

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
LEARNING COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY** held remotely by video-
conference on Monday, 20 September 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Wyn Thomas (Chairman), Councillors Bryan Davies Marc Davies, Meirion Davies, Odwyn Davies, Rhodri Davies, Endaf Edwards, Lloyd Edwards, Keith Evans, Hag Harris, Alun Lloyd Jones, Lynford Thomas and Ivor Williams

Also in attendance: Councillor Catrin Miles and Catherine Hughes (Cabinet Member)

Officers in attendance:- Mrs Meinir Ebbsworth, Corporate Lead Officer – Schools, Mrs Elen James, Corporate Lead Officer- Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Mr Gethin Jones, Corporate Manager – Support & Intervention, Mr Mark Gleeson, Corporate Manager – Lifelong Learning , Mr Gareth Lewis, Headteacher Ceredigion PRU, Ms Gillian Evans, Corporate Manager -,ALN Inclusion & Wellbeing, Mrs Mary Davies, Corporate Manager – School Improvements, Mrs Lisa Evans, Scrutiny and Standards Officer and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic Services and Standards Officer

(10:00am – 12:45pm)

1 Apologies

Councillor Mark Strong apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

Councillor Paul Hinge apologised for his inability to attend the meeting due to being on other Council duties.

2 Personal

Condolences were expressed to Ms Nia James, Corporate Manager Learning Resources on her passing of her mother recently.

Councillor Lloyd Edwards was welcomed back to the committee following his period of illness

3 Disclosures of personal/

None.

4 A verbal update in relation to support for the Schools Service during the COVID 19 period

The Corporate Lead Officer – Schools provided Members with a current update on the Covid 19 position within schools. It was reported that

the new Infection Control Decision Frameworks for schools and colleges as from August 2021 included a national risk registry which had low, moderate, high, and very high risks.

Currently, in conjunction with Hywel Dda Health board, the schools in Ceredigion had been assessed as a medium risk with 22 positive cases being recorded in Ceredigion schools the day before.

The Chair thanked all officers and school staff for their work during this difficult time.

5 Update on three Services within Porth Cymorth Cynnar (PRU, Support and Prevention and Lifelong Learning and Skills Services)

Consideration was given to the Report updating and informing the Committee on the development of the three Services within Porth Cymorth Cynnar namely the Pupil Referral Unit in Ceredigion, Support and Prevention Service and Lifelong Learning and Skills within Porth Cymorth Cynnar and as part of the Through-Age and Wellbeing Programme.

A detailed presentation on the three services were provided by their respective Corporate Managers/Headteacher on the background; staffing structure and the current position of each service.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to note the report for information and to thank the officers for all their work within these services.

Officers also stated that possibly in the future Members could attend the facilities of the services to view their work, once the figures of covid 19 cases had reduced

6 Additional Learning Needs strategy

Consideration was given to the Report upon the Additional Learning Needs strategy. It was reported that the New Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales was issued in March 2021 with the intention to implement the new system from September 2021. However, the implementation programme had been revised due to the impact of the pandemic.

A detailed background to the strategy was provided and that the aim of the new approach, as stated in the Code.

It was reported that due to the significant impact of the pandemic the ALN implementation plan was further reviewed by the Minister in July 2021. From 1 September 2021, the ALN system would commence exclusively for children of compulsory school age and below who:

- are newly identified as having an additional learning needs (ALN) following ALN Code processes, regardless of their setting - including those that may attend an EOTAS setting, an independent school or who are electively home educated;
- are detained;

From 1st January 2022, the ALN system would commence for children of compulsory school age and below who:

- attend maintained schools (including PRUs) in Nursery Years 1 and 2 and Year 1, Year 3, Year 5, Year 7 and Year 10) who have special educational provision via early years action / early years action plus or school action SA /school action plus SAP;
- Children who currently had special educational provision via a statement; were awaiting or were in the process of an SEN assessment; and those who were over compulsory school age, would not be included in the first year of implementation.
- The movement of children to the new system was spread throughout the year.
- Parents would not be able to request a move to the new system until 1st January 2022.

It was reported that the Local Authorities were still awaiting the final three-year implementation guidance, which was expected to be published early in the Autumn term. This delayed guidance, was impacting the certainty of advice we were able to deliver to schools, as well as the preparation that was able to be undertaken with parents and support agencies.

