

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 OCTOBER 2021

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson),
Councillors Cunnah, Hopkins, Joyce, Phillips, Mia Rees and Singh

Co-opted Members: Carol Cobert (Church in Wales Representative)
and Karen Dell'Armi (Parent Governor Representative)

Mia John (Cardiff Youth Council Representative)

72 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Patricia Arlotte and Cllr Siân-Elin Melbourne. Councillor Hopkins indicated that he would have to leave the meeting at 5.00 to attend to other Council business but would re-join the meeting later. Councillor Mia Rees indicated she would have to leave the meeting at 6.30 pm.

73 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mike Phillips declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 on the basis that he has a family member who receives ALN provision.

74 : MINUTES

The approval of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee were deferred until the next meeting of the Committee in November.

75 : YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children and Families), Graham Robb (Independent Chair of the Youth Justice Board), Sarah McGill (Corporate Director, People and Communities), Deborah Driffield (Director, Children's Services) and Angharad Thomas (Operational Manager, Youth Justice Services) to the meeting.

Councillor Hinchey was invited to make a statement, during which he referred to the decline in first time entrants and the progress being made.

Graham Robb was invited to make a statement, during which he explained that the first indications of the impact of improvement work were becoming apparent. He outlined the need for caution about the reductions referred to by Councillor Hinchey and stressed the need for sustained improvement. Substantial challenges remain in performance, delivery and impact on children's lives.

Angharad Thomas updated Members on the progress being made and referred to the case study submitted in the papers.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members sought clarification from Officers on the key successes they wished to highlight and the principal challenges the service is facing. Members were advised that the first-time entrant work indicated that young people were being prevented from entering the youth justice system. The focus on partners and getting better pathways for young people had contributed to this. The Youth Justice Board had referenced the shared direction of travel with partners as significant. There will be a challenge in evidencing the impact on some of the most challenging children. It will be possible to make a difference for some but not all, and the latter will remain in the justice system. It is important to keep working to improve outcomes even if the result is delayed. There has been considerable progress in partnership work. The details have been received of a joint strategic needs assessment which allows for the interrogation of over-representation in the youth justice system of particular communities. There is important work being done for the first time about Additional Learning Needs of children in the youth justice system. This is a result of collaborative working.
- Members sought clarification as to whether the increased instances of violence against the person referred to in the Q1 Children's Services Report were among the challenging cases referenced above. Members were advised that there had been an increase in all categories of violence affecting young people in the last quarter. Some of the children involved might present the highest number of issues but some might not. Violence might be a key indicator of serious issues as might repeat offending. A child that is entering the justice system for the first time might present the highest risk. A key message going forward is how to work with Early Help, Safe and other strategies to ensure upstream prevention is in place.
- Members sought clarification on the impact on the capacity of the service of staff sickness absence and vacancies. Members were advised that there are 3 managers in place including 2 agency who are covering until the restructuring is complete. Below the management level, 2 of the staff who are off sick are from the intensive support service. The workload has been spread across the service which corresponds to the intention that work should be shared across the service and high risk cases are not concentrated on one worker. Case planning processes draw on the strength of the whole team. There is no impact on young people from reduced capacity. The caseload has reduced due to the closure of cases and tightening up of criteria. There has been an impact on supervisions due to staff sickness, Covid, and a change in management. Staff are being encouraged to undertake peer support, group supervisions and regular check-ins.
- Members were advised that interviews had taken place for new management posts.
- Members were advised that a large proportion of staff sickness absence was due to actions being taken under HR policies and procedures to bring people to account. Members were further advised that problems with supervision were in some cases a legacy issue related to a lack of supervisions performed by managers.
- Members were advised that a victim engagement feedback survey was being undertaken which was innovative and rare. The numbers of participants was

still low because it was a new survey. The survey demonstrated a commitment to getting the views of victims on the services being provided.

