



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : LEARNING AND LAESCYP MEETING

MONDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY, 2016

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

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

Cooptees:

C Brown, A Rees and R Lazell

Councillor H Jones (Cabinet Member for Learning)

Councillor Richard Thomas (Chair of the Schools Forum)

Officers:

Dorothy Haines (Chief Officer (Learning) - Chief Education Officer), Anthony Lewis (Head of School Planning and Improvement) and Sarah Bowen (Inclusion Group Leader)

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

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
1043	Apologies for absence	No apologies for absence were received.
1044	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	Rosemary Lazell, Co-optee, advised that she is a member of the Governing Bodies for Afon Taf High School and Ynysowen Community Primary School.
1045	School Balances 2015/16	Anthony Lewis took the Committee through the report and gave an update regarding the current position on the School Balances for 2015/16, advising the Members as follows:

- Financial monitoring policies that have been implemented.
- Schools balances reported at the end of the 2014/15 financial year.
- 2015/16 approved budgetary position on Schools.
- Current projected outturn position based on information which has been reported and approved by Governing Bodies.
- Pupil led funding review update, i.e. effective financial monitoring, scrutiny and challenge, the key measures of success
- A breakdown of where the Authority wants to be.

A member queried the Gurnos Nursery excess balance of “+25” in Table 3 of the report. Anthony Lewis advised that this figure should read “+15”.

Officers provided advice and background information in relation to the following questions from the Committee:

- In relation to Afon Taf, what is the realistic timescale that you expect to reduce their deficit to zero?
- Clarification on the outcome/findings of the Schools Forum with regard to the changes to the funding methodology as outlined in the pupil led funding review update at paragraph 5.4 of the report.
- The timescale of the wider local Authority review for the funding methodology which will consider a more equitable allocation of resources.
- Pupil/teacher ratio, and the difference of funding amounts per school within the Borough.
- Clarification on previous fundamental reviews of the Authority’s formula funding.
- Potential alterations to Schools and how this will reflect on the particular school’s formula funding.
- When the original review started in 2014, did you anticipate the lack of consensus between the Schools and why wasn’t the thoughts of breaking it down, as suggested, actually started at that time?
- Decisions made by the Schools Forum and the choices provided to the Headteachers.
- An explanation on why the schools’ balances vary so much?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at the balances on Secondary Schools, should we be concerned about all our Secondary Schools? • Surplus places in Secondary Schools. • The difficulties Finance Committees of Governing Bodies are experiencing to keep track of their finances, with the figures differing between what is being supplied by the Authority and Governing Bodies. <p>Councillor Richard Thomas, Chair of the Schools Forum, gave an overview of the role of the Schools Forum.</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contents of the reports be noted by the Committee. • In relation to the difference in figures being supplied by Governing Bodies Anthony Lewis to look at this as a matter of urgency. <p>Alan Rees (Co-optee) and Councillors Simon Williams and Richard Thomas left the meeting.</p>
1046	Performance Board Action Points - Parental Engagement	<p>Sarah Bowen took the Committee through the report and gave an update on progress being made on improving parental engagement in particular pupil learning. She advised Members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities identified in order to improve pupils' well-being and the impact on their attainment. • The inclusion service which has provided support, advice and guidance to all Schools. • The Adult Community Learning Service which provided a number of Family Learning Programmes. • The programmes which focus on improving parental engagement. • The advice, support and guidance provided by the Authority to meet the specific needs of the parents of particular groups of pupils. • Thy key next steps to agree with schools the measures that will be used to inform future planning and to evaluate the impact of the actions taken. <p>Officers provided advice and background information in relation to the following questions from the Committee:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any evidence that increased parental engagement has had a positive effect on educational attainment in the County Borough? • Is there a detailed action plan on how we are going to progress parental engagement? <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>The contents of the report be noted by the Committee.</p>
1047	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	The Chair advised that there was no update in relation to this item.
1048	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>Surplus places</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This to be considered at a future meeting. <p><u>Figures being provided by Governing Bodies differ from those supplied by the Local Authority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed at the meeting that Anthony Lewis will take this up as a matter of urgency. • Update on progress to be reported back to a future meeting. <p><u>Pupil led funding review - Schools formula funding.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is to be brought back to a future meeting. <p><u>HR Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair to update members at a future meeting.
1049	Forward Work Programme	<p>The Chair to liaise with the Scrutiny Office on the Forward Work Programme, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to a School to attend a future meeting. <p>The Chair to arrange a meeting of all Learning and LAESCYP members in April/May to discuss the forward work programme.</p>
1050	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	The Chair advised that there was no business deemed urgent.