

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 10 January 2013 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Richard Davies, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Colin Hughes (Chair), Geraint Lloyd-Williams, Dewi Owens, Arwel Roberts (Vice-Chair) and Gareth Sandilands and Co-opted Members C. Burgess, G. Greenland, D. Houghton and N. Lewis.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Economic and Community Ambition (RM), Head of Internal Audit (IB), Head of Education (KE), School Effectiveness Performance Officer: Secondary (JM), Corporate Improvement Manager (TW), 14-19 Education Network Co-ordinator (JG), Principal Coleg Llandrillo (JD), Coleg Llandrillo/Director Rhyl (CJ), Democratic Services Manager (SP), Scrutiny Co-ordinator (RE) and Administrative Officer (CIW).

The Chair welcomed Ms Nicola Lewis to the meeting following her appointment as Education Co-opted Member, Parent Governor – Primary and Mrs Debra Houghton who had been appointed as the Secondary Sector Parent Governor representative. Mrs Houghton had until recently been the Primary Sector Parent Governor representative on scrutiny. Members were also informed that Dr Dawn Marjoram, who unfortunately was unable to attend the meeting, had recently been re-appointed as the Special Educational Needs Sector's Parent Governor representative. He also welcomed members of the Peer Learning Exchange Team from Flintshire County Council and representatives from the Wales Audit Office who were observing the meeting as part of the Wales Audit Office's (WAO) Scrutiny Improvement Study.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ian Armstrong, Meirick Davies, Peter Owen and Allan Pennington and Dr D. Marjoram (Co-opted Member).

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Members declared any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at the meeting.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No items were raised which in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 29th November, 2012 were submitted.

Matters arising:-

5. Corporate Risk Register – Councillor H. Hilditch-Roberts explained that in terms of corporate risk he had raised the issue of possible legal and financial implications on the Council following the severe weather event in Ruthin.

8. Library Service Standards: Annual Report 2011/12 – The Chair informed the Committee that at a recent meeting Henllan Community Council had complimented the Library Service on the level and standard of provision in the area.

10. Scrutiny work Programme – In response to a question from Councillor A. Roberts regarding the problems experienced in relation to the roll-out of the x2 wheelie bin scheme, the Scrutiny Coordinator referred to page 5 of the Briefing Notes and explained that a report in respect of this matter would be presented to the meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee on the 28th February, 2013. She also referred to Appendix 4 of the Committee's Forward Work Programme, which detailed progress in relation to the Committee resolutions, and it was confirmed that the situation had and was continuing to improve.

RESOLVED – that, subject to the above, the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

5 COLEG LLANDRILLO AND DENBIGHSHIRE LEARNERS

The Committee received a PowerPoint a presentation from Jackie Doodson, Principal Coleg Llandrillo and Celia Jones, Director Coleg Llandrillo – Rhyl which detailed the performance of Denbighshire 16-19 year olds students enrolled at Coleg Llandrillo Cymru.

The presentation highlighted the following salient points and areas:-

- Group Structure – Coleg Menai, Cloeg Meirion Dwyfor and Coleg Llandrillo.
- Llandrillo Structure – Rhyl Campus and Rhyl Sixth highlighted.
- Facts and Figures about Coleg Llandrillo – Approximations highlighted.
- Denbighshire Students (Full time (FT): 16-19) - At Rhos, Denbigh Campus, Rhyl Sixth, Rhyl Campus and Abergele Campus. Increase in numbers in Rhyl with decline in Rhos.
- Subject Choices - At non Denbighshire Campuses.
- 14-16 Provision (Denbighshire) - 14-16 Vocational Pathways and 14-16 FT (EPIC) for 2011/12 and 2012/13.
- Student Success – In relation to Denbigh College, Abergele College, Rhyl Sixth, Rhyl College and Llandrillo Total.
- Rhyl in Context - Levels of Achievement for Rhyl High, Blessed Edward Jones (BEJ), Abergele, Weighted Average Rhyl Schools and Rhyl Sixth.
- Prestatyn and Rhyl Sixth Partnership – Joint post 16 offer and extended choice.