- Members were interested in knowing whether the relaxation of Covid restrictions had led to staff finding it easier to engage with young people. Members were advised that the relaxation of restrictions was welcomed. There was awareness of the importance of maintaining the restrictions that were still in place. People had been engaged throughout with the use of WhatsApp and Chromebooks which allow Teams conversations, as well as socially distanced bicycle rides and walks. Staff are not yet able to bring young people into the office as they would like, but are seeing young people in school. Going forward a hybrid model will be used.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the way forward.

76 : CLOSER TO HOME/DEVELOPMENT OF ACCOMMODATIONS OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARDIFF

The Chair welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children and Families), Sarah McGill (Corporate Director, People and Communities), Deborah Driffield (Director, Children's Services) and Kate Hustler (Operational Manager, Substitute Family Care in Social Services) to the meeting.

Councillor Hinchey was invited to make a statement, during which he referred to the history of the Closer to home/development of accommodations options for children and young people and referred to the high quality accommodation provided at Falconwood.

Members were provided with a presentation outlining the development of accommodation options for children and young people in Cardiff.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members noted that out of county placements were increasing and were interested in the target for out of county placements over the next 2 years. Members were advised that the out of county concept is misleading because of the size and layout of Cardiff. More than 70% of out of county placements are within an hour's travel time of Cardiff. The Closer to home concept makes more sense. What is necessary to accommodate and support young people in Cardiff is more important.
- Members were advised that it was not desirable to place children and young people far from Cardiff when it is not in their best interest, but it is sometimes necessary to do so when the resources are not available locally. It is not sensible to set targets for the number of children placed locally, but the intention would always be for children to keep their links with their schools, families and communities as long as they were able, and to access local career opportunities when leaving care.

- Members were further advised that a high percentage of children and young people are living with family or friends outside Cardiff or Wales, but it was in their best interest to do so. The aim is for Cardiff children to be in Cardiff homes. Once there is a preferred provider within Cardiff, children are identified who are willing and able to move back to Cardiff. It is still necessary to place some children outside Cardiff because of the risks to them in the local community. Some children placed outside do not wish to return because they are settled and doing well where they are. It is still not possible to provide sufficient accommodation internally and some reliance must still be placed on external private sector providers, although the balance is shifting.
- Members were advised that significant progress had been made against what was initially very limited provision in Cardiff. Whether or not the Council directly provides the support service it is desirable that the Council owns the facility. This ensures the Council has a role in deciding placements within the facility, and allows for flexible provision should needs change. A programme board has been established and new schemes are added. Some are specifically for children. There is increasing need for the Young Persons Gateway. Tenders are awaited for The Citadel which will provide self-contained accommodation for 16-plus with complex needs. The collaborative working and alignment of service that is evident is commendable.
- Members discussed community liaison. Councillors sometimes have to deal with community members who are not sympathetic to the needs and experiences of children and young people within homes. Members sought information on the process of engaging positively with the community where new accommodation is planned or underway. Members were advised that in the case of Falconwood the Council began engaging with neighbours while the development work was ongoing, and the neighbours have been supportive. Police and PCSOs have been invited to Falconwood and are familiar with the staff and residents. The children are participating in local sports teams and an effort is being made to embed the development in the community. The development has been well-received which is not the case with all developments. The Council would seek to follow the same process with future internal developments.
- Members were further advised that the key was to have the right property in the right place. Spatial issues that impact on the local community need to be addressed. It was important to remember that the children were the Council's corporate responsibility and needed the Council's protection. Councillors had to engage positively with local communities in support of such developments. It is important that the children should not be isolated but should be embedded in the community. As community leaders and representatives Councillors need to be at the forefront of that. It is sometimes a difficult conversation but one that needs to happen.
- Members were reminded that there was a distinction between Council provision and independent provision and advised that the Council was reviewing and improving processes, building links and discussing plans with preferred providers and local communities. This was still in the early stages. The Council will be relying on the independent sector for some time. The

Council is concerned to ensure that when providers come into Cardiff, the places are filled with children from Cardiff and not children from elsewhere. It is also concerned to ensure independent providers and young people are involved in the community.

