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THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

12th October 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

EDUCATION AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee will be held as a Hybrid Meeting: Via MS Teams/Abraham Derby Room at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale - if you would like to attend please contact committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk on Tuesday, 19th October, 2021 at 10.00 am.

Please note that a pre and post meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start and following the conclusion of the meeting for members of the committee.

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting a

We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh or English. / Croesawn ohebiaith trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

To consider any declarations of interests and dispensations made.

4. EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES 5 - 14

To receive the Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on the 14th September, 2021.

(Please note the Minutes are submitted for points of accuracy only).

5. ACTION SHEET - 14TH SEPTEMBER 2021 15 - 22

To receive the Action Sheet.

6. EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – RECOVERY AND RENEWAL PLAN 23 - 54

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

7. IMPROVING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME 2021 55 - 70

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

8. PUPIL EXCLUSIONS 71 - 82

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

9. EDUCATION PLANNING OBLIGATIONS - OVERVIEW 83 - 90

To consider the report of the Corporate Director

Education.

10. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 30TH NOVEMBER** 91 - 94
2021

To receive the report.

To: Councillor H. Trollope (Chair)
Councillor J. Holt (Vice-Chair)
Councillor D. Bevan
Councillor G. Collier
Councillor M. Cook
Councillor M. Day
Councillor L. Elias
Councillor S. Healy
Councillor J. Hill
Councillor C. Meredith
Councillor J. C. Morgan
Councillor J. P. Morgan
Councillor T. Smith
Councillor B. Summers
Councillor D. Wilkshire
T. Baxter
Pritchard

All other Members (for information)
Manager Director
Chief Officers

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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

SUBJECT: EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

- Councillors: J. Holt
 D. Bevan
 M. Cook
 M. Day
 L. Elias
 J. Hill
 C. Meredith
 J.C. Morgan
 J. P. Morgan
 T. Smith
 B. Summers
 D. Wilkshire

Co-opted Member

T. Baxter

AND: Corporate Director of Education
 Service Manager Education Transformation &
 Business Change
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

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>	

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The following apologies for absence were reported:-</p> <p>Head of School Improvement and Inclusion Service Manager Young People and Partnerships Strategic Education Improvement Manager</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest and dispensations were raised.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 22nd June, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 22nd JUNE, 2021</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd June, 2021 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Vacant Position for Co-opted Member</u></p> <p>It was reported that a nomination had been received to be considered by Full Council in September. If the nomination was accepted, the governor would be briefed in order to attend the October meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p><u>Pupil Development Grants</u></p> <p>A Member referred to the information provided and although the data was welcomed, the Member advised that he had wanted to see how individual grants had been used to support individual and groups of learners in schools.</p>	

	<p>The Corporate Director Education agreed that a further update would be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that course of action.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>VERBAL UPDATE - COVID 19</u></p> <p>The Corporate Director Education provided a verbal update on the current status of Covid-19 within Education and schools. Although, the Corporate Director stated that the situation was a dynamic one and changed on a daily basis.</p> <p>The Corporate Director advised that the number of cases had increased over the last few days and the situation was deteriorating in the Authority’s education and learning settings. There were particular increases in the children and young people category aged between 10-19 year olds. The Corporate Director informed that at present there were 119 positive cases across Blaenau Gwent School estate of which were 109 learners and 10 members of staff. There was also a number of the workforce self-isolating. The highest numbers are within Abertillery Learning Community – Secondary Phase, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community – Secondary Phase, Tredegar Comprehensive and Cwm Primary School. The Corporate Director noted that these were the figures for the second week of term, which emphasised the level of challenge faced and reminded Members that these figures were likely to change on a daily basis.</p> <p>The Corporate Director referred to the meetings with headteachers to be prepared for the term ahead and advised that these meetings included education, environmental health, health and safety and support services. The responses from headteachers had been excellent and a common position was reached. The Welsh Government infection control framework was considered, which advocates managed self-isolation for children under the aged of 18. The contact groups would be identified for testing and monitoring and this course of action was taken with a view to maintain face to face teaching and learning,</p>	

where possible. All schools would be providing support for TTP services as there was capacity challenges in this area. The catering and cleaning staff are fragile due to the number of staff self-isolating and the Corporate Director confirmed that this would be closely monitored along with the situation with teachers and learners as we go through the autumn term.

At this juncture, Members raised the following questions which were answered accordingly.

How are PPE supplies within schools?

The stocks of PPE within schools are sufficient to support teaching and learning. It had also been confirmed that hardship funding would be continued, which would assist with such associated costs.

Have Welsh Government issued guidance on vaccinations for 12-19 year olds?

The vaccinations programme for 12-15 year olds has been agreed by the four Chief Medical Officers across the UK and a WG announcement was imminent. The vaccination programme is currently available for young people over the age of 16 years.

A Member praised the Local Authority in the approach and actions being taken in schools. The Member felt that it was being handled in a positive way.

Concerns were raised around children being sent to school if there was a positive case of Covid-19 within the home and there were mixed opinions of whether children should remain home to self-isolate or be sent to school. The Corporate Director Education advised that Welsh Government had provided some flexibility to work on a local basis, but there was clear guidance in place that needed to be in place by the 20th September. Therefore, Blaenau Gwent was working with Environmental Health colleagues to ascertain the best way forward to manage the situation. The Member felt that parents should be advised to keep children home to self-isolate.

The continued learning and wellbeing of pupils was a real balance as learners had already been disrupted and it was felt that being in school was important for both their emotional and physical wellbeing. It was added that the priority was to ensure learners stayed within their respective school settings. There would be instances where learners may need to work from home and a great deal of work has been done on blended learning should the need arise, however, focus was on maintaining face to face learning.

The Chair thanked the officers for the verbal update and felt it was important that these updates are provided in order to keep our constituents up to date.

No. 7 **EDUCATION SERVICES –**
MAIN SELF-EVALUATION REPORT (SER)

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Education outlined the report, which provided Members of the Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise the findings of ongoing self-evaluation processes undertaken within the Education Directorate, across the Council and with key partners.

The Corporate Director spoke to the report and detailed the comprehensive self-evaluation process, which helped to identify those areas where progress has been made and where further improvement was required. It was noted that the detailed findings were contained in the Main SER, which was attached as at appendix 2 and the Corporate Director referred the Members of the Scrutiny Committee to the three inspection areas of the LGES inspection framework. The Corporate further provided an overview of the areas where good progress had been made and areas where further improvement was required as outlined in the report.

In conclusion, the Corporate Director acknowledged that the Main SER document was a very lengthy working document, which covered all of the LGES framework. The document provided the context and data to evidence progress and inform self-evaluative commentary. However, it was intended to update the Summary SER document for future self-evaluation reports and this will enable Members to focus specifically on key priorities. Therefore, the Corporate Director suggested that Members consider the following areas as lines of enquiry for the scrutiny process, in line with the corporate impact assessment as detailed in Appendix 4.

- Recovery and renewal linked to academic progress;
- support for vulnerable learners;
- ALN reform/Curriculum reform;
- learner wellbeing; and,
- collaborative working to support learners, particularly with schools.

The Corporate Director Education invited questions from Members of the Scrutiny Committee at this juncture.

A Member noted that although the gender gap was mentioned in the report there was no area for improvement and it was asked if this was area to be considered.

The Corporate Director Education advised that the topics covered in the report was not an exhaustive list and summarised in the report, although, gender information could be found in the main Self Evaluation Report.

A Member referred to the accuracy of targets and outcomes outlined in the report as precise data was not being provided. The Member felt that it was important to monitor this information to ensure pupils had not slipped due to the pandemic and target settings was accurate.

The Corporate Director Education informed that in line with the School Development Plans across the schools, the targets set are ambitious, realistic and deliverable. The Corporate Director advised that work was being undertaken in conjunction with the EAS for schools had been identified as needing additional support in a

	<p>graduated fashion. This work was a key strand of activity in the Recovery and Renewal Plan to ensure the base line data was recalibrated so data focused on attention going forward.</p> <p>Councillor M. Day left the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p>Concerns were raised in relation to predicted grades as the pandemic had greatly affected our schools and it was hoped that our vulnerable learners had the appropriate support. It was important that although this data was not available at the present time it be made available to the Scrutiny Committee in order for Members to monitor the situation.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education suggested a report could be presented which detailed the evidence on how the appropriate judgement was arrived. In terms of the effects of the pandemic, secondary schools managed KS4 centre determined grades processes well. The Corporate Director added that there had not been many appeals against the grades awarded, therefore, it was felt that there was a balanced understanding of our learners.</p> <p>In response to concerns raised in relation to the number of young people attending further education outside Blaenau Gwent as the academic courses was not available. The Corporate Director Education confirmed that it was intended to organise a member briefing with Coleg Gwent to provide the latest position and the Corporate Director agreed to raise this matter with Coleg Gwent at the next Post 16 Strategic Partnership Board.</p> <p>A Member also asked for information on admissions in secondary schools outside of Blaenau Gwent and the Corporate Director agreed to provide the inward and outward migration data from secondary schools.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and acknowledged that effective self-evaluation is an on-going process (Option 1).</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>INCLUSION STRATEGY AND REVIEW (2021-2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p>	

	<p>The Corporate Director Education spoke in detail to the report and outlined the key points.</p> <p>It was noted that an extensive consultation process had been undertaken with Pen y Cwm. A Member felt that it would be beneficial to establish a focus group of like-minded parents and asked if this could be explored.</p> <p>The Corporate Director advised that the views of both parents and pupils will feature within the development of the strategy.</p> <p>A Member referred to the Service Level Agreement and hoped that it was a live document which had sign up from everyone as it was important that Coleg Gwent was involved to make them aware.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and agreed to the review of the Inclusion Service to ensure that the requirements of the ALN Act are met, this would include reviewing relevant resourcing, structures, job descriptions and ensuring that relevant arrangements are in place to fulfil the needs of the ALN Act (Option 2).</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Service Manager for Education Transformation and Business Change advised that the report provided the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee with an overview Education Accessibility Strategy Review process and associated timeline. The Service Manager added that the revised Strategy would be implemented from September 2022 and outlined in detail the strong progress which had been made against the Strategy along with associated actions between 2017 and 2021.</p> <p>The Service Manager further spoke in detail to the report and outlined the current context, alignment with the administration of medicines and medical needs as well as the financial implications on the budget.</p>	

	<p>The Committee welcomed the reported and was pleased that Blaenau Gwent was leading the way.</p> <p>Councillor Summers left the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and information therein be noted (Option 1).</p>	
No. 10	<p><u>HOME TO SCHOOL AND POST 16 TRANSPORT POLICY REVIEW 2022 – 2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Service Manager for Education and Business Change provided a detailed overview of the report and outlined the key points as noted in the report.</p> <p>Concerns were raised around the travel distance for children and it was felt that additional resources should be available for school transport and a Member felt that this needed to be reviewed. The Officer advised that an extensive review had been undertaken and Blaenau Gwent’s existing limits are more generous than the statutory limits, however, the policy would be reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>Further concerns were raised about public transport, which was late on occasions and the Service Manager for Education and Business Change advised that the Authority was aware of these issues and although the Authority only provided travel grants for pupils, the concerns had been escalated to the appropriate transport providers in order to address the issue.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and approved the Policy in its current format, however, it was recommended to the Executive that a review of the policy be undertaken next year in line with normal procedures.</p>	
No. 11	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 19TH OCTOBER, 2021</u></p>	

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Education advised that KS4 data would not be available to share with Scrutiny at the next meeting and following discussions the Committee AGREED that Pupil Exclusion report be included on next month's agenda.

In terms of 'helping elected members get to know our schools' it was felt that at present there was a great deal of pressure on schools it and was felt that this was not the right time to pursue this activity.

The Committee AGREED this course of action.

The Committee, subject to the foregoing, AGREED that the report be accepted and the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 19th October 2021 with the aforementioned amendments (Option 1).

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee – 14th September 2021

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
5	<u>Action Sheet – 20th April 2021</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil Development Grants: information to be provided on how the funding has been used to support individual learners. Anonymised case studies to be provided.	Lynn Phillips	Case Studies attached.
7	<u>Education Services – Main Self Evaluation Report (SER)</u> Admission figures to be provided of both inward and outward migration of pupils.	Claire Gardner	Information attached.

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PDG support for pupils in Blaenau Gwent

Case study number 1 – support for individual pupil

1 to 1 support was provided to a pupil in a year 3 class for maths. The school identified that the pupil was working at 2 sub-levels below expected-age level in maths. At the end of year 2 he had received an outcome 4 for maths, expected outcome at the end of the foundation phase is outcome 5. In contrast, he achieved an outcome 5 for literacy and Personal and Social. The school therefore identified that the pupil was underperforming in maths compared to other areas in his learning.

The school used part of their PDG to cover costs of a teaching assistant to work with individual pupils who were in receipt of free school meals and who were having difficulties with maths. The teaching assistant was trained on 'Precision Teaching' which is a method of planning teaching experiences that meet the needs of an individual child who is experiencing difficulty with developing or maintaining/retaining certain skills or concepts. The pupil received one-to-one support for 20 minutes every day focusing on basic maths skills for three terms.

Outcome - At the end of year 3, the pupil had made 3 sub-levels progress (equivalent to 1 levels progress) in maths, most pupils are expected to make 2 sub-levels of progress in 1 academic year, so the pupil had made expected progress + 1 sub level.

Case study number 2 – support for group of learners

A group of 6 year 5 FSM pupils were identified as being on the cusp of being awarded a Level 4/5 in literacy at the end of Key Stage 2. Level 4 is the expected level at the end of Key Stage 2. All of the pupils had reading ages in line with expectations to achieve a L5 (based on WG national test data and school assessment data), however they were achieving mid or high level 4 in both oracy and writing. Part of the PDG grant was used by the school to employ an additional member of staff for half a day a week to work with these pupils for the summer term (when the pupils were still in year 5), the autumn term and the spring term (when the pupils were in year 6).

