

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Members Present:

2 March 2017

Chairperson: Councillor A.R.Lockyer

Vice Chairperson: Councillor H.N.James

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

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

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

**Officers In
Attendance** A.Evans, A.Jarrett, Mrs.A.Thomas, C.Millis,
J.Hodges, N.Place, M.Daley, Ms.H.Lewis,
N.Chapple, Mrs.J.Khaghanian and N.Evans

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

1. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM
MEMBERS**

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

Cllr Hugh James - the report of the Head of Transformation

2. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG
PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 26
JANUARY 2017**

The Committee noted the minutes and requested that an error be corrected in relation to the Declarations of Interest and that where appropriate “he change to she”.

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

The Committee noted the forward work programme.

4. **HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER SAFEGUARDING TRAINING**

Members considered a report on the delivery of training to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver on Safeguarding. Officers advised that this report was presented following a request by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee that the work needed to be highlighted.

Members questions why the report stated that there was no financial impact and asked how the costs of delivering the training were met. Officers stated the costs are covered by the licence fee that taxi drivers are required to pay.

Members asked for clarification on what the training involved. Officers answered that a lot of the content was in relation to child sexual exploitation but also included information in relation to domestic abuse. Officers stated that the presentation that was used at the training would be circulated to Members.

Clarity was sought on whether it would be compulsory to attend the training before being granted a taxi licence. Officers confirmed that this was a difficult issue and advice from legal would be required.

Members asked whether those who have attended the training session could be given a sticker to display within their vehicle to show that it is a safe vehicle. Officers stated that this was a good idea and would be investigated further.

Following scrutiny the report was noted and Members requested an update report annually on how many drivers had accessed the training.

5. **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE - SAFER BRIGHTER FUTURES QUARTER THREE HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

Members considered the third quarter highlight report for the Corporate Improvement Objective in relation to Safer Brighter Futures.

Members raised concern that some of the measures stated that data would be available early in 2017 and asked whether the information was now available. Officers stated that this was down to issues with a computer system and this was being rectified but the information would be prepared for the final quarter.

Members asked for clarity on what the initials IFSS stood for and were informed that it was the integrated family support service.

Following scrutiny the report as noted.

6. **ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE REPORT CARD**

Members considered the Adult Community Learning Service Report Card.

Members queried why only five learners have enrolled on the new course 'Working with parents, introduction to Health and Social Care and level 3 Education and Training'. Officers noted that this was a new course and was currently being piloted. Officers continued that the course will shorten from 4 days a week to 3 and this may increase interest. Members stated that any further roll out of the course should take into consideration the location because it is difficult for some individuals to access the training due to poor transport links.

Members queried the figures for customer satisfaction and were concerned that the number of responses was quite low. Officers stated that this was misleading and generally only approximately 10% of attendees complete an evaluation form.

Members asked whether the team were looking to unlock funding from any potential Swansea Bay City Region deal. Officers stated that the team had been successful in identifying funding opportunities in the past and will continue to do so.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

7. **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE - BETTER SCHOOLS
BRIGHTER PROSPECTS QUARTER THREE HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

Members considered a report on the Corporate Improvement Objective Better Schools, Brighter Prospects.

Members stated that in the future they would like to see numbers and percentages where appropriate and highlighted the measure in relation to Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) figures and the latest data that stated 3.6% were deemed NEET. Members wished to know how many individuals this meant. Officers stated that this was 55 out of 1542 individuals.

Members asked why there were no financial implications associated with this report given that it was linked to the Strategic School Improvement Programme. Officers stated that because this was a monitoring report and the financial impacts are highlighted in the specific programme reports.

Members asked what was being done to address the decline in foundation education. Officers stated that there was a requirement to alter the way a child is assessed and to improve the teaching in some areas. Members noted that foundation education was high on the agenda for ERW along with pre-school education.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

8. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:-

Cabinet Board Proposals

8.1 **Children, Young People Service – 3rd Quarter 2016/2017**

Members considered the quarterly performance monitoring report for Children, Young People Services.

Members welcomed that the Independent Reviewing Officer post had now been offered and that a start date was being agreed.

Members asked whether the upheld complaints were for one service area. Officers stated that they were not and were from a number of different areas.

Members asked for clarity on how many children have been removed from the child protection register and how many of those had been re-registered as they felt it was not clear within the report. Officers replied that 169 children had been removed from the register and 9 had been re-registered.

Members wished for their thanks to be recorded for the hard work undertaken by staff that had addressed the significant issues in the past.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

8.2 Categorisation of Schools in Neath Port Talbot

Members considered an annual update report on how schools in Neath Port Talbot have been categorised using the National Categorisation System.

Officers advised that the colour a school is categorised correlates with the amount of support that is required, However, Members asked for it to be made clearer on whether the support hours were per week, per month or per term. Officers stated that this will be made clearer in any future publications but it was per term.

Members asked how the categorisation of schools worked in reality. Officers advised that the categorisation comes from the objectives set by Welsh Government and these objectives cannot be changed. Officers continued that it is the challenge advisors who rate the schools and come to an agreement with them that it is a far assessment. It was further confirmed that there have been no disagreements and samples of assessments are considered on a regional basis to further ensure the process is robust.

Officers advised that there is comparative public data available on the ERW website.

Members asked were the officers confident that those schools who had been categorised as red and those that had been for more than a year were all receiving a consistent level of support. Officers stated that this was the case and each school received consistent advice, guidance and support.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

8.3 Admission to Community Schools 2018/2019

Members considered the report that sought agreement for the admission arrangements for Community Schools in 2018/2019.

Members noted their disappointment that Ysgol Gynradd Gwauan Cae Gerwen had not been included at appendix 5 with Cwmtawe school. Officers stated that this was because it was not a partner school of Cwmtawe.

Members continued that this was confusing for families and they were often asked whether their children could attend Cwmtawe. Officers stated that it is parental choice and if parents of children in Gwaun Cae Gerwen wanted their child to attend Cwmtawe then they could. Clarification was sought on how many children had failed to secure a place in Cwmtawe from Gwaun Cae Gerwen and whether there were surplus places available at Cwmtawe. Officers confirmed that all requests from Gwaun Cae Gerwen to go to Cwmtawe had been agreed last year and for the forthcoming year and that there were still surplus places in Cwmtawe.

Members noted the concerns that had been raised and asked if an annual report could be presented to the Committee highlighting any cases where parents had failed to secure the their choice of place in secondary school for their child.

Following scrutiny the Committee was broadly supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet on the proviso that an annual report was presented to the Scrutiny Committee.

8.4 Home to School Transport Policy review and Consultation

Members considered the report on the Home to School Transport Policy following the consultation period.

Members welcomed the hard work that had been undertaken by officers to ensure the policy was a fair one.

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

8.5 Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Members considered the report that sought agreement of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-2020.

It was suggested that the plan may be lacking something that would assist the Welsh Government to reach its target of 1m Welsh speakers by 2050. It was further suggested that the plan could be viewed as reactive and not proactive.

An alternative suggestion was put forward that the Council was taking its responsibility to Welsh in Education seriously and had invested circa £37m to improve it and that this should be welcomed. This is particularly evident at the usage of Welsh in English Medium Primary schools which has been excellent as has the number of children using conversational welsh.

Following scrutiny the Committee was broadly in support of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

CHAIRPERSON