

DRAFT AGENDA

ID	2196
Committee	Pwllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu
Date	15/09/2020
Attendees	<p>Cynghorwyr Haydn Trollope (Cadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Julie Holt (Is-gadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Derrick Bevan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Garth Collier (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Martin Cook (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Malcolm Day (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr D. Lyn Elias (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Wayne Hodgins (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Clive Meredith (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr John C. Morgan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorydd John P. Morgan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Lee Parsons (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Bob Summers (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Tommy Smith (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Stephen Thomas (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Mr. Tim Baxter (Co-Optee)</p> <p>Mr. Alun Williams (Co-Optee)</p> <p>Lynn Phillips (Swyddog)</p> <p>Gavin Metheringham (Swyddog)</p> <p>Gemma Wasley (Swyddog)</p> <p>Michelle Jones (Swyddog)</p> <p>Liz Thomas (Swyddog)</p> <p>Gwasanaethau Democraidd (Notify)</p> <p>Leeann Turner (Secretary)</p> <p>Pob Cynghorydd (Notify)</p> <p>Louise Bishop (Notify)</p> <p>Sean Scannell (Notify)</p> <p>Anne-Louise Clark (Notify)</p> <p>Richard Crook (Notify)</p> <p>Rhian Hayden (Notify)</p> <p>Damien McCann (Notify)</p> <p>Michelle Morris (Notify)</p> <p>Steve Berry (Swyddog)</p> <p>Andrea Jones (Swyddog)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Joanne Collins (Notify)</p>
Item ID	2571
Item Title	Cyfieithu ar y Pryd
Summary	Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o rybudd os dymunwch wneud

	hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais.
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Item ID	2572
Item Title	Ymddiheuriadau
Summary	Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

Item ID	2573
Item Title	Datganiadau Buddiant a Goddefebau
Summary	Ystyried unrhyw ddatganiadau buddiant a goddefebau a wnaed.

Item ID	2574
Item Title	Cofnodion Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu
Summary	Derbyn cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu a gynhaliwyd ar 26 Chwefror 2020. (Dylid nodi y cyflwynir y Cofnodion ar gyfer pwyntiau cywirdeb yn unig).

Item ID	2656
Item Title	Dalen Weithredu – 26 Chwefror 2020
Summary	Derbyn y ddalen weithredu.

Item ID	2576
Item Title	Amser Cyfarfodydd y Dyfodol
Summary	Ystyried amser cyfarfodydd y dyfodol.

Item ID	2657
Item Title	Blaenraglen Waith Arfaethedig y Pwyllgor Craffu 2020/21
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu

Item ID	2658
Item Title	Polisi Cludiant Rhwng y Cartref a'r Ysgol ac Ôl-16 2021/22: Cymeradwyo a Chyhoeddi (erbyn 1 Hydref 2020)

Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Trawsnewid Addysg.
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Item ID	2659
Item Title	Blaenau Gwent – Cytundeb Partneriaeth Ôl-16
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Gwasanaeth Ieuencid.

Item ID	2660
Item Title	Gwasanaethau Addysg Blaenau Gwent DRAFFT Canfyddiadau Hunanarfarnu
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Interim Addysg.

Item ID	2661
Item Title	Polisi Diwygiedig Llywodraethwyr Awdurdod Lleol
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Gwella Addysg Strategol.

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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 – 26TH FEBRUARY, 2020

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

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

Co-opted Member

A. Williams

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

ALSO: EAS Representatives
Ed Pryce, EAS
Sarah Davies, Principal Challenge 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>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G.A. Davies.</p> <p><u>Co-opted Member</u> T. Baxter</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 15th January, 2020 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 15TH JANUARY, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 15th January, 2020 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Item 5 – Action Sheet – 4th December 2019</u></p> <p>Improving Schools Programme - A Member again raised concerns that all Members had not received the correspondence from the Executive Member for Education in relation to a meeting in a Blaenau Gwent School. The Chair confirmed that he had spoken to the Head of Democratic Services who had clarified why the Action had been completed and a letter from the Executive Member</p>	

would be sent to the Leader of the Labour Group to address this issue.

The Leader of the Labour Group confirmed he had received a letter from the Executive Member for Education which had addressed the Labour Groups concerns, however, he felt it was not appropriate to share the private correspondence with the Committee.

The Chair advised Members that he would enquire if the correspondence from the Executive Member to the Leader of the Labour Group could be shared with all Members of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee AGREED this course of action.

Item 7 – Pupil Exclusions

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Education clarified that some exclusions did carry on from key stage 3 through to key stage 4 and could potentially be the same pupil.

Forward Work Programme – 26th February, 2020

A Member referred to the Forward Work Programme for 26th February, 2020 and the request for the EAS to prepare a six month update on projected results for all schools so that Members could be kept fully informed and enquired regarding a timeframe.

