

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

Date: 29 March 2023

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors D Mayer (Chair), S Cocks, P Drewett, F Hussain, J Jones, M Pimm, A Screen, E Stowell-Corten and K Whitehead

In Attendance: Rhys Cornwall (Strategic Director - Transformation and Corporate Centre), Janice Dent (Policy and Partnership Manager), Dr Carl Williams Local Policing Area Commander, Chief Superintendent – Gwent Police), Ed Pryce (Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy), Marc Belli (Education Achievement Service (EAS) Principal School Improvement Partner), Sarah Morgan (Chief Education Officer), Sarah Davies (Deputy Chief Education Officer), Neil Barnett (Scrutiny Adviser), Taylor Strange (Governance Officer), Emily Mayger (Governance Officer) and Pamela Tasker (Governance Officer)

Apologies: None.

1 Declarations of Interest

None.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 February 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th February 2023 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3 Safer Newport Community Safety Partnership

Invitees:

- Rhys Cornwall (Strategic Director)
- Janice Dent (Policy and Partnerships Manager)
- Dr Carl Williams Local Policing Area Commander, Chief Superintendent – Gwent Police)

The Strategic Director and the Policy and Partnerships Manager gave a brief overview of the report.

Members asked the following:

- The Committee asked if the Safer Newport Partnership considers environmental hazards and if Natural Resources Wales (NRW) should be included in the partnership.

The Policy and Partnerships Manager explained that they are part of the One Newport Partnership, but it only includes statutory partners. The Strategic Director clarified that the Community Safety Partnership has a specific role.

- The Committee emphasised the importance of designing areas with the environment in mind, prioritising safety over preventing crime.

The Strategic Director explained that while the partnership doesn't specifically focus on design, they work closely with the police and encourage collaboration with them on security issues. The Local Policing Area Commander highlighted that the police can influence planning in terms of designing out crime. They also suggested that Natural Resource Wales could be incorporated into the Strong, Resilient Communities Partnership. The Committee reiterated the crucial role of designing communities with safety in mind.

- The Committee acknowledged the significant focus on the city centre but questioned the partnership's approach to rural areas.

The Policy and Partnerships Manager explained that there are subgroups focusing on the city centre and Newport-wide projects, with Safer Streets projects targeting specific areas of concern. The Local Policing Area Commander added that individual officers also focus on certain areas and raise issues internally within the police tasking processes. The Policy and Partnerships Manager emphasised that feedback from the different groups is shared with the Intelligence Hub to avoid a reactive approach and enable a more targeted use of resources.

- The Committee requested police involvement in regeneration projects to address existing issues before new projects are implemented.

The Local Policing Area Commander agreed that officers should attend these meetings and can be included in incidents where they haven't been previously.

- The Committee enquired about the partnership's funding and obligations to use resources to address issues.

The Strategic Director explained that funding is available on a case-by-case basis, with some additional funding secured for specific projects in recent years. The Local Policing Area Commander noted that there are statutory duties to follow, and the partnership has a responsibility to use its resources effectively. The Policy and Partnerships Manager added that the Police and Crime Commission is responsible for ensuring the partnership delivers on its commitments. The Strategic Director emphasised that NCC and Gwent Police work well together operationally, not just to meet statutory requirements.

- The Committee asked about the source of funding for keeping the streetlights on and whether it is ongoing or capital funding that supports the Safer Streets work.

The Policy and Partnerships Manager explained that the funding comes from capital funding. The Strategic Director noted that there have been challenges in balancing statutory requirements with making the streets safer, especially with additional lighting and CCTV. They also explained that some funding is available for prevention work, but there are also specific project funds available.

- The Committee asked about the feedback received from the community work approach.

The Local Policing Area Commander mentioned that an event was held with partners such as NCC, Youth Service, and the Police, which was well-received by the community. They also mentioned that the Street Night ambassador scheme, which deals with issues such as violence against women, is very well-received.

- The Committee asked whether Newport County and Community should be part of the partnership. The Strategic Director noted that an update can be provided.
- The Committee acknowledged the report which outlined the intended course of action and sought clarity on the timeline for relaying the outcomes back to the Committee.

The Policy and Partnership Manager emphasised that the present session's objective was not only to establish a feedback mechanism but also to incorporate viewpoints from the Councillors. The Strategic Director proposed a blend of bi-annual reports and real-time reports to address issues as they arise.

The Committee thanked the officers for attending.

Conclusions

- The Committee wished to thank the officers and partners for their attendance and for the report received. Members requested if future reports could incorporate case studies and examples of partnership working.
- The Committee wished to be involved in the working group to help shape the working plan, which would develop the strategic needs assessment, associated strategies and the work programme.
- The Committee were pleased to hear about the quality work from the Newport Intelligence Hub. It was requested if an informal meeting could be arranged with the Newport Intelligence Hub Manager to set up a presentation to explain the heat maps on incidents and anti-social behaviour. Comment was made that this would be beneficial, especially for the newer Committee Members.

4 Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2023 - 2025

Invitees:

- Ed Pryce - Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy
- Marc Belli – Education Achievement Service (EAS) Principal School Improvement Partner
- Sarah Morgan – Chief Education Officer – Newport City Council
- Sarah Davies – Deputy Chief Education Officer – Newport City Council

The Education Achievement Service Assistant Director and Chief Education Officer gave a brief overview of the report.

Members asked the following:

- The Committee asked if the budget is analysed every year.

The Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy explained that the budget is based on a model from 2012, with the size of the school being the biggest determinant of the budget, and other socio-economic factors also playing a role. The Chief Education Officer mentioned that

the budget is determined through the SLA (Service Level Agreement), and a charge is given, which NCC has to accept or decline based on its affordability.

