



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education

At: Multi-Location Meeting - Lilian Hopkin Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

On: Thursday, 18 April 2024

Time: 4.00 pm

Convenor: Councillor Lyndon Jones MBE

Membership:

Councillors: A Davis, A M Day, F M Gordon, B Hopkins, Y V Jardine, S M Jones, S Joy, J D McGettrick, F D O'Brien and A J O'Connor

Co-opted Members: Beth Allender and Elizabeth Lee

Agenda

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5 Public Questions Questions can be submitted in writing to scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk up until noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Written questions take precedence. Public may attend and ask questions in person if time allows. Questions must relate to items on the open part of the agenda and will be dealt with in a 10-minute period.	
6 Religion, Values and Ethics in Education Briefing Dr Andrews (Bangor University), Cllr Robert Smith Cabinet Member (Education, Learning and Skills), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education) and Jennifer Harding-Richards (Religion, Values and Ethics Adviser)	14 - 23
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and Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education) and Kate Phillips
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Next Meeting: Thursday, 9 May 2024 at 4.00 pm



Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Thursday, 11 April 2024
Contact: Scrutiny Officer

Agenda Item 3



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

Monday, 12 February 2024 at 3.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

Y V Jardine
J D McGettrick

Councillor(s)

S M Jones
F D O'Brien

Councillor(s)

S Joy
A J O'Connor

Co-opted Member(s)

Beth Allender

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

Robert Smith, Cabinet Member

Officer(s)

Kelly Small
Michelle Roberts

Head of Education Planning and Resources
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A Davis, A M Day and B Hopkins

119 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

120 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

121 Minutes

The Panel agreed the minutes of the 18 January 2024.

122 Letter/s

The letter to the Cabinet Member relating to the 18 January meeting was received by the Panel.

123 Public Questions

There were no public questions received.

124 Annual Budget Proposals - as they relate to Education matters

The Panel thanked the Cabinet Member for Education Learning and the Head of Education Planning and Resources for attending the meeting to discuss the Annual Budget as it relates to education matters. They provided a presentation that covered:

- Overall school budget for 204-25
- Central budget and central staffing
- Additional Learning Needs
- Service review
- Charges to schools
- Other savings

The following points were raised by the Panel and will be forwarded to the Service Improvement, Finance and Regeneration Scrutiny Performance Panel for discussion and inclusion in their letter to the Cabinet Member for Economy, Finance and Strategy.

- We recognise that it is a challenging budget but were encouraged that the cabinet member and education department have carefully considered the options available to them in order to make the best of the monies available.
- We were concerned about the continual reduction in the level of reserves held by schools. Whilst we recognise the need for the money to be spent wisely, it is important for schools to have a good level of reserves to act as a buffer if and when needed.
- We noted from the contribution made by the Swansea Schools Budget Forum, who are one of the Statutory Consultees, that when it comes to the settlement Swansea receives from Welsh Government for education it is 'relatively poorly ranked at around 17/18th of 22 Welsh local authorities'. As a Panel we would support putting pressure on Welsh Government to work to improve Swansea's position.
- We welcomed the news about the ALN mini bus pilot and look forward to hearing more about this as it develops.
- We welcomed the news that Welsh Government are likely to pay for the £5 million (received as part of the Barnet consequentials) uplift in teachers' pension costs for Swansea.
- Concern was raised with regard to grants received from Welsh Government flatlining and the impact that this will have on our overall education spending.
- We felt it was good that the council received a one-off payment this year but did express concern about what might happen in future years.
- We noted the overspend in Home to School Transport again this year. We will keep a scrutiny eye on how this progresses over the coming year.
- We welcome the enhancing of 'in county' provision, thereby reducing the potential for so many out of county placements. However, we did notice that

there are large savings projected for ALN and felt it was important that this does not affect the overall ALN outcomes in Swansea moving forward.

- Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank both schools and the central education team for the work they do in these challenging times.

125 Work Programme

The Panel accepted the work programme noting that an extra meeting 19 February had been arranged to look at school organisation in relation to the amalgamation of special schools in Swansea.

126 For Information - Recent Individual School Inspection Outcomes List

The information was noted by the Panel. The Panel asked that future reports contain a little more context including some of the positives at the schools.

The meeting ended at 4.05 pm

Chair



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education**

MS Teams

Monday, 19 February 2024 at 4.30 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

A Davis
S Joy
A J O'Connor

Councillor(s)

A M Day
J D McGettrick

Councillor(s)

F M Gordon
F D O'Brien

Co-opted Member(s)

Beth Allender

Co-opted Member(s)

Elizabeth Lee

Co-opted Member(s)

Officer(s)

Helen Morgan-Rees
Michelle Thomas
Michelle Roberts

Director of Education
Education Funding and Information Officer
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): B Hopkins and S M Jones

127 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

128 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

129 Public Questions

There were no public questions received.

130 School organisation - Future plans for Special Schools in Swansea - Presentation and discussion

The Panel thanked the director of Education and the Education Funding and Information Officer for attending the meeting to discuss the future plans for special schools in Swansea. They provided a presentation that covered:

- The vision and the case for change
- What, how, when and where in relation to the proposed amalgamation

- Consultation that has taken place and responses received
- Statutory Notice and schedule
- Next steps

The Panel asked a number of questions:

- The number of responses that supported the proposal
- Where other sites considered for its location.
- What is the state of/category of the two buildings being move from
- Will the home to school transports costs increase.
- How many extra pupils will the proposal cater for. How many do we currently serve. How many out of county placement.
- How will we future proof this proposal, ensuring that future needs are built into it.
- Will the entry criteria and process used be reviewed in light of the different types of pupils that may be coming through.
- Will the amalgamation have an implication on jobs or will it result in job losses.
- Do the people who gave their views in the consultation know that they must give their objection also, should they want to.
- Have Estyn given any feedback on the Councils response to their consultation submission.
- Has any other works in other schools had to be put back in order for this amalgamation and new build to potentially progress.

A summary of the discussion including in relation to these questions, including the Panels views on this matter, will form part of the Convener's letter to the Cabinet Member following this meeting.

The meeting ended at 5.20 pm

Chair



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Thursday, 22 February 2024 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

M Bailey
F M Gordon
J D McGettrick
B J Rowlands

Councillor(s)

A Davis
B Hopkins
F D O'Brien

Councillor(s)

A M Day
S Joy
A J O'Connor

Other Attendees

Matthew Bailey, Clydach Ward Councillor
Brigitte Rowlands, Clydach Ward Councillor

Officer(s)

Helen Morgan-Rees	Director of Education
Sarah Loydon	School Improvement Adviser
David Thomas	Principal School Improvement Adviser

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): S M Jones
Co-opted Member(s): Beth Allender

131 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

132 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

133 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

134 Schools Scrutiny Session 2 - Clydach Primary School

The Panel welcomed the Deputy/Acting Headteacher Mr Roe, the new Headteacher Mr Jones and the Chair of Governors Mr Nicholds to the meeting.

The Panel agreed at the beginning of the municipal year to meet with three schools to discuss their school improvement plan and Estyn Inspection outcomes. Clydach Primary School was one of those.

The Acting Headteacher and the Chair of Governors provided the Panel with a PowerPoint presentation addressing the four questions sent to the school in advance of the meeting, namely:

1. Can you outline progress with your school improvement plan including progress with Estyn recommendations and introducing the new curriculum?
2. What are the barriers to the school improving its learner outcomes further including any challenges you are experiencing?
3. What are the governing bodies' priorities and how are they being addressed?
4. How well do you feel you have been supported by the local authority, the school improvement service and Partneriaeth.

The Panel raised the following issues for further discussion

- Have the level/number of staff changes and how many staff are still with you from prior to Nov 2022.
- How are you ensuring parents are being kept informed of progress at the school.
- How good progress and notable improvement has been made at the school since Estyn Inspection.
- Capital investment at the school
- Support the school has received from the Council and Partneriaeth
- Ensuring the schools is taking all teachers on the journey in relation to the curriculum for Wales.
- The next Estyn visit and next steps.

The Panel will put their full thoughts on the discussion had into a letter to the Cabinet Member of Education and Skills.

135 Work Plan for 2023/2024

The Work Plan for 2023/2024 was noted. The meeting on the 13 March 2024 will be moved to a date in July 2024.

The meeting ended at 5.00 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 4



To:
Councillor Robert Smith
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Michelle Roberts
Gofynnwch am:
Scrutiny Office 01792 637256
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrchol:
e-Mail scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
e-Bost:
Date 26 February 2024
Dyddiad:

Summary: This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 19 February 2024. The Panel discussed School Organisation, the amalgamation of special schools in Swansea.

