



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 11 September 2019 at 5.00 pm at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park. Clydach Vale, Tonypanydy, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor S. Rees-Owen (Chair)

Councillor W Lewis	Councillor J Brencher
Councillor A Calvert	Councillor S Powell
Councillor M Powell	Councillor M Griffiths
Councillor G Jones	

Co-Opted Members in attendance:-

Mr J Fish, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative
Mr K Wilhite, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative
Mrs R. Nicholls, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative

Officers in attendance:-

Mr P Nicholls, Service Director, Legal Services
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Ms A Batley, Director of Children's Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr A Williams (Acting Assistant Director) Central South Consortium
Dr C Stokes – Central South Consortium
Ms S Corcoran – Central South Consortium

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

Councillor M Adams and Councillor S Evans

8 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

9 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors H. Boggis, M. Diamond, S. Evans, H. Fychan, J. Harries and G. Stacey

10 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 10th July 2019 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

11 CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

With the agreement of the Chair and the Committee the agenda will be taken out of sequence

12 Report from the Central South Consortium

The Acting Assistant Director Central South Consortium informed Members that the report is to update Members on the contribution of the Central South Consortium (CSC) on raising standards in schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

Members were informed that the Joint Committee agreed the Consortium's business plan for 2019/20 at its meeting held on the 19th December 2018. The priorities are:

- Develop a high quality education profession
- Develop inspirational leaders to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards
- Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to wellbeing, equity and excellence
- Develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting self-improving systems
- Provide professional learning opportunities to support the curriculum for Wales
- Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Central South Consortium.

The Acting Assistant Director explained that Welsh Government sets the first four priorities and Central South Consortium added the latter to support schools in moving forward. It was explained that for each of these priorities there is a detailed operational plan that outlines how and when each aspect of individual priority will be delivered.

It was explained to Members that the business plan sets out how CSC aim to deliver the priorities through effective school self-evaluation and improvement planning. This is underpinned by building capacity in schools so that they are well placed to support other schools through the continued development of the "Central South Wales Challenge".

The Central South Wales Challenge Strategy is based on six underlying principles commonly found in successful school systems. It was highlighted that school leaders across the region have been actively engaged in the school-led approach taken by the consortium over the past few years and they have consequently become more accountable for the performance of their schools, schools in their cluster and for supporting other schools across the region. The focus over the last few years has been to embed the following key approaches within the school led improvement model:

- School Improvement Groups
- School Hubs
- Leadership Programmes
- Peer Enquiry
- Challenge Advisers.

The Acting Assistant Managing Director explained to Members the progress that

has been made within RCT.

In relation to school inspections, 17 schools were inspected (including one PRU) in RCT during 2018-19. It was brought to Members' attention that 2 were asked to write excellent practice case studies. A total of 5 schools were judged as adequate and in need of improvement and placed in a follow up category of Estyn Review. It was explained that there were no schools judged as having important weaknesses that outweighed strengths and requiring placement in the statutory category of Significant Improvement during the last academic year. In addition, no schools were placed in Special Measures during 2018-19.

In relation to schools that were inspected in previous years, it was noted that one school was removed from Estyn Review during 2018-19 and a total of two schools were removed from a Significant Improvement and Special Measures statutory category during 2018-19

In respect of Categorisation, Members were informed that during 2018-19 the consortium continued to work closely on behalf of the Local Authority to monitor the progress of the schools in need. Of the 118 schools in RCT, 6 schools required red level of support and 9 schools required amber support. There were 44 schools requiring green support and 59 requiring yellow.

The Acting Assistant Managing Director continued to explain that all red and amber schools have bespoke packages which are detailed within a support plan. He also provided Members with funding allocations for RCT schools and a list of additional support requested through the Local Authority.

The Chair thanked the Officer for his report and opened up the meeting for Members questions.

A Member raised concerns about that lack of context behind the data provided; it was felt that there is a raft of headline figures without any comparative data for Members to consider. The Member felt very strongly about the lack of reference to School Governors in the report given the key role they play in the functioning of our schools. The Officer explained that he would take these observations into consideration and would return with this data at a future meeting.

Members felt that there was insufficient comparative data presented in the report in respect of red schools. Members wanted clarification on how support was being evaluated. It was explained that CSC have been working with Cardiff University to develop an effective evaluation strategy. The model under consideration will track the impact of intervention and support on previous learner outcomes and current data in a much more efficient way.

