

# Minutes



## Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

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Date: 11 July 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors W Routley (Chair), J Cleverly, C Townsend, B Davies, P Drewett, D Jenkins, M Al-Nuaimi, R Howells and D Mayer

In Attendance: Samantha Schanzer (Scrutiny Adviser), Sarah Davies (Deputy Chief Education Officer), Sarah Morgan (Chief Education Officer), Katy Rees (Assistant Head of Education - Inclusion), Deborah Weston (Assistant Head of Education - Resources) and Kath Bevan (Assistant Head of Education - Engagement & Learning)

Apologies: Councillors P Bright

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### 1 Apologies

Councillor P Bright

### 2 Declarations of Interest

None.

### 3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Committee noted there was a discrepancy with attendance recorded.

The minutes of meetings held **6<sup>th</sup> June 2023** were **accepted as a true and accurate record**.

### 4 End of Year Report - Education Services 2022-23

The Committee noted an error an error in the wording in the report that stated the report was 2023-23 rather than 2023-24.

- The Chief Education Officer agreed that this should be rectified.

The Chief Education Officer and Deputy Chief Education Officer presented the report.

#### Questions:

The Committee asked for clarification on what the seven strategic priorities were compared to the seven dimensions in education mentioned in the report.

- The Chief Education Officer noted the seven strategic priorities derive from the Corporate Plan which then feed into Education such as in attainment and employability.
- The Deputy Chief Education Officer further highlighted the focus of between linking education to the overall work of the Council.
- The Chief Education Officer acknowledged the confusion and assured Committee that it would be clarified in the report.

The Committee asked for further information regarding Millbrook School.

- The Chief Education Officer highlighted that the move from Millbrook to Brynglas is only temporary and noted that a timeline can't be given on the situation as options have to be considered.
- The Chief Education Officer highlighted that this work was not established in the capital programme but did confirm that the site is being worked on.
- The Chief Education Officer expressed understanding of the concerns of those impacted by the situation.

The Committee asked for clarification about the link between a new Welsh medium school and the Whitehead site.

- The Assistant Head of Education – Resources informed the Committee that a new primary school is being built on the Whitehead site, with work initiating on 17.07.23.
- The Assistant Head of Education- Resources further detailed that this site will then be used for students of Pilgwently with the Pilgwently school being used then as the Welsh Medium school.

The Committee asked how far along was Millbrook primary school from presenting options for consideration.

- The Chief Education Officer was unable to provide any further update and confirmed that the students have not being impacted in terms of standards and quality of education. The Chief Education Officer confirmed that Officers are also in regular communication with the Governors and parents.

The Committee asked for clarification regarding the statistic that stated 3% of staff had advanced Welsh language skills and queried whether this included Welsh medium staff.

- The Assistant Head of Education – Resources informed Committee this focused on central education staff members, not school employees.

The Committee asked about the number of Welsh language staff and the offer to improve the number of Welsh speaking staff.

- The Deputy Chief Education Officer noted in that they are proactive in the recruitment of Welsh language staff as well as promoting the learning of Welsh language through mechanisms provided by HR.
- The Deputy Chief Education Officer further noted it is a priority of promoting Welsh language uptake by education staff.
- The Deputy Chief Education Officer noted that it would take a while to see changes in relation to this as the plan spans 10 years.

The Committee felt that the report needed to be supported with information that demonstrated how they got the 60% achieved RAG.

- The Deputy Chief Education Officer noted that they work within criteria to produce these numbers so while 60% of the action is completed within that frame, the impact of those actions are may not be 60% felt.

The Committee asked for an example of a rapid action review.

- The Chief Education Officer informed Committee that these reviews could be a review of any team or service provision such as ALN etc and that the reviews serve to focus on any strengths or weaknesses as well as helping those in the review understand whether the work and service plans are accurate to their current position.
- The Chief Education Officer further highlighted the ALN team had good practice in relation to supervision which was as a result used across the service area.
- The Deputy Chief Education Officer noted that they are a cross service area review with other team leaders sitting on the review panel. It was also highlighted that it's a best practice review.

The Committee asked whether this covered the schools themselves.

- The Chief Education Officer noted school staff do link into the process however it is more focused on corporate team.
- The Chief Education Officer noted the rapid reviews occur one per term.
- The Chief Education Officer noted the focus for all department and team managers to be aware of all that goes on within the service area.
- The Chief Education Officer informed the Committee that they work within the idea that if something doesn't work, it should be changed and of keeping things simple.

The Committee queried if there was an update on the PRU unit.

- The Assistant Head of Education – Engagement & Learning highlighted the focus is on supporting not just PRU learners but all learners through a tiered, need-based system. The Assistant Head informed Committee there was a universal approach, a more targeted approach which saw CLA mentors will engaging on a 1-1 or small group basis, and a bespoke offer for the smaller group of more complex cases.
- The Assistant Head of Education – Engagement & Learning noted there still is a blend and mix in students from outside of Newport such as unaccompanied minors and students from neighbouring counties.

The Committee asked what was being done to make schools safer, as well as querying school lockdowns procedures and whether rapid reviews were taking place regarding this.

- The Chief Education Officer noted that while they are proud of the exclusion data they have presented, it is important to reintegrate children into schools to avoid disenfranchising or upsetting them. The Chief Education Officer also noted that this must be balanced against respecting teachers' and their profession, which meant that permanent exclusion in some cases is necessary.
- The Chief Education Officer noted that staff do meet with union partners and on a more intimate basis regularly in order to cquire information and discuss violence in schools effectively. The Chief Education Officer also noted that teachers have a right to record issues and data should be collected to look at any patterns or trends in specific schools and throughout the Local Authority which should be responded to accordingly.