Dear Cllr Smith,

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 19 February 2024

We would like to thank the Director of Education and the Education Funding and Information Officer for attending the meeting and providing information for the Panel. We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and to share the views of the Panel.

We were given a PowerPoint presentation covering why the amalgamation is needed, the high-level vision and aims, the extent of the consultation and what it told us, the proposed location, the statutory notice period and the next steps.

We asked about the number of consultation responses that were received in relation to the proposal. We heard that, from the survey, 25% had concerns and 75% were supportive. We were told that the survey was just one part of the consultation exercise, with a range of other tools being used to gain views, including face to face meetings. Also, that there were a large number of statutory consultees contacted as part of this process, including for example Estyn, Childrens Commissioner, governors and elected members.

We heard that several sites were initially considered, but after investigations into those, one clear option emerged and this is the site adjacent to the current Pen-y-Bryn Special School.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TRUSLOW A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

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To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

We were interested to hear that the new school would cater for up to 350 pupils, which will mean a further 100 places. This should enable Swansea to cater for those pupils coming through who may have had to go out of county in the past to stay closer to home.

We asked what state and/or category were the current two buildings being used for special schools in Swansea. We heard that they are not designated as category 'D' but it was the suitability for purpose that was the key issue in relation to the two special school sites. Whether other works elsewhere had been put back in order to progress this proposal was also asked and we were told that this was not the case and in fact, this proposal had been put back previously due to more urgent need coming forward in the past.

We asked whether the entry criteria and the process used for ALN pupils will be reviewed in light of the different types of pupils that may be coming through in the future. We heard that the ALN referral panel, currently used, will likely need to be recalibrated to accommodate the numbers and types of pupils coming through.

We were interested to explore how the proposal is being 'future proofed' to ensure future needs are built in early. We heard that the special school would form one part of the offer provided to ALN pupils, alongside mainstream schools and special teaching facilities. It is understood that there is a growing need for ALN provision across Swansea and this amalgamation will form part solution for that need.

We were pleased to hear about the wide-ranging consultation exercise that was completed but did want to emphasise the importance of telling consultees that if they wished to object, they had to do that separately within the statutory notice period.

We asked whether this proposal would have an impact on jobs and particularly in job losses. We heard that this could not be ruled out because we currently have two leadership structures and only one would be required.

We asked whether it was likely that the home to school transport costs would increase because of this proposal. We were told that it is probable that the need for transport will increase but the council is working to mitigate this by preparing for that now. This is being done through the mini bus pilot, increasing the councils mini bus stock in the specialist sector and providing more transport in house.

We welcome and are supportive of this exciting new proposal and look forward to seeing how it progresses.

Your Response

We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter but on this occasion do not require a formal response.

Yours sincerely

COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk



To:
Councillor Robert Smith
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Michelle Roberts
Gofynnwch am:
Scrutiny Office 01792 637256
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrchol:
e-Mail scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
e-Bost:
Date 7 March 2024
Dyddiad:

Summary: This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 22 February 2024. The Panel met with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors from Clydach Primary School to discuss their school development plan.

Dear Cllr Smith,

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 22 February 2024

We thanked the Acting Headteacher and the Chair of Governors from Clydach Primary School for their presentation addressing the set of questions that were sent to the school in advance of the meeting. We are writing to you as the Cabinet Member to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and to share the views of the Panel.

We welcome the good progress that has been made with the School Improvement Plan since the Estyn Inspection in November 2022. We were particularly keen to hear about the progress being made in relation to the five Estyn recommendations contained in that report.

We heard from the School Improvement Service that they are particularly proud of the progress that the school has made towards the recommendations provided by Estyn in the recent inspection. It was recognised that it has been a significant piece of work and required a number of changes to be made at the school in order to make the provision for learning much better.

Some of the points we noted from the discussion include:

- The school was placed in special measures in November 2022 by Estyn, who provided them with five recommendations for improvement. We heard from the Acting Headteacher that these closely interlink and have been the driving force of everything done since then.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TRUSLOW A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

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To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

- When the Estyn inspection took place in November 2022 there was no Headteacher in the school, quite a number of staff at the school were absent and a number of agency staff were covering. There was also no admin, no caretaker, no cook. There was a real challenge with staffing.
- Now the school has a newly appointed Headteacher, a Deputy Headteacher who acted into the Headteacher role until that appointment, so he has clear experience of the difficulties experienced at the school and has been heavily involved in making improvements. The Senior Leadership Team has a full complement and almost all teaching staff are back in work, there are no temporary posts. So, there has been a significant shift in terms of staffing and consistency for the children of the school.
- Following the inspection, a post inspection action plan was written. It identifies the milestones that have been actioned and the next steps.
- Estyn revisited in June 2023 and said 'leadership at the school promotes a calm and supportive culture of continuous improvement based on clear communication and high expectations. As a result, staff respect leaders and value the professional development opportunities and that the role of the governors is evolving with the growing emphasis on reflection and the governing body includes well organised committees for finance and the monitoring of progress towards the post inspection action plan'.
- The school have developed communication with parents, pupils, governors and staff.
- When Estyn came in for their most recent visit in June, they stated that leaders have established clear structures for evaluating the school's progress to ensure the self-evaluation activities are strategic and effective.
- They have embedded a calendar of purposeful activities and provided clear expectations for all staff. This clarity has started to foster a growing culture of trust and respect. This is driving forward improvements, helping leaders identify strengths effectively and ensure that priorities and the findings are used strategically to plan next steps for professional learning. Leaders are seeking opportunities to involve parents in the self-evaluation process.
- The school has worked hard on developing teaching across the school. The leadership team has worked diligently focusing on the development of teaching and learning. They received a really positive quote from Estyn that summarises where they are at with teaching 'there has been a notable improvement in the quality of provision across nearly all classes. The consistency of teaching is having a positive impact on pupil progress, fostering good pupil well-being, and improving attitudes to learning'.
- Since inspection the school has worked hard to develop a curriculum, various new initiatives have been introduced to ensure the progressive development of pupil skills. Estyn said that 'leaders have developed a shared vision for teaching and learning and staff collaborate thoughtfully to establish the curriculum that systematically builds on existing knowledge, understanding and skills'.
- Leaders at the school have taken significant steps to develop useful professional learning opportunities. Notably, staff members have received training in consistent approaches to the teaching of reading and writing and staff members have also begun engaging in professional learning activities outside of the school environment. This includes participation in cluster events and observing good practise in other schools.

We asked about the challenges faced by the school and how they are working to address or mitigate them. The Panel heard:

- The new leadership team had inherited a significant deficit budget. The governing body have worked proactively with the local authority and the school to develop a robust recovery plan, which is reducing the deficit budget. Although it is a significant barrier that the school face on a daily basis in terms of their spending and what they have to work, with a knock-on effect to staffing. The governing body committees continue to monitor the school's finance and staffing situation in line of the budget.
- Premises have been an issue with the school spread over two sites. The school said they are excited about the opportunity and the prospect of moving to one site. Recognising there is a long journey ahead, but that this will be beneficial for the school. We heard that the infant building dates back to 1862. It needs significant repairs and they are frequently facing issues such as leaks, plumbing issues and most recently electrical updates.
- Another barrier that they faced was the post inspection action plan itself. Initially, they felt they were quite restricted by that and couldn't deviate towards anything else, but Estyn have now given them the autonomy to look into other areas that they have identified for improvement, like for example foundation learning provision.
- One of the big challenges faced was pace of change and the morale of staff but they believe they have made strong progress with this to date. Staff are fully engaged with the school improvement activities, but the pace and demands on this for staff are tough. The Chair of Governors said, as a school and as leaders, we are placing well-being at the centre of all our decisions particularly staff well-being alongside progress against the recommendations and this is always a key discussion point in governing body meetings.

The school also outlined how well they feel they have supported throughout this process to date, including:

- They had received excellent support from the School Improvement Adviser, particularly with the increased level of support required to assist the acting Headteacher.
- The brokered support. During the absence of the headteacher, the local authority provided interim leadership to the school by brokering support in the form of an experienced Headteacher.
- From Partneriaeth, with the development at the curriculum. Partneriaeth assigned a link officer to the school, who has provided support to the leadership team and training for staff, deepening understanding of the curriculum and provided additional general training in line with the needs of the school.
- They said that Human Resources support for the school has been valuable. They guided and supported the school through some very challenging situations.

The Panel recognised that supporting the school through this most challenging period has be no mean feat and we would like to thank both the Acting Headteacher and the Chair of Governors for their strong commitment to bringing about improvement at the school. We congratulate their success so far, in what was said to be marathon not a sprint. We are reassured that good progress is being made across the School Improvement Plan and with the Estyn recommendations and that there is now good

leadership and a full staff compliment to enable the school to continue to build upon those improvements.

