



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Wednesday, 15 February 2023 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor M Durke (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

F M Gordon
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)

L R Jones
T M White

Councillor(s)

S Joy

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden
Sarah Hughes
Helen Morgan-Rees
Jeff Fish
Melissa Perry

Democratic Services Officer
Team Manager for Education Strategy
Director of Education
Corporate Fraud Team Investigator
Solicitor

Also present

Councillor R V Smith – Cabinet Member for Education & Learning

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): J P Curtice and B Hopkins

35 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

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

36 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Education & Skills Corporate Delivery Committee held on 25 January 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

37 Review of School Governance Spring 2023.

Helen Morgan-Rees referred to the importance of successful school leadership in schools, with a leading role played by school governors. She indicated that there is already a good system in place in Swansea, and the aim would be to build on and develop this going forward. The impact of leadership on our learners is something we still need to maintain our focus on, and how this affects the development, skills and progress of learners.

The scrutiny report referenced in the report outlines this focus and many of the recommendations remain live and relevant now despite the huge changes both locally and nationally to Education since its publication.

Jeff Fish then presented a report which updated members of the Committee on progress made against the 2016 School Governance Scrutiny Inquiry Panel report and sought consideration of how to best support school governance in the future, and to realise the Council's priorities to ensure leadership supports the learner progress.

The background to the original scrutiny review was outlined, as were the Cabinet Members responses to the recommendations contained within the report. The majority of the recommendations and core ideas from the report remain still valid and relevant today and have in turn become embedded in the Education Departments working practices.

The updated current position was outlined with regard to the changing national Educational background, in particular around the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales, the commencement of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act and the removal of school categorisation, along with the local issues around the regional education partnership ERW which has now ceased and has been replaced by Partneriaeth.

The significant progress made in the developing of additional and varied and more accessible training for school governors, as well as the implementing of the effective recruitment & skills matrix were outlined.

The attendance at governor training has increased and improved as a result, but going forward a more blended online/ in person approach may be needed to better support some governors.

He outlined and detailed his personal background in Local Government and beyond relating to Education and governance and referred to the background to the creation of his post which he took up last October. One of his main focus was the development a new vision for school governance, in line with the Council's priority in ensuring that leadership supports learner progress.

He acknowledged that the role of a school governor has developed and expanded over the years and is one that is both extremely demanding and rewarding. The availability of help and assistance from experienced governors and relevant professional that is available to new starters was detailed and is one that we have established over the years, and is there to utilised when required, this is an area we need to grow, develop and expand, and almost build into a 'self help' and mentoring programme.

He referred to the potential conclusions outlined in the report that Members may wish to consider.

Members of the committee asked numerous questions and made comments regarding the information highlighted in the report and presentation, particularly around the following areas:

- support, training and help that is already available to governors,
- recognising the need to increase and support further governors in their roles which are purely voluntary,
- acknowledging the huge amount of time, work and commitment that governors have to put into the role,
- the need to potentially better advertise and promote via social media the vacancies available currently on governing bodies,
- the revised LA governor appointment process has helped and improved the overall picture,

The Officer, Director and Cabinet Member responded accordingly to the issues and points raised above and indicated a further report would be brought back to the next committee building on the discussions and matters raised today, with a view to updating and refining the existing procedures going forward.

38 Work Plan.

The Chair spoke further to the circulated draft work plan and the report discussed in the previous item and outlined that the February meeting would again focus on Strengthened and Effective School Governance.

The meeting ended at 5.02 pm

Chair