
VIRTUAL HEAD TEACHER – BRIEFING REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. For Members to receive a brief overview of this Agenda Item ahead of this meeting and receiving a briefing from Deborah Williams, the Virtual Head teacher. This follows a request at May's CYPSC meeting for Members to meet Deborah.

Background

2. At a meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee on the 15 May 2023, Members considered the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Annual Report 2022/23.

Issues

3. During the Q&A session at the May meeting, Members were particularly interested in the role of the Virtual Head Teacher and were pleased to hear that Deborah Williams was in post and already commencing her work.
4. Arising from this meeting, Members requested that Deborah, Councillor Merry and any other senior officers be invited along to this meeting and brief Members on the following:

- What Deborah has been working on to date;
- what her plans are in the coming months;
- what challenges and issues she has uncovered to date;
- what support networks she has in place; and
- any views on how this scrutiny committee can support her in her role.

Way Forward

5. At this meeting Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education; Mike Tate, Assistant Director of Education and Lifelong Learning; and Deborah Williams, Virtual Head Teacher will be in attendance to brief the Committee.
6. Members will be able to agree any comments, concerns or recommendations that they wish to pass on to the Cabinet Member and Senior Officers during the Way Forward and decide whether they wish to receive further updates from witnesses in the future.

Legal Implications

7. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee considers this report and information provided at the meeting and agrees any recommendations, comments or advice it wishes to offer to the Cabinet Member, Virtual Head Teacher and senior officers in Education & Lifelong Learning; and any future scrutiny Members may wish to undertake on this issue.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services

27 June 2023