

Minutes of the Meeting of LEARNING COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held Hybrid - Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron / remotely via video conference on Thursday, 30 June 2022

PRESENT; Councillor Endaf Edwards (Chair), Councillors Euros Davies, Marc Davies, Meirion Davies, Amanda Edwards, Eryl Evans, Paul Hinge, Geraint Wyn Hughes, Chris James and Gareth Lloyd

Also in attendance: Councillors Wyn Thomas (Cabinet Member) together with Elizabeth Evans, Gwyn Wigley Evans,

Officers in attendance: Mrs Meinir Ebbsworth, Corporate Lead Officer Schools, Mrs Elen James, Corporate Lead Officer – Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Mr Mark Gleeson, Corporate Manager, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Mrs Carys Tisdell, Head UCD Ceredigion, Mr Aled Rumble, Curriculum for Wales Co-ordinator, Mrs Lisa Evans, Scrutiny Support and Standards Officer and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic and Standards Officer

(10.00-1:30pm)

1 Apologies

Councillor Rhodri Davies and Mark Strong apologised for their inability to the meeting.

**2 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)
Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.**

Mrs Lisa Evans, Scrutiny Support and Standards Officer declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the issue in relation to school transport raised under the Forward Work Programme.

3 Lifelong Learning and Skills Service and Canolfan Eos and Canolfan Aeron (Pupil Referral Units)

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Wyn Thomas presented the report upon the Lifelong Learning and Skills Service and Canolfan Eos and Canolfan Aeron (Pupil Referral Units) He reported that there were five services within Porth Cymorth Cynnar, namely -

- Early Intervention Service
- Support and Prevention Service

- Wellbeing Centres' Service
- Lifelong Learning and Skills Service
- Canolfan Eos and Canolfan Aeron

He stated that the Porth Cymorth Cynnal:-

- provided early support of a general and purposeful nature, as well as integrated through-age information, advice and intervention.
- The aim of the service was to improve aspects of the individual's personal, social, educational, physical, mental and emotional wellbeing by promoting the resilience, strength and independence of individuals and their families.
- The Service provided purposeful and ready advice and support.
- The Service enhanced Ceredigion's provision in terms of physical and leisure activities and reinforces and increases individuals' skills and knowledge through the world of work and volunteering opportunities.

Ms Carys Tisdell, Head – UCD Ceredigion presented Members with an enlightened presentation on the following:-

- UCD Ceredigion PRU-
- Overview
- Staffing Structure
- Professional development of Staff
- Contextual/Information Pupil Data
- Reintegration
- Attendance
- Timetable for September 2022
- School Uniform
- Wellbeing Activities
- Theme Weeks
- Winter Well-being, Visit from Art of Brilliance
- School Sport
- Active Play
- Upcoming activities and dates

Mr Mark Gleeson, Corporate Manager subsequently provided Members with a presentation on the following:-

- Our Vision
- Lifelong Learning and Skills
- Aims of the Alternative Curriculum
- Qualifications
- Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training
- Traineeships – Who is eligible ?
- Engagement strand
- What do we do?
- Advancement Strand
- Apprenticeship
- Dysgu Bro,
- Employment Support Team- how can we help? How we support individuals

- Information
- Press releases

Following questions and comments from the floor, it was AGREED
 (i) to note the update provided;
 (ii) to congratulate both services on their excellent work;
 (iii) that Members of the Committee visit Hyfforddiant Ceredigion in the near future ; and
 (iv) that following discussion with staff at Canolfan Eos and Canolfan Aeron, that Members visit both Canolfan Eos and Aeron at a time which was suitable for all

4 Self-evaluation and Improvement Planning - Schools and Culture Service

Consideration was given to the report upon the Self-evaluation and Improvement Planning -Schools and Culture Service. The report had been presented in order to ensure that the Committee members understand the service's self-evaluation processes and their role within those processes.

It was reported that the Schools and Culture Service had arrangements in place which ensured regular self-evaluation. These arrangements form part of the corporate business planning arrangements.

A grid was presented to illustrate the self-evaluation processes and the role of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in those processes.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED:-

- (i) to establish a workstream which responds to the Schools and Culture Service's three Level 1 Business Plan recommendations; and
- (ii) to establish a workstream to contribute to the service's self-evaluation processes

5 Mid Wales Education Partnership - Business Plan

An update on the priorities of the education partnership between Powys and Ceredigion for 2022-23 was provided by the Cabinet Member.

It was reported that the Mid Wales Education Partnership between Powys and Ceredigion Local Authorities was formed in September 2021. It was based on a Memorandum of Understanding between the two counties. The Memorandum of Understanding stated that the two counties were working together on issues relating to the following:

- Curriculum for Wales Developments
- Leadership Pathways
- Support for Newly Qualified Teachers and Early Career
- Professional development of Teaching Assistants
- Rural Deprivation and Equity

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In September 2021, mid-financial year, Powys and Ceredigion submitted two separate business plans to the Welsh Government. The plans were approved and as a result the Regional School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) was allocated to both Local Authorities

In March 2022, a joint Business Plan was submitted by the Mid Wales Education Partnership and approved by the Welsh Government. Both Local Authorities continue to receive their share of the Regional School Improvement Grant (RCSG)

It was AGREED to approve the Mid Wales Education Partnership Business Plan for 2022-23 as presented.