- Members were advised that the high cost of property in Cardiff had also led to a reliance on providers outside the city. The Welsh Government was now supporting the Council to increase provision in the city.
- Members sought clarification on whether the Council would have the capacity to provide permanent residential placements for children who were unable after assessment to go into foster care, return to family or go to a kinship placement. Members were advised that it would be clear after assessment that some children need to be in a small residential unit. It is hoped that the Council would be able to support them in a small local unit where they would be able to attend a school and have links with family where possible.
- Members were advised that feedback indicates that many providers are reconsidering investing in Wales for fear of being unable to keep their profits. Profit is not necessarily a bad thing depending on what is done with it. The Council will continue to be reliant on the independent sector for some time because it will not be able to make sufficient in-house provision for at least 18 months.
- Members commended the staff at Falconwood assessment centre on their commitment to the children in their care. Members invited Officers to return to the Committee with the success stories from the centre in 6 months.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the way forward.

77 : FAMILY DRUG AND ALCOHOL COURT

The Chair welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children and Families), Sarah McGill (Corporate Director, People and Communities), Deborah Driffield (Director, Children's Services) Natasha Hilderley (Operational Manager, Specialist Services) and Vicki Morris (Deputy Director, Centre for Justice Innovation) to the meeting.

Councillor Hinchey was invited to make a statement in which he referred to the high profile and innovative nature of the Family Drug and Alcohol Court.

Members were provided with a detailed presentation by both Vicki Morris and Natasha Hilderley, during which they provided an overview of the project and plans and progress to date.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members commended Officers on the project and presentation and expressed a desire to be advised on progress at a future date.
- Members were advised that the project was a pilot for Wales and would have a high profile. It would be advisable to study data from authorities in England for purposes of comparison and to benchmark any success.
- Members were interested in how the project team had gathered information and from what sources. Members were advised that a call had been made on the expertise of the team in the Social Innovation Centre to understand who it was necessary to engage with. There has been a commitment across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to collaborate. The Steering Group has required commitment and involved many conversations. Having the IFST process has allowed the process to progress more quickly than in England. Close collaboration with Welsh Government, Elected Members and key partners in Directorates has allowed the formulation of a Working Group with will, passion and drive.
- Members were advised that the project was a model for what the Council would like to achieve across Children's Services and a vehicle for changing and improving services. It would not have been possible without IFST or the work and commitment of Officers and members of the team who have performed exceptionally. The Court will greatly improve the experience of families.
- Members were advised that cultural change was always difficult to achieve but it was very rewarding when it was. Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan had worked together particularly well and the judiciary had also been supportive. It was helpful that members of the project team had already achieved similar outcomes. A great deal had been learned that could be taken back to England.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the way forward.

78 : CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE - Q1 2021-22

The Chair welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children and Families), Sarah McGill (Corporate Director, People and Communities), and Deborah Driffield (Director, Children's Services) to the meeting.