Your Response

We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter but on this occasion do not require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely

COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 18 April 2024

The support and development of Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) in Swansea Schools

Purpose:	To brief/update the Scrutiny Panel on the support and development of RVE across Swansea schools
Content:	A briefing/update on the strategic plan to support and develop RVE within Swansea schools
Councillors are being asked to:	Consider the information provided and give views
Lead Councillor:	Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
Lead Officers & Report Authors:	Jennifer Harding-Richards (RVE and RSE Adviser) Jennifer.Harding-Richards@swansea.gov.uk

1. Introduction and Legislation

1.1 For all learners up to and including year 8:

- RVE is mandatory; there is no parental right to withdraw.
- RVE is a statutory requirement of the Curriculum for Wales and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3-16.
- Learners over the age of 16 can 'opt in' to RVE. If a learner chooses to opt in to RVE, then the school or college must provide RVE which is objective, critical and pluralistic.
- RVE must be delivered objectively, critically and pluralistically.
- RVE sits within the Humanities Areas of learning and experience (AoLE) with the five what matters statements which will contribute to learners realising the four purposes of the curriculum.
- RVE should be given parity with the other subjects within the Humanities area.
- In designing the RVE curriculum, practitioners must pay due regard to the Welsh Government RVE Guidance as well as the RVE locally agreed syllabus (2022 agreed syllabus).

- The RVE curriculum must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Wales are mainly Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Wales and must also reflect the fact that a range of non-religious philosophical convictions (within the meaning of section 375A(3)) are held in Wales (Curriculum and Assessment Wales 2021 Act).
- 1.2 Since September 2023, there has been a change to legislation. There is no right to withdraw from RVE in respect of years 8 and below as all schools and settings will have implemented the Curriculum for Wales for those learners.
- 1.3 Thereafter, the phased roll-out of the Curriculum for Wales will continue, and the right to withdraw will be removed for:
- Year 9 learners in September 2024
 - Year 10 learners in September 2025
 - Year 11 learners in September 2026
- 1.4 All learners from years 9-13:
- Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from Religious Education (RE). Schools should have a protocol to support with this process should it be needed.
 - RE must be delivered in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus for RE (2008 'legacy' agreed syllabus).
 - RE must be included in the curriculum for all registered learners excluding:
 - a. Learners in nursery provision
 - b. Learners aged 19 or over
 - c. Learners over 16 who are receiving part time education.
 - RE must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

2.0 The National Centre for RE, Bangor University: Research 2023-24

- 2.1 In 2023, the National Centre for RE, Bangor University undertook research to explore how RVE was embedded within the Curriculum for Wales. Their research included both quantitative and qualitative research methods and included responses from 58 schools. The second phase of research will involve in depth interviews with colleagues from across Wales.

3.0 Swansea Standing advisory council for Religious Education (SACRE)/Standing advisory council for Religion, Values and Ethics (SACRVE)

- 3.1 As RVE (and its predecessor RE) is a locally determined subject, it is the responsibility for each local authority to provide a SACRE/SACRVE (standing advisory committee for RVE/RE). The committee, in essence has the duty and responsibility to monitor the provision and quality of RE/RVE and collective

worship, across its schools and provide appropriate advice and support to aid its teaching.

4.0 RVE Support for Swansea schools

4.1 Agreed Syllabus

4.2 The 2022 Swansea RVE Agreed Syllabus was published, following extensive consultation with teachers, learners, SACRE members, faith groups and council officers in Swansea. The agreed syllabus is therefore a co constructed syllabus that meets legislative duties. Early evaluation of the syllabus has provided positive feedback. Examples include the following:

- *May I thank you for all your work in producing the Swansea Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics. This document was very much welcomed at a time when I was unsure of which direction to take our RVE planning. The syllabus effectively links the expectations from Curriculum for Wales with the Welsh Government RVE guidance; clearly identifying strong relationships between Humanities, the Four Purposes and What Matters' statements. One aspect of the guidance that I needed more support with was the inclusion of non-religious beliefs. The section on non-religious beliefs in the 'recommendations for knowledge, skills and experiences' section was very beneficial and reassuring.*
- *I believe that the Swansea Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics will support all schools to develop an inclusive RVE curriculum that will support the development of pupils' religious literacy. The example units provided will support schools with this construction in the early days and give teachers the confidence to further develop their RVE teaching and learning over time. The guidance notes on progression and assessment will support senior leaders to think about how they move learners through the progression steps. As a result, there should be a wealth of good practice to share in the future.*
- *An excellent example of collaborative working to support senior leaders and teachers with a critical change in education.*

5.0 Resources

5.1 Swansea SACRE secured grant funding of £12,000 in 2022-2023 to support with the development of RVE resources. Two national advisers for RE were commissioned to work on the resources with us. The resources, which include materials for both the primary and secondary phases, have been translated and are now freely available for schools to access bilingually.

5.2 We have secured grant funding of £12,500 (2024-2025) which will allow the development of further resources to support with early years and progression step 5 (age 14-16) RVE.

5.3 Feedback on the resources developed to date include the following examples:

- *The format is clear with the headings. Great that links to resources are provided i.e You Tube. Key ideas and vocab section is helpful. Lots of lovely ideas for teaching and learning activities.*
- *A really useful document which allows freedom in teaching whilst still providing valuable and enjoyable activities for the pupils. This has definitely given me more confidence in RVE teaching (Pentrechwyth primary school).*

6.0 Professional Learning

- 6.1 School Leaders from the primary and secondary sector received professional learning in 2022 regarding the legislative changes. Legislative summaries were shared with school leaders at the beginning of this academic year. This has ensured that school leaders are made aware of their legislative duties and responsibilities and can work with their RVE/Humanities leads to ensure that their provision for RVE not only meets statutory requirements but also is designed placing the learner at the centre of curriculum design. To date, we have had no requests to support managing the removal of the right to withdraw from RVE.
- 6.2 Governors are invited to attend annual training to support them with their understanding around RVE. Twenty-four governors from across Swansea schools have received the training which seeks to enhance their understanding of legislation and how RVE fits within the curriculum for Wales. Moving forward, we have plans to provide a pre recorded webinar for schools to utilise with their own governing bodies at a time convenient to them.
- 6.3 All secondary RVE leads are invited to attend termly full-day network meetings. Nearly all schools have been represented at these meetings over the last year. These productive days provide RVE leads with local, regional and national updates for RVE, professional learning provided by a faith lead to support with the delivery of authentic RVE and the sharing of effective practice which will be led by a school on a rota basis.
- 6.4 In partnership with Partneriaeth, newly qualified and early career teachers are invited to attend annual training to support their work. Evaluation from the session in 2023 included the following:
- *The session helped to make the subject area more understandable and relatable. It emphasised the importance of RVE in the curriculum in a way that is useful to share within my school as it has often felt as though it is viewed as more of a secondary subject. Also, the range of ideas shared for planning activities/lessons.*
- 6.5 In 2022-23, four twilight sessions were offered to support schools with the following:
- (a) Legislation and RVE
 - (b) The Agreed Syllabus
 - (c) Curriculum development
 - (d) Authentic and lived experience RVE

- 6.6 Feedback was positive and included the following:
- *I feel more confident discussing RVE with colleagues after listening to Jennifer's presentations, with very current information.*
 - *Providing excellent guidance on developing the new curriculum and what is needed to develop this in line with the Welsh government.*
- 6.7 In 2023-2024, ten twilight sessions were offered to support schools to develop their understanding of objective, critical and pluralistic RVE. These have been offered in partnership with the National Centre for RE, Bangor University and the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK at Cardiff University. Feedback will be gained after the final session in June.
- 6.8 Partnering with Partneriaeth, twelve schools across the region have been funded to work collaboratively on projects to develop objective, critical and pluralistic RVE. This involved five Swansea schools. Funding teachers for three days has enabled high-quality collaboration and development of resources which will be shared across the region. Feedback on these sessions included the following:
- *This time has had an invaluable impact upon myself and my colleagues as professional leaders of RVE. Primarily, seeing the larger picture has improved strategic planning in line with reflection. Listening to Josh speak about how Ethics has been an underdeveloped area in the shift from RE to RVE has led me to research and include a greater number of philosophical discussions as part of our school curriculum. I have had time to work on learning episodes and implement these with monitoring to assess effectiveness.*
- 6.9 A large number of schools have received personal bespoke support to assist with curriculum development, resourcing and development of RVE across the whole school with further positive feedback received:
- *Just wanted to thank you for all you've done and are doing to support us to embrace and plan for the new RVE curriculum. I can't go into much detail, but I was able to confidently answer some difficult questions/line of enquiry, in our inspection this week. This certainly would not have been the case without all the fantastic training we've had so I wanted to thank you for this. I did sing your praises! (Brynymor primary school)*
- 6.10 Swansea SACRE/SACRVE members will join teachers from across Swansea on 11 April to participate in a day of professional learning. The high impact day will provide teachers with opportunities to creatively and strategically embed RVE within their curricula in a meaningful, purposeful and authentic way.
- 6.11 Since September 2023, 74% of Swansea schools have received support and professional learning.