- Literacy and Numeracy Skills – Denbighshire Students FT 2011/2012.
- Continuous Improvement – Details of Improvement.

Over the last 5 years Rhyl College, students and staff, had received a number of accolades and noteworthy successes. These included:-

- UK Automotive Young Apprentice of the year (2009).
- UK Finalist Institute for the Motor Industry Automotive Engineering Centre of the Year (2009)
- First National Retail Skills Academy in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (2010)
- Colegau Cymru FE Teacher of the Year (2012)
- Unique pan Wales School/College partnership – Prestatyn High and Rhyl 6th – the only partnership where College students study in a school setting
- Finalists – Young Enterprise (Subo Soux) and winners of the best customer service and best trade stall categories (2012)

The following responses were provided to questions and issues raised by Members of the Committee:-

- In response to concerns raised by Ms C. Burgess, the Coleg Llandrillo/Director Rhyl (CLDR) explained that a more structured timetable had been introduced and additional buses provided to address the transportation problems initially experienced by students. The 14-19 Education Network Co-ordinator (ENC) explained that a link had been provided on Facebook which could be utilised by students to communicate details of any problems, such as transportation issues, which were being experienced.

- In reply to a question from Councillor A. Roberts regarding connections with Ysgol Glan Clwyd, the CLDR explained they were working closely with the Dyffryn Clwyd Partnership, which included Ysgol Glan Clwyd, Denbigh High School and Denbigh College. She highlighted work being undertaken by the Rhyl College in respect of the 14 – 16 curriculum which allowed for the extension of the curriculum, particularly through the medium of Welsh.

- The CLDR provided the following responses to questions from Councillor D. Owens:-

- Details of funding issues pertaining to the concerns relating to the 14 – 19 grant funding, European funding and partnership working in schools, particularly in relation to vocational qualification decline, were provided. The Principal Coleg Llandrillo (PCL) outlined the work being undertaken by the ENC to overcome and remove, through good communication and partnership working, any barriers which arise.
- It was explained that the lack of representation from Denbighshire on the Board had been recognised but would be difficult to address until a vacancy arose. An outline of the membership appointment process was provided and it was confirmed that a letter had been sent to Denbighshire regarding this issue.
- Details of the literacy and numeracy skills figures, with regards to Denbighshire, were provided by the PCL.

- The PCL responded to questions from Councillor G. Sandilands outlining the existing communication links with Prestatyn High School. She provided details of the process adopted for maintaining effective performance with regard to the school and confirmed that significant improvements had been achieved in this area. The CLDR confirmed that a strong robust working partnership existed with the school.
- Councillor G. Lloyd-Williams referred to the recent merging of the Colleges in the Group and the CLDR outlined the benefits and advantages realised. However, she explained it would be difficult to anticipate or forecast if any further mergers would take place.
- Councillor H. Hilditch-Roberts explained that it would be beneficial for the Committee to receive details relating to year on year student enrolment numbers and qualification attainment figures. He also requested that details of the cost of educating a student be provided for information purposes. The CLDR explained that there was a framework of costs related to learning units which varied depending on the individual subject.
- The CLDR responded to a question from Councillor R.J. Davies and confirmed that if the demand for a specific course at one campus increased and decreased at another site staff were flexible in their working practices to meet the needs of the service users. She also confirmed that the existence of the Rhyl site had impacted beneficially on the local economy.

Councillor E.W. Williams referred to the possible future framework of the college structure which he felt could improve the level of choice and number of options available for students in Denbighshire. He felt that it would be important to convey to both the Welsh and Central Governments the importance of offering students the opportunity to have vocational and traditional courses, which could be progressed through partnership working. The Head of Education emphasised the importance of having a broad curriculum offer available for students. Effective partnership working with the colleges and engagement with all stakeholders were integral to ensuring that Denbighshire students excelled in their chosen fields.

