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FRIDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE **EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** WHICH WILL BE HELD IN THE **CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, CARMARTHEN. SA31 1JP AND REMOTELY AT 10.00 AM ON THURSDAY, 6TH OCTOBER, 2022** FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA

Wendy Walters

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Democratic Officer:	Julie Owens
Telephone (direct line):	01267 224088
E-Mail:	juowens@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
This is a multi-location meeting. Committee members can attend in person at the venue detailed above or remotely via the Zoom link which is provided separately.	
The meeting can be viewed on the Authority's website via the following link:- https://carmarthenshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home	

Wendy Walters Prif Weithredwr, *Chief Executive*,
Neuadd y Sir, Caerfyrddin. SA31 1JP
County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP

EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

PLAID CYMRU GROUP - 7 Members

Cllr. Carys Jones
Cllr. Liam Bowen
Cllr. Kim Broom
Cllr. Llinos Mai Davies
Cllr. Peter Hughes Griffiths
Cllr. Betsan Jones
Cllr. Jean Lewis

LABOUR GROUP - 4 Members

Cllr. Lewis Davies
Cllr. Shelly Godfrey-Coles
Cllr. Dot Jones
Cllr. Edward Skinner

INDEPENDENT GROUP - 2 Members

Cllr. Sue Allen
1 Vacancy

UNAFFILIATED - 1 Member

Cllr. Sean Rees

NON ELECTED VOTING MEMBERS - 2

Vera Kenny	Roman Catholic Church Representative
Rev. Delyth Richards	Church in Wales Representative

ELECTED VOTING PARENT GOVERNOR MEMBERS - 3

Deborah Elias	Parent Governor Representative - Area 1 - Dinefwr
Anthony Enoch	Parent Governor Representative - Area 2 - Carmarthen
Felicity Healey-Benson	Parent Governor Representative - Area 3 - Llanelli

A G E N D A

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM.**
- 3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)**
- 4. SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS** 5 - 8
- 5. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22** 9 - 30
- 6. EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN FOR 2022/23** 31 - 36
- 7. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT** 37 - 42
- 8. FORTHCOMING ITEMS** 43 - 48
- 9. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 16TH MARCH 2022** 49 - 56

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EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 06 OCTOBER 2022

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

Purpose:

Allow members of the Scrutiny Committee to engage directly with the school community. Receive first-hand evidence of how Ysgol Brynteg has focused specifically on supporting the wellbeing of pupils, families and staff following the Pandemic.

To consider and comment on the following issues:

The presentation will set out any changes in behaviours / attitudes to learning, engagement and anxiety among pupils, providing the overview of how the school manages these in Brynteg.

The Headteacher will also refer to the strategic work in partnership with the Local Authority, working as a member of the Wellbeing group.

Reasons:

Education Services have provided a new structure to allow scrutiny to ensure that evaluation and improvement work effectively.

The sessions help scrutiny members to oversee the quality of provision by the local authority and, in doing so, to carry out their democratic accountability functions.

Scrutiny members wish to understand how schools support the wellbeing of pupils and school staff.

To be referred to the Cabinet / Council for decision:

No

Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Glynog Davies (Education and Welsh Language)

Directorate Education and Children Services	Designations:	Tel Nos. / E Mail Addresses:
Name of Head of Service: Aneirin Thomas	Head of Education Services and Inclusion	01267 246506 arthomas@sirgar.gov.uk
Report Authors: Aneirin Thomas	Head of Education Services and Inclusion	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
06 OCTOBER 2022

To allow members of the Scrutiny Committee to engage directly with the school community. Receive first-hand evidence of how Ysgol Brynteg has focused specifically on supporting the wellbeing of pupils, families and staff following the Pandemic.

Please refer to presentation from headteacher of Ysgol Brynteg.

**DETAILED REPORT
ATTACHED ?**

School Presentation to be provided at the meeting

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: **Aneirin Thomas** **Head of Education and Inclusion**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Not applicable.

CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S)
AWARE/CONSULTED
No.

Include any observations here
Not applicable.

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THERE ARE NONE

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection

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EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

06 OCTOBER 2022

Education and Children Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2021/22

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- That members consider and approve the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee annual report for the 2021/22 municipal year.

Reasons:

- The Council's Constitution requires Scrutiny Committees to report annually on their work.

To be referred to the Cabinet / Council for decision: **NO**

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:

Cllr. Glynog Davies (Education and Welsh Language)

Directorate Chief Executives		
Name of Head of Service: Linda Rees-Jones	Designations: Head of Administration & Law	Tel Nos. / E Mail Addresses: 01267 224010 lrjones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
Report Author: Julie Owens	Democratic Services Officer	01267 224088 juowens@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

06 OCTOBER 2022

Education and Children Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2021/22

The attached report has been prepared in order to comply with Article 6.2 of the County Council's Constitution which states that a scrutiny committee must:

"Prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committee's activities over the previous year."

The report provides an overview of the work of the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee during the 2021/22 municipal year and includes information on the following areas:

- Overview of the Work of the Committee;
- Other Scrutiny Activity;
- Development Sessions;
- Public Engagement;
- Challenges and Future Work;
- Support for the scrutiny function;
- Member attendance at meetings.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones Head of Administration & Law

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities – In line with requirements of the County Council's Constitution.

2. Legal - In line with requirements of the County Council's Constitution.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

1. Local Member(s) - N/A

2. Community / Town Council - N/A

3. Relevant Partners - N/A

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations - N/A

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**

NO

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Reports and Minutes		Meetings from September 2015 onwards: https://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=153

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Chair's Foreword



I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee for the 2021/22 municipal year.

At the outset I would like to thank both the elected and co-opted members of the Committee for their contributions over the past year in attempting to scrutinise the Authority's performance and policies.

Due to ongoing coronavirus restrictions, the Committee held all of its meetings online during the year, and we again allocated time in the Committee's Forward Work Programme to assess the authority's response to the pandemic, particularly in relation to Education and Children's Services.

The Committee also scrutinised the Youth Support Services, the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, the Education Department's 10 Year Strategy, Mental Health and Wellbeing relating to staff and pupils, the monitoring of air quality and ventilation in schools, funding challenges relating to those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), the Council's 2022/23 budget proposals for the Department, the Departmental Business Plans and the new regional school improvement model.

As the Committee was unable to carry out physical school visits, a number of schools were invited to attend the meetings remotely to share their experiences in terms of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Programme and their Covid recovery work in supporting pupils and staff.

The Committee undertook a Task & Finish Group during the year which scrutinised the way in which the Council consulted on school organisation proposals. We received evidence from Council officers, schools, Town and Community councils and Welsh Government officials and were pleased that the Cabinet accepted our recommendations in full.

