

# CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2017

- PRESENT:** Councillor Aled Morris Jones (Chair)  
Councillor Dylan Rees (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors Richard Griffiths, Shaun James Redmond,  
Alun Roberts and Nicola Roberts.
- Mr. Keith Roberts (Representing The Catholic Church),  
Mrs. Anest G. Frazer (Representing The Church in Wales)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive,  
Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and Business Process  
Transformation),  
Assistant Chief Executive (Partnerships, Community and Service  
Improvement),  
Interim Head of Children's Services (Strategic) (for item 3),  
Interim Head of Children's Services (Operations) (for item 3),  
Head of Learning (for item 4 & 5),  
Head of Democratic Services,  
Interim Scrutiny Manager (AD),  
Committee Officer (MEH).
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Lewis Davies, John Griffiths (Portfolio Member for  
Resources), Llinos M. Huws (Leader & Portfolio Member for  
Housing & Social Services), R. Meirion Jones (Portfolio Member  
for Education, Youth, Libraries & Culture), Bob Parry OBE FRAGS  
(Portfolio Member for Highways, Property & Wates), Dafydd R.  
Thomas (Portfolio Member for Corporate).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors Carwyn Jones, Richard Owain Jones, J A Roberts

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The Chair welcomed Mrs. Anest G. Frazer, representing The Church in Wales to her first meeting of the Committee.

### 1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Dylan Rees declared a personal interest in item 4 as Chair of the Governing Body of Bodffordd Primary School.

Councillor Alun Roberts declared a personal interest in item 5 as he is a representative of the Council on the Governing Body of Beaumaris Primary School.

Councillor Nicola Roberts declared a personal interest in item 4 as she is on the Governing Body of Ysgol y Graig, Llangefni and Talwrn Primary School. She also declared that she is a parent of a child who is a pupil at Ysgol y Graig.

## **2 NOMINATIONS TO PANELS AND BOARDS - SCHOOLS PROGRESS REVIEW SCRUTINY PANEL**

Submitted – a report by the Interim Scrutiny Manager in relation to nominations to serve on the Schools Progress Review Scrutiny Panel.

It was noted that Councillors John Arwel Roberts and Alun Roberts were nominated to serve on the Scrutiny Panel at the meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 but a further two elected members needed to be nominated to serve on this Panel.

Councillor Nicola Roberts said that she considered that it was not appropriate for her to put her name forward to be nominated on the Schools Progress Review Scrutiny Panel as she has a child who attends one of the schools that will be under review.

**It was RESOLVED to nominate Councillors Richard Griffiths and Shaun Redmond as further two elected members from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to serve on the Schools Progress Review Scrutiny Panel.**

## **3 MONITORING PROGRESS - CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Submitted – a report by the Interim Head of Children's Services (Operations) in relation to the above.

The Leader of the Council, and the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Social Services highlighted the main recommendations of the CSSIW report published on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 as regard to the priorities within the Children's Services of the Authority. In response to the findings and recommendations, the authority has put in place the following arrangements:-

- A revised Service Improvement Plan, incorporating all of the recommendations of the CSSIW's Inspection Report;
- New Project Management arrangements in place, with an internal Improvement Group of Officers meeting on a monthly basis, and reporting to the Senior Management Team and to the Executive;
- Established a new Panel of Elected Members following the recent local authority elections, which will report to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

The Interim Head of Children's Services (Operations) said that it is encouraging that the recruitment of staff has improved over recent months with 7 out of 8 Practice Leader posts within Children's Services been successfully filled. He further noted that it is hoped that agency staff may be released by the end of the year following a hand-over to staff who are newly-qualified and new to the service. One of the goals of the service is to be able to identify problems within vulnerable families at an early stage and providing support much earlier. The Interim Head of Children's Services

added that partnership working has improved had greatly improved and in particular, as regards North Wales Police sharing of information regarding vulnerable families and children.

Having considered the report the Committee made the following points:-

- The Committee referred to the 'out of county' placement of children and the financial costs resulting from these placements. The Committee also noted that placement of a child out of county could have an added emotional pressure on the child/young person. The Interim Head of Children's Services responded that an internal Panel had been established within the Service to review each individual child/young person's placement to ensure that their needs were being met in the most appropriate setting. A review/assessment was being undertaken with the aim of bringing children/young people back onto the Island and increasing placement options.
- The Committee questioned if induction and training packages were in place for newly recruited employees. The Interim Head of Children's Services responded that the service worked closely with the Human Resources Service of the Council to develop a Workforce Strategy, to arrange recruitment following the restructuring, and arrange induction and support package to support newly recruited employees.

**It was RESOLVED to accept the progress report.**

#### **4 SCHOOLS MODERNISATION - LLANGFNI AREA STATUTORY CONSULTATION**

Submitted – the report of the Head of Learning in relation to the above.

The Portfolio Holder for Education outlined the recommendations of the report to the Committee and explained the differences between the two Options put forward with regard to the Llangefni Area Statutory Consultation.