The Chair and Members of the Committee thanked the Principal Coleg Llandrillo and the Director Coleg Llandrillo, Rhyl for their detailed and informative presentation.

RESOLVED – *that the Committee receive the presentation and note its contents.*

6 KS4 EXAMINATION RESULTS

A copy of a report by the School Effectiveness Performance Officer: Secondary, which verified performance of Denbighshire schools' external examinations results at Key Stage 4 and post 16, and provided an analysis of results against benchmarked information and performance against other local authorities, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The School Effectiveness Performance Officer: Secondary (SEPO:S) introduced the report which provided information regarding the performance of Denbighshire schools teacher assessments and external examinations. All key indicators at KS 4 for external qualifications had improved during the year to be top ten performing in Wales. There had been significant improvement in all indicators since 2010, particularly the Level 2 Threshold and Level 2 including English, Welsh and Mathematics. A summary of Assessment and Examinations Rankings had been included in the report.

It was explained that the key performance indicator at the end of key stage 4 was the Level 2 Threshold including English, Welsh and Mathematics. Details of the percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2, and individual school performance, had been included in the Report. The Level 2 Threshold indicated the number of pupils gaining 5 GCSE A*-C's or vocational equivalents, and this replaced the 5A*- C indicator used in previous years. The percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 Threshold was 83%, which had been 10% higher than the previous year. This had been the fourth year that the Level 2 indicator had increased in Denbighshire high schools and placed Denbighshire first in Wales in 2012, and this had been a significant improvement moving from eighteenth in 2010. The HE highlighted the importance of focusing on the improvements achieved with regard to the Level 2 Threshold, particular reference was made to the pupil attainment profile, the success achieved in special schools and the improvement realised in Rhyl Schools. She emphasised that it would be important not to become complacent in order to ensure that the improvement levels were sustained.

The SEPO:S confirmed that all schools had improved this year with Blessed Edward Jones and Rhyl High School achieving the highest increases of 22% and 25% respectively for the Level 2 Threshold. In addition Prestatyn High (91.%), Ysgol Dinas Bran (98.%), Ysgol Glan Clwyd (91%) and St.Brigid's (96%) had all achieved over 90% for the Level 2 Threshold. Ten pupils (0.8%) had left school without a recognised qualification in 2012 and this had placed Denbighshire eighteenth in Wales. Details of the examination result achievements of pupils from Ysgol Plas Brondryffyn and Ysgol Tir Morfa had been highlighted in the report.

Welsh Government had utilised Banding as a way of using national data on school performance in context to group schools according to where they were on their improvement journey relative to other schools in Wales. Band 1 schools indicated good overall performance and progress, and those in band 5 showed weak performance and progress relative to other schools. The banding profile of schools in Denbighshire in 2012 had improved and all schools were in Band 2 except for Ysgol Dinas Bran, who remained in Band 1, and Denbigh High School who had improved from band 4 to Band 3.

The performance indicator for post 16 was the Level 3 Threshold, which equated to 2 A levels or vocational equivalents, and results at Post 16 had largely remained static.

The percentage of candidates achieving the Level 3 Threshold had improved by 3% to 99% in 2012 and this was above the Welsh average of 97%. The Average wider points score had improved to 694 in 2012 but this was below the Welsh average of 773. The percentage of A & A* grades had decreased to 19.4% in 2012 from

22.5% in 2011 with the Welsh average being 23.6%.

The number of candidates awarded the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification's Advanced Diploma had decreased. However, the qualification had been taken by significantly more pupils in 2012. The SEPO:S referred to the network of schools and confirmed that they had not created a negative impact and initial problems, such as transportation issues, had been addressed.

Members were informed that Improving performance in education and the quality of our school buildings was one of the Council's new Corporate Priorities for 2012-17. Details of possible risks, and the steps implemented to reduce them, had been outlined in the report.