The Committee also wrote directly to the Welsh Government to outline our concerns with regards to Elective Home Education and future funding pressures in tackling the NEET agenda.

I would again like to thank Democratic Services and Education and Children's Services Officers for their input and for their professionalism in supporting the work of the Committee, not only this year, but for the full Council term since 2017. They have supported the Committee's work effectively and have always been prepared to provide open and honest answers to often very challenging topics and questions.

There is no doubt that the Education and Children's Services Department has an integral part to play in meeting the Council's ambitions of creating a greener, fairer and wealthier Carmarthenshire and the Committee's work has enabled us to see first hand the huge amount of work that is carried out across the service to meet those aims.

I commend the Annual Report to members.

Councillor Darren Price
Chair of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

The Scrutiny function is a key element of the County Council's governance arrangements and decision-making process. Although not a decision-making body, Scrutiny is at its most effective when it grasps the potential to influence and inform decisions made by both the Council and partner bodies across the county.

Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution requires all Scrutiny Committees to "*prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committee's activities over the previous year*".

This report highlights the work undertaken by the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee during the 2021/22 municipal year. It aims to provide members with an opportunity to reflect on its achievements, identify areas of best practice and highlight areas for improvement to further enhance the scrutiny function. Additionally, this report may facilitate discussion on items which could be identified for inclusion within future work programmes.

The Committee is chaired by Councillor Darren Price and is made up of 14 Elected Members and 5 voting Co-opted Members (3 elected parent governor members, 1 representative from the Church in Wales and 1 representative from the Roman Catholic Church). Cabinet Members attend meetings as required in order to address the Committee on areas within their respective portfolios.

Support is provided by the Democratic Services Unit and other Council officers, as and when required.

2. Overview of the Work of the Committee in 2021/22

2.1 The Role of Scrutiny

The Education & Children Scrutiny Committee's key responsibilities are:

- Educational Standards & School Performance
- Inclusion & Additional Learning Needs
- Welsh Medium Education
- School Modernisation
- Adult Community Learning
- Youth Services
- Youth Offending
- School meals
- Children's Services including Social Services & Family Support Services

In accordance with its areas of responsibilities, the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee will seek to:

- Examine how well the Cabinet and Council are performing.
- Hold the Cabinet to account and seek to promote open and transparent decision-making.
- Monitor the performance of the Council's services and functions.
- Review decisions made by the Cabinet where appropriate.
- Assist the Cabinet in the development, monitoring and review of policy.
- Scrutinise, as a key element of the consultation process, the proposed revenue budget strategy and capital investment programmes.
- Enable the participation of external organisations and partners in consideration of issues that may impact upon the delivery of Council and countywide priorities.

2.2 The Forward Work Programme

The Committee utilised the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny's Gateway framework to develop its own Forward Work Programme (FWP) for the 2021/22 municipal year which was reviewed on a regular basis. This provided a manageable, flexible, and robust approach to scrutiny and ensured that the areas for review were considered on a priority basis and in a timely manner.

In this regard, the Committee determined that periodic reports in relation to performance and budget monitoring be circulated to members outside the formal meeting programme. This process enabled any relevant matters identified by members to be placed on the formal agenda for further consideration, as appropriate. The benefits of such an approach led to an improved level of debate and input during Scrutiny Committee meetings.

In the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined in the FWP.

2.3 Meetings of the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee

The Committee schedules its meetings on a 6 weekly basis to consider issues and reports included in its FWP.

The Committee held 6 formal meetings during the 2021/22 municipal year. The meeting scheduled to be held in October 2021 did not proceed as no reports were available and the meeting scheduled for April 2022 was cancelled due to it falling within the pre-election period.

All meetings were conducted in accordance with the provisions set out within section 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

To complement the work undertaken during formal meetings, the Committee also undertakes other scrutiny functions such as Task and Finish, One Day Scrutiny and visits to establishments falling within its remit, together with member development sessions.

2.4 Performance Monitoring / Strategic Issues

One of the principal roles of the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee is to monitor the performance of services and functions within its remit. Accordingly, the Committee reviews performance monitoring reports and various strategies and plans to provide a balanced assessment of performance across the relevant service areas.

2.4.1 Carmarthenshire County Council Annual Report 2020/21

In July 2021, the Committee considered the Council's Annual Report for 2020/21 which detailed the progress made during the year for each of the Council's 15 well-being objectives, adopted in June 2018, and which had been amended to reflect developing priorities and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, Brexit and climate change. The Committee focused upon the 4 objectives which were relevant to the Education and Children Scrutiny, namely:

- Well-being Objective 1:** Help to give every child the best start in life and improve their early life experience.
- Well-being Objective 2:** Help children live healthy lifestyles (Childhood Obesity).
- Well-being Objective 3:** Support and improve progress, achievement, for all learners.
- Well-being Objective 4:** Ensure all young people are in Education, Employment or Training (EET) and are following productive learning and career pathways.

Outcome:

In accordance with the recommendation of the Cabinet in September 2021, the Annual Report 2020/21 was subsequently approved and adopted by Council in October 2021.

2.4.2 Performance of Social Care Services in Carmarthenshire 2020/21

At its meeting in July 2021, the Committee considered the draft Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Social Care Services in Carmarthenshire for 2020/21. The Committee noted the statutory requirement for the Director of Social Services to report annually to Council on the delivery, performance and risks, as well as plans for the improvement of the whole range of Social Services. A detailed discussion ensued regarding the administration of Elective Home Education, whereby Committee sought assurances within the following areas:

- Maintaining a register
- Safeguarding
- Defining suitable education
- Intervention
- Flexi-schooling
- Funding

Outcome:

The Committee made representations to Welsh Government with a view to strengthening Elective Home Education legislation. The correspondence proposed collaboration between Welsh Government and Local Authorities by way of the development and enhancement of legislation, policy and guidance to enable Authorities to effectively administer Elective Home Education process.

2.4.3 2021-22 Performance Report relevant to Education and Children scrutiny

In accordance with the protocols established by the Committee, quarterly performance monitoring reports pertinent to the Committee's remit were circulated to members as follows:

- October 2021 – Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring 2021/22
- December 2021 – Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring 2021/22

The reports enabled members to monitor performance in respect of the Well-being Objectives pertinent to the Committee's remit and aligned to the Authority's Corporate Strategy. The information provided a self-evaluation of performance in accordance with the reformed legislative framework enshrined within Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Members were afforded the opportunity to raise any concerns or matters which required further consideration at the Committee's formal meeting, in accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

2.4.4 Education Department's 10-Year Strategy

At its meeting in November 2021 the Committee considered the Education Department's 10-year Strategy which brought together the department's strategic thinking, mission statement and priorities for the next 10 years. The strategy set out the vision for the role that education services would play in the future development of vibrant communities and a prosperous economy in Carmarthenshire. The Committee reviewed the strategy and put forth observations to further refine the strategy and ensure that it reflected the Authority's aspirations.