Councillor Hinchey was invited to make a statement during which he paid tribute to Officers and staff in Children's Services for their performance during the pandemic, noting that the number of children being returned home had increased. There are still pressures and work has continued on remodelling the service.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members discussed whether it would be possible to expand Cardiff Works into a recruitment agency for social workers as an alternative to using external agencies. Members were advised that the possibilities of Cardiff Works had not been fully utilised. The Council had begun to use the service in relation to care workers but there was no reason why that could not be expanded to cover a range of other staff where there are difficulties recruiting. The concept of developing the Council's own staff requires that they be recruited pre-qualification, which will necessitate apprenticeships and traineeships. There need to be opportunities for support workers and social work assistants. These are crucial if the Council is to have a pool of people for development and training.
- Members sought clarification as to whether face to face visits with children had returned to the level they were pre-pandemic, and what had been learned from the experience of virtual visits. Members were advised that face to face visits should soon be at pre-pandemic levels but there was some delay due to demand. Members were further advised that a significant amount had been learned from virtual visits. What matters is what suits the young person most. Some young people were very happy with remote contact whereas others were unhappy. Different ways of using the technology have been explored. At the start of the pandemic when it was only possible to visit children most at risk, there was concern that without being in people's houses it was difficult to be certain of the real situation for many young people. For some young people it might be important to have first-hand knowledge of their home situation.
- Members sought information on any changes in practice in relation to strategies for prevention, such as improved performance and review conferences for children on the Child Protection Register. Members were advised that during the pandemic social workers were still visiting children when it was necessary or safe to do so. Children were not at school and Early Years centres were not open. The numbers of children on the Register escalated such that it became difficult to ensure that they were seen. An additional Child Protection Conference Coordinator was brought in to review decisions at an early stage. As a result there was a significant decrease in the number of children going on the Register.
- Members were further advised that a reviewing hub is being introduced which will allow staff to better understand where children are on the pathway and step them up or down in a timely way. Work is underway on developing intervention hubs to provide support internally. Wraparound support is being increased to prevent children coming into care or step them down more quickly. While significant pressures remain the Council is moving forward with innovation and development, which will help attract social workers.
- Members sought information on evidence of a relationship between increasing youth violence and child sexual exploitation, and whether there was sufficient cooperation from partners in addressing it. Members were advised that the Council has developed the Safe Model for safeguarding adolescents from sexual or criminal exploitation. The Safe Model seeks to understand what is happening within different communities and provide wraparound support for children rather than seeing them as a problem. It allows the sharing of information about Police activities that might have an impact on children.

Internal management reviews are underway into serious violent incidents and the results will be shared across the partners.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the way forward.

79 : SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS: THE EXPANSION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF CATHAYS HIGH SCHOOL

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills), Melanie Godfrey (Director of Education & Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Planning (SOP)), and Michele Duddrige-Friedl (Operational Manager, Planning and Provision) to the meeting.

Councillor Merry was invited to make a statement during which she referred to the paper to Cabinet reporting back objections to the published statutory notice regarding the plan to increase capacity at Cathays High School, replace the school buildings with new build accommodation, and expand the current Specialist Resource Base (SRB) for learners with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) from 16 to 50 places.

Members were reminded that the Band B programme was designed around tackling deficiency of places in secondary schools. Cathays High School was included due to its location and condition and that is why the Council is proceeding despite the objections. The Council has to weigh up the concerns that have been brought forward against the aims it was trying to achieve. Many objections have been raised regarding the moving of the cycle track. However, moving the track is necessary to provide the new school with space and playing fields, and to make provision for open access space. It also provides an opportunity to provide an improved track that will help grow cycling in the city. The new school will have enhanced sport and community facilities.

The Councillor further reminded Members that catchment areas need to be reviewed. The current catchment areas are not always logical or equal in size with centrally located schools. The expansion of Cathays High School will make it sustainable and will complement the amendment of catchment areas.

Members were advised that any decision would be subject to Charity Commission approval, and that there had been comments in relation to Crown Way. This has been examined in more detail and the Council would look to keep Crown Way open.

More than 100 emails having been received from members of the public regarding the proposals it had been decided to consider the public's concerns under 5 main headings. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

Capacity of the site

Members discussed whether the site would be large enough to accommodate a school of 1,450 pupils and sought clarification on the minimum requirements for a school of that size.

Members were advised that the overall proposed area of the site is 46,000 sq. metres which is the minimum size required for a school of this size. The school will meet BB requirements under a constrained site. There is insufficient space for grass fields so 2 3g pitches will be provided which would be counted twice in terms of 2 grass pitches. If required there would be supplementary sports provision at Heath Park. It is probable that the school would be able through timetabling to increase utilisation of the 3g pitches such that it would not need the Heath Park facilities, but the Heath Park provision would be available if necessary.

