

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 APRIL 2019

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson),
Councillors Cunnah, De'Ath, Philippa Hill-John, Joyce, Morgan,
Phillips, Taylor and Singh

Co-opted Members: Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative),
Carol Cobert (Church in Wales representative), Rebecca Crump
(Parent Governor Representative) and Karen Dell'Armi (Parent
Governor Representative)

Yasmin Bahary (Cardiff Youth Council)

88 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received for this meeting.

89 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

90 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 12 March 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairperson

91 : NEW SCHOOL PROVISION - CREIGIAU/ST FAGANS, RADYR/MORGANSTOWN AND FAIRWATER

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills), Nick Batchelar (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning) to the meeting and Michele Duddridge Hossain (Operational Manager, Planning and Provision) to the meeting to provide a briefing to the Committee.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Merry to make a statement, during which she advised that the information to be provided related to early plans for the first primary school on the Plasdŵr site. The proposal is for something very different, namely a two form entry school with one stream being Welsh medium and the other being English medium with significant welsh (EMW). The idea is to grow the use of the Welsh language, but also be able to give parents a choice.

Members were advised that the school will be close to existing Welsh and English medium schools. Ysgol Gymraeg Coed-y-Gof has a large catchment area but the school has faced recent challenges. However, support has been put in place to improve the situation. There has been a clear indication from Welsh Government documentation that they will be assessing the categorisation of schools and want to see local authorities moving along the bilingual continuum.

The Committee were invited to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members queried how many places would be available in each stream and were concerned that having an EMW would not help in persuading parents to opt for the Welsh medium stream. Officers advised that there would be 30 in each year group in each stream, the proposal is to establish a Governing Body with a Headteacher who will celebrate linguistic continuum.
- Members were advised that there were not any EMW schools in the Cardiff area, however, there are 30 examples of that type of school across Wales and those schools have demonstrated success.
- Members noted that school admissions would operate as they do currently, with the local authority administering the policy and whilst there were be two different streams within the school, it would be one school, with one Headteacher and one Governing Body.
- Members asked whether there were any risks in parents choosing the EMW stream; future provision should one stream be more popular than the other and whether, the predominance to focus on welsh is removing the choice to take up other languages, such as French and Spanish.

Members were advised that currently there is no community to consult to enable information to be obtained as to what language option they would choose. There is currently a call for all new schools to be Welsh medium schools, however concern was expressed as to whether that would fulfil the authorities statutory requirements and would in effect be forcing a language choice on parents who did not want it. With reference to provision, there would be the option to make it either a two form Welsh medium school or English medium school.

- Members noted that whilst it is difficult planning for new schools in developments that are not fully populated, different methodology needs to apply a different methodology for establishing demand. Cymraeg 2020 will not be met by building new Welsh medium schools, there has to be a recognition that to reach a much more bilingual situation will require more for pupils to emerge genuinely fluent in Welsh. There has to be a level of change and there will be a benchmarking exercise with other authorities who operate EMW schools.
- Members discussed the need for training to be provided to ensure that those who teach in English as they do not have the confidence to speak in Welsh is provided to ensure that they fluent.

AGREED: That the Chair writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the meeting.

92 : WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted the Work Programme for the next three months.

93 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None

94 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 14 MAY 2019

The date of the next scheduled meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee is on Tuesday 14 May 2019 at 4.30 pm

The meeting terminated at 5.30 pm