Outcome:

The Education Department's 10-year Strategy was further developed to incorporate the feedback of the Committee and was subsequently approved for publication by the Cabinet in January 2022.

2.4.5 Education and Children's Service' Draft Departmental Business Plan 2022/23

At its meeting in January 2022, the Committee considered the Education and Children's Services Draft Departmental Business Plan 2022/23 which detailed the department's aims, objectives and priorities to support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and the Authority's Well-being Objectives. This provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment upon the priorities outlined for the department.

2.4.6 Actions and Referrals

During the course of the municipal year, requests for additional items were made by members of the Committee to assist them in discharging their scrutiny role. An update on the Actions and Referrals was presented to the Committee at its meeting in March 2022 which detailed the progress made in relation to these requests.

2.5 Revenue & Capital Budgets

2.5.1 Budget Monitoring Reports

In accordance with the protocols established by the Committee, quarterly reports on the departmental and corporate revenue and capital budgets were circulated to members as follows:

- October 2021 - in respect of the budgetary position as at 30th June 2021; and
- February 2022 - in respect of the budgetary position as at 31st October 2021.

The reports enabled members to monitor expenditure in each service area and the progress made in connection with any capital works. Members were afforded the opportunity to raise any concerns or matters which required further consideration at the Committee's formal meeting, in accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

2.5.2 Revenue Budget Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25

In addition to monitoring the current revenue and capital budgets, the Committee was also consulted on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 at its meeting in January 2022. The report provided the Committee with the proposed Revenue Budget Strategy for 2022/23, together with indicative figures for the 2023/24 and 2024/2025 financial years.

Outcome:

As part of the Authority's widespread consultation undertaken on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25, the Committee considered the Strategy and endorsed the budget proposals, as submitted. The Budget Strategy was subsequently adopted by the Council at its meeting in March 2022, subject to some amendments and a reduction in the planned council tax levy.

2.6 Education

2.6.1 Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation

In June 2022 the Committee reviewed the Authority's progress in respect of the ALN Transformation Action Plan and associated funding formula which had been developed to meet the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. Members raised significant concerns regarding the disparity of approach in respect of the ALN funding formula across Wales. A further update report was considered by the Committee during a school engagement session at its meeting in March 2022 (section 3.3 refers) which provided an overview of the array of measures taken by the Authority to prepare for the introduction of the ALN system.

Outcome:-

The Committee made representations to Welsh Government to establish whether support would be provided to Local Authorities by way of:

- Identifying a National funding formula for schools to address the additional learning needs for pupils.
- Leading on all-Wales discussions on best practice in creating a fair and equitable ALN Funding Formula.

The Welsh Government subsequently confirmed that ALN funding was un-hypothecated, and once distributed it was the responsibility of individual local authorities to set budgets for their schools and the associated local provision supported. This approach to funding was in accordance with the Welsh Government's view that local authorities are best placed to deliver services in line with the requirements and circumstances of their population, to whom they are accountable. An assurance was however provided that the phased rollout of the ALN system would be monitored and evaluated by Welsh Government in accordance with the findings of the independent review of school spending across Wales, published in 2020.

2.6.2 Education Recovery Plan "STEPPING FORWARD"

In July 2021 the Committee reviewed the Education and Children's Services arrangements with schools and pupil referral units to promote learning and support vulnerable pupils during the coronavirus pandemic. The Committee acknowledged the way in which services within the department had adapted their working practices to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic, together with the key learning opportunities derived from the areas of promoting learning and supporting vulnerable pupils. Officers addressed members' enquiries in respect of attendance levels, workload of headteachers, implementation of the new curriculum and monitoring of the wellbeing and standards of education of electively home educated children.

Outcome:

The findings of the report and the feedback from Committee facilitated the development of the department's strategic plan to ensure sufficient support for schools to meet the needs of vulnerable learners.

2.6.3 Welsh in Education Plan (WESP) 2022 - 2032

In July 2022 the Committee considered the draft WESP 2022-2032, the production and implementation of which is a statutory requirement for the Authority. A presentation was provided to the Committee which set out the Authority's 10-year vision to create an improved planning system for Welsh-medium education.

The Committee recognised that the Authority's WESP would provide the means for the Welsh Government to monitor the way in which the Authority would contribute to the implementation of the Welsh Medium Education Strategy (WMES) objectives, which sought to facilitate an increase in the number of people of all ages able to use the Welsh language with their families, in their communities and in the workplace.

Officers addressed a range of queries and observations which related to job security, staff capacity and training opportunities, training for governors, support for Headteachers, teacher recruitment, Welsh-medium vocational pathways and the value of multilingualism. The importance of clear communication with stakeholders was emphasised by the Committee, specifically with parents and their children in order to raise awareness and understanding of the process.

Outcome:

The Committee's observations, together with stakeholder feedback provided as part of a comprehensive 8-week consultation process undertaken in the Autumn of 2021, helped to refine the WESP. At its meeting in January 2022, the Cabinet approved the revised WESP, to be implemented from September 2022.

2.6.4 Well-being of Learners and Staff in Educational Settings

In November 2021 the Committee scrutinised the support arrangements provided by the Authority to schools, pupil referral units and specialist settings in respect of the well-being of learners and staff against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic. The Committee acknowledged the increasing complexity of the well-being challenges faced by schools, with significant unprecedented pressure placed on educational staff, children, and parents alike. In reviewing the report, the Committee commended the robust support mechanisms which had been made available to schools in response to the challenges brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. The Committee was however particularly concerned to note the poor ventilation in some schools whereby CO₂ readings were consistently amber or red.

Outcome:

The Committee requested regular updates on the situation regarding ventilation in schools. A verbal update was given to the Committee on the matter during consideration of the Authority's Revenue Budget Strategy Consultations 2022/23 to 2024/25 in January 2022.

Furthermore, the Cabinet, at its meeting in January 2022, supported a Notice of Motion submitted by the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, which called on the Welsh Government to urgently consider approving, tendering and funding Ultra Violet and/or High Efficiency Particulate Air Filters in schools.

2.6.5 Update on PARTNERIAETH

In March 2022, the Committee received for consideration a report which set out the collaborative arrangements for the establishment of 'PARTNERIAETH', a regional consortium designed to promote excellence, and which would serve the schools within Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. Officers addressed a number of queries in relation to the staffing structure, priorities, functions and funding mechanisms required to deliver its aims and objectives.

