



City and County of Swansea

**Minutes of the Education & Skills Policy
Development Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday, 10 March 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor R V Smith (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J P Curtice
M A Langstone
D W W Thomas

Councillor(s)

B Hopkins
M B Lewis

Councillor(s)

L R Jones
S Pritchard

Also Present:

Councillor J A Raynor - Cabinet Member for Education, Learning & Skills

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden
Helen Morgan-Rees
Stephen Holland

Democratic Services Officer
Director of Education
Senior Solicitor

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): O G James

16 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

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

17 Minutes.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 be approved and signed as correct record.

18 Discussion and Review of Evidence/Information Submitted.

Helen Morgan-Rees gave a powerpoint presentation covering the issues and topics raised and discussed by the Committee during its deliberations on the impact of Covid, including and discussed were the following area:

- 5 main emerging issues both locally and nationally - insecure foundations for learning, learners lack of progression could disadvantage them for life, demands on profession, certain learners are more challenged and system pressure;
- Insecure foundations for learning – issues around mental health and resilience of young people, effect of home learning and not being in school, lack of

confidence, motivation and self-efficacy, relationships, physical health & enabling skills;

- Learners lack of progression could disadvantage them for life - barriers to development, key enabling skills and knowledge, gaps in learning, quality of learning, progression, breadth/reduction in curriculum for home learning, preparation for exams & loss of opportunities;
- Demands on profession – huge adaptation for teachers and teaching assistants, re-planning and prioritising learning, morale and well-being, Covid related expectations, sum of duties expectations guidance and support, operational pressures around return to school, increased administrative pressures, education reform & recruitment and finances;
- Certain learners are more challenged & system pressure - vulnerable learners, early years, examination year groups, impact on learners in Welsh medium education especially those from English speaking families, learners from families where English is an additional language, Y6/Y7 transition & localised disadvantages;
- System pressure - ability to adapt, digital technology, relationships, professional capacity, scale of change & nature of education;
- Risks – future well-being crisis, inequality issues, prolonged economic impact of pandemic going forward;
- Addressing issues – recovery plan in place, national issues to be taken into account & focus on well-being.

Members of the committee discussed the issues and matters raised above and both made comments relating to them and asked a series questions of the Officer who responded accordingly.

Councillor J A Raynor, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning & Skills indicated that recent communications from the WLGA indicated that recovery from the pandemic is affecting pupils across Wales, and could take several years to recover and catch up.

The Chair indicated that the recovery plan in place along with the issues highlighted and discussed at the meeting could form the basis of a report to cabinet from the committee.

He asked that the Director draft a report and circulate it for comments prior to it being presented to a future meeting of the committee.

19 Workplan 2020/2021.

The Chair indicated that in order to give the Director an opportunity to draft and circulate the report referred to above, he proposed that the April meeting be cancelled and a special meeting be arranged on Wednesday 12 May.

The committee agreed and supported the proposal.

The meeting ended at 4.58 pm

Chair