

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Thursday, 26 January 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Jon Harland, Carol Holliday, Alan Hughes, Hugh Irving (Chair), Terry Mendies, Gareth Sandilands (Vice-Chair) and Andrea Tomlin

Education Co-opted Members –

Kathy Jones and Neil Roberts

Lead Members – in attendance at the Committee’s invitation

Cllr Gill German, Lead Member for Education, Children and Families in attendance for Item 5, Christ the Word Inspection Report

Cllr Elen Heaton, Lead Member for Health and Social Care in attendance for Item 6, Cefndy Performance Report 2022/23

Observers: Councillors Joan Butterfield, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones and Huw Hilditch-Roberts.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Governance and Business (Monitoring Officer) (GW); Head of Education (GD); Head of Finance (SG); Principal Education Manager (JB); Principal Education Manager (MG); Interim Head of Community Support (AL); Operational Service Manager _ Cefndy (NB); Scrutiny Coordinator (RE); Zoom Host and Webcast (KJ) and Committee Administrator (SLW)

GwE representatives – Core Leads for Denbighshire

Jacquie Chan (Primary) and Mair Herbert (Secondary)

Christ the Word representatives –

Bernadette Thomas (Interim Head Teacher)

Claire Armistead (Associate Head Teacher)

Colette Owen (Roman Catholic Diocese of Wrexham Representative)

Councillor Peter Prendergast (Vice-Chair of the Governing Body)

POINT OF NOTICE

The Vice-Chair chaired the meeting on the basis of arrangement already agreed between him and the Chair, as the Chair had anticipated not being available to attend the meeting.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chris Evans and Terry Flanagan, Co-opted Member for Education (Primary Sector Parent Governor Sector).

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following Councillors declared a personal interest in business item number 5 - Councillor Ellie Chard as a present governor at Ysgol Tir Morfa and a past employee at Ysgol Mair (the predecessor primary school prior to the establishment of Christ the Word) and Councillor Peter Prendergast in his capacity as the current Vice-Chair of the Governing Body of Christ the Word.

The Monitoring Officer advised Councillor Chard that her interest was historic and therefore no longer required to be declared. He proceeded to advise Councillor Prendergast that, in his capacity as Vice-Chair of the Governing Body he had both a personal and prejudicial interest in the business item, but as he was a Local Education Authority (LEA) appointed governor he qualified for an exemption from the interest being classed as a prejudicial interest. Therefore, his interest was solely personal for the purpose of the discussion at the current meeting.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No matters of an urgent nature had been raised with the Chair or the Scrutiny Co-ordinator prior to the commencement of the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 November 2022 were submitted. It was:

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022 be received and approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

No matters were raised in relation to the contents of the minutes.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Due to the confidential nature of the information that would be discussed under the following item of business Councillor Hugh Irving proposed that the meeting be moved to Part II business, Councillor Carol Holliday seconded the proposal. The Committee was in agreement and it was:

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 13 and 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

5 CHRIST THE WORD INSPECTION REPORT

The Head of Education, Geraint Davies, introduced the confidential report (previously circulated) which outlined the response to the recent Estyn Inspection Report that resulted in Christ the Word Catholic School being placed in Special Measures.

During his introduction the Head of Education provided some context to Estyn's inspection, which included background information on the school's establishment, the impact of Covid on all pupils and educational establishments including Christ the Word School, and details of the five recommendations made by Estyn, all of which were detailed in the Inspection report available on the Estyn website.

In addition, he detailed all the steps undertaken by the Council's Education Service, the School's Governing Body, Diocese and GwE to date with a view to addressing Estyn's recommendations, which included the development of a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and a joint Local Education Authority (LEA) and GwE Support Plan for the school. These measures included the appointment of additional governors on the School's Governing Body, the appointment of an interim school leadership team and the provision of additional support to help move the school forward. All of these actions and the measures outlined in the PIAP had been accepted by Estyn and the delivery of the PIAP and LEA/GwE action plans were now subjected to regular challenge and monitoring.

Responding to Committee members' questions the Lead Member for Education, Children and Families, the Head of Education, LEA Education Officers, Christ the Word School and Diocese representatives, along with GwE representatives:

- outlined the governance and management arrangements for Voluntary Aided schools
- gave an overview of the Estyn Inspection process, including the lead-in work ahead of an Inspection
- outlined the types of support offered to the school since its establishment
- confirmed that safeguarding was a key feature of all Estyn inspections. The measures now in place in response to the regulator's recommendation were now continually challenged and monitored to ensure their robustness. Also, an additional governor had been appointed to the School's Governing Body and that governor had assumed responsibility for safeguarding on the Governing Body
- advised that various training events were being held for school leaders, staff and governors to ensure that they had the relevant skills to address the recommendations and deliver the action plans
- confirmed that the PIAP and LEA/GwE Support Plan dovetailed with the new Curriculum for Wales, Religious Instruction (RI) Programme, and the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code and would ensure their delivery across the school going forward
- gave assurances that all partners involved with the school were now working effectively together with a common aim of supporting the school going forward and securing the very best outcomes for all learners attending the school

At the conclusion of a comprehensive and an in-depth discussion, the Committee thanked all for attending and for constructively contributing to the debate:

Resolved: to

- (i) receive the information provided during the course of the discussion;***

- (ii) support all parties' efforts to date in addressing the recommendations laid out in Estyn's Inspection report of Christ the Word School; and*
- (iii) request that a further report be presented to the Committee in September 2023 detailing the progress achieved in implementing and delivering the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and the joint local authority & GwE Support Plan following the 2022 Estyn inspection of the school.*

**AT THIS JUNCTURE (11.50 A.M.) THERE WAS A 10 MINUTE BREAK.
THE MEETING RECONVENED AT 12.00 P.M.**

OPEN SESSION

Following completion of the above business the meeting resumed in open session.