2.7 Children's Services

2.7.1 Youth Support Service

In June 2021 the Committee reviewed the Youth Support Service response provided during the coronavirus pandemic. The Committee scrutinised the main areas of activity and noted the innovative approaches which had been implemented during this period and which would be adopted as standard practice to meet the individual needs of children and young people. The Committee recognised the valuable contribution to service delivery in respect of children, young people, and families during unprecedented circumstances.

Consideration was given to the remit, structure, governance arrangements and funding model for the provision of youth support services. In this regard it was acknowledged that youth work was undergoing a period of significant change in line with the Welsh Government Youth Work Strategy recommendations to develop a new funding model, introduce an innovation and outcomes framework for youth work, establish a youth information service and implementation of a regional partnership approach to inform and develop local delivery of services.

2.7.2 Contacts and Referrals to Children's Services

In July 2021 the Committee reviewed the Authority's position in respect of the contacts and referrals, pressures and demands within the Children's Services division since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. In March 2022, the Committee received updated information on the current situation regarding the volume of work within the division, the challenges faced and the potential need for additional resource. The Committee considered the remit and structure of the Children's Services division and highlighted concerns in respect of the ongoing National recruitment crisis, and potential risks presented to the Authority in light of the difficulties in appointing social workers. The Committee was assured to note the array of measures implemented to mitigate those risks.

2.7.3 Family Support Services: Education and Children's Services

In December 2021 the Committee evaluated the Education and Children's Services delivery of preventative support for families across the County. A review of the challenges faced by the preventative services was undertaken, together with the actions taken to address those challenges within the context of the emerging needs of families and demands on services. Officers addressed the Committee's concerns in relation to the Childcare Offer for Wales initiative, the myriad of data collection systems in place, employee well-being and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic upon the number of referrals submitted.

2.7.4 Working With Those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)

In December 2021, the Committee scrutinised the Authority's actions to reduce the number of NEETs. The Committee expressed the view that the current funding mechanisms, which was heavily reliant upon the receipt of short-term grants, was not deemed to be sustainable.

Outcome:

The Committee made representations to Welsh Government requesting a long-term funding mechanism to address the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic whereby an increase in demand was anticipated for youth support services in relation to NEET issues as well as other complexities.

A response was duly provided by the Welsh Government which clarified that details of the UK Government's plans to replace EU funding was awaited. Reference was also made to the Programme for Government which comprised a number of initiatives to support young people. Specifically, two new programmes had been introduced for NEET, namely Jobs Growth Wales+ and ReAct+, with a successor community based employability provision, based on the current Communities for Work+ programme scheduled to be launched in April 2023.

3. Other Scrutiny Activity

3.1 Task and Finish

The purpose of a task and finish group is to contribute to the development of new policy or to undertake a piece of investigative scrutiny work. Such groups have been instrumental in strengthening the policy development / investigative roles of scrutiny during the past few years.

During the municipal year, as part of its investigative role, the Committee undertook a Task and Finish Group to review of the current consultation process for school organisation changes, including changes in linguistic provision and closure of schools.

The scope and aims of the Task and Finish Review were to:

- Review the current process of engaging and consulting with schools, pupils, parents and the public in terms of any proposed school changes;
- Identify National and international best practice on consultation and engagement;
- Review the way in which the Council's Strategic Objectives are communicated, consulted upon and understood by schools, pupils, parents and residents e.g. WESP and MEP;
- Formulate recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet.

The membership of the Task and Finish Group comprised 6 Elected Members appointed to reflect the political balance of the Council as a whole, as far as possible:

Plaid Cymru:	Councillors Darren Price, Kim Broom & Jean Lewis
Independent Group:	Councillor Edward Thomas
Labour Group:	Councillor Dot Jones
New Independent Group:	Councillor Shahana Najmi
Co-opted Member:	Mr Anthony Enoch

To enable the Group to positively contribute to the development of the Authority's strategic plans, the review was separated into 2 parts in order to align with the timescales of review of the Education and Children's Services WESP and MEP plans. Accordingly, an Interim Recommendations Report which comprised of 6 recommendations developed by the Group and was subsequently endorsed by the Cabinet in September 2021.

The Group met on a further 3 occasions between September and November 2021 and developed 9 additional recommendations based on a thematic structure within the areas of:

- School Organisation Code;
- Engagement and Consultation;
- Project Engagement; and
- Information and Training.

The recommendations will be presented to the Cabinet in Autumn 2022.

3.2 Update on previous Task and Finish Groups

At its meeting in March 2018, the Committee agreed to establish a task and finish group to undertake a review into provision for early years education, childcare and play opportunities.

As part of its investigation, the Group considered a range of evidence over a series of meetings held between May 2018 and February 2019. A number of recommendations were formulated and presented to the Cabinet in October 2019, however Members requested further detail in respect of funding implications and policy matters. In April 2021 an update report was provided to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration and the Group's remit was subsequently extended to review school admission arrangements.

The scope and aims of the Task and Finish Group were to review the:

1. Foundation Phase provision
2. Standard of provision
3. Provision of play opportunities
4. Provision of Childcare
5. 30 Hour Childcare Offer
6. Carmarthenshire Schools Admissions Policy

During the course of the review, Welsh Government announced that the all-Wales Childcare Offer for 3 and 4 year olds would be rolled-out across Carmarthenshire from January 2019. This had had a significant impact on the work of the Task and Finish Group, and the recommendations reflected this.

Outcome:

A total of 20 recommendations were considered and subsequently approved by the Cabinet in January 2022.

3.3 Site Visits

Due to coronavirus restrictions, it was not possible to undertake physical site visits during the municipal year. At its meeting in June 2021, an alternative structure, in the form of online school engagement sessions was therefore endorsed as a temporary measure to enable the Committee to continue with its school evaluation and improvement function. The Committee subsequently agreed the thematic reviews and timetable for the school engagement sessions up until the Autumn of 2022.

The following online school engagement sessions were undertaken during the 2021/22 municipal year:

3.3.1 School recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

In January 2022 the Committee considered the financial support allocated to schools during 2021/22 by way of the Accelerated Learning Programme and which included an additional 'Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards' (RRRs) grant recently provided. The Committee's remit was to focus upon the utilisation of the additional funding provided to schools to meet the requirements of the RRRs, within the areas of Accelerated Learning, Priority Cohorts for Support and Curriculum Reform.

The Committee then received a presentation from the federated Bryngwyn and Glan-Y-Mor school representatives which focussed upon the means by which they had addressed the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, the impact upon pupils and staff and the perceived longer-term challenges ahead.

