



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Education & Skills Corporate Delivery Committee**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Wednesday, 14 December 2022 at 4.15 pm

Present: Councillor M Durke (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J P Curtice
S Joy
T M White

Councillor(s)

F M Gordon
Y V Jardine
R V Smith

Councillor(s)

L R Jones
S Pritchard

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden
Stephen Holland
Helen Howells
Sarah Hughes
Helen Morgan-Rees
Melissa Perry
Kate Phillips

Democratic Services Officer
Principal Solicitor
Team Manager for Pupil Support
Team Manager for Education Strategy
Director of Education
Solicitor
Head of Vulnerable Learner Service

Also present

Councillor R V Smith Cabinet Member for Education & Learning

Apologies for Absence

Councillor: B Hopkins

27 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

28 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Education & Skills Corporate Delivery Committee held on 23 November 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record

29 Attendance & Inclusion.

Helen Howells and Kate Phillips gave a verbal/powerpoint presentation relating to the background to the draft Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027.

The strategy is linked to and based around the corporate priorities for Education.

The strategy has 5 key priority areas:

- Promoting attendance
- Promoting inclusion
- Embedding effective universal provision while supporting sufficient specialist places
- Embedding a shared inclusion ethos
- Emotional health and psychological wellbeing (EHPW) whole school approach

Attendance – historically in Swansea has been very good and pre pandemic was at 95% for primary and 94.3% in secondary. Swansea was then ranked ninth in Wales for attendance.

The pandemic has obviously impacted on these figures, and Welsh Government did not measure schools on their attendance during the period and fixed penalty notices were not issued either and children were advised not to attend if feeling unwell.

Post pandemic the figures were at 90.1% for primary and 86.6% for secondary, though Swansea was now ranked sixth in Wales. These figures though have improved further during the recent academic term which is to be welcomed and can be confirmed once the term has ended. The drop in attendance figures is a national issue and not confined to Swansea.

Fixed penalty notices have now also been re-introduced by Welsh Government.

The issues caused by the pandemic on children and young people such as loss of routine, bereavement, increased anxiety & mental health issues, rise in challenging behaviours have all impacted on attendance. The rise in poverty and the cost of living crisis is also impacting on attendance figures.

What can we do going forward:

- Review of Education Welfare Service process
- Monthly attendance strategy meetings
- Change in approach from traditional attendance strategies
- Joint production of an updated attendance policy

Members of the committee asked numerous questions and made comments regarding the information highlighted in the presentation to which the Officers, Director and Cabinet Member responded accordingly.

Detailed during the discussion were the potential and possibility for the new strategy to include and be based around current clusters, involvement of governing bodies and young people to develop and promote the initiative, expanded use of external funding monies to employ additional staff in some schools, examples of good practice currently in operation in schools that can be shared.

With the current budgetary pressures facing all local authorities, large increases in funding is unlikely and revised/different/smarter ways of working within current budgets could be the answer going forward.

Officers indicated they would examine all these areas discussed and highlighted before bringing a further report back to committee in the new year.

30 Work Plan

The Chair spoke further to the circulated draft work plan and outlined that the next meeting would again focus on Attendance & Inclusion with a report/presentation building on the information provided and discussions that took place at the meeting today.

The meeting ended at 5.12 pm

Chair