

START WELL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Decision Notice – Remote meeting, 10th November, 2025.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor R.R. Thomas (Chair); Councillor H.M. Payne (Vice-Chair); Councillors A. Asbrey, J. Aviet, W. Gilligan, E. Goodjohn, S.J. Haines, S.M. Hanks, W.A. Hennessy and J. Lynch-Wilson.

Co-opted Members: L. Barrowclough (Parent Governor – Primary Sector), Dr. M. Price (Roman Catholic Church), K. Riddick (Parent Governor – Secondary Sector), M. Werrett (Church in Wales), G. Scott (Welsh Medium Education), P. Bond and R. Davies (Vale Youth Council).

Also present: Councillors R.M. Birch (Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language), L. Burnett (Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources), G. John (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport and Wellbeing) and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

AGENDA ITEM 1. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor N.P. Hodges.

AGENDA ITEM 2. MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 8th September, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

AGENDA ITEM 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor J. Aviet declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 7 – Summary of Estyn Inspection Outcomes for Summer Term 2025 and Update on Schools in Statutory Follow-Up – as a family member worked at Pencoedtre High School, and they were also a Governor at Oakfield Primary school. The Councillor left the meeting before discussion on the item.

Councillor S. Haines declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Summary of Estyn Inspection Outcomes for Summer Term 2025 and Update on Schools in Statutory Follow-Up – as they were a Governor of St Athan Primary School, which was covered in the report

Councillor J. Lynch-Wilson declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Summary of Estyn Inspection Outcomes for Summer Term 2025 and Update on Schools in Statutory Follow-Up – as they were a Governor of St Athan Primary School, which was covered in the report

Councillor H. Payne declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Summary of Estyn Inspection Outcomes for Summer Term 2025 and Update on Schools in Statutory Follow-Up – as they were a Governor of Palmerston Primary School, which was covered in the report.

L. Barrowclough (Co-opted Member) declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Summary of Estyn Inspection Outcomes for Summer Term 2025 and Update on Schools in Statutory Follow-Up – as their family member attended Ysgol Y Deri.

Dr. M. Price (Co-opted Member) declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Summary of Estyn Inspection Outcomes for Summer Term 2025 and Update on Schools in Statutory Follow-Up – as he was a Governor of St Richard Gwyn School, which was covered in the report.

K. Riddick (Co-opted Member) declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Summary of Estyn Inspection Outcomes for Summer Term 2025 and Update on Schools in Statutory Follow-Up – as they were a Governor of Pencoedtre and Whitmore High Schools.

AGENDA ITEM 5. WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2024-2025 (REF) –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the report and appendices be endorsed.

Reason for recommendation

To allow the report to be published and to allow the Council to meet its reporting duty to the Welsh Commissioner as part of the Welsh Language Standards.

AGENDA ITEM 6. PRESENTATION: SCHOOL BUDGET RECOVERY PLANS – UPDATE FROM TREVOR BAKER, HEAD OF STRATEGY, COMMUNITY LEARNING AND RESOURCES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the presentation on School Budget Recovery Plans be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the presentation and to discussions at the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 7. SUMMARY OF ESTYN INSPECTION OUTCOMES FOR SUMMER TERM 2025 AND UPDATE ON SCHOOLS IN STATUTORY FOLLOW-UP (DLS) –

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Estyn inspection outcomes for the summer term be noted, and that Palmerston Primary be congratulated on their core inspection with no Estyn follow-up activity.
- (2) T H A T the progress of Pencoedtre High School in addressing their Estyn recommendations, and the work that has begun in relation to Fairfield Primary and St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School to address the recommendations within their inspection reports, be noted.

Reason for recommendations

- (1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 8. ANNUAL SHAREHOLDER REPORT BIG FRESH CATERING COMPANY (DCR) –

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the Annual Shareholder annual update report for the Big Fresh Catering Company Ltd (BFCC) for the 2024/25 financial year be noted.
- (2) T H A T the ongoing financial, operational and governance arrangements in place between the Council and the Company, including the requirements of the Shareholder Committee under its Terms of Reference, be noted.
- (3) T H A T the potential for future commercial and traded service opportunities being explored by the Company, with any developments to be subject to the appropriate governance, financial appraisal and confidentiality provisions through the Shareholder Committee be noted.

Reason for recommendations

- (1-3) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 9. UPDATED FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2025/26 (DCR) –

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2025/26 (Appendix A to the report) be agreed.

(2) T H A T a summary of the Decision Tracking Data relevant to the Start Well Scrutiny Committee be presented to the Committee as part of the biannual Forward Work Programme Monitoring Reports.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) To agree the items, topics and delivery methods that the Start Well Scrutiny Committee will consider for the remainder of the 2025/26 Municipal year, and to update the Forward Work Programme published on the Council's website.

(2) To provide a six-monthly update to Committee Members on the data readily available, to maintain an understanding of the Committee's impact in supporting the Council within its decision-making process.