



PARTNERIAETH

Minutes of the Partneriaeth Regional Scrutiny Councillor Group

Held Remotely via MS Teams

Monday, 13 February 2023 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

Cllr Lyndon Jones (Convener Swansea Education Performance Scrutiny Panel)

Cllr Peter Black (Chair of the Swansea Scrutiny Programme Committee)

Cllr Huw Murphy (Chair Pembrokeshire Schools and Learning Scrutiny Committee)

Cllr Pat Davies (Vice Chair Pembrokeshire Schools and Learning Scrutiny Committee)

Cllr Sue Allen (Vice Chair Carmarthenshire Education and Children Scrutiny Committee)

Officer(s)

Ian Altman

Lead Officer Partneriaeth

Helen Morgan-Rees

Lead Director and Director of Education in Swansea

Cressy Morgan

Partneriaeth Strategic Adviser

Michelle Roberts

Scrutiny Officer (Swansea)

Apologies for Absence

Cllr Carys Jones (Chair Carmarthenshire Education and Children Scrutiny Committee)

9 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Carys Jones (Chair Carmarthenshire Education and Children Scrutiny Committee)

10 Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

11 Minutes and Letter/s arising from the last meeting

The minutes and letter arising from the meeting on the 24 October 2022 were accepted.

12 Outline of and Feedback from Partneriaeth Joint Committee Agenda held on 3 February 2023

Ian Altman updated the Councillor Group on the outcomes of the Partneriaeth Joint Committee held on the 3 February 2023. The following was noted:

- Martin Nicholls, Chief Executive in Swansea was appointed as Lead Chief Executive for Partneriaeth
- Helen Morgan Rees, Director of Education in Swansea was appointed as Lead Director for Partneriaeth
- Cllr Lyndon Jones attended as the Chair of the Scrutiny Councillor Group and spoke the Councillor Groups letter from the meeting on 24 October 2022.
- Section 151 Officer presented the Partneriaeth financial report for 2022-23, giving an update on the financial position of Partneriaeth at the end of December 2022 and it was noted that the report provided information around service level agreements with the local authorities. The financial report was noted and the revised budget and the grant income and allocation for 2022-23 was approved.
- An overview was provided of the internal audit work programme for 2022-23, the joint committee considered the objectives, the scope and the approach and the reporting arrangements. Progress made was noted. Further work would be conducted between March and May 2023, a report will then be presented to Joint Committee during the Summer term.
- An overview was provided giving progress with the business plan, its delivery and areas still to be developed.
- It was explained that a detailed evaluation document that will include the impact of the work carried out so far, will be prepared.
- A strengthening of one element of the risk assessment was made.

13 The Joint Committee's Financial affairs, risk Management and Governance arrangements

- Helen Morgan Rees updated the Councillor Group on the financial and governance arrangements as requested and as the Legal Agreement says the Councillor Group to review, scrutinise and assess the Joint Committee's risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements and review and assess the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which resources have been used.
- She updated the panel on the funding arrangements for Partneriaeth including each local authorities contribution and also the grant funding received from Welsh Government along with Service Level Agreements. She explained that an impact report is being put together that will go to the June Joint Committee and will outline the value for money element. It was reported that it was important that the service is tailored to the needs of each local authority and also that full engagement of all three local authorities was key to them all getting value for money from Partneriaeth.
- Governance arrangements are progressing as agreed in the Joint Agreement, including termly Joint Committee, Scrutiny Councillor Group and regular stakeholder group meetings.

The Councillor Group asked:

- About ensuring there is minimal duplication in what is done by Partneriaeth and what it done with local authorities and schools. Councillors heard that is something that all those involved are very aware off and committed to ensuring does not happen whenever possible. They heard that the that teacher groups are useful reference point to have those conversations, to ensure that it's clear who's providing what.
- About the possibility of Partneriaeth staff working out of local authority offices. Ian Altman explained that having a base where all staff can come into it really important, to get the opportunity to work together. He said we would not want to the teams to become fragmented. So having that designated base is really important for us. He explained they only have a hot desk room, admin space and a couple of meeting rooms at the moment, so it is not a huge footprint.

14 Updated Risk Profile

Ian Altman informed the Councillor Group that there has only been one change to the document previously seen by the Group. This change relates to a strengthening of the comment around the increased risk around priority one and schools not being sufficiently supported in their implementation of curriculum.

The Councillor Group asked:

- About the item on the risk register relating to the Welsh Government funding not arriving on time and how much we rely on that. The Group heard that it is a large risk because the vast majority of the organisation relies on those levels of grant funding. There is a commitment from Welsh Government over three years for these grant lines will be sustained. The money however does tend to arrive on time.
- What are the risks with the new curriculum and how does the offer to teachers by the Welsh Government on workload pay impact on this work? Ian Altman said that Professional learning would be seen as something that adds value to the system rather than something that impinges on workload. I think wherever possible we try and make things available asynchronously so staff can access a variety of times and there is no was that expectation that it is out of core hours. However, in terms of workload, there is significant expectations on staff. Ian Altman said I think it is up to us to make our professional learning offer as agile as possible.
- About the effectiveness of cluster professional development around the national curriculum was raised and the Group hoped that funding for schools to release staff to attend would continue.

15 A look at Performance of Partneriaeth Priority 1 - Curriculum & Assessment

The Councillor Group agreed as part of their work programme to look at the performance of a different one of the six Partneriaeth priorities at each meeting. The Councillor Group therefore welcomed Ian Altman and Cressy Morgan the Partneriaeth Strategic Adviser to the meeting. They provided a presentation and outlined progress with regards to Priority One: Curriculum & Assessment - Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners. They covered the following points:

- The Business Plan
- The availability of information on Partneriaeth website
- The Professional Learning Offer
- How there are different challenges for different clusters, so one size will not fit all and that it is important that a flexible and agile approach is taken when supporting all clusters.
- A mixture of universal and bespoke support seems to be effective.
- Three examples of cluster worker working were given.

The Councillor Group raised the following points:

- The prescriptive nature of the old curriculum and the skills required for the New Curriculum were raised. The Councillor Group felt that it was important we take all school staff along with us on the journey to introduce the New Curriculum for Wales and we should ensure that no one gets left behind by ensuring we are supporting those who may be struggling with the transition.

16 Partneriaeth Scrutiny Work Programme

The Scrutiny Work Programme was noted.

17 Discuss points for the letter to Chair of Partneriaeth Joint Committee arising from this meeting

The Cllr Group agreed to include their views on the following for the inclusion in their letter to the Chair of Partneriaeth Joint Committee:

- Pleased to see that the first impact report for Partneriaeth is being produced and look forward to seeing it in June.
- Concern was raised about the impact of Welsh Government workload pay award and its impact on teaching time. The Group understand we have no details available at present but would appreciate keeping the Councillor Group to date as this progresses.
- Highlight the risk of the Welsh Government grant funding not coming through on time recognising how dependent Partneriaeth is on flow of these monies.
- The Councillor Group wanted to recognise and thank Partneriaeth for their hard work in developing a team working ethos with schools around the introduction of the new curriculum.
- The Councillor Group also wanted to emphasise the importance of taking all teachers along in the journey to implement the New Curriculum for Wales.

The meeting ended at 11.40 am

Chair