



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Teams

Monday, 14 February 2022 at 3.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
B Hopkins
L J Tyler-Lloyd

Councillor(s)

S J Gallagher
L James

Councillor(s)

D W Helliwell
S M Jones

Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

Robert Smith

Cabinet Member - Education Improvement, Learning & Skills

Officer(s)

Helen Morgan-Rees
Brian Roles
Michelle Roberts

Director of Education
Head of Education Planning and Resources
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A M Day and M A Langstone

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

3 Letters and Minutes

The Minutes and letters were accepted by the Panel.

4 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

5 Annual Budget Proposals - as they relate to Education matters

The Panel thanked the Cabinet Member Cllr Robert Smith, the Director Helen Morgan Rees and the Head of Education Planning and Resources Brian Roles for the comprehensive presentation and attending the panel to discuss the issues.

The following points from the discussion will be forwarded to the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel for discussion and inclusion in their letter giving feedback on scrutiny views of this year's Annual Budget proposals.

1. The Panel welcomed the increase in the budget provision for schools for the next year but noted that the funding is heavily weighted to year 1 2022/23. We share the departments concerns in relation to the clarity of funding for schools in years 2 and 3.
2. The Panel heard that individual school reserves are currently at a high level. We did recognise that this is a positive thing given the challenges coming in years 2 and 3, but we agreed that this means the schools must be encouraged to have good medium term spending plans, in order for this to been used effectively.
3. The Panel did have concerns regarding the potentially inadequate funding from Welsh Government for:
 - a. Phased roll out of Free School Meal provision to all primary pupils
 - b. The emerging implications of the Additional Learning Needs Act.
4. The Panel raised concerns about the potential change to the proxy measure that is based upon Free School Meal allocation which is the indicator used for extra funding in schools for vulnerable pupils like, for example, the allocation of the Pupil Development Grant and the School Uniform Grant. The Panel would be keen to see how this will be addressed in upcoming policy changes from Welsh Government, so vulnerable children do not lose out.
5. The Panel were concerned about the rising energy costs for schools and would like to see schools switching to more green solutions, where it is feasible.
6. The Panel welcomed the high level of delegated spend that has been maintained by Swansea Council. Hearing that this coming year will be 83% and will increase to 85% in 2024/25.

6 Work Programme 2021/2022

The Panel agreed to re-schedule the item on Asylum Seeker and Refugee pupils to the meeting on the 15 March 2022.

The meeting ended at 3.45 pm

Chair