

Minutes of the Education Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee

14 October 2021

Remotely via Teams

Chairperson:	Councillor S.H.Reynolds
Councillors:	M.Crowley, S.Harris, J.Jones, D.Keogh, S.Miller, R.Phillips, M.Protheroe, S.Renkes, A.J.Richards, M.Spooner, D.Whitelock, R.W.Wood and J.Hale
Co-opted Voting Members:	M.Caddick and L.Newman
Officers In Attendance	A.Thomas, C.Millis, P.Walker, I.Guy, T.Davies, C.Davies, R.Crowhurst, M.Daley, J.Haeney, K.Jones and A.Spooner-Cleverly
Cabinet Invitees:	Councillors A.R.Lockyer and P.A.Rees

1. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

Cllr R Phillips

Re: Welsh Medium Grant - Outline Plan
- as she is a Governor at Ysgol Gynradd
Gymraeg Trebannws but has
dispensation to speak and vote.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 2nd September 2021 were approved.

The committee experienced technical difficulties at this point in the meeting. The meeting was therefore deferred until 2.30pm to rectify these issues.

- At 2.30pm the meeting was reconvened. –

3. **CURRICULUM REFORM UPDATE**

Members received information on the rollout of the Curriculum for Wales and the support Neath Port Talbot schools receiving.

Members of the Committee thanked the support that staff and teachers have provided resulting in good Estyn results, along with the implementation of a new curriculum.

Members queried the meaning of a 'non-maintained nursery setting' as detailed on page 8 of the circulated report. Officers confirmed that a non-maintained nursery setting would be nursery's that are privately run, for example flying start. The chair highlighted that she would discuss this query outside of the meeting.

Discussions took place around the meaning of Metacognition. It was explained that metacognition means that the language of purposes is the language of learning. Therefore, the pupils would need to learn how to solve problems and be creative to enable them to be ambitious and capable.

The Cabinet Members highlighted that there had been a recent update in relation to potential changes to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) qualification structure. It was noted that officers would bring a report to a future meeting outlining these changes on the assessments of GCSE's

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

4. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

Quarter 1 2021/22 Quarterly Performance Report

Members were provided with the quarter 1 performance management data, complaints and compliments for the period 1st April 2021 to

30th June 2022 for the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate.

Members paid congratulations to officers on the rapid re-opening of services and the work during the pandemic and post pandemic.

Members queried whether the figures for 'CP/002 - full day care childcare places' were the number of places available rather than number of places being utilised. Officers confirmed that they would get an accurate response outside of the meeting and circulate it with the members

Members queried whether the large take up from 16-24 year olds detailed within 'CP/117 – communities for work' were related to the kickstart scheme. Officers highlighted that they were not aware that the take up were predominantly kick start places, however, officers confirmed they would check with DWP figures and provide a response to members outside of the meeting.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

Welsh Medium Grant - Outline Plan

Members were updated on the sought agreement to put forward an expression of interest application to Welsh Government for Increasing Welsh Medium Provision Capital Grant funding (2022 – 2026), as detailed within the circulated report.

Members asked for an update on Ysgol Gymraeg Pontardawe. Officers explained that they were in the process of appointing new contractors. In relation to timescales, the interior work should be completed by December 2021 and the exterior to be completed by December. Enabling pupils to back in the classrooms by Christmas.

Discussions took place around the additional costings following Covid-19 and the difficulties in purchasing supplies and recruiting contractors due to supply and demand. Officers explained that Welsh Government were aware of these pressures and would provide support if required.

The Coed Darcy development was discussed and it was highlighted that it was currently undergoing the planning process.

Discussion took place around the previous unsuccessful bid for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhosafan. Members were advised around the reasoning of why the bid was unsuccessful, however, members noted that infant class size grant for a 4 classroom renovation was accepted first. Therefore this has been incorporated into future planning.

The Chair commended the officers on the work detailed within the report on behalf of the committee.

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

Youth Service Update

Members were provided with an update on the Local Authority Youth Service.

Discussions took place around the different services that the Youth Service provide. The officer explained that the team were always open to any queries from members or public. It was noted that there was also a Facebook page and a newsletter that was circulated regularly detailing all information. Members requested a copy of the newsletter to be circulated to the Committee.

The difficulties around recruitment of staff was discussed. It was noted that full time posts were appointable however, part time posts were more difficult to recruit.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

Employability and Skills Programmes within Education Leisure and Life Long Learning Directorate

Members were updated in relation to the Employability and Skills Programmes within Neath Port Talbot.

Members raised concerns around the issues raised in the report around the ending of European funding and the lack of information around the levelling up fund. Members asked what the contingency plans were moving forward. Officer's reassured members that they currently have employability projects that they have funding for that they need to carry through and Welsh Government had given continuation in terms of timescales. Officers reiterated that they

weren't concerned about the employability funding and were continuing to plan ahead.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

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

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

Councillor S.H.Reynolds

Chairperson

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