Outcome:

The overview of how the schools had utilised the additional funding provided members with a detailed understanding of the impact of the Local Authority's support on provision across the school system.

In response to a suggestion put forth by the Committee, the school engagement session was enhanced whereby pupils were invited to form part of future engagement sessions to enable them to articulate their experiences directly to the Committee.

3.3.2 ALN Transformation

In March 2022 the Committee was provided an overview of the array of measures taken by the Authority to prepare for the introduction of the ALN system. The update comprised a school engagement session with representatives from QE High School in attendance to provide the Committee with an in-depth understanding of the school's transition to the new system which aimed to provide a fair and inclusive educational structure and derive improved outcomes for children and young people with ALN.

Outcome:

The school engagement session provided members with a detailed understanding of the school preparedness for, and implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

4. Development Sessions

During the 2021/22 municipal year, Committee Members were invited to the following development sessions /seminars provided by the Authority: -

- Microsoft Teams Training for online meetings – numerous sessions in June 2021
- Historic Buildings and Carmarthenshire's Net Zero Carbon Commitment (May 2021)
- The Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (June 2021)
- Hywel Dda University Health Board – Covid Briefing (September 2021)
- Planning Services Seminar (September 2021)
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Workshop (October 2021)
- Planning Service Phosphates Briefing (November 2021)
- Digital Connectivity Event (January 2022)

5. Public Engagement

The Scrutiny function provides the opportunity for public participation in the Authority's activities whereby members of the public can request items to be placed on the Committee's meeting agenda. Carmarthenshire residents, or those who own a business or are employed within the county are also permitted to ask questions at meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.

Whilst the Committee did not receive any suggestions of possible topics from members of the public during 2021/22, the Committee's Forward Work Programme included a range of topics which required public consultation/participation.

In order to promote public awareness of Scrutiny Committees and the ability of the public to put forward topics for discussion, the Forward Work Programmes of the Authority's Scrutiny Committees, and details of how the public can become involved, are published on the Authority's website:

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/committees-meetings/scrutiny/#.Xp7Am6aQxMs>

During the municipal year, the Authority's Communications department provided digital marketing support to the Authority's Scrutiny function and proactively promoted details of forthcoming items which may be of interest to the public.

6. Challenges

The Education and Children's Services department continued to be under pressure throughout the municipal year as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Nevertheless, the department has adapted and developed innovative solutions during unprecedented circumstances to meet the needs of children and young people across Carmarthenshire. The Committee has continued to be constructive in its role in scrutinising performance which has facilitated the department and positively contributed to policies and decisions. It has been a balancing act for the Committee in undertaking its scrutiny duty without impacting on the resourcing of front-line services.

7. Future Work

As the Authority emerges from the coronavirus pandemic, it is evident that the Committee has made significant progress during the municipal year and will continue to concentrate on topics where members' input will result in positive outcomes to drive forward service improvement. To ensure that the best use is being made of meeting time, the Committee is keen to continue implementing the principles of the Centre for Public Scrutiny in order to achieve a streamlined and focused scrutiny process.

The work of the Committee for 2022/23 will be considered by the Committee at a development planning session and will be regularly reviewed as part of the monitoring of the Forward Work Programme during the course of the year.

In order to enhance the Authority's Scrutiny function, members will continue to attend development sessions, seek officers' advice where appropriate and make full use of informal pre-meeting discussion.

8. Support for the Scrutiny Function

Support for Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny function is provided by the Democratic Services Unit, based within the Administration and Law Division of the Chief Executive's Department. Support for the scrutiny function includes:

- Formulating and despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings in accordance with the Forward Work Programmes.
- Providing support and constitutional advice to the Scrutiny Committees and to members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring any issues arising from those meetings are actioned.
- Giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to members of the Council and its officers.
- Managing the strategic development of Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire through engaging in National and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum and meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs with the Cabinet.
- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as and when guidance is published.
- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny Committees' Forward Work Programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny Committee members.
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the administration of scrutiny Task and Finish Groups, assisting in writing reports in conjunction with the Groups and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews.
- Assisting with the Scrutiny member development programme.

For more information on Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire including Forward Work Programmes, Task and Finish reports and annual reports, visit the County Council's website at: www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny.

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or e-mail scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk.

9. Attendance

Attendance by members of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee during the 2021/22 year is shown in the table below. A total of six meetings were held during the 2021/22 municipal year.

Scrutiny Committee Member	Meetings Attended	%
Cllr. Sue Allen	6	100%
Cllr. Liam Bowen	4	67%
Cllr. Kim Broom	6	100%
Cllr. Sharen Davies (Since 10.11.21)	1 [of 4]	25%
Cllr. Rob James (since 14.07.21)	2 [of 4]	50%
Cllr. John Jenkins	5	83%
Cllr. Betsan Jones	6	100%
Cllr. Dot Jones	5	83%
Cllr. Gary Jones	4	67%
Cllr. Jean Lewis	6	100%
Cllr. Shahana Najmi (until 10.11.21)	1 [of 2]	50%
Cllr. Darren Price	6	100%
Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone	6	100%
Cllr. Bill Thomas (until 14.07.21)	0 [of 2]	0%
Cllr. Edward Thomas	5	83%
Cllr. Dorian Williams	4	67%
Parent Governor Representatives	Meetings Attended	%
Mr Anthony Enoch	6	100%
Mrs Felicity Healy-Benson (since 01.10.21)	4 [of 4]	100%
Church Representatives	Meetings Attended	%
Mrs Vera Kenny	6	100%
Rev D. Richards	2	33%

Substitutes	Meetings Attended
Cllr. Mansel Charles	1
Cllr. Deryk Cundy	2
Cllr. Jeff Edmunds	1
Cllr. Rob James	2
Cllr. Ken Lloyd	1
Cllr. Eryl Morgan	1
Cllr. Gwyneth Thomas	1
Cabinet Member	Meetings Attended
Cllr. Glynog Davies (Education and Children)	5
Cllr. David Jenkins (Resources)	1

EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

06 OCTOBER 2022

Education, Young People and the Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan for 2022/23

To consider and comment on the following issues:

That the Committee confirm its Forward Work Plan for 2022/23.

Reasons:

The County Council's Constitution requires Scrutiny Committees to develop and publish annual Forward Work Plans that identify issues and reports to be considered during the course of the municipal year.

