



# City and County of Swansea

## Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

### Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education

**At:** Multi-Location Meeting - Lilian Hopkin Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

**On:** Thursday, 14 November 2024

**Time:** 4.30 pm

**Convenor:** Councillor Lyndon Jones MBE

**Membership:**

Councillors: A Davis, A M Day, F M Gordon, B Hopkins, Y V Jardine, S M Jones, S Joy, J D McGettrick, F D O'Brien and A J O'Connor

Co-opted Members: Beth Allender and Elizabeth Lee

---

#### Agenda

Page No.

- |          |   |                |
|----------|---|----------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>  |                |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests</b><br><a href="http://www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests">www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests</a>   |                |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips</b>  |                |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Minutes</b>  | <b>1 - 7</b>   |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Letter/s</b>   | <b>8 - 14</b>  |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Public Questions</b><br>Questions can be submitted in writing to Scrutiny <a href="mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk">scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk</a> up until noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Written questions take precedence. Public may attend and ask questions in person if time allows. Questions must relate to items on the open part of the agenda and will be dealt with in a 10 minute period. |                |
| <b>7</b> | <b>Strategy for Poverty Proofing the School Day</b><br>Cllr Robert Smith (Cabinet Member Education and Learning), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education) and Kelly Small (Head of Education Planning and Resources)  | <b>15 - 22</b> |
| <b>8</b> | <b>Progress with Inclusion Strategy (including update on Behaviour Strategy)</b><br>Cllr Robert Smith (Cabinet Member Education and Learning), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education) and Kate Phillips (Head of   | <b>23 - 29</b> |

Vulnerable Learner Service)

- |           |  |                |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Briefing on School Admissions Policy</b><br>Cllr Robert Smith (Cabinet Member Education and Learning), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education) and Helen Howells (Team Manager for Pupil Support) | <b>30 - 55</b> |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Briefing on Careers Advice in Schools</b><br>Cllr Robert Smith (Cabinet Member Education and Learning), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education) and David Bawden (Strategic Skills Co-ordinator)  | <b>56 - 60</b> |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Workplan 2024/25</b>  | <b>61 - 62</b> |

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, 12 December 2024 at 4.30 pm



**Huw Evans**  
**Head of Democratic Services**  
**Friday, 8 November 2024**

---

**Contact: Scrutiny Officer**

# Agenda Item 4



City and County of Swansea

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

**Multi-Location Meeting - Lilian Hopkin Room, Guildhall / MS Teams**

**Thursday, 20 June 2024 at 4.30 pm**

**Present:** Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

A M Day  
J D McGettrick

**Councillor(s)**

S M Jones  
F D O'Brien

**Councillor(s)**

S Joy  
A J O'Connor

**Co-opted Member(s)**

None

**Other Attendees**

R Smith Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

**Officer(s)**

Helen Morgan Rees, Director of Education  
David Thomas, Lead School Improvement Adviser  
Michelle Roberts. Scrutiny Officer

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): A Davis and B Hopkins  
Co-opted Member(s): Beth Allender

---

**154 Confirmation of the Convener**

Councillor Lyndon Jones was confirmed as Convener for the Panel for the municipal year 2024/2025.

**155 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

Cllr's L Jones and M Day declared a personal interest on agenda items 8, 9 and 11.

**156 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

None

**157 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on the 9 May 2024 were agreed by the Panel.

**158 Letter/s**

The letter to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning following the meeting on the 9 May 2024 was noted by the Panel.

**159 Public Questions**

No public questions were received.

**160 Role of the Performance Panel**

The Panel noted the report detailing the role of the Performance Panel.

**161 New Curriculum for Wales Update (watching brief item)**

The Panel thanked the Lead School Improvement Adviser for the providing a report and attending the meeting to discuss progress with the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales.

The Cabinet Member said that this was still an evolving piece of work and that it is not without its challenges but that he continues to be pleased with how it was progressing in Swansea.

The report outlined:

- Background and context to the Curriculum for Wales
- Updated the Panel on the work that is happening across Swansea schools, the school improvement team and Partneriaeth.

In summary:

- a. The focus for schools in Swansea will be the evaluation of the impact of their curriculum offer. Officers will support the use of toolkits to provide effective, thought-provoking questions and promote deep self-evaluation.
- b. Swansea schools continue to feel they are supported well.
- c. LA officers need to continue the focus on how school leaders influence ongoing Curriculum for Wales design.
- d. LA officers ensure schools are supported well to make use of and evaluate the impact of professional learning offered locally and by the region.
- e. Further develop collaborative partnerships to support a better shared understanding of progression across and between schools.
- f. School improvement advisers have and will continue to identify schools that have the capacity to share effective practice in terms of curriculum design and review.
- g. School improvement advisers will sensitively identify schools that require additional support in their reform journey indicated by the progress that learners make over time.
- h. School Improvement Team and Additional Learning Needs officers will collaborate more closely to support a holistic view of support for learners.
- i. School improvement advisers will continue to make representations to Welsh Government on behalf of our stakeholders to inform national policy.

The following questions/issues were raised by the Panel. Summary of the Panels views on progress and the responses to these issues will form part of the letter to the Cabinet Member following the meeting:

- How are the clusters of schools across Swansea working together with regard to the Curriculum for Wales.
- Those schools in Wales that Estyn have identified that the Curriculum for Wales has not yet had a positive impact.
- Are we taking teachers with us in Swansea in the development of the Curriculum for Wales.
- Are we still focused on pupils learning basic skills in the bid to introduce the new curriculum.

## **162 Key issues affecting education 2024/25**

The Panel thanked the Director of Education for her presentation outlining some of the key issues affecting education in Swansea 2023/2024. She covered 8 key issue areas including:

1. Resource Management
2. Support for Learners
3. Accountability
4. Learner Attendance
5. Behaviour and Wellbeing
6. Quality of Teaching
7. Welsh Language
8. Tiered Roles and responsibilities

The Panel will consider this presentation when they discuss and agree their work plan for the coming 12 months so that it is reflective of the key issues highlighted where possible.

## **163 Drafting the Work Programme for 2024/25 for discussion**

The Panel discussed the key issues identified for the Panels work programme for the coming 12 months. The Scrutiny Officer will now formulate the plan to take this forward and circulate a draft to the Panel for agreement.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm

**Chair**



City and County of Swansea

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

Bishopston Comprehensive School, The Glebe, Bishopston,  
Swansea SA3 3JP

Thursday, 19 September 2024 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

S M Jones  
A J O'Connor

**Councillor(s)**

S Joy

**Councillor(s)**

F D O'Brien

**Co-opted Member(s)**

Beth Allender

**Other Attendees**

Cllr Robert Smith

Alison Sykes

Andrew Thomas

Jon Roper

Additional Senior Staff:

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Headteacher

Deputy Headteacher

Chair of Governors

Claire Ratty, Claire Jacobs, Charlotte Lewis, Amy Pierce,  
Sian Forwood, Melanie Davies

**Officer(s)**

Helen Morgan-Rees

David Thomas

Rachel Percival

Director of Education

School Improvement Adviser

Scrutiny Officer

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): A Davis, A M Day, B Hopkins and J D McGettrick

Co-opted Member(s): Elizabeth Lee

---

**164 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

Cllr L Jones declared a personal interest in minute item 166 "Site Visit and Schools Scrutiny Session 2 – Bishopston Secondary School".

**165 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

None.

**166 Site Visit and Schools Scrutiny Session 2 - Bishopston Secondary School**

The Panel received a tour and presentation from Bishopston Comprehensive School. They met with the Head and Deputy Head Teacher, Chair of Governors, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Director of Education, School Improvement Adviser and other senior members of staff to discuss four key questions which were as follows:

- Can you outline progress with your school improvement plan including progress with Estyn recommendations and introducing the new curriculum?
- What the barriers might be to the school improving its learner outcomes further including any challenges they are experiencing?
- What the governing bodies' priorities are and how are they being addressed?
- How well you feel you have been supported by the local authority, the school improvement service and Partneriaeth.

The Panel were particularly grateful to the students who carried out the tour and the orchestra for their performance. The Panel will put their thoughts on the visit into a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

The meeting ended at 6.03 pm

**Chair**



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education (Informal)**

Gwrosydd Primary School, Parkhill Terrace, Tre-boeth,  
Swansea SA5 7DJ

Thursday, 17 October 2024 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

B Hopkins  
J D McGettrick

**Councillor(s)**

S M Jones

**Councillor(s)**

S Joy

**Other Attendees**

Cabinet Member Cllr R Smith  
Headteacher C Roberts  
Chair of Governors D Saunders

**Officer(s)**

David Thomas                      School Improvement Adviser  
Michelle Roberts                  Scrutiny Officer

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): A Davis, A M Day, Y V Jardine, F D O'Brien and A J O'Connor  
Co-opted Member(s): Beth Allender and Elizabeth Lee

---

**167 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

None

**168 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

None

**169 Site Visit and Schools Scrutiny Session 2 - Gwrosydd Primary School**

The Panel met with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and a group of seven pupils from Gwrosydd Primary School. They discussed the following four key questions that were sent to the school in advance of the meeting:

1. Can you outline progress with your school improvement plan including progress with Estyn recommendations and introducing the new curriculum?
2. What the barriers might be to the school improving its learner outcomes further including any challenges they are experiencing?



3. What the governing bodies' priorities are and how are they being addressed?
4. How well you feel you have been supported by the local authority, the school improvement service and Partneriaeth.

The Panel thanked the headteacher, staff, pupils and the chair of governors who attended the meeting and for the tour of the facility. The Panel will put their thoughts on the visit into a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

The meeting ended at 6.00pm

**Chair**

# Agenda Item 5



**To:**  
**Councillor Robert Smith**  
**Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

**BY EMAIL**

*Please ask for:* Michelle Roberts  
*Gofynnwch am:*  
*Scrutiny Office* 01792 637256  
*Line:*  
*Llinell*  
*Uniongyrchol:*  
*e-Mail* [scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk)  
*e-Bost:*  
*Date* 1 July 2024  
*Dyddiad:*

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 20 June 2024. The Panel discussed the Curriculum for Wales implementation in Swansea.

Dear Cllr Smith,

## **Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 20 June 2024**

We would like to thank you and the officers from the Education Directorate for attending the meeting and providing information for the Panel. We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and to share the views of the Panel.

### **Curriculum for Wales**

You told us that this was still an evolving piece of work and that it is not without its challenges but that you continue to be pleased with how it is progressing in Swansea.

The Principal Improvement Adviser gave us an update on progress with regard to the work happening in schools, the school improvement team and Partneriaeth including the challenges that have arisen and how they are being addressed or mitigated. We were also interested to hear about what is planned to continue to move this important agenda forward.

We asked how schools across Swansea are working together to take forward the Curriculum for Wales across their clusters. We heard that nearly all schools in Swansea have a good grasp of the high-level statements that exist within the curriculum for Wales. Schools have used those themes to provide a really clear view of linear progression and what that looks like from 3 years old to 16 years old. Nearly all of our schools and settings provide practitioners with a clear shared understanding

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TRUSLOW A CHRAFFU**

**SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE**

**GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE**

**[www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk) / [www.abertawe.gov.uk](http://www.abertawe.gov.uk)**

I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod  
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

of progression. There are plans in place to deepen that work, so not just linear progression but vertically as well. We also heard that a key piece of work will take place to unpick and share how clusters of schools are working together especially those that are not geographically close together who making it work effectively.

We asked about the minority of schools in Wales where Estyn have identified that the Curriculum for Wales has not yet had a positive impact. We were told that one school in Swansea, when inspected, included a recommendation along those lines, but that is one out of all the inspections that took place and that five out of the overall fifty inspections across Wales. We heard that in reality it is a small number and those recommendations are pointing at the area of inclusion and/or the integration of the primary school in to the secondary school. So, we heard that it is about looking at how do we make those links even more explicit, it may also be that particular schools have some challenges in terms of, for example geography.

