



## City and County of Swansea

### Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

## Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education

**At:** Remotely via Teams  
**On:** Thursday, 21 January 2021  
**Time:** 4.00 pm  
**Convenor:** Councillor Lyndon Jones MBE

#### Membership:

Councillors: C Anderson, A M Day, M Durke, S J Gallagher, D W Helliwell, B Hopkins, L James, S M Jones, M A Langstone and L J Tyler-Lloyd  
Co-opted Members: D Anderson-Thomas and A Roberts

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#### Agenda

	Page No.
<b>1 Apologies for Absence.</b>	
<b>2 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.</b>	
<b>3 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips</b>	
<b>4 Letters and Minutes</b>	<b>1 - 8</b>
<b>5 Public Questions</b> Questions must be submitted in writing, no later than noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Questions must relate to items on the agenda.	
<b>6 Verbal update - Covid Education Recovery Plan</b> Cllr Jen Raynor Cabinet Member Education Improvement, Learning and Skills and Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education)	
<b>7 Education Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/2021</b>	<b>9</b>

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, 16 February 2021 at 2.00 pm

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Huw Evans'.

**Huw Evans**  
**Head of Democratic Services**  
**Thursday, 14 January 2021**

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**Contact: Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer**



# Agenda Item 4



**To:**  
**Councillor Jennifer Raynor**  
**Cabinet Member for Education**  
**Improvement, Learning and Skills**

**BY EMAIL**

*Please ask for:* Michelle Roberts  
*Gofynnwch am:*  
*Scrutiny Office* 01792 637256  
*Line:*  
*Llinell*  
*Uniongyrchol:*  
*e-Mail* [scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk)  
*e-Bost:*  
  
*Date* 12 January 2021  
*Dyddiad:*

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills following the meeting of the Panel on 17 December looking at the Swansea Skills Partnership and the Covid situation in Education.

Dear Cllr Raynor,

## **Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 17 December 2020**

We would like to thank you and the Interim Director of Education Helen Morgan Rees, Cllr Robert Smith and members of the Swansea Skills Partnership for attending our meeting. We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and to share the views of the Panel.

### **Swansea Skills Partnership**

We found this discussion with members of the Swansea Skills Partnership very useful, helping us to understand its role, the progress being made and the added value of having such a Partnership in Swansea.

We were pleased to hear about some of the positive outcomes from this partnership working including in particular digital learning, recognising this links closely to the City Deal project but that is has also been essential in the current Covid situation. We were also interested to hear about the focus on careers advice and guidance for learners.

We were keen to hear about the digital platform called 'My Choice' that has been developed. We were told that until now all advice and guidance for vocational learning was in different places, now with this platform, Year 11's are able to access it all in one place. We recognise that it is also beneficial for schools when looking to gain impartial

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advice and guidance. We were glad to hear that pupils can access all the common applications forms for 6<sup>th</sup> Form, Colleges and work based learning too as well as learners being able see what is happening in Swansea, possible future opportunities and links to other websites. We welcomed the news that Welsh Government are looking at the Platform to see how it can be shared as good practice for others to use.

We were told digital learning and capacity has changed completely over the past 9 months. We emphasised the importance of young people being able to find out what digital careers are out there and will be available in the future especially with the new arena and City Deal. We felt it was important that young people in Swansea are skilled enough to get the top jobs as well as other available roles as opportunities arise from these projects. We also heard about the importance of continuing professional development for teachers, colleges and universities in how lessons are taught and the pedagogy around incorporating devices and technology into learning.

The Panel was pleased to hear that the Partnership was exactly what the Education Policy Development Committee (PDC) had had in mind when it made its recommendation to Cabinet in 2018. The Panel agreed with the Chair of the Policy Development Committee when he said a vocational element should form part of every child's educational experience. He said he was happy with what the partnership has delivered but that it will now needs to be a dynamic, able to change and evolve as required, including developing the new curriculum linked to general work based skills.

The Panel felt it was vital to include the business community on the Partnership and would like to see this progressed, which was something originally raised by the PDC. You told us that the strength of the partnership is having organisations on it that have their fingers on the pulse as far as the business community is concerned like for example colleges who have food links with employers. Also that there needs to be a broader perception of what employment in the future is about, for example employers need applicants to be flexible, with good transferable skills and able to market themselves.

The work of the Partnership is evolving and it will be important to keep up momentum. We heard that Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) has been identified as an item that would benefit from a focus from the Partnership. The example of the good work on NEET at Pentrehafod Comprehensive School was raised, which we felt shows what can be achieved by one school in partnership, so with all partners involved a lot more can be achieved.

