

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH OCTOBER, 2018

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR HAYDEN TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

Councillors: D. Bevan
M. Cook
G. A. Davies
J. Hill
L. Parsons
T. Smith

Co-opted Member

Mr. T. Baxter
Mr. A. Williams

**AND: Corporate Director – Education & Learning
Head of Education Transformation - Education
Inclusion Lead Officer – Education
Youth Service Manager - Education
Sarah Davies – EAS
Tracey Pead - Welsh Government ALN Transformation**

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:</p> <p>P. Baldwin, J. Collins, P. Edwards, L. Elias, J. Holt and J. C. Morgan.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 3rd September, 2018 were submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET</u></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 3rd September, 2018 was submitted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward Work Programme - The Corporate Director of Education outlined the content of the table and stated that she did not feel that the numbers were dis- 	

	<p>proportionate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers and Costs of Paid Chairpersons and Advisers on School Governing Bodies – The Corporate Director of Education confirmed that there were currently no paid Chairpersons. She explained that there was a Vice-Chair in the ALC that was acting as an Adviser and under contract to be paid. <p>Following a question regarding payment to Chairpersons in previous years the Corporate Director explained that there had been a paid Chair, to set up a Governing Body, throughout the duration of the New School build.</p> <p>The Corporate Director informed Members that the congratulations letter to the 4 Comprehensive Schools had been sent.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 3rd September, 2018 be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>ALN REFORMS – ARE WE READY?</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education which was presented to provide Members with an update on the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018), the implications and the progress made in terms of readiness.</p> <p>The Inclusion Lead Officer spoke to the report and highlighted the salient point therein:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of the Report • Scope and Background • The ALN New Way of Working • The ALN Implementation Timeline • The ALN Act – Are we Ready? • Options for Recommendation <p>A Member felt that with regard to PCPs (Person Centred Practice) it was essential to ensure that these were Chaired effectively and that the recommendations were followed up and completed. The Inclusion Lead Officer felt that this was</p>	

a valid point and the needs of the pupil were the main focus.

The Member also made reference to 2.21 where he was of the opinion that the age of young people with ALN was 0 to 19. The WG Officer explained that under the new system it was 0 to 25 with access to suitable education and training and will be person centred. She stated that communication with parents and carers was essential and as a result there had been 5 workshops arranged prior to the Christmas period and 5 following the Christmas period across the region in order to train parents and carers in PCP. The Officer felt that it was important to provide opportunities for youngsters Post 16.

Concern was raised by a Member regarding schools having the capacity to implement the Act by 2020, and as budgets were changing he asked where the Officer felt the Authority would be in 3 years' time. The Inclusion Lead Officer responded that much relied on implementing good practice and there were details that needed to be ironed out regionally. The WG Officer continued that assurance was needed that teachers in all schools could meet the needs. She explained that the first steps had been taken with a readiness survey being rolled out. The WG Officer assured Members that this cost would not be coming from the Council's budget. It was noted that an additional £3.9m had been provided by Welsh Government across Wales for professional learning.

The Inclusion Lead Officer referred to 5.1 of the report where the expectations of WG was that the reforms would bring about savings, however this was later revised and WG now considered the impact to be cost-neutral. The Officer expressed the concern of ADEW Inclusion regarding this and should it become clear that the new system is not cost natural there will be robust challenge to WG.

A Member asked if additional funding would be available for learners up to the age of 25 and the WG Officer advised that there was currently no additional funding. The Inclusion Lead Officer confirmed that work had already commenced with the Health Board around health needs at all ages 0 - 25 and this model was currently developing across Gwent.

	<p>Mr. T. Baxter left the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p>A Member asked if the ALN Act could be used as a tool to ensure that Elective Home Educated children were being provided with an appropriate education as he felt there could potentially be concerns around children with additional learning needs. The Inclusion Lead Officer explained that in relation to statemented pupils the Authority were unable to prevent them being educated at home although the Statement would remain in place and would be monitored annually, however for pupils attending a special school and whose parents elect to home educate, then the Authority are able to deny the request.</p> <p>A question was raised in relation to the outcome Universal Credit had on Free School Meals as it was evident that this had a severe effect on pupil's education with the possibility of becoming NEETs. The WG Officer responded that the drive of the programme was to prevent youngsters becoming NEET; she explained that the Act was more of an umbrella approach to enable longer support working with College Principals to determine suitable courses to alleviate NEETS.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that Option 1 be endorsed namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To accept the report and agree that Blaenau Gwent will be ALN ready for September, 2020 when the new ALN systems become operational and appropriate preparations are taking place. <p>The Inclusion Lead Officer and WG Officer left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>INSPIRE 2 ACHIEVE AND WORK PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017 - 2018</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Education Transformation which was presented to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the local Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work Projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).</p>	