The member of staff also supported more-able and cusp pupils in other year groups, but on a Tuesday afternoon she worked specifically with this group of pupils, and as they were all in receipt of free school meals, the PDG grant was used to cover costs for this period of time. Sometime was spent talking with the pupils to identify what genres they enjoyed, and they voted on a book they would like to study in depth. They chose Kensuke's Kingdom by Michael Morpurgo. Work initially began on developing oracy skills, in particular developing the pupils' inference and deduction skills, and their debating skills. This included the group introducing the book to other members of their class, and leading a debate on themes linked to the story.

In the Autumn and Spring term, the focus was on using the pupils' oracy skills to develop their writing. This included writing a play version of the story, which the pupils performed to their class.

Outcome – all pupils achieved a L5 in literacy at the end of KS2.

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	Number on Roll Y6 19/20	Abertillery Learning Community	Brynmawr Foundation School	Ebbw Fawr Learning Community	Tredegar Secondary School	Bishop Hedley School	Newbridge Secondary School
Abertillery Learning Community	132	129	1	0	0	0	2
All Saint's RC School	25	0	0	14	2	7	0
Beaufort Hill Primary School	29	0	5	20	0	0	0
Blaenycwm Primary School	26	1	20	1	1	0	0
Brynbach Primary School	21	0	0	0	20	1	0
Coed y Garn Primary School	30	3	19	0	0	0	1
Cwm Primary School	26	0	0	25	0	0	0
Deighton Primary School	23	0	0	0	21	1	0
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community	29	0	0	27	0	0	0
Georgetown Primary School	52	0	0	1	49	0	0
Glanhowy Primary School	40	0	0	1	36	1	0
Glyncoed Primary School	40	0	0	34	1	0	0
Penycwm Special School	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhosyfedwen Primary School	17	0	2	15	0	0	0
Sofrydd Primary School	19	4	0	0	0	0	10
St Illtyd's Primary School	28	6	0	0	0	0	19
St Joseph's RC School	9	0	0	0	9	0	0
St Mary's CIW School	24	0	16	1	0	0	0
St Mary's RC School	24	0	15	2	0	3	0
Willowtown Primary School	57	2	2	47	2	0	0
Ysgol Gymraeg Brohelyg	32	0	1	2	0	0	0
Ystruth Primary School	43	17	21	0	1	0	0
Didn't name primary school (not BG)	9	3	0	2	4	0	0
Total	745	165	102	192	146	13	32

chool pupils applied to attend in Sept 2021

River Centre	Crickhowell High School	King Henry School	Islwyn High School	St Alban's Comprehensive	Penycwm Special School	Cwmbran Secondary	Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw	Electively Home Educated	Moved Out of Borough	Missing applications	Total
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	132
0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	25
0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	26
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	30
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	23
0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	52
0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40
0	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	40
0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	19
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	28
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	24
0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	24
1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	57
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	1	0	0	32
0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	43
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
1	27	0	3	2	20	0	28	5	8	1	745

DATA SUMMARY

NUMBER OF IN-YEAR TRANSFERS BG TO BG	
PRIMARY	121
SECONDARY	24
TOTAL	145

NUMBER OF IN-YEAR TRANSFERS OOB TO BG	
PRIMARY	98
SECONDARY	52
TOTAL	150

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Agenda Item 6

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **19th October 2021**

Report Subject: **Education Directorate – Recovery and Renewal Plan**

Portfolio Holder: **Executive Member of Education, Cllr. Joanne Collins**

Report Submitted by: **Corporate Director of Education, Lynn Phillips,
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion, Luisa
Munro-Morris and Service Manager - Education
Transformation and Business Change, Claire Gardner**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
30.9.21	30.9.21	07.10.21			19.10.21	10.11.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the Education Directorate's identified priorities for recovery and renewal, as part of the response to the COVID-19 situation. Please note additions to this report include the areas of progress in the Recovery and Renewal Action Plan (Appendix 3) as well as the inclusion of an Education Recovery One Page Overview (Appendix 4)

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the Corporate Director of Education provides a verbal update to Scrutiny Committee regarding the response to the COVID-19 emergency. In addition, Education has reported on key outcomes, challenges and implications at each stage of the response, including the repurposing and subsequent reopening of schools.
- 2.2 This report provides an overview of progress made during the planning phase of Education recovery, along with information on identified priorities for recovery and renewal. The draft recovery and renewal plan is in development and will be a working document, which outlines how the Council will continue to support schools, both during and beyond the pandemic. It is, however, highly likely that we will continue to move between alert levels and thus response and recovery throughout the remainder of this and the next academic year. Therefore, an effective approach to business continuity at each level is required. This is dealt with via the development and review of local COVID-19 Education Guidance document, operational plans and risk assessments. It is also a key feature of the aforementioned plan. An alert level information paper has been produced, which details the operational implications and changes at each stage (please refer to **Appendix 1** for more information).

2.3 Impact Assessment

Until the latter part of Spring-term, the Education Directorate was firmly focused on working with and supporting schools to continue to effectively adapt and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant shift in practice, delivery and learning has occurred throughout the course of the pandemic, affecting every aspect of education and all associated provision. Therefore, in order to inform the development of a recovery and renewal plan, the Education Directorate undertook a detailed Impact Assessment to identify key impacts on education from the COVID-19 emergency. Each impact has been RAG rated to measure its seriousness. The following impacts have been identified (please refer to **Appendix 2** for more information):

- 2.4
- **Learners** - Education, social, emotional, physical and mental health implications (short and long-term).
 - **Vulnerable learners** - For those with disabilities and additional needs, provision and processes have been restricted.
 - **School staff** - Professional development, social, emotional, physical/mental health and general wellbeing in line with the need to adapt to blended learning. Staff childcare implications relating to school closure. LA's and schools have been required to establish and implement control and safety measures to support clinically vulnerable staff. This has impacted upon both staff and school operations.
 - **Childcare** - After school and pre-school provision which has been reduced and/or is not available due to COVID restrictions
 - **Education staff training** - Staff training needs aligned to operations are not all currently adapted to be delivered online e.g. first aid
 - **Education assets and site management** - Statutory functions, testing and inspection (Health and Safety, Fire Risk Assessment, maintenance and site management, ventilation), operations are regularly reviewed in line with the latest guidance and governed by risk assessments
 - **School operations** – Catering, cleaning and access to school sites, movement in and around the school, trips and visits, visitors, refuse, PPE and resources are all under continual review. These areas are subject to risk assessment and reduced operation in line with the COVID alert level implementation. Changes to the school day have been implemented throughout the school estate to support staggered start and finish times. Changes to statutory functions and regulations which affect school operation e.g. school admissions. ICT infrastructure, devices, access to resources, systems and software for both pupils and staff in line with digital exclusion and blended learning are continually reviewed to support inclusion. Home to school and post 16 transport operations, have been restricted, reconfigured and subject to detailed risk assessment.
 - **School support services** - School support service operation i.e. Educational Psychology, ALN, Social Services etc. has been prohibited on site due to lack of access, which has affected pupil and family engagement and progress. Transition at all phases has been affected by key support services having restricted/no access to schools. Human Resource management processes and engagement via OD are now online focused, but will require review to support effective school operations that were paused due to COVID. Wellbeing support services

require monitoring in terms of access and uptake. Additional insurance and financial implications for schools as a result of the pandemic. EAS support for schools has transitioned to online with a deficit to levels of engagement and to the brokerage of relevant support at all levels e.g. Learning Network Schools (LNS) arrangements.

- **School accountability services** - EAS Challenge Advisors have not been able to hold schools to account and school's data monitoring has been suspended. Estyn has suspended school inspections resulting in risks to school progress – particularly those in a category, who are in a category for longer than planned.
- **School leadership** - School governance has been adapted online, therefore, the evidence base is largely restricted to Headteacher report and narrative. Support for current and new school leaders has been limited to online, and school to school working opportunities have mainly focused on wellbeing and operational issues.
- **Poverty** - Family entitlement to benefits has increased across Blaenau Gwent and the region, including free school meals. Additional funding has been allocated to support these families, however, many schemes are not sustainable and so the ongoing impact will need to be assessed.
- **School community** - Limited face to face contact and the shift to online engagement has challenged communication and relationships.
- **School development** - School development plans have had to be largely adapted in order to react to COVID-19.
- **Safeguarding** - School closure has meant that children and young people have had limited access to on-site school support e.g. adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Service support intelligence and capability has been restricted. Vulnerable adults are more exposed to risk factors with limited access to support services.
- **Voluntary/Third Sector/ Charities work and engagement** - Opportunities to engage partners in school based education delivery and support activities have been restricted significantly due to operational implications associated with COVID-19. Members have both recognised the pressures and supported both education and schools throughout the pandemic, need to continue to develop this work.
- **Preventative health measures** - School-based preventative strategies to support healthcare needs of pupils have either been stopped or largely disrupted by COVID-19 i.e. vaccinations, growth and development checks, dental health, period equity etc.
- **COVID-19 control measures** - LA's and schools have implemented a series of control measures in order to manage community health i.e. vaccinations, Lateral flow tests, use of PPE, positive case management and risk assessment.
- **Improved school-to-school partnership working** – need to ensure this continues and is further developed.
- **Significant progress in professional development of staff, and upskilling of pupils e.g. IT/blended learning** – need to ensure this continues and is further developed.
- **Streamlining of services and operations in line with emergency response has been really positive and this has supported schools**

to provide continuity - need to ensure this continues and is further developed.

2.5 The impact assessment process provided the opportunity for reflection and review, learning from which has been taken forward to inform recovery and renewal priorities and planning.

2.6 The relationship between the Council and its schools is stronger than ever before. Our aim is to create a shared vision and associated plan to address key priorities for the future of Education within Blaenau Gwent.

2.7 **Recovery – Priorities**

The Education Directorate's Recovery and Renewal plans are in line with the corporate approach led by the Director of the Environment and Regeneration. It needs to be acknowledged that the impact of the last 18 months on all aspects of our school communities, and in particular the disruption to teaching and learning, is far reaching. Recovery will need to be planned in the short, medium and long term for learner development and progression. The Education Directorate's top priority in the EAS business plan is to;

2.8 *Minimise the impact of COVID-19 on learner development and progress, including improving the digital competency of all learners and staff in the wider Blaenau Gwent school community.*

2.9 **Renewal – Priorities**

Through schools having to adapt to new ways of working, a number of positive outcomes have been evidenced. The Education Directorate will work with relevant stakeholders, including schools and the EAS, to use these outcomes to shape new ways of working across the Education Directorate and throughout the school estate. The core purpose of all schools in Blaenau Gwent will be to provide excellent learning and teaching for all our learners, but this will not mean a return to doing things as they were pre-pandemic, but to using the experience of the pandemic to shape education provision as we move forward.

2.10 **Next Steps and Progress**

- Impact assessment completed
- Key measures to indicate progress identified (**Appendix 4**)
- Baseline and data collection on key measures, September 2021
- Recovery and Renewal targets set, September 2021
- Established protocol September 2021 to support schools under current Operational Guidance
- School Operations Management Group continues to meet (fortnightly/monthly??)
- Curriculum Reform and Recovery and Renewal groups set up September 2021 to ensure a strategic approach to the delivery of the Recovery and Renewal Plan

- Detailed action plan for each impact area to be shared with relevant stakeholders by end of September 2021

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report has been discussed by Education DMT and CLT prior to submission to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

- **Option 1** – Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers and accepts the report, associated documentation and proposed course of action.
- **Option 2** – Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee provide comments in relation to improvements that can be made in relation to the associated documentation and proposed course of action.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 Education is a strategic priority and key to facilitating effective delivery of the Corporate Plan.

4.2 One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan is for every child to have the best start in life. The Council seeks to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people, so that their progress is in line with ambitious expectations. This is particularly pertinent in an emergency crisis situation.

4.3 There are both statutory and regulatory functions and responsibilities associated with Education. The recovery and renewal plan is an essential component in securing effective and compliant delivery.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report, however, it should be noted that the impact of the COVID-19 emergency response on both Council and school revenue budgets is being closely monitored. The school balances have increased and the overall Education portfolio had a favourable position at year-end for financial year 2020-21.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

There are two strategic risks associated with this report:

1. The impact of COVID-19 on learner progression and pupil regression. This is being mitigated through the Council, EAS and Schools working in collaboration to support learners across the board; and,
2. The risks associated with the provision of safe learning environments to minimise the potential transmission of COVID. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place to mitigate the risks, but the situation is constantly under review and appropriate remedial action is taken e.g. self-isolation protocols are implemented.

5.3 **Legal**

This report provides information relating to the emergency response requirements as well as the specific Education obligations set out in the School Standards and Organisation Act Wales (2013) to support strategic and operational activity to improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Education are in the process of mapping existing and required datasets (both qualitative and quantitative), analysis of which will inform planning and performance. The two lead officers are working closely with the Policy and Performance team and the Corporate Recovery Group, to develop performance indicators which will be used to monitor and report on progress.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

There is a commitment from the Council and its schools to provide quality education for our children and young people to improve their life chances, despite the challenges faced during the emergency crisis.

6.3 **Involvement**

There has been extensive involvement of key stakeholder both corporately and across the school estate. The planning groups for secondary, primary and special schools that are established, including Headteacher representation has secured a collaborative and corporate response. This collaborative approach will continue throughout the recovery and renewal period.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term**

This report largely reflects on the emergency response to date, however, there are robust governance arrangements in place to support the next stages of the emergency for the foreseeable future.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The Council's emergency response has facilitated a preventative approach to minimising the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The report outlines the significant amount of partnership working at a strategic and operational level. This has resulted in a strengthening of the working relationships between the Council, schools and other key partners.

6.7 **Integration**

The emergency response has been a 'One Council' approach.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Any physical works planned and undertaken within education settings are planned in order to take account of decarbonisation and reducing carbon emissions.

6.9a **Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment**

The existing impact assessment and action plan was created prior to the socio-economic duty commencing. However, an assessment will be carried out in relation to each priority area during the autumn-term review process.