We were pleased to hear about the commitment, knowledge and experience that individual members of the Partnership are bringing to the table, working together, to improve the learning and opportunities of young people in Swansea.

We asked about whether there was any duplication of effort with other Partnerships and were informed that there are other partnerships where there is some overlap but this is not duplication and is beneficial to Swansea, like for example work around the new curriculum and a developing a good quality learning offer. There has been some benefit from regional programmes afforded by the region.

We heard that the Partnership has worked well having representation from outside of Swansea like Neath Port Talbot Colleges and that it is positive to be able to work across borders and with a wide range of partners to the benefit of our learners. We were told for the Partnership to now improve and progress further they will now need to revisit the purpose, priorities and original intentions moving forward and that would include more fresh thinking including involvement from the business community.

We were pleased to hear about the positive impact the Partnership is having especially in relation to digital learning and the careers platform My Choice. The Panel look forward to seeing how the Partnership develops in the future by building on these good early foundations. We would emphasise the importance of engaging the local business community and the need to look to include them in the partnership moving forward. We agreed that it would be highly beneficial to see a focus on NEET which will be a vital area that can be influenced by all partners. We would like to thank all those who attended the meeting which has enabled us to see a clearer route map for the future of the Partnership.

### **Covid and our Education Services**

We were told in December there was a ministerial directive for schools to move to remote learning and that attendance levels in schools had already plummeted to 44% prior to that directive. We heard that 92 out of the 94 schools in Swansea had been affected by positive cases with the highest incident school having 69 cases, with a number of schools having above 25 cases. There has been 938 positive cases so far in schools plus more children out of school self-isolating. We recognise the disruption has therefore been significant. We would again like to thank the Education Department and Schools for the amazing job they are doing at this very difficult time.

### **Your Response**

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised but would ask for a response to the following point by 2 February

1. Can you tell us how you plan to select and include representatives from the business community as an integral part of the Partnership and what the timescale for this might be?

Yours sincerely

### **COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES**

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

[Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk)



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Teams

Thursday, 17 December 2020 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

C Anderson  
S J Gallagher  
L James

**Councillor(s)**

A M Day  
D W Helliwell  
S M Jones

**Councillor(s)**

M Durke  
B Hopkins  
M A Langstone

**Co-opted Member(s)**

D Anderson-Thomas

**Co-opted Member(s)**

**Co-opted Member(s)**

**Other Attendees**

J A Raynor  
R V Smith  
N Brazil  
Helen Burgum  
Beth Titley

Cabinet Member Education Improvement, Learning, Skills  
Chair of the Education Policy Development Committee  
Gower College  
Bishop Gore Comprehensive School  
Careers Wales

**Officers**

Helen Morgan Rees  
Chris Rees  
David Bawden  
Michelle Roberts

Interim Director Education  
Leader of Learning – Digital Competence  
14-19 Education Officer  
Scrutiny Officer

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): Cllr L Tyler Lloyd  
Co-opted Member(s): A Roberts

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**1 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

Disclosures of interest were received from Cllrs Mike Day, Mike Durke, Myles Langstone and Susan Jones.

**2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

None

**3 Letters and Minutes**

Letter and Minutes were received by the Panel.

#### 4 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

#### 5 Swansea Skills Partnership

Helen Morgan Rees, Director of Education gave a presentation on the current position and priorities of the Swansea Skills Partnership (also known as PSA), including:

- That it began from a recommendation to Cabinet June 2018 from work carried out by the Education Policy Development Committee. With the aim of meeting the opportunities provided by Swansea Bay City Deal and to ensure robust local arrangement for partnership to feed into regional partnerships.
- The purpose of the PSA is to
  - promote and develop Swansea as a 'Learning City' and to be the best in the UK
  - promote and develop Swansea as a 'Learning City' – aligning providers with a shared vision and values
  - develop a local action plan to promote and develop Swansea as a 'Learning City' to inspire children and young people
  - in partnership develop a road map for skills or the learning pathway to reinforce the messages about agreement and collaboration at all levels in education
  - identify and further develop cohesive opportunities for Swansea learners
  - monitor and evaluate progress against the local action plan and ensuring appropriate linkage to the RLSP action plan
  - further develop careers advice including apprenticeships and work-based learning and expand the focus to include key stage 3 and primary pupils
  - further develop initial teacher training and continuous professional development opportunities for school based staff
  - ensure apprenticeships and work-based learning align to future skills needs
- It now needs to evolve including membership, momentum, its key focus areas, Covid opportunities. Further work is needed to develop further.
- Some key outcomes of the PSA so far include: Building digital capacity, advice and guidance for careers, next steps in learning and future occupations and raising awareness of the Swansea Bay City Deal.

