

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in Meeting Room 4, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 30 January 2020 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Ellie Chard, Ann Davies, Hugh Irving (Vice-Chair), Arwel Roberts and David Williams

Co-opted Members Kathleen Jones and Neil Roberts attended for Agenda Item 6 – Verified External Examination Results

Cabinet Members Councillor Bobby Feeley, Richard Mainon, Huw Hilditch-Roberts and Tony Thomas attended at the committee's invitation for agenda items relating to their portfolios

GwE representatives for business item 6: Jacqueline Chan and Mair Herbert

Observers – Councillors Meirick Lloyd-Davies and Graham Timms

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive (JG), Head of Community Support Services (PG), Community Support Services Project Manager (AR), Head of Education and Children's Services (KIE), Senior School Improvement Officer – Secondary (JM), Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation (AS), Performance and Programme Systems Administrator (EJ), Head of Communities and Customers (LG), Principal Librarian (BH), Scrutiny Co-ordinator (RhE) and Democratic Services Officer (KAE).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Huw Jones (Chair), Martyn Holland, Bob Murray, Peter Scott and Geraint Lloyd Williams.

In the absence of the Chair the Committee was presided over by the Vice-chair Councillor Hugh Irving.

The Committee sent their warmest regards and hopes for a speedy recovery to Councillor Huw Jones.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Personal declaration of interest were received for Agenda Item 6 – Verified External Examination Results.

- Ellie Chard – Governor at Ysgol Tir Morfa
- Anne Davies – Governor at Ysgol y Castell
- Arwel Roberts – Governor at Ysgol y Castell and Ysgol Dewi Sant
- Hugh Irving – Governor at Prestatyn High School

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

None

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 28 November 2019 were submitted.

Matters Arising –

Hafan Deg, Rhyl – the Scrutiny Coordinator confirmed that the new leaflet promoting the service had been distributed throughout the area.

Cefndy Healthcare members visit – the Scrutiny Coordinator sought verification that it was a single visit for all members rather than individual visits, the Committee agreed.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2019 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 WORK OPPORTUNITY AND DAY ACTIVITY SERVICES REVIEW

In the absence (due to personal reasons) of both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the In-house Adult Social Care Task and Finish Group the Head of Community Support Services introduced the report (previously circulated). The report presented the findings of the review of the Work Opportunity and Day Activity Services for adults with complex disabilities. He advised that the Task and Finish Group had recently considered the review's findings and were in agreement with the conclusions drawn and the recommendations put forward.

During the review it had become apparent that the services provided to people with complex learning disabilities were valued by service-users, their families and carers, and that a number of them wanted to see the services improve and develop. The Review had concluded that:

- Meifod Wood and Garden Control Services would both benefit from being operated as social enterprises as this would enable them to grow and develop into businesses in their own right, which would broaden the experiences on offer to service-users;
- Popty Catering Services should remain as part of Community Support Services but capitalise on an opportunity available to re-locate to space available at Denbighshire Leisure Limited's new headquarters in Denbigh, where a purpose built kitchen could be installed for the Service. That relocation would enable Popty to develop into a work experience placement service and also assist the Service to further explore the viability of retaining the sandwich provision service within Denbighshire Leisure Limited;
- it would be beneficial for Job Finding to transfer into the 'Working Denbighshire' Service. In doing so it would be able to take advantage of the connections and experience of a dedicated employment support service and

- Y Bont and the Golden Group would benefit from amalgamating as one single service, re-locating from Canol y Dre to a purposely refurbished area within County Hall in Ruthin.

Responding to members' questions the Head of Service advised that:

- the Task and Finish Group was supportive of the proposals having received assurances that those individuals working within Popty would continue to be able to meet and socialise with other colleagues currently based with them in Canol y Dre, as a number of them attended other work opportunity services on other days;
- it was estimated that refurbishment work to accommodate the relocation of services to both County Hall and Denbigh would cost in the region of £120K - £150K. It was anticipated that this cost could be funded in part through a successful application to the Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) and to the Council's own Strategic Investment Group (SIG). There should also be sufficient funds available to offset the cost via the capital receipt that would be available upon the sale of the Canol y Dre building;
- there would be no gap in service provision to current service-users during the transition period, there may actually be an overlap as the transition would be gradual with service-users being introduced to their new surroundings using a phased familiarisation approach;
- architects and other specialists would be engaged to design appropriate washroom and rest facilities at County Hall to meet service-users' needs and
- developing Meifod Wood and Garden Control into social enterprises would open up opportunities for both services and help ensure that sufficient staff capacity would be available to cover sickness leave etc.