The Youth Service Manager spoke to the report and highlighted the key points therein:

- Purpose of the Report
- Scope and Background
- Evidence
- Implications
- Risk
- Supporting Evidence
- Expected Outcome

The Youth Service Manager explained that due to the high unemployment in Blaenau Gwent work was being done with the Welsh Government, Careers Wales and DWP in order to share the level of data.

A Member referred to 5.2 of the report and enquired of the criteria needed in order to secure future funding, the Officer said that it was a national priority. The Corporate Director explained that the numbers detailed in the report referred to pupils at the end of year 11; however, there was need to be able to track pupils in years 11, 12 and 13.

A Member referred to the Autistic Champion for Wales who had received £10m from Welsh Government, and whose role it was to ensure autistic youngsters gained employment. He asked if contact could be made with the Champion to support learners in Blaenau Gwent.

Concern was raised by a Member in relation to Page 36 of the report regarding Post Code eligible referrals. The Officer explained that Welsh Government had submitted a bid to WEFO for communities for work, which is split across two age brackets. She explained that Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr predominantly came under the old Communities First Programme.

A question was asked as to whether there would be an exit strategy should there be a risk of funding coming to an end. The Officer responded that the Council would be working towards an exit strategy, however, she emphasised that the Council would work in partnership and they were fully aware of the risks, which would continually be monitored and reported to Scrutiny on an annual basis. The Head of Education Transformation said that Welsh Government had

	<p>a key role in supporting the exit strategy.</p> <p>A Member asked why the projects in schools differed and the Officer said that it was based and tailored on the individual school's needs.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Option 2 be endorsed, namely to accept the report.</p> <p>Councillor G. A. Davies left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>FINAL END OF FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2, KEY STAGE 3 AND PROVISIONAL KEY STAGE 4 OUTCOMES 2018</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education which was presented to provide Members with the performance monitoring information for statutory, end of Key Stage Teacher Assessment for 2017/18 for the end of Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 Performance (provisional) at Local Authority Level.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Education and the EAS Officer spoke to the report and highlighted the key points therein:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of the Report • Update on Changes (Key Stage 2 and 3) • Implications for Local Authorities • Foundation Phase • Key Stage 2/3/4 <p>A Member asked if the Officers could explain the role of Scrutiny regarding the new Framework and the reporting of School Performance Data. The EAS Officer informed Members that the WG were looking at developing a new score card. The Corporate Director explained that Challenge Advisers would use school progress and values to set targets.</p> <p>Concern was raised by a Member who asked if Scrutiny Members were not provided with information until Key Stage 4, how would the committee be able to support those</p>	

	<p>pupils who may be at risk of not achieving their expected outcomes. The Corporate Director said that all information and data would still be shared and monitored by the EAS, Governors and the Education Directorate; however this information would not be in the public domain.</p> <p>It was asked if information regarding the Flying Start programme could be produced in relation to the first intake of children and the progression they have made to date; and to produce this information to WG to hopefully show the difference Flying Start has made. The Corporate Director undertook to collate this information.</p> <p>Reference was made to Universal Credit where the number of children entitled to free school meals has dropped significantly and the Corporate Director explained that statistically this appears to resemble EFSM due to parents and carers having part time employment, however support for those pupils who are in need of free school meals is available.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recommend that the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee monitors this statutory, annual end of phase/key stage performance and provide feedback regarding the extent to which the Council is demonstrating improvement and the effectiveness of processes to secure ongoing improvement, and; • To include that the Scrutiny Committee were very pleased to note the improvements made in all schools. 	Corporate Director
No. 9	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 26TH NOVEMBER, 2018</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee, which was presented to provide Members with the Forward Work Programme for the Meeting to be held on 26th November, 2018 for discussion and to update the Committee on any changes.</p>	

<p>The Corporate Director asked the Scrutiny Committee if it would be helpful to submit a report on the new inspection and she stated that a Member Briefing was due to be held.</p>	
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<p>The importance of attending Member Briefings was noted.</p>	
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<p>The Committee AGREED the Forward Work Programme for the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee to be held on 26th November, 2018.</p>	
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