A Member stated that she was very frustrated with the report as year after year the report is presented without any outcomes, which leaves the Committee with no idea on how effective the service is for our education system in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Member continued with her concerns regarding training from headteachers for teaching assistants. It was considered that the lack of continuity in funding caused by temporary awards for support assistants impacted on their professional development and access to training opportunities and recognised qualifications. The Director of Education and Inclusion Service explained that non statutory ALN funding is delegated through the Local Authority and not through the Consortium. It was highlighted that schools prioritise the use of this funding based on need.

The Chair stated that there is no evidence that demonstrates value for money in relation to the provision of CSC. Officers explained that a full report with verified data and additional information will be presented in January. Members commented that the report does not provide the committee with robust outcome data. Another Member commented that it was difficult to evaluate the impact of the Consortium and whether the LA is getting the service it needs based on the information provided.

One member queried what was being done to develop creative learning across the curriculum in preparation for the implementation of the new curriculum. It was explained that joint practice development is something that CSC is leading on in all schools. There are 10 professional Learning Hubs, which provide support and training for schools on this and a range of issues.

A Member also commented that the report was not very detailed; he felt strongly that there is no evidence on value for money for the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf. He continued to express concerns in relation to the absence of school level or pupil level information, the increasing budget and the HMI report which raised concerns and stated that close partnership working with the Consortium and LAs was needed. It was stated that Scrutiny Committee Members needed to see how it is working for the education system and how we are benefiting. We need examples of good and bad practice.

The Officers commented that in light of the concerns raised we will continue to work together on agreeing the structure of future reports. It explained that a review of the regional delivery arrangements in the Central South Region has been undertaken by the ISOS Partnership.

The Chair commented that as a committee we did not want to duplicate the work of the Joint CSC Committee however, further clarification was needed. It was felt that Members would benefit from seeing the ISOS report and the CSC Value for Money. It was noted that the latter report was on the Council's website. It was suggested that a link to the CSC Joint Committee Reports could be included in future reports.

A Member also commented how he felt that as Councillors they needed to support schools and at present they did not have the information to do so.

The Member also asked for clarification on the priority relating to "Develop a high quality education profession" and as to whether this was happening as to date the committee had seen no evidence of this. Officers reassured Members that this priority is detailed in CSC's business plan and has a series of comprehensive actions.

Member put forward questions relating to SIGs, Peer Enquiry and school inspections. The Officers explained that the change on data recording. In respect of the 18 schools inspected Members felt it would be good to see excellent case studies so that governors could reference these.

The Chair wanted clarification with regards to the recruitment of Welsh first language teachers, It was explained that recruitment of Welsh Medium staff is difficult and that this is being explored at present.

After more robust discussion Members **RESOLVED** to form a small working

group to discuss what is required from reports in the future and present it back to Committee at a future Meeting.

13 Future Central South Consortium Performance Data Reporting

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services invited the Senior Challenge adviser (Secondary) Central South Consortium (CSC) to present Members with an overview of the changes to performance measures for 2019 and going forward.

The Senior Challenge Adviser (Secondary) CSC explained that she would present these under the following headings:

- Our National Mission and CSC Business Plan 2019/20
- Changes for Teacher Assessment Reporting at foundation phase, key stage 2 and key stage 3
- Interim Performance Measures at key stage 4
- Future national developments.

The CSC Business Plan priorities 1-4 align directly with the four enabling objectives in WG's National Mission.

The Education (amendments relating to teacher assessment information) (Wales) Regulations 2018 highlight some key changes. These include:

- Teacher assessment can be used for information purposes only and to develop school improvements but should not be used for **school accountability purposes below national level**.
- There is **no change** to the collection process or to the information that WG will hold.
- Teacher assessment data below National level will be removed from all publicly available data sources:
 - My Local School
 - StatsWales website
 - Statistical Releases
- Comparative data for local authorities and regional consortia will not be available.

With regards to Foundation Phase, key stage 2 and key stage 3 Members were informed of the implications for schools. It was explained that the following information will no longer be available:

- DEWi Comparative Reports
- All Wales Core Data Sets (AWCDS)
- National Benchmarking Data (FP, KS2, and KS3)
- Family average comparisons (as previously included in AWCDS).

