



## **SPECIAL CABINET**

### **MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025 AT 1PM**

#### **Councillors:**

J. Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change), N. George (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways), P. Leonard (Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection), C. Morgan (Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces), E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance), C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education), S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Housing) and E. Forehead (Cabinet Member for Social Care).

#### **Together with:**

R. Edmunds (Chief Executive), M.S. Williams (Executive Director Corporate and Regeneration), G. Jenkins (Director Social Services)

#### **Also in Attendance:**

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), R. Hartshorn (Director of Environment and Regulatory Services), M. Lloyd (Director of Infrastructure and Waste Services), L. Donovan (Director of People Services), L. Sykes (Deputy Director Financial Services), B. Winstanley (Director of Assets and Decarbonisation), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), Dr. P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement) and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

#### **And:**

M. Hulland (Head Teacher), and N. Davies (Head Teacher and School Improvement Lead)

### **RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS.**

The Leader reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here To View](#).

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S. Morgan (Leader of Council and Chair).

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor J. Pritchard (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change) presided.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Declarations of interest were received in relation to Agenda Item No. 3 – Implementing the recommendations of the Middle Tier Review – Councillor E. Stenner declared a personal interest in that she is a Director of the EAS Company Board and Councillor C. Andrews declared a personal interest in that she sits on the EAS Joint Executive Group.

As these were Council appointments and personal interests only Councillor Stenner and Councillor Andrews could remain in the meeting and take full part in the debate and vote.

## **3. IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MIDDLE TIER REVIEW.**

Considered by Education Social Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025.

Consideration was given to the report that sought Cabinet approval on the future model for school improvement and updated Members on the exit costs and funding to enable the Council to exit the EAS from September 2025.

Cabinet noted the history of the EAS and how it had galvanised school improvement since its inception, however there was now a once in a generation opportunity to return this service in-house and bring forward a new model for school improvement.

Responding to a question in relation to the benefits for teachers, learners and governing bodies and what if any financial implications there were for the authority, Officers highlighted the improved collaboration and holistic support of the new model and estimated that £100,000 of savings could be achieved in the first full year of implementation.

Clarification was then sought as to whether there had been any change in headteachers views since the initial meetings and it was confirmed that if anything views had become more positive about the model moving forward. Further clarification was then sought about the local authority's capacity to support schools during transition. It was confirmed that there would be plenty of Officer and administration support and experienced Headteachers would continue to work as school improvement partners, providing the same level of support and guidance as they currently did but this support would now be central to Caerphilly rather than shared across the EAS partners. Although it was noted that there would still be ample opportunities for practice sharing and examples of partnership working were highlighted. Reassurances were given the Council would continue to focus on direct access to schools and more interactions to support school improvement and there would be continuity and stability during the transition process with a focus on the best interests of learners.

Cabinet queried the rationale behind the notice period, and it was explained that this period was part of the legal requirement of the EAS contract should a sole partner decide to leave the consortium. This notice provided for a period of restructuring and stability within the EAS caused by the exit. It was further noted that the Council would continue to purchase professional learning from the EAS for another 3 years maximising the Council's position during the exit process. Cabinet was assured that at the end of the three-year period there would still be the same ambition and attitude to improvement, building on from the growth over the last 12 year and in particular the last 5 or 6 years.

Following due consideration and for the reasons given in the Officer's report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained therein be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation this was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report the following recommendations on a proposed new model for school improvement be endorsed

- Delegate responsibility to the relevant officers and the Cabinet Member for Education to serve notice to withdraw from EAS in August 2025 with the notice period being two years.
- Migrate Governor Support Services from the EAS back in house and deliver directly.
- Migrate the School Improvement Partner functions back in house taking back control of the key component of improving schools.
- Continue to access a professional learning offer from the partnership of the four LA's, albeit with a smaller ask.
- Complement the new EAS professional learning offer with the emerging national professional learning offer from Welsh Government.
- Work with Headteachers to identify further opportunities to support school to school improvement within Caerphilly and to support any other partners who require assistance.

#### **4. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST**

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **5. EXEMPT ITEM – PROPERTY ACQUISITION TO FACILITATE WASTE STRATEGY DELIVERY**

Following due consideration and for the reasons given in the Officer's report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations contained therein be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation this was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained within the Officers report the recommendations at 3.1 and 3.2 of the Officers report be approved.

The meeting closed at 13.50 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 21<sup>ST</sup> May 2025.

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Chair