The Panel then discussed Partnership with a cross section of its membership, hearing.

- It has been successful to drill down and focus on certain areas including for example on digital capacity and good quality careers advice.
- Partnership had lost momentum a bit and there has been degrees of traction.
- Panel pleased to hear about the positive outcomes from this partnership working including:
  - Digital learning was an obvious choice and links closely to the City Deal project and has also been useful in the current Covid situation.

- Focusing on careers advice and guidance for learnings to help them make the right choices.
- The Panel were keen to hear about the Platform called 'My Choice' has been developed and it unique to Swansea area. The Panel heard that until now advice and guidance for vocational learning was not in one place for Year 11's to go and where opportunities are. A platform was therefore developed to do this. Schools can gain impartial advice and guidance, it also have common applications forms for 6<sup>th</sup> Form, Colleges and work based learning. Learners can also see what is happening in Swansea, possible future opportunities and gives links to other websites. Welsh Government are looking at the Platform to see how it can be shared as good practice for others to use.
- The Panel heard that digital learning and capacity has changed completely over the past 9 months and is now a must. It is important for young people to know what digital careers are and will be available especially with the new arena and potential job opportunities. Discussion raised the City Deal and how it is important that young people in Swansea are skilled enough to get the top jobs as well as other available roles. The Panel felt it was important to include the business community on the Partnership and would like to see this progressed.
- The Panel were also told about the continued importance of professional development for Teachers, colleges and universities in how lessons are taught using devices and technology, getting the right Pedagogy.
- Panel was pleased to hear that the PSA was exactly what the Education Policy Development Committee had in mind when it made its recommendation to Cabinet in 2018. Pleased to see curriculum is and will be more aligned to future skills needs locally and nationally. The Panel agreed with the Chair of the Policy Development Committee when he said a vocational element should form part of every child's educational experience. He was happy with what the partnership can deliver believing it needs to be a dynamic and able to change as things develop including with developing the new curriculum and general work based skills.
- The Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills told the Panel that the strength of the partnerships is having organisations on it that have their fingers on the pulse as far as the business community is concerned like for example colleges who have food links with employers. Also that their needs to be a broader perception of what employment in the future is about, for example employers need to be flexible, with good transferable skills and able to market themselves.
- It is time to start to think about what is next for the partnership. Need to keep momentum and Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) has been identified as it does involve a number of partners. The example of the good work on NEETs at Pentrehafod Comprehensive School was raised. This shows what can be achieved and with all partners involved a lot more can be achieved.
- Councillors were pleased to hear about the commitment, knowledge and experience that individual members of the Partnership are bringing to the table and working together to improve the learning and opportunities of young people in Swansea.
- There are a number of different partnerships out there, is there any duplication of activity was asked? The Panel heard that there are other partnerships and there is some overlap but this is not duplication and is beneficial to Swansea like for



- example work around the new curriculum and a good quality learning offer and there has been some benefit from regional programmes afforded by the region.
- The Panel asked how lessons are learnt within the Partnership so it can improve. The Panel heard that the Partnership use information locally to inform planning locally and has demonstrated that projects so far.
  - Partnership has worked well having representative from outside of Swansea like Neath Port Talbot, is positive to be able to work across borders and with a wide range of partners to the benefit of our learners.
  - The Panel were told that to improve and progress further they will now need to:
    - Revisit the purpose and original intentions and include more fresh thinking including involvement from the business community.
    - Refresh priorities moving forward.
    - Build on current momentum (critical not to lose momentum now especially moving out into the post Covid world)
    - Focus on a couple of key sub groups one of which should be NEETs.

The Panel were pleased to hear about the positive impact the partnerships is having especially in relation to digital learning and careers platform. The Panel look forward to seeing how the Partnership develops in the future by building on these good early foundations. The Panel would like to emphasise the need to engage the local business community and look to include it on the partnership moving forward (and will ask for further information on this aspect). Positive to see sub group to look at NEETs which is a vital area that can be influenced by all partners moving forward. Agreeing the next steps must include a focus on challenges faced by vulnerable learners. Councillors thanked all those who attended the meeting saying the Panel can now see a route map for the future of the Partnership.

