



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the Education & Skills Policy Development Committee

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday, 11 November 2020 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor R V Smith (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J P Curtice
L R Jones
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)

B Hopkins
M A Langstone
D W W Thomas

Councillor(s)

O G James
M B Lewis

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden
Helen Morgan-Rees
Stephen Holland

Democratic Services Officer
Interim Director of Education
Senior Solicitor

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): F M Gordon

1 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

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

2 Minutes.

Resolved that the minutes of the Education & Skills Policy Development Committees held on 2 September and 1 October 2020 be agreed as correct records.

3 Workplan 2020/2021 Discussion.

The Chair indicated that as previously discussed by the committee at its meeting in September, the impact of Covid on the education of young people going forward needs to be examined. Blended learning options and particularly the use and availability of both IT equipment and access to the internet will be crucial issue going forward due to the likelihood of more disruption to the provision of education in the future due to the pandemic.

He indicated that the update provided in September had outlined the huge strides taken in a short period by the education department in developing and delivering learning opportunities to young people across the City during the first national lockdown.

Helen Morgan-Rees gave a brief verbal update on the two main key strands that the Department had worked towards initially in the Continuity of Learning Plan and the Safe Return to School.

The latter has been completed successfully and the task and finish group formed to oversee and monitor the issue will meet for its final meeting in early December.

The different challenges arising from Covid were outlined and the various blended/distanced/remote/synchronised ways of delivering work and lessons to pupils was outlined to the committee.

The consistency and quality of learning is a key issue as well as the need to ensure that pupils aren't excluded from learning from home by a lack of IT hardware or internet connectivity issues.

She indicated that the department is in regular contact with Welsh government and its partner organisations, and has recently received early feedback on good practice from Estyn following their survey of schools.

Examples of good practice are available and need to be shared, distributed and promoted as widely as possible.

Councillor J A Raynor, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning & Skills outlined that the department had made excellent and rapid progress in developing and delivering the blended learning service during the first lockdown which included both virtual lessons and home learning via printed materials distributed by schools.

A review of the blended learning provision going forward would be needed, as well as the need to ensure both that all young people aren't digitally excluded and have the appropriate devices to enable them to complete their workload at home, and that they have the necessary internet connection.

The need for ongoing professional development and additional training for teachers and school staff to ensure continued and quality education provision was also outlined as an area for review.

Members of the committee discussed the issues raised above and asked various questions of the Officer and Cabinet Member who responded accordingly.

The Chair suggested that the following four areas could form the basis of the committee's review of the current blended review provision in Swansea:

- access to learning opportunities;
- approaches used and best practice developed;
- professional learning;
- learner views.

Resolved that:

- 1) blended learning be agreed as a topic for examination and review by the PDC.
- 2) an update report on the current provision of blended learning be presented to the next meeting of the PDC on 9 December 2020.

The meeting ended at 4.30 pm

Chair