To be referred to the Cabinet / Council for decision: NO

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr Glynog Davies, Cabinet Member for Education and Welsh Language

Directorate: Chief Executive's	Designations:	Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:
Name of Head of Service: Linda Rees-Jones	Head of Administration & Law	01267 224010 lrjones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
Report Author: Julie Owens	Democratic Services Officer	01267 224088 juowens@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

06 OCTOBER 2022

Education, Young People and the Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan for 2022/23

Article 6.2 of the County Council's Constitution requires each scrutiny committee to develop and publish an annual Forward Work Plan to identify and prioritise issues and reports to be considered during the course of a municipal year.

The development of a Forward Work Plan:

- Provides a focus for both officers and members, and is a vehicle for communicating the work of the Committee to the public. The Forward Work Plan (see attached report) will be published on the Council's website www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/scrutiny and it will be updated on a quarterly basis.
- Ensures agreement of provisional agendas for scheduled scrutiny meetings within the council diary. The Forward Work Plan is a flexible document that can be amended to reflect additional meetings and agenda items during the course of the year.

The draft Forward Work Plan includes a number of cyclical reports as well as those reports requested by the Committee during the course of previous meetings.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?

Forward Work Plan 2022/23

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

1. **Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities** - In line with requirements of the County Council's Constitution.
2. **Legal** – In line with requirements of the County Council's Constitution.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

1. **Local Member(s)** – N/A
2. **Community / Town Council** – N/A
3. **Relevant Partners** – N/A
4. **Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations** – N/A

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED: No**

Include any observations here: N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

These are detailed below.

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Education, Young People and Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee Reports and Minutes		https://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=153

Education, Young People and the Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee – Forward Work Plan 2022/23

6 th October 2022	1 st December 2022	22 December 2022	23 January 2023	16 March 2023	20 April 2023
School Engagement Session (update - Brynteg Primary School now participating in place of Swiss Valley)	Carmarthenshire Youth Justice Plan	Actions and Referrals Update	Revenue Budget Consultation 2023/24 - 2025/26 - TBC	Post 16 Review - including Vocational Qualifications and those Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEETs)	Additional Learning Needs (ALN)
Education and Children Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2021/22	County Council Annual Report	Revenue Budget Consultation 2023/24 - 2025/26 - TBC	Education and Children's Services Draft Departmental Plan 2023/24	Transformation, Innovation Change (TIC), including school budgets.	Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme
County Council Annual Report (rescheduled to 01.12.22)	Corporate Strategy (rescheduled to 23.01.23)	Forthcoming items	Corporate Strategy	Forthcoming items	Actions and Referrals Update
Forward Work Plan 2022/23	Forthcoming items		Forthcoming items		Forthcoming items
Forthcoming Items					

Scrutiny Committee Members to scrutinise the following reports via e-mail

Performance Management Report (Quarter 1) Page 35	Budget Monitoring April 22 to August 2022 (To be circulated outside committee meeting process)	Performance Management Report (Quarter 2) (To be circulated outside committee meeting process)	Budget Monitoring April 22 to October 2022 (To be circulated outside committee meeting process)		Budget Monitoring April 22 to December 2022 (To be circulated outside committee meeting process)
Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring (outturn 2021/22)			10 Year Social Services Strategy		Performance Management Report (Quarter 3)

Budget Monitoring April 22 to June 2022					
Director of Social Services Annual Report					

Additional reports / information requested by the Committee during 2022/23 (to be circulated via email):

- Previously reports submitted to the Committee pertaining to Elective Home Education (EHE)
- Eligibility for Free School Meals (EFSM) - Information note to be circulated to all County Councillors to provide an update on the progress made with the roll-out of the provision of free school meals. Furthermore, an update report to be circulated to the Committee setting out how the EFSM categorisation issue has been addressed and will be measured going forward.

Additional report(s) to be allocated to the Forward Work Plan (date(s) to be confirmed):

- Post COVID Education Review

Workshops to be arranged:

- Self Evaluation and School Data - **scheduled for 18/10/22 10:00hrs – 12:00hrs in County Hall, Carmarthen.**
- Post 16 Review - including Vocational Qualifications and those Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEETs) – November 2022

Development Sessions

- Overview of the remit of the ECS Committee following confirmation of its revised Terms of Reference and clarity on the role/expectations of Members of Scrutiny Committees. **Provisional date set for 15/11/2022**

Site Visits

- The Authority transitioned to an alternative structure, in the form of online school engagement sessions, to temporarily replace school visits during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, to enable the Committee to continue with its school evaluation and improvement function. The Scrutiny Committee hope to resume its site visits during the 2023 calendar year.

EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6TH OCTOBER 2022

NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

To consider and comment on the following:

- Explanation provided for the non-submission of a scrutiny report.

Reason:

- The Council's Constitution requires Scrutiny Committees to develop and publish an annual Forward Work Programme which identifies the issues and reports to be considered at meetings during the course of the year. If a report is not presented as scheduled, officers are expected to prepare a non-submission report explaining the reason(s) why.

To be referred to the Cabinet for decision: NO

Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Glynog Davies (Education and Welsh Language)

Report Author: Julie Owens	Designation: Democratic Services Officer	Tel No. / E-Mail Address: 01267 224 088 juowens@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6TH OCTOBER 2022

NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Council's Constitution requires Scrutiny Committees to develop and publish an annual Forward Work Programme which identifies the issues and reports to be considered at meetings during the course of the year.

If a report is not presented as scheduled in the Forward Work Programme, the responsible officer(s) are expected to prepare a non-submission report explaining the reason(s) why.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

1. Local Member(s) – N/A

2. Community / Town Council – N/A

3. Relevant Partners – N/A

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE / CONSULTED

YES

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

There are none.

Title of Document	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
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EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORTS

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH
LANGAUGE**

DATE OF MEETING: 06 OCTOBER 2022

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	EXPLANATION	REVISED SUBMISSION DATE
Council Annual report	Noelwyn Daniel	Due to unforeseen circumstances, this report is being delayed.	01.12.22

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EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 06 OCTOBER 2022

FORTHCOMING ITEMS

To consider and comment on the following:

- To note the forthcoming items to be considered at the next meeting of the Education, Young People and Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee to be held on the 1st December, 2022.

Reason:

- The Council's Constitution requires Scrutiny Committees, at the commencement of each municipal year, to develop and publish a Forward Work Plan which identifies the issues and reports which will be considered at meetings during the course of the year.

To be referred to the Cabinet for decision: NO

Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Glynog Davies (Education and Welsh Language)

Directorate:
Chief Executive's

Name of Head of Service:
Linda Rees-Jones

Report Author:
Julie Owens

Designations:

Head of Administration &
Law

Democratic Services Officer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 06 OCTOBER 2022

FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Council's Constitution requires Scrutiny Committees, at the commencement of each municipal year, to develop and publish a Forward Work Plan which identifies the issues and reports to be considered at meetings during the course of the year. When formulating the Forward Work Plan the Scrutiny Committee will take into consideration those items included on the Cabinet's Forward Work Plan.

