



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Thursday, 18 April 2024 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

A Davis
B Hopkins
J D McGettrick

Councillor(s)

A M Day
S M Jones
F D O'Brien

Councillor(s)

F M Gordon
S Joy
A J O'Connor

Co-opted Member(s)

Beth Allender

Co-opted Member(s)

Elizabeth Lee

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

Dr J Andrews
R Smith

Bangor University
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Officer(s)

Sarah Hughes
Rhodri Jones
Helen Morgan-Rees
Kate Phillips

Team Manager for Education Strategy
Head of Achievement & Partnership Service
Director of Education
Head of Vulnerable Learner Service

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): None

136 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Cllr Lyndon Jones and Cllr Mike Day declared a personal interest in Item 6.

137 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

138 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings on the 12 February, 19 February and 22 February 2024 were agreed by the Panel.

139 Letter/s

The letter to the Cabinet Member following the Panel meetings on the 19 February and the 22 February 2024 were noted.

140 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

141 Religion, Values and Ethics in Education Briefing

The Panel thanked Dr Joshua Andrews from Bangor University and Jennifer Harding Richards for attending the Panel and presenting information on Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) education.

The Panel heard firstly from Dr Andrews about recent research completed into this matter by Bangor University. In 2023, the National Centre for Religious Education at Bangor University undertook research to explore how RVE was embedded within the Curriculum for Wales. Their research included both quantitative and qualitative research methods and included responses from 58 schools. The second part of the research will involve in depth interviews with colleagues from across Wales. Dr Andrews outlined some of the findings from that research so far.

Jennifer Harding Richards then took the Panel through the report provided which covered:

- Legislation
- Bangor University Research
- Swansea Standing advisory council for Religion, Values and Ethics (SACRE)
- RVE support for schools in Swansea
- Resources
- Professional learning
- Partnership working
- National work
- Estyn reports and secondary RVE Audit
- School improvement reports; and
- Suggested next steps.

Councillors asked a number of questions including:

- A number of shortcomings highlighted what is the plan moving forward.
- Number of statutory obligations not being met and it seems that subject is being watered down as part of the humanities curriculum.
- What is the funding breakdown for resources.
- Need to be mindful of pressures on teachers and the monies available for specialist teachers considered.
- Has there been any national research by Education Directors group.
- There needs to be more space in teacher training curriculum for this, are Welsh Government considering this.

- The Panel would like to revisit this issue in a years' time to see how it is progressing.

A summary of the discussion including in relation to these questions and the Panels views on the matter, will form part of the letter to Cabinet Member following the meeting.

142 Hearing the Voices of Children and Young People

The Panel thanked Councillor Robert Smith (Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education), Rhodri Jones (Head of Achievement and Partnership Service) and Sarah Hughes (Head of Education Strategy) for attending the Panel and presenting a written report giving details on how the voices of Children and Young People are considered within Education. The discussion covered:

- The Children's Rights and Human Rights Scheme and the Pupil Manifesto
- Universal Children's Day
- School Councils and beyond
- Partnership and Involvement Team
- Learner Voice in Schools' Quality Assurance and Monitoring
- Education Directorate
- Future workstreams for learner voice and next steps

The Panel raised the following points:

- With regard to the lost voices project, what happens to the information gained and is it fed into what other departments do too.
- Vital that children and young people are involved in shaping their lives and the council priorities.

A summary of the discussion in relation to these questions will form part of the Conveners letter to the Cabinet Member sent following the meeting.

143 Education Other Than at School Services Annual Update

The Panel thanked Councillor Robert Smith (Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education) and Kate Phillips (Head of Vulnerable Learners) for attending the Panel and presenting a writing report giving an update on Education Other Than At School Services in Swansea. The discussion covered:

- Background
- Consultation and engagement period
- Further considerations
- Proposed model
- Timeline

The following questions/points were raised by the Panel:

- What will the gatekeeping for the services and how will pupils access it
- The impact of the language used in relation to services needs to be considered carefully. For example, Pupil Referral Unit and alternative curriculum and that better more positive language could be used potentially for example appropriate curriculum.
- The different pathways were highlighted; will that go alongside the continued building of capacity in mainstream.
- How well has the new model been received by staff in the EOTAS services and will there be a net change in staffing.

A summary of the discussion in relation to these questions will form part of the Conveners letter to the Cabinet Member sent following the meeting.

144 Feedback from Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group

The letter was noted by the Panel.

145 Work Plan for 2023/2024

The Work Plan for 2023/2024 was noted. All meetings apart from those that require a school visit will have a starting time of 4.30pm from the new municipal year.

The meeting ended at 5.31 pm

Chair