The committee clarified that the services paid for are the ones they are provided. The Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy highlighted that over the last 10 years it has remained consistent with how much each local authority has agreed to pay. The Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy further highlighted efficiency savings are offered up to the other Local authorities (LA), a 10% cut was proposed with 3 agreeing to this to this cut.

- The committee asked about possible reports to review. The EAS Assistant Director noted that reports are shared with the local authority first but can be presented to the committee. The Chief Education Officer highlighted monthly meetings to ensure quality support for schools. EAS has shifted focus to longitudinal studies on impact, evaluating school quality instead of just attainment. The Committee supported the school-centered approach and Welsh Government's efforts to monitor child progress.
- The Committee requested information on pupil attainment to meet EAS Value for Money criteria.

The EAS Assistant Director explained that assessments were devolved into clusters of schools and areas, with EAS having a role in their development. The Principal School Improvement Partner emphasized the importance of each setting having a curriculum and assessments tailored to individual learners. The Cap 9 score is returning to help understand school performance. Center-determined or predicted grades were used due to Covid-19. The Chief Education Officer noted that governing bodies have access to data and are responsible for holding schools accountable. It was reinforced that the data may be used by schools to compare privately but not as a method of comparison publicly.

- The Committee enquired about EAS's self-evaluation process.

The Chief Education Officer explained that the value for money aspect was evaluated in the business plan. The EAS Assistant Director noted the use of a QR code feedback system for teacher training evaluations, with roughly 6,000 evaluations generated. Teachers are contacted 6 months later for feedback on their improvement, with a 30% response rate. The Committee thanked EAS for their support to schools.

- The Committee noted the increased accountability of school governors and asked about training.

The EAS Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy explained that virtual training has been provided over the last 18 months, but the challenge is getting governors to attend as only two sessions are mandatory. More virtual and face-to-face sessions will be arranged in the future. The Head of Education detailed school development planning sessions with the chair of governors and a reported self-evaluation system for quality assurance, which helps schools evaluate and maintain reports without increasing the level of bureaucracy.

- Members asked whether there were plans to develop other curriculums for Gwent schools.

The Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy Curriculum responded that they don't have a full picture at the moment

but their curriculum team is always looking for resources. The Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy also highlighted that their curriculum resources are located on their curriculum website and that they had just completed an audit of the resources available online. They further informed the committee that their team can produce a summary report for the committee. The Committee would like the Gwent archives to be looked at in terms of a resource for schools as well as transport from schools to Gwent archives.

- The Committee asked how school's equality policies deal with attainment across different backgrounds.

The Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director noted that their small team helps local authorities with equality policies, and that EAS looks at correct teaching methods and practices. The Deputy Chief Education Officer said that EAS provides professional learning and resources for schools, while the Head of Education highlighted that the local authority has a variety of wellbeing programs such as those to combat bullying. There is also a South East Wales meeting that involves the inclusion leads from each local authority as well as EAS. The Head of Education also highlighted that they cover this topic during their monthly partnership meeting and noting best value for money comes when efforts aren't duplicated.

- The Committee asked if there was statistics on equality performance.

The Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy stated there is in school but are not required. The Head of Education expects every school to evaluate disadvantaged groups on how well they are doing. The Deputy Chief Education Officer noted a focus should be on closing the gaps in attainment and level within the various groups within schools. The Head of Education also highlighted that school development plans should reflect this in the monitoring evaluation activity.

- The Committee asked whether EAS get positive feedback from headteachers.

The Education Achievement Service (EAS) Assistant Director: Policy and Strategy highlighted that EAS receives 95% positive feedback from school staff and conducted a headteacher survey 18 months ago with positive feedback, and another survey is due soon. EAS also has a Headteacher Strategy Group that meets half-termly.

- Do Headteachers report back to Newport directly?

The Deputy Chief Education Officer noted that the Education team meet with school headteachers outside of other organisations led meetings, as well as being invited to the majority of events run by the schools.

- The Committee requested an audit with the headteachers to be brought to scrutiny. The Principal School Improvement Partner (EAS) acknowledged the request and informed the committee that school headteachers are very forthcoming when raising their views or concerns. The Principal School Improvement Partner (EAS) appreciated the need for an audit and scrutiny, but reaffirmed school staff are willing to communicate their views. The Committee agreed that school staff are very proactive.

The Committee thanked the officers for attending.

Conclusions

- The Committee wished to thank the EAS and officers for their very positive actions in supporting schools which is widely evidenced in school governors' meetings as well as in the EAS report itself. Members praised the new style of the report, and were pleased with the data within. Members felt reassured by the partnership's answers, as well as the depth of the processes described. Query was raised about the steps EAS is taking to help develop materials to be used in the new curriculum and Members request to have further information on this.
- The Committee also made comment about the QR code which was given by the EAS Manager, and felt that this was an innovative way to gather feedback from Members, Teachers and other service users regarding the Business Plan.
- The Committee requested if the 'Stats and stories' reports be circulated to committee members.
- A Committee Member would like to have an independent audit against EAS conducted which would give Head Teachers the opportunity to give Newport City Council direct feedback. This could be Sent to Head Teachers directly by NCC and could be returned without the Head Teacher having to publish their name and school to help the Committee receive a true picture of the service level that EAS provide.

5 Scrutiny Adviser Reports

Invitee:

- Neil Barnett – Scrutiny Adviser

The Scrutiny Adviser informed the Committee of the Actions sheet.

The meeting terminated at 6.47 pm