Members were further advised that there would be a little more than 13,500 sq. metres available for open access areas. This is more than the current provision which is around 12,000 sq. metres. The existing school site is approximately 20,000 sq. metres which is insufficient under BB guidance. The new site will be compliant and will continue to have an area for GLL and a BMX track area. There will be shared car parking with GLL.

Members discussed whether the site boundary outlined on the map was fixed or whether there might be adjustments. Members were advised that the boundary was agreed with GLL and it was not anticipated that there would be any significant changes.

Members were advised that the Building Bulletins were a capacity measuring device used in England that Welsh Government adopted as guidance, and are not a statutory requirement in Wales. Allowances are made for locations as they would be in England where sites are constrained.

Strategic decision for expansion

Members discussed the strategic decision in favour of expanding Cathays High School to 8 FE and the decision to reduce the size of Willows High School. The assumption appears to be that Cathays High School will continue to take the majority of its pupils from out of catchment. Members were concerned about the implications for travel across the city. Members were also concerned about the long-term sustainability of the school in regard to the projections for declining intake in the latter half of the decade.

Members were advised that Cathays High School is being brought forward because of its central location whereas Willows High School is in the southern part of the city. It is operating at a larger size to relieve pressure on other schools. It is a misconception that the pressure is only coming from the south of the city. It is not just in one catchment area and one school that there is oversubscription. If additional places were put in other schools it would compound the problems in relation to cross-city travel.

Members were further advised that the Council had reviewed the number of school places that were going to be needed. Willows had originally been put down for 8 FE as well as Cathays, but the Council has since recognised that there is a reduction in the birth rate. Cathays has had to expand to 8 FE but Willows is not full at its current size. There will need to be changes to the catchment areas at some point.

Members were further advised that Cathays was important to the city as a 'pressure valve', taking children from catchment and local areas. If it was not available at a larger size there would be a need to transfer more children across the city. Due to its central location it provides flexibility where catchment areas are not perfectly aligned. While the number of children entering the school is expected to drop after 2024 it is expected to increase again in 25 years.

Members were advised that Cathays is expected to accommodate 6-8 FE until at least 2028 when the numbers are expected to fall, and will help to deal with the growth in north-east Cardiff. Due to its central location it is bordered by several other catchment areas. Catchment areas will need to be reorganised in the future but there will need in the reorganisation to be a school with a central location.

Members sought clarification as to whether it was expected that Willows would retain more of its catchment in the future, and what implications there were for Cathays. Members were advised that the Willows proposal was being brought forward and it was expected there would be an increase in pupil numbers. A number of children who currently attend Cathays come from Stacey Primary School. It will be necessary to consider catchment changes at the correct time to capture the right blend of children for each school. There is a challenge for Willows to meet PAN but it is important to have flexibility so the school can grow.

Members also sought clarification on the implications of housing developments in the north-east of the city and whether they meant that the numbers of children currently expected to enter Cathays might not in fact do so. Members were advised that the developments would have an impact on schools in the north of the city and also on Cathays.

Members were further advised that it was expected that the interest and community trust in Willows would be rejuvenated to the extent that the school would be filled from within the local community. Residential developments in the area are capped in relation to the location and flood defences in the area. Willows also borders fewer catchment areas than Cathays. Within Cardiff there is a fluctuation of approximately 900 pupils from the top of the intake table to the bottom over a period of 12 years. The Council can only make projections based on the visible data, historic trends and aspirations in regard to the future. The Council considers that the mix is right between the 2 schools based on the information available and the scope for development in the LDP.

Members were reminded that it is difficult to predict future birth rates and demand for particular schools.

Financial implications

Members were sought clarification in regard to the financial implications of the proposal particularly in relation to the SOP revenue account, IT infrastructure and the school's delegated budget.