Councillor A. Roberts referred to the findings of a recent Estyn inspection at Clocaenog school which reinforced the conclusions with respect to the progress made during recent years with the delivery of education within the county. The HE outlined the contributing factors involved in attaining significant improvements, particular reference being made to schools in Rhyl. She highlighted the benefits of partnership working with schools and the robust strategies adopted to achieve improvement and continued progression. The Head of Internal Audit referred to the internal audit report in respect of Rhyl High School and highlighted the improvements achieved in terms of the performance and management of the school. Councillor E.W. Williams explained that the success achieved had to a significant degree been influenced by the £1.2m invested in Education two years previously to improve the service.

Councillor H.Hilditch-Roberts referred to the possible risks emanating from the challenges in terms of leadership, management and Headteachers and the need to ensure positive progression. He also highlighted the need to profile School Governors when appointed and to examine accreditation for leadership for Headteachers. The HE acknowledged the challenges with regard to maintaining the current position in relation to the Level 2 Indicator. She referred to the effects of changing cohorts, particularly on smaller schools, and the consequence of pupils' performances and profiles on the overall attainment profile of a school. Reference was made to the need to meet national challenges, issues relating to the Modernising Education Review and the crisis faced with regard to the recruitment and retention of Headteachers. It was confirmed that leadership and management development courses were provided and very strong partnership work ethics had been adopted with Headteachers and Governing Bodies. Councillor E.W. Williams stressed the need to publicise and promote Headteacher posts in Denbighshire and referred to the appointment of Business and Finance Managers in schools to assist with financial administrative duties. He felt that the existence of Business and Finance Managers for schools should be more effectively used to sell headteacher posts to prospective candidates.

The HE responded to a question from Councillor G. Sandilands and confirmed that Denbighshire did work closely with the Welsh Government and that there was, collectively across Wales, lobbying of the Welsh Government with regard to funding provision, particular in relation to the 14 – 19 category. The SEPO:S provided an

outline of the 14 – 19 funding streams and made reference to the improvements achieved in the areas where the funding had been invested.

In response to questions relating to Denbigh High School, Councillors C. Hughes, R.J. Davies and the officers highlighted the success and level of improvement achieved at the school during the past twelve months.

During the ensuing discussion Councillor D. Owens highlighted the importance of the success achieved in respect of Education provision within the Authority in terms of raising the profile of the County and assisting with its regeneration.

RESOLVED – *that the Committee receive the report and note the performance of schools against previous performance and external benchmarks.*

7 ESTYN ACTION PLAN

A copy of a report by the Head of Education, which detailed the progress made in response to the recommendations made by Estyn following the 2012 inspection, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Head of Education (HE) explained that the main findings of the Estyn Report had indicated that the Local Authority had achieved 'Good' for the three key questions:-

- How good are outcomes
- How good is provision
- How good is leadership and management.

All other indicators had also been judged to be 'Good', with the exception of 3.1 'Leadership', which had been judged to be 'Excellent'. The Estyn Report, A report on the Quality of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People in Denbighshire, had been included as Appendix 1. In order to improve further the following recommendations had been made by Estyn:-

Recommendation 1: Improve the accuracy of Teacher Assessments at the end of Key Stage 3.

Recommendation 2: Identify all services for children and young people in Denbighshire and establish an effective system to measure the impact of these services to help the Authority and its partners know whether these offer good value for money.

A copy of the Estyn Action Plan – Draft, May, 2012 had been included as Appendix 2 to the report.

Progress had been made against all actions identified under Recommendation 1 in the Post Estyn Action Plan, with the exception of 1.4. The completion date for activity related to 1.4 was July 2014. Appendix 3 – Estyn Action Plan Monitoring Form and Appendix 4 – Key Stage 3 – Core Subjects – Teacher Assessments 2012 contained the relevant information with respect to Recommendation 1.

