



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Thursday, 13 July 2023 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

A Davis
S Joy
A J O'Connor

Councillor(s)

A M Day
J D McGettrick

Councillor(s)

S M Jones
F D O'Brien

Co-opted Member(s)

Beth Allender

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

Robert Smith

Officer(s)

Helen Howells
Helen Morgan-Rees
Kate Phillips
Michelle Roberts

Team Manager for Pupil Support
Director of Education
Head of Vulnerable Learner Service
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): B Hopkins and S E Keeton
Co-opted Member(s): Elizabeth Lee

76 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

77 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

78 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting on the 15 June 2023 were agreed by the Panel.

79 Letter/s

The letter to the Cabinet Member following the Panel meeting on the 15 June 2023 was noted.

80 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

81 Managing and Improving School Attendance including data

The Panel thanked Councillor Robert Smith (Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education), Kate Phillips (Head of Vulnerable Learners) and Helen Howells (Team Manager Pupil Support) for attending the Panel and presenting a writing report giving details on managing and improving school attendance in Swansea. The discussion covered:

- Attendance in Swansea schools and data
- Attendance Policy 2023
- Attendance Action Plan and the five key priorities
- Further strategies to improve attendance

The following issues/questions were raised by the Panel. A summary of the Panels views on progress made in relation to school attendance and the responses to their questions, will form part of the letter to the Cabinet Member following the meeting.

- It is reassuring that figures are improving and would expect that now to continue.
- What has been the change in approach.
- Are there any studies/research available into the reasons for non-attendance (the panel heard that a Welsh Government report has recently been published containing this information, a link to this will be circulated to the Panel.
- Have the number of young carers increased since covid.
- What tools and interventions are being used across schools.
- Has the numbers of elective home educated children increased since Covid.
- Does the data available provide any trends in for example year groups and particularly impact on attendance of pupils in school transition years in Covid now progressing through the year groups.

82 Managing and Improving School Exclusions including data

The Panel thanked Councillor Robert Smith (Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education), Kate Phillips (Head of Vulnerable Learners) and Helen Howells (Team Manager Pupil Support) for attending the Panel and presenting a writing report giving details on managing and improving school exclusions in Swansea. The discussion covered:

- Swansea's approach to exclusions
- Exclusions data
- Interventions to promote inclusion

The following issues/questions were raised by the Panel. A summary of the Panels views on progress made in relation to exclusions and the responses to their questions, will form part of the letter to the Cabinet Member following the meeting.

- There is a small number of schools that face a unique challenge, what are they doing to buck the trend and reduce exclusions.
- What is working and not working so well in relation to improving exclusions. How is good practice being shared.
- Does each school have its own pastoral support in place.
- How long are fixed term exclusions.
- Are Local Area Co-ordinators involved in talking to parents/families.

83 Work Plan for 2023/2024

The Work Plan for 2023/2024 was noted.

The meeting ended at 5.00 pm

Chair