Committee members were keen to visit the current services delivered from Canol y Dre, Meifod Wood and Garden Control and the Head of Service agreed to facilitate the visits. The Committee:

Resolved: to report to Cabinet, that

- I. it had read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 1) as part of its consideration;***
- II. subject to the above observations, it supported the intention to relocate four services (Popty Catering Services, Y Bont, Jobfinding and The Golden Group) and to combine Y Bont and the Golden Group into one co-located service; and***
- III. it recommended for approval the proposal to explore the setting up of social firms relating to two activities currently being carried out by the Service, namely Meifod Wood and Garden Control***

6 VERIFIED EXTERNAL EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Head of Education introduced the report and appendices (previously circulated) emphasising that one of the challenges facing the Service at present was that they were delivering services during a period of time when they were waiting for the imminent introduction of a new curriculum. That meant they were currently

delivering the service without knowing which indicators they would be assessed against, as these were yet to be agreed. Whilst education practitioners acknowledged that the narrow set of indicators previously used to measure pupils' educational attainment had had a detrimental effect on pupils and schools, the data presented for the last academic year did not present a true and holistic illustration of each individual pupil's achievement.

Responding to members' questions the Lead Member, Head of Service, Principal Education Manager and GwE representatives advised that:

- whilst there was an element of correlation between deprivation, poverty and poor educational performance there were other contributing factors such as mental health and well-being issues. Mental health was the greatest challenge faced by Education and Children's Services at present;
- Denbighshire was fully aware of where its Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) pupils were being educated and had an education and well-being profile on each one, therefore officers knew exactly what their needs were and their capabilities;
- a lot of work in the county's deprived areas centred around the transition of young children into education;
- County education staff and GwE regularly tracked the progress of individual schools and pupils at all Key Stages (KS) and could therefore tailor their programme of support to each individual school's specific needs;
- due to the experimental work being undertaken at the KS3 phase the 'dip' in performance at this stage should not be a cause of concern, as there was a decrease in attainment on a national basis in 2019;
- it was difficult to compare performance at KS4 in 2019 with previous years due to the significant changes in the education programme in Wales and the fact that the national data capture for individual schools was now based on first entry results. Nevertheless, there had been an improvement in Science results;
- pupils' attainment for Welsh language qualifications were above the national average in three of the four key stages. That was a reflection of the investment made in recent years in Welsh medium education in the County;
- the Education Service's aim was for each pupil and school to achieve the best they could, commensurate with their ability, hence the emphasis in Denbighshire on providing clear, transparent qualitative information on attainment;
- examination results illustrated one specific aspect of education whilst Estyn inspection reports provided a far more holistic picture and analysis of the quality of education, care and leadership provided by the schools and the Education Authority, as they had regard to other aspects of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities and their impact on a pupil's general well-being;
- Denbighshire's Head of Education and Children's Services was the present Chair of the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW). She was therefore able to share with other Directors of Education Denbighshire's experience of amalgamating both Education and Children's Services under one head of service and the benefits that brought to devising a whole child approach to service delivery;

- Christ the Word School, being an all-through school, was not in a position to benefit from the very effective 'cluster' arrangements available to other schools in the county. However, they were able to work with other local head teachers and schools to share experiences and practices. Representatives from the school had recently attended a meeting of the School Standards Monitoring Group (SSMG) and whilst there were still challenges to overcome they had given the Group a positive presentation and vision for the future and
- school exclusion data which the Committee had requested would be published nationally within the forthcoming few weeks and would be circulated to Committee members when available.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee congratulated the Education Service, GwE, teachers and pupils on their performance during the 2018/19 academic year. Having reviewed the performance data available they felt assured that the County's education staff and GwE had an in-depth knowledge and understanding of each pupil's capabilities, aspects which required improvement and where resources required to be focussed in order to improve attainment and support pupils to achieve to the best of their abilities. This was commendable considering the pressures caused by the imminent introduction of a new curriculum and the non-availability of national benchmarking data. It was therefore:

Resolved: - *subject to the above observations:*

- i. to receive the information relating to the verified performance of the county's school pupils at Key Stage 4 and post 16 examinations during the summer of 2019, acknowledging the barriers that existed which fettered the Education Service from undertaking comparison exercises with previous years' results and with the results of other local education authorities; and*
- ii. that they were satisfied that both the Council's Education Service staff and GwE personnel had identified the emerging trends and areas which would require improvement going forward at all Key Stages.*

7 DRAFT STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY

The Lead Member for Corporate Services and Strategic Direction introduced the report (previously circulated) and the conclusions of the review, which had been instigated at Scrutiny's request following its concerns that the policy did not properly reflect the requirements of the Council's Welsh Language policy.

