

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2022

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson),
Councillors Cunnah, Hopkins, Melbourne, Molik, Phillips and
Mia Rees

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

Mia John (Cardiff Youth Council Representative)

The Chair wish to thank all those involved in the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee over the last five years for their hard work, support and dedication over that period. Councillor Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills echoed those remarks in her statement.

127 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Heather Joyce.

128 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mike Phillips declared a personal interest in Item 5 as his daughter is on the autistic spectrum and receives funding from the Authority. Karen Del'Armi also declared a personal interest in Item 5 as she is Chair of Governors at Llanishen High School.

129 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on the 22 February were approved as a correct record of that meeting as proposed by Councillor Robert Hopkins and seconded by Councillor Mia Rees.

130 : SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING: ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2023/2024

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills), Melanie Godfrey (Director, Education and Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Planning), Brett Andrewartha (School Organisation Programme Planning Manager) and Jennie Hughes (Senior Achievement Leader, Inclusion) to the meeting.

The Chair invited Councillor Merry to make a statement, during which she confirmed the nature of the report; an annual report which goes out to consultation each year and it will come into force in September 2023. It was noted that that the Bishop of Llandaff CIW High School will become part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme from September 2023.

The Chair invited questions from Members:

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.

- Members queried whether all faith schools were part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme and were advised that there were two secondary schools who were not yet part of the scheme although agreement had been received from one of those schools and the other will be spoken to soon. With reference to primary schools, there were still a handful of schools who were not yet part of the scheme. Members noted that the final decision rests with the Governing Body of the school.
- Members sought further information about the 'managed move' of pupils and the review of catchment areas. Officers confirmed that the legislation in respect of managed moves has not changed, but there is a fair access protocol in place which allows for arrangements where schools are fully subscribed to be allowed to admit pupils above that published admission number where there are particularly challenging circumstances. Officers confirmed that whilst there does need to be a review of school catchment areas, Band B places need to be sorted in the first instance, no date for that has yet been set but it will happen as soon as it can do.
- Members referred to Individual Development Plans (IDP's) and whether the provision was for those on school action plus or whether it will be for those where there is a statement. Members were advised that the same arrangements apply to those with statements as long as those statements still exist. They will be converted to IDP's in due course, although Welsh Government has not yet confirmed when that is likely to happen. The new ALN code places greater emphasis on every school making a good inclusive offer, therefore in the majority of cases you would not need to name a school in an IDP; the Local Authority could do that in exceptional circumstances, but it is expected that that would largely be for children who needed to attend a resource based school. There will be no difference between what used to be school action and statemented; it is an equal approach for all. The admissions policy covers both systems, due to the current transition phase.

RESOLVED:

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

131 : SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING: PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX LEARNING NEEDS AND AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITION

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills), Melanie Godfrey (Director, Education and Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation

Planning), Brett Andrewartha (School Organisation Programme Planning Manager) and Jennie Hughes (Senior Achievement Leader, Inclusion) to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member and Programme Director provided statements confirming that the outcome of the consultation has been relatively positive across the board with a clear acknowledgement that there is a need to bring forward the proposals.

The Chair invited questions from Members:

- Members sought clarification about funding and whether the proposals will be realistically be delivered. Officers explained that in relation to the building proposals outlined, everyone is either on an existing site or there is a project which is a well-established project. Areas have been identified in order for the provision to be put in. It has been included as part of the wider asset programme. Some will not be in place for September 22 but will be in place not long after that. There is no major risk with the projects.

Members queried the amount of places that would be available in September 22. Members were advised that there are interim agreements in place where we needed, but some of these planned for September 2023 have been factored in alongside the out of county planning. There were no plans for all places to be funded and filled by September 22.

- In relation to funding and transport, the modelling around out of county and the transport position has not yet been fully worked through. It is affordable within the delegated budget currently but modelling not fully completed. It will be necessary to see whether all the projects will be progressed. The consultation responses have helped with this information. It is hoped that there will be a spread of additional learning needs (ALN) provision across the city. There would then be an expectation that the transport costs across the city per pupil would reduce. This is not a final position.
- Members sought clarification in relation to the involvement of parents in the placement of children with ALN to help ensure that schools were not passing on the responsibility of those children rather than keeping them in main stream education. Officers advised that a specialist place is not a default for children with ALN. Specialist placements are only considered if they cannot be accommodated in the school. Parents are closely consulted; they have the right to comment on placement. A number of children could be placed in either and the parent's views would tend to be given the greatest weight.
- Members referred to a number of the responses which raised some questions about staffing capacity and skill levels and the need for training and queried what forward planning has taken place to ensure that staff with the right level of skills and will be there in a sufficiently timely manner. Members were advised that meetings have taken place with the special school heads; work will

be done with schools on an individual basis as schools will have different challenges. There needs to be a tailored approach for each of the proposals. Not all places will be filled at one time, therefore staff will be staggered as well. Schools will need to be employing and developing more specialist staff over the next few years.