Members were advised that the capital contributions that would need to be supported by the SOP revenue reserve would include anything related to the project. Within the MIM project is the core MIM project and capital elements associated with it. The capital elements will be funded with Welsh Government with the usual intervention

rate of 65% to 35%. The MIM element is 19% LA to 81%. The capital element relates to preparing the site including demolition. There are early allowances allocated for capital, the remainder comes under MIM. There will be a contribution out of the reserve for the relocation of the track. This will be 100% funded rather than having a contribution rate from Welsh Government. In regard to IT and schools' delegated budgets, the Band B programme is funded in part by schools' delegated budgets. There is no commitment in this regard.

Velodrome project

Members were concerned about the effect on the plans for the school if the Velodrome project did not go ahead.

Members were advised that the projects had been brought forward in close succession in order to get the alignment between the two correctly in place. It would require a Cabinet decision to proceed with the school before a significant investment could be made in the sports village. The reserve has been allocated to fund the capital for the track.

Members sought clarification on whether the allocation of the SOP reserve to fund the track was compatible with the guidance on how that funding should be used. Members were advised that it was and that the reserve would fund the capital finance. The relocation of the track is essential for the school project to proceed.

Scrutiny of the consultation process

Members were concerned about the scrutiny of the consultation process and the capacity of the Committee to scrutinise the consultation as fully as it might wish to. Members do not feel well-placed to scrutinise the proposal in the detail that they might like to because certain details are not yet available.

Members were advised that the same process was followed with each development in regard to agreeing the principle of the proposals. It was understandable that there was frustration that the details of the plans were not available, however those details would follow once the principle had been agreed. Comments made during the consultation influence the more detailed plans that are presented during the pre-planning stage.

Members were further the advised that the site had been tested to check that it meets requirements and early survey work had been carried out to make sure that it is viable. The next stage of working up the designs would involve significant costs and it would be difficult to progress that without some assurance that the project would proceed.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the way forward.

Councillor Phillips advised that he had a personal interest in this item as he has a family member in receipt of ALN provision.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills), Melanie Godfrey (Director of Education & Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Planning (SOP)), and Michele Duddrige-Friedl (Operational Manager, Planning and Provision) to the meeting.

Councillor Merry was invited to make a statement, during which she drew attention to the principles underlying the proposals and reminded Members of the Council's commitment to inclusive education. Nevertheless there is an issue in regard to specialist provision and SRB. It is desirable that children should have access to the right provision for the level of need they have.

Members were advised that there are strong processes in place to continue the Council's inclusive approach. These projects were in place to ensure the Council is expanding its specialist provision because there are a high number of children and young people who need to access the more specialist environments.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members sought clarification on whether the combined proposals would account for the entire deficit of places or whether there would be need for further expansion in due course. Members were advised that there would be need for further provision in the future. The proposals in the current paper require a statutory consultation process. There may be others that could be progressed without a statutory consultation process. The Council will continue to work to ensure balanced provision across the city.
- Members noted the out of county provision budget for 2021-22 and sought clarification on the extent of any reduction in the out of county provision budget. Members were advised that it was possible the extra provision would reduce a further escalation in the budget or reduce the budget provision. No conclusion could be drawn as of yet.
- Members enquired as to the timelines surrounding the consultation. Members were advised that the proposals would not all be brought under the same consultation. How they would be divided up had not yet been finalised, but the intention was to bring forward the consultations as soon as possible. It is necessary to balance the desire to progress the consultations in a short timescale with the resource available. It is not possible to run a number of consultations simultaneously.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the way forward.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills), Melanie Godfrey (Director of Education & Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Planning (SOP)), and Michele Duddrige-Friedl (Operational Manager, Planning and Provision) to the meeting.