6.9b **EqIA**

The application of EqIA's to each priority has been considered as part of the Education impact assessment process. EqIA's will be undertaken in line with development and implementation of the recovery and renewal plan.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The report will be presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and then subsequently through to the Executive Committee for monitoring purposes.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Alert Level Implications

Appendix 2 – Education Directorate Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – Draft Recovery and Renewal Action Plan

Appendix 4 – Education Recovery One Page Overview

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Welsh Government Alert Level Response and Associated Implications for School

Alert Level One – Low Risk

- Schools will be fully operational in line with their COVID Secure Risk Assessment with limited impact upon overall business continuity
- Sports Centres will be open for use under an agreement with schools
- Individual risk assessments will be in place for vulnerable staff and pupils, to support them to continue to access school-sites
- Monitoring of school-based incidence rates will take place on a daily basis
- Sufficient staff will be in place to facilitate the delivery of education, along with all statutory and wider education functions
- School support functions including transport, will be fully operational under a COVID Secure Risk Assessment
- Local Authority multi-departmental support and engagement will be carried out on a regular basis
- Local Authority Guidance documents will be in place in respect of both operations and human resources

Alert Level Two – Medium Risk

- Schools will be fully operational in line with their COVID Secure Risk Assessment, with the exception of breakfast and afterschool clubs which will cease operation, along with other associated recreational activity
- Overall business continuity is likely to be impacted, with a reduction in non-essential business
- Sports Centres will be open for use under an agreement with schools
- School operations including the management and use of resources throughout the school will be reviewed
- School site access restrictions will be in place
- Individual risk assessments will be in place for vulnerable staff and pupils
- Additional monitoring measures will be in place to establish and address COVID-19 incidence rates in both pupil and staff populations
- Staff and pupil numbers are likely to fluctuate aligned to self-isolation and increased incidence of COVID-19, with decreasing staff and pupil populations
- Classes and year groups (including associated school staff, support staff and visitor contacts) are likely to be required to self-isolate
- School support staff self-isolation is also more likely i.e. caretaking, catering, cleaning, transport, school crossing patrol staff etc. affecting the delivery of key support services
- Supply staff may be required to cover the delivery of education
- The delivery of education may be impacted, with the need to introduce partial remote learning measures within affected class and/or year groups
- School-based operations will require review on a school-by-school basis based in line with the findings of contact tracing, e.g. the schools COVID Secure Risk Assessment and associated mitigation measures are likely to require review
- Increased Local Authority multi-departmental support and engagement may be required
- There is a potential for increased demand for both the Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programmes

- Local Authority guidance documents will be in place for both operations and staff, requiring review at regular intervals

Alert Level Three – High Risk

- School-based operation is likely to decrease in line with COVID Secure Risk Assessment. Breakfast and afterschool clubs, along other associated recreational activity will cease to operate
- Overall business continuity will be impacted with further reductions in services, provision and site-based work
- Sports Centres will be open for use under an agreement with schools, with restricted use likely to affect the delivery of physical education to varying degrees (on a school by school basis)
- School operations including the management and use of resources throughout the school will be reviewed and reduced accordingly
- School site access restrictions will be in place ensuring that only essential visitors are able to access school buildings
- Individual risk assessments for vulnerable staff and pupils are likely to require review
- Increased monitoring measures will be in place to identify and manage increased COVID-19 incidence rates in both pupil and staff populations
- Staff and pupil numbers are likely to decrease aligned to self-isolation and increased incidence of COVID-19
- There will be an increased need to address pupil/family support requirements outside of standard operating procedures, i.e. increased Social and other related service support, digital exclusion, entitlement to free school meals etc.
- Possible increase in staff absence linked to health and welfare
- Classes and Year Groups (including staff) are likely to be required to self-isolate, along with partial and/or full temporary school closures, where it is no longer viable to operate safely
- The school closure protocol will come into effect (i.e. consideration of the ability to fulfil first aid, emergency planning, supervision, support for ALN etc. and to carry out statutory functions)
- In the event of a school closure, consideration will be given to furloughing staff in line with the established criteria
- School support staff self-isolation is highly likely i.e. catering, cleaning, transport, school crossing patrol staff etc. affecting the delivery of key support services
- Higher numbers of supply staff are likely to be required to cover the delivery of education
- Delivery of education is highly likely to be impacted, with the need to move to partial and/or full remote learning
- School-based operations will require review on a school-by-school basis in line with the findings of contact tracing e.g. the schools COVID Secure Risk Assessment and mitigation measures will require review. The introduction of additional control measures is likely to be required, such as the habitual wearing of PPE in classrooms by staff (this falls outside of the WG School Operational Guidance)
- Increased Local Authority multi-departmental support and engagement will be required more frequently
- There will be a higher level of demand and impact upon Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programmes

- Local Authority Guidance documents for both operations and staff will require frequent review

Alert Level Four – Very High Risk

- School-based operation is likely to decrease significantly in line with COVID Secure Risk Assessment and review processes. Breakfast and afterschool clubs, along other associated recreational activity, will cease operation
- Overall business continuity will be significantly impacted with services, provision and site-based work being focused on essential and statutory activity/requirements
- Sports Centres will be closed which will impact upon the availability of use by schools and ultimately the delivery of physical education to varying degrees
- School operations including the management and use of resources throughout the school will be reviewed and reduced
- School site access restrictions will be in place ensuring that only essential visitors are able to access school buildings
- Individual risk assessments for vulnerable staff and pupils will require review
- Significantly increased monitoring measures will be in place associated with pupil and staff numbers, including out of hours and duty arrangements
- Staff and pupil numbers will frequently fluctuate aligned to self-isolation and increased incidence of COVID-19, with significant impact expected upon both staff and pupil populations
- There will be an increased need to address pupil/family support requirements outside of standard operating procedure i.e. increased Social and other related service support, digital exclusion, entitlement to free school meals etc.
- There is likely to be an increase in staff absence linked to both health and welfare
- Classes and Year Groups (including staff) will be required to self-isolate, along with partial and/or full temporary school closures associated with a health and safety assessment and where it is no longer viable to operate safely
- School closure protocol comes into effect more frequently (i.e. first aid, emergency planning, supervision, support for ALN etc. along with the ability to carry out statutory functions)
- In the event of a school closure, consideration can be given to furloughing staff where applicable, in line with the established criteria
- School support staff self-isolation will be required i.e. caretaking, catering, cleaning, transport, school crossing patrol etc. affecting the delivery of key support services
- Higher numbers of supply staff will be required to cover the delivery of education (if available and if the school remains open)
- Delivery of education will be impacted, with the need to move to partially and/or fully remote learning
- School-based operations will require review on a school-by-school basis based on the findings of contact tracing e.g. the schools COVID Secure Risk Assessment and mitigation measures will require review with the introduction of additional control measures such as the habitual wearing of PPE in classrooms by staff (this falls outside of the WG School Operational Guidance).
- Increased Local Authority multi-departmental support and engagement will be required more frequently
- Full school closure may be required over a prolonged period, with the requirement to establish provision for vulnerable and key worker children

- Increased impact and demand upon Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programmes
- Local Authority Guidance documents in place for both operations and staff – reviewed more frequently

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Education Impact Assessment

Impact Area	*RAG	Key Impacts	Identified Needs / Actions	Responsible
Learners	Amber	Impact of missed time in school – education, social, emotional, physical and mental health implications (short and long-term).	<p>Develop a recovery and renewal plan with a focus on education and wellbeing.</p> <p>Link with national and regional priorities.</p> <p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p>Partnership work with the EAS to broker support in line with the EAS Business Plan.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Vulnerable learners	Red	<p>Impact of missed time in school – education, social, emotional, physical and mental health.</p> <p>For those with disabilities and additional needs, provision and processes have been restricted.</p>	<p>Develop recovery and renewal plan with a focus on provision for vulnerable learners.</p> <p>Link with national and regional priorities.</p> <p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p>Partnership work with Social Services, Health and Safety and the EAS to broker support.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

School staff	Amber	<p>Impact of missed time in school – professional development, social, emotional, physical/mental health and general wellbeing in line with the need to adapt to blended learning.</p> <p>Staff childcare implications relating to school closure.</p> <p>LA's and schools have been required to establish and implement control and safety measures to support clinically vulnerable staff. This has impacted upon both staff and school operations.</p> <p>For those with disabilities and additional needs, provision and processes have been restricted.</p>	<p>Develop recovery and renewal plan</p> <p>Link with national and regional priorities.</p> <p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p>Partnership work with OD, Health & Safety and the EAS to broker support.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Childcare	Red	After school and pre-school provision which has been reduced and/or is not available due to COVID restrictions	Childcare operational plans and risk assessments to be reviewed and monitored by the Childcare Sub-group.	Service Manager - ET and BC
Staff training	Red	Staff training needs aligned to operations are not all currently adapted to be delivered online i.e. first aid and RPI	Training plan review in partnership with Health and Safety and OD colleagues.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager -ET and BC
Education assets and site management	Amber	Statutory functions, testing and inspection (Health and Safety, Fire Risk Assessment, maintenance and site management, ventilation), operations are regularly reviewed in line with the latest guidance and governed by risk assessments	<p>Review school operational plans and WG guidance to inform priorities and changes to local guidance and operations.</p> <p>Review guidance and associated policy, risk assessment and operational plan bi-monthly, in partnership</p>	Service Manager - ET and BC

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

			with Health and Safety and the Technical Working Group.	
School operations	Red/Amber	<p>Catering, cleaning, access to school sites, movement in and around the school, trips and visits, visitors, refuse, PPE and resources are all under continual review. These areas are subject to risk assessment and reduced operation in line with the COVID alert level implementation. Changes to the school day have been implemented throughout the school estate to support staggered start and finish times.</p> <p>Changes to statutory functions and regulations which affect school operation e.g. school admissions.</p> <p>ICT infrastructure, devices, access to resources, systems and software for both pupils and staff in line with digital exclusion and blended learning are continually reviewed to support inclusion.</p> <p>Home to school and post 16 transport operations, have been restricted, reconfigured and subject to detailed risk assessment.</p>	<p>Operational plan to be monitored, provision, guidance and policy to be adapted accordingly.</p> <p>Regular monitoring required as above</p> <p>ICT Plan and associated strategy to be developed in partnership with SRS and the ICT Strategy Group.</p> <p>Monthly review in line with the latest regulations. Procurement and operations review</p>	Service Manager ET and BC
School support services	Red	<p>School support service operation i.e. Educational Psychology, ALN, Social Services etc. has been prohibited due to lack of access, which has affected pupil and family engagement and progress.</p> <p>Transition at all phases has been affected by key support services having restricted/no access to schools.</p> <p>Human Resource management processes and engagement via OD are now online focused, but will require review to support effective school operations that were paused due to COVID.</p>	<p>Inclusion Service review to be undertaken.</p> <p>Transition to be developed.</p> <p>Work with OD to undertake an impact associated and establish an operational plan around schools.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		<p>Wellbeing support services require monitoring in terms of access and uptake.</p> <p>Additional insurance and financial implications for schools as a result of the pandemic.</p> <p>EAS support for schools has transitioned to online with a deficit to levels of engagement and to the brokerage of relevant support at all levels e.g. LNS Schools.</p>	<p>Working with Finance and Insurance colleagues to undertake an impact assessment, in order to inform future planning.</p>	
School accountability services	Red	<p>EAS Challenge Advisors have not been able to hold schools to account and school's data monitoring has been suspended.</p> <p>Esytyn has suspended inspection resulting in risks to school – particularly those in a category, who are in for longer than planned.</p>	<p>Review EAS Business Plan in line with WG regulations and guidance.</p> <p>Multi-agency partnership working with Estyn in order to support schools causing concern.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
School leadership	Amber	<p>School governance has been adapted online, therefore, the evidence base is largely restricted to Headteacher report and narrative.</p> <p>Support for current and new school leaders has been limited to online, and school to school working opportunities have mainly focused on wellbeing and operational issues.</p>	<p>Work with the EAS to review current practice for governance and school leadership.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Poverty	Red	<p>Family entitlement to benefits has increased across Blaenau Gwent and the region, including free school meals. Additional funding has been allocated to support these families, however, many schemes are not sustainable and so the ongoing impact will need to be assessed.</p>	<p>Working with Finance and Benefits colleagues to undertake an impact assessment, in order to inform future planning.</p>	Service Manager ET and BC/ Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
School community	Red	<p>Limited face to face contact and the shift to online engagement has challenged communication and relationships.</p>	<p>Provide support for individual schools to address barriers to parent engagement in partnership with the EAS.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

School development	Amber	School development plans have had to be largely adapted in order to react to COVID-19.	Provide support for individual schools to address barriers to parent engagement in partnership with the EAS.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Safeguarding - children	Red	School closure has meant that children and young people are at greater risk of harm e.g. adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Service support intelligence and capability has been restricted.	Supporting Schools to ensure that they are able to effectively identify and manage risks, via structure an effective multi-agency approach.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC
Safeguarding - adults	Red	Vulnerable adults are more exposed to risk factors with limited access to support services.	Supporting Schools to ensure that they are able to effectively identify and manage risks, via structure an effective multi-agency approach.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC
Voluntary/Third Sector/ Charities work and engagement	Red	Opportunities to engage partners have been restricted significantly due to operational implications associated with COVID-19.	Establish a stakeholder re-engagement and support plan for Education and schools.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC
Preventative health measures	Red	School-based preventative strategies to support healthcare needs of pupils have either been stopped or largely disrupted by COVID-19 i.e. vaccinations, growth and development checks, dental health, period equity etc.	Work closely with ABUHB, Public Health Wales and associated partners to review and develop a school health plan .	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/Service Manager ET and BC
COVID control measures	Amber	LA's and schools have implemented a series of control measures in order to manage community health i.e. vaccinations, Lateral flow tests, use of PPE, positive case management and risk assessment.	Review and evaluate existing control measures in line with the latest guidance, regulations and associated operational plans, in order to inform business continuity planning.	Service Manager ET and BC/Health and Safety