- Members also referred to the responses from the Welsh medium sector; generally speaking the responses were positive and favourable but there were a lot of responses raising the issue that Welsh seemed to be a less developed provision and the lack of a clear pathway for parents from foundation to secondary school. This may lead to an exodus from Welsh medium education, particularly during the transition phase between primary and secondary school. Members were advised that the Glantaf proposal is key. It is very ambitious and will push the city forward significantly. Funding information is awaited from Welsh Government in relation to that. This is not a final set of proposals, this is getting things moving in the right direction. Welsh medium SRB provision needs to be built up in the primary sector as well. Options are currently being considered. When the WESP was brought forward there was commitment to half of the schools being Welsh; there will be an expectation that there will be SRB provision in those schools as well. It will grow over time as the WESP develops.
- Members stated that several times there has been mention of this not being the final stage in the process; there is reference to a final options paper and financial evaluation. Members were advised that there are not fixed time scales at present but it will be put together over the next few months.
- Members queried how the transition would be managed when SRB provision would be put into schools that currently do not have that type of provision. In terms of no SRB in the schools currently looking to put provision, how is that going to be managed and how are you going to manage that transition? Officers advised that the development of the Court School at Fairwater will not be part of the existing school building, it will be a new build on the same site and the school and children would not transfer until such times as the school was ready for them. There would then be extra places that would grow over time. That project is not planned for delivery for a few years yet as it is a big build project. The Court School is part of Band B, for which there is a full visioning exercise, it is not just expansion.
- Members queried a comment about ALN provision being centred in areas of Cardiff where the population is predominantly white; the comment does warrant a bit of thought about the needs of the BAME community and whether that adds another level of resourcing issues to consider before the places are opened up. Members were advised that it is not the final set of proposals,

plans in certain areas are still being considered, particularly in the Fitzalan catchment area. Officers believe that they have presented a good mix. There are some areas of deprivation and other areas as well. It is important to get the spread across the city; these are the proposals being brought forward immediately but there will be others that will come forward in due course.

RESOLVED:

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

132 : SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING: PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING NEEDS.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills), Melanie Godfrey (Director, Education and Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Planning), Brett Andrewartha (School Organisation Programme Planning Manager) and Jennie Hughes (Senior Achievement Leader, Inclusion) to the meeting.

Statements were provided by the Cabinet Member and Programme Director; firstly noting that the reports do show that the Local Authority has taken notice of the responses received during the consultation periods; and secondly that the recommendation is to proceed with the core proposal. In terms of the Greenhill proposal, there will be further reflection on some of the comments made, and a further report will come back to Committee at a later date. Primarily those comments referred to the Dutch Garden site and particularly around the proximity of the junction. There are design solutions, but it is necessary to get the balance of it being school and not looking like a prison. Further work will be undertaken about the site and the provision in place.

The Chair invited questions from Members:

- Members referred to the facilities being developed on both the Dutch Garden Centre Site and the Ty Glas site in Llanishen and noted that the facilities were very different. Members queried how students on the Ty Glas site would access the Dutch Garden site facilities. It was explained that there would be a visioning exercise which would map out what the links would be; whether pupils would be on one site or the other for all or part of their schooling; and how that would factor in with offsite provision. That process has not yet started, the consultation responses were required in the first instance. That would happen in any Band B project.

Members queried the Estyn response in relation to the Eastern High and Cardiff West Community College SRB provision; they seemed cautious about demands on Cardiff West at this time. Is the provision to be developed over a period of time to allow the college accommodate and establish the provision in a planned way? Members were advised by Karen Del'Armi, Chair of Governors at Cardiff West that the Governing Body does support

the establishment of the SRB and see it as an area for growth, although physical space may be an issue, which has been discussed with officers, staff and students. It is important to make sure that the safeguarding and health and safety elements are right.

RESOLVED:

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

133 : SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING: EXPANSION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF PENTYRCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills), Melanie Godfrey (Director, Education and Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Planning), Brett Andrewartha (School Organisation Programme Planning Manager) and Jennie Hughes (Senior Achievement Leader, Inclusion) to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member and Programme Director provided statements. Whilst the responses were broadly supportive, an issue was raised by a non maintained nursery. There have been discussions about how the two nurseries could work together.

Members did not have any questions.

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

134 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS REPORT

Alison Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer provided the Committee with a correspondence update, an update on the Replacement Local Development Plan Task & Finish group findings and information in relation to the draft Scrutiny Annual Report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to note the correspondence update;
- (2) to note the way forward for collating the findings and recommendations to date of the Joint Task and Finish Group inquiry into the Replacement LDP Strategic Options; and
- (3) to approve the draft Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee page of the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/2022 and highlight the committee's greatest achievements for inclusion in that report.

135 : 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.

136 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were tabled at this meeting.

137 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee will be agreed by Council at its annual meeting in May 2022.

The meeting terminated at 6.00 pm