7.0 Partnership working

7.1 Over the last year, we have worked with Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to support RVE within our schools. Both the National RE Centre at Bangor and the UK Islamic School at Cardiff University have co-presented twilight professional learning for our teachers. We have partnered with University of Wales, Trinity St David's (UWTSD) to allow our teachers free access to their RE resources and artefacts. The RVE Adviser has developed professional relationships with national RE bodies, including National association of teachers of Religious Education (NATRE), Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants (AREIAC), National advisory panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE) and the RE Council for England and Wales.

8.0 National work

8.1 RVE within Swansea has been positively recognised over the last year with many requests to share our work at a national level.

8.1.1 The RVE adviser has written several blogs around RVE curriculum development, and these have been published on the 'Reforming RE' blog space.

8.1.2 The RVE adviser has been commissioned to deliver/co-deliver two webinars for DARPL to support schools with antisemitism and working with traveller and gypsy pupils.

8.1.3 The RVE adviser has been involved in two panels discussing the RVE developments within Wales:

- (a) The Religion Media Centre – 5th September 2023
- (b) BBC Radio Wales; All Things Considered – 14th September 2023

8.1.4 The RVE adviser will be presenting at the AREIAC/AULRE joint national conference in June outlining our work in Swansea. The focus of the presentation will be *Finding the sweet spot – Supporting and empowering teachers to navigate their way through the subsidiarity afforded by the Curriculum for Wales with the knowledge, skills and experiences essential in supporting their learners to become ethical and informed citizens. The rationale, thinking and rigorous due diligence employed in co constructing our RVE Agreed Syllabi.*

8.1.5 The RVE adviser will be presenting a 'lunch and learn' session for Welsh Government in May sharing the work we have undertaken on antisemitism.

9.0 Monitoring the delivery and quality of (legacy) RE/ RS in Swansea schools

9.1 Examination entries (2023)

School	A level entries	GCSE (full) entries	GCSE (short) entries
Birchgrove		0	
Bishop Gore		182	
Bishop Vaughan	11	140	
Bishopston		31	
Cefn Hengoed		13	
Dylan Thomas		0	
Gowerton	9	40	
Maes Derw		0	
Morrison		12	
Olchfa		9	
Pentrehafod		203	5
Penyrheol		11	
Pontarddulais		12	
YG Bryn Tawe		5	
YG Gwyr	6	19	
All schools	26	677	5

9.1.2 All schools have a legislative duty to provide RE for all learners. For key stage 4 and 5 learners, this should be in accordance with the legacy Swansea RE Agreed Syllabus, or via an external qualification. The entry data above indicates that large numbers of learners in Swansea schools are not entered for an external qualification in Religious Studies.

9.2 Swansea entries for RS; 2014 – 2023 (ten-year trend)

Year	GCSE FC	GCSE SC	A2
2014	701	661	43
2015	715	820	53
2016	771	797	48
2017	870	577	55
2018	732	783	31
2019	666	534	32
2020	600	510	24
2021	695	148	16
2022	671	17	21
2023	677	5	26

The ten-year trend shows a significant decrease in entries for short course and A level RS. GCSE full course entries remain fairly static.

10.0 Estyn reports

10.1 SACRE has examined the relevant sections of LA school inspection reports. During the academic year September 2022 – September 2023, sixteen primary schools in Swansea were inspected, and three secondary schools which included two engagement visits. The full report was shared with SACRE/ SACRVE members at the Autumn 2023 meeting. There were some positive comments regarding RVE in a number of schools, including:

- *The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and understanding of religion during classroom activities and collective worship. These include assemblies that focus on aspects of Christianity and other religions. There are close links with the community that provide valuable opportunities for pupils to engage with their community, such as participating in acts of remembrance and laying a wreath. The school works well to develop pupils' understanding of equality and diversity, and to support those in need, for example through raising money for a range of charities (Gwyrasydd primary school).*
- *Many pupils are developing well as ethical, informed citizens, who show empathy and compassion for others and recognise the importance of their rights, and the rights of others. Through a comprehensive curriculum offer, pupils explore different religions and beliefs from around the world. Visitors to the school, such as local volunteers, share their values and beliefs and this helps pupils to reflect helpfully on their own values, for example on the need to be kind and caring towards others (Casllwchwr primary school).*

11.0 Secondary RVE Audit

11.1 Swansea SACRE undertook an audit of Key Stage 4 provision of RE in 2022. The audit indicated that whilst most schools offer RS as a GCSE option, the provision of statutory RE is erratic and inconsistent.

11.2 Undertaking an audit of provision at Key Stage 3 in 2024, 63% of Swansea secondary schools indicate that there is not equity between History, Geography and RVE. Where subjects are delivered as separate disciplines, the typical pattern of timetabled lessons is 3/3/2 (History/Geography/ RVE).

11.3 Furthermore, it is evident that within Humanities departments, RVE specialism is often the least represented. For example, in one 11-18 school with nine Humanities teachers, there is only one RVE/RE specialist.

12.0 School Improvement Reports

12.1 In partnership with the School Improvement Team, we have a snapshot of Swansea school's implementation of RVE (primary schools) within their wider curriculum.

Number on roll	Dedicated lead?	Where is the school on its RVE journey?	SDP priority
19	Yes	Estyn just reflected that the curriculum and ethos allowed the pupils to reflect well on values.	Yes
357	Yes	Area in need of development	No
137	Yes	Aim to refine and <u>update provision</u> for RVE. An outline for teaching the Abrahamic religions has already been planned. Need to add to the recommendations for knowledge, skills and experiences and include non-religious worldviews and philosophical convictions. This will ensure that RVE is broad and balanced within school.	Yes
152	Yes	Teach RVE through: Explicit teaching of world beliefs Exploring ideas through Big Questions Encouraging pupils to see links with real world events Reflection on our world and how we can make a difference Opportunities to study local and global contexts (Sustainable Development Goals) Developing critical thinking skills using our HABER model <u>Age appropriate</u> daily worship time and reflection Stories, school events and visitors	No
427	Yes	Early stages. Assigned different religions to be explored with different year groups	Yes
191	Yes	Further work needed	No
157	Yes	The religion values and ethics (RVE) curriculum has been thoroughly reviewed and recreated to include key elements – big questions, school values and similarities between religions in line with the agreed syllabus	Yes

145	Yes	RVE curriculum is in place, school leaders are aware of the need to ensure that this matches the agreed syllabus	No
301	Yes	School leaders are aware of the new agreed syllabus for religion, values and ethics (RVE) and <u>AoLE</u> leads have attended recent training. They are currently engaged in a cross-checking activity with the current curriculum to ensure appropriate coverage and progression; this requires further development.	Yes
242	Yes	There is a progressive curriculum in place to support the teaching of religion, values and ethics (RVE).	No
92	Yes	The school has an effective lead in place for religion, values and ethics (RVE); they have attended relevant training and are aware of agreed syllabus. The RVE lead is currently engaging in helpful PL and work with other schools to review and update the curriculum offer.	No
221	Yes	The school has a dedicated, recently trained lead for RVE who has implemented a clear approach to teaching in this area.	Yes
165	Yes	RVE is to be relaunched this year, a dedicated leader for this area of the curriculum engages with regular professional learning opportunities. Themes from the new agreed syllabus align strongly with inquiry approach	Yes
251	Yes	Further work is planned to support the effective implementation of RVE in line with the new agreed syllabus.	Yes

13.0 Suggested next steps

- 13.1 Rigorous and robust system in place to monitor RVE in all schools in Swansea and ensure a consistently high level of provision that meets legislative duties.
- 13.2 Ensuring that Swansea SACRE is provided with the support it requires to deliver its statutory duties.
- 13.3 Undertaking research across the local authority to compare with the national findings.
- 13.4 Collaboration with the Humanities team within the regional consortium to ensure a consistency of approach for professional learning.
- 13.5 Partnering with ITE in Swansea to offer support for trainees in RVE.

14. Legal implications

- 14.1 There are no legal implications within this report.

15. Finance Implications

- 15.1 There are no financial implications within this report.

16. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 16.1 The report is for information and not for decision.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None

Agenda Item 7



Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 18 April 2024

Hearing the Voices of Children and Young People

Purpose:	To brief the Panel on work undertaken during 2023-2024 to hear the voices of children and young people in Swansea.
Content:	An overview of work undertaken by the Education Directorate and work undertaken by the Partnership and Involvement Team based in the Social Services Directorate.
Councillors are being asked to:	Consider the information provided and give views.
Lead Councillor:	Cabinet Member for Education & Learning
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Rhodri Jones, Head of Achievement & Partnership Service Rhodri.jones@swansea.gov.uk Sarah Hughes, Team Manager for Education Strategy Sarah.hughes@swansea.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the work undertaken to listen to the voices of children and young people over the last municipal year. The Education Directorate and the Partnership and Involvement Team in Social Services engage with children and young people, both in educational settings and also in the community to ensure their voices are heard. The Partnership and Involvement Team have also facilitated events linked with Education.
- 1.2 In 2014, Swansea Council launched its Children's Rights Scheme, which sets out the arrangements that Swansea Council will put in place to ensure compliance with its duty to have due regard to the UNCRC. The Council continues to uphold its statutory commitment to facilitating County-wide mechanisms to hear the voice of children and young people, as set out in Section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and Article 12 of the UNCRC.

- 1.3 The importance of hearing the voices of children and young people is reflected in the 2023/28 Corporate Plan under the Education and Skills objective. This is detailed under '*Involving People – by involving learners in their education through a range of engagement mechanisms in order to demonstrate we value these key stakeholders*'.

Specific strategies also refer to learner voice, e.g., the Inclusion Strategy will promote learner participation in decision-making.

2. The Children's Rights and Human Rights City Schemes and the Pupil Manifesto

- 2.1 A second version of the Children's Rights Scheme was published in 2021. This was updated from the 2014 scheme following public consultation and ensures the scheme compliments the 'Right Way' principled approach that is being embedded nationally and led by the Children's Commissioner for Wales. A progress report outlining work of the Children and Young People's Rights Scheme 2021-2023 was presented to the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 14 November 2023.
- 2.2 As part of the Children's Rights Scheme, children and young people have identified seven County-wide priorities to be addressed by Swansea Council and its partners of the Public Service Board:
- Protecting the Environment
 - Quiet Voices
 - Supporting Disabled Children
 - Equality for LGBTQ+ Children and Young People
 - Politics
 - Listening to Learners
 - Feeling Safe – with a focus on Women and Young Women's Safety in Public Spaces
- 2.3 Targeted training is provided to schools around the rights of children and young people, with several quality checks in place to provide assurance around schools promoting these effectively. Many schools embrace the principles that underpin the work of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- 2.4 The Education Directorate provides direct support to children and their families. Person centred approaches are central to the work of teams that provide support, where children's views and voices are part of decision-making. Examples of this include the work of the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team and support for learners who are excluded. Schools are encouraged to display advocacy information that has been provided to them.
- 2.5 An action plan engagement event took place in June 2023, following the establishment of Human Rights City priorities and the declaration of Human Rights City status. 20 young people from secondary schools attended this event, which fed directly into Human Rights City Action plans, published in December 2023.

- 2.6 In November 2023, work began with the Pupil Voice PLC in the secondary sector on the next Swansea Pupil Voice Manifesto. Initial indications show similar topics to the 2022 Manifesto, but we look forward to receiving this to further shape our priorities going forward.

3. Universal Children's Day

- 3.1 Following a successful event in November 2022, the Council held another event to mark Universal Children's Day at the Waterfront Museum on 20 November 2023.
- 3.2 100 children and young people across primary and secondary schools celebrated Children's Rights in Swansea. During the day there were talks and workshops from the Children's Commissioner's Office, a presentation about a schools' project with Taith, and Ysgol Crug Glas demonstrated how they learn through play and adapt their teaching.
- 3.3 Workshops were held by Swansea MAD and STOPP Period Poverty and an interactive marketplace with 30 organisations that work with children and young people across Swansea was held.
- 3.4 During the day, the new relaunch of The Big Conversation – Swansea's county-wide mechanism for hearing the voice of children and young people was launched. Children and young people gave their views on what they wanted from The Big Conversation and how they wanted it to run.

4. School Councils and Beyond

- 4.1 The School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005 sets it out clearly that the governing body of a school must establish a school council, the purpose of which is to enable pupils to discuss matters relating to their school, their education and any other matters of concern or interest and to make representations on these to the governing body and the headteacher.
- 4.2 The headteacher of a school must ensure that meetings of the school council are convened on six occasions during the school year and ensure that all school council meetings are supervised by at least one member of the school staff. Both the governing body and the headteacher of a school must consider any matter communicated to them by the school council and provide a response to the school council.
- 4.3 The membership of the school council must consist solely of registered pupils at the school. The governing body of a school and the headteacher must make arrangements for at least one registered pupil of each year group, from Year 3 and above, to be elected to membership of the school council.
- 4.4 The headteacher of a school must ensure that the school council has the opportunity to nominate up to two pupils from years 11 to 13 (inclusive) from its membership to be associate pupil governors on the school's governing body. The governing body must accept any pupil nominated and appoint him or her as an associate pupil governor on the governing body.

4.5 Swansea schools have a long history of ensuring that pupil participation goes way beyond the requirement of having a school council, with the national definition of participation being at the centre of our schools' ethos in that *participation means that it is a learner's right to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing any action that might affect them. Having a voice, having a choice.* This has been evident as all our schools plan the development and delivery of the Curriculum for Wales. For example, the way in which schools engage in the long-term planning for the development of concepts within their individual curricula and on a day-to-day basis when consulting pupils over what they want to learn within a given topic or theme.

5. Partnership and Involvement Team

5.1 Over the last twelve months, the Partnership and Involvement Team have continued to undertake an extensive variety of activities that have provided opportunities to listen to the voices of children and young people.

5.2 In May 2023, the Team created a cross-directorate working group to:

- Support the Children's Rights commitment and contribute to a Children's Rights Scheme Implementation Plan
- Assist in the co-ordinator of the statutory responsibility of local authorities to promote and facilitate participation of children and young people in decisions that might affect them. (Section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010)
- Review and Refresh the "Big Conversation" model for a cluster/area model to hear the voice of CYP within their communities – linked in with early help hubs, youth provision, Primary & Secondary schools as well as wider community groups & forums etc.
- An opportunity to shape and work on countywide, community & school-based priorities for CYP
- Co-ordinate the feedback of progress to children and young people via multiple mechanisms and forums in Swansea

5.3 The Team works with directly with children and young people. Some examples of activities include:

- Sessions to embed the 'Right Way Approach' at Ysgol Pen y Bryn Special School, including observation of classes.
- Drop-in sessions at the Ysgol Pen y Bryn Thrive breakfast where Council staff have had the opportunity to get to know the children and young people and learn from them.
- 18 Sessions for children and young people who have additional needs were held during the summer holidays, where suitable spaces are available for families to spend time together. This was funded by Enabling Communities. Sessions included physical activities such as Rock Climbing, Surfing and Ninja Warrior. There were animal handling sessions at Plantasia and the community farm, along with two ALN youth clubs which had art and crafts and cooking activities. All sessions were chosen by children and young people and based on what they had told us they wanted. This work has been developed from listening to children and young people with ALN and

their views on the lack of inclusive and accessible activities available to them.

- Intergenerational LGBTQIA+ Family sessions during the summer of 2023. These sessions were primarily arts and craft sessions, where participants were encouraged to explore their identity and their community
- 5.4 Since 2014, there has been a mechanism called 'The Big Conversation' to involve children and young people aged 5-25 years to provide an opportunity for them to engage in accessible and meaningful sessions to shape services and to have a voice on issues that impact their lives. This model was originally delivered through large events, then was delivered in a different way following the pandemic. A review has been undertaken, with a new model launched in November 2023. This model has a mixture of opportunities to facilitate participation and provide opportunities to feed back to children and young people in relation to how their voice is being heard and influences decision-making.
- 5.5 The first relaunched 'Big Conversation' which focused on the theme Equality was held in February 2024. There were 80 young people from primary and secondary schools in attendance, along with teaching and support staff. During the day, children and young people across Swansea looked at current priorities set by children and young people in 2021 and told us if they thought those priorities should stay and if there were any other priorities that should be focused on. Children and young people also had the opportunity to feed their views into the Council's Human Rights Strategic Equality Plan. The afternoon focused on equality workshops where children and young people shared their views and ideas through three activities that looked at identity and equality.
- 5.6 The Partnership and Involvement team were involved in setting up the Junior Safeguarding Board priority for 2023, which is Sexual Harassment. Young people have been working on projects across Swansea that look at reducing gender-based violence, sexual harassment in schools and safe places.
- 5.7 As a follow on from the Plan UK project that worked with young boys, a White Ribbon Day event was held to showcase and celebrate the work that had been done. This was through an exhibition at Swansea Grand Theatre where members of the public, schools and council officers had the opportunity to meet the boys and view the work they had been doing over a number of months. The work had focused on positive masculinity, stereotypes, and roles in society. The work has been continuing with the boys who have chosen to become ambassadors and are putting together an assembly for primary schools.
- 5.8 A 'Lost Voices' project was undertaken in June 2023 to provide opportunities to engage with young people who have not traditionally been heard. These included young people with experience of the care system, young people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, young people experiencing mental health and young people struggling to find their own path.
- 5.9 During February 2023, a large event was held at the Waterfront Museum in partnership with Sadie's Butterflies to raise awareness of Trans issues and

offer support to those in the Trans and LGBTQIA+ Community. The event saw 951 visitors which included many children, young people and their families.

