



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : LEARNING AND LAESCYP MEETING

MONDAY, 25TH JANUARY, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor L Mytton (**In the Chair**)

Councillors M Davies, G Lewis, K Moran, S Slater and C Tovey

Cooptees:

C Brown, A Rees and R Lazell

Portfolio Members:

Councillors L A Matthews and P Williams.

Officers:

Dorothy Haines (Chief Officer (Learning) - Chief Education Officer), Anthony Lewis (Head of School Planning and Improvement) and Ewan McWilliams (Corporate Performance Manager)

Howard Jones (Scrutiny Officer) and Karen Vokes (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
945	Statement by the Leader of the Council - Outcome of the Estyn Inspection	<p>The Leader advised the Committee that the outcome of our Estyn Inspection was made public today, and confirmed that this Authority has officially come out of special measures. He outlined that he was very pleased with the outcome and outlined to Councillors and Co-opted Members the importance of continual progress.</p> <p>He advised that the Authority should be rightly pleased and proud that we have turned this situation around at the very</p>

		<p>earliest opportunity, and that it needs to be recognised that a tremendous amount of hard work has been undertaken by a whole range of people, including staff of the Authority, Councillors, Schools (teaching and non teaching) and various departments across the Authority for their valued and continued contribution which will give even greater success.</p> <p>Also the Leader wanted to thank Councillors, Co-optees and officers of the Learning and LAESCYP Committee for their contribution under very difficult circumstances, outlining that their continual effort along with our collective efforts will give this Authority greater success in the future.</p>
946	Apologies for absence	Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Simon Williams and Maureen Harris (Co-optee).

The Chair welcomed Claire Brown and Rosemary Lazell to their first meeting as co-optees of this Committee.

947	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No declarations of interest were made.
948	Performance Board - Learning	<p>Councillor Phil Williams took the Committee through the Learning Performance Board report, advising the Members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of the Performance Board, where senior officers and elected members can discuss and challenge performance on a diverse range of service improvement related topics. • Representation on the Learning Performance Board Review. • Achieving the outcomes. • Understanding the priorities for improvement and actions which will help continue a positive level of improvement. • Barriers preventing outcomes being achieved, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of leadership and challenge from Governing Bodies The ability of Schools to manage their finances The knowledge, skills and confidence of parents to support their child's learning. • The challenge on value for money. • Identified areas for improvement under five thematic areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parental Engagement - More able and talented pupils - Governance and Governing Bodies

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration - Corporate Support Services <p>Officers provided advice and background information in relation to the following questions from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long was the performance Board meeting? • To provide more detail on the process for challenging Schools about their financial management. • A lack of understanding and knowledge in the Schools on what is required of them and the importance of Governor training. • In relation to Governance/Governing Bodies, how good is performance management of headteachers? How can the professional standards for headteachers be used more effectively? • In relation to parental engagement, do we have any specific strategies in place to support this action point? • Has there been a reduction in funding for Schools? • In previous Scrutiny meetings reference has been made to the increase in pupil numbers, do you have any financial contingency plans in place to take account of the potential increase in numbers? <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>The following actions points, as outlined in 6.1 of the report, be dealt with as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A standing item be included on future agendas to monitor the action points at paragraph 4.0 of the report. • Parental Engagement and Governance and Governing Bodies are recognised as key areas for this Committee.
949	Service Level Agreements (SLA's) for Local Authority Services to Schools	<p>Councillor M Davies arrived at 4.45 pm.</p> <p>The Chair agreed that this item be considered at this point in the agenda.</p> <p>Anthony Lewis took members through the report and gave an update on the ongoing commitment to undertake a review of Service Level Agreements for Local Authority Services to Schools. He outlined to members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current position on SLAs in relation to School Meals and Breakfast Club, Relief Caretaking/ Cleaning Contract, School Music, Insurance,

		<p>Evaluation of all SLAs and Education Inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where we want to be • Next steps <p>Officers provided advice and background information in relation to the following questions from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to 6.2 of the report, SLAs will be distributed to Schools and bodies by the 23rd February, with each governing body signing up to or not by 31st March. As in previous years, why have schools only been given 5 weeks to make this decision? • How are SLAs set for each School? • The issues Schools could potentially face when considering SLAs. • Has advice been sought through the Regional Consortium in relation to SLAs to Schools? <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>Scrutiny accepts the contents of the report.</p>
950	National Categorisation of Schools	<p>Dorothy Haines gave Members an update in relation to the categorisation of reports for 2015/16 and recent inspection outcomes. She outlined to members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of Schools categorised in each of the four support categories in the autumn term of 2014 and the autumn term of 2015. • The outcomes of the categorisation system for primary and secondary Schools. • The outcomes of the Estyn Inspection to Schools within the County Borough. • Continual Improvements so that no Schools are in the red and amber support categories and no Schools require follow up following an Estyn Inspection. <p>Officers provided advice and background information in relation to the following questions from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to the use of external Consultant Headteachers and Consultant Governors - who are these Consultants and who pays for them? • Will these external Consultants be experienced in Primary/Secondary Schools or both? • Will the drive for improvement stop now as we

		<p>haven't got the goal to get out of special measures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification on the number of Schools categorised in each of the four support categories, as outlined in Paragraph 5.2 of the report. <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the report. • Dorothy Haines to forward a summary position of Schools following publication of the data on the 28th January 2016.
951	Key Stage 4 Standards 2014/15	<p>Alan Rees (Co-optee) left the meeting at 5.15 pm).</p> <p>Dorothy Haines updated members on the performance of Schools at key stage 4 (KS4).</p> <p>She outlined in detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trend in performance in all key indicators over the last 3 years. • Attainment. • The rate of improvement since 2012. • Individual school performance. • Performance of specific groups of learners, e.g. gender, free school meal eligibility, higher attainers, ethnic minority pupils, pupils with english as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs. • Priorities for improvement and actions to improve standards. <p>Officers provided advice and background information in relation to the following questions from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities for improvement - do we have any feedback on how this is affecting the pupils themselves? • In relation to the aim to improve the quality of teaching - has this improved? • Clarification on the "positive trajectories at KS4 whilst implementing curriculum reform". • Do we need to be concerned in relation to Home School Children?

		<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the report.</p>
952	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	The Chair advised that she attended the Governance, Performance, Business Change and Corporate Services Scrutiny meeting and gave an update to Members in relation to Human Resources and the Performance Board.
953	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	<p>The Chair and the Committee reflected in detail on the issues that had been considered at the Meeting, in particular:</p> <p><u>Performance Board:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To progress action points, e.g. Parental Engagement and Governance and Governing Bodies. <p><u>SLA's:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor feedback from the consultation with the Unions. <p><u>Updates on HR Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair to liaise with Howard Jones and Carys Kennedy on this. <p><u>Home School Children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair to discuss this with Councillor Bill Smith, Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee.
954	Forward Work Programme	The Chair to liaise with Howard Jones on the Forward Work Programme.
955	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	The Chair advised that there was no business deemed urgent.