We asked how we are insuring a focus on pupils learning basic skills in this process of change to introduce the new curriculum. We were told that more and more schools are going back to those basic skills and are making those explicit in their school improvement plans but that is not happening everywhere. We heard that the curriculum needs to be implemented in a way that plans for all pupils. We heard that previously we were governed by an accountability system that made us get to a measure. Now we are able look at the individual pupil and provide a much more bespoke curriculum and offer for each individual child.

We also asked whether we are taking teachers with us on the journey to develop the Curriculum for Wales in Swansea schools. We heard that in the daily conversations that the School Improvement Officers have with practitioners they are finding that teachers are still excited by curriculum for Wales, that they enjoy seeing and giving responsibility and ownership to the pupils. The Principal School Improvement Adviser also said it is our job to give them the confidence to take this forward. In his view, we are taking teachers with us but he said, in saying that teachers are already at the table with curriculum for Wales.

## **Your Response**

We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter but on this occasion do not require a formal response.

Yours sincerely

**COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES**

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

[Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk)



**To:**  
**Councillor Robert Smith**  
**Cabinet Member for Education and Learning**

**BY EMAIL**

*Please ask for:* Scrutiny  
*Gofynnwch am:*  
*Scrutiny Office* 01792 636292  
*Line:*  
*Llinell*  
*Uniongyrchol:*  
*e-Mail* [scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk)  
*e-Bost:*  
*Date* 7 October 2024  
*Dyddiad:*

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 19 September 2024 at Bishopston Comprehensive School. This letter does not require a response.

Dear Cllr Smith,

### **Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – visit to Bishopston Comprehensive School**

On 19 September the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel visited Bishopston Comprehensive School. We are grateful to the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, other senior staff, the Director of Education, the Service Improvement Officer and yourself for attending. We thanked the Head for her detailed overview and for answering our questions. We also extend our thanks to the students who took part in the tour and the wonderful orchestra performance. Some of the points noted from the school's presentation include:

- The school focus heavily on sharing effective practice with other secondary schools, cluster primaries and external partners. This includes a cross-phase transition project.
- The school is using a robust and honest self-evaluation process, the outcome being a "what is best for us" approach.
- Triangulation of data has given a clearer picture of strengths and areas to improve.
- Profession learning opportunities are offered and the GROW method is used in professional dialogue.
- There is a whole school focus each half term on a different ALN, providing strategies to staff.
- New curriculum development continues with focuses on innovation, collaboration, creativity and shared ownership.
- The wellbeing of pupils remains central with a focus on pupil voice. The school have been a lead professional inquiry school for Partneriaeth and have received £15m investment for building improvements.

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TRUSLOW A CHRAFFU**

**SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE**

**GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE**

**[www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk) / [www.abertawe.gov.uk](http://www.abertawe.gov.uk)**

- Finances are challenging and the school are struggling to make further cuts to meet the current budget.
- Additional challenges include staff recruitment, minibus transport, stretched ICT Hwb grant and site challenges, including flooding, a lightning strike and ground movement.
- Post 16 education remains a challenge. Travel is a barrier due to the school's rural catchment, along with transitioning pupils from a school to a college environment. The school feels not having a 6<sup>th</sup> form offer is a disadvantage for both pupils and the school.
- Attendance figures continue to be below pre covid levels however this is true for all schools. The school continues to offer nurture provision and engagement as well a new EWO and rewards for good attendance.
- Metacognition is valued and helps support self-regulated learning.

We enjoyed seeing the new facilities and were very impressed with the pupils who took part in the tour. We noted the pride and positive feeling felt by both pupils and staff. We were pleased to hear of the school's progress in introducing the new curriculum and the support the school have received from the local authority, the school improvement service and Partneriaeth. We felt the school have blended the new curriculum in well through a pragmatic approach, that builds on previous developments and does not overload staff.

We have taken on board the current challenges outlined by the school. We note the challenges with attendance and feel that in the current climate 91.3% is reasonable and the school are clearly actively addressing concerns.

We asked the Director of Education about any plans to extend the schools offer beyond 16 and heard that there would not be funding for this. We also queried the schools budget challenges and were concerned this could limit their ability to meet the needs of the new curriculum. The Director of Education discussed the process of narrowing that all schools must undertake, although acknowledged that schools have differing starting points, and that the priorities were, being realistic and getting the basics right. You highlighted that education is the biggest budget item and the Council face continual challenges with balancing priorities and a rise in additional costs. The Head highlighted the that way ALN funding is granted can cause challenges for the school. The Director of Education stated that how ALN funding is distributed will be considered.

Overall, it was clear to the Panel that the school is working hard to meet its challenges and demonstrates excellence in all areas, particularly with its commitment to shared learning and the work with cluster primaries.

### **Your Response**

We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter but on this occasion do not require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely

### **COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES**

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

[Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk)



**To:**  
**Councillor Robert Smith**  
**Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

**BY EMAIL**

*Please ask for:* Michelle Roberts  
*Gofynnwch am:*  
*Scrutiny Office* 01792 637256  
*Line:*  
*Llinell*  
*Uniongyrchol:*  
*e-Mail* [scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk)  
*e-Bost:*  
*Date* 25 October 2024  
*Dyddiad:*

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 17 October 2024. The Panel met with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors from Gwyrosydd Primary School to discuss their school development plan.

Dear Cllr Smith,

### **Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 17 October 2024**

We thanked the Acting Headteacher and the Chair of Governors from Gwyrosydd Primary School for their presentation addressing the set of questions that were sent to the school in advance of the meeting. We are writing to you as the Cabinet Member to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and to share the views of the Panel.

We welcome the progress that has been made with the School Improvement Plan since the Estyn Inspection in February 2023. We were particularly keen to hear about the progress being made in relation to the three Estyn recommendations contained in that report.

It was evident that the school is clearly now on a path to improvement. The school, the governing body and local authority are working to help address the three Estyn recommendations. We heard from the Acting Headteacher that these recommendations closely interlink with the School Improvement Plan and are helping to move improvements forward.

The Panel recognised that there has been quite a period of instability at the school which included higher than desired levels of staff sickness, including the intermittent attendance by the previous Headteacher at the school. There had been no office staff and no caretaker for a period of time. There has also been a high turnover of school governors.

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TRUSLOW A CHRAFFU**

**SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE**

**GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE**

**[www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk) / [www.abertawe.gov.uk](http://www.abertawe.gov.uk)**

The Panel were pleased to hear that this has been partially addressed with an acting Headteacher appointed, a new Chair of Governors and that there has been strong support from the School Improvement Adviser. Although it was recognised that the permanent Headteacher position needed to be resolved. We heard that this appointment will be made in readiness for the 2025 school year. Staff sickness levels at the school are still high but improvements have been made including the appointment of back office staff.

The Panel were concerned about the high turnover in the Governing Body and in particular, in relation to the Local Authority Governor representative position, which has had a number of changes over recent years and has now remained unfilled for some time. The Panel asked if you could follow this up and see if that can be resolved as a matter of urgency.

The Acting Headteacher and Chair of Governors are clearly committed to making the improvements required at the school and have put a number of improvements in place to begin that process. The Panel were pleased to hear from the School Improvement Adviser that 'he is pushing at an open door' with them. Some of these improvements include:

- A revised School Improvement Plan has been developed, identifying progress made, what is needed and the milestones for that improvement. This has been developed in conjunction with staff and Governors at the school.
- Pupil voice has been strengthened substantially at the school, with pupils having a strong input into their learning. The Panel were particularly pleased to hear from a group of pupils about how they thought this was going.
- The school has worked hard to develop the Curriculum for Wales, including using new initiatives to ensure the progressive development of pupil skills. The Panel were particularly keen to hear about the use of local knowledge and history as a basis for some of the projects being undertaken at the school.

We asked about the challenges faced by the school and how they are working to address or mitigate them. The Panel heard about:

- Staff sickness and the instability of the Headteacher position over recent years. This made it difficult for the school to focus on its core purpose and has affected staff morale. Listening to staff concerns, support and encouraging staff development has and will continue to help to improve this, but this is still a challenge.
- Staff stress. Concern with issues including the numbers of pupils with Additional Learning Needs and the associated pressures that come with that. Also the time required for non-teaching tasks like nappy changing and form filling.
- Budget related matters was raised including, for example, cost of sickness cover.
- Premises. A limited amount of money has been put into the maintenance and improvement to the school and its grounds over recent years. This includes the pupil toilets needing attention and CCTV system needing investment.
- Lack of signage to and at the school was highlighted as a concern. This makes it difficult to locate, which some Councillors attending the session experienced firsthand!
- Not having a Flying Start at the school and the numbers of pupils in reception and year 1 declining, mainly because pupils who attend Flying Start settings tend to stay in the school in which that is located.

The Chair of Governors highlighted some of the challenges the Governing Body have or are experiencing, including:

- Uncertainty around Governing Body stability. A new Chair of Governors has now been appointed but the constant turnover of Governors continues to be a challenge, with the governing body struggling to appoint the numbers of Governors they require. This therefore results in the governing body being constantly in new/development of new governor mode, making it difficult to carry out the key roles to the school of support and challenge.
- Managing sickness absence and dealing with Human Resource procedures at the school.
- High turnover of office staff and retaining people has proved difficult.
- Budget has taken a hit due to loss of Headteacher.

The school also outlined how well they feel they had been supported throughout this process to date, including saying:

- They have received excellent support from the School Improvement Adviser, particularly with the increased level of support required to assist the acting Headteacher.
- Human Resources support for the school has been valuable.

The Panel wished to emphasise the importance of ensuring continued support and assistance for the Acting Headteacher, as this has clearly been, and still is, a challenging role.

The Panel wished to praise the progress made at the school so far and look forward to those improvement bedding in. The developments in relation to pupil voice at the school should be applauded. We look forward to seeing continued improvement in the stability at the school, particularly with the appointment of a permanent Headteacher, the continued reduction in staff sickness levels and a full and functioning Governing Body.

## **Your Response**

We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter but on this occasion do not require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely

### **COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES**

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

[Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk)



# Agenda Item 7



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

### Education Scrutiny Performance Panel 14 November 2024

#### Strategy for Poverty Proofing the School Day Given the Cost-of-Living Crisis

<b>Purpose:</b>	To brief the Scrutiny Panel on the Education Directorate's strategy for poverty proofing the school day, given the cost-of-living crisis
<b>Content:</b>	An overview of support provided to schools and families to reduce disadvantage
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	Consider the information provided and give views
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Robert Smith Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
<b>Lead Officer and report author:</b>	Kelly Small, Head of Education Planning and Resources <a href="mailto:Kelly.Small@swansea.gov.uk">Kelly.Small@swansea.gov.uk</a>
<b>For Information</b>	

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The City and County of Swansea's Corporate Plan 2023-2028 sets out wellbeing objectives including:
  - Improving Education and Skills - so that everyone in Swansea gains the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in life
  - Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities - so that every person in Swansea can achieve their potential
- 1.2 The Education Directorate supports schools in their role to help ensure children and young people's needs are met by creating the right conditions for them to thrive now and prosper in the future.
- 1.3 In the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019, 17 (11.5%) of Swansea's 148 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs - areas with an average population of 1,600) are in the most deprived 10 per cent in Wales.