Under the new ALN system local authorities had a duty to review the arrangements made by schools to meet the needs of learners with ALN. This guidance would outline Ceredigion Authority's principles and expectations for educating children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). It also provided clarity on what was expected of Ceredigion mainstream schools in meeting the needs of learners with ALN and would be reviewed by the authority. This document would form an integral part of the authority's framework for meeting the needs of all children and young people between the ages of 0 and 25.

Ceredigion was already well placed to implement many of the principles of the new ALN reforms and a list of these were provided. Also the risk that were identified due to these changes.

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The new ALN system would operate in parallel to the SEN system, during the three-year implementation period. A review of the implementation plan and principles and expectations document should be provided, once the final implementation plan and information has been confirmed by WG.

Ceredigion's Principles and Expectations document would be presented to cabinet in due course. Members also raised concern that WG had stated that implementing these changes would be cost neutral, however, this was not the case due to the extra resources required.

It was AGREED to note the current position and to thank officers for their work in the implementation of this code.

7 GCSE and A Level results award process 2021

Consideration was given to the GCSE and A Level results award process 2021. It was reported that it was announced in November 2020 that the

traditional GCSE and A Level external examinations would not take place in the Summer of 2021. Instead, an independent panel group comprising Secondary Headteachers and other partners was put together to devise a consistent national approach for awarding examination grades for the Summer of 2021.

The system for 2021 has not simulated the system for the Summer of 2020. Instead, pupils were regularly assessed on the content of the examination specifications from March until the end of May. All secondary/all-through schools had to:

- present a detailed assessment programme to the Welsh Joint Education Committee for its approval;
- adapt and create new assessments and appeals policies;
- provide a training programme for staff on themes such as trends and data protection;
- deliver individual subject assessment programmes;
- prepare appropriate timetables, assessments and marking schemes;
- undertake the marking and moderation of all assessments;
- keep a detailed record of evidence of pupils' achievement in all assessments and all subjects
- ensure strong accountability arrangements
- enable and lead on the appeals process
- present an explanatory document to the Welsh Joint Education Committee illustrating the pattern of results compared to patterns in the past

The Welsh Joint Education Committee set thresholds where they would wish to have professional conversations with schools if interim results exceeded those thresholds. There were no professional conversations between the Welsh Joint Education Committee and any of Ceredigion's secondary/all-through schools.

The above work was substantial and intensive in a very short period of time. We are extremely thankful to Headteachers, leadership teams, teachers and school staff for their excellent professional work in supporting our pupils during this time.

Although it is not possible to compare this year with last year, the table below notes both years, for information only.

GCSE Results

Dangosydd ~ Indicator	2020	2021	
Capped 9	392	386	
5A*-C (Iaith a Mathemateg/Language and Maths)			68.8
	67.7		
5A*-G	94.8	95.9	
5A*-A	29.3	33.8	
Maths gorau ~ Best maths	72.9	72.8	
Maths	71.4	70.8	

Rhifedd ~ Numeracy	68.0	68.0
Cymraeg ~ Welsh	82.1	81.6
Saesneg ~ English	73.8	75.1
Gwydd ~ Science	76.8	74.8

A Level Results

Dangosydd ~ Indicator		2020	2021
3A*-C	75.6	79.1	
3A*-A	27.2	35.4	
TotPoints	855	~	

It was AGREED to note the current position.

8 Estyn Letter - Summer Term 2021

It was reported that In November 2020, Estyn held a virtual meeting with the Schools and Culture Department's officers, to evaluate our work in supporting schools during the Covid pandemic. Estyn subsequently outlined its findings in a letter, which had been presented to the Governance and Audit Committee and following this meeting; Cabinet. Estyn also compiled a national report, which contained specific recommendations.

In May 2021, Estyn held a second meeting with every Local Authority and focussed on our work in response to the national report's recommendations. Estyn sent a letter to the Chief Executive on 16 July 2021, outlining our work in those areas.

It was AGREED to note the report for information. Members wished to congratulate the service on the excellent report.

9 An update on the Authority's support for Schools as they prepare to implement Curriculum for Wales

Consideration was given to the Report updating the Authority's support for Schools as they prepare to implement Curriculum for Wales.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to note the current position and that a further report updating the committee be presented in the future.

10 To confirm the Minutes of the previous Meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes

It was AGREED to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 27 May 2021.

Matters arising

None.

11 To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

It was AGREED to note the Forward Work Programme presented subject to the following:-

- To consider reintroducing the work streams virtually, the CLO- School reported, for example that a Head teacher could be able to attend
- That GCSE and A Level results award process 2021 be removed from the agenda for the next meeting as there would be no further information to add to the report present earlier

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 November 2021

Chairman: _____

Date: _____