The Performance and Programme Systems Administrator outlined the steps taken as part of the review, which included seeking guidance and advice from the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office.

Members were advised that:

- having one official name for all new streets would assist the blue light services and others to locate properties quickly in the event of an emergency;

- the Armed Forces agreed that streets should not as a matter of course be named after fallen serving personnel, they felt that this would only possibly merit consideration if they had been awarded gallantry honours of the highest level e.g. the Victoria Cross;
- the new policy would not advocate bilingual street names from now on, but that all new streets should be given Welsh only names;
- English only street names already in existence would remain thus, no bilingual street signs would be erected to replace these signs when they required replacing;
- although some street names were literal translations of the original Welsh or English names, others were not and therefore if both version were displayed they could cause confusion for the emergency services. The County did have a record of all officially recognised street names in both Welsh and English, these were known as 'Type 4' street names.

Members mentioned that upon local government re-organisation in 1996 Denbighshire had adopted a policy of replacing all street name signs with bilingual signs, however this replacement programme had not been fully delivered.

Councillor Arwel Roberts requested that his disagreement with the policy of not replacing English street name signs, as and when they required replacing, with bilingual signs be placed on record.

The Committee:

Resolved: - subject to the above observations and the noted objection, that –

- i. all new streets be named in Welsh only;***
- ii. the option to name streets after individuals be removed from the policy;***
- iii. the Council's policy be amended to reflect this and presented to Cabinet for approval; and***
- iv. it had read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 5) as part of its consideration***

8 LIBRARY SERVICE STANDARDS 2018-19 AND DRAFT LIBRARY SERVICE STRATEGY

The Lead Member for Housing and Communities introduced the report and appendices (previously circulated) emphasising that Denbighshire had during 2018-19 met all 12 core entitlements set by the Welsh Government's (WG) Museums and Libraries Division (MALD). In addition it had achieved in full 8 of 10 constituent targets of the Quality Indicators, partially met one, and failed to achieve the one target which related to acquiring up-to-date reading materials per 1,000 population.

Members were advised by the Head of Communities and Customers and the Principal Librarian that the County's Library Service was extremely popular with residents and well visited by users as the statistics demonstrated. The reason for

this was that the Library Service delivered the services that residents wanted and helped residents to access Council and other services near to home.

The modern library service was much more than a book borrowing service, it helped deliver the County's Volunteering Strategy, supported the delivery of the health and well-being agenda and hosted social gatherings for all age groups ranging from babies to the elderly which mitigated against social isolation.

Members praised the Service and its staff for the wide-range of services they delivered and commended them on the excellent MALD report and the efficient execution of the bus pass renewal service

Responding to members' questions the Lead Member, Head of Service and Principal Librarian:

- confirmed that it was the Service's intention to roll out the 'dementia memory packs', currently available to users of Prestatyn Library, to all libraries in due course via funding secured from Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council 's (DVSC) Dementia Aware Denbighshire plan
- advised that the Service was working closely with town councils in an attempt to increase footfall in the libraries even further, in particular to entice people from nearby towns and villages that did not have a library of their own to attend and use their nearest library
- confirmed that consideration was being given to relocating Rhyl's Library to the former Queen's Market site in the town as part of the area's redevelopment, although no firm decision had yet been taken

The Committee:

Resolved: - subject to the above observations on the performance against the 6th Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards to receive the report, commend the Service and its staff on their excellent service and performance, and request that a progress report be presented to the Committee in January 2021

9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator introduced the report (previously circulated) seeking Members' review of the Committee's work programme and providing an update on relevant issues. Members were reminded that the proposal form for scrutiny forward work programme (appendix 2) should be completed for the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs Group (SC&VCG) to review and allocate. There was still time to submit any urgent forms for the SC&VCG meeting that afternoon, the next meeting would then be 19th March.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator advised the Committee that March's agenda only had two items but two of them were substantial topics and suggested that no further items be added. The committee agreed and requested that the relevant lead members be invited.

Resolved *that subject to the above that the Performance Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan be noted.*

10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillors Ellie Chard and Arwel Roberts were due to attend a Schools Standards Monitoring Group meeting at Denbigh High School that afternoon.

Meeting concluded at 12:35