- 1.4 The percentage of children on roll in Swansea schools that were eligible for free school meals (FSM) in January 2024 varied from 2.09% to 69.78% in primary schools, and from 5.61% to 51.0% in secondary schools.
- 1.5 The Education Directorate aims to raise the attainment of children and young people from low-income households by reducing the barriers that they often face to achieving their full potential. This report outlines some of these areas, namely:
- Pupil Development Grant (PDG)
  - The rollout of free school meals
  - The cost of the school day
  - School uniform

## **2. Pupil Development Grant (PDG)**

- 2.1 PDG is grant funding provided by the Welsh Government to schools and settings for children and young people aged 5 to 15 who are eligible for FSM. Grant is based on £1,150 per learner with FSM eligibility (note that this excludes children only receiving universal FSM). Use of the grant should focus on the following key areas:
- high-quality learning and teaching
  - Community Focused Schools
  - early childhood play, learning and care
  - high aspirations supported by strong relationships
  - health and wellbeing
  - leadership
  - Curriculum for Wales and qualifications
  - supporting post-16 progression
- 2.2 In May 2019, the Policy Development Committee supported recommendations regarding PDG use in Swansea. These included:
- Appoint a senior leader within the school to champion pupils who are eligible for FSM with responsibility for the strategic implementation of PDG
  - Optimise the progress of MAT (more able and talented) pupils eligible for FSM through more targeted and effective use of the PDG for this group of pupils
  - Establish a PDG plan clearly identifying eligible pupils and demonstrate/evaluate the actions/activities to support them
  - Undertake regular tracking of the academic progress of this group of pupils
  - Include the provision and evaluation of the activities/resources used to support the learning of Looked After Children (LAC) FSM pupils where appropriate
  - Undertake an annual review of intervention strategies to be evidenced and undertaken by the leadership team - interventions that are selected to be implemented should be based on sound research and evidence

- 2.3 School Improvement Advisers from the Education Directorate consider school PDG plans as part of their autumn term support visits and discuss how schools are supporting the recommendations from paragraph 2.2.
- 2.4 Schools also have access to a flowchart to consider if spend is eligible in line with the grant terms and conditions (see Appendix A).
- 2.5 A summary of PDG allocations to schools for the financial year 2024-2025 is shown in the table below.

	Max	Min	Avg	Total
Primary	£319,192	£5,793	£82,665	£6,365,167
Secondary	£474,725	£71,963	£250,786	£3,316,101
Special	£64,999	£20,893	£42,946	£85,892
PRU/EOTAS	£80,500	£80,500	£80,500	£80,500
				<b>£9,847,660</b>

The amount of PDG received by schools can vary greatly, depending on the number of pupils eligible for FSM.

Note that £350k of 'smoothing' grant was also received so that no school lost funding from the previous year, and the surplus funding was shared pro rata amongst schools.

- 2.6 Some interventions are more successful than others and the best approaches are not always the most expensive. What should be consistent is that the approaches are research and evidence based. Some examples of use in Swansea that meet the needs of learners are:
- Purchase of support packages (reading eggs, maths seeds, toe-by-toe etc.)
  - self-esteem (THRIVE, Empathy Lab etc.)
  - supporting mental health
  - Developing tracking systems
  - Freeing key staff to work with families and other agencies (TAF)
  - Employing staff to support families
  - Implement catch-up programmes
  - Increase staffing ratios in the early years
  - Provide enrichment and after-school provision
  - Homework club for parents and pupils
  - Computer skills course for parents
  - Creation of wellbeing rooms
  - Supporting MAT pupils
  - Nurture lunchtime clubs
  - Art therapy

2.7 Training packages are also delivered to staff (teachers and teaching assistants), such as:

- Speech and language
- Well-being training
- Wellcomm
- Developing teaching, e.g. Hattie's 'visible learning'
- Trauma informed
- Behaviour strategies
- Attachment

2.8 Families can also be supported directly, for example:

- Free pre-school childcare clubs
- Free after-school club
- Free/subsidised school trips
- Free school snacks
- Provision of IT equipment

2.9 The impact of PDG can be seen through improved engagement, fewer social services referrals, improved attendance, improved attainment and importantly a better relationship between parents and the school.

### **3. The rollout of universal free school meals**

3.1 The Welsh Government asked local authorities to roll out universal free school meals for primary pupils by 2024. This commitment was in response to the rising cost-of-living pressures on families and ambitions to:

- tackle child poverty
- ensure no child goes hungry in school
- promote healthy eating across the school
- increase the variety of food options
- improve social skills at mealtimes
- improve behaviour and attainment

3.2 Swansea Council agreed to roll out the free meal a whole year group at a time, to ensure fairness across the county. From September 2024, all full-time pupils up to and including Year 6 in primary schools are receiving a free meal.

3.3 To accommodate the increasing number of pupils whilst working within the grant provided, changes have been made to the menu on offer in primary schools. Less labour-intensive menu choices are being offered whilst still ensuring that a healthy and nutritious meal is being served.

3.4 Some school kitchens required new equipment to enable them to produce more meals, and this was purchased and installed using a grant from the Welsh Government. Some schools also required upgrades to their electrical systems to enable the new equipment to be

installed. Some of these projects delayed the rollout of universal free school meals as they had to be completed in all schools to allow us to roll out to the whole year group at the same time.

- 3.5 Five schools remain with major capital works required, and these will be completed as soon as possible and by the end of 2025. Our catering service are using alternative solutions to be able to deliver meals to all learners in these five schools until the capital works are completed.
- 3.6 To date, the Welsh Government has allocated £7.2m of capital funding to support equipment and building work in Swansea schools. Additional meals provided are supported by revenue grant, which has been increased to £3.20 per meal.
- 3.7 Take up of the universal free school meal offer is increasing and ranged between 35% and 91% in June 2024, with an average uptake of 66%. Catering officers continue to investigate where there are low levels of take up to encourage an increase.
- 3.8 It should be noted that the directorate is continually reminding parents and carers to apply for free school meal eligibility, even though they will get a free meal without applying, as otherwise they cannot claim for school uniform grant if eligible, and also the school and council will lose out on funding that is based on FSM numbers, in particular PDG.

#### **4. The cost of the school day**

- 4.1 Schools are frequently reminded to consider the cost of the school day for parents and carers. A conference on the poverty agenda was run for school leaders in Swansea on 23 May 2024 that outlined good practice, provided information on available support and resources, and also reminded schools to pay heed to the Welsh Government's *School uniform and appearance: policy guidance for governing bodies*.
- 4.2 Schools have been offered training linked to our regional school improvement service, Partneriaeth, on costing the school day. Things schools are asked to consider include:
  - The cost of school trips, particularly those abroad
  - The cost of non-uniform days and dressing up days (and how this can affect attendance for children living in poverty)
  - Charges for after-school clubs
  - Charges for fruit, cooking etc.
  - Asking for contributions for school fetes, discos etc.
  - Access to technology for homework
  - Pressure to keep up with styles and trends when certain items are allowed in schools

## 5. School uniform

- 5.1 The Welsh Government's *School uniform and appearance: policy guidance for governing bodies* includes the following statements regarding how a school uniform should be set by a governing body:
- Basic items and colours that can be bought from multiple retail suppliers at reasonable prices
  - Avoid high-cost items such as blazers and caps
  - Avoid variation in colours and style for different year groups as this is expensive for parents and limits the scope for second-hand sale or handing on to siblings
  - Have easily washable items: dry clean only items should be avoided
  - Limit the frequency of uniform changes
  - Consider the cost and availability of non-standard sizes
  - Transitional period for any change
  - If considering different uniforms for summer and winter consider whether it is proportionate and justifiable to do so
  - Secondary schools are encouraged to consider the feasibility of aligning their school uniform policy with those of their feeder primary schools to enable any core uniform items to continue to be used
- 5.2 School uniform grant (now called School Essentials Grant) from the Welsh Government is available to children and young people who are:
- eligible for free school meals (eFSM)
  - Looked After Children (LAC)
  - classed as No Resource to Public Funds (NRPF)
  - in year groups Reception to Year 11 (as of September 2024)
- 5.3 Funding available is £125 for each eligible learner with the exception of those in Year 7, who will be entitled to £200.
- 5.4 The grant can be spent on:
- School uniform including coats and shoes;
  - School sports kit including footwear;
  - IT equipment: laptop and tablets ONLY (School Essentials should only be used in limited situations where a school is unable to loan equipment to the family);
  - Uniform for enrichment activities, including but not limited to: scouts; guides; cadets; martial arts; sports; performing arts, or dance;
  - Equipment - for example, school bags and stationery;
  - Specialist equipment where new curriculum activities begin such as design and technology;
  - Equipment for out-of-school hours trips such as outdoor learning - for example, waterproofs.

- 5.5 Swansea Council uses an online system for parents/carers to apply for the grant. Payments are made directly into bank accounts a few days after applications are submitted. Should a parent be unable to use this system they can work through their school, where purchases will be made on their behalf.
- 5.6 It should be noted that pupils receiving the universal free school meal are not eligible for the uniform grant unless they meet the eligibility income criteria for free school meals. Also some older children who do receive a free meal do so because of the Welsh Government's 'transitional protection'. This means that a child may have been entitled to a free school meal because of income levels, and even though the income level has increased the free school meal has been protected. This causes a lot of confusion for parents and carers who do not understand why they are not eligible for the uniform grant when their child is in receipt of free school meals.
- 5.7 Most schools in Swansea offer a recycling service to enable uniform to be reused. Swansea Council also supports GROW, a charity that launders and recycles school uniform, usually for £1 an item [Projects – GROW Cymru: A Women's Help enterprise in Swansea](#)

## **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications.

## **7. Finance Implications**

- 7.1 There are no finance implications.

## **8. Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 8.1 The report is for information and not for decision.

### **Background papers:**

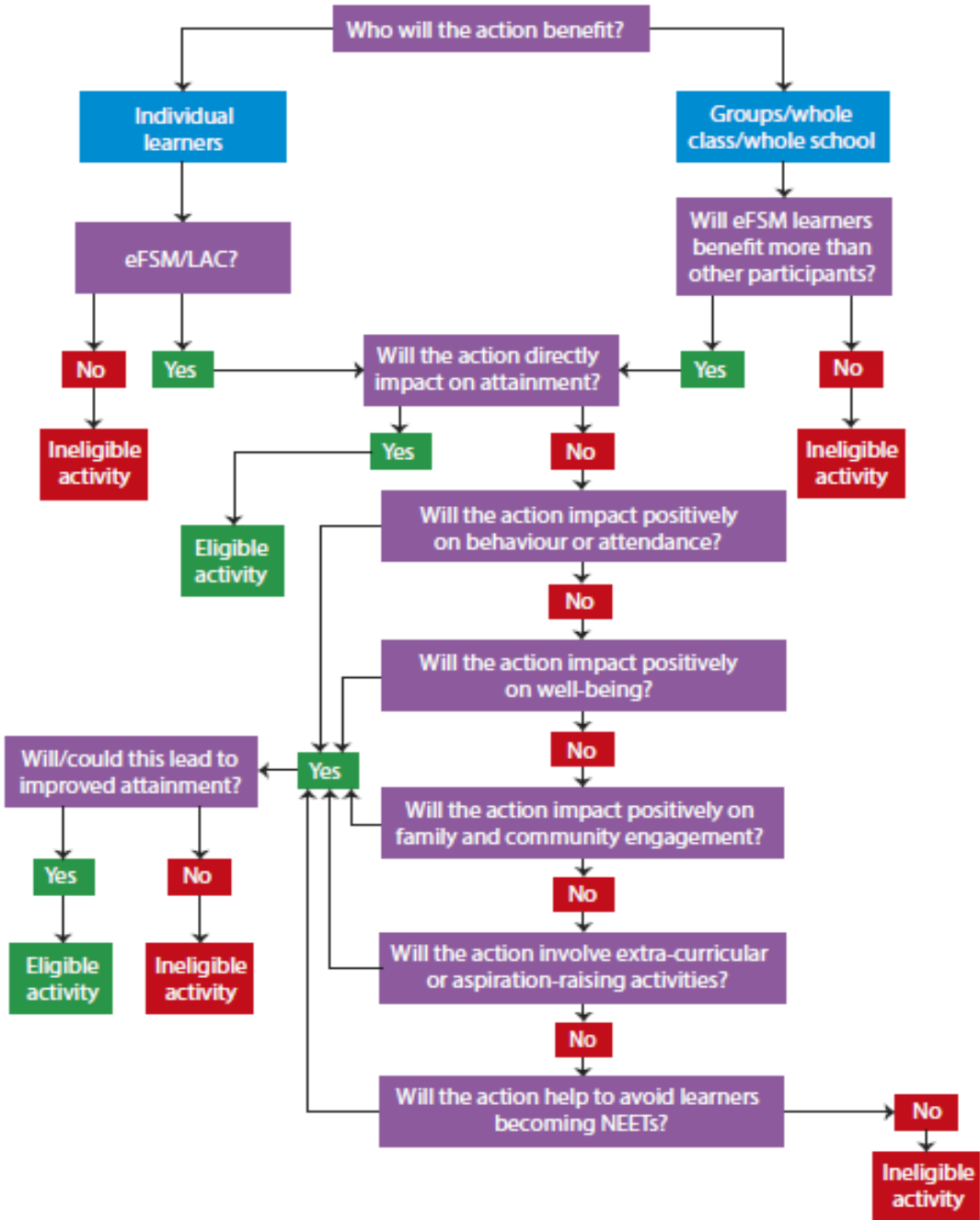
Corporate Plan [Corporate plan 2023 / 2028 - Swansea](#)