The list of forthcoming items attached includes those items which are scheduled in the latest version of the Education, Young People and Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Plan to be considered at the next meeting, to be held on 01 December, 2022.

At the time of writing, the Cabinet Forward Work Plan has not yet been published.

DETAILED REPORT
ATTACHED?

YES: List of Forthcoming Items

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

1. Local Member(s) – N/A

2. Community / Town Council – N/A

3. Relevant Partners – N/A

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE / CONSULTED

YES

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

There are none.

Title of Document

Locations that the papers are available for public inspection

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FORTHCOMING ITEMS – TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON 01 DECEMBER 2022

Agenda Item	Background	Reason for report
Carmarthenshire Youth Justice Plan	The production of a Youth Justice Plan is a statutory duty of the Local Authority (Part 3; s40) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Therefore, this Plan is approved by the Local Management Board, presented for scrutiny at the Local Authority's Cabinet and at the Hywel Dda University Health Board. It is formally submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales as a statutory requirement. It is reported to Fair and Safe Communities and submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner.	To give members an opportunity to consider and comment on the Carmarthenshire Youth Justice Plan.
County Council Annual Report 2021/22	This report will provide members with details of the Council's performance for 2021/22	Scrutiny Members requested include this item onto the Forward Work Plan in order to carry out their role in scrutinising performance.

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EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 16 MARCH 2022

PRESENT: Councillor D. Price (Chair)

Councillors:

S.M. Allen, L.R. Bowen, K.V. Broom, J.P. Jenkins, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, G.R. Jones, M.J.A. Lewis, E. Morgan (In place of S.L. Davies), E.M.J.G. Schiavone, E.G. Thomas and D.T. Williams

Co-opted Members:

A. Enoch	-	Parent Governor
F. Healey-Benson	-	Parent Governor
V. Kenny	-	Roman Catholic Church Representative
Rev. D Richards	-	Church in Wales Representative

School Representatives for Queen Elizabeth High School:

Mr D. Williams	-	Headteacher
Mrs L. Jones	-	Assistant Headteacher, Inclusion & Wellbeing
Mrs L. Thomas	-	Assistant Headteacher, Canofan Elfed
Mrs V. Brook	-	Additional Learning Needs Coordinator

PARTNERIAETH Representative in attendance:

Mr I. Altman	-	PARTNERIAETH Lead Officer
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The following Officers were in attendance:

G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
S. Davies, Head of Access to Education
A Thomas, Head of Education Services and Inclusion
S. Smith, Head of Children's Services
E. Forsyth, Interim Head of School Improvement, Curriculum and Wellbeing
N. Jackman, Service Manager
R. Williams, Additional Needs Provision Manager
S. Hendy, Member Support Officer [Webcasting]
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer
J. Owens, Democratic Services Officer [Note taker]

Virtual Meeting - 10.00 am - 1.08 pm

[Note:

- At 12:55pm the Committee's attention was drawn to Council Procedure Rule (CPR) 9 – Duration of Meeting and, as the meeting would have been underway for three hours at 1:00pm, it was resolved to suspend standing orders, in accordance with CPR 23.1, to enable the Committee to complete the remaining business on the agenda.]

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Davies and R. James. Furthermore, the Chair reported that Cllr G. Davies, Cabinet Member for Education and Children would not be in attendance at the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM.

Attendee	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
E. Schiavone	5	Family member is an employee of PARTNERIAETH.
V. Kenny	6	Daughter is an employee within the Children's Services division.

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.

4. SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT SESSION

In accordance with the School Engagement Programme agreed by Committee at its meeting on 30th November 2021, a report was presented to members which detailed the school preparedness for, and the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act.

The Committee was provided with an overview of the array of measures taken by the Authority to prepare for the introduction of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system. In this regard, a synopsis of the engagement undertaken with schools to date was provided to the Committee in order to facilitate the delivery of a fully inclusive education system for learners in Carmarthenshire, and which would ensure that the needs of learners are identified early and addressed quickly, and where all learners are supported to reach their potential.

The Committee then received a presentation from the school representatives which focussed upon the school's transition to the new system which aimed to provide a fair and inclusive educational structure and derive improved outcomes for children and young people with ALN. The key points covered within the presentation included:

- The ALN system sought to transform the separate approaches for special educational needs to create a unified system for supporting learners from 0 to 25years.
- The cross-cutting education reform principles emanating from National guidelines and regulations enabled opportunities for change which aimed to provide:
 - equality of access;
 - personalised 'person centred' learning;
 - a focus on wellbeing, with high quality, balanced and structured teaching and meaningful assessment, with a move away from statistics;
 - inclusive school ethos to ensure a safe, supportive, stimulating learning environment;
 - a culture of collaboration.

- The ALN system would be underpinned by a mandatory ALN Code which placed the views, wishes and feelings of learners at the heart of the process of planning the support required, which would subsequently enable them to learn effectively and achieve their full potential.
- A phased approach would be taken to replace Statements of Special Educational Needs with Individual Development Plans (IDPs) which would set out a description of a child or young person's ALN.
- The concept of good universal teaching, in addition to bespoke interventions, and a need to embrace the new curriculum and strategies to support every pupil was considered to be of paramount importance to meet the requirements of the Act.
- The Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) would play a key strategic role in every school.

A number of observations and queries were addressed, as follows:

In response to a query regarding the role of parents and guardians in the development of IDPs, the School Representatives detailed the communication methods utilised to raise awareness of the new system. The Committee was informed that parents and guardians were placed at the heart of the process, by way of effective and regular communication with the school, in order to ensure appropriate provisions and adjustments to support the needs of children and young people with ALN. The Committee was assured to note that the process was working well to date, with parents and guardians taking an active role in the development of IDPs. The Director of Education and Children's Services emphasised that the new system was based upon a partnership approach which promoted an open and constructive relationship between schools and parents/guardians. In this regard, the Additional Needs Provision Manager referred to the active programme of engagement to provide appropriate parental/guardian support.

In response to a query regarding the number of pupils with IDPs, the Director of Education and Children's Services explained that the ALN transformation formed part of a suite of educational reform within Wales, whereby robust and universal whole-class teaching would have a direct bearing on the Additional Learning Provision required by pupils with ALN.

Clarification was sought on the mechanisms in place to support more able and talented pupils within the school, together with the challenges experienced by teachers to provide differentiated and bespoke programmes of study for pupils. The School Representatives acknowledged the range of abilities within the school and provided assurances that appropriate support was provided by way of programmes and plans, to meet the needs of all groups of learners. In this regard, the School Representatives were pleased to report that the school curriculum was reviewed and adapted as required; furthermore, the teachers, with valuable input from Teaching Assistants, catered for the needs of pupils by way of robust universal teaching.

