Minutes of the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

13 April 2023

Port Talbot Civic Centre / Remotely - Hybrid

Vice Chairperson:	**Councillor D.Thomas**
Councillors:	W.Carpenter, M.Crowley, J.Henton, J.Jones, C.Lewis, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds and D.Whitelock
Co-opted Voting Members:	M.Caddick
Officers In Attendance	I.Guy, K.Gilvert, H.Thomas, J.Roberts, J.Haeney C.Millis, R.Crowhurst, S.McCluskie and A.Thomas
Cabinet Invitees:	Councillors J.Hurley and N.Jenkins

1. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCMENTS**

   The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

   It was confirmed that the scrutiny committee would be scrutinising items 9, 10, 11 and 12 from the Cabinet Board agenda.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

   There were no declarations of interest received.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

   The minutes of the meetings held on 24th November 2022, 8th December 2022 and 25th January 2023 were approved as true and accurate records.

4. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

Elective Home Education

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack. Members queried if the new guidance would place a statutory duty for all pupils to be registered within the education system. Officers were unable to confirm if this would be the case until the new guidance was published by Welsh Government.

Members expressed their concern in the significant rise in numbers that are being educated at home and the education that they are receiving. Members queried if there were sufficient staff to deal with the number of children being educated at home. Officers confirmed that there are currently two co-ordinators employed at present and this was sufficient.

Following scrutiny, Members noted the report for information.

Equality and Safe Place to Learn

The initiative for community focused schools has come directly from Welsh Government over the last 18 months. Officers outlined how Neath Port Talbot has utilised the funding from Welsh Government to focus on this area.

Members queried if there was any work that could be done with governing bodies to better understand community links and things that organisations within the community can offer. Officers advised that the new curriculum provides a lot of focus on engagement within the community. Further, a piece of work is being carried out on 'asset based community development.' This considers what is available within the communities and how to engage the schools within what is already available. It will look at the reciprocal arrangements between the schools and the community organisations.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted for information.

Period Dignity Report

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

It was confirmed that comprehensive schools are provided with funding to purchase items as required. Primary schools are emailed to ask if they would like products and if so, what products are required. Primary schools are also entitled to replacement uniform from the funding.

Following scrutiny, members noted the report for information.

NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) Update Report

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda. Members were provided with updated destination figures. 2.2% of young people transition from school into NEET. This is the second best year ever within Neath Port Talbot and relates to only 35 young people.

Members queried the figures presented on the graph, specifically relating to 2018. Officers advised that there were discrepancies in the All Wales reporting for that year, with one local authority not presenting their figures on time.

Members raised the concerns outlined in one of the case studies in relation to assistance dogs. Members queried if the authority would consider developing a model risk assessment to support this in the future. Officers advised they are mindful of the situation moving forward.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

5. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

This item was noted for information.

6. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

Chairperson

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