Progress had also been made against actions identified under Recommendation 2 and included in Partnerships Action Plan, Appendix 5 to the report.

In response to a question from the Head of Internal Audit, the HE outlined the follow up process adopted by Estyn in considering the progress achieved in terms of the recommendations.

In response to a question from Councillor A. Roberts, the HE provided details of the funding allocation and process for individual pupils in the primary and secondary schools. She explained that there had been a major review of the funding formula and summarised the delegated budget in terms of the funding mechanism. The School Effectiveness Performance Officer: Secondary (SEPO:S) confirmed that the moderation of standards process was robust with teachers operating in clusters.

The SEPO:S responded to a question from Councillor R.J. Davies regarding the provision of training for teachers in the use of Moodle. He explained that this had been highlighted in red due to the impact of regional working and the uncertainty as to which staff would eventually be working for the county and who would be working for the regional service.

The HE confirmed that improving performance in education and the quality of school buildings was one of the Council's Corporate Priorities for 2012-17. It was explained that in monitoring the delivery of the Action Plan the Committee could assist the Council to fulfill part of the above ambition.

During the ensuing discussion the Chair and members thanked officers for the excellent standard of work undertaken, and it was:-

RESOLVED – *that the Committee:-*

- (a) receive the report and note the progress achieved to date in addressing Estyn's recommendations, and*
- (b) agrees that a further progress report be included in the Committee's forward work programme for July, 2013.*

8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A copy of a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator, which requested the Committee to review and agree its Forward Work Programme and provided an update on relevant issues, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. A copy of the Cabinet's forward work programme had been included as Appendix 3, and a table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising Members on progress with their implementation had been included as Appendix 4 to the report.

A proposal form, had been included as Appendix 2, which requested consideration of an item relating to the Wales Audit Office's Annual Improvement Report. Members agreed this item be included in the forward work programme for April, 2013.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) had met on the 20th December when it had been decided that a report on CCTV should be transferred from Partnerships Scrutiny Committee's forward work programme for March, 2013 to Performance Scrutiny Committee's forward work programme for April, 2013.

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme for future meetings, as detailed in Appendix 1, and the following amendments and additions were agreed:-

Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 21st February, 2013:-

CSSIW Annual Council Performance Evaluation 2011/12 - Members agreed that as this item had been considered and accepted by the Corporate Governance Committee as a positive report, it be presented to the Performance Scrutiny Committee as an Information Report.

Introduction of Speed Limiters and Rev Counters on Council Vehicles - At the request of the Performance Scrutiny Committee's Vice-Chair it was agreed that a report on the potential benefits and costs of introducing speed limiting/rev counting devices on Council vehicles be included in the Committee's forward work programme for February, 2013.

Corporate Plan 2012/13 (Q3) – The Corporate Improvement Manager explained that the report would detail the indicators and measures in terms of the Baseline position with regard to the Corporate Plan.

Members agreed that an item relating to the Corporate Risk Register be included in the Forward Work Programme for consideration at the July Committee meeting. It was also agreed that the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group be requested to consider the coordination of an item pertaining to the performance of Cefndy Enterprises.

RESOLVED – that, subject to the above amendments and agreements, the Future Work Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor R.J. Davies provided a detailed summary of the issues discussed and considered at the Service Performance Challenge - Environmental Services meeting held on the 28th November, 2012, which included issues relating to:-

- The Recycling Park Contract and Material Recycling Facility savings.
- Discussion with Welsh Government relating to Co-mingled Waste.
- Food Waste Processing Contract.
- Residential Waste Projects.
- Street Cleaning Coordination.
- Staff Flexible Working Conditions.
- School Meals Services.
- Health and Safety Issues.

RESOLVED – *that the report be received and the position be noted.*

The Chair explained that Denbighshire's Peer Learning Exchange Team would be attending Wrexham County Borough Council Scrutiny Committee meetings as part of the WAO Scrutiny Improvement Study exercise.

Meeting ended at 12.20 p.m.