In response to a query regarding pupil integration between the school's mainstream and the Specialist Inclusion Centre (Canolfan Elfed), the School Representatives reported that Canolfan Elfed had received a National accolade at the Pearson Teaching Awards in recognition of the excellent range of inclusive online learning resources for pupils during the coronavirus pandemic.

A query was raised in respect of the funding formula for ALN, and whether this was considered adequate to meet the requirements of the Act. The Director of Education and Children's Services and the Additional Needs Provision Manager reported that following consultation with schools and representatives of the Budgetary Forum, the allocation of the additional £2m funding for 2022/23 would be finalised imminently. It was explained that the future savings derived from the discontinuation of Statements of Special Educational Needs would be fed back into the system and provide schools with flexibility regarding the use of funding; however, due to the phased programme of the ALN transformation, it was recognised that the savings would not be realised for a further three years.

Reference was made to the music curriculum for ALN whereby the Additional Needs Provision Manager was pleased to report that a Welsh Government funding had been made available for schools by way of the Adapted Musical Instruments grant.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. UPDATE ON PARTNERIAETH

[NOTE: Cllr E. Schiavone having earlier declared an interest in this item remained in the meeting for its consideration].

The Committee received for consideration a report which set out the collaborative arrangements for the establishment of 'PARTNERIAETH', a regional consortium designed to promote excellence, and which served the schools within Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Swansea.

The Committee thereupon received a presentation from the Lead Officer of PARTNERIAETH, which detailed the staffing structure, priorities, functions and funding mechanisms required to deliver its aims and objectives. It was highlighted that the regional consortium was based on a vision of a partnership working on behalf of the respective Local Authorities and which contributed to the improvement in the performance of the schools within the consortium and the education of children and young people. Committee's attention was drawn to the business plan for 2022/23, which demonstrated how PARTNERIAETH would support each Local Authority priorities, facilitated by dedicated Senior Strategic Advisors and which was also aligned to National priorities.

A number of observations and queries were addressed, as follows:

A concern was raised that the new regional consortium may have a limited positive impact on schools and therefore would not improve upon the performance of the previous 'ERW' regime, particularly in light of the reduced staffing structure which equated to 26.8 full-time posts.

Assurances was provided to the Committee that the PARTNERIAETH consortium focussed upon a cohesive partnership approach, with strong lines of communication and performance monitoring to address the needs of schools. As an example, a leadership programme was being developed in accordance with the Authority's priority area in respect of leadership skills.

In response to a query, the Lead Officer for PARTNERIAETH clarified that regular scrutiny would be undertaken to monitor and review the delivery of the consortium's aims and objectives. An emphasis was placed on collaboration as a key area of strength, whereby the system was developed and structured on a partnership basis.

Reference was made to the staffing structure whereby a member queried whether further resource was required to deliver a high-quality level of support akin to the sterling service provided by the Challenge Advisors. The Director of Education and Children's Services confirmed that the staffing structure was deemed appropriate to meet the aims and objectives of the consortium and would be periodically reviewed in accordance with succession planning protocols to ensure that the skillset of employees addressed support requirements.

In response to concerns raised regarding duplication of work, it was explained that co-construction, with clear lines of communication, was a key priority, which would enable the utilisation of identified skillsets within the consortium to provide an improved provision to schools.

A member highlighted that the differing priorities across the Authorities within the consortium could potentially lead to some Authorities drawing upon more

resources and support than others and enquired how this imbalance would be redressed. The Director of Education and Children's Services recognised that pressures from different areas would emerge at different times, however it was emphasised that regular and clear communication would be maintained at Director level to ensure that resources were deployed to meet the needs of the consortia, with a scrutiny function to ensure that an equal share of services was utilised amongst partners. It was also highlighted to members that PARTNERIAETH was a smaller entity with robust management processes to ensure that additional requests from external Authorities would not be accepted if they were deemed to be to the detriment of the consortia.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

6. CONTACTS & REFERRALS TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES

[NOTE: V. Kenny having earlier declared an interest in this item remained in the meeting for its consideration].

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Authority's position in respect of the contacts and referrals, pressures and demands within the Children's Services division.

Members were reminded that a report had been presented to the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8th July 2021 and it was therefore considered timely to provide updated information on the current situation regarding the increase in the volume of work within the division; the challenges faced and the potential need for additional resource.

The report detailed the remit and structure of the Children's Services division and set out pertinent information to the Committee in respect of the staffing levels and the processes followed by the Central Referral Team (CRT), Assessment Team and Long-term Child Care Teams, to deal with cases. Furthermore, the report referred to the preventative services provided by the division, including the Flying Start and Families First initiatives and also referred to a new structure implemented in response to the increase in Electively Home Educated (EHE) children.

The report showed an increase in contacts since the onset of the pandemic, though it was noted that the number of referrals had decreased during 2021/22 which may have been attributable to the Preventative Services having reverted to the provision of face to face support with the easing of coronavirus restrictions.

A number of observations and queries were addressed, as follows:

Committee referred to the ongoing National recruitment crisis and concerns were raised regarding the risks presented to the Authority in light of the difficulties in appointing social workers. The Service Manager provided members with a synopsis of the array of measures implemented to mitigate those risks, including an ongoing review which sought to enhance the salary of social workers to bring the rate of pay in line with other Authorities, and the recruitment of suitably qualified social workers from overseas. The Director of Education and Children's Services referred to the favourable working conditions within the Authority, therefore it was pleasing to note that the retention of employees was not an area for concern. Furthermore, the high-quality service maintained by the division, who were required to deal with complex issues, was commended by the Director of Education and Children's Services and Committee members.

DURATION OF MEETING

During the consideration of this item, the Committee's attention was drawn to Corporate Procedure Rule 9 – Duration of meeting and the fact the meeting had been underway for nearly three hours. It was therefore:

RESOLVED that Corporate Procedure Rule 9 be suspended to enable the remaining items on the agenda to be considered.

A concern was raised that not all Electively Home Educated (EHE) children had received a statutory annual home visit from the Authority. The Director of Education and Children's Services reported that additional funding had been provided by the Welsh Government which would address the increase in the level of demand placed on the division as a result of the rise in EHE children across Wales since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

7. SCRUTINY ACTIONS UPDATE

The Committee received a report which detailed the progress achieved in relation to requests or referrals emerging from previous meetings during the 2021/22 municipal year.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

8. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 28 JANUARY 2022

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28th January 2022 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE