



EDUCATION SKILLS AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.00 PM THURSDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2022

REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

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

PART 1

1. Welcome and Roll Call
2. Chairs Announcements
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 5 - 8*)
5. Consider the impacts that the pandemic has had on Schools (Verbal update)
6. Childcare Capacity in the County Borough following the effect of the pandemic (*Pages 9 - 14*)
7. Pre-Decision Scrutiny
 - i. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board agenda for pre-decision scrutiny (Cabinet Boards reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)
8. Forward Work Programme 2021/22 (*Pages 15 - 18*)
9. 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

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Thursday, 10 February 2022

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor S.H.Reynolds

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.Mizen

Councillors: M.Crowley, S.Harris, J.Jones, D.Keogh, S.Miller, R.Phillips, A.McGrath, S.Renkes, A.J.Richards, M.Spooner, 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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Minutes of the Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee

19 January 2022

Remotely via Teams

Chairperson:	Councillor S.H.Reynolds
Vice Chairperson:	Councillor R.Mizen
Councillors:	M.Crowley, J.Jones, D.Keogh, R.Phillips, M.Protheroe, S.Renkes, M.Spooner, D.Whitelock, R.W.Wood and J.Hale
Co-opted Voting Members:	M.Caddick, A. Amor and L.Newman
Officers In Attendance	A.Thomas, C.Millis, H.Lervy, R.Crowhurst, I.Guy, Ashton, R.Bowen, J.Burge, Dennis, K.Windsor-Brown, T.Davies and C.Davies
Cabinet Invitees:	Councillors A.R.Lockyer and P.A.Rees

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr. Sonia Reynolds	Re. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 - as she is a trustee and Chair of Canolfan Meardy which hosts lots of tots along with being a School Governor at Ysgol Gymraeg Gwaun Cae Gurwen
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Cllr. Rebecca Phillips	Re. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 – as she is a School Governor at YGGD Trebanos and YGGD Pontardawe
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Co-opted Member Adam Amor Re. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 - As he is a School Governor of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg rhosafan and Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera bro dur. A relative also attends Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhosafan.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved.

3. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

The committee chose to scrutinise the following cabinet board items:

Welsh In Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 Thank you to all the partners and agencies involved in this plan.

Members received an update on the outcome of the consultation on Neath Port Talbot's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032, as detailed within the circulated report.

Officers referred members to the IIA that was circulated as a supplement to the agenda which contained the full Impact including further detail from the original first stage assessment as detailed in the circulated reports.

It was also highlighted that the officer's recommendation would be amended to read:

'Having given due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment, circulated prior to the meeting, and the responses to the Consultation, the draft WESP be commended to Council for permission to submit to Welsh Government for approval.'

It was noted that the majority of the feedback from the consultation were positive responses. Along with a potential concern around the increase in numbers in education on the welsh language as whole. This was outweighed by the number of positive Responses.

Members queried whether the delivery of the plan was attainable. Officers confirmed that they were confident in the timescale on the delivery of the plan.

There were concerns around the monitoring of the plan and members queried the detail around the project management of the plan. Officers confirmed that there was a sturdy plan in place to monitor the outcomes and action plan. It was mentioned that groups would be formulated to focus on particular areas and they would meet regularly to share any concerns to ensure targets are met. It was noted that the plan would be annually reported back to the Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee along with Welsh Government.

Discussions took place around the lack of mention of the pandemic in the plan. It was noted that the pandemic doesn't feature a huge amount in the plan, however, it is being continuously considered by the whole Education Department.

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

Strategic School Improvement Programme - Proposal To Establish A New Welsh-Medium Primary School In Neath Abbey

Members received information in relation to a consultation on a proposal to establish a new Welsh-medium primary school at St John's Terrace, Neath Abbey, Neath, SA10 7ND.

Discussions took place around the potential transition from the starter school to a new school in Coed Darcy. Officers highlighted that as nothing had currently been agreed that it's best to consider that the school would continue in the allocated school.

School travel plans were discussed and it was highlighted that an informal assessment has been completed. However, it would be the responsibility of the School Governing Body along with the Council to draft a School Travel Plan.

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

4. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21**

That the Forward Work Programme be noted.

Councillor S.H.Reynolds

Chairperson



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills & Culture Scrutiny Committee

17th February 2022

Report of the Head of Early Years, Inclusion & Partnerships – Hayley Lervy

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Childcare Capacity and the Effect of the Pandemic

Purpose of the Report:

To provide Members with an update on childcare capacity in Neath Port Talbot and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the sector.

Executive Summary:

The Think Family Partnership's Early Years and Childcare Team has continued to support the childcare sector in Neath Port Talbot throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Up to five registered settings have closed as a result of Covid.

A number of grant pots have been administered to provide financial assistance to settings, with approximately 210 applications being made.

Background

The Think Family Partnership's Early Years and Childcare Team is in place to support childcare settings across the county borough area.

Through financial support for new developments and sustainability of existing settings, access to free training, and through work with partners to strengthen the links between children and other early year's services, the team work to ensure that a quality childcare sector is built for children and families in Neath Port Talbot.

Childcare Settings and the Pandemic

One setting has closed down permanently as a result of COVID. One childminder has de-registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), but the team have been advised of four childminders who do not intend to re-open.

