support through this helpline.

The Educational Psychology Service has continued to offer regular supervision and training for Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) staff within schools. ELSAs are a valuable resource and many worked during the initial lockdown and in Hubs with vulnerable learners. Support was provided through regular phone calls, video calls and social media platforms for ELSA staff, to ensure they were enabled to support the children and young people safely.

Inclusion Service officers have undertaken garden visits, in line with Covid guidance, to build relationships with families, undertake assessments, work through effective strategies and interventions and sign post to other agencies for support. This was particularly effective for vulnerable young people supported by the Wellbeing Service and Cynnydd who struggled to engage over the phone and online. Work was also provided for young people to complete the qualifications they started prior to lockdown with Cynnydd. As a result of this, no young person missed out on the qualification they had been working towards and NPT Cynnydd are 37% over our profile target for numbers of qualifications gained.

The Wellbeing Service and Cynnydd used innovative ways to continue to support their caseload and schools, virtually over the phone and through physically staffing hubs during lockdown. The Cynnydd team worked closely with their link schools to ensure they were feeding into the school processes for supporting vulnerable learners (see appendix A; case study 2). Wellbeing links for schools

kept in contact, providing information, advice, resources and support when needed. The virtual support and 'garden visits', have led to increased support being available to the wider family along with the individual pupil. Multi agency working, including attendance at key panels, during this period remained strong and this has resulted in some really positive outcomes (see appendix A; case study 3).

On return to school in September, teams have continued to make contact with schools, through individual meetings and / or consultation clinics. Discussions have focused on how best to support the current caseload, along with any new concerns or referrals. Cynnydd are back in school full time and have already started a project with Swansea City Community Trust focusing on health and wellbeing. The Community Trust have recognised Cynnydd as a key partner who have supported the projects and enabled young people to take part and stay committed to re-engage with their education and nominated Cynnydd for a Premier league Inspires Award.

Requests for statutory assessments have continued in line with the LAs statutory duties and the Additional Needs Support Service (ALNSS) has continued to provide advice and support for families going through the statutory process. The Inclusion Service training menu, a comprehensive training menu for schools, has been adapted to ensure that almost all training can be delivered effectively online, to ensure school based staff have access to mandatory training and continual professional development.

With the growing body of research on the long term impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and how relevant this is in the current climate, training on trauma informed approaches with schools has been developed along with Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Mental Health Panels are being offered in all clusters. These multi-agency meetings are attended by Educational Psychologists, School Based Counsellors, Wellbeing team, CAMHS and school staff.

Attendance:

Attendance for September and October in the primary sector was 89.3% incl. special schools (89.4% excl. special school). Whilst in the secondary sector it was 86.7% incl. special schools (87.8% excl. special schools). It is not possible to accurately compare these figures with the rest of Wales at this moment in time as Welsh Government have not yet released aggregated attendance data by local authority. However, Welsh Government is publishing weekly attendance statistics by local authority and from these figures the average attendance rate of each local authority across Wales has not risen higher than 88% since the beginning of term. We can, therefore, determine that both the primary and secondary sectors in Neath Port Talbot are doing very well in overall terms of attendance. The rates of attendance include the many pupils who have followed TTP advice and been required to stay at home to self-isolate when someone they know or within their school 'bubble' has tested positive for COVID.

Attendance between boys and girls of both primary and secondary sectors varies by less than 1%. Attendance of LAC and EAL (English as an additional language) children is better than average in both sectors. Attendance of pupils recorded as having ALN is around 6% less than those without ALN in the primary sector and around 8% less in the secondary sector. However, pupils with FSM currently have below average attendance rates in both sectors (83% primary and 77% secondary).

During the period until October half-term more than 1,600 individual communications were made with parents by the Education Welfare Service. This was a combination of home (or garden) visits and telephone/email contacts. Since the beginning of the pandemic EWOs have adapted the focus of their support for pupils with a far greater emphasis on the welfare element of the role. There remain a small

number of families where attendance continues to be a cause of concern with no justifiable reasons for absence. In ordinary times these families would, after all other support and engagement has been exhausted, be subject to a fixed penalty notice or commencement of Court action; however, punitive routes have currently been temporarily paused by Welsh Government at this time. The Education Welfare Service continues to support these, and all families, with various methods of engagement and encouragement and act as that vital link between school and home.

