

No.

LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 12th February, 2019.

Present: Councillor L. Burnett (Chairman); Councillor N.P. Hodges (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors: Ms. R.M. Birch, B.T. Gray, S.J. Griffiths, M.G.J. Morgan,
Mrs. J.M. Norman, Mrs. R. Nugent-Finn and Mrs. S.D. Perkes.

Co-Opted Members: Dr. C. Brown (Parent Governor – Secondary Sector),
Mrs. J. Lynch-Wilson (Parent Governor –Primary Sector) and Dr. M. Price (Roman
Catholic Church).

Non-Voting Observers: Mr. H. Gapper (Welsh Medium Education), Mr. I. Cramb and
Mr. C. Edwards (Vale Youth Forum).

Also present: Councillors Dr. I.J. Johnson and S.T. William.

735 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January, 2019
be approved as a correct record.

736 ANNOUNCEMENT –

The Chairman took the opportunity to welcome Mr. H. Gapper, the Welsh Medium
Education representative, to his first meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

737 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Mr. H. Gapper declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 5 – Proposal to Increase the
Number of Primary Welsh Medium School Places in Barry – Reference from
Cabinet, 17th December, 2018 – in that he was a Parent Governor of Ysgol
Sant Baruc. He would remain to make his representations then leave the room
when the Committee was to consider the matter.

Councillor N.P. Hodges, declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 5 advising that as a
Local Authority Appointed Governor at Ysgol Sant Baruc, he would remain for the
item and speak and vote.

Councillor L. Burnett declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 5, however advised the
Committee that she had a great niece who attended the school but that she had
been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee to speak and vote on the
proposals when they arose at Council meetings.

738 FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT AND COMMITTEE REPORTING –

The Director of Learning and Skills, by way of a Power Point presentation, provided Members with an overview of the new Committee report template that would be used for Committee reports from February 2019.

The Director began by advising that the Well-being of Future Generations Act gave public bodies a legally binding common purpose of the seven national well-being goals for Wales. The Act detailed the ways in which the Local Authority should work with other public bodies to improve well-being across Wales. The Act also provided for better decision making by ensuring public bodies took account of the longer term, by helping to prevent problems occurring or getting worse. In addition there was a need to take an integrated and collaborative approach and consider and involve people of all ages. The Well-being Goals and the Five Ways of Working provided by the Act were designed to support the Council to deliver the Sustainable Development Principle which was to *“meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*.

In terms of embedding the Act into the work of the Council, the Director advised that the Council had been an early adopter of the Act and the Corporate Plan had been designed to maximise the Council’s contribution to national well-being goals and to embed the five ways of working into the Council’s work.

Committee was advised that the Act placed an emphasis upon effective transparency and more specifically on the communication of why decisions were and had been taken.

Elected Members were also able to channel their wide range of community intelligence into the decision making process and through using the five ways of working Members could ensure that proposals were in line with the sustainable development principles. This also ensured that the proposals were attractive to the long term needs of the Vale of Glamorgan which would also help prevent problems or prevent issues from escalating. The public, the third Sector and private partners also had a role to play and the Council would seek to involve all in its work where possible.

The Director referred to reports on the agenda which had been completed using the new template advising that the new format would improve transparency and detail the five ways of working and where they were aligned to the Council’s Corporate Well-being Objectives as noted in Section 5 which provided a distinct place within the report for authors to reference the five ways of working and the linkages to the Council’s Corporate Well-being Objectives. The Executive Summary paragraphs contained within the report would also aid transparency and give an effective overview of the key aspects within the reports.

Following the presentation it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the contents of the presentation be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the presentation which outlined the aims of the new Committee report template.

739 PROPOSALS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PRIMARY WELSH MEDIUM SCHOOL PLACES IN BARRY (REF) –

Cabinet had, at its meeting on 17th December, 2018, referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee as part of the consultation process. The report was seeking approval to consult on a proposal to move Ysgol Sant Baruc from its current location on St. Paul's Avenue in Barry to a newly constructed 420 place school building with 96 part time nursery places on the Barry Waterfront development.