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

Review of Implementation - Areas that have worked well				
Relationships and Engagement with headteachers	Green	Throughout the course of the pandemic relationships, communication and engagement with school leaders has improved significantly. School leaders have had the opportunity to work together with the Council, shaping provision and informing key developments throughout the response period. In addition, they have been empowered to share and seek solutions to issues which have emerged, whilst working closely with the Council to achieve consistency in delivery methods etc.	Continue with the current engagement format to aid recover and ensure effective engagement and participation opportunities are in place for/with school leaders	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC
Digital inclusion	Amber	Throughout the course of the pandemic both Welsh Government and the Council have worked to secure and invest in devices and connectivity to address digital disadvantage. As a result, there is now an improved understanding of the level of digital disadvantage throughout the school estate. In addition, there are established methods and solutions by which the impact of digital disadvantage can be addressed.	Ensure a full review of provision and requirements takes place, to aid device/provision sustainability plans in line with the Education ICT Strategy and blended learning developments.	Service Manager ET and BC/ Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Business continuity – service design and delivery	Amber	Both schools and associated Council services have established effective service design and delivery models, along with business continuity arrangements, ensuring effective response to the pandemic.	Continue to review operational and business continuity plans, to ensure that alert level response and associated delivery can be managed effectively.	Service Manager ET and BC
Learners	Amber	Many pupils have developed skills through engaging with distance learning e.g. resilience and time management.	Continue to build on these skills in a face-to-face setting, ensure schools provide catch up support for pupils who have not developed such skills/not engaged well with distance learning	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Teaching staff	Amber	Many teachers and teaching assistants have developed their use of ICT to deliver learning, many schools have used ICT in creative and engaging ways to encourage, motivate and support learning.	Continue to build on these skills in a face-to-face setting. Work with the EAS to ensure blended learning continues to	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

			be a key priority in school development planning	
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Priority 1: Learner Wellbeing

Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Termly Updates
HoSial and SMETBC	<p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p><u>Stakeholder Recovery and Renewal Group</u></p> <p>Monthly engagement with primary and secondary headteachers to shape support for recovery and renewal</p>	Monthly meetings	July 2021 - ongoing	All stakeholders engaged, represented and informed	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive as part of FWP.	Meetings continue to take place on a monthly basis, with September’s session having to be re-arranged to accommodate partners, next meeting October
	<p><u>Focus Groups</u></p> <p>Series of focus groups to discuss key issues around recovery and renewal</p>	As required (led by education)	July 2021 – ongoing	All stakeholders engaged, represented and informed	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive as part of FWP.	<p>The following meetings have taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to schools – September • Risk Assessments and Operational Guidance • Track and Trace Processes • Breakfast Club • Cyber Security

<p>HoSlal</p>	<p><u>Whole school wellbeing and mental health support</u> Evaluate current provision within inclusion team to support school's wellbeing and mental health. Exploration of different support strategies to provide a BG model e.g. Trauma Informed Schools</p>	<p>Meetings with all relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>October - ongoing</p>	<p>Schools have provision in place to support learner's wellbeing</p>	<p>Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive</p>	<p>Next meeting with Caroline Friend re TIS, November 3rd</p>
<p>HoSlal and SMETBC</p>	<p><u>Further develop partnership working and re-establish pre-Covid referral systems and interventions</u> e.g. healthy schools, Post-16 partnership, youth service, education transformation, social services</p>	<p>Attendance at relevant meetings</p>	<p>July 2021 - onwards</p>	<p>Partnership working developed to support pupil wellbeing across all educational settings. Develop cross partnership BG agreed ways of working</p>	<p>Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive. Share good practice across EAS.</p>	<p>Joint planning with healthy schools to provide training for schools on respect and tolerance</p>

Priority 2: Vulnerable Learners

Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Monthly Updates
SMETBC	Digitally disadvantaged learners continue to access devices/MI-FI	Licensing and revenue costs funded by WG and LA. Going forward, these costs will be addressed via schools	Ongoing	All digitally disadvantaged learners in BG have access to devices/MI- FI as required	Weekly monitoring is in place coordinated by Education, in partnership with SRS and schools. An evaluation and review is currently underway, to inform plans and provision going forward.	All schools have sufficient devices to facilitate the provision. We currently have: 359 devices and 161 Mi-Fi
SMETBC	Continued support for pupils and families eligible for FSM via direct payments	WG funding	Ongoing	All eligible families receive payments for isolation and holidays	Half-term monitoring and fortnightly reporting via the SitRep	We currently provide payments in line with isolation and holiday periods. Presently, there are 2,785 pupils eligible for FSM, with application rounds re-opened once every half-term.
SMETBC	<u>Re-establishment of Breakfast Clubs with a pilot scheme until the end of October</u>	Time for meetings	March 21 – Summer 21	Pilot in place, with aim to reintroduce BC across BG and increase capacity	Review of BC provision with schools	
SMETBC	<u>Proposal to increase capacity of Pen y Cwm has been approved by Executive Committee, and first phase completed. Second phase</u>	Consultation process, meetings with architects, schools leaders etc.	Summer 21 – ongoing	Pen y Cwm able to meet the needs of learners in BG	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	Phase 1 works complete, Phase 2 work in development and long term planning processes have been initiated in partnership with Planning, Estates and Technical Services

	<u>to be completed by next Autumn term</u>					
HoSlal	<u>Realignment of ALN SLA and EP Service</u> Revised support offer to schools based on school-improving system. Schools to be provided with one offer to access whole school training to support vulnerable learners	Time for meeting with PyC staff	Summer 21 – ongoing	ALN SLA revised in line with new ALN Bill	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	Engagement with all relevant services – revised offer to schools to be sent October 21
HoSlal, Gill Smith, Finance	<u>Analysis of funding to support vulnerable learners</u>	Meeting with Finance and GS. Engagement with stakeholders	October 21	Schools able to best support ALN pupils, within budget	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	Meeting with finance set up for October 21
HoSlal	<u>Review of Inclusion Service</u>	Meetings with all relevant stakeholders	September 21 – August 22	Inclusion service able to meet needs of ALN Bill		
HoSlal	<u>ALN Reform</u>					
HoSlal and Lisa Adams	<u>Review of EHE Policy and practices</u>	Meetings with relevant stakeholders.	June 21 – August 22	Updated Policy to meet needs of EHE learners		
SMETBC	<u>Intimate Care Needs Policy – review Policy</u>	Support from Tredegar Comp				
SMETBC	<u>Accessibility Strategy</u>	Time to review policy/strategy	July 21 – Spring 22	Policy and strategy updated		Updated time line and action plan have been taken via the Council's

HoSlal	<u>Equalities training and support for schools</u>	Meetings to agree agenda and set up training	October 21	Schools able to support vulnerable learners	Monthly monitoring in place, via Accessibility Action plan	political processes with a review having commenced Training for all schools set up for October 20th
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Priority 3: Academic Progress

Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Monthly Updates
HoSlal and SMETBC	<u>Curriculum Reform and Build Back Better Group</u>		October 21 – ongoing	School governors/leader are supported to implement school improvement and held to account	SCC meetings/action plans/ Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive EAS monthly CA reports	First meeting to be set up by Emma Jones
HoSlal	<u>Partnership work with the EAS to broker support in line with the EAS Business Plan.</u>	Time for meetings				Fortnightly update meetings with HoSlal and Principle Challenge Advisor
	Co-construction of MER cycle to hold EAS to account for services provided to BG schools		April 21 – September 21	HoSlal has clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of all school settings in BG	Visit notes – not for accountability purposes	
	Fortnightly meetings with PCA to monitor MER cycle and share information about schools	Time for meetings				
	<u>Engagement with STEM</u>		September 21 – December 21	Development of BG offer to support parents, initial pilot stage by December 21, roll out to all schools January 22	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive/ share good practice across EAS	
HoSlal and SMETBC , Richard Crook’s team	Increase opportunities for STEM links across BG schools	Time for meetings and visits				
	Work with Regeneration on the STEM activity					

HoSIal and SMETBC	Promote 5G classroom across BG schools					
HoSIal and SMETBC	<u>Develop a LA blended learning best practice policy</u>					
	Work with the EAS to review current practice for governance and school leadership in current context, to inform future ways of supporting leadership					
HoSIal and SMETBC	Review of support for families accessing Welsh Medium Education working with WG, schools and securing alignment with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan	Education, WG and the WEF	2020 – January 2021	Draft WESP submitted wot Welsh Ministers January 2022	Monitoring is undertaken on a monthly basis	
HoSIal and SMETBC	Work with Andrew Parker’s team to create Parnt Engagement Survey – to inform the Blended Learning Approach, and to develop engamenet/training					WG and WEF resources have been shared with Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg and parents. The WESP is scheduled for consultation w/c 11.10.21

Priority 4: School Operations

Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Monthly Updates
HoSlaI and SMETBC	<u>Survey of schools to identify where training is not up to date e.g. Safeguarding, first aid and Health and Safety -</u> Use information to support schools to access relevant training	TBD	October 2021 – November 2021	Training programme developed aligned to the needs of schools	Termly monitoring with schools	Responsible Persons Training Programme in place for the autumn-term 2021
	Engagement sessions with schools – new protocols in place to support schools to manage positive cases	Education, Environmental Health, TTP and schools	September 2021 – ongoing (monitored fortnightly)	Early identification and monitoring of positive cases	Daily monitoring undertaken and reported via Education to all relevant stakeholders	New process and guidance in place. Daily support is provided via Education and Environmental Health. Comms and guidance in place
	All schools have emergency contact information to support escalation procedures i.e. move to blended learning	Education, Environmental Health and schools	July 2021 – ongoing	Schools are able to effectively respond to case escalation	Daily monitoring undertaken and reported via Education to all relevant stakeholders	One school has moved to blended learning for a year group thus far this term and 3 schools are currently on the watch list. This is monitored daily
	BG updated schools based risk assessment and operational guidance, work with individual schools in order to assess individual operational plans and to advise accordingly.	H&S, Education and Environmental Health	July 2021 – ongoing	Schools operate safely with sufficient measures and controls in place	Daily monitoring between Education, H&S, Environmental Health and Schools	All schools have up to date risk assessments in place

	<p>Review Home to School Transport Policy and established working group to address complex applications and policy and practices</p>	Education and Community Services	July 2021 - ongoing	All eligible pupils and students have access to transport	Fortnightly monitoring	Transport Policy for 2021/22 in place, with the policy agreed for 2022/23 via Executive Committee. The working group meeting on a fortnightly basis and have considered 6 cases to date. A procedural review is underway and will be completed by January 2022
	<p>Monitoring group established around national shortage of drivers – target to address capacity issues as a result of COVID and resource based issues with transport</p>	Education and Community Services	September 2020 – ongoing	Transport solutions are agreed where issues are identified. Meaning all pupils have access to education, without their transport needs presenting a barrier	Daily monitoring	Transport contingency plans are in places and being monitored
	<p>Fire Risk Assessment Review process in place</p>	H&S and Education	September – December 2021	All schools FRA documentation is up to date	Weekly in line with COVID Secure Risk Assessment	FRA reviews have commenced
	<p>Facilities Action Planning with individual schools re-established</p>	H&S and Education	October – December 2021	All schools have up to date Facilities Action Plans	Monthly monitoring is in place	Meetings have commenced with view to completing all action plan

	<p>Summer programme of works completed successfully</p> <p>Autumn works underway</p>	<p>Community Services and Education</p> <p>Community Services and Education</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>September – December 2021</p>	<p>All programmed minor works projects have now been completed</p> <p>All minor works projects complete</p>	<p>Monthly monitoring is in place</p> <p>Monthly monitoring is in place</p>	<p>reviews by October half-term 2021</p> <p>Works have been completed in 18 schools, with snagging undertaken and ongoing monitoring for defects</p> <p>A work programme has been established and is underway</p>
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Education Recovery Plan – Overview

Recovery and Renewal Focus - Education has developed a detailed impact assessment in collaboration with key partners including schools, in order to determine the key priorities for recovery and renewal. The 4 overarching priority areas of focus are as follows:

- **Priority 1 - Learner Wellbeing**
- **Priority 2 - Vulnerable Learners**
- **Priority 3 - Academic Progress**
- **Priority 4 – School Operations**

Present Position - Over the last academic session school operations have been negatively affected by the pandemic. The latest Welsh Government operational guidance seeks to resume normal school operations from the autumn-term 2021. During the 2020/21 academic session, data collection and school's data management was reconfigured and/or suspended, therefore, we are currently working to establish the baseline for the above priorities as at September 2021. However, current levels of COVID within the community are affecting the school's ability to resume normal practice. Therefore, the target for the autumn-term is to establish the baseline.

Implementation Plan - Education has worked to establish a detailed action plan for each impact area. The action plan details the work required with Council services, schools/headteachers, wider partners such as the Education Achievement Service, pupils and parents. In addition, stakeholder engagement and communication plans are in place, with 3 consultative groups having been established as follows:

- Recovery and Renewal Group
- Curriculum Reform Group
- School Operations Management Group

The aim of these groups is to ensure a strategic approach to effective delivery of the action plan, whilst also securing appropriate resources and expertise.

Key Measures to Determine Progress -The following data sets – both qualitative and quantitative, will be used to monitor and measure progress against each impact area:

- Qualitative surveys
- Early years and pre-school uptake
- Admissions data
- Free school meals data
- Attendance and exclusion data
- Referral data (i.e. Social Services)
- Digital Disadvantaged data

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Agenda Item 7

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **19th October 2021**

Report Subject: **Improving Schools Programme 2021**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
29.09.21	30.09.21				19.10.21	10.11.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the BG Improving Schools Programme, in line with national changes to school evaluation, improvement and accountability. The report will also cover the pilot of the new regional approach 2021-2022, which reflects the national changes.

2. Scope and Background

The report covers all schools and settings within the County Borough identified by the Education Directorate, supported by the EAS and/or Estyn as needing to improve. The Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme operates within the regional arrangements for supporting schools across South East Wales.

