



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

Monday, 13 February 2023 at 3.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

S Joy
A J O'Connor

Councillor(s)

S E Keeton

Councillor(s)

J D McGettrick

Co-opted Member(s)

Elizabeth Lee

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

Robert Smith

Officer(s)

Helen Morgan-Rees
Kelly Small
Michelle Roberts

Director of Education
Head of Education Planning and Resources
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A M Day, B Hopkins, S M Jones and F D O'Brien

Co-opted Member(s): Beth Allender

37 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

38 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

39 Minutes

The Panel agreed the minutes.

40 Letter/s

The letter from the Cabinet Member relating to the 15 December meeting and the letter to the Cabinet Member following the 19 January meeting were received by the Panel.

41 Public Questions

There were no public questions received.

42 Annual Budget Proposals - as they relate to Education matters

The Panel thanked the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning, the Director of Education and the Head of Education Planning and Resources for attending the meeting to discuss the Annual Budget as it relates to education matters. They provided a presentation that covered:

- Medium Term Budget Strategy
- Further key messages for 2023-2024 consultation
- Education – non-delegated proposals

43 Summarising views for feedback to Cabinet

After the discussion, with the Cabinet Member and Officers on the Annual Budget as it relates to Education, the Panel agreed the following feedback. This will be included in the Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel response to Cabinet on the 16 February 2023.

- **Uplift.** We welcome the uplift in the budget this year from £202 to £215 million but recognise this will not cover all the financial pressure on schools budgets. However, it is very welcome and we recognise that it is the largest cash allocation for any Council department in Swansea, which highlights the fact that education is a top priority.
- **School Reserves.** We heard that the school reserves have reduced substantially and are now approximately £11 million across schools in Swansea. Concern was raised about the fact that some schools reserves are high while others have very low reserves and therefore these schools will require help and support.
- **Financial pressure.** We recognise that schools will be under a lot of pressure from a number of costs that are currently not fully known this year 2023/24, and indeed 2024/25, for example ALN, free school meals universal roll, fuel and energy costs and teacher pay increases etc.
- **Pressures on reducing school meals budget.** We must ensure there is no loss of quality or standard of the school meals provided and our aim should be to buy local.

44 Work Programme

The Panel accepted the work programme noting the next meeting on the 16 March 2023 will be informal as it will be part of a site visit to Maes Derw Pupil Referral Unit.

The meeting ended at 3.40 pm

Chair