Councillor Merry was invited to make a statement, during which she referred Members to the presentation they had received in the previous meeting.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members sought information on whether there had been discussions with Welsh Government and other partners about how the availability of Welsh speaking staff might be increased. Members were advised that there had been conversations with Welsh Government and Central South Consortium on this topic. There will also need to be work done with training providers to make significant changes and improvements. Members were further advised that WG will bring out a workforce strategy to increase the number of fluent Welsh speaking staff in Welsh medium schools and staff to teach Welsh in English medium schools. Work is required to gain a firm understanding of the situation in the local area and the reasons for fluent Welsh speaking staff not feeling confident to teach in Welsh. The Council has had discussions with one of the teaching unions who were positive about the experience they could share.
- Members enquired as to whether there had been engagement with higher education to address the issue of students not using Welsh in their university courses. Members were advised that Cardiff Met is an important partner with regard to their teacher training programme. Members were further advised that the membership of the WESP Board had been increased in order to improve the involvement from the higher education sector. There are in addition other ways to support Welsh speaking teachers. Teaching assistants are able to progress through the graduate scheme. Upskilling the current workforce is important. It is also necessary to consider the wider workforce. Some teachers who were exposed to Welsh medium education may no longer be in Wales and it was important to consider how to encourage them to come to Cardiff.
- Members enquired as to what discussions had taken place regarding the possibility that there might be a 24% surplus in English medium places. Members were advised that it would be necessary to put long-term plans in place as the situation develops. It will be a challenge over a 10-year period to meet the targets set out.
- Members sought information on the strategies involved around transition points for example from nursery to reception. Members were advised that the Council has moved from responding to demand to stimulating demand as part of its strategy to encourage Welsh medium education. A range of clear information is essential so that people can make informed choices. Parents need to be able to see the journey from nursery through primary to secondary education. Where parents have chosen to put their children through Welsh medium education at whatever point there needs to be reassurance about the

level of support both within school and wider support mechanisms around the school to support language acquisition both formally and informally.

- Members sought information on whether patterns of take up were consistent across the city. Members were advised that there are certain areas where there is a much greater level of Welsh medium demand and other areas and communities with a lower take up. There is a need for in depth consideration and engagement activity to understand why those communities consider Welsh medium education is not appropriate for them.
- Members sought information about parental support in relation to Welsh language learning. Members were advised that there is a certain level of classes offered currently. In addition to family Welsh lessons, people are able to access Welsh learning through employment. The Council would want in association with further education and other partners to expand the opportunities available.
- Members discussed the importance of spreading the availability of Welsh medium education across the city. Members were concerned that an opportunity had been missed with the construction of new schools in new communities to go beyond the 50% target. Members were advised that the principle that was outlined was at least 50%. In relation to the LDP a range of options could be considered, including dual stream or all Welsh medium. A higher provision is not precluded. The target across Cardiff is 40% which is a national target. The Council would be looking at the demand from communities. The current plan is the first 10-year plan on the road towards achieving the 2050 target. The Council would expect the establishment of Plasdŵr schools with dual language provision to have an impact in regard to what families want and move the community along the bilingual continuum in a way they had not anticipated. The development of the model is expected to challenge perceptions about what English medium education may offer, combined with the national curriculum changes.
- Members reiterated their concern that it might be easier to make Welsh medium education more widely available in new schools in new communities. Members were advised that school plans would come forward over time. While the intention is to encourage the take up of Welsh medium education it would not be possible to build only Welsh medium schools if there is not the level of demand within communities. It is also important not to undercut existing Welsh medium schools. The at least 50% target gives a degree flexibility.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the way forward.

82 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were tabled.

83 : WAY FORWARD

Members discussed the information received and identified a number of issues which the Chairman agreed would be included in the letters that would be sent, on behalf of the Committee, to the relevant Cabinet Members and Officers.

84 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Committee is via MS Teams on Tuesday 9 November 2021 at 4.30 pm.

The meeting terminated at 8.45 pm