

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Wednesday, 22nd November, 2017 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor S.rees-Owen – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

J.Brencher	L.Hooper	R.Smith
A.Calvert	W.Lewis	S.Rees
H.Fychan	S.Powell	

Co-opted Members

Mr.J.Fish – Voting Elected Parent/Governor Representative
Mr.D.Price – Representing UNISON

Officers in Attendance

Ms.E.Thomas – Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Mr.P.Nicholls – Head of Legal, Litigation, Planning & Environment, Community & Children's Services
Ms.A.Richards – Head of 21st Century Schools
Ms.N.Morgan – School Organisation & Governance Team Leader
Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services

35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillor J.Harries and S.Evans.

36 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED – that in accordance with the Code of Conduct there were no personal declarations of interest made at the meeting pertaining to the agenda.

37 MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on the 25th October, 2017.

38 REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING
SEREN

In accordance with Minute No.40 of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on the 28th November, 2016 the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning provided Members with a progress report on the achievements of the Seren Hub during its second cycle (2016/17) and outlining the lessons learnt that may affect the current and subsequent cycles.

The Chair welcomed Mr.S.Parry Jones, Co-ordinator of the Seren Hub (RCT and Merthyr) who introduced Members to the following students, who each spoke of their individual experiences of the Hub in very positive terms and indicating that it gave them the confidence and inspiration to apply for places at higher Universities:

- Lucas Watts – Ysgol Garth Olwg
- Nyasha Thomas – Ysgol Garth Olwg
- Katie Waits – Hawthorn Comprehensive School
- Aliah Akhtar – Hawthorn Comprehensive School

Members of the Committee put forward their questions to the students and the Co-ordinator of the `Hub` and the students were praised for their performance and insight into how the Seren Network works.

The Chair queried if there were any elements of the `Hub` that could be transferred to students that were not part of that cohort. In response the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning reported on the provision that is offered to More Able and Talented (MAT) pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf in partnership with the Central South Consortium.

Following a discussion, the Chair thanked Mr.S.Parry Jones and the students for their attendance at this meeting and wished them all the best for the future.

RESOLVED - that the findings of the evaluation of the Hub's activities which have been undertaken by an independent company appointed by the Welsh Government be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

34 **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

The Director of Education & Lifelong Learning provided Members with updated information relating to the Governor Support Service in Rhondda Cynon Taf following the review that was undertaken by the Scrutiny Working Group during 2016, the recommendations of which were endorsed by this Committee at its meeting held on the 29th September, 2017 (Minute No.17 refers) and commended to the Executive. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a copy of the recommendations together with the progress made to date by the Governor Support Service.

It was reported that the Governor Support Service provides a very comprehensive service for primary and special schools via a Service Level Agreement (SLA), which is purchased by those schools in Rhondda Cynon

Taf who choose to avail themselves of the service. The SLA as shown at Appendix 2 to the report provides details of the support that is provided by the team in terms of advice, guidance and training to help governors in their role.

Attached to the report at Appendix 3 was a copy of the SLA in respect of the service that is offered to secondary schools, which is purchased by 11 of the 17 schools. Following recent recommendations noted in the Internal Audit Reports this SLA has now been redrafted for the secondary schools and all through schools and was shown at Appendix 4 to the report.

Details were reported upon in respect of the training programme which is produced on a termly basis and the number of courses held during 2016/17 were shown at Appendix 5 and at Appendix 6 were details of the number of governors that had completed the on-line mandatory training.

In response to a query raised by a Member, it was reported that on-line training is to be bilingual.

At the meeting Members expressed concern on the number of vacancies that are available as it was orally reported at the meeting that the current figure was between 230-240 vacancies, despite Governor Support Officer being proactive in advertising. It was felt by the Committee that this could be due to a number of reasons such as the role of a governor being on a voluntary basis and also the time that an individual has to give to undertake training, if mandatory training is not completed within six months of a person taking up the position as a governor then that person could be suspended. However, one Member indicated that whilst the role is of a voluntary nature, many individuals are not aware that the hours allocated to the role can be “banked”.

In response to a further question, it was reported that there is no statutory requirement to undertake DBS checks on people who wish to be on a governing body, however, schools are advised that it is good practice if such checks were made.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED –**

1. That further information be included in future reports on the evaluation and data of the training courses that have been undertaken by governors;
2. That the Committee be provided with an explanation of “banking of hours” in terms of voluntary work for governors at a future meeting.

**S.REES-OWEN
CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 6.27 p.m.

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