Welsh Government School Uniform Policy [School uniform and appearance: policy guidance for governing bodies | GOV.WALES](#)

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Flowchart on Use of PDG

Flowchart on Use of PDG





# Agenda Item 8



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

### Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 14 November 2024

## **Briefing on progress on the Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy (including an update on the behaviour strategy)**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To brief the Scrutiny Performance Panel on progress on the Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy (including an update on the behaviour strategy)
<b>Content:</b>	The report sets out the progress against the Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy, including detailed information relating to the development of a new behaviour strategy.
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	Consider the information provided and provide comments and observations
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Robert Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
<b>Lead Officer &amp; Report Author:</b>	Kate Phillips, Head of Vulnerable Learner Service <a href="mailto:Kate.Phillips2@swansea.gov.uk">Kate.Phillips2@swansea.gov.uk</a>

### 1. Background

The Vulnerable Learner Service covers a range of services for vulnerable learners which include Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team, Maes Derw Pupil Referral Unit, services for pupils Educated Other than at School, Home Tuition Team, Pupil Engagement (promoting inclusion/reducing exclusion), School Admissions Team, Looked After Children Education, Education Welfare Service and Education Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Some learners are identified as vulnerable due to a specific additional learning need or personal situation for example children who are looked after. In addition, all children and young people can potentially experience periods of vulnerability at different points in time.

Creating an education system which is inclusive and responsive to need is critical in meeting needs and ensuring all children and young people have the best chance to access education opportunities and progression. This will

contribute to achieving the Education Directorate aim of creating an Excellent Education for All by Working Together.

The Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy was agreed by Cabinet in May 2023 and aims to bring together the key priorities across all areas of the Vulnerable Learners Service which will support us to meet the needs of vulnerable learners to achieve the aims of the Education Directorate and Swansea Council.

These priorities are:

- Promoting attendance
- Promoting inclusion
- Embedding effective universal (whole school) provision while supporting sufficient specialist places
- Embedding a shared inclusion ethos
- Emotional health and psychological wellbeing (EHPW) whole school approach

Within the priority of inclusion there is a current workstream focusing on developing a revised behaviour strategy for Swansea schools. This work is being considered as part on the Education Service Transformation Committee and additional detail will be provided as part of this report to update the Education Scrutiny Panel on the progress to date and proposed next steps.

## 2. Update on progress against each priority.

**Promoting attendance:** Attendance remains challenging however, since 2022 there has been a slow but steady increase in attendance across all sectors of education in Swansea. This improving picture has been supported by the work of the Education Welfare Service (EWS). A full review and team restructure has been undertaken to ensure that EWS are able to work in the most effective way possible. All schools are now supported with individual action plans and some schools with the most challenging attendance rates have been supported by the Family Engagement Grant. Family Engagement Officers have been appointed by school and meet regularly. EWS are represented at all Family Engagement Officer meetings and attendance is a standing item. EWS are also moving away from punitive approaches wherever possible and focusing on learner welfare using trauma informed approaches and considering appropriate responses to Emotionally Based School Avoidance.

**Promoting Inclusion:** This priority aims to reduce exclusion from schools and minimise the use of part time timetables, unless they are part of a planned reintegration strategy. In line with national trends there has been an increase in the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions over the last 5 years in Swansea. It is recognised that there are a number of factors that have contributed to this which include, but are not limited to, the impact of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis, the increase in learners with additional learning needs and learners who are neurodiverse. These factors have contributed to reduced emotional health and wellbeing which in turn can create emotional responses to environments which may be perceived as challenging

behaviours. These societal and demographic changes require a different response or different environment for learners and this has led to the need to develop a revised behaviour strategy for Swansea schools. This work is being co-developed with schools and wider stakeholders and is the focus of the Education Service Transformation Committee. More detail will be provided in Section 3 of this report.

**Embedding effective universal (whole school) provision while supporting sufficient specialist places.** There has been significant progress in relation to this priority which focusses on provision for learners with additional learning needs. The priority is about achieving the right balance between supporting learners in their local schools via whole school and targeted approaches wherever possible while also recognising that for some learners a more specialised provision is required.

This priority has been progressed via our Specialist Teaching Facility (STF) review. The STF review has been ongoing for a four year period which has included an extensive period of stakeholder engagement and co-design. The output of this engagement period was a set of proposals to remodel and redesignate the STF offer in Swansea. These proposals include the:

- redesignation of 25 Special Teaching Facilities.
- change the specialism of 3 STFs.
- opening of 5 new Special Teaching Facilities and expansion of a further 4 STFs.
- the closure of 5 Special Teaching Facilities.

The net gain will be 61 additional places if the proposals proceed.

The consultation period ended in October 2024 and a report with the outcome of the consultation and final recommendations will be considered by Swansea Cabinet in December 2024.

In addition to the work supporting the increases of specialist places there has been significant work undertaken to support the universal offer at whole school level. There has been a focus on building capacity and using inreach and outreach offers of support to both learners and as professional development. This work has included:

- A pilot 'cluster enhanced provision' model in the Dylan Thomas cluster, the pilot is ongoing at the time of reporting. The provision provides short term interventions for learners and specialist advice for professionals on an inreach / outreach basis.
- A sensory resource base has been established at Grange Primary School to provide new opportunities for learners with sensory impairment. The base will also offer training opportunities for school professionals.
- A new Welsh Medium Additional Learning Needs provision has been opened in Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bryniago to support learners with additional learning needs through the medium of Welsh and provide a transition to a new STF model if agreed.
- Pen y Bryn Special School are working with the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team to provide an outreach support offer to STFs

- The Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team have also commissioned Occupational Therapy support for STFs

While many of these workstreams are still in early stages of development our ongoing monitoring and evaluation indicate good success in all workstreams and the feedback to date is positive. We will continue to review and measure the impact on learners.

**Embedding a shared inclusion ethos.** The intention for the priorities in the Inclusion Strategy is that they will support the embedding of a shared inclusion ethos by ensuring inclusive approaches and a commitment to meeting the needs of vulnerable learners. The work on the behaviour strategy is an example of this and, as outlined in Section 3 below, agreeing shared, consistent approaches which place learners at the centre are critical.

In addition to this, an Accessibility Strategy has recently been approved by Cabinet.. This strategy will support the local authority with the aim of ensuring an inclusive, equitable and positive education experience for all disabled learners. Alongside this strategy there has been a focus on using the Welsh Government ALN Capital Grant to improve accessibility in schools by making physical improvements to buildings or purchasing additional resources.

The Welsh Government ALN Capital Grant has also been used strategically to support the embedding on an inclusion ethos. The grant was used to ensure every school was able to purchase sensory equipment to support learners. In addition to this, the grant has been used to future proof spaces in schools for learners with additional learning needs, aligned to our strategic programmes. The grant was also used to purchase minibuses to ensure more equitable experiences for learners with additional needs particularly in relation to home to school transport.

**Emotional health and psychological wellbeing (EHPW) whole school approach.** This priority is led primarily by the Education Psychology Service (EPS) but as with all elements of the Inclusion Strategy there are important interconnections. An example of this is the work undertaken in relation to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). EPS has developed this important training package for schools and also shared the training and strategies with EWS to ensure consistency in approach. The small improvements in attendance and shift to a less punitive approach reflect this. EPS have also led on the development of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme. This was initially challenging to establish due to recruitment challenges but the innovative use of Assistant Educational Psychologists has ensured that ELSA is now an embedded initiative within schools in Swansea.

A significant milestone in this priority was the recommissioning of the school based counselling service which resulted in the commissioning of a new provider who is able to align services to the approaches within the Inclusion Strategy. Stakeholders were involved in this process. This priority area is also overseen by the Emotional Health and Psychological Wellbeing Forum which is a multi-agency forum.

### **3. Progress on development of a new behaviour strategy**

As detailed in Section 2, work on developing a new behaviour strategy is aligned to the priority of Promoting Inclusion and also incorporates elements of the other priorities.

It is reported nationally that behaviour in schools is becoming more challenging and this is reflected in Swansea schools and feedback from school-based colleagues.

The increasing trajectory of exclusions indicates that new approaches are required.

Societal and demographic changes have been identified and these include (although are not limited to):

- The impact of the pandemic
- Poverty and cost of living crisis
- Social media
- Substance use
- Increase in violent crimes
- Recruitment challenges in schools
- Challenging budget positions

We also know there is an increase in learners with Additional Learning Needs and an increase in Neuro Diverse learners who require different approaches from those that may have been traditionally offered. Practice differs between schools.

The LA has a Duty to Promote High Standards of Education in accordance with Education Act 1998 and we also have an obligation to support schools and governing bodies to meet their obligations, including those specified under the Education and Inspection Act 2006. In addition to this we have responsibilities in relation to the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child and the Wellbeing of Future Generations. For these reasons we are in the process of developing a behaviour strategy and policy for schools in Swansea. The work will be co-designed with schools and multi-agency partners. It is being overseen by the Education Service Transformation Committee who have been valuable contributors to the workstream.

The progress to date is as follows:

- Two multi agency workshops were held face to face with over 120 attendees.
- Attendees represented a significant breadth of stakeholders including schools, education officers, Local Health Board representatives, Public Health Wales representatives, social workers and social services

representatives, Welsh Government, Service Transformation Committee members, trades unions and Swansea Parent Carer forum and others.

- Attendees provided detailed feedback to five key questions.
- The feedback collated and themed.
- A questionnaire was circulated and complete by 22 schools.
- The results were analysed and themed.

The partnership work has enabled us to be clearer about the issues and the approaches needed to address them. The emerging feedback is as follows:

Issues:

- Dysregulation and emotional responses
- Increased physicality
- Gap between home and school expectations
- Insufficient resource for LA to provide support
- Children with 'complex' needs and ALN
- Issues of respect

Approaches needed:

- Early intervention and support
- Training and development
- Parental involvement and support
- Consistent policies and procedures
- Positive reinforcement and relationships
- Funding and resources
- Specialist support and training
- Parental and community engagement
- Support from external agencies
- Consistent and clear guidelines

The next steps in progressing this work will be to hold follow up workshops to begin to design the strategy. The proposed next steps will be to:

- Collate all findings and reshare at follow up workshops
- Produce draft policy with our stakeholders
- Consider producing a toolkit
- Identify best practice
- Draw on experts within schools and identify relevant research
- Draw up a delivery plan

The Service Transformation Committee will continue to oversee this work and the aim is to conclude by Easter 2025.