- 5.10 The Team explored opportunities to gather views through digital sources. This was not possible with the existing configuration of Hwb, however other ways are being explored.
- 5.11 A Bright Ideas Campaign, an intergenerational campaign to look at the development of community spaces within the city centre, was launched in January 2024. This campaign was shared with schools to promote, alongside other services that work with children and young people.

6. Learner Voice in Schools' Quality Assurance and Monitoring

- 6.1 The Education Directorate's School Improvement Team continue to speak to learners during 'listening to learner' activities as part of schools' quality assurance and monitoring.
- 6.2 Of the reports published to March 2024 for schools inspected from April 2023, seven primary schools and three secondary school had references to pupil voice in their Estyn reports. Nearly all reports provide examples of the positive impact of including learner voice. Examples include:
- Parkland Primary 'Most pupils, including those with ALN, take on leadership roles with enthusiasm via involvement in the extensive range of pupil voice groups across the school. Through these responsibilities they are beginning to influence the work of the school. For example, the Digital Heroes help improve pupils' awareness of cyber bullying.'
 - YGG Y Login Fach 'The pupil's voice is prominent in the school's day to day life. For example, pupils contribute ideas to their learning and it was their idea to place a 'quiet time bench' on the playground to promote their well-being.'
 - YGG Tirdeunaw 'Most pupils are proud that their voice is valued and respected, for example when expressing an opinion through the councils, the 'bocs beco' worry box and the 'inspiration week'.
 - Cefn Hengoed 'Staff use pupil voice as an important element in evaluating pastoral and academic provision. The school council has its own development priorities, which are part of the school's planning for improvement.
 - Y G Gwyr 'Pupils benefit from a range of valuable opportunities to undertake leadership roles through the school council and the various working groups. These working groups work diligently and raise others' awareness of important issues such as the dangers of vaping, women's rights and the importance of raising money for local and national charities.'
 - Pontarddulais Comprehensive 'While senior leaders use the views of pupils to inform their self-evaluation well at a whole-school level, the use of pupil voice in areas of learning is less well-established.'

7. Education Directorate

- 7.1 Following a survey for post-16 learners, the findings have been used to inform the development of future provision in Swansea, within the available

qualifications offer. The post-16 strategy is making good progress against its aims.

- 7.2 The Education Directorate is currently developing a number of workstreams linked to the vision of anti-racist Wales 2030 which will be formulated into an action plan. The voice of those with lived experience is central to current training opportunities for Education Directorate and school staff and will inform workstreams and developments moving forwards.
- 7.3 As part of the recommissioning of the schools counselling service, a series of learner workshops were held to understand views around emotional health and wellbeing. All key stages were represented, and their needs will form the foundation of the procurement framework. Within the resource available, it is hoped a model that captures learners' expectations will be delivered.
- 7.4 In the past few months the Directorate has prepared its draft Accessibility Strategy which is currently out for consultation. As part of the drafting process, disabled learners shared their views via completion of a Microsoft Word or Microsoft Forms questionnaire, either independently or with support, eg from an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) to ensure that the draft strategy reflected what was important to them. They will be further engaged during the consultation period prior to the approval of a final Strategy.
- 7.5 In June 2023, Swansea Council partnered with Swansea MAD to access a "Democracy Grant" from Welsh Government Democratic Engagement Fund, which will support school and community sessions continuing the work of how to register and how to vote but also exploring the need for new Voter ID. Sessions will be done through creative means, for example DJing, Virtual Reality and Stop Motion.

8. Future workstreams for learner voice / next steps

- 8.1 Continue the work of the 'A Whole School Approach – Mechanisms for Hearing the Voice of Children and Young People' working group, led by the Partnership & Involvement Team. This group has representatives from all Directorates to improve opportunities to listen to children and young people with a more joined up approach between services.
- 8.2 Further develop working in partnership with the Partnership & Involvement Team on opportunities to hear the voices of children and young people, including those who are marginalised, those with protected characteristics and those with quiet voices.
- 8.3 The School Improvement Team will continue to listen to learners as part of schools' quality assurance and monitoring.
- 8.4 Undertake audits of all school councils in Swansea.
- 8.5 Development of further opportunities using digital mechanisms.

9. Legal implications

9.1 There are no legal implications within this report.

10. Finance Implications

10.1 There are no financial implications within this report.

11. Equality and Engagement Implications

11.1 The report is for information and not for decision.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None.

Agenda Item 8



Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Scrutiny Performance Panel – 18 April 2024

Update on Education Other than at School (EOTAS) provision in Swansea

Purpose	To update the Scrutiny Panel on EOTAS provision in Swansea
Content	The report sets out progress since April 2023 in relation to issues considered in the previous report to Scrutiny Performance Panel
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the information provided and give views
Lead Councillor	Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Education Improvement Learning and Skills
Lead Officer	Helen Morgan Rees, Director of Education
Report Author	Kate Phillips, Head of Vulnerable Learners Service

1. Background

- 1.1 As reported to Education Scrutiny Performance Panel in April 2023, the needs of learners in Swansea have changed since 2016 when the current model of Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) was agreed.
- 1.2 Since the last update to Scrutiny Panel a number of developments have taken place to address the changing needs of learners. In June 2023 Swansea Cabinet considered a report requesting permission to review the current model of EOTAS provision in order to evolve provision for EOTAS in Swansea.
- 1.3 Cabinet approved a recommendation from this report which was to undertake a period of consultation with the PRU Management Committee and wider stakeholders in order to review the current operating model and reorganise the PRU internally.
- 1.4 This consultation and engagement period was undertaken with stakeholders and resulted in the development of a new, proposed model for service delivery. This proposed model was shared via a further report to Cabinet in January

2024 and permission was then granted to take forward the new model of service delivery.

- 1.5 The Head of Vulnerable Learners Service is currently undertaking the operational changes required to begin to implement the new model from 1st September 2024.
- 1.6 This report will update Scrutiny Panel on the proposed changes to the delivery model as outlined in both the June 23 and January 24 reports and the operational steps that have been undertaken to date, to complete the actions required.

2. Consultation and Engagement Period

- 2.1 Following agreement from Cabinet in June 2023 to undertake the consultation exercise the following stakeholders were identified:
 - pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Management Committee
 - staff at PRU
 - learners attending PRU and those in receipt of other EOTAS services
- 2.2 The consultation activity took place over a 12-week period which started following Cabinet's agreement on 15 June and ended on 20 October 2023. This allowed for the school summer break to be excluded from the consultation period.
- 2.3 The consultation activity included consultation with the PRU Management Committee. Two focus groups were formed. One with a leadership focus and the other with a practitioner focus.
- 2.4 Eight principles were shared with the focus groups which outlined what needed to be achieved. These principles are as follows:
 1. The model has to be one that maximises the current resource available across the Vulnerable Learners Service to meet the needs of all learners requiring EOTAS provision and identifies the PRU's role within that.
 2. The model has to be one that will achieve better outcomes for all EOTAS learners across Swansea Council, not just those attending the PRU.
 3. The model does not expect the PRU to provide all of the above however, the role of the PRU needs to be identified in the continuum of support and may need to contribute resource (physical, human, financial) to boost other EOTAS providers (home tuition, Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team and Pupil Support Team) with the aim of ensuring access to resources is as equitable as possible for EOTAS learners.
 4. Equally, there may be opportunities for other teams in the Vulnerable Learners Service to work differently with the PRU to support learners who are dual registered at PRU better.
 5. Achieving the above should in turn lead to the PRU functioning more as intended, namely, reintegration model with earlier intervention.
 6. The model needs to work towards addressing the high level of violence and aggression reported by staff at the PRU. It also needs to provide

opportunities to improve attendance, reduce exclusions and to ensure that those learners who are on Pastoral Support Plans receive a package of support which increases their time in education (not necessarily increasing time in Maes Derw but offering something alternative).