2.1 Update on School Categorisation 2021-2022: What are the new arrangements for supporting schools?

School categorisation was suspended during the academic year 2019-2020. In March 2021, Welsh Government consulted on its new draft school improvement guidance (*School Improvement Guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability*). Importantly, the new proposals aim to:

- Strengthen the importance and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning by schools, which draws on a broad range of evidence;
- Focus on schools' self-evaluations and improvement priorities as the starting point for work with local authorities and regional consortia;
- Consider school performance in its widest sense, with schools evaluated in their own context, supported by a broad range of evidence, bespoke improvement planning and support;
- Ensure that the school's self-evaluation processes identify areas of strengths and priorities for improvement, which are drawn together in a single, strategic school development plan;

- Build on schools' self-evaluations and development plans to work with local authorities and regional consortia to agree the additional support they need to improve; and,
 - Identify where schools have strengths and capacity to collaborate with other schools to support them.
- 2.2 As a result of these changes, in 2021-22 all of BG's schools will undergo a Professional Discussion with the LA, EAS and other partners. The discussion will focus on the school's priorities for improvement, the support it requires and may identify practice that is worth sharing. Schools have received a series of briefing sessions across a range of forums, to enable them to prepare for the above new ways of working. During the delivery period of this pilot approach, the views of schools will be regularly gathered, to inform practice moving forward.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 **Option 1**
Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.
- 3.2 **Option 2**
Accept the report as provided.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 **Corporate Improvement Plan**
Education remains a priority in the Corporate Improvement Plan. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 consolidates, clarifies and reforms the law in relation to intervention in schools causing concern. The Welsh Government's statutory guidance for schools causing concern (February 2014) details the local authority powers of intervention in schools causing concern, the grounds on which those powers can be invoked and the procedures governing the intervention process. A further explanation of this is explained further in Appendix 1, which includes the LA powers of intervention.
- 4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan Objectives**
Through our Education provision we seek to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress and performance is ambitious and raises aspirations levels.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 **Impact on Budget**
There are no direct financial implications for this report. However, the Council allocates approximately £42.8 million to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes.

Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional EAS arrangements of approximately £364,000 from the core Education Directorate Budget.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

Risk is associated with ineffective processes to ensure good progress against priorities in identified schools. Failure to raise standards is identified as a key risk to the Council, both in terms of reputation and pupil life chances. This is reflected in the Education Directorate and EAS risk registers. Mitigating actions include the routine monitoring of quantitative and qualitative information, regular Securing Improvement Partnership meetings between the Council and the EAS, regular quality assurance meetings within the Education Directorate and across teams and school inspection findings.

There is regular review of a school's progress towards its priorities. School attendance and exclusion figures are monitored on a fortnightly basis. School's safeguarding processes are also closely monitored. Holistic support packages are devised via regular intra Council services meetings between OD, finance, health and safety, education and school governor support services. The quality of provision i.e. the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms is monitored and supported via the EAS. The quality of school leadership is also supported extensively by the EAS via a range of programmes and school-to-school networks.

5.3 **Legal**

The Improving Schools Programme operates within the legal framework of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct staffing or workforce implications arising from this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information**

6.1.1 **Schools requiring higher levels of support that have made positive progress 2019-2021**

Since March 2020, there have been limited opportunities for Council/EAS staff to visit the schools in Blaenau Gwent to work alongside school leaders to undertake self-evaluation activity due to the pandemic. However, in-person opportunities to see provision and practice first-hand resumed to a limited degree during the Summer term 2021 and this has informed the progress evaluation of this report.

6.1.2 **Brynmawr Foundation School:**

- The school was inspected in October 2019 and placed within the category of schools requiring Special Measures.
- The school continues to be subject to a LA statutory warning notice to improve and intervention is now in place. The LA is currently reviewing the notice during the Autumn term.

- Governance has significantly improved. There are now no additional LA governors on the governing body.
- The school has had several beneficial changes in senior leadership since the core inspection, with 3 new assistant headteachers now in post and key subject leadership changes.
- During the pandemic, the school has engaged very well with EAS support and professional learning.
- A strong support plan is currently in implementation as part of the EAS Learning Network School model, working closely with Cardiff High School, with the headteacher undertaking the role of School Improvement Partner. Coaching and mentoring of leaders forms the core of this support.
- The school is part of the national pilot for *multi-agency support for schools in special measures* national initiative, which involves a range of partners supporting the school and monitoring its progress in a systematic and responsive way, tailored to the specific needs of the school. The next LA led meeting is in early October 2021.
- Estyn will revisit the school to monitor its progress from 5th-8th October 2021.
- In addition to Learning Network School support, the school has engaged in a range of helpful programmes to support improvements in teaching and learning, preparing for curriculum reform, supporting wellbeing of learners and improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners.
- The school engaged very positively with the Celebrate, Share, Support and Refine initiative, which demonstrated that it had in place strong practice during the time of school closure in providing online learning for pupils, and good support for families within the community.

Progress update:

- From evidence seen in limited on-site visits during Summer 2021, there is still work to be done, but the school is making progress against its recommendations with good progress made in strengthening leadership.

6.1.3 Abertillery 3-16 Learning Community:

- The school was inspected in February 2018 and placed in the category of schools requiring significant improvement.
- The school is currently subject to an LA warning notice. The LA is currently reviewing this via the SCC meeting in the Autumn term.
- Governance has improved significantly. Governors have received a planned programme of EAS support and sub-committees are now working well.
- The Learning Community has had several changes in senior leadership since the inspection: a new substantive Headteacher was appointed in January 2020; a Deputy Phase Lead at Primary was appointed in Spring 2021; a new substantive Secondary Phase Lead started at Easter 2021; a new Secondary Assistant Headteacher started at Easter. The impact of leadership consolidation can now be seen in more consistent provision and practice across the community, with standards in books overall broadly in line with age and stage.

- The school is engaging well with Tonyrefail School as its Learning Network School. On-site visits between the schools commenced in May 2021, and Tonyrefail supported with an EAS/LA verification visit in May 2021, which included the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion.
- In addition to Learning Network School support, the school has engaged in a range of helpful programmes to support improvements in teaching and learning, developing middle leadership, preparing for curriculum reform, supporting wellbeing of learners and improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners.
- The school engaged very positively with the Celebrate, Share, Support and Refine initiative, which demonstrated that it had in place strong practice during the time of school closure in providing online learning for pupils, and good support for families within the community.

Progress update:

- The May verification visit looked at a limited but useful range of first-hand evidence, supporting the view that the school has made satisfactory progress overall against its inspection recommendations.
- Some aspects of the school's progress were identified as strong (e.g. leadership development).
- Estyn will revisit the school to monitor its progress during the autumn or spring terms this year.

6.1.4 **Sofrydd Primary School:**

- The Local Authority commissioned a Leadership, Management, Teaching and Learning Review at the school, in February 2020. This review found significant shortcomings in the way the school was led and managed.
- A new substantive Headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The governing body is now carrying out all its statutory functions and governors report stronger engagement with the school.
- The school engaged very positively with the Celebrate, Share, Support and Refine initiative, which demonstrated that it had in place strong practice during the time of school closure in providing online learning for pupils, and good support for families within the community.
- The Headteacher worked quickly and effectively to put in place additional nurture provision to support vulnerable learners during their acting period in post. This was supported financially by the LA.
- The school has been supported by a Learning Network School (LNS) arrangement with both Cwrt Rawling Primary School and Blaen-y-Cwm Primary School, which has enabled improvements to be made in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The school has also engaged well with fortnightly EAS mathematics and STEM in-school support, as well as programmes to improve outcomes for disadvantaged youngsters and those who have had adverse childhood experiences.

Progress update:

- A formal review of progress against the recommendations of the review in 2020 will take place this term, with the new Headteacher and the

leadership team working collaboratively together. This will inform the identification of priorities for improvement moving forward and the school's status under the SCC arrangements.

6.1.5 **Schools Causing Concern**

The River Centre Learning Community:

- The LA is concerned that the school does not engage with key statutory LA functions and services. The pre-warning letter of Spring 2021, which set out these concerns in detail, did not achieve the compliance required and the school was issued with a Statutory Warning Notice on 14.09.21.
- Schools Causing Concern meetings have not provided the LA or EAS with the assurance of the effectiveness of the school's blended learning provision.
- Staff at the school are now engaging in regional professional learning programmes including engagement with the Distance and Blended Learning training; Newly Qualified Teachers programme; Schools as Learning Organisations and wellbeing training.
- The EAS has supported the Governing Body with training in self-evaluation. Strengthening the Governing Body's effectiveness will continue to be a focus of support.
- Following the school's engagement in the Celebrate, Support, Share and Refine pilot, the EAS has supported with its review and development of distance and blended learning provision.
- The LNS school Ysgol Bryn Castell is supporting, with a focus on: developing an effective School Development Plan; reviewing the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, including distance and blended learning; mentoring of leaders; planning for the new curriculum and ALN reform. The school is engaging appropriately overall with this support.
- The school has also received increased support via additional School Improvement Partner (SIP) time, with a specific focus on self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Progress update:

- The LA and EAS will work alongside school leaders to undertake self-evaluation activity during the autumn term 2021 to evaluate provision and practice and agree priorities for improvement.
- From the outcome of the May SCC meeting, it should be noted that the engagement with the Schools Causing Concern process has been unsatisfactory.

6.3 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.3.1 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

The regional pilot of new ways of working to reflect the new national arrangements for school evaluation, improvement and accountability has been evolved through the engagement of a variety of stakeholders including schools and members of governing bodies. A range of Council services and external partners are involved in delivering programmes to support schools requiring

improvement. Monitoring progress towards targets enables effective targeting of support.

6.3.2 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

Monitoring school progress against priorities facilitates support for schools to ensure that they achieve and maintain high quality outcomes in the long term.

6.3.3 Preventative focus

Through effective monitoring and evaluation of school performance, early identification of emerging areas for improvement can be achieved with consequent early intervention to secure improvement. The effectiveness of the LA's monitoring, evaluation and intervention programmes ensure that preventative action is taken early in order to minimise the escalation of concerns.

6.3.4 Collaboration / partnership working

The LA collaborates with neighbouring local authorities through the South East Wales Consortium for the provision of School Improvement services through the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

The LA also secures a range of pupil support services such as Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Speech and Language, and Ethnic Minority support services through regional collaboration. Within the LA, the school improvement and inclusion leadership teams ensure that there is a coordinated approach to supporting schools in the Education Directorate and across the Council as a whole.

6.3.5 Integration (across service areas)

The LA commissions its school improvement function on a regional basis.

6.4 EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)

There is no requirement for EQIA assessment since this is not a change of policy or practice. However, implementation of the LA's monitoring, evaluation and intervention practice in schools has a positive impact on children and young people and on staff within a particular school. By improving the quality of education, standards are improved for all children and young people. Through the LA's school improvement strategy, particular focus is given to vulnerable learners and those who are at risk of underachievement.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 Monitoring of improvement pathways is an important mechanism for ensuring that Members of the Education Scrutiny Committee and the Executive are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the authority to account effectively for the quality of education provision and hence pupil outcomes.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Schools Causing Concern operational appendix

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EAS

Education Achievement Service
for South East Wales
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg
i Dde Ddwyrain Cymru

Schools Causing Concern

Operational appendix for meetings of
Schools Causing Concern

Updated September 2020

Schools Causing Concern Meetings:

A Schools Causing Concern meeting can be requested by the local authority when a school is considered to be a 'school which causes concern' or is at risk of 'becoming a school which causes concern'. A School Causing Concern meeting will be arranged when a school:

- Is placed in a red or amber category;
- Has received a local authority warning notice;
- Is placed in an Estyn statutory category of requiring Significant Improvement or Special Measures;
- Evidences that enhanced support and challenge is required linked to grounds 1-6 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 for Schools Causing Concern.

Meetings may be arranged when a school;

- Is placed in a yellow or green category but its capacity to improve is not secure and / or the pace of improvement is too slow.
- Is in an Estyn review category.
- Is identified as a risk in relation to a review or audit, which has been conducted by the LA or EAS. This may include for example; Finance, Health & Safety and Safeguarding Audits or Leadership and ALN Reviews.
- Demonstrates evidences that enhanced support and challenge is required linked to grounds 1-6 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Within the Welsh Government guidance on Schools Causing Concern, the six grounds for intervention are:

Ground 1	The standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low.
Ground 2	There has been a breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed.
Ground 3	The behaviour of pupils at the school or any action taken by those pupils or their parents is severely prejudicing, or is likely to severely prejudice, the education of any pupils at the school.
Ground 4	The safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).
Ground 5	The governing body or head teacher has failed, or is likely to fail, to comply with a duty under the Education Acts.
Ground 6	The governing body or head teacher has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise of any of its, his, or her functions under the Education Acts.

Terms of Reference

Membership of a Schools Causing Concern Meeting

A Schools Causing Concern meeting is a collaborative meeting between a school, the local authority and the EAS. Key individuals are essential to the meeting. Essential members are listed below:

Director of Education / Chief Education Officer (or representative of)
Head of School Standards (LA)
Head Teacher
Chair of Governing Body or Vice Chair (in exceptional circumstances)
EAS Representative

The following members will attend at the request of the Executive Member / Cabinet Member for Education, Chief Education Officer or Managing Director of the EAS:

Executive / Cabinet Member for Education
Managing Director / Director / Assistant Director EAS

On occasions, additional school, LA or EAS staff will be required to attend. Additional members may include:

Additional Senior Leaders or Heads of Department from schools
Additional EAS Representatives
Additional Senior Leaders, HR, Finance or Health and Safety Offices from the local authority.

Aims of a Schools Causing Concern Meeting

School Causing Concern meetings form part of a wider drive by SEWC LAs and EAS to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people. The local authority and EAS roles will be principally:

- To review and evaluate pace and progress in relation to identified School Development Plan priorities.
- To challenge the Headteacher and Governing Body on the rates of progress in their school.
- To recommend and monitor actions aimed at accelerating improvement.
- To consider the extent to which the school has been successful in achieving required improvement. This will determine future actions by the LA and EAS. This may encompass:

Schools Causing Concern Progress Judgements:

1. The school has made strong progress and will not be required to attend Schools Causing Concern meetings. *The support level of the school will be reduced.
2. The school has made *satisfactory/ *strong progress but will need to continue to attend Schools Causing Concern meetings to enable the impact of improvements to become consistent and embedded.
3. The school demonstrates limited progress. *It is advised that the local authority determine appropriate next steps of action agreed with the agreed Schools Causing Concern policy.