- The Assistant Head of Education – Inclusion informed the Committee that there is multi-agency support to tackle major issues on safety for both the students in question and the schools. The Assistant Head noted that there are systems in place should an incident occur, but these are reviewed when they occur.
- The Chief Education Officer noted that schools are required to write their own emergency plans a review of emergency plans and that sometimes the emergency plan isn't just a lockdown, but it could be moving people out of the school.
- The Chief Education Officer highlighted that they asked schools to conduct a mock lockdown with the focus being on not alarming children when mock lockdowns occur as well as being able to review the mock lockdowns measures.
- The Deputy Chief Education Officer noted lockdowns need to be seen as similar to fire drills in order to reduce alarm when they occur.
- The Chief Education Officer noted civil contingencies are the go-to contacts in emergencies.
- The Assistant Head of Education – Engagement & Learning all data is analysed to see any patterns or trends within the data which could be helpful.
- The Chief Education Officer informed the Committee that headteachers are encouraged to feedback to the Local Authority and other headteachers should an event occur to detail what went wrong and what went right.

The Committee wanted it noted that it sent its best wishes to those effected by the recent events in Tewksbury Academy.

The Committee questioned whether a holistic approach is taken to help at risk students.

- The Chief Education Officer noted that work is done with Preventative Services who investigate these issues as well as the Youth Justice team.
- The Chief Education Officer highlighted schools alone shouldn't have to deal with these issues.
- The Chief Education Officer noted the question in relation to resources is better asked to other service heads.

The Committee asked whether it was the schools' responsibility to lead on student exclusion and support and did the Local Authority have the resource to support.

- The Chief Education Officer confirmed that while it is the schools' responsibility, the school cannot be all things to all people, and this is why support from other services is so important.

The Committee highlighted that schools in Newport do a great job at helping their students with mental wellbeing.

- The Chief Education Officer noted schools are supported with the large burden of helping students in all means.

The Committee noted their support for all educational staff and the work that they do.

The Committee queried what age range covers the term "young people".

- The Assistant Head of Education – Engagement & Learning noted this is used as a general term covers those within education under 18.

The Committee queried besides GEMs, what schooling is available for unaccompanied minors.

- The Assistant Head of Education – Engagement & Learning highlighted that once the paperwork is completed, they take their prior experiences into account and help support them on the desired pathway. The Assistant Head noted that it is learner lead, and as many know their desired educational destination, it helps make sure that they are accessing the right qualifications.

The Committee asked are all schools provided Hwb.

- The Deputy Chief Education Officer detailed that all schools have access to it even those outside of the service agreement as detailed by the Welsh Government

The Committee asked why haven't they achieved the NEET targets.

- The Chief Education Officer explained the achievement is satisfactory as they have exceeded the Welsh average and improved on previous years, but due to the target being an ambitious goal, when it is not achieved it comes up as amber.
- The Assistant Head of Education – Engagement and Learning reassured Committee that thorough spreadsheets are kept to ensure that students from years 10-13 are followed up with, and that their systems are robust and sector leading.

The Committee asked for the new education model to be explained.

- The Deputy Chief Education Officer highlighted that a new Welsh Government guidance model for school improvement came out a few years ago and is now statutory with the focus being on supporting schools.
- The Deputy Chief Education Officer noted the school improvement is a tiered approach across the region.
- The Deputy Chief Education Officer also noted that there is a school advisor that helps evaluate the school and is a role that has changed name.
- The Deputy Chief Education Officer highlighted that some schools have partner schools in order to support each other to improve.
- The Deputy Chief Education Officer explained that all the work highlighted is based on the school development plan.

The Committee noted a typo on page 48 of the agenda of 20222 and 2024, which both should be 2022.

- The Assistant Head of Education – Resources informed Committee that the WESP plan had an accompanying implementation plan which was then imbedded in the 10-year plan.
- The Chief Education Officer agreed that typos should be fixed.

The Committee noted that the report was positive and informative and asked whether the report should have a section on the feedback from schools.

- The Chief Education Officer noted this occurs annually with the information feedback gained from the schools.
- The Chief Education Officer gave an example whereby the schools feedback a desire to talk to NORSE with this being arranged.

- The Chief Education Officer highlighted that in the corporate report the feedback inclusion isn't possible however the officers can bring prior feedback to the Committee.

The Committee thanked Officers, their teams and school staff for their continued hard work.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the very positive relationship between NCC and the schools themselves.

## **5 Conclusions of Committee Reports**

The Committee were content with the report and thanked officers for the report and their continued hard work.

The Committee noted the date typing errors throughout the report and asked that these be rectified.

The Committee asked that the 7 Dimensions and 7 Strategic Priorities be clarified as being separate and distinct within the report.

The Committee wanted to forward its concerns regarding temporary accommodation arrangements at Millbrook School and asked that the issue be resolved at the earliest opportunity. The Committee asked for an update regarding Millbrook, its position and whether options have been presented/accepted by the end of the year.

The Committee recommended that school, parent and pupil feedback be included in the report.

## **6 Scrutiny Adviser Reports**

The Scrutiny Advisor informed the Committee that the action table was now clear and all information had been provided.

The Scrutiny Advisor noted that no dates or items had changed in the Forward Work Programme.

The Scrutiny Advisor informed the Committee that the date of the next meeting was the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

## **7 Live Event**

[Please click here to watch the recording.](#)