7. We need to maximise what works well and address challenges to make improvements where needed.
 8. It is expected that all areas of the Vulnerable Learners Service will need to contribute and collaborate to achieve the above. There is no additional funding / resource but there is an opportunity to use funding / resource differently.
-
- 2.5 The groups were invited to propose suggestions to make changes and adaptations to the current model in line with the 8 principles and the feedback was collated.
 - 2.6 The consultation process also included staff engagement.
 - 2.7 Staff were invited to complete a questionnaire and provide their views and suggestions. In total 36 members of staff completed the questionnaire which was open to all staff including teachers, teaching assistants, leadership team and associate staff. The questionnaire had around a 50% response rate which was pleasing.
 - 2.8 The responses were honest, helpful and constructive. Collectively, survey responses provided some important input into revising the current operational model. Responses were analysed and a summary of the key themes is included below.
 - 2.9 It was considered critical to consult with children and young people too.
 - 2.10 Staff at the PRU supported children and young people to complete a questionnaire which asked for their views on the current provision. 19 responses were provided which was around a 22% response rate.
 - 2.11 In addition to this, Child and Family Services officers were able to speak to children and young people during via their attendance at youth clubs or other community activities.
 - 2.12 The School Support Team also worked with nine children and young people on the home tuition case load who were in receipt of EOTAS services but not able to access the PRU for a variety of reasons. This input was important as part of the review is about widening access to EOTAS services.
 - 2.13 The findings of the consultation exercise were grouped into themes with feedback from across all groups included within each theme. The themes considered what worked well, what doesn't work, and suggestions for improvement. They were also used to develop the new model. These findings and the proposed new model were shared in the report to Swansea Cabinet in January 24.

3. Further considerations

- 3.1 Alongside the consultation activity, consideration was also given to data held by the local authority in relation to current, emerging need and future predictions. A summary of this data can be found in the report to Cabinet January 24.
- 3.2 Furthermore Swansea Council corporate plans and commitments were considered to ensure any proposals was aligned accordingly.
- 3.3 The Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy is a key document which outlined the priorities and goals for the Vulnerable Learners Service over the next five years. The proposed model is designed to align to this strategy.
- 3.4 It is also recognised that Swansea Council have made significant investment in EOTAS services including investment in the Maes Derw building. The proposed model allows greater and more flexible use of this resource to ensure it reaches the maximum number of learners.
- 3.5 Legislative obligations were also considered including the Wellbeing of Future Generations, UNCRC and ALNET 2018. There are legal obligations on Swansea Council to meet the needs of our most vulnerable learners and this proposed model is designed to align with these obligations.
- 3.6 As part of the consultation activity dialogue took place with an external provider on our current EOTAS framework to ensure any future proposed model was operationally deliverable.

4. Proposed model

- 4.1 The proposed model has been developed using all of the information gathered during the consultation period as detailed above.
- 4.2 In addition, it has considered ways to address the challenges outlined in the June 2023 Cabinet Report and has used the eight principles outlined earlier in this report.
- 4.3 The proposed model is detailed in Appendix A.
- 4.4 The key changes are as follows:
 - The existing primary phase and halfway house merge to form a single PRU, operating on a reintegration model for learners in primary and lower secondary (up to Y8).
 - The provision for learners with Social and Emotional Mental Health needs remains but operates on a more flexible, bespoke, intervention model allowing for earlier and more flexible bespoke package to be developed for learners some of which will be offered on an outreach basis.
 - The provisions for secondary learners will be merged to one provision catering for Y8/9 upwards and operate on a flexible, bespoke,

intervention basis. There will be full time places available but there will also be bespoke, multi-agency outreach packages too.

- The options available to the EOTAS panel will be expanded and schools will be encouraged to refer earlier for preventative interventions to avoid escalation to longer term or full-time placements. Registration at Maes Derw will not necessarily be needed to access preventative interventions.
- A special school 'spoke' provision will be established in the Maes Derw building to cater for a small number of learners with a long-term additional learning need who require specialist teaching but access to the resources of a PRU.

4.5 The new model was agreed by Cabinet in January 24 and the Head of Vulnerable Learners Service is currently reviewing the staffing structure to ensure it is operationally deliverable.

4.6 The PRU Management Committee is fully appraised and has been involved and updated at every stage.

5. Timeline

5.1 Following consultation, it is envisaged that the final staffing structure would be in place by April 2024 with implementation proposed for September 2024.

5.2 However, there will be learners mid-way through a course of study and there is no intention to disrupt this. Current learners will continue as they are while the new model is phased in. This is in line with the learner centred, bespoke approach advocated.

6. Legal implications

6.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

7. Finance Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

8. Equality & Engagement Implications

8.1 The report is for information and not for decision.

Background papers:

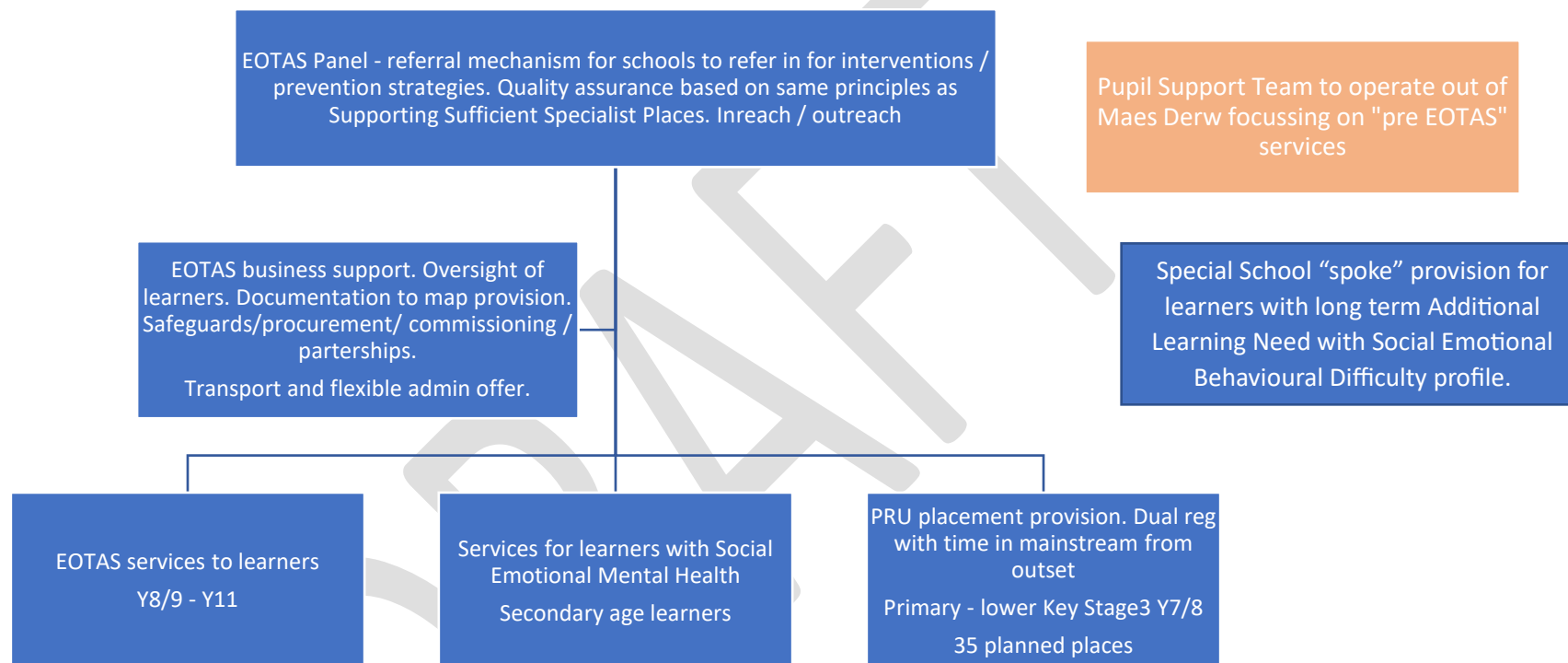
[Cabinet Report June 2023](#)

[Cabinet Report January 2024](#)

Appendices: Appendix A

Proposed model for EOTAS Services.

A suite of provision operating out of Maes Derw building:



Appendix A

EOTAS services offer to include:

IDP to outline provision – school based outlining Additional Learning Provision

School registration and pastoral support (and other provision linked to interests and engagement)

Outdoor learning offer / Activity Centres.

