



## **Minutes of the Scrutiny - Partneriaeth Regional Scrutiny Councillor Group**

**Remotely via Microsoft Teams**

**Monday, 23 October 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 of Education, Young People and Welsh Education Scrutiny Committee)

Cllr Sam Skyrme-Blackhall (Vice Chair of Education, Young People and Welsh Education Scrutiny Committee)

Cllr Carys Jones (Chair Carmarthenshire Education and Children 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

Dylan Williams

Partneriaeth Strategic Lead

Andrew Owen

Headteacher Birchgrove Comprehensive School

Michelle Roberts

Scrutiny Officer (Swansea)

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### **27 Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received. The Chair welcomed Cllr Sam Skyrme-Blackhall to the Councillor Group.

### **28 Declaration of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **29 Minutes and Letter/s arising from the meeting on 19 June 2023**

The minutes and letter arising from the meeting on the 23 October 2023 were accepted.

### **30 A look at Performance of Partneriaeth Priority 2**

The Councillor Group agreed as part of their work programme to look at the performance of a different one of the four Partneriaeth priorities at each meeting. The Councillor Group therefore welcomed Ian Altman, Dylan Williams, Cressy Morgan and Andrew Owen (Headteacher from Birchgrove Secondary School) to the meeting. They provided a presentation and outlined progress with regards to Priority 2 of the Partneriaeth Business Plan 2023-2024.

The report and discussion looked at:

Embedding principles and processes which underpin educational equity in all schools and educational settings. Our aim is that personal or social circumstances are not obstacles to achieving educational potential and that all schools and settings have high aspirations for all learners. This is being done by

- I. Continuing to support schools and educational settings to understand how to mitigate the impact of poverty on engagement, achievement and attainment.
- II. Continuing to support schools and educational settings to understand how to mitigate the impact of trauma on engagement, achievement and attainment.
- III. Working with key partners to embed evidence based universal approaches to promote positive health and well-being.

The Headteacher from Birchgrove Primary School outlined some of the work they are doing in relation to mitigating the impacts of poverty on pupils at the school. He said that the impact on the school of this has been dramatic. That they had always been an inclusive school but the poverty proofing work has helped them look at this is a slightly different way, by looking at the challenges some pupils face on a daily basis. He felt that the Poverty Proofing Audit completed last year had been a beneficial and positive experience for the school. He outlined some of the work that has been happening in relation to poverty proofing since that audit including, for example, teachers becoming much more in tune with pupil wellbeing and ensuring school uniform being much less prescriptive and therefore more economical to purchase.

The Councillor Group were impressed with the work happening at the school and thanked the Headteacher for his valuable input into the meeting.

### **31 Outline of and Feedback from Partneriaeth Joint Committee Agenda held on 6 October 2023**

Helen Morgan Rees updated the Councillor Group on the outcomes of the Partneriaeth Joint Committee held on the 6 October 2023. The following was noted:

- The Joint Committee resolved to amend the choice of voting member on Partneriaeth's Joint Committee. This will provide flexibility for the three local authorities and give them the option of nominating their Cabinet member with the education portfolio as their voting member instead of their Leader. Each Local Authority will have to agree with this.
- The Committee received the letter from the last Councillor Group meeting.

- The Committee looking at the financial report including contributions from each local authority, service level agreements, budget monitoring, grant income and any associated risks.
- Looked at Annual Governance Statement where the Internal Audit review gave a moderate assurance rating on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, internal control, risk management and financial management arrangements in place. All aspects raised have been acted upon including improving and strengthening the business plan.
- The Joint Committee received Partneriaeth's Internal Audit Work Programme 2023-24 for approval. The Work Programme has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- The Joint Committee received a report providing information of provision and performance of the financial year 2023-24 business plan. The business plan is monitored quarterly and it was noted that nearly all actions were on track for full delivery by March 2024.
- The Joint Committee received a report with a response to the Partneriaeth stakeholder perception survey from summer term 2023. The Joint Committee expressed disappointment at the low take up of the survey from Headteachers. In response, the committee were advised this was due to a number of reasons, including the Action Short of Strike. This impacted negatively on the completion rate and it was decided to extend the survey to discreet groups.

### **32 Updated Risk Profile**

Ian Altman told the Councillor Group that the report provided has only been amended very slightly to reflect the new business plan and its priorities.

### **33 Update on Curriculum for Wales**

Ian Altman provided the Councillor Group with a report giving an overview of current support for schools with regard for the Curriculum for Wales. They heard that all primary settings and half of all secondary settings adopted the Curriculum for Wales in September 2022 with all schools adopting it in September 2023. The report covered curriculum requirements, progression and assessment challenges, cluster working and schools receiving most support. The following points were raised and discussed:

- The need to take all teachers with us on the journey
- The challenges of meeting the needs of individual clusters of schools
- Joint working within clusters
- Raising awareness of school governors of the services provided by Partneriaeth.

### **34 Discuss points for the letter to Chair of Partneriaeth Joint Committee arising from this meeting**

The Councillor Group agreed to write a letter to the Chair of the Joint Committee following today's meeting.

### **35 Partneriaeth Scrutiny Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Work Programme was noted.