#### **4. Legal implications**

4.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report

## **5. Finance Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implication associated with this report

## **6. Integrated Assessment Implications**

6.1 The report is for information and not for decision.

### **Background papers:**

Vulnerable Learners Service Inclusion Strategy. [08 - Appendix A.pdf](#)

# Agenda Item 9



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

### Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 14 November 2024

## Briefing on School Admissions Arrangements

<b>Purpose:</b>	To brief the Scrutiny Performance Panel on the School Admissions Arrangements including a recent review.
<b>Content:</b>	The report sets out to describe the governance statutory processes around the admissions arrangements which are reviewed annually, including its oversubscription criteria.
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	Consider the information provided and give views around the processes.
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Robert Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
<b>Lead Officer &amp; Report Author:</b>	Helen Howells, Team Manager for Pupil Support Helen.Howells@swansea.gov.uk

### 1. Background

- 1.1 Swansea Council has a legal responsibility for determining the admissions arrangements for its maintained schools under section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act (1998). Furthermore, in accordance with the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006 the Council has a duty to review the Admissions to Schools Policy and to consult governing bodies of voluntary aided schools on their admission arrangements. Guidance for this is set out in the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013). The School Admissions Arrangements for 2025/2026 can be found in Appendix A.
- 1.2 Swansea Council has established an independent, experienced and quorate Admission Forum, which is specified in section 85A of the 1998 Act (inserted by section 46 of the Education Act 2002). The Admission Forum in Swansea ensures that the arrangements are fair and equitable, providing a vehicle for admission authorities and other key interested parties to scrutinise the effectiveness of local admission arrangements, consider how to deal with difficult admission issues and advise admission authorities on ways in which their arrangements can be improved. As an Admission authority, Swansea Council pays due regard to any advice offered by the Forum.



- 1.3 The Admission Forum in Swansea has a key role in ensuring a fair admissions system that does not disadvantage one child compared with another and is straightforward and easy for parents to understand. Forums are responsible for monitoring compliance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code 2013.
- 1.4 Admissions arrangements are reviewed annually. This process is set out in the Welsh Government School Admissions Code 2013 and is fully complied with by Swansea Council. Should there be no significant changes, then the arrangements are reviewed by the Admission Forum prior to consultation with all Swansea LA maintained schools, Swansea VA schools, Chairs and Clerks to Governors, and neighbouring LAs. The consultation period each year runs from December to January. Following completion of the consultation process the LA must determine the admission arrangements by 15th April in the determination year. To meet the requirements of the legislation and code, the agreed arrangements are reported to Council (usually at a meeting in March) to be determined.
- 1.5 If a significant change to the admission arrangements were proposed, the LA would be required to undertake a full consultation process (i.e with parents of all children likely to be affected which is every family living in Swansea and indeed any family likely to move to the area).

## **2. Current position**

- 2.1 The Admissions team represents the admitting body for Swansea Council, and processes over eight thousand admission applications per year. Approximately five thousand of these applications are made during admission rounds for year of entry i.e. Nursery, Reception and Year 7. Each application is processed in accordance with Swansea Council's agreed admission arrangements.
- 2.2 Swansea Council complies with all legal requirements and have always consulted with statutory consultees on an annual basis since we have been required to do so. Throughout all this time and from a total of 94 schools, all but one primary school (in last year's consultation), felt overwhelmingly that the arrangements are fair and work well for Swansea. This means that 99.3% of schools per pupil population currently consider the arrangements fair for all.

In addition to this, we have a high rate of meeting parental preferences, which is between 97 and 98% year on year. This indicates that our arrangements are effective for the vast majority of families. In any arrangements dealing with such high volume and where there are pressures on places in certain areas, there will always be a very small number of refusals, but our admissions appeal process allows for these cases to have further, independent consideration if requested. We also operate waiting lists. Details of admission appeals by school and outcome are published every year in our Information for Parents Booklet.

2.3 Unusually, in the consultation for the 2024 Admission Arrangements there was an objection from a statutory consultee (a single primary school). Given that this objection had followed 100% agreement rate for many years, it was considered important to give a very through consideration to this objection. In addition to this, a parent whose child attended the same school had written in to state they felt the criteria was unfair. Their child had not been offered a place at their preferred school at the time although they were subsequently offered a place, in line with the oversubscription criteria, when one became available from the waiting list. While parents are not statutory consultees, their comments were still given detailed consideration by the Forum. The details of this consideration and the findings of the consultation are outlined in the report to March Council 2024 (Appendix D). The key points from this report are:

- To inform Council of the statutory process undertaken by the Admissions Forum.
- To ensure Council have all the information relating to the current admissions arrangements.
- To advise council that the arrangements remain fair and equitable.
- To highlight any consultee (statutory or otherwise) who feel that the current arrangements are unfair.
- To provide a full and through report enabling Council to determine the arrangements for the LA.
- The report addressed the specific issues raised during the consultation process and the justification for the proposal to retain the current arrangements as changes proposed in line with the suggestion made would disadvantage other applicants.

This report was considered by Council in March 2024. Following further representations to Council from the same member of the public who had submitted the letter regarding the arrangements, Council requested a further review.

Following this request the Admissions Forum undertook an additional review to ensure they were satisfied that the arrangements and specifically the oversubscription criteria remain equitable. Despite the parent not being a statutory consultee, the Forum felt that it was appropriate that their views were considered.

Additional information was also considered, such as:

- potential scenarios and outcomes which would have occurred should the oversubscription criteria be amended to that being suggested.
- additional data in relation to previous admission rounds.
- outcomes of meetings with colleagues in other LAs.

2.4 A report has been compiled for council consideration in December, outlining the issues raised and the findings of the Admissions Forum (Appendix E).

2.5 The Admissions Forum's key findings, following scrutiny of historical data and analysis of current practise are detailed below.

### **3. Admission Forum Review Findings**

3.1 The Forum concluded that data analysis (Appendix B) confirms that instances of refusal using our long standing arrangements during the admissions rounds, are extremely low, noting the following:

- Instances of sibling refusal, in catchment, are extremely low. Data confirmed that each admission round deals with over 5,000 applications per annum. In six years and approximately 30,000 applications, only five applications had been refused when a child was living in catchment which equates to 0.016%.
- Of those five catchment refusals, only three had siblings also attending the school, equating to 0.01%.
- Over the last 6 years this was an anomaly in two years only, 2021 and 2023, and occurred as standalone instances in two different primary schools.
- There have been no catchment refusals for September 2024.
- In 2023, two out of the three refusals were subsequently offered their first choice school, due to pupil movement, this is a usual occurrence, and while initial refusals are upsetting, the team work tirelessly to match as many children as possible to their first choice school.

Thus, evidencing the current arrangements work effectively for the vast majority of families living in catchment and wishing siblings to attend the same school

3.2 Data in Appendix B shows that the highest level of refusal occurs when parents apply for a school outside their catchment. The LA recognises parental right to choose a school for their children and provides support and guidance for all parents choosing schools outside of their catchment area.

3.3 The Forum consider that Swansea Council are fully compliant with the Admissions Code and are identical to its closest neighbouring authority. Additionally, officers have consulted with other local authorities in Wales, during National meetings, and understand that their instances of in catchment refusal/appeals, including that of the sibling criteria, are equal to or higher in other LAs. Given this new information the Forum therefore concluded that our arrangements are best suited to the local need.

3.4 The Forum continues to exercise fairness to all parents and recognise it is difficult to have multiple criteria and to satisfy all parents/families and all circumstances. The Welsh Government School Admissions Code provides guidelines and examples of good practice for oversubscription criteria that are fair to all children and their families. It states, "it is possible for a criterion to be fair in some circumstances and not in others. It is for admission authorities, acting in accordance with the provisions and guidelines in this Code, to decide which criteria they will use and in what circumstances."

3.5 Members of the Forum wished to highlight that the Local Authority processes up to 8,000 admission applications annually and they consider that the criteria is fair and equitable. Over 97% rate of first applications are met in the

admission rounds, which is similar or higher than that of other LAs. Coupled with data from schools which shows that all but one is currently in agreement that the arrangements are fair, the Forum have therefore concluded that they are equitable and suitable.

- 3.6 The Forum agrees that the independent appeals process which can add consideration and weighting to family circumstances provides a further option for these cases to be considered. In conclusion therefore, the Forum feels that the current admissions arrangements and criteria are equitable for all families.
- 3.7 The Council produces and publishes an Information for Parents Booklet every year.

### [Glossary - Swansea](#)

This booklet provides important supplementary information and guidance for all applicants and applicants must sign to confirm they have read it prior to applying for a school place. Amongst the detailed guidance it contains important information confirming that no particular scenario guarantees a place in a preferred school e.g. being in catchment or having a sibling attending. In addition, important definitions are included such as how the Council define siblings for the purpose of school admission applications. This booklet is reviewed every year to ensure that guidance is as clear and relevant as possible.

- 3.8 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is completed every year for Council to consider before they determine to approve the arrangements. The IIA for current Admissions Arrangements has been assessed as low risk to all communities. Should a full consultation be required in relation to a change to oversubscription criteria then there are potential implications, both in terms of financial cost to the council and for vulnerable communities. Furthermore, given the scale of consultation required, this would not be possible in time for the current admission round, if considered appropriate at all
- 3.9 The most significant issue in relation to ensuring first preferences are met in admissions is not the oversubscription criteria but the availability of places where needed to meet demand, specifically from in year transfers. A transformation strategy is currently underway to identify right schools in the right places, which highlights demand for school places and aims to achieve correct catchment boundaries to minimise oversubscription in schools. Decreasing oversubscription will reduce the need to use any criteria, and the Forum felt that oversubscription itself, rather than the criteria is the issue that needs to be addressed.
- 3.10 Following careful consideration of all facts available the Forum considers the current admissions arrangements equitable and most suitable to meet local need.

#### **4. Legal implications**

- 4.1 In addition to the legal implication contained in the body of the report Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Regulation 4 of the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006 require Admission Authorities to consult and determine school admission arrangements annually. The Regulations set requirements for consultation and determinations of admission arrangements. The Welsh Government has issued guidance circular 'Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales', which sets out methodology for local authorities to follow when determining their admission arrangements. There is also a legal requirement to consider the guidelines contained in the Welsh Government School Admissions Code
- 4.2 Swansea Council fully complies with its statutory duty in relation to its admissions arrangements. Section 85A of the 1998 Act (inserted by section 46 of the Education Act 2002) requires all LAs to establish an Admission Forum. Admission Forums provide a vehicle for admission authorities and other key interested parties to discuss the effectiveness of local admission arrangements, consider how to deal with difficult admission issues and advise admission authorities on ways in which their arrangements can be improved. Admission authorities of all maintained schools, when exercising their functions, must have regard to any advice offered by the Forum.
- 4.3 Admission forums have a key role in ensuring a fair admissions system that does not disadvantage one child compared with another and is straightforward and easy for parents to understand. Forums are responsible for monitoring compliance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code 2013. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Education (Admission Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2003.
- 4.4 Any proposed admissions arrangement, should be reviewed by the Admission Forum prior to consultation with all Swansea LA maintained schools, Swansea VA schools, Chairs and Clerks to Governors, and neighbouring LAs. The consultation period each year runs from December to January. If a significant change to the admission arrangements were proposed, the LA would be required to undertake a wider consultation process (i.e with parents of children likely to be affected). Following completion of the consultation process the LA must determine the admission arrangements by 15 April in the determination year. To meet the requirements of the legislation and code, the agreed arrangements are reported to Council (usually at a meeting in March) to be determined.