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
New settings opening	2	5	6
Childminders/Nannies opening	2/0	3/0	2/1
Overall setting numbers at end of year (end Dec 21)	131	124	121
Overall registered childcare numbers at end of year (end Dec 21)	2,335	2,413	2,333

Issues Identified by the Sector

- The initial lockdown and series of breaks resulted in a significant break in attendance and take up of childcare.
- Initially during lockdown there was a break in provision and following on from that parents often made the choice to delay the take up of childcare provision.
- Playgroups had to close on occasion due to Covid breakouts and children not attended due to self-isolating. This resulted in a fragmented service.
- Low morale within the sector at the lack of recognition from Welsh Government for childcare and for the anxiety of staff

- returning to work, worrying they will spread virus to their own family
- No face to face support from Flying Start/Early Years Development Officers. Contact was mostly with managers rather than with all staff, as done on a physical visit to the setting. Opportunities for building relationships between setting staff and Development Officers was paused.
 - Internet issues
 - Staff not having appropriate IT devices
 - Families missing out on Play & Stay sessions.
 - Parents unable to go into settings.
 - Attachment issues for children/parents.
 - Children have missed out on making friends/ friendship in settings and in family life.
 - Some parents/children have become less confident due to not mixing.
 - FS Settings were encouraged to send their paperwork directly to the schools for transition.

Support throughout Covid-19 Pandemic

The Early Years & Childcare Team continue to support settings to ensure they are as COVID secure as possible, accessing risk assessments, policies and procedures via umbrella organisations, as well as supporting managers to keep up to with date changes to the Protective Measures Guidance from Welsh Government.

Flying Start settings have embraced the challenges resulting from COVID 19 and continue to deliver a high quality, essential part of the Flying Start programme despite the extra restrictions and considerations.

Settings engaged with the Healthy & Sustainable Pre-School Scheme (HSPSS) have seen visits to settings paused, however, the team maintain regular contact with settings offering support, guidance and updates, and reminding them of the important messages of HSPSS and of continuing their good practice.

One setting has agreed to pilot a virtual HSPSS accreditation process to help with Covid adaptations. This will include virtual tours and online group sessions for question and answers on certain aspects.

Specific support in response to the pandemic includes:

- Regular updates sent to settings from WG, Health, LA, umbrella orgs via email.
- Support phone calls, emails and video links available but not always easy to gauge the needs or concerns of staff via email, telephone or virtually.
- Outdoor visits offered when restrictions allowed
- Online training provided, including mandatory courses, behaviour management, and food safety.
- Promoting extra Covid funding for settings and encouraging them to apply/
- Providing a Schemas Scheme of Work and resources delivered to all NPT childcare via team outdoor visits
- Resources provided and delivered to support priority areas for HSPSS
- Links to mental health support for staff and children regularly shared and focused on in discussions.

During the COVID pandemic, additional funding was awarded to all local authorities to provide financial support to the childcare sector as they maintained “business as usual”.

Year	Grant	£	No. settings benefitting	Purpose
20-21	WG CWTCH Grant	£102,700	48	Covid recovery
20-21	WG Childcare Providers Grant	£7,455	3	Sustainability through Covid
20-21	WG uplift to sustainability fund	£133,957	96	Sustainability through Covid

20-21	WG Childcare Offer Covid Capital Grant	£122,784		Covid safe delivery of childcare
21-22	WG uplift to sustainability fund	£173,500	66	Sustainability through Covid
21-22	WG Childcare Offer Covid Capital Grant	£65,544		Covid safe delivery of childcare

In addition to the above, funding was secured from WG for childcare settings delivering Flying Start and/or the Childcare Offer to improve IT at their settings.

A broader update on the support provided to the childcare sector is included in a separate Think Family Partnership Update report for Education, Skills & Culture Cabinet Board Report (17.02.22).

Financial Impacts:

No impact

Integrated Impact Assessment:

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

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications

Workforce Impacts:

No impact

Legal Impacts:

No impact

Risk Management Impacts:

No impact

Crime and Disorder Impacts:

No impact

Counter Terrorism Impacts:

No impact

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts:

No impact

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

No recommendations.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

No decision required.

Implementation of Decision:

No decision required.

Officer Contact:

Hayley Lervy, Head of Early Years, Inclusion & Partnerships,
h.lervy@npt.gov.uk

Angeline Spooner-Cleverly, Participation Co-ordinator, a.spooner-cleverly@npt.gov.uk

Allison Harris, Think Family Partnership Manager,
a.t.harris@npt.gov.uk

Lisa Clement-Jones, Early Years & Flying Start Manager, l.clement-jones@npt.gov.uk

Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee – Forward Work Programme 2021/22

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Contact Officer
2021		
18 th March	Update Report on Libraries	Andrew Thomas
	Report on the work of Cynnydd and the Wellbeing Service	Andrew Thomas
29 th April	Meeting cancelled	
10 th June – Postponed to 28 th June	<p>An update on the impact Covid-19 has had on Education and Leisure services;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the return to schools been, any issues etc, overcome or still challenging, • Assessment in lieu of exams, how is it going/gone • Staff morale in Council, classroom and wider provision, • New curriculum prep. Simple quick rendering of what was said at school standards. • Adult Education activities 	Andrew Thomas/ Chris Millis

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare - as furlough ends after summer what will be the issues for providers / do we know? How many operating 	
22 nd July	Please see Cabinet Board FWP for items	
2 nd September	Update on capacity at Schools – First and Second Choice	Andrew Thomas / Helen
14 th October	Update on Youth and Community Activity (included on Cabinet Board)	Jason Heaney/ Angeline Spooner-Cleverly
	Curriculum Reform Update	Chis Millis and Mike Daley
1 st November	WESP (on cabinet papers	
25 th November	Report on school capacity including nursery and special unit figures	John Burge
2022		
19 th January (moved from 6 jan to fit in with WESP timescales)		

17 th February	Childcare Capacity in the County Borough following the effect of the pandemic	Hayley Lervy
	Consider the impacts that the pandemic has had on Schools.	Christopher Millis
Pre-election period		
31 st March		

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