The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources, in presenting the report, drew attention to paragraph 35 advising that since 1998 the Barry area had seen a 5.8% decline in the demand for English medium education and an increased demand for Welsh medium education of 6.7%.

Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers was published in July 2017, and set out the long-term vision for the Welsh language. Increasing the number of Welsh speakers was one of the three key themes, and the following key transformational changes would be required within the education sector in order to achieve the vision:

- Increase the proportion of each school year group receiving Welsh-medium education from 22% (based on 7,700 seven-year-old learners in 2015/16) to 30% (about 10,500 in each year group) by 2031, and then 40% (about 14,000 in each year group) by 2050;
- Transform how the Council taught Welsh to all learners in order that by 2050 at least 70% of those learners reported that they could speak Welsh by the time they left school;
- Increase the number of primary teachers who could teach in Welsh from 2,900 to 3,900 by 2031 and 5,200 by 2050; increase the number of secondary teachers who could teach Welsh from 500 to 900 by 2031 and 1,200 by 2050; and increase the number of secondary teachers who could teach through the medium of Welsh from 1,800 to 3,200 by 2031 and 4,200 by 2050.

It was noted that approximately 1,700 dwellings would be built by 2022. 756 units in total had been built and occupied to date with children placed at schools serving the area. The Barry Waterfront Development currently served High Street and Holton Primary Schools for English medium primary provision, Ysgol Sant Baruc for Welsh medium provision and All Saints and St. Helen's Primary Schools for denominational education.

Having regard to paragraph 74 of the report, the Head of Service referred to a typo in that the report noted the estimated revenue cost of operating a new 420 place school would be £1.43m. This should have read £1.33m. It was noted that the difference from the revenue budget for Ysgol Sant Baruc of £760k to the £1.33m would be

No.

found from within individual schools' budgets generated by the additional revenue from the increase in pupil numbers from the new housing developments.

The Project Manager for the 21st Century Schools, Mr. Matthew Curtis, was introduced to the Committee and in referring to Appendix A, the proposed timetable for increasing the number of primary Welsh medium school places in Barry, advised that the consultation period would end on 22nd February, 2019 and had been undertaken in line with the School Organisational Code. To date it had also been published on the Council's website and a decent response rate had been received. To assist the consultation process a number of public sessions had been held (around 20) with comments being received, for example around funding, travel and hiring implications. The Project Manager advised that a large percentage of those consulted were in favour of the proposals, with positive responses having been received.

Following the presentation of the report, the Chairman then asked the first speaker, Mr. G. Griffiths, to make his representations to the Committee.

Mr. Griffiths advised that he was an Local Authority Governor of Ysgol Sant Curig and Ysgol Gwaun y Nant schools, but that he was speaking in a personal capacity to the Committee. Mr. Griffiths stated that he would be making personal comments / observations based on research he had carried out and listening to fellow Governors at recent meetings. He stated that he was sure that in due course there would be formal representations made by each Board of Governors in respect of the proposal. Mr. Griffiths advised that he was a former Bilingual Qualified Teacher and as such knew the challenges that Bilingual Schools faced in predominately English speaking parts of Wales.

Mr. Griffiths stated that Towns and Cities were a collection of Urban Villages and each was different and needed different facilities to help them survive and grow.

There seemed he stated, in his view, two issues to consider:

Numbers attracted to each school. Sant Baruc 234 / Sant Curig 425 / Gwaun y Nant 252

“New Schools attract new Pupils Sant Baruc will be moving to the Waterfront so no issue there – but could Sant Curig and Gwaun y Nant see a significant drop in numbers at a time when ALAN / new Curriculum are in training and could this see staff wishing to move to a New School.

Schools look to promote themselves and social media has become key in this. If you Google each school there are up to nine different sites where Parents / Guardians can get information. Who is responsible for those sites – updating them and / or passing on relevant information to sites which are not School or Vale of Glamorgan?”

Mr. M. Bowen, the second member of the public who had registered to speak, was then invited by the Chairman to make his representations.

No.