#### **5. Finance Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implication associated with this report

#### **6. Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 6.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

6.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

6.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

### **Background papers:**

[School Standards and Framework Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[The Education \(Determination of Admission Arrangements\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[School admissions code | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales)

[Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[The Education \(Admission Forums\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[Schools Admissions Arrangements 2025-2026 Report](#)

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A [School admission arrangements 2025/2026 - Swansea](#)

Appendix B Data to model the suggested scenario change

Appendix C Current IIA

Appendix D [Schools Admissions Arrangements 2025-2026 Report](#)

Appendix E Report for Council December 2024

## Appendix B

Since 2018 there have been 3 occasions where a pupil in catchment with a sibling refused (highlighted in table below):

Admission rounds (on-time applications)	Total number of applicants refused on offer (all criterion)	Number of 'catchment' only refusals	Number of 'catchment with a sibling' refusal	Number of Sibling only criteria refusals (not in catchment)
September 2018				
Cefn Hengoed	12	0	0	2
Oystermouth				2
Parkland	13	0	0	2
Penllergaer	1	0	0	0
September 2019				
Pontarddulais Comp	25	0	0	2
Sea View	3	1	0	2
September 2020				
Newton	3	0	0	2
Oystermouth	4	0	0	2
Pontlliw	8	0	0	1
Seaview	4	0	0	2
YGG Llwynderw	7	0	0	3
September 2021				
Sea View	3	0	1 (distance tie breaker applied to determine refusals)	
Mayals	5	0	0	4
Penllergaer	6	0	0	2
September 2022				
Sea View		1	0	
September 2023				
Newton	4	3	2 (distance tie breaker applied to determine refusals)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>

## SCENARIOS

### Reception September 2023 – Newton Primary

Newton refusals (with existing criteria) were:

Catchment	Sibling	Distance
Yes	No	0.67
Yes	Yes	0.69
Yes	Yes	0.78
No	No	0.57

If oversubscription included 'catchment with sibling' criteria above catchment only criteria, refusals for Newton would have been:

Catchment	Sibling	Distance
Yes	No	0.46
Yes	No	0.61
Yes	No	0.67
No	No	0.57



## Reception September 2021 – Sea View Primary

Refusals (with existing criteria) were:

Catchment	Sibling	Distance
Yes	Yes	0.53
No	No	0.72
No	No	0.78

If oversubscription included 'catchment with sibling' criteria above catchment only criteria, refusals for Sea View would have been:

Catchment	Sibling	Distance
Yes	No	0.38
No	No	0.72
No	No	0.78

In both scenarios, if we added an additional criteria of 'catchment with sibling' above catchment alone, catchment children would still have been refused, and they live closer in distance than some of the catchment with sibling applicants.

# Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form

Please ensure that you refer to the Screening Form Guidance while completing this form.

## Which service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Vulnerable Learners Service

Directorate: Education

### Q1 (a) What are you screening for relevance?

- New and revised policies, practices or procedures
- Service review, re-organisation or service changes/reductions, which affect the wider community, service users and/or staff
- Efficiency or saving proposals
- Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning
- New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, e.g., new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, changing location
- Large Scale Public Events
- Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation
- Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Services Board, which impact on a public bodies functions
- Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)
- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)
- Major procurement and commissioning decisions
- Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services
- Other

### (b) Please name and fully describe initiative here:

#### School Admissions Arrangements 2024-2025

Every Local Authority (LA) has a statutory duty to manage admissions to its schools. The Admission Arrangements are set out in accordance with the Welsh Government (WG) School Admission Code (July 2013) and ensures that the admissions to schools are managed in a fair and equitable manner for all pupils.

### Q2 What is the potential impact on the following: the impacts below could be positive (+) or negative (-)

	High Impact		Medium Impact		Low Impact		Needs further Investigation	No Impact
	+	-	+	-	+	-		
Children/young people (0-18)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older people (50+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any other age group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Future Generations (yet to be born)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Race (including refugees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Asylum seekers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gypsies & travellers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion or (non-)belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Welsh Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Poverty/social exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Carers (inc. young carers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

# Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form

Community cohesion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Q3 What involvement has taken place/will you undertake e.g. engagement/consultation/co-productive approaches? Please provide details below – either of your activities or your reasons for not undertaking involvement**

A compulsory consultation takes place annually with stakeholders (e.g. schools, headteachers, governing bodies, neighbouring LAs and other admission authorities). The LA’s Admissions Forum which is a statutory body also considers all responses to the consultation and makes its own recommendations which are also included in the admission arrangements report, which in turn goes to Corporate Briefing, Cabinet and Council for approval in line with the statutory timescales.

**Q4 Have you considered the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 in the development of this initiative:**

- a) Overall does the initiative support our Corporate Plan’s Well-being Objectives when considered together?  
 Yes  No
- b) Does the initiative consider maximising contribution to each of the seven national well-being goals?  
 Yes  No
- c) Does the initiative apply each of the five ways of working?  
 Yes  No
- d) Does the initiative meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?  
 Yes  No

**Q5 What is the potential risk of the initiative? (Consider the following impacts – equality, socio-economic, environmental, cultural, legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)**

High risk

Medium risk

Low risk

**Q6 Will this initiative have an impact (however minor) on any other Council service?**

Yes       No      If yes, please provide details below

School Transport: if the school offered following the admissions process is further from the home address than 2 miles (primary school) and 3 miles (secondary school) then transport will be offered.

**Q7 Will this initiative result in any changes needed to the external or internal website?**

Yes       No      If yes, please provide details below

# Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form

**Q8 What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on people and/or communities when considering all the impacts identified within the screening and any other key decisions affecting similar groups/ service users made by the organisation?**

The Admission Arrangements are set out in accordance with the Welsh Government (WG) School Admission Code (July 2013) and ensures that the admissions to schools are managed in a fair and equitable manner for all pupils.

## Outcome of Screening

**Q9 Please describe the outcome of your screening using the headings below:**

- **Summary of impacts identified and mitigation needed (Q2)**
- **Summary of involvement (Q3)**
- **WFG considerations (Q4)**
- **Any risks identified (Q5)**
- **Cumulative impact (Q7)**

Q2: The admission arrangements ensure all admission applications are treated equally and fairly and in line with WG School Admissions Code.

Q3: Compulsory consultation undertaken annually with stakeholders (e.g. schools, headteachers, governing bodies, neighbouring LAs and other admission authorities). The LA's Admissions Forum which is a statutory body also considers all responses to the consultation.

Q4: Due regard has been given to the to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

Q5: Correspondence was received from a parent regarding the LAs admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria following a refusal of a place at their catchment primary school. It should be noted that the child was subsequently offered a place at the preferred school due to natural pupil movement in the year group and did not need to appeal the refusal.

Parents are not a mandated consultee under the School Admissions Code. The LA is only required to consult with wider stakeholders, such as parents, if a significant change to policy is being proposed. The Local Authority has checked the Regulations and Welsh Government Guidance and are satisfied that current arrangements and processes that drive these are compliant with our legal responsibilities. Due consideration was given to the representation made which was thoroughly discussed by the Education Directorate Senior Leadership Board (SLB) and the Admission Forum. The conclusions and recommendations of both SLB and the Admission Forum were that the arrangements should remain in place. The arrangements will continue to be discussed each year by the Forum to ensure there is no emerging pattern to suggest any unfairness.

All schools and governing body's in Swansea were consulted on the Admissions Arrangements 2025-2026. Neighbouring local authority's were also consulted. We have 83 local authority community maintained schools and 6 voluntary aided (VA) schools in Swansea. 3 schools responded to the consultation.

Q7: The Admissions Arrangements will have a positive impact on learners in Swansea by ensuring equality of access to school places.

# Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form

(NB: This summary paragraph should be used in the 'Integrated Assessment Implications' section of corporate report)

Full IIA to be completed

Do not complete IIA – please ensure you have provided the relevant information above to support this outcome

NB: Please email this completed form to the Access to Services Team for agreement before obtaining approval from your Head of Service. Head of Service approval is only required via email.

<b>Screening completed by:</b>
<b>Name:</b> Melissa Taylor
<b>Job title:</b> Admissions Manager
<b>Date:</b> 18/01/2024
<b>Approval by Head of Service:</b>
<b>Name:</b> Rhodri Jones
<b>Position:</b> Head of Achievement and Partnership
<b>Date:</b> 01/02/2024

Please return the completed form to [accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk)



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Council – 5 December 2024

# Review of Swansea Council School Admissions Arrangements

<b>Purpose:</b>	To report back to Council following the meeting on 21 March 2024 so that 'The Admission Policy and its criteria be reviewed prior to the 2026-2027 admission arrangements'.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Swansea Council Admissions Arrangements Inclusion Strategy Abertawe 2028
<b>Consultation:</b>	School Admission Forum, Access to Services, Legal
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that:  1) Council considers and accepts the findings of the review by the School Admissions Forum of the Admissions Arrangements and its criteria as outlined in this report.
<b>Report Author:</b>	Kate Phillips
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	N/A
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Stephanie Williams
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Rhian Millar

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act (1998) states the local authority (LA) is responsible for determining the admission arrangements for its maintained schools. In accordance with the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006 the Council has a duty to review the Admissions to Schools Policy and to consult governing bodies of voluntary aided schools on their admission arrangements. Guidance for this is set out in the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013).

- 1.2 Swansea Council processes over eight thousand admission applications per year. Approximately five thousand of these applications are made during admission rounds for year of entry i.e. Nursery, Reception and Year 7.
- 1.3 These applications are processed in accordance with Swansea Council's agreed admission arrangements. The admission arrangements are consulted upon annually ensuring a regular and robust process to consider the effectiveness of the arrangements and consider any proposed amendments. The consultation includes the School Admissions Forum, schools, governing bodies and neighbouring local authorities. They are also determined at Council each year ensuring stringent oversight of the process.
- 1.4 Following the consultation in relation to the 2025/2026 admission arrangements a report was taken to Council on 21 March 2024 (see background papers). During that meeting representations were made from a member of the public in relation to the current oversubscription criteria in the admission arrangements. Council resolved that a further review of the arrangements should be undertaken.

## **2. Background to concern raised**

- 2.1 Every LA must have its own oversubscription criteria as part of its admissions arrangements. This means that if more applications have been received for any school than there are places available, the oversubscription criteria apply.
- 2.2 Swansea Council's admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria are legal and compliant with the Welsh Governments School Admissions Code which also states it is for each LA to decide on appropriate criteria dependent on local circumstances.
- 2.3 The full Swansea Council Admission Arrangements are detailed in Appendix A. The oversubscription criteria are as follows:
  1. Children who are in the care of a local authority.
  2. Children who live within the school's defined catchment area.
  3. Children who have a brother or sister of statutory school age attending the school at the date of their admission.
  4. Children attending a designated partner primary school (applies for applications to secondary schools only).
  5. Other children for whom a place has been requested for whom criteria 1 to 4 above do not apply, ie. distance.

Should criteria 1-4 be matched, and there are more applications than places available, then distance is used as a 'tie-breaker'.

- 2.4 During the 2025/2026 admission round, one set of parents raised a concern about the oversubscription criteria in Swansea Council admission arrangements. They considered that the current arrangements were unfair. The parents attended Council in March 2024 and stated they consider that

there should be an additional criteria of “children who live within the school’s catchment area with a sibling attending the school when they join”, which they consider should be the second criteria.

Following the consideration of the admission arrangements in Council in March 2024 a further review of the arrangements was requested.

### **3. Details of review undertaken**

- 3.1 The review was undertaken by providing existing legislation, guidance alongside a range of additional research, data and modelling to an extraordinary meeting of the School Admissions Forum. The Forum is the key statutory body with the agreed remit to review admission arrangements. Guest members were invited to ensure additional insight and the new information along with additional representations were shared for a full review of the original decision making.
- 3.2 The additional forum took place on 14 May 2024. In order for them to consider the matter robustly they were provided with:
  - potential scenarios and outcomes which would have occurred should the oversubscription criteria be amended to that being suggested.
  - additional data in relation to previous admission rounds.
  - outcomes of meetings with colleagues in other LAs.

The Forum gave the matter serious consideration. Following the full council meeting, other parents from the same school contacted their local Councillor. These representations were also considered despite the Forum recognising that parents are not statutory consultees. It was considered reasonable to take into account the views expressed.

A full explanation of the considerations of the Admission Forum members is detailed below, which answers each of the points made by the parent in full council meeting and the request by the Council meeting to review the decision.

### **4. Admissions Forum Review**

- 4.1 The Forum takes its role to provide equity in its admissions arrangements very seriously. Analysis of historical data (Appendix B) in relation to sibling refusal in catchments confirmed the following:
  - Instances of sibling refusal, in catchment, are extremely low. Data confirmed that each admission round deals with over 5,000 applications per annum, in six years and approximately 30,000 applications only five applications had been refused when a child was living in catchment which equates to 0.016%.
  - Of those five catchment refusals only three had siblings also attending the school, equating to 0.01%.