The Head of Learning said that due to the pressure on the schools within the town of Llangefni it was decided to include this catchment area within Band A of the Schools Modernisation Programme. Ysgol y Graig and especially Ysgol Corn Hir have already exceeded pupil numbers. She referred to the consultation process together with numerous responses within the Llangefni catchment with school stakeholders at Ysgol Henblas, Ysgol Esceifiog, Ysgol Bodffordd, Ysgol Corn Hir, Ysgol y Graig and Ysgol Talwrn.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following matters:-

- The Committee asked whether the recent announcement by Ms. Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education, with regard to Councils having to consider all viable alternatives to closure under new rules to support rural schools would affect the Authority's schools modernisation plans. The Head of Learning clarified that the recommendations of the Cabinet Secretary had already been addressed in the guidelines of the Authority's schools modernisation process.

- The Committee also referred to responses that closure of schools can have a detrimental effect on villages and communities. Questions were raised as to whether a Community Impact Assessment had been made to identify areas within the modernisation plan. The Head of Learning responded that the Community Impact Assessment is part of the background work of the process and detailed work will need to be undertaken to gauge the changes the Cabinet Secretary for Education is suggesting within the new Code for Modernisation of Schools.
- The Committee referred to the federalisation of schools and questioned the effect on schools. The Head of Learning responded that 12 schools on Anglesey are within a federal schools category due to the difficulties in recruiting Head Teachers generally on the Island.
- The Committee questioned as to whether the modernisation of schools is driven by reducing costs for the Authority. The Head of Learning responded that Estyn challenge whether authorities are addressing empty places within schools. It is considered that a modern school environment is better for the best education opportunities for children.

Following further deliberations :-

**It was RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive that :-**

- **Option B be the preferred option which will incorporate :-**
  - **Option 3 – which is to build a new school to replace Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Bodffordd;**
  - **Option 8 – adaptations to Ysgol Esceifiog, Gaerwen;**
  - **Option 7 – further consultation will be required on adapting Ysgol y Graig to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Talwrn, and close Ysgol Talwrn;**
  - **Option 9 – adaptations to Ysgol Heblas, Llangristiolus.**

## **5 SCHOOLS MODERNISATION STRATEGIC OUTLINE PROGRAMME - BAND B (2019-2024)**

The Chair said that he was given to understand that an administrative error had occurred in submitting papers for discussion at this meeting. The Portfolio Holder for Education and the Officers requested that an amended report with minor amendments be considered at the meeting due to the requirement of Welsh Government for all Local Authorities to update their Band B proposals and submit their revised Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) by 31 July, 2017. Following discussions a vote was taken and it was decided that the amended report be discussed at the meeting. The Committee was afforded adequate time to read the minor amendments to the report before consideration.

Submitted – a report by the Head of Learning in relation to the above.

The Head of Learning said that the Authority's Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) was presented to the Welsh Government in December 2013. The strategic paper was divided into 4 Bands namely Band A (2013-2019), Band B (2019-2022), Band C (2022-2025) and Band D (2025-2028). Since the original SOP (2013) factors such as demographic changes and leadership capacity have changed significantly. Additionally, Welsh Government has said that Band B will be for a period of 5 years and will run from 2019-2024. It was noted that due to the two primary schools in Llangefni being full to capacity, and the requirement to make changes to Ysgol Graig, the funding within Band A will not be sufficient to address all the requirements in the Llangefni area, Welsh Government has instructed the Authority to include the Llangefni area within the SOP Band B. The Head of Learning also said that the catchment area of Amlwch, Lligwy and Seiriol have been included within the SOP of Band B.

The Chair said that Councillor Lewis Davies (who is not a member of the Scrutiny Committee) had requested to speak on this matter.

Councillor Lewis Davies said that following receipt of the second published report with regard to the SOP, this report has been of great concern to the local members for the Seiriol areas. Non-statutory consultation has been undertaken recently in the three schools in the area i.e. Beaumaris, Llandedgan and Llangoed which has been positive and at times challenging. Beaumaris Town Council have also expressed deep concerns as regard to this matter and have suggested that decisions have already been taken for closure of some schools in the area. However, officers have assured publicly that no decisions have been taken as regards which schools are to close. He expressed his deep concerns that a sensitive document had been published publicly which was suggesting that one school was to close in the Seiriol area. He expressed that he has assured the Head-teachers and Governing Bodies of the 3 primary schools in the Seiriol area that he would attend this meeting to express concerns. Councillor Lewis considered that the consultation process should be suspended in the Seiriol area. He further said that the Chief Executive has said that he would attend a public meeting in Beaumaris when the matter is discussed.

The Chief Executive responded that he would do his utmost to attend the public meeting and it was noted that the Head of Learning had also been invited to the meeting.

Councillor R. Meirion Jones said that as Portfolio Holder for Learning he was apologising that the incorrect document had been presented, in the first instance, for consideration by this meeting. He expressed that no decision has been taken to close any school in the Seiriol area at present.

The Leader of the Council said that this was a Strategic Outline Programme for which the Authority was requesting £18 million from Welsh Government towards the Band B programme and reiterated that there has been no decision in regards to school closures.

The Committee considered the report and **it was RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive to:-**

- Consider the modernisation of primary and secondary schools, and also primary and secondary sharing the same campus or 3-16 / 3-18 through schools;
- Consider a Local Authority contribution of approximately £18 million towards the Band B programme;
- Consider the seven main options as outlined in the Economic Case of the SOP, and to expect further detailed analysis in the subsequent, detailed business cases;
- Continue to support the school modernisation programme's case for change and the drivers for change.

**COUNCILLOR ALED M. JONES  
CHAIR**