Mr. Bowen explained that he was a parent of a child at Ysgol Sant Baruc, but was not a Governor of the school. He was also involved in one of the forums for parents centred around the Waterfront development and had also wished to provide the Committee with the local RhaG perspective and support of the proposals, advising that they were good proposals both for Sant Curig and Sant Baruc. He was also confident for the future, being aware that a number of parents were supporting Welsh medium education and the proposal would assist the target for 2050 of increasing Welsh medium by a third. If the proposal went ahead he advised there would be a 17% increase for Barry and 10% for the Vale of Glamorgan. Mr. Bowen also referred to the lack of catering facilities at Sant Baruc and that having this facility would be a significant advantage for the school.

With regard to paragraph 49 of the report, he advised that for the Reception year the school was full and in his view, there was so much demand that this statistic was only going to grow.

Councillor S. Wiliam, not a Member of the Committee but with permission to speak, advised that he was a local Member and referred to two major benefits of the proposals, the access to Welsh medium education in the locality and to community benefits. The support in the area he stated was extensive and that all the people he had talked to were pleased with the proposals. There was also an excellent English medium school on the Island and that the proposals would be future proofing the Vale in moving to further promote the Welsh language throughout the county.

Councillor Dr. I. Johnson, not a Member of the Committee but with permission to speak, stated that he was a Local Authority Governor of Gladstone Primary. He took the opportunity to thank the officers for hosting the meetings for Local Ward Members the previous week and trusted that this would continue through to the planning process. He was aware through the consultation that 90% had responded in favour of the proposals and this was something he said was to be extremely welcomed. As local Member he was aware of the constraints of the current site, there being no parking facilities and that it was not a good situation for staff, pupils, parents or residents.

Mr. Gapper, the Welsh Medium Education Representative on the Scrutiny Committee, stated that in representing the Welsh Medium sector he thought the case for expanding and relocating had been well made by the previous speakers and, in his view, the report had provided an excellent rationale for the proposal and he thanked the officers for the information provided. Mr. Gapper also considered that there was a high level of support for the proposal and took the opportunity to refer to two specific points. Aware of the developing issue in relation to Welsh medium education, he considered that the rate of increase was likely to increase further in the future and with the 2050 policy this would lead to a greater demand for Welsh medium education in the future. Secondly, although it was necessary to respond to the demand it was also not just a numbers game, the benefits were clear and he considered that the Welsh medium education proposal would achieve such benefits.

Having heard the speakers, the Chairman then referred the representations and the report for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee.

No.

A number of Members considered that the proposals appeared to be well thought out and the arguments by the speakers who had spoken clearly shaped the way forward. A Member also queried whether there was geographical data available for the breakdown of responses and was informed that although there was no specific geographical data, the information could be broken down in respect of the type of respondent i.e. parent, local resident, etc. Reference was also made to the need to ensure the continuity between further education and officers were urged to consider such matters.

Following a query as to how the proposal had been reached in the first instance, the Head of Service for Strategy, Community Learning and Resources in response advised that there had been a number of historical discussions that had taken place. He also referred to the conditions in the schools, in particular Sant Baruc did not have a kitchen and staff time was taken up in taking children back and forth over two sites. The point had also been made in relation to the need to ensure Welsh medium education was supported and the rationale to offer choice. There was already existing capacity in High Street and Barry Island Schools and in referring to further education advised that opportunities in order to support families within the communities was one of the drivers in promoting the proposal.

Councillor Hodges, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, stated that he had heard nothing but praise and excitement from the people on the Waterfront about the proposals and he was also aware that organisations within the community were also keen to use the facilities in the school.

The Youth Forum Representative stated that in his view, the proposal was an amazing opportunity and that through his school years he had seen the provision of the Welsh language change and he asked whether all Members on the Committee agreed with the proposal in order that he could inform the new Welsh Parliament Forum Member who attended Bro Morgannwg School.