- Over the last 6 years this was an anomaly in two years only, 2021 and 2023, and occurred as standalone instances in two different primary schools.
- There have been no catchment refusals for September 2024.
- In 2023, two out of the three refusals were subsequently offered their first choice school, due to pupil movement, this is a usual occurrence, and while initial refusals are upsetting, the team work tirelessly to match as many children as possible to their first choice school.

The data analysis confirms that instances of refusal for siblings in catchment are extremely low evidencing the current arrangements work effectively for the vast majority of families living in catchment and wishing siblings to attend the same school.

- 4.2 The parent expressed concerns regarding the separation of siblings, however, the Forum recognised the work of the Admissions Team to avoid sibling separation wherever possible.

The forum recognised that changing the criteria would result in similar levels of refusal but for children in different categories. Thus, it was considered that changing the criteria to 'siblings first' will increase refusals for children who live in catchment but without siblings attending the school. The Forum acknowledged that these children may be vulnerable, for instance they may have additional learning needs, be young carers or asylum seekers.

The Forum wished it to be noted that equal value should be placed upon every circumstance, and that every scenario of oversubscription will ultimately cause anxiety for families affected. The admission arrangements are designed to minimise instances of refusal and changing to suit one set of circumstances, may disadvantage more families.

Furthermore, changing criteria does not fully provide protection for sibling groups only those where an elder sibling attends school already. Should a first child be refused on the basis they have no older siblings attending the school, and subsequent younger children are given first choice placements, then there is a sibling separation.

Data in Appendix B shows that the highest level of sibling separation occurs when parents apply for a school outside their catchment. The proposed amendment to the criterion does not change the circumstance for these children and families. The LA recognises parental right to choose a school for their children and provides support and guidance for all parents choosing schools outside of their catchment area.

- 4.3 The Forum recognises the distress caused to the three children and their families who were refused a placement, while living in catchment with siblings, over the last six years, While the Admissions Team avoid sibling separation wherever possible they cannot mitigate against this scenario entirely. Unfortunately, in any arrangements, given the volume of applications, there will very occasionally be cases where applications must

be refused, and parents have the opportunity to appeal against the decision to refuse a school placement. Unlike the Local Authority, the independent appeal panel can take into consideration personal circumstances.

Data modelling based on the parent's preferred criteria highlights there would be more refusals for first born or only children. Highlighted in the case of the school oversubscribed in 2023, it shows that should the criteria have been 'catchment with siblings' then three children who all lived closer to the school than those with siblings would have been refused a school place instead. Similarly in the case in 2021, there would have been one refusal for a child who lived very close to the school. The same number of children are refused, because the school is oversubscribed in that year (See Appendix B).

- 4.4 It is the view of the Forum that the criteria is not unique to Swansea; Neath and Port Talbot have similar arrangements. Moreover, the code does not recognise a 'best practice guide' rather lists examples only, stating that the arrangements for individual schools must be set in the context of local circumstances and practical application of the criteria. The Forum consider that Swansea Council are fully compliant with the Admissions Code. Additionally, officers have consulted with other local authorities in Wales and understand that their instances of in catchment refusal/appeals, including that of the sibling criteria, are equal to or higher than in Swansea. Given this new information the Forum therefore concluded that our arrangements are best suited to the local need.

The Forum continues to exercise fairness to all parents and recognise it is difficult to have multiple criteria and to satisfy all parents/families and all circumstances. The Welsh Government School Admissions Code provides guidelines and examples of good practice for oversubscription criteria that are fair to all children and their families. It states, "it is possible for a criterion to be fair in some circumstances and not in others. It is for admission authorities, acting in accordance with the provisions and guidelines in this Code, to decide which criteria they will use and in what circumstances."

- 4.5 The existing arrangements also contain a 'sibling' oversubscription criterion. This comes after the higher criteria of residing in the catchment area for a school. For all existing oversubscription criteria, when there are more applicants meeting any one of the criteria, distance from the home address to the school is used as a tie breaker.

The parent argued that children living in catchment with a sibling in attendance should take priority over simple distance alone and does not believe this would be difficult or controversial to implement. The Forum agrees, and that is why sibling is higher than distance in our oversubscription criteria. However, distance is used as a tie breaker in all criteria.

- 4.6 The Forum recognised that this has been upsetting for the family and were pleased that a place became available, recognising that current criteria ensured that their child was offered that place. As already mentioned, members of the Forum wished to highlight that the Local Authority processes

up to 8,000 admission applications annually and they consider that the criteria is fair and equitable. There is an over 97% rate of first applications being met in the admission rounds, which is similar if not higher than in other LAs. This would be at risk should the criteria change for the reasons detailed in this report.

- 4.7 In summary, the Forum believes that the current criteria is best suited and most equitable for children and families in Swansea because it minimises, as far as possible, the instances of refusal. It does not disadvantage families with only one child or an eldest child where their sibling/s have not yet started school, but it also gives priority to siblings by ensuring they are considered before distance in the oversubscription criteria. The policy uses distance as a tie breaker in all oversubscription criteria to ensure that children who live nearest to their preferred school are able to attend wherever possible. This does mean that in very few occasions, catchment and distance takes priority over catchment and sibling but this is only when there is a tie break situation.

The Forum states that changing the policy in the manner advocated would still lead to refusals, but in this case for children living in catchment and living nearer the school in distance, there is also a potential for first born siblings to be split from younger siblings in this scenario.

The Forum also recognises that in any criteria which is applied to a high volume of applications over an extended time frame there will be a small number of cases where there is a negative outcome. Swansea Council processes up to 8,000 admission applications annually and the Forum consider that the criteria is fair and equitable. The council has an over 97% rate of first preferences being met in the admission rounds therefore oversubscription criteria is only applied to under 3% of all applications.

The Forum agree that the independent appeals process which can add consideration and weighting to family circumstances provides a further option for these cases to be considered. In conclusion therefore, the Forum feels that the current admissions arrangements and criteria are equitable for all families.

- 4.8 The most significant issue in relation to ensuring first preferences are met in admissions is not the oversubscription criteria but the availability of places where needed to meet demand. A transformation strategy is currently underway to identify right schools in the right places, which highlights demand for school places and aims to achieve correct catchment boundaries to minimise oversubscription in schools. Decreasing oversubscription will reduce the need to use any criteria, and the Forum felt that oversubscription itself, rather than the criteria is the issue that needs to be addressed.
- 4.9 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is completed every year for Council to consider before they determine to approve the arrangements. The IIA for current Admissions Arrangements has been assessed as low risk to all communities. Should a full consultation be required in relation to a change to oversubscription criteria then there are potential implications, both in terms of financial cost to the council and for vulnerable communities. Furthermore,

given the scale of consultation required, this would not be possible in time for the current admission round, if considered appropriate at all.

- 4.10 In the meantime, this matter has been called in for scrutiny so it would seem inappropriate to make any proposals for changes while the matter is under scrutiny. Should the Scrutiny Committee wish to make any recommendations, these would be considered as part of that process.

## **5. Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- 5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

- 5.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implication associated with this report.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 In addition to the legal implication contained in the body of the report Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Regulation 4 of the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006 require Admission Authorities to consult and determine school admission arrangements annually. The Regulations set requirements for

consultation and determinations of admission arrangements. The Welsh Government has issued guidance circular 'Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales', which sets out methodology for local authorities to follow when determining their admission arrangements. There is also a legal requirement to consider the guidelines contained in the Welsh Government School Admissions Code

- 7.2 Swansea Council fully complies with its statutory duty in relation to its admissions arrangements. Section 85A of the 1998 Act (inserted by section 46 of the Education Act 2002) requires all LAs to establish an Admission Forum. Admission Forums provide a vehicle for admission authorities and other key interested parties to discuss the effectiveness of local admission arrangements, consider how to deal with difficult admission issues and advise admission authorities on ways in which their arrangements can be improved. Admission authorities of all maintained schools, when exercising their functions, must have regard to any advice offered by the Forum.
- 7.3 Admission forums have a key role in ensuring a fair admissions system that does not disadvantage one child compared with another and is straightforward and easy for parents to understand. Forums are responsible for monitoring compliance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code 2013. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Education (Admission Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2003.
- 7.4 Any proposed admissions arrangement, should be reviewed by the Admission Forum prior to consultation with all Swansea LA maintained schools, Swansea VA schools, Chairs and Clerks to Governors, and neighbouring LAs. The consultation period each year runs from December to January. If a significant change to the admission arrangements were proposed, the LA would be required to undertake a wider consultation process (i.e with parents of children likely to be affected). Following completion of the consultation process the LA must determine the admission arrangements by 15 April in the determination year. To meet the requirements of the legislation and code, the agreed arrangements are reported to Council (usually at a meeting in March) to be determined.

### **Background Papers:**

[School Standards and Framework Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)  
[The Education \(Determination of Admission Arrangements\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)  
[School admissions code | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales)  
[Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)  
[The Education \(Admission Forums\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)  
[Schools Admissions Arrangements 2025-2026 Report](#)

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A            [School admission arrangements 2025/2026 - Swansea](#)  
Appendix B            Data to model the suggested scenario change



Since 2018 there have been 3 occasions where a pupil in catchment with a sibling refused (highlighted in table below):

Admission rounds (on-time applications)	Total number of applicants refused on offer (all criterion)	Number of 'catchment' only refusals	Number of 'catchment with a sibling' refusal	Number of Sibling only criteria refusals (not in catchment)
September 2018				
Cefn Hengoed	12	0	0	2
Oystermouth				2
Parkland	13	0	0	2
Penllergaer	1	0	0	0
September 2019				
Pontarddulais Comp	25	0	0	2
Sea View	3	1	0	2
September 2020				
Newton	3	0	0	2
Oystermouth	4	0	0	2
Pontlliw	8	0	0	1
Seaview	4	0	0	2
YGG Llwynderw	7	0	0	3
September 2021				
Sea View	3	0	1 (distance tie breaker applied to determine refusals)	
Mayals	5	0	0	4
Penllergaer	6	0	0	2
September 2022				
Sea View		1	0	
September 2023				
Newton	4	3	2 (distance tie breaker applied to determine refusals)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>

## SCENARIOS

### Reception September 2023 – Newton Primary

Newton refusals (with existing criteria) were:

Catchment	Sibling	Distance
Yes	No	0.67
Yes	Yes	0.69
Yes	Yes	0.78
No	No	0.57

If oversubscription included 'catchment with sibling' criteria above catchment only criteria, refusals for Newton would have been:

Catchment	Sibling	Distance
Yes	No	0.46
Yes	No	0.61
Yes	No	0.67
No	No	0.57



## Reception September 2021 – Sea View Primary

Refusals (with existing criteria) were:

Catchment	Sibling	Distance
Yes	Yes	0.53
No	No	0.72
No	No	0.78

If oversubscription included 'catchment with sibling' criteria above catchment only criteria, refusals for Sea View would have been:

Catchment	Sibling	Distance
Yes	No	0.38
No	No	0.72
No	No	0.78

In both scenarios, if we added an additional criteria of 'catchment with sibling' above catchment alone, catchment children would still have been refused, and they live closer in distance than some of the catchment with sibling applicants.

# Agenda Item 10



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

### Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 14 November 2024

#### Career Advice in Swansea Schools

<b>Purpose:</b>	To update the Scrutiny Panel on careers advice, information and guidance across schools in Swansea.
<b>Content:</b>	The role of Careers Wales Careers Advisers, Business Engagement Advisers and Careers Curriculum teams.
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	Consider the information provided and give views.
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Robert Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
<b>Lead Officer &amp; Report Author:</b>	David Bawden, Strategic Skills Co-ordinator <a href="mailto:David.Bawden@swansea.gov.uk">David.Bawden@swansea.gov.uk</a>

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 Careers Wales delivers a remit set by Welsh Ministers which provides the all-age, independent, impartial and bilingual guidance and coaching service as well as Careers and Work-Related experiences (CWRE) service in Wales. This offer is presented as a partnership agreement made between Careers Wales and secondary schools and settings.
- 1.2 In Swansea, every secondary school and setting has a signed partnership agreement, and every secondary school or setting makes full use of the services provided by Careers Wales.
- 1.3 Careers Wales has a broad range of expertise available to deliver the services offered to schools. Every Swansea school has access to:
  - a careers adviser
  - a business engagement adviser
  - a curriculum support team for CWRE
- 1.4 There is strong partnership working between schools, the Local Authority and Careers Wales to offer high quality advice, information and guidance to our young people. These partnerships have had a positive impact in supporting

progression pathways; with 97.4% of school leavers in 2023 going on to a positive destination in 2024, according to Careers Wales destination data.

