



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the Education & Skills Policy Development Committee

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday, 21 July 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor M Durke (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

B Hopkins
M B Lewis

Councillor(s)

L R Jones
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)

H Lawson

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden
Helen Morgan-Rees
Stephen Holland

Democratic Services Officer
Director of Education
Senior Solicitor

Also Present:

Professor Christopher Chapman – Glasgow University

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): J P Curtice, M A Langstone and D W W Thomas

7 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.

8 Minutes.

Resolved that the minutes of the Education & Skills Policy Development Committee held on 16 June 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

9 Professor Christopher Chapman PhD MA BSc (Hons) FAcSS FRSA (Glasgow University).

The Chair welcomed Professor Chapman to the meeting and thanked him for his attendance.

Professor Chapman then gave Members information relating to his current position in Glasgow University, and his background in the education profession over the years.

He outlined the two main programmes he has been involved in since moving to Scotland in 2013, the first being “The Network for Social and Educational Equity”

[Network for Social and Educational Equity](#) which has developed through partnerships between the university, local authorities and various other bodies to form the West of Scotland Regional Improvement Partnership, which now covers 8 local authorities and around 35% of the children in Scotland.

The second project is “Children’s Neighbourhoods Scotland” [Children’s Neighbourhoods Scotland](#) which is a more place based and holistic approach to tackling child poverty and developing the voice of young people.

The first project tends to be more school focused with the second looking more at connectivity and place based approaches, both are underpinned by design based research.

He referred to a recently published book “*Educational Equity: Pathways to Success*” which he had co-edited with Mel Ainscow who had previously worked in Wales, the book documents the programme of work undertaken since 2013.

He indicated that the starting point for a lot of the work, is that schools cannot tackle poverty and create an educational system that is fair and supports children to achieve in isolation. The approach starts at a classroom level but takes in the wider school approach also, as well as factoring in the influence of wider society and communities.

The ways in which schools can share good practice and ideas, move knowledge through a network and collaborative approach was outlined.

The aim is for all the partners to work together and co-operate using the evidence gathered and following analysis, to develop new approaches and support the development of a more equitable education system. By working together, using co-production and taking into account the evidence, expertise and experience of the various partners helps to develop new ideas and approaches.

He outlined that cycles of testing and refinement of the processes and practices put in place, with changes and models of delivery being monitored and then updated if needed. A pragmatic approach to change is taken.

The aim to get the children in the classroom engaged and motivated in learning is a key element of any success going forward, as without the young people being onboard and engaged with their teacher’s and the learning process invariably leads to future problems.

The key principles behind the main aim to reduce the gaps in achievement of the social equality project is based on a collaborative approach both at a school and network/cluster level, clusters have a dedicated member of staff assigned to them to give advice and support, and assist with good practice sharing etc. The member of staff would ordinarily visit schools twice a term and maintains regular communication via e mail/phone to maintain the spiral and cycle of evidence collecting.

The scheme operates on a tight/loose basis, with the principles being tightly maintained but the day to day operation and implementation by the individual schools being more loosely controlled.

The need to invest and give opportunities to teachers and staff with capacity building and the opportunity to learn and improve is usually done via three phases. The first is building trust and relationships, then embedding the ideas and finally to aiming for long term sustainability, with schools taking on the role of developing things going forward.

He then further detailed the key principles behind the neighbourhoods project is that it is a place based project across 6 sites, with a mix of urban and rural locations. The same issues and problems that affect the different communities in similar ways but in different locations are examined and the background to the scheme has come from a wide basis of schemes and ideas from projects in the USA and Northern Ireland.

The scheme is neighbourhood based and has the aim to improve outcomes for young people in poverty and seeks to empower and engage of young people at its core.

It's led by the university in partnership with other bodies and has two main approaches, the first being the active engagement and training of young people as co-researchers to get them involved and highlight the problems and issues that are affecting their communities.

A collective impact approach is taken which means there is are research based staff in each of the 6 locations collecting data and information and then local coordinators are appointed for each locality to work 'on the ground' and try to co-ordinate between the various agencies involved. These local coordinators are based in places like school, youth clubs and housing associations so they get a better knowledge and feel for the locality they are working in.

Members and Officers then asked numerous questions and made various comments relating to Professor Chapmans presentation, including topics around the private sectors involvement in projects, the role of the local coordinators, social and community issues, inter-generational problems, deprived communities, the outcomes and impact of the initiatives to date, the impact of Covid on learning and its effect on learning going forward.

Professor Chapman responded to these and answered the various queries and comments accordingly.

The Chair and Members thanked Professor Chapman again for his overview presentation and contribution to the committee.

Members then discussed the issues and topics raised in the presentation.

Helen Morgan-Rees outlined that Swansea Council does have local area coordinators (LACs) but their role doesn't cover educational matters and is more adult community support based.

She referred to and detailed the good work already ongoing in Swansea by school improvement advisers in sharing good practice between schools. She also referred to the importance of the pupil development grant to schools and its pivotal role in trying to improve education for young people in disadvantaged areas. She also outlined the previous and ongoing work undertaken with Durham University in promoting evidence based education approaches in schools.

10 Workplan 2021/2022.

The Chair and Members further to the presentation and discussion undertaken in the previous item then debated the potential topic areas and information they would like to receive going forward at future meetings in order to build their knowledge towards the possible development of community mentors/champions going forward.

Resolved that

- 1) the meeting in September receive targeted data and indicators from Education's data officer relating to the impact and effect of Covid based around the increase in free school meal numbers and indicators around vulnerability of pupils.
- 2) Pentrehafod and Dylan Thomas comprehensive schools be invited to attend meetings in the autumn to give information and background on their networks, clusters, and partnerships within the community to support the concept of community learning champions/ mentors.

The meeting ended at 5.12 pm

Chair