## **6 Verbal update - Covid Education Recovery Plan**

The Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills and the Director of Education outlined the current position in relation to Covid and its impacts on Education.

- In December there was a ministerial directive to go to remote learning which felt like the right thing to do. But more difficult for primary schools to do remote learning as pupils less able to do self-directed learning.
- Attendance level had plummeted to 44% prior to directive. The best part of term the attendance above 80%
- 92 out of the 94 schools in Swansea had been effected by positive cases. The highest incident school had 69 cases, with a number of schools having above 25 cases.
- There has been so far 938 positive cases in schools and then more children of school self-isolating.
- The disruption has been significant.
- The Panel were told that not all pupils will start back on the 4 Jan and it will be a mixed bag depending on the situation at the time. The ability of schools to operate safely will determine whether they go back to face to face teaching at start of term. Start on both safety and staffing.

- Important to learn from those schools who have had high positive rates but it seems that community transmission rates are key. Considering things like zoning schools differently etc.
- Working in partnership with Public Health Wales to identify any patterns around schools which is helpful in learning and understanding this.
- Lateral flow testing proposed to prevent self-isolating for contacts in schools. Practicalities and logistics make this difficult to implement and needs to be looked into more.

## **7 Education Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/2021**

Due to the current pressure on the Education Department, the Panel have agreed to postpone all items scheduled in January and February apart from receiving a verbal education Covid update and the Annual Budget as it relates to Education. This will be reviewed in early March.

## **8 For Information - Annual Audit of Schools**

The Annual Audit of School Report was noted.

The meeting ended at 5.27 pm

**Chair**

## Education Scrutiny Performance Panel DRAFT Work Programme 2020/2021

All meetings will be held remotely using Teams for foreseeable future

Date	Items to be discussed	Who
<b>Meeting 1</b> 22 Oct 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on implications and the recovery plan resulting from the impact of Covid-19 in Education and Schools (<i>cont'd from meeting in July</i>)</li> <li>Update on the key issues affecting Education more widely</li> <li>Planning the rest of the Council year in Education Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme (for discussion by Panel)</li> </ol>	Cllr J Raynor H Morgan Rees  Panel
<b>Meeting 2</b> 19 Nov 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>School 1 – Waun Wen Primary School</b> (<i>part of panels watching brief on Wellbeing in Schools and was on work programme for March 2020</i>). How the school meets the needs of their most vulnerable pupils, the challenges they face and what they do to meet/mitigate those challenges including through the Covid-19 crisis.</li> <li><b>Elective Home Education</b></li> </ol>	Headteacher Ms C Nicklin  Cllr J Raynor H Morgan Rees Kate Phillips
<b>Meeting 3</b> 17 Dec 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swansea Skills Partnership</li> <li>Update – Education and Schools recovery from Covid</li> <li>Annual Audit of Schools (<i>for information item</i>)</li> </ol>	Members of Partnership Cllr J Raynor H Morgan Rees
<b>Meeting 4</b> 21 Jan 2021	Update – Education and Schools recovery from Covid	Cllr J Raynor H Morgan Rees
<b>Meeting 5</b> 16 Feb 2021 2.00pm	Annual Budget as it relates to Educations matters (using Cabinet budget papers) <i>Annual item</i>	Cllr J Raynor H Morgan Rees
<b>Meeting 6</b> 18 Mar 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update – Education and Schools recovery from Covid</li> <li>PDG summary of spend to support vulnerable pupils (<i>Annual item</i>)</li> </ol>	Cllr J Raynor H Morgan Rees
<b>Meeting 7</b> 22 Apr 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional Learning Needs Reform and implementation (<i>watching brief item</i>)</li> <li>New Curriculum update including progress with implementation (<i>watching brief item</i>)</li> <li>The New Estyn Regime and summary of outcomes of thematic reviews</li> </ol>	Cllr J Raynor H Morgan Rees
<b>Meeting 9</b> 13 May 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education Other Than At Schools Update (EOTAS), including progress with new provision (meeting to be added for May 2021)</li> <li>Update 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme</li> </ol>	Headteacher PRU Cllr J Raynor H Morgan Rees

To be rescheduled: **Penyrheol Comprehensive School** (Discuss school performance), **Morrison Secondary School** (Discuss school improvement following Estyn Monitoring) and Behaviour Strategy and how associated delegated spend to schools has been used.