



## **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, 20 November 2019 at 5.00 pm at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, 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

### **Officers in attendance:-**

Mr P Nicholls, Service Director, Legal Services  
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services  
Mr D Williams, Head of Attendance and Wellbeing Service  
Mr M Silezin , 14—19 Strategy Officer

### **County Borough Councillors in attendance:-**

Councillor S Evans

#### **37 Declaration of Interest**

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

#### **38 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors H. Boggis, S.Evans, H. Fychan, A.Davies – Jones, G. Stacey and M. Diamond.

#### **39 Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 25<sup>th</sup> September as an accurate reflection of the meeting subject to it being noted that County Borough Councillor W. Lewis and J Brencher sent their apologies for the meeting.

#### **40 Consultation Links**

The chair referenced the consultation links, which were available through the 'RCT Scrutiny' website. The Chair reminded Members that Information is provided in respect of relevant consultations for consideration by the Committee, which are circulated on a monthly basis by the Graduate Scrutiny Research Officer.

#### **41 Review of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20**

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communication presented Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the forward work programme from January to April 2020. Members were asked to consider the Work Programme and identify any items they wish to include as well as adopting a flexible approach to the work programme in order to accommodate any pre scrutiny opportunities and future public engagement items.

In respect of public engagement the Service Director Democratic Services informed Members that further enhancements are underway to provide better access to the business of scrutiny online. This includes providing more user friendly information to support the public engaging in this important element of the Council's democratic processes and overall governance functions.

After further consideration of its work programme Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee put forward their suggestions.

A Member requested that the Committee consider the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) funding at the end of the financial year.

Another Member requested that the Committee carry out a piece of work in relation to improving the outcomes for eFSM Pupils.

With regards to training a Co-opted Member request if there could be some consideration to the time that training session are available as it can be difficult to attend during working hours.

After further discussion Member RESOLVED to:

- Agree the draft Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for the Municipal year 2019/20 (which includes topics from January to April 2020) subject to the addition of the ALN report being added and consideration of the piece of work in respect of improving outcomes for eFSM Pupil within the County Borough
- Agree that if there are any additional training requirement Members will inform the Democratic Services Officer as and when required:
- Agree that flexibility is given to the work programme to accommodate any pre-scrutiny opportunities and early engagement in policy development. .

#### **42 Music Service Provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf Report**

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services introduced Members to the 14 – 19 Strategy Officer who presented the report in respect of the music service provision in RCT.

The Officer thanked Members for the opportunity to update the Committee on the provision. It was explained that the music service was reorganised in 2015 and now consists of a co-ordinator, a part time administration assistant and 20 tutors. The Service provides an instrument hire service, individual instrument tuition, small group instrument provision, preparation for the practical element for GCSE, singing tuition, whole class instrument tuition, choral etc.

It was brought to Members attention that the service receives £129.000 to run these services and supplements this with Service Level Agreements with schools, direct payment from learners, revenue from concerts, support from the Friends of RCT Youth Music and any grants that the service is successful in obtaining. It was also brought to Members attention that as a direct response from schools who have difficulty in finding the administration time to collect monies from learners a Parent Pay Scheme where payments may be made through the website or over the phone directly to the authority.

The current service provides in 47 primary schools, 7 secondary schools and 3 through schools. Ensembles are provided after school on a Friday and engages 94 learners. The service currently engages over with 2373 musicians of which 311 (13.1%) claim free school meals (eFSM).

The Officer explained that all provision in schools is established through full consultation with individual schools in order to meet their needs. Learners who are eFSM are able to access ensembles free of charge and schools can use PDG and EIG to provide music tuition for disadvantage learners.

After concluding his report, the Officer opened up the meeting for Members questions and observations.

Members thanked the officer for the report, a Member asked for information regarding cost of lessons, it was explained that cost will vary on a sliding scale according to the type of service required.

A Member commented on the number of pupil that take up the service and asked whether the service is becoming agency based rather than education based service within our schools, the Member continued to ask if the committee could receive information as to who decides who has the service within each school.

A Member stated that there doesn't seem to be any acknowledgement of musical achievement with the education system. The Director of Education and Inclusion Services explained that since changes were made to the music service, music data is not collated by the local authority.

Members asked if this would be collated centrally in CSC, officers explained that they did not have the information to hand and would come back to Member in due course.

Members requested that in future reporting it would help if some comparative data, along with data of which schools use the service and which schools use their PDG grant funding.

After a very interesting debate and discussion Member **RESOLVED** to:

- Acknowledge the report
- Receive a report at a future meeting with comparative data;

- Receive a table of school within RCT who participate in the service

#### **43 Update Report in respect of the Feminine Hygiene Product in Schools in RCT**

The Head of Attendance and Wellbeing Service provided Members with an update on the Council's progress of tackling period poverty within schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf following the previous update in March 2019.

The Officer explained that the implementation plan outlined a number of key milestones and delivery dates for the introduction of the scheme, which members were provided an update on March 2019.

It was explained that the final action point of the implementation plan was 'To further review the scheme in 6 months to determine if it should continue and to seek funding to sustain it beyond the Welsh Government grant'.

Members were presented with results from a follow up survey which outlined the view of the pupils and the view of the schools. The overall comments about the scheme were extremely positive.

In relation to the management and monitoring of the scheme Members were informed that initially the Attendance and Wellbeing Service managed the scheme, including purchasing of the dispensing units using Welsh Government grant, placing orders for the sanitary products; arranging delivery of the products via the service's officers. In March 2019 RCTCBC received confirmation of grant funding from Welsh Government to the sum of £185,977. It was explained that this is a significant increase to the previous year's funding of £17,700. It was highlighted that the grant criteria included spend on products only to all learners with 10% of the total amount spent purchasing reusable products.

Members were also informed that this year's grant funding from Welsh Government was allocated directly to schools. 98% of responses said it was positive move.

The Head of Attendance and Wellbeing explained that in April 2019 it was decided that the Head of Attendance and Wellbeing would continue to operate an oversight of the scheme with School Facilities Service Supervisors continuing to operate monitoring reports on the implementation of the Scheme. Members were presented with the latest audit information from the schools facilities service.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the updating report and proceeded to take Members question.

Members commented on funding going forward and wanted some clarity on how easily sustainable would it be for the Council to keep the provision going once the additional funding from Welsh Government Grant would cease.

Officers explained that the recommendations from the Scrutiny Working Group were approved by Cabinet before any notification from Welsh Government of grant funding.

In respect of the audit by the school facilities service Members felt that there needed to be continuity across schools in the county borough. Member suggested that one of making sure schools adhere to the process would be to send out an email of the outcomes of the Audit to the governing bodies of the schools so it can be monitored.

The Chair raised concerns over the negative comments from schools and asked how we deal with this. Officers explained that by continuing to keep regular audits this will should help us monitor the progress going forward. Members suggested that submitting the audit reports to governing bodies going forward would help in progress of the scheme.

In respect of educating pupils and staff Members felt strongly that there is still a need for more work to be done to ensure that the stigma associated with menstrual matters are reduced.

Members also highlighted that there needs to be a more consistent approach across Rhondda Cynon Taf within the provision of PSE lessons in schools so that it is delivering the same message.

Members suggested that the animation clip that formed part of the Working Group Report could be played to schools to show the wishes and feelings of pupils throughout our schools this could also be used as a learning tool.

After further discussion and deliberation Members RESOLVED to

- Acknowledge the content of the report
- Continue to monitor the progress going forward.
- Reconvene the working group to assess any amendment going forward.

**This meeting closed at 7:45**

**CLLR S REES-OWEN  
CHAIR.**