



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the Education & Skills Service Transformation Committee

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Wednesday, 27 September 2023 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor M Durke (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

F M Gordon
S Joy
T M White

Councillor(s)

B Hopkins
Y V Jardine

Councillor(s)

L R Jones
S Pritchard

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden
Sarah Hughes
Helen Morgan-Rees
Melissa Perry
Kate Phillips

Democratic Services Officer
Team Manager for Education Strategy
Director of Education
Solicitor
Head of Vulnerable Learner Service

Also present

Councillor R V Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Apologies for Absence

None

13 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

14 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Education & Skills Service Transformation Committee held on 26 July 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

15 Matters Arising.

The Chair outlined that following the last meeting, Members and Officers had held an informal workshop to look at the topic of home to school transport on 20th September.

He thanked the Officers for their detailed and informative briefing and outlined that the exercise had been a really worthwhile one, with Members asking numerous questions on the extremely complex matter, and seeking clarity on the wide range of various issues raised during the discussion.

The workshop had examined current practices, the challenges currently facing the authority with home to school transport issues and the potential for alternative ways of working in the future.

16 Supporting Sufficient Specialist Places.

The Head of Vulnerable Learners presented a report which presented the committee with information regarding the Supporting Sufficient Specialist Places programme in relation to the current position and future plans.

Outlined and detailed in the report were the following areas:

- Current position where all schools in Swansea are expected to provide learning environments where the needs of all children can be met, wherever possible. This includes children with additional learning needs and is in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act 2018 (ALNET).
- In addition to the school offer, there are also 34 specialist teaching facilities (STFs) within Swansea schools. These STFs are hosted by schools on behalf of the local authority and provide specialist educational provision for children and young people who need additional support to the mainstream offer. There are also two special schools.
- The way in which the STF provision has gradually evolved, developed and increased over the years, has resulted in the facilities now not necessarily being in the correct places that they are currently needed.
- Inclusive approach across the authority and the training and guidance that is available to schools and staff, as well the examples of good practice.
- The development of a quality assurance based programme around the current good practices, will assist the service going forward.
- Some variation in approach to STFs due to capacity issues and locations does unfortunately mean that some children to have to travel to access the learning and help they require.
- The aim going forward is to enable all young people to access the help they need in their local communities.
- Ever increasing need for specialist services both locally and nationally.
- An extensive period of review and redesign of the current provision has been undertaken since 2020, including a high level of stakeholder engagement, collaboration and co-design, stakeholders include the Swansea Parent Carer Forum, Headteachers, Additional Learning Needs Coordinators (ALNCOs), Local Health Board colleagues, Child and Family Services colleagues and officers from across the Education Directorate.
- Establishment of a Change Team with members of the Education Directorate and Senior Leadership Team (EDSLT) Strategic Leads.

- This collaboration exercise resulted in a revised set of principles which will underpin any new model of provision going forward. The principles were detailed and outlined in Appendix A to the report.
- Development of new cluster approach in four schools with officers from the ALN and Inclusion Team, the outcome of this work was a proposed model of provision which could be applied across all school clusters in Swansea.
- The proposed model of provision is currently being finalised and will be shared with the Change Team who will consider its viability in terms of deliverability across the board.
- The new model is likely to be more resource intensive than the current model, however, this reflects the increasing demand, emerging needs of learners, the shift in societal pressures and increased legal responsibilities of schools and the local authority.
- The proposed model is likely to reduce transport costs and enhance local authority provision within the county thus reducing the need for costly, out of county options which necessitate learners being educated out of their local communities.
- The aim is that the savings achieved in these areas could be redistributed to support the new model. Current budgetary constraints make this more challenging however, we are committed to finding solutions that will enable our proposed model to succeed.
- 2 pilot projects currently in place which are a Minibus pilot and Dylan Thomas cluster enhanced cluster provision.
- The background to the development and operation of the 2 projects which are in their early stages was outlined and detailed.
- Early evaluations of the minibus project have identified several benefits including financial savings, improved pupil well being and reduced congestion around the school site. The aim is to expand and trail in other schools where possible.
- The other project emerged from work that was undertaken in 2022/2023 and aimed to give some learners who could benefit from additional support a shorter term placement in a specialist provision.
- This pilot would not be appropriate for many learners but has been developed as an option for some young people with specific needs.
- Potential identified for specialist staff to operate in more of an outreach model to support some learners in their current settings and, perhaps more significantly, upskill staff across schools to support learners with different needs on the basis that ALN is everybody's business.
- The combination of the approach of shorter-term placements in a specialist setting and enabling specialist staff to take their skills, experience and expertise out of the specialist settings led to a proposal for inreach/outreach provision which would be offered on a locality basis. This is being trialled at a cluster enhance provision within the Dylan Thomas cluster.
- The proposal has been planned with all primary headteachers and ALNCOs in the cluster along with the ALNCO from the secondary school.
- Grant money has been identified to support the pilot and guidance documentation is being developed, so the aim is to have the provision available in the new year.

- The new provision will be carefully reviewed and evaluated and its effectiveness will be assessed to help inform future developments.
- The next steps which include drawing together all predictive data and finalising projections of future provision requirements.
- The Change team would then review the work and pilots undertaken before agreeing a way forward in conjunction with stakeholders and Members.

Members of the committee asked numerous questions and made comments regarding the information provided and highlighted in the presentation and report, the Officers and Director responded accordingly.

The Chair thanked the Head of Vulnerable Learners for her informative report and presentation.

17 Work Plan 2023-2024.

The Chair outlined the Education & Skills STC Work Plan for the remainder of 2023/2024.

The meeting ended at 4.43 pm

Chair