The Chairman also advised that she was hugely supportive of the steps that had been taken to promote and encourage the Welsh language but took issue with some of the figures contained within the report and, in her view, using percentages was also strictly not comparing like with like. She also queried the information in relation surplus places, advising that the report needed to be accurate in order for Committee Members to make informed decisions. She also took the opportunity to ask the Committee to consider making a recommendation to Cabinet for a strategic review of all schools in the Vale as, in her view, there were a number of Victorian Schools which required refurbishment and that these should not be overlooked. Her main focus was to ensure equity in provision across the primary sector.

Members, although concurring with the sentiments of the Chairman, felt that a further report could be presented to the Scrutiny Committee under its work programme in relation to a review of school buildings.

The Cabinet Member, with permission to speak, took the opportunity to reassure the Committee that in preparing the proposals he had been extremely mindful of the

No.

need to ensure that Welsh medium provision was not introduced at the expense of English medium provision.

Having fully considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T Cabinet be informed that the Scrutiny Committee unanimously supports the proposal to increase the number of primary Welsh medium schools places in Barry as contained within the report.

(2) T H A T a further report on school buildings in the primary sector be presented to the Scrutiny Committee under its work programme.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having considered the report and in view of the overwhelming support for the proposal.

(2) In order that the Committee can consider primary provision of school buildings and their fabric.

740 SUMMARY OF SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORTS OF AUTUMN TERM 2018 (DLS) –

The Lead Officer for School Improvement / Senior Challenge Advisor commenced by advising that the report recognised the importance of improvement in school outcomes and provisions through good leadership and prospects to improve in meeting the needs of young people in the long term.

In the Autumn Term 2018 two primary schools, High Street and Ysgol Sant Curig, had been inspected and both had been judged to be good or better in all inspection areas. For the five inspection areas, High Street Primary School had been identified as “Good” in all categories. Ysgol Sant Curig being categorised “Good” for two categories and “Excellent” in three. It was also important to note that there were no schools identified as requiring special measures and at the end of the Summer term the Local Authority had one school in Estyn review (St. Richard Gwyn) but by November 2018 Estyn had reviewed the progress of the school and had judged that good progress had been made in respect of the key issues identified in the inspection. As a result, Estyn had decided no further monitoring would be required in relation to the inspection and as such, the school would be removed from Estyn review.

The Chairman took the opportunity, with the Committee’s permission, to ask the Challenge Advisor to send their good wishes to the schools with it subsequently being

No.

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T letters of congratulations be forwarded to High Street Primary School and Ysgol Sant Curig in respect of the inspection outcomes for each of the schools.

(2) T H A T a site visit be arranged to High Street School in view of the progress made to date.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the good and excellent work being undertaken in the schools.

(2) In order that Committee Members can witness progress first hand.

741 ANNUAL EQUALITY MONITORING REPORT 2017-2018 (MD) –

The report provided the Scrutiny Committee with progress against the equality objectives of the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20 and other actions taken to improve equality for people living and working in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The report also summarised what services had done to collect and analyse equality data on how people of protected characteristics had used their services and noted what they had done to make improvements in the reporting period 2017/18.

The appendices attached to the report showed the data collected and analysed by the service areas, together with the initial report on employment information and an employment action plan.

The Head of Performance and Development stated that the Annual Monitoring Report was a statutory requirement, with Members commenting that it was a good report which provided much detail.

The representative from the Youth Forum stated that in his view, it was a far more comprehensive report than the one Welsh Government had produced. He also took the opportunity to point out that the Youth Forum was also focusing on various issues in particular regard cyber bullying.

The Chairman, in referring to the data that was collected, took the opportunity to enquire whether more could be undertaken to inform people of why such data was collected and that this could be an opportunity to discuss with the Social Media Team ways of undertaking this.

The Corporate Equalities Officer advised that one of the appendices did provide such information, although further work would be undertaken and suggested that this be reported as appropriate.

Having considered the report it was subsequently

No.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the Annual Equality Monitoring report be endorsed and referred to Cabinet for approval with the Committee's comments.

Reason for recommendation

To bring to the attention of Cabinet the progress against the Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20 and the other actions taken to improve equalities for people living and working in the Vale of Glamorgan and consider the Committee's comments.