*delete as appropriate

Process

- The local authority will determine the venue for meetings*. Generally, meetings will be held in local authority offices unless there is a specific reason for holding the meeting at the school. *Meetings will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams where this is deemed appropriate for 2020-2021
- The Director of Education or Cabinet Member / Executive Member for Education will chair the meeting.
- The local authority will facilitate the meetings. The local authority will take minutes of the meeting.
- The agenda will be agreed at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. The local authority should ensure that further notice is given whenever possible, enabling the school to fully prepare for the meeting. Ideally, the next agenda should be discussed at the end of a Schools Causing Concern meeting. This discussion will include details of specific areas the local authority and EAS wish to focus upon and those persons required to attend.
- Schools will be requested to present evidence to demonstrate progress linked to their School Development Plan / PIAP. Therefore, all reports presented at Schools Causing Concern meetings must practically align to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. Local authorities reserve the right to request first hand evidence linked to specific reports. This may include pupil data, pupil books, minutes of departmental meetings, SLT meetings and reports to Governing Bodies. (This list is not intended to be exhaustive).
- Schools will prepare and submit progress reports or updates of their School Development Plan to the local authority 5 working days prior to the meetings. All documents to be distributed to all attendees at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting.
- School may use the meetings to discuss brokered support, their on-going challenges / barriers to improvement and any additional support requirements.
- The school will be expected to discuss its progress, obstacles to improvement, and any further planned actions.
- The LA and EAS will provide a view on a range of aspects relating to the school's key successes and barriers. These aspects may include the school's level of engagement, its pace and progress, its capacity to improve and required future support from the LA and EAS.
- Where a school is requested to attend a Schools Causing Concern meeting, the local authority may choose to discuss and focus on a range of issues, which can contribute to successful school performance and pupil outcomes. This should include a focus on pupil exclusions, attendance, wellbeing, vulnerable group data, performance management arrangement, parent engagement etc. (This list is not intended to be exhaustive).
- Confidential items will not be recorded within minutes. The nature of confidential discussion will be agreed between the school, local authority and the EAS. The local authority reserves the right to see either the Headteacher or Chair of Governors individually by request.
- The LA will provide a view of the schools' improvement and its need for further support using Schools Causing Progress Judgements 1-3 (indicated on page 3).
- Local authority and EAS staff will participate in a pre-briefing and debriefing session before and after a Schools Causing Concern meeting.

Schedule /Timings of Meetings

For schools requiring the highest levels of support, monthly meetings will be established. All Schools Causing Concern will be requested to attend a meeting every half term.

It is expected that a School Causing Concern meeting will last no longer than 1.5 hours.

The local authority will aim to agree and issue meeting dates at least 6 weeks in advance. The local authority will invite EAS representatives, the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. The Head Teacher will invite any additional staff or Senior Leaders whose attendance has been requested.

The local authority will record and circulate minutes of meetings. All minutes should be circulated to the school, LA and EAS within 10 working days.

Agenda

The standing agenda for all Schools Causing Concern meetings is:

1. Welcome and apologies.
2. Specific actions or matters arising from the previous meeting.
3. Head teacher led discussion* based around the school's progress against the School Development Plan priorities (agreed prior to the meeting), including any reports verifying evidence of progress. Other Senior Leaders or Heads of Department may lead specific / appropriate reports by request. * This discussion should include any plans for managing the context of the school in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and plans for blended / distance learning should this be required.
4. School led discussion* linked to the progress of all learners, including vulnerable groups. *This should include plans for intervention and support following the extended absence of many pupils from school during the Covid 19 pandemic and the progress this group are making.
5. EAS overview of support provided and commentary of progress made by the school.
6. Conclusions / next steps.
7. A.O.B / Future agenda items.
8. Confidential matters to be discussed in the presence of the local authority, EAS, the Head and/ or the Chair of Governors.
9. Meeting close.

A 15-minute LA and EAS pre-brief / debrief will take place before and after each meeting. The school will not be invited to participate.

Improvement Conferences:

It is recognised that a Schools Causing Concern meeting is time limited which can restrict the length of the agenda. On occasions an extended meeting will be required to consider:

- The pace of progress linked to School Development Plan priorities and the identified support required.
- Why a school is not improving and has become 'stuck'.
- The level and range of support a school has received and its impact.
- The use of local authority statutory powers.

An improvement Conference will act as an extended and focussed meeting. This could be considered as an escalation of concern. The meeting will be scheduled over at least half a day and will be chaired and by either:

- The Executive/ Cabinet Member for Education
- The Chief Education Officer
- A Chief Education Officer from within the region but not from within the LA
- The Managing Director / Director of the EAS

At this stage the local authority will determine the agenda in conjunction with the school with at least 3 weeks' notice. Minutes will be kept as a record of the meeting and shared with all in attendance.

Persons Present:
 Apologies:
 Date of meeting:

School Development Priorities
•
Local Targets
•

Actions completed since last Schools Causing Concern Meeting (School / LA / EAS)
•
Main issues arising from Meeting
•
Schools Causing Concern Progress Judgement (1-3):

Actions for the school (to include timescales):

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

Actions for the LA (to include timescales):

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

Actions for the EAS (to include timescales):

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

Next Meeting: (Date)

Next Agenda Items: (Draft)

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Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **19th October 2021**
Report Subject: **Pupil Exclusions**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member for Education**
Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
29.09.21	30.09.21	07.10.21			19.10.21	10.11.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide opportunity for Members to scrutinise internal exclusion data for Blaenau Gwent in both the primary and secondary school sectors for the academic year 2020-21, as well as the regional exclusion data for the academic year 2019-20.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The key Exclusion Guidance is the Welsh Government Guidance entitled: 'Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units' (Updated November 2019).
- 2.2 By law (section 52(4) of the Education Act 2002), headteachers, governing bodies, LAs and independent appeal panels must have regard to this guidance when making decisions on exclusion and administering the exclusion procedures and appeals. There is a strong expectation that the guidance will be followed unless there is good reason to depart from it.
- 2.3 The guidance is very helpful and very prescriptive. For example, the guidance states that only the headteacher can exclude a learner and that unofficial exclusions – sending learners home unofficially – is unlawful. This approach means that the Education Directorate's guidance to schools, and the practice in place in schools, reflects the processes set out in the WG guidance.
- 2.4 The WG guidance includes template letters for informing parents following an exclusion, and at every stage of the exclusion disciplinary process.
- 2.5 The Council's Exclusion Guidance for schools, as well as including much of the WG guidance, provides additional local information such as process flowcharts, a standardised reporting format and a checklist for head teachers to ensure that the decision to exclude has been carefully considered and is being used as a last resort.

2.6 Section 6.1 of this report provides the performance information data relating to exclusions.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The options for Scrutiny to consider are:

3.2 **Option 1:** Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the report, thereby contributing to continuous self-evaluation prior to making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

3.3 **Option 2:** Accept the report as provided.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic support the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 This work supports the Corporate Plan - Education priority one namely to improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing. It also contributes to priority three regarding supporting school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions.

4.2 This work also supports our strategic responsibilities with regard to Objective 2: to progress our Vision for Education (school led, self-improving system based on effective school to school collaboration), as well as Objective 4: the securing of effective, efficient and economical high quality provision for our vulnerable learners.

4.3 This focus also contributes to the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan, specifically to help support children and young people to have confidence and aspiration to develop their full potential and places a high value on education and development.

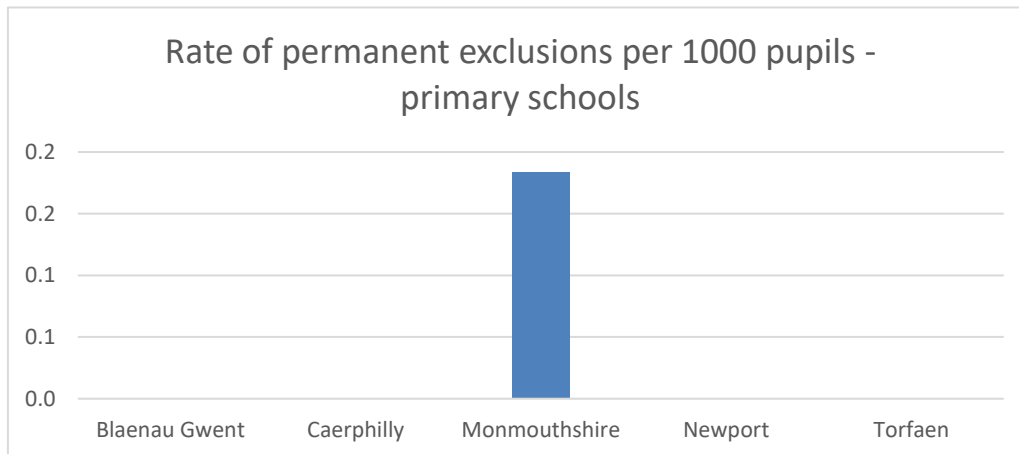
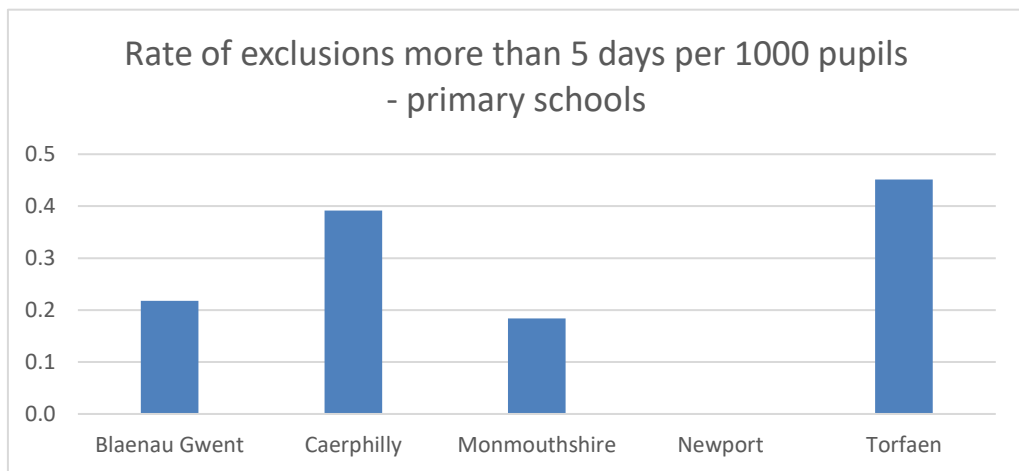
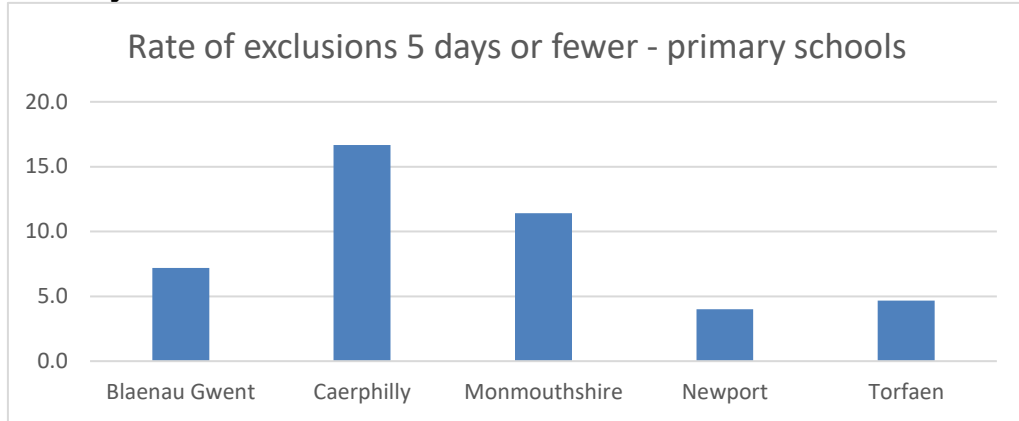
5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 *Impact on Budget*

5.1.1 The Council is required by the Education Act 1996 to ensure that pupils who have been permanently excluded are in receipt of an appropriate education after fifteen days. If an alternative mainstream school is not appropriate then it becomes necessary to arrange a placement in either an out of county special school or our SEBD (social, emotional and behaviour difficulties) school. There are of course significant cost implications with placing a pupil out of county. In terms of in county placement, which is always the preferred option, tuition costs may be incurred whilst placement is being facilitated. There are no budgetary implications in terms of fixed term exclusions although schools make provision to meet pupil need from within their own budgets to avoid or reduce the likelihood of fixed term exclusions.