6 CEFNDY PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23

The Lead Member for Health and Social Care, Councillor Elen Heaton, introduced the Cefndy Performance Report 2022-23 (previously circulated). The report provided an overview of the current performance of Cefndy within the financial year 2022-23 and the market conditions within which it was operating.

It was confirmed that Cefndy manufactured various living aids and had been in existence for approximately 40 years. Many staff had worked in Cefndy for many years with the average length of service being 17 years.

The Interim Head of Community Support, Ann Lloyd, informed members that reports had been presented to Scrutiny over a number of years. There had been significant disruption and cost volatility to global supply chains since the start of the Covid pandemic which had increased Cefndy's competitiveness against imports. This had impacted positively with sales increasing with existing customers and had seen some additional business with new customers.

Cefndy had experienced some unforeseen budget pressures during the current financial year including additional energy costs, higher than expected salary increases and emergency building repairs.

Work had taken place over the previous 18-24 months to assist in the stabilising of the service.

Feedback received from one of the largest customers of Cefndy was that they should be building on the fact that they were a British manufacturer, and delivering social value. As a result of this feedback, the Principal Manager, Strategic Marketing, had held a session to support the team in developing an action plan around increasing business to business trade with existing customers. Officers were also looking at opportunities to re-ignite relationships with previous customers based on the current market opportunities and ability to compete (on a range of products) with imports.

As there were currently some vacant posts within Cefndy, this was giving the opportunity to review the business model.

Work was taking place as the building needed significant repairs carried out. An Extraction system needed to be replaced to reflect a change in the Health and Safety legislation. Some of the equipment was past its serviceable life with spare parts no longer available. A business case was being developed to take to the Strategic Investment Group for £400k.

As the Appendix to the report contained confidential information Councillor Carol Holliday proposed the meeting move to Part II business for the remainder of the discussion, Councillor Andrea Tomlin seconded this proposal. The Committee:

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Responding to members' questions, the Lead Member and officers:

- advised that whilst the report stated Cefndy had five large customers with whom it was currently exploring development opportunities, it did business with in excess of 100 different individual customers, including other local authorities
- advised that Cefndy provided valuable employment opportunities for disabled individuals. Cefndy differed to the Council's Work Opportunities Services as those employed at Cefndy were Council employees and therefore covered by the Council's terms and conditions of employment
- gave details of the unexpected one-off costs experienced during the course of the current financial year, other unforeseen pressures encountered and the measures taken to address them as well as potential future risk mitigation measures
- advised that all opportunities were explored with a view to developing and sustaining the business for the future, including potentially increasing its partnership working opportunities with Llandrillo College once its new site in Rhyl, located near the Cefndy premises, was open

At the conclusion of an in-depth discussion the Committee:

Resolved: *subject to the above observations to –*

- (i) receive the performance, sales and costs analysis presented for Cefndy for the 2022/23 to date, acknowledging the unforeseen budget pressures it has encountered and the work undertaken to mitigate their effect;***
- (ii) support the work undertaken at Cefndy and the achievements of the business model operated within the Council's Social Care Services;***

- (iii) request that an Information Report be provided to the Committee following the end of the current financial year detailing Cefndy's end of year performance analysis for 2022/23;*
- (iv) request that Cefndy's annual performance report for the 2023/24 financial year, including an analysis of the delivery of its financial, business and social well-being objectives, be presented to the Committee during the summer of 2024; and*
- (v) request that a visit be arranged for all Committee members to Cefndy to see the manufacturing facility, the production work undertaken there along with the employment opportunities on offer and to meet the workforce.*

PART I

OPEN SESSION

Following completion of the above business the meeting resumed in open session.

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Coordinator introduce the report (previously circulated). There were four items listed for the next Performance Scrutiny Committee on 16 March 2023 –

- (i) Learner Travel Measure (Wales);
- (ii) Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan;
- (iii) Library Service Standards 2021/2022; and
- (iv) Mould & Condensation in Denbighshire Council Housing Stock.

Item (iv) had been referred to the Committee by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group at its meeting on 19 January 2023. In addition, enquiries had been made with relevant officers on whether the reports listed under (i) to (iii) would be available for Committee's next meeting. Further details in relation to the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure were still awaited from the Welsh Government (WG), therefore this report would not be available until later in the year.

A representative from each of the Scrutiny Committees were requested to be appointed on the Capital Scrutiny Group (CSG). The Group would meet six times per year and meetings would be held virtually. Councillor Terry Mendies proposed Councillor Gareth Sandilands be appointed on the CSG, seconded by Councillor Carol Holliday. It was agreed Councillor Hugh Irving would deputise in Councillor Sandilands absence.

The Scrutiny Coordinator informed members that the Service Challenge Groups were to be re-established and a representative for each of the nine council services would be sought in the near future. Members were requested to give some thought to which services were of particular interest to them as they may wish to put their name forward in due course to serve as the Committee's representative on that Service Challenge Group.

The Committee:

Resolved: *subject to the information contained within the report and the inclusion of the future items agreed during the course of the meeting, to:*

- (i) confirm the Committee's forward work programme attached at Appendix 1 to the report; and***
- (ii) appoint Councillor Gareth Sandilands as its representative to serve on the Capital Scrutiny Group, with Councillor Hugh Irving appointed as the Committee's substitute representative on that Group.***

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

None.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1.00 P.M.