6 Update on a new Area School in the Aeron Valley

The construction of a new primary school in the Aeron Valley area had been agreed as part of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools programme. That programme was now known as the Sustainable Learning Communities Programme. The school would be for pupils aged 3-11 and would cover the Felin-fach, Ciliau Aeron, Dihewyd and Cilcennin areas. In November 2021, suitable land was purchased for the building, in the village of Felin-fach.

The Strategic Outline Case was approved by Welsh Government in December 2021 for the estimated build cost of £10,932,950. The tender to appoint consultants to develop the project was published in February 2022 and following a lengthy process, SPP were appointed in April 2022. SPP were Project Management and Quantity Surveying Consultants had the responsibility for delivering the project following a Two Stage Procurement Process. BREEAM Consultants were appointed in April 2022. The Contractor tender was published on the 16th May 2022 and following several requests to extend the tender period, the revised tender closing date was set for 20th June 2022.

Following a tender evaluation process, the appointment of a contractor should follow in early July 2022. Designs for the school were scheduled to be agreed and signed off by November/December 2022.

The Contract sum was scheduled for agreement by January / February 2023, and Welsh Government Outline Business Case (OBC) and Final Business Case (FBC) would be submitted for approval as soon as the contract sum was agreed. Cabinet approval for contract sum would be sought concurrently.

It is anticipated that work would commence on site March/ April 2023 assuming all processes run smoothly and scheduled for completion July/August 2024.

A Shadow Governing Body for the new school was currently being established.

It was AGREED to note the update provided, however, Members urged that the work commence as soon as possible due the raising costs of building materials following the pandemic.

7 Curriculum for Wales - update

The Cabinet Member reported that Primary schools in Wales would begin implementing the Curriculum for Wales in September 2022, and its implementation would become statutory in the secondary sector from September 2023.

The Curriculum for Wales Co-ordinator provided an update on the range of support for schools in implementation, and the continuing priorities for 2022-23.

- The Journey since 2015/19
- Supporting the curriculum
- Stream 1- Area Support
- Stream 2- Networking
- Stream 3 Individual support for schools
- Stream 4 National networking

It was AGREED to note the update provided

8 Verbal update on the provision of free school meals

The Cabinet Member reported that Ceredigion County Council would be offering Free School Meals from the Autumn term onwards to all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children.

This was following the Welsh Government's announcement to offer Free School Meals for primary school pupils across Wales, starting with Reception classes from September 2022.

In response to the current rising cost-of-living, this was a positive step forward in ensuring that no child goes hungry while in school and tackling poverty in our County.

From Monday 5 September 2022 onwards, all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 Children in Ceredigion schools would be offered Free School Meals, extending the offer beyond what needs to be done by September.

Ceredigion County Council and Welsh Government were committed to implementing this scheme quickly and there was a need to build catering capacity to ensure a successful phased implementation and work towards a whole school roll-out over the next three years.

The Council were working with Welsh Government to develop a process for you to be able to request a free meal for your child/children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 from September 2022, trying to avoid any unnecessary to parents/guardians.

Further information would follow by the end of term.

It was AGREED to note the current position.

9 Co-opted Members for Ceredigion County Council's Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee - representatives of Parent-Governors

The Cabinet Member reported that in accordance with the Council's Constitution there was a need for two representatives of Parent- Governors on School Governing Bodies to serve on the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee as co-opted members with voting rights. One from the primary sector and one from the secondary sector.

The term of the appointment would last for 5 years from the date of appointment or until the representative ceases to be a parent-governor or resigns from the Committee.

A recruitment exercise took place during May 2022 and the two successful candidates were:

- Cathryn A. Charnell-White (primary sector)
- Jonny Huw Greatrex (secondary sector)

Council on 7th July were requested to approve the appointment of the following co-opted members of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 7th July 2022, for a term of 5 years from that date:

- Cathryn A. Charnell-White (primary sector)
- Jonny Huw Greatrex (secondary sector).

It was AGREED to note the current position.

10 To confirm minutes of the previous meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes

It was AGREED to note the minutes of the last meeting of the committee.

11 Forward Work Programme

It was AGREED to note the Forward Work Programme as presented subject to considering that School Transport Policy at the next meeting. This was a policy under the remit of Mr Rhodri Llwyd, CLO Highways & Environmental, therefore he would attend to facilitate the discussion on this matter.

It was also reported that the Council had recently informed parents/guardians that they would be ending the free school transport for pupils in the Llangwryfon area, who wished to attend Henry Richard School. In response, the CLO, Schools requested that all parents/guardians contact the Council via Clic with the name and address of the pupils affected. The Local Member for this area, Councillor Gwyn Wigely Evans would inform the parents/guardians of this request accordingly.

It was reported that this was the first meeting of this Committee following the passing of Councillor Hag Harris, who had previously been a Cabinet member for Education. He would be greatly missed.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 September 2022

Chairman: _____

Date: _____