External providers (LEAP, Down to Earth). Contract centrally and not requiring Maes Derw registration

Gower College. Young apprentices. Contract centrally and not requiring Maes Derw registration

Youth Justice Service

Support worker offer

Maes Derw on site quals – SWEET, BTEC, GCSE

School on site quals – GCSEs / BTEC

Duke of Edinburgh

Work experience

Outreach tuition (home tuition)

Surfability

Bikeability

Princes Trust

Early Help Hubs (understanding and managing behaviour, emotional health and wellbeing and for parents/carers)

And many other options to be developed

Agenda Item 9



PARTNERIAETH



GWEITHIO MEWN PARTNERIAETH I SICRHAU RHAGORIAETH I BAWB
PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

To:
Cllr Glynog Davies
Chair of Partneriath Joint Committee

Please ask for: **Scrutiny**
Scrutiny Office Line: **01792 637732**
e-mail: scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
Date: **25 March 2024**

Dear Councillor Davies

Partneriath Scrutiny Councillor Group – 26 February 2024

The Scrutiny Councillor Group would like to thank Mary Francis Jones (NPEP Lead from Heol Goffa Special School in Llanelli) and officers representing Partneriaeth, Ian Altman (Lead Officer), Helen Morgan Rees (Lead Director), Jenna Gravelle (Lead Adviser) for attending our meeting, for presenting the information we requested and answering our questions. I am writing to you to reflect on our views from the meeting.

The Councillor Group agreed as part of their work programme to look at the performance of each of the Partneriaeth priorities, we therefore welcomed the update report on Priority 3: Support schools and educational settings to develop a range of research and enquiry skills as a key part of their own professional learning.

The Lead Adviser Jenna Gravelle outlined the purpose of Priority 3, her role and the work being undertaken in relation to this. We heard the aim of the priority is to enable schools and settings across the region to use enquiry to establish and maintain a rhythm of learning, innovation and change. We were told that this will be achieved by supporting the growth of networks of schools to develop a range of enquiry skills by leading enquiries in their own settings, promoting collaboration across our schools to explore and develop approaches to digital learning design and also by driving a system whereby schools are willing to take risks, experiment and innovate their practice to raise standards.

The National Professional Inquiry Project (NPEP) Lead at Ysgol Heol Goffa Special School in Llanelli give us a school perspective on the impact of the work they have been doing at Heol Goffa School in relation to this priority. She told us about, for example, the enquiry cycles including the last three years and how the NPEP has developed the enquiry process including what has worked, what could be better and the resulting actions for the future, also the collaborative approach with Partneriaeth

We were pleased to hear about the successes with this project and we asked about what the main challenges were, recognising that others can learn from that experience. The NPEP Lead said the main challenging areas were/are time allocation, being able to be released from the classroom and ensuring staff are covered. The other challenging factor was ensuring staff involvement, making all staff aware and involved so all staff in school can appreciate what you are doing. The Councillor Group were

impressed with the work happening at the school and thanked the NPEP Lead for her valuable input into the meeting.

The Partneriaeth Lead Officer and the Lead Director provided us with the information with regard to the Partneriaeth financial affairs, risk management and governance arrangements as (as stipulated is completed by the Cllr Group in the Joint Agreement).

We were informed that from a financial position, Partneriaeth is on track, with the funding being spent appropriately to meet its business planning targets for the end of this financial year.

We were given an overview of the risk register as it currently stands, hearing Partneriaeth has now received the funding from the Welsh Government, so that risk has now be downgraded for this financial year. One of the potential high impact risks in the future will be the lack of clarity in terms of the functions and delivery of Partneriaeth following the recent Welsh Government Education Ministers announcement. He is proposing that funding no longer goes to regional bodies but that it goes directly to local authorities. This puts the role of regional bodies again in flux. We heard that this is hugely significant for Partneriaeth and will need to be reflected in the risk register moving forward.

We were concerned about the ongoing instability with this for Partneriaeth staff and the risk that some staff may look to move away from their current roles to more stable positions, which could put the role of Partneriaeth ultimately in jeopardy. We feel that this is a serious risk and that clarity for staff and the organisation needs to be made as soon as possible.

We would welcome your thoughts on the contents of this letter, but on this occasion do not require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Lyndon Jones
Chair of Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group
Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 10

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel Work Programme 2023/2024

Date	Items to be discussed	Who invited
Meeting 1 15 Jun 23 4.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional Learning Needs Reform Annual Update (watching brief item) (Kate Phillips and Alison Lane) 2. New Curriculum for Wales Annual Update (watching brief item) (David Thomas) 3. Estyn Inspection – progress with recommendations (Sarah Hughes) 4. Key issues affecting education 2023/24 (Helen Morgan Rees) then discuss draft Work Programme for 2023/24 	Cabinet Member and Director Relevant officers
Meeting 2 13 Jul 23 4.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managing and Improving School Attendance including data 2. Managing and Improving School Exclusions including data (Kate Phillips and Helen Howells) 	Cabinet Member and Director
Meeting 3 14 Sep 23 4.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looked after Children, support and progress in school (Kate Phillips and Helen Howells) 2. Following up on the 10 CDC recommendations (referred from Education Cabinet Development Committee) (Sarah Hughes) 3. Feedback from Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group 	Cabinet Member and Director Convener
Meeting 4 19 Oct 23 4.00pm	Schools Session and Site Visit 1 – Gorseinon Primary School School Development Plan (Pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor 18 Oct)	
Meeting 5 23 Nov 23 4.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reducing disadvantage in Schools, including pupil development grant, roll out of free school meals, cost of the school day and school uniform (Kelly Small) 2. School Improvement Service Annual Update (David Thomas) 3. Cookery in Schools (Rhodri Jones) 	Cabinet Member and Director
Meeting 6 14 Dec 23 4.30pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual Education Performance against identified priorities (RAG) including Estyn Inspection recommendations progress update (Sarah Hughes) and Cabinet Member Q&A 2. Feedback from Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group 	Cabinet Member and Director Convener
Meeting 7 18 Jan 24 4.30pm	Introducing the New Curriculum for Wales – a meeting with a Secondary School and its Cluster Primaries – Gowerton Comprehensive School cluster. (Pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor on 17 Jan at 4.30pm)	Headteachers and Chairs of Governors
Meeting 8 12 Feb 24 3pm	Annual Council Budget as it relates to education matters	Cabinet Member and Director
Meeting 9 19 Feb 24 4.00pm	School Organisation - Amalgamation of special schools in Swansea	Cabinet Member and Director

Meeting 10 22 Feb 24 4.00pm	Schools Session 2 – Clydach Primary School School Development Plan. Confirmed (<i>Pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor 20</i>)	Headteacher and Chair of Governors
Meeting 13 Mar 24 4.00pm	Schools Session and Visit 3 – Bishopston Comprehensive School Postponed until July 2024	Headteacher and Chair of Governors
Meeting 11 18 Apr 24 4.00pm	1. Religion, Values and Ethics Education (Jennifer Harding-Richards) 2. Hearing the Voices of Children and Young People (Rhodri Jones) 3. Education Other Than At School services (EOTAS) Annual Update (Kate Phillips)	Cabinet Member and Director
Meeting 12 9 May 24 4.00pm	1. Quality in Education (QEd) / Sustainable Communities for Learning Update (Louise Herbert-Evans) 2. Swansea Skills Partnership Annual Update (David Bawden) 3. End of year review in Education Scrutiny	Cabinet Member and Director
New municipal year 2024/2025		
Meeting 1 20 Jun 24 4.30pm	1. Overview of key issues in education 2024/2025 2. Work Planning – discussing and agreeing the work programme for 2024/2025 – <i>discussion by Panel members</i>	Cabinet Member and Director
Meeting 2 11 Jul 24 4.00pm	Schools Session and Visit 1 – Bishopston Comprehensive School To discuss School Development Plan (<i>pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor tba</i>)	Headteacher and Chair of Governors

To be added when we have more information from Welsh Government: Performance in Swansea Schools – Swansea Education Directorate/Cabinet Member and Partneriaeth (Annual) - Partneriaeth Legal Agreement says 'Each Council's scrutiny committee for children's and education services will meet at least once a year to consider performance and progress in their schools such meetings to be attended by Council and PARTNERIAETH staff equipped to answer questions'.

The Panel will also receive relevant individual school Estyn reports as they are published, along with any other reports or information relevant to Education Scrutiny.

Background

Cllr Robert Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
Helen Morgan Rees, Director of Education

The Officers listed in above timetable and their roles:

Sarah Hughes (Head of Education Strategy)

Rhodri Jones (Head of Achievement and Partnership Service)

Kate Phillips (Head of Vulnerable Learners)

Alison Lane (Head of Additional Learning Needs Team)

Kelly Small (Head of Planning and Resources Team)

David Thomas (Principal School Improvement Officer)

Karin Jenkins (Head of Swansea Music)

Amanda Taylor (Head of PRU and BSU)

Jennifer Harding-Richards (Religion, Values and Ethics Adviser)

Louise Herbert-Evans (Team Manager Capital)

Lisa Collins (Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer – Vulnerable Learners)

Helen Howells (Team Manager Pupil Support – Vulnerable Learners)