

Minutes of the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

27 October 2022

Port Talbot Civic Centre / Remotely - Hybrid

Chairperson:	Councillor D.Thomas
Councillors:	W.Carpenter, M.Crowley, N.Goldup-John, J.Henton, J.Jones, C.Lewis, R.Mizen, P.A.Rees, S.H.Reynolds and D.Whitelock
Co-opted Voting Members:	A. Amor and M.Caddick
Officers In Attendance	H.Lervy, C.Millis, P.Walker and R.Crowhurst, C.Griffiths, C.Millis, P.Doyle, E.Dennis, K.Gilbert, S.McCluskie and A.Thomas
Cabinet Invitees:	Councillors N.Jenkins and J.Hurley.

1. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair confirmed that members would be scrutinising items 9, 12 and 16 from the Cabinet Board agenda.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Members noted that on Page 8 of the minutes, it does not include a record of the response from the Cabinet Members for Education to

the request for confirmation that the budget for the Youth Provision would be maintained for the year. The Cabinet member confirmed that the budget would be maintained for the year.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record with above amendment.

4. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

Participation and Engagement Strategy (Permission to Consult)

Members were presented with information relating to the Participation and Engagement Strategy (Permission to Consult), as detailed within the report circulated.

Members queried if the conversations referred to within the report, would include seeking to actively engage with young people who do not participate in local youth provisions within their communities. Members queried if work would be undertaken with third sector organisations and the local PCSO's. Officers confirmed that they would be looking at all groups of children and young people, and those that would be particularly most vulnerable. Officers stressed the importance of understanding what is important to young people so that services can be shaped to meet the needs of young people.

Following scrutiny, Members were supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet Board.

Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Report 2020-21

Members were presented with information relating to the Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Report 2020-21. The report sets out an overview with regards to how the authority responded in the first year of the pandemic.

Members reiterated the importance of library's acting as community hubs and recognised that this importance would greatly increase moving forward. Members recognised Neath Port Talbot was one of the authorities that saw participation in the libraries increase during the pandemic. The maintenance of these hubs within communities is extremely important. Officers confirmed that this would be maintained over the coming months.

Members queried if libraries would be offering warm zones over the coming months, in light of the cost of energy increasing. Officers confirmed that libraries would be part of this, as will Pontardawe Arts Centre, and conversations will be held with Celtic Leisure to determine if they will also be able to participate.

Members expressed their thanks to Members for the service that they provide to the public.

Following scrutiny, Members were supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet Board.

Youth Service Update

Members were presented with information relating to the Youth Service, as detailed within the report circulated.

Members asked officers for information indicating what youth clubs are across the area and that link with the local authority. Officers indicated that they would add this information to the next report.

Members of the committee queried if children who had not yet returned to school due to the pandemic, had now returned. Officers confirmed that the children who had not yet returned, contact was being maintained by the appropriate officers and bodies. Some children have elected to be home educated and contact is maintained with them as required.

Following scrutiny, members noted the report.

5. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

Members asked for an earlier update on the cost of living crisis. Officers advised that they are currently looking at this item and will get back to members on this item.

Officers advised that an update on the Judicial Review would be brought forward when it has been fully considered by officers.

The Chair advised of the need to receive written reports on items in order for the scrutiny committee to be able to consider the item fully.

Following consideration, members noted the Forward Work Programme.

6. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

7. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

This item was not required as there were no private items for consideration.

Chairperson