## 2. Careers Advice, Information and Guidance in Swansea

### Careers Advisers

- 2.1 Every Swansea secondary school has a professionally trained careers adviser who works within the school. Careers Wales' professional standards for advisers require them to achieve QCF Level 6 in Career Guidance and Development or the equivalent and register with the Career Development Institute's (CDI) UK Register of Career Development Professionals. They provide impartial and professional support to individuals and co-ordinate the range of services of the Careers Wales team for individual schools.
- 2.2 Careers advisers focus on the short and long-term needs of learners. This supports learners to broaden their horizons and raise awareness of the skills required in the modern labour market. Careers advisers support learners to develop skills for career planning and give crucial support at key transition points for pupils who need it.
- 2.3 From September 2024, all pupils in year 10 or 11 will be offered a guidance interview before leaving school, with ongoing support which will be differentiated to meet individual need, as below:
- **Universal support** - offer of a guidance interview and additional support based on the Careers Advisers professional judgement.
  - **Career Check support** - one to one support for those young people identified from Career Check as in need of guidance and coaching support.
  - **Targeted support** for those young people whose individual characteristics can lead to them not being in Education, Employment or Training post compulsory education.
  - **Additional Learning Needs Support** - one to one support for those young people identified as having additional learning needs (ALN).
- 2.4 At post-16, careers advice and guidance is focused primarily on learners identified as at risk of not completing their post 16 course of learning and those who self-refer. For those who decide to leave education at 16 and enter a job or training, support will be available via the Working Wales service.
- 2.5 The Strategic Coordinator of Education Skills meets regularly with the Careers Wales Swansea team manager to discuss local needs and challenges of the careers advisory service. For the academic year 2023/24, the number of one-to-one interactions across Swansea schools was 5,108. 296 group sessions were delivered.
- 2.6 In 2023, the Education Directorate carried out a learner voice survey to sixth form learners across the city. This exercise highlighted that the key people to give careers advice, information and guidance to young people were Careers Wales careers advisors based in secondary schools.

- 2.7 In March 2024, in partnership with Gower College Swansea, an event was organised to inform Careers Wales advisors on areas of regional economic growth. This took place at Swansea Arena and included updates on Pentre Awel, Campuses, Pembrokeshire Dock Marine and Apprenticeships. Advisers impact school learners through informed decision-making regarding pathway choices at post-16. A similar event is planned for December 2024, organised by the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership.

### **Business Engagement Advisers**

- 2.8 Careers Wales has well established links with local and national employers to support its approach to employer engagement. There is a national team of Business Engagements Advisers (BEAs), experienced in working with employers and expert in their knowledge of national and regional labour market trends.
- 2.9 Three BEAs support schools and settings in Swansea. The supportive team facilitates links between business and Education via a range of activities and programmes, including:
- visits to employer premises.
  - employer talks in schools.
  - digital employer presentations and virtual CWRE activities.
  - World of Work days / carousel events.
  - employer challenges and curriculum related content.
  - support to develop alumni networks and strategic links with employers.
- 2.10 All Swansea secondary schools and settings are part of Careers Wales Valued Partner programme. This initiative gives recognition to employers who support individual schools through Careers Wales employer engagement activities. Through the initiative, Careers Wales identifies employers who have an ongoing relationship and who regularly support activities in these schools (a minimum of three activities per year).
- 2.11 In 2023/2024, Careers Wales facilitated 132 employer engagement activities across Swansea schools and settings, these were attended by 5182 young people.
- 2.12 One such example is Kier Construction and Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe, who collaborated on a project called 'The Big Build'. 43 pupils from across the school, in years 9 to 11, worked closely with the Kier team across a week, learning about the construction processes. Working together as a team with help from local contractors Ian Williams Carpentry and HD carpentry, they took part in the construction of an outdoor learning space. All labour and materials costs were covered by Kier Construction. Learners followed plans and drawings and carried out basic civil engineering checks along with initial groundworks, carpentry and paving jobs. Pupils were able to speak with employees who held different roles within the organisation such as labourer, site manager, surveyor and carpenter. This raised aspirations and has motivated young people to continue to study and pursue a career in

construction. <https://careerswales.gov.wales/news/pupils-build-outdoor-classroom-with-kier-and-careers-wales>.

See also <https://x.com/i/status/1790741316642423060>

- 2.13 In another example, Morganstone became a School Valued Partner of Cefn Hengoed School for the duration of the construction of the new 3G pitch and barn. The whole school had assembly talks where learners got to know about what was happening at the school, introducing many of their apprentices who shared their career stories. Pupil voice was consulted early on and from what the pupils said they wanted from Morganstone a programme of employer engagement activities was drawn up which lasted for the build duration of 18 months.

### **Careers Curriculum Team**

- 2.14 Careers advice, information and guidance is included within Careers and Work-Related Experiences (CWRE), which is one of five cross cutting themes within the Curriculum for Wales for learners aged 3 to 16. Effective CWRE consists of careers education embedded across areas of learning which is supported by a range of work-related experiences. The Local Authority has worked closely with Careers Wales curriculum team to help implement CWRE by building the skills, knowledge and confidence of education professionals to deliver an effective careers programme.

- 2.15 From the age of three, CWRE should inspire learners to,

- develop an understanding of the purpose of work in life for themselves and society.
- become increasingly aware of the range of opportunities available to them.
- develop the attitudes and behaviours required to overcome barriers to employability, career management and lifelong learning.
- explore opportunities through a variety of meaningful experiences in learning, work and entrepreneurship.
- develop resilience and the ability to be adaptable in response to challenges, choices and responsibilities of work and life.

- 2.16 Working alongside Careers Wales, the Local Authority has established a network of school teachers, careers advisors and other stakeholders to support with implementing and embedding CWRE as part of Curriculum for Wales. This has included the use of the Careers Wales CWRE toolkit to design, implement and evaluate CWRE provision.

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/education-and-teaching-professionals/careers-in-the-curriculum/toolkit>

- 2.17 Themes covered from Swansea CWRE network include:

- creating a CWRE policy.
- planning, reviewing and evaluating CWRE in the curriculum.
- auditing CWRE in the curriculum.

- embedding CWRE in Areas of Learning.
- enterprise and Entrepreneurship.
- the Careers Wales website and resources.
- stakeholder engagement.

2.18 Swansea's successful partnership and networking opportunities has been used as good practice across Wales for developing strong relationships between stakeholders to realise CWRE in the curriculum. A case study of this work will feature in a Careers Wales brochure of good practice.

### **Engaging with Parents and Carers**

2.19 The Local Authority fully supports Careers Wales' parent strategy to help young people make more informed decisions at key transition points. Careers Wales recognises that, for many young people, parents are key influencers who have an important role to play in shaping and guiding decisions.

2.20 Careers Wales parent strategy sets out how they will empower parents to be suitably prepared to support their child in their career planning through four key goals:

- engage parents earlier on in their child's academic life.
- engage with parents in targeted groups as set out in brighter futures.
- improve reach to all parents, particularly via digital means.
- better engage parents in influencing and shaping development of our services.

### **Summary**

2.21 Swansea's ongoing partnership between schools, the Local Authority and Careers Wales provides high quality, impartial careers support that makes a positive impact on individuals' education, economic and wellbeing outcomes. Careers advice, information and guidance has been successful in raising aspirations, broaden horizons and raising awareness of all the opportunities and pathways available to them.

### **3. Legal implications**

3.1 There are no legal implications.

### **4. Finance Implications**

4.1 There are no finance implications.

### **5. Integrated Assessment Implications**

5.1 An IIA is not required as this report is for information only.

# Agenda Item 11

## Education Scrutiny Work Programme 2024/2025

Date	Items to be discussed
<b>Meeting 1</b> 20 Jun 24	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Curriculum for Wales update</li> <li>2. Overview of key issues in education 2024/2025</li> <li>3. Work Planning – discussing and agreeing the work programme for 2024/2025 – <i>discussion by Panel members</i></li> </ol>
<b>*Meeting 2</b> 19 Sep 24	<b>Schools Session and Visit (1) – Bishopston Comprehensive School</b> To discuss School Development Plan (Pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor 2 Sep)
<b>*Meeting 3</b> 17 Oct 24	<b>Schools Session and possible Visit (2) – Gwrosydd Primary School</b> (Pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor tba)
<b>Meeting 4</b> 14 Nov 24 4.30pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Strategy for Poverty Proofing the school day given the cost-of-living crisis and progress with the Inclusion Strategy approved by Cabinet in 2023 including progress with regard to the Behaviour Strategy</li> <li>2. Briefing on School Admissions Policy.</li> <li>3. Briefing on Career Advice in Swansea Schools</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 5</b> 12 Dec 24 4.30pm	Annual Education Performance against identified priorities RAG include Estyn progress against recommendations and Cabinet Member Q&A (Dec 2024) Include an update on Post 16 and Welsh in Education Strategy progress and an update on elective home schooling
<b>*Meeting 6</b> 23 Jan 25 4.00pm	<b>Curriculum for Wales: Bishop Gore Comprehensive</b> cluster of schools (Hosted at Bishop Gore School) Pre-meeting with School Improvement Adviser
<b>Meeting 7</b> Feb 2025	Annual Budget as it relates to education matters (1 hour slot to coincide with other Panels and Budget Cabinet meeting) - <i>Date tbc</i>
<b>Meeting 8</b> 20 Feb 25 4.30pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managing/improving school attendance and exclusions</li> <li>2. How schools improve the quality of teaching and learning – cluster and regional work.</li> </ol>
<b>*Meeting 9</b> 20 Mar 25 4.00pm	<b>Schools Session and possible Visit (3) – Dylan Thomas Community Secondary School</b> - tbc (Pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor tba)
<b>Meeting 10</b> 10 Apr 25 4.30pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Additional Learning Needs Reform Update</li> <li>2. Education Other Than at School services</li> <li>3. Pupil Voice Manifesto and the pupil voice in education</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 11</b> 8 May 25 4.30pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Swansea Skills Partnership Annual update</li> <li>2. Quality in Education (QEd) / Sustainable Communities for Learning</li> <li>3. Religion, Values and Ethics education update</li> <li>4. End of Year review in Education Scrutiny</li> </ol>

\* Informal Panel meeting at a school – not public

Due to the number of issues suggested for scrutiny this year we have a reserve list which will need to be slotted in during the year or alternatively they could be included in an extra meeting:

- Pupil Development Grant Spend analysis
- Schools Meals Service
- Cookery in Schools Follow up

The Panel will also receive relevant individual school Estyn reports as they are published, along with any other reports or information relevant to Education Scrutiny.

### **Background**

Cllr Robert Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning  
Helen Morgan Rees, Director of Education

The Officers listed in above timetable and their roles:

Sarah Hughes (Head of Education Strategy)

Rhodri Jones (Head of Achievement and Partnership Service)

Kate Phillips (Head of Vulnerable Learners)

Alison Lane (Head of Additional Learning Needs Team)

Kelly Small (Head of Planning and Resources Team)

David Thomas (Principal School Improvement Officer)

Jennifer Harding-Richards (Religion, Values and Ethics Adviser)

Louise Herbert-Evans (Team Manager Capital)

Lisa Collins (Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer – Vulnerable Learners)

Helen Howells (Team Manager Pupil Support – Vulnerable Learners)