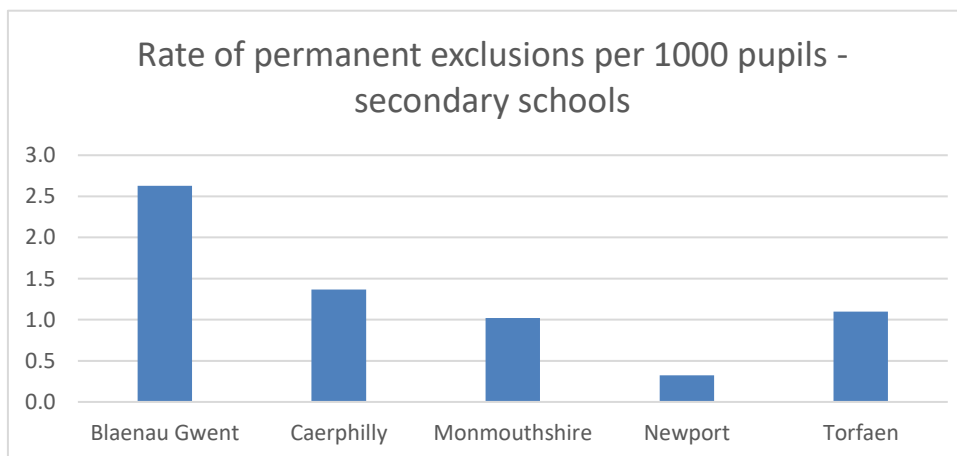
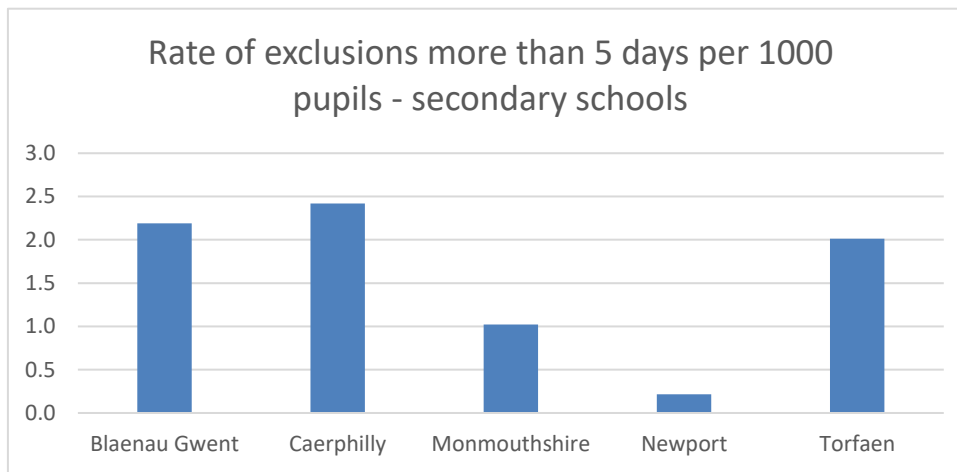
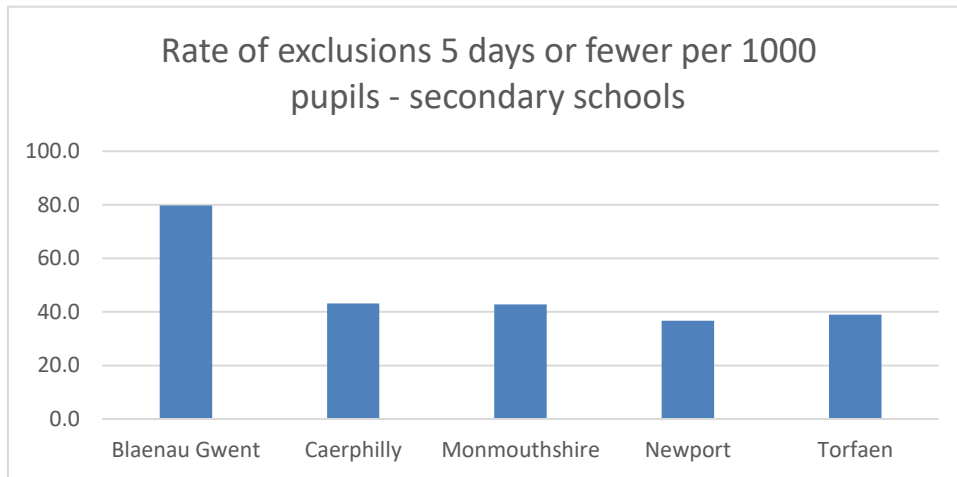
- 5.2 **Risk**
- 5.2.1 There is an ongoing need to minimise exclusions so that pupils are attending school on a regular basis and are able to maximise their potential.
- 5.2.2 Failure to ensure that there is robust monitoring of exclusions in schools and of the quality of Council services to support school improvement carries with it a number of significant risks:
- 5.2.3
- Undetected and unaddressed decline in school performance and the quality of provision
 - Students do not achieve to acceptable levels
 - Lack of overall improvement in schools' performance
 - Negative impact on the reputation of the Council
- 5.2.4 Similarly, ineffective monitoring of Council Services also poses a range of risks including:
- Reducing standards and quality of provision in schools
 - Poor value for money
 - Ineffective support for schools which hinders their improvement
 - Negative impact on the reputation of the Council
- 5.2.5 **Mitigating factors**
There is a need to introduce a number of measures to support schools to reduce exclusions. Please see section, **The Inclusion Service Priorities to Improve Exclusions**
- 5.3 **Legal**
There are no legal implications for this report.
- 5.4 **Human Resources**
There are no human resources implications arising from this report.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 Performance Information and Data
- 6.1.2 **The National Analysis**
The last Welsh Government data published in October 2020, reported on national 2018/19 data and this information has previously been presented to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.1.3 **The SEWC Regional Analysis**
The SEWC regional comparisons are available for the 19/20 academic year as detailed overleaf

6.1.4 Primary Schools



6.1.5 For rate of 6 days or more and 5 days or less Blaenau Gwent was 3/5 (where 1 is the least excluding). The rate of exclusions per 1,000 pupils was 0.2 and 7.2 respectively. There were no primary permanent exclusions in Blaenau Gwent.

6.1.6 Secondary Schools



6.1.7 For rate of 6 days or more Blaenau Gwent was 4/5 and for 5 days or less Blaenau Gwent was 3/5 (where 1 is the least excluding). The rate of exclusions per 1,000 pupils was 2.2 and 79.7 respectively. The rate of secondary permanent exclusions in Blaenau Gwent was also the highest at a rate of 2.6 per 1,000 pupils.

6.1.8 Exclusion - Analysis Over 4 Years

The table below sets out Blaenau Gwent exclusion data for the last four years.

6.1.9 Number of Exclusions:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
KS3 & KS4	464	446	306	160
5 days or less	450	433	295	155
6 days or more	14	13	11	5
FP & KS2	52	68	67	33
5 days or less	52	64	63	33
6 days or more	0	4	4	0
Total	516	514	373	193

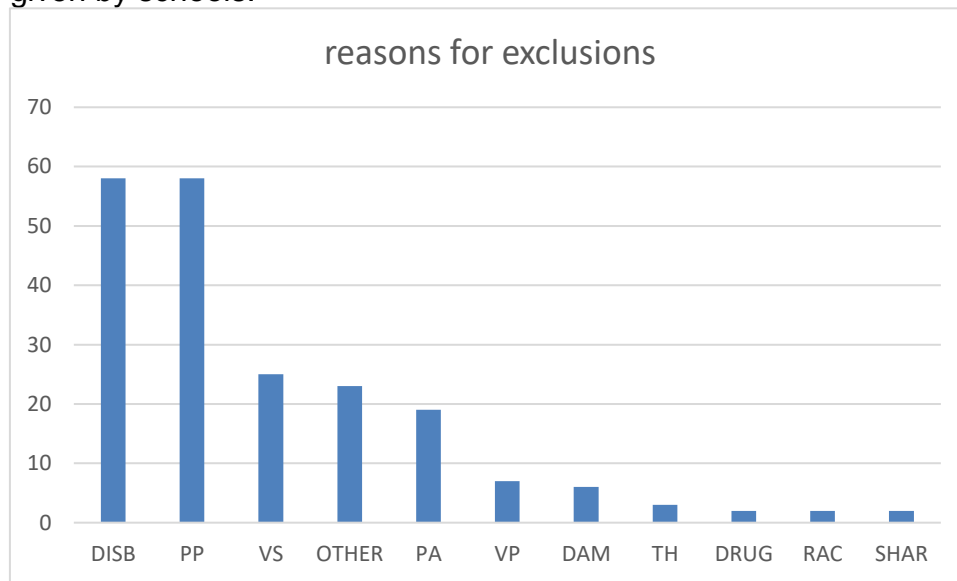
6.1.10 Number of Days:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
KS3 & KS4	872	763	544	259.5
5 days or less	766.5	628.5	430.5	225.5
6 days or more	105.5	134.5	113.5	34
FP & KS2	84.5	225.5	137	47.5
5 days or less	84.5	174.5	111.5	47.5
6 days or more	0	51	25.5	0
Total	956.5	988.5	681	307

6.1.11 Overall, BG have seen a decrease in exclusions in 2020/21 compared to the previous year. However, it is important to note that schools were not open for all pupils between December and March due to the COVID response.

6.1.12 Number of Exclusions by Reason

Below are the reasons given by schools for exclusion. Schools are able to use more than one reason but the data below represents the main reason given by schools.



KEY	
DISB	- Persistent disruptive behaviour
PP	- Physical Assault against pupil
VS	- Verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against an adult
OTHER	- Other
PA	- Physical assault against adult
VP	- Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil
DAM	- Damage
TH	- Theft
DRUG	- Drugs/Alcohol
BUL	- Bullying
RAC	- Racial abuse
SHAR	- Sexual Harassment

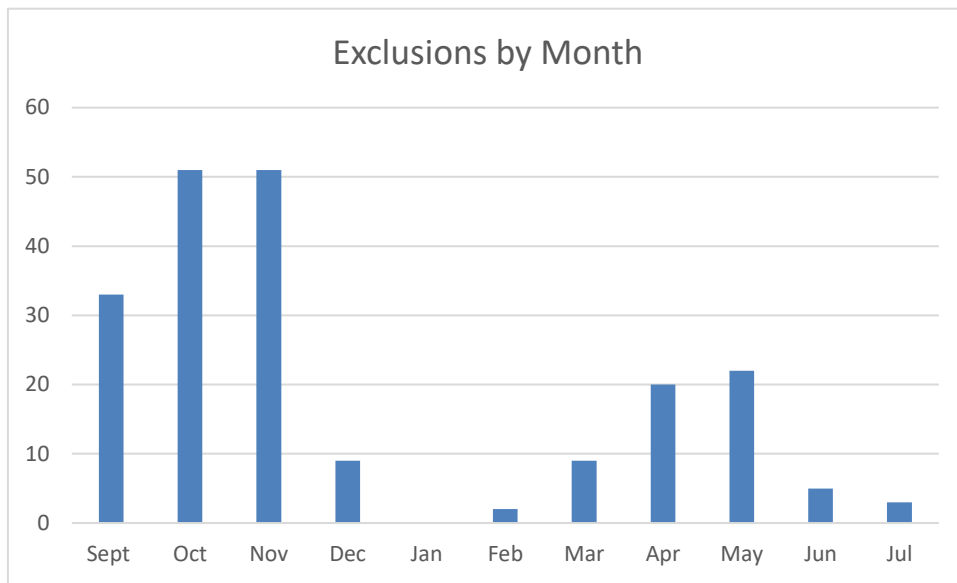
6.1.13 In terms of reasons for exclusion, the main reasons have remained largely unchanged and in line with national trends:

- persistent disruptive behaviour;
- physical assault on a pupil; and,
- verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult.

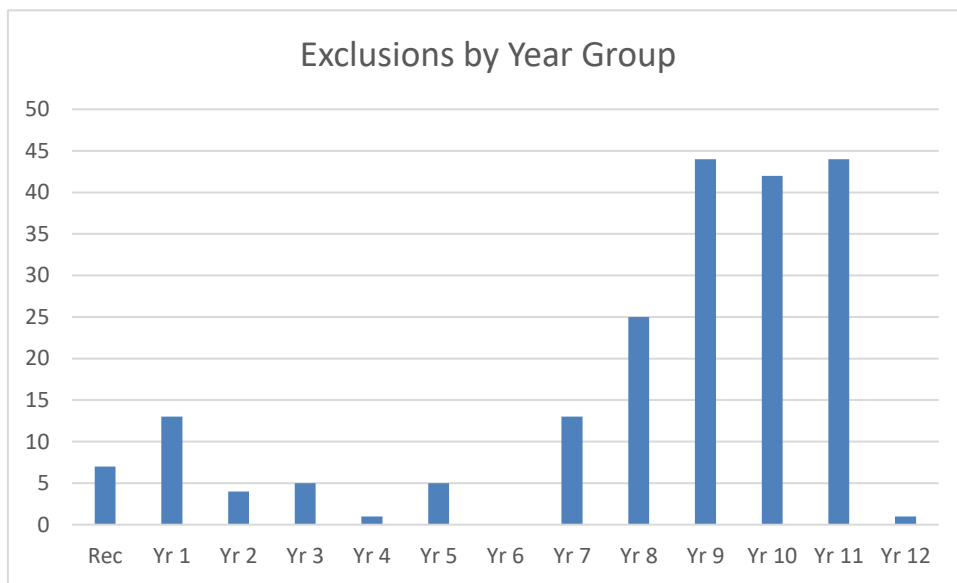
6.1.14 At Primary, the main reason for exclusion was physical assault against a pupil (PP), and accounted for 47% of exclusions.

6.1.15 At Secondary, the main reason for exclusion was persistent disruptive behaviour (DISB), and accounted for 33% of exclusions.

6.1.16 Exclusions by Month



6.1.17 Exclusions by Year Group



6.1.18 Permanent Exclusions

There were a total of six permanent exclusions in 2019/20 compared to three in 2018/19 and nine in 2017/18.

6.1.19 **Evaluation of Data and Processes**

The Inclusion team evaluation has identified the following considerations:

- Exclusions are too high and need to reduce and this has been identified in the Education Directorate's self-evaluation arrangements.
- Monitoring of pupil level exclusion data by all Inclusion teams has improved and is effective, informing EWS work and dialogue with schools.
- A regional approach to exclusions was under development but has not progressed due to COVID
- Joint working with the EAS has improved but requires further development, specifically relating to challenging schools on the use of exclusions.
- There is excellent behaviour management practice in some schools, however, this needs to be shared more readily.
- There is inconsistent use of exclusions across schools, illustrated by the varying rates of exclusions.
- The local authority arrangements for tuition need to be reviewed to ensure they fully meet need and that tuition is in place for all pupils by day 16.