Elective Home Education:

Since schools resumed in September a number of parents have made the choice to deregister their child in favour of educating them at home themselves (Elective Home Education). There are currently 215 children within Neath Port Talbot who are subject to elective home education. 54 were added to the list since the beginning of the school year.

The number of boys/girls subject to elective home education is more or less evenly split with marginally more boys than girls being deregistered. Approximately a third of those deregistered since September have sighted COVID related concerns as reasons for choosing elective home education, whilst approximately a half have not providing any reason at all other than the required notification of deregistration.

The Elective Home Education Co-ordinator continues to work with all families choosing to educate their child at home; however, for the time-being this support is being provided via telephone and email rather than home visits. When this pandemic eventually does come under control and passes-by, it is hoped that some of those families who deregistered with concerns of their child contracting COVID whilst at school will re-register back at their former school.

FSM Payments:

Members will be aware that the Welsh Government determined that pupils who are entitled to free school meals (FSM) will either receive a meal or payment for the parent to purchase a meal during each school holiday period until, and including, Easter 2021. Having been one of the first local authorities in Wales to support FSM pupils and implement 'grab bags' within the first week or two of the original lockdown in March we experienced significant logistical difficulties in ensuring a daily meal reached the home of every Neath Port Talbot FSM pupil every day; some 5,500 pupils. It was not possible to sustain this approach long-term, therefore, it was subsequently decided that financial payments direct to parents bank accounts was a better option and allowed individual parents the flexibility to purchase and provide a meal of their own choice. Since the introduction of FSM payments the Council has paid to Neath Port Talbot parents payments in excess of £2.3 million.

In addition to this, commencing from the beginning of October self-isolation payments of just over £15k have been made to 849 FSM pupils who have been instructed to self-isolate when they have had symptoms of COVID themselves, or where they have come into contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID. These payments are again to provide a meal whilst the FSM pupil is not able to attend school.

Governors:

With schools fully open to pupils and operating as normally as they can, the majority of governing bodies have now adapted to their new way of working and are meeting virtually. A number of governors were initially cautious and hesitant to engage in remote meetings, however, there are many examples of positive feedback being received that following initial 'get-together' meetings to trail the process confidence amongst governors has grown and new ways of working embraced.

Plans that were already in the pipeline to deliver some governor training sessions online were advanced as a result of the pandemic. Members will be aware that there is a legal requirement for governors to attend

certain mandatory training courses within a specified period of time (Induction/Data/Chair of Governors etc); failure to do so can in some instances result in automatic suspension of the governor for a period of time prior to their full removal from the governing body should they continue to fail to attend the training. Whilst Welsh Government informally relaxed this requirement during the earlier stages of the first lockdown, as schools started to return to normality so did the requirement for governors to undertake the training within set timescales. Since the beginning of the new school year we have been providing governors with remote online training. To date 9 sessions have been held remotely with some 68 governors attending. Feedback has been universally positive; however, as with any form change there have been some minor issues to resolve and technical challenges to overcome. When the pandemic is finally under control and lives return to normal, the Governor Support Team will continue to offer a mixture of face-to-face training sessions and online remote sessions in efforts to support governors from across the spectrum with working; caring or other commitments and bring an added dimension of flexibility for governors as they undertake the role.

Financial Impacts:

No Implications

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Implications

Workforce Impacts:

No Implications

Legal Impacts:

No Implications

Risk Management Impacts:

No Implications

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item , to include the full consultation report as an appendix.

Recommendations:

That Members note the report

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Case Studies

List of Background Papers:

None

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DRAFT
Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme 2020/21

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Officer
19 November	Impact from Covid-19 on Youth Unemployment and Disengagement – possibly an update from the Youth Unemployment taskforce - Verbal Update	Aled Evans
	Update on reopening of schools – include Blended learning, attendance, performance, how children with learning difficulties are coping with the new environments, feedback for how preparation work is going for Year 10/11 (GCSE years), Inclusion of an analysis on lost time due to positive tests	Aled Evans/Chris Millis/ Andrew Thoms
	Neath Port Talbot Youth Service – Summer Support Programme	Chris Millis
21 January	Update on leisure – include the effect that Covid -19 has had on leisure, the reopening of leisure facilities during this time, the current position with Celtic Leisure.	Andrew Thomas/ Paul Walker
	Brief update report on libraries – include take-up	Andrew Thomas
	Update on Neath Port Talbot following the withdrawal of ERW	

18 March	Budget	
13 May		

By virtue of paragraph(s) 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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