

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 25TH OCTOBER, 2019**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

Councillors: J. Millard
D. Bevan
M. Cook
L. Elias
W. Hodgins
C. Meredith
J.C. Morgan
K. Rowson
T. Smith
B. Summers
S. Thomas

Co-opted Members

T. Baxter
A. Williams

AND: Corporate Director of Education
Head of Education Transformation
Strategic Education Improvement Manager
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ALSO: Ed Pryce, Assistant Director - Strategy and Policy (EAS)
Ms C. Leaves, Headteacher Tredegar
Comprehensive School
Mr L. Perrett, Tredegar Comprehensive School

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
	<u>ANNOUNCEMENTS</u>	
	The Director of Education announced the appointment of Meryl Echeverry as the new Head of Abertillery Learning	

	<p>Community.</p> <p>Councillor Wayne Hodgins congratulated Aspire Blaenau Gwent on achieving the Large Employer of the Year Award at the Apprenticeship Cymru Awards 2019.</p> <p>The Chair and Scrutiny Members extended their congratulations and requested that appropriate letters be forwarded.</p>	Scrutiny Officer
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.A. Davies, J. Holt and K. Pritchard.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 11th September, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 11th September, 2019 was submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET FOR THE EDUCATION</u></p>	

	<p><u>& LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: END OF FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2, KEY STAGE 3 , KEY STAGE 4 (PROVISIONAL)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Strategic Education Improvement Manager which was presented to provide Members with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an update on the agreed reporting arrangements in light of the accountability reforms that are occurring at a national level; and • performance monitoring information in line with agreed reporting arrangements for statutory, end of key stage teacher assessment for 2018/19 for end of foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (provisional) at local Authority level and hence opportunity to provide feedback on processes to secure ongoing improvement. <p>The EAS representative presented the report and detailed the main points contained therein. The format of the report had been agreed by the five regional Directors of Education in the South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) and the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to ensure consistency of reporting and was in line with the national reform agenda.</p> <p>A Member raised concerns around the new reporting arrangements. The EAS representative said that any feedback from Members on what information was required would be considered for potential inclusion in reporting.</p> <p>With regard to individual pupil performance data, the Director of Education said that with the removal of the high stakes accountability, the broader school performance could be scrutinised as this would not involve scrutiny of individual pupil performance data. There would be other arenas where pupil performance discussions on continual</p>	

improvement could take place, e.g. Member briefing sessions.

A Member commented that the regional overview of performance of the new interim measures was easy to understand and gave Members relevant information.

The EAS representative informed Members that in paragraph 6.2.3 – all headline measures were interim.

In response to a Member's question regarding individual School Development Plans, the Director of Education said that schools would be addressing the data in their individual Development Plans and would focus on improving the right things. A professional panel would look at the School Development Plans to ensure they were tailored and bespoke to the individual school.

A Member commented that in relation to the arrangements that would remain and the documents produced for the Governing bodies, the School Development Plans hold schools to account on Members behalf. Schools were undergoing major changes and needed to re-imagine how education was being delivered. Feedback had been received from staff who were excited about the changes with schools moving in the right direction. One school in particular needed extra support, the Member felt that there needed to be involvement from Executive and Scrutiny Members on reinventing education in Blaenau Gwent with schools and Governing bodies also playing their part.

The Director of Education commented on strengthening the role of the Governing body, performance reporting and individual data that was available to Members.

The EAS representative pointed out that primary school data training for Governors would be available.

A Member referred to Governors and the accountability reforms and felt that cluster training to provide adequate challenge should be arranged. The EAS representative said that if schools required cluster training this could be provided on request.

A Member enquired regarding performance data for home

educated pupils. The Director of Education explained the limitations to the extent that this data could be assured, home educated pupils sat qualifications but the number of home visits were limited and further work needed to be undertaken in this area.

A Member commented that pupils needed a steady environment to encourage learning for their future and not continual change. He felt that some skills were only available in colleges and not in schools.

The EAS representative referred to the national picture and the policy change decision by the Welsh Government. There had been concerns regarding the quality of BTec qualifications and stressed the most able learners would continue on. Only the way schools were supported would change to support continual development. There was one Science Advisor in place and the strongest science departments would support other schools.

The Director of Education commented that over the next 10 years £100m from the Welsh Government had been promised for Science and technology. The role of the Member Strategic Board was to make links closer to schools to better support youngsters and felt encouraged regarding the work to improve sciences.

A Member commented that it was pleasing to note the level of progress made by pupils and enquired how these rates of performance could be measured and presented to scrutiny. The Director of Education said that there was a National Register of Elected Home Educated pupils which contained the reasons why parents had selected home education.

The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinised the revised policy and contributed to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Councillors Wayne Hodgins, Clive Meredith, Bob Summers and Martin Cook left the meeting at this juncture.

No. 8

**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 6TH NOVEMBER
AND 4TH DECEMBER, 2019**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair raised concerns regarding the Annual National Performance Information contained in the Information Pack and requested that a Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting be held to consider the item.

A Member suggested that reports on the Information Packs be included on the web site in future. The Director of Education said that it was important that Information Pack reports be included on the web site for external Regulators to view the information.

Another Member suggested that the Executive Member for Education and EAS representatives be invited to the next meeting to secure ongoing improvement and continue to move Education forward.

The Committee AGREED this course of action.

In response to a Member's question regarding membership of sub groups, the Strategic Education Improvement Manager said that memberships of sub groups could be updated to ensure equal representation.

A Member requested a report on literacy and numeracy figures. The Director of Education said that as part of the accountability reform national test scores data was not available.

The Committee FURTHER AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meetings on 6th November and 4th December, 2019 be approved.