The Officer went on to explain that for 2018/19 the CSC will provide an interim evaluation of a school "CSC School on a page" which will assist and support where needed school self- evaluation activities.

The Senior Challenge adviser (Secondary) Central South Consortium (CSC) also highlighted the implications for Local Authorities (LAs).

Members were informed that for 2018/19 elected Members can expect a

reduced standard scrutiny report for teacher assessment outcomes. The main changes are :

- Removal of published LA data, LA comparisons and corresponding rank positions;
- Removal of the summary position based on benchmark quarter summaries
- Removal of any information published at individual school level for FP, KS2 and KS3 teacher assessment or Welsh National Tests.

Members were informed that information will be available for:

- National Categorisation Support Categories
- Estyn inspection outcomes of schools
- Progress of schools in Estyn follow- up categories
- Progress of Schools causing concerns
- Pupil progress information
- School engagement in the curriculum reform programmes.

Members were given an overview of Summer 2019 Reporting in respect of Interim Key Stage 4 Performance Measures. It was explained that historical performance measures will no longer be published by WG, This includes % Level 1 Threshold, % Level 2 Threshold, % Level 2+ and % 5A* - A.

It was highlighted that interim measures will be points based rather than focused on the percentage of pupils attaining a particular threshold grade/ level. The Officer continued to highlight and explain the measures published will be:

- The capped 9 measures (3+6)
- Literacy measure (best Language / Literature)
- Numeracy measure (best of mathematics/ numeracy)
- Science measure (best of science)
- Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate measure, and
- Points Score equivalents are:
 - A* = 58, A=52, B=46,D=34, E=28,F=22,G=16

The Senior Challenge adviser (Secondary) Central South Consortium (CSC) ensued by explaining the future of performance measures, along with the work of WG AND WLGA, in respect of future National developments. On completion of the presentation, Member put forward their questions and observation to the officer.

A Member raised a question in relation data sets and comparative data as parents find this helpful when choosing a school. Governors looking at data for family schools is also helpful in challenging leadership in schools.

In response, the Officers explained that with regards to parents we are further confirmation. It was explained schools will still receive all school data and there will be family data for Key Stage 4.

It has been explained the process is there for every child to achieve its potential.

After further questions and robust discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the information that was presented to the Committee and agreed to receive further information when available.

The Director of Adult Service in conjunction with the Service Development Officer (Children Services) presented Members with the draft placement Commissioning Strategy May 2019 to April 2022.

It was explained that Rhondda Cynon Taf placement commissioning strategy outlines the priorities for development within the placement service and our external commissioning up to 2022. The strategy provides insight into our current services and through analysis of management information of our existing commissioning patterns identifies our priority areas. The purpose of the strategy is to pull together in one document the identified strands of placement commissioning, to ensure there is a clear vision, which underpins our approach to commissioning, and ensure this vision aligns with our corporate planning.

Members were presented with the priority areas which are:

- Recruit more foster carers able to meet the more complex needs of children and young people,
- Provide more in house residential placements within the local area to meet need,
- Provide better support packages to carers to encourage them to apply for Special Guardianship Orders rather than be kinship foster carers.
- Provide a range of accommodation for 16+ and care leavers.
- Improve our commissioning processes for external placements, including integrated commissioning with key partners.
- Develop a reunification model to return young people safely to their family members.

In respect of next steps, Members were informed that going forward the strategy will inform, the shaping of internal placements and partnership working approach to placement commissioning with stakeholders and a range of public and private sector partners and that in order to achieve this we will produce a Market Position Statement that will be published.

Members thanked the Officers for the report and put forward their questions and observations. A Member raised a concern over out of county placements and asked if this strategy would alleviate the situation. Officers explained that there would always be a need for placing out of county, as these are often specialised placements, which will deal with more needs that are complexed.

Members put questions forward in respect of unplanned placement and want clarity as to what this meant. Officers explained that 50% of the cases are known as unplanned placement as the placement of a child in care that is not identified on the child's Care and Support Plan.

A Member asked a question regarding the data in graph 6 with regards to gender and if there was reasons behind more males than females, being looked after. Officers explained that there is not enough evidence to support any trend data.

Members continued to scrutinise the report and **RESOLVED** to endorse the draft Placement Commissioning Strategy and agree the outlined next steps.

15 URGENT BUSINESS

This meeting closed at 7.30 pm

**CLLR S REES-OWEN
CHAIR.**