6.1.20 **The Inclusion Service Priorities to Improve Exclusions**

- Developing closer working with the Principal Challenge Advisor and Challenge Advisors through the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Group and Wider Group regarding exclusion concerns in identified schools.
- Sharing data and best practice and including actions to reduce exclusions in school support plans.
- Using resources flexibly to support initiatives that help early intervention or reduce exclusions e.g. Positive Futures School provision.
- Developing regional working as part of the SEWC ALN/Inclusion Action Plan to share good practice and facilitate regional school to school working.
- Reviewing the exclusion guidance in the light of a more pupil focused approach.
- Supporting school to school work to improve the management of behaviour across all schools and share good practice in the appropriate use of exclusions.
- Working with the River Centre to further develop the revolving door approach to support reintegration back into mainstream provision.
- Challenging schools where exclusions are too high.
- Developing a Trauma Informed Schools approach model in schools so that schools can help support pupils as opposed to punitive measures being used

- Attempting to reduce exclusions in the Foundation Phase, especially in line with the Children's Commissioner's report and implement the recommendations in the analysis section.
- Issuing the 'building blocks' toolkit to schools.
- Implementing the recommendations from the Police and Crime Commissioner's report on 'Understanding the Triggers'

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

A reduction in exclusions will result in pupils being able to access more education, which will support them to achieve better outcomes, which also reduces the future financial implications on other services.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

Exclusion data is monitored regularly and forms a part of the evidence base for other teams' work within the Directorate, the EAS and other Services.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

A focus on reducing school exclusions aligns to the Directorate and Corporate Plan. Reduced exclusion levels will have a positive impact on the life chances of children and young people, better preparing them for their future beyond their time in school.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

Reduced exclusion rates reduces the likelihood of a pupil becoming NEET and increases the likelihood of a pupil achieving well and supports pupils to reach their potential.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Reducing exclusions has an increasingly high regional profile and is supported through the work of the EAS. Strong links exist with neighbouring LAs as well as within Blaenau Gwent services such as with Children's Services. Working in partnership with other services is fundamental to providing a co-ordinated, effective service to children and young people as well as schools.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

A focus on exclusion impacts upon key objectives within Education as well as in work with Children's Services.

6.8 **EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**

There are no adverse equality impacts in relation to the data in this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Exclusions are monitored fortnightly. Annual FADEs for exclusions are prepared and data is provided to Welsh Government.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Welsh Government Exclusion Guidance

<https://gov.wales/exclusion-schools-and-pupil-referral-units-pru>

[Permanent and fixed-term exclusions from schools in Wales, 2017/18 \(gov.wales\)](#)

List of Acronyms

EAS: Education Achievement Service

NEET: Young people not in education, employment or training

SEWC: South East Wales Consortium

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Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **19th October 2021**

Report Subject: **Education Planning Obligations - Overview Report**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education
Claire Gardner, Service Manager for Education
Transformation and Business Change**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
29.09.21	30.09.21	07.10.21			19.10.21			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee with an overview Education Planning Obligations and associated processes.

2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 **Background and Context**
 - 2.2 This report has been produced in conjunction with colleagues in the Planning team to respond to a specific request from Scrutiny Members relating to understanding the implications of Section 106 agreements within the context of the school estate. Education infrastructure is an integral part of achieving and maintaining sustainable communities. The Council's future approach to education delivery is guided by the 21st Century Schools Programme (as set out in the 21st Century Schools Strategic Outline Plan), along with Blaenau Gwent's School Organisation Policy (2021).
 - 2.3 New residential developments that are likely to accommodate children (Nursery to Year 11), will create additional demand for places at existing schools, and potentially places pressure upon the delivery of education associated provision. Where a new development generates additional pupil numbers in excess of the existing and/or planned capacity at local schools, the Council will, where appropriate, seek financial support from a developer via planning obligations, in order to mitigate the impact upon the school estate and provide additional capacity in order to create suitable learning environments for additional pupils.
 - 2.4 Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements (in line with section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act), are private agreements between local authorities and developers. The obligations form part of the planning permission, to make an otherwise unacceptable development, acceptable. It is the land which is bound by the Section 106 agreement, rather than the person or organisation who develop it.

- 2.5 A planning obligation for educational facilities **will be sought from new residential development comprising of 10 or more dwellings**, but will only be required where the development is likely to result in the generation of additional pupil numbers in excess of the existing and/or planned capacity at local schools.
- 2.6 The recipient school will usually be the catchment school serving the development. However, there may be circumstances where an alternative school is deemed a more appropriate recipient. For example, it may be more accessible to the development or may better provide the capacity required. The use of the payment will, therefore, be determined on a case by case basis
- 2.7 The methodology for calculating the payment is based upon the anticipated pupil yield of the development, multiplied by the costs per pupil for the provision of the education facility. The Council's yield data is categorised into 'primary' provision (including nursery facilities up to age 11) and 'secondary' provision.
- 2.8 Based upon the 2001 census data, local surveys and school pupil roll data for the County Borough, the pupil yield factors utilised by the Council are:
- 0.30 primary school places per relevant residential unit
 - 0.20 secondary school places per relevant residential unit
- 2.9 The cost of providing additional primary and secondary school places is derived from the Department for Education (DfE) Education Projects Cost and Performance Data.
- 2.10 Obligations for education provision will not be sought for one bedroom residential units, studio flats, sheltered/elderly person housing, care homes, rest homes, nursing homes and student accommodation, on the basis that such developments are unlikely to house school age children. **Affordable Housing development, either as part of a site or forming the whole of the development site, will not be exempt from the requirement.**
- 2.11 School capacity is calculated in accordance with the National Assembly for Wales Circular 09/2006: *Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales* and Welsh Government '*Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance*' (2011). School capacities are determined on an annual basis in the autumn-term. The capacity calculations for each school determine their admission number. Pupil projections are then carried out twice annually at the start of each new year (January), and again at the start of each new academic year (September). These calculations then inform the planning and provision of pupil places, for example, highlighting where schools have surplus places and where they have sufficiency issues.
- 2.12 Residential Land Availability Schedules are provided to the Education Transformation team on an annual basis at the commencement of each academic year. A standard pupil projection forecast is completed along with

a 'planning' projection forecast, the latter of which, details the impact of planning applications that have been granted for housing developments, upon the provision of school places. Projections are carried out to detail pupil place information for each school in Blaenau Gwent over a 5-year period. Where sufficiency issues are identified within the school estate due to housing developments, a Section 106 calculation of education facilities contribution form will be completed, detailing the requirement for the planning obligation i.e. the developer's financial contribution.

- 2.13 Assessment of pupil capacity for each proposed residential development will take into account existing numbers of primary and secondary school pupils in the catchment schools serving the proposed development, together with the planned pupil capacity in those schools.
- 2.14 Surplus places do not necessarily equate to there being excess capacity at the school, as it is generally accepted that schools should not operate at 100% capacity. The Audit Commission reported in their 2002 report, Trading Places that:
 - 2.15 *'it is unrealistic and probably undesirable to aim for a perfect match of pupils and places at each school. Some margin of capacity is necessary to allow parental choice ... Not all unfilled places are surplus'*.
 - 2.16 Furthermore, excess capacity is required to ensure pupil places are available for inward migration into a school catchment area, and to accommodate fluctuations in birth rates.
 - 2.17 Obligations will, in most cases, be in the form a financial sum (Education Facilities Payment) to be paid to the Council at an agreed stage or intervals during the development. The payment would be utilised by the Council to provide the required works to increase the capacity of a specified school, and/or address facilities issues that would enable the school to reconfigure provision in order to accommodate additional pupils.
 - 2.18 In exceptional circumstances, it may be preferable for the obligation to comprise the transfer of land or works by the developer, in lieu of part or all of a financial payment. In these circumstances, the Council's expectation is that the works should be delivered directly by the developer in accordance with details and a specification agreed by the Council. The developer would be required to fund the development of the detailed scheme and carry out the works to the appropriate standard.
 - 2.19 Any transfer of land or works should be accompanied by a commuted sum to enable the Council to undertake the maintenance of the land/facility for a minimum period of 20 years. Any commuted sum will be calculated on a case by case basis.
 - 2.20 An Education Facilities Payment towards the upgrading/ extension of existing educational facilities will be sought, if implementation of the development will result in the generation of additional pupil numbers in excess of the existing

or planned capacity at a local school/schools. The use of the payment will, therefore, be determined on a case by case basis by the Council's Education Directorate in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority, with the objective of achieving optimum pupil capacity.

- 2.21 Education Facilities Payments may be used to increase school capacity by:
- Provision of new classrooms / learning environments
 - Replacement of existing demountable facilities with permanent facilities
 - Improvements and refurbishments to provide additional capacity
 - Provision of additional facilities necessitated by the additional demand
 - The creation of a new school building if warranted, based upon the size of the development

- 2.22 Where a payment is agreed to provide additional capacity and the school in question is then subject to strategic re-organisation, the payment may be transferable to the next closest or most relevant school at the time of construction. where additional capacity is required and can be created to mitigate the impacts of the development. This principle would also apply where a school is closed down on the grounds of poor/substandard accommodation.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 **Option 1:** Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers and accepts the report.

- 3.2 **Option 2:** Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers the report and provides comments relating to implementation of the Education Planning Obligations.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1 Education planning obligations form part of the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP), which is vital to successful delivery of the BG Corporate Plan, along with the BG Wellbeing Plan.

- 4.2 The LDP seeks to ensure that growth is delivered in the right place at the right time, whilst also guiding development in line with the needs of our communities, and in consideration of the environment and ecology.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no direct budget implications associated with this report.

- 5.1.1 Developer contributions are sought in line with the potential for increased pupil numbers, which cannot be met within the existing school capacity.

- 5.1.2 Over the last 3 years, Education has secured 3 developer contributions for 3 primary schools across both the Ebbw Fawr and Tredegar/Sirhowy Valley areas, totalling £152,546. These contributions have and/or will be used to

increase the capacity of both internal and external teaching and learning environments, in order to facilitate increased pupil numbers aligned to each development.

- 5.1.3 Further submissions have been made in line potential developments, which are monitored on a monthly basis.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The primary risk from an Education planning obligation perspective, is threat to viability of housing sites. Developers may indicate that the required contribution makes the development site unviable when considering development costs against the required contribution. In cases such as this, the relevant departments come together to assess viability and associated options, seeking to secure the best outcome for all parties, with the community at the forefront of this process.

- 5.2.1 Regular engagement between both the Education and Planning services supports effective management and mitigation of such risks, as extensive work is undertaken in planning and managing impact. In addition, contributions are identified at an early stage and progressed accordingly, with consideration given to school organisation implications.

5.3 ***Legal***

The Council are required to prepare a Local Development Plan as part of their statutory obligations. The Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) supports effective implementation of the policy set out within the Local Development Plan. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), requires that all planning applications are to be determined in accordance with the LDP.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no direct human resource implications associated with the report, as there are designated functions within the relevant Directorate's, along with officers who are responsible for managing and monitoring this process in accordance with the regulatory and policy framework.

- 5.4.1 The Corporate Directors of both Regeneration & Community Services, and Education, supported by Wider Corporate Leadership Team, will have a key role in ensuring the effective implementation and resourcing in line with effective implementation of the SPG and LDP.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Section 106 developer contributions are recorded on an annual basis via a register which is made publically available. The LDP is currently under review, the process associated with which is likely to span a 2-year period. There is a delivery agreement in place with Welsh Government aligned to completion of this process.

- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
 Effective management of development areas throughout Blaenau Gwent, whilst maximising opportunities for residents, local services and businesses. Affordable housing and Education are seen to be a priority in line with the delivery of the LDP.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
 Stakeholders and end-user needs and engagement are of paramount importance in line with both the development and implementations of the LDP. There are extensive consultation processes involved in the development phase of the LDP and SPG's, in line with Welsh Government's regulatory and policy framework.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
 The purpose of the LDP is to secure long-term developments, whilst also take account of long-term implications, assessed via a sustainability appraisal process.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
 The LDP seeks to protect against loss of ecology and green spaces, and protect against inappropriate development. In addition, Education planning obligations seek to secure a sustainable education system within Blaenau Gwent, which is able to support growth and development within the local area.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
 Education, Planning and Housing teams work closely together to plan, monitor and review planning obligations on a monthly basis. Education are a key partner involved in reviewing the LDP.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
 The LDP and associated planning obligations, impact upon Education, schools, Highways, Housing, Economic Development and Community Services, therefore, service area involvement is key to effective implementation and management of the LDP and associated planning obligations.
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
 This is a key focus of both Education Facilities management and School Organisation functions and processes. Any physical works undertaken within a school setting are subject to a decarbonisation assessment. In addition, there is a Decarbonisation and Climate Change Policy within the preferred strategy of the replacement LDP
- 6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***
 N/A
- 6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***
 N/A

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Education, Housing and Planning officers meet on a monthly basis in order to monitor the impact of developments upon schools and education delivery, whilst also ensuring that developments can progress to the benefit of the community.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

N/A

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Agenda Item 10

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **19th October 2021**
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 30th November 2021**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member Education**
Report Submitted by: **Cllr Haydn Trollope, Chair of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	07.10.21			19.10.21			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 30th November 2021 for discussion and agreement.

2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's revised Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
 - 2.4 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in June 2021, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
 - 2.5 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 30th November 2021, and
 - Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;

- Suggest any additional invitees that the committee requires to fully consider the reports; and
- Request any additional information to be included with regards to the topics to be discussed.

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting 30th November 2021, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 30th November 2021

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

Date	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Executive / Council
<p>Meeting: Tuesday 30th November 2021</p> <p>Deadline: Tuesday 16th November 2021</p>	1. Pupil Attendance	Performance Monitoring Members to review the pupil attendance performance of Blaenau Gwent's schools and monitor the associated outcomes, whilst recognising how this monitoring can inform key strategic priorities.	Luisa Munro-Morris / Lisa Adams	Executive
	2. Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Monitoring existing plan and draft 10-year plan <i>Please note the report and Plan will need to be translated to Welsh by the Directorate.</i>	Pre-Decision To provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise performance against the Education Directorate's current WESP (2012 -20). In addition, Members will have the opportunity to scrutinise the draft BG 10-year WESP, prior to Executive Committee approval and submission to WG in January 2022.	Claire Gardner	Executive 15.12.21
	3. Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate 2020/21	Performance Monitoring To provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the management of pupil places and the school estate throughout the 2020/21 academic session.	Claire Gardner	Executive 15.12.21
	4. Education Directorate End of Year 2021 report	Performance Monitoring To provide Members with the first annual strategic overview report from the Corporate Director on progress made and key areas for future development.	Lynn Phillips	Executive 15.12.21

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