The EAS representative said that key stage 4 target setting had significantly changed since level 1. Secondary schools no longer had to set prescribed targets, they could be bespoke to specific cohorts, Challenge Advisors would monitor this, however, it would be very difficult to aggregate this in a meaningful way, currently there was a period of flux and it was impossible to predict a timeframe.

The Member referred to categorisation points and said that the Welsh Government had made many changes to education over the last 8 years and Members needed to be kept fully informed. The EAS representative responded that as there had been a long period of change a Members workshop could be arranged. The Director of Education

	<p>said there would be interim measures in place for the next three years and the Directorate were supporting teachers as best they could by relaying messages regarding curriculum changes and associated reforms.</p> <p>The Chair requested that a Members briefing session be arranged with the EAS.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	<p>EAS Representative</p>
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>EAS BUSINESS PLAN AND LOCAL AUTHORITY ANNEX 2020-2021 (DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education which was presented for Members to consider the full contents of the draft EAS Business Plan 2020-2021 and the Local Authority Annex 2020-2021, as part of the regional consultation process.</p> <p>The EAS representative presented the report and highlighted the main points contained therein, including that the EAS Improvement Strand 3 – Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability mechanisms, supporting a self-improvement system could be covered in more detail in a Members briefing session.</p> <p>A Member requested a breakdown on the numbers of challenge advisors for both primary and secondary schools and enquired regarding timescales for staff with capability issues to show improvements of results. The EAS representative said that a breakdown of Challenge Advisors would be provided. The EAS were not the sole provider of support to schools, but their emphasis was on the quality of that support and brokering the right support to match the school. Ultimately capability issues were for the Governing Body to determine.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>The Director of Education commented that capability procedures were in place and were based on individual cases with an appropriate supportive approach for members of staff to continue to improve. It was evidence based in line with policy and Organisational Development</p>	<p>EAS representative</p>

procedures. The Member felt that a timescale for improvement should be in place with the EAS and Governing Bodies both involved to ensure improvements were made.

A Member commented that secondary schools needed specialist Challenge Advisors. The changes this year had been important and focused on the School Development Plan and moving towards improving targets. School to school working needed to be effective to help drive curriculum changes forward and enquired if all schools were taking part in school to school working. The Challenge Advisor said there had been a cultural change regarding school to school working, whereby a whole school wraps around another school as a model with Challenge Advisors support. There had been significant improvement in which schools had put themselves forward to engage as Learning Network schools and to encourage other schools to engage.

Councillor Wayne Hodgins left the meeting at this juncture.

In response to a Member's concern in relation to succession planning within the broader leadership team, the EAS representative assured Members that this was a general comment and not aimed at Blaenau Gwent. There was a strong working relationship with the Local Authority and Blaenau Gwent was proactive in its intervention with schools.

A Member referred to a Network meeting and said that Governors needed a greater understanding of issues. The EAS representative said there had been additional meetings focussing on a new model due next year. Schools had expressed an interest in the cluster model and the EAS would provide the training models. Two clusters from Blaenau Gwent had applied for this model and would be informed if they had been successful in due course. A Member said that the Tredegar cluster was unaware of this. The EAS representative said that notification had been forwarded to the Chair of Governors and Head Teachers. He commented that sometimes the detail could be lost in the volume of communication received.

	<p>A Member referred to the Business Plan and enquired what the impact would be if one authority pulled out. The EAS responded that the five authorities recognised the financial efficiencies of working collectively. If this scenario came about the EAS Financial Director would have to address the issue. The Director of Education commented that Blaenau Gwent would find it difficult not working collectively with other local authorities.</p> <p>A Member referred to retaining a high bar for the identification of those who can provide support for other schools and had concerns on the impact this would have on the school staff had been seconded from. The EAS representative said that in relation to capacity of schools the Governing Bodies would decide if staff could be seconded to provide support to other schools. If a school wanted to withdraw from this process, then another school could be found in order to broker the best candidate.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the report and Business Plan be accepted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT EDUCATION SERVICES DRAFT SELF-EVALUATION FINDINGS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education which was presented to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the findings of ongoing self-evaluation processes undertaken in the Education Directorate, with partners and across the Council.</p> <p>The Director of Education spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>Members referred to Appendix 1 and the pupil well-being slide and requested if there was any evaluation on impact to support the statements. The Director of Education said a whole wealth of information was captured combined with anonymised case studies in relation to the school counselling services. The Youth Services Manager commented that wellbeing had improved and this information was provided in annual reports to the Welsh Government and in FADES, however, exclusion data could</p>	

	<p>was in place for those individual pupils who needed additional support. There was commitment from Head Teachers to work with the Department to identify pupils on the cusp of becoming EHE.</p> <p>A Member enquired if parents opted for EHE to avoid heavy fines for non-attendance at school and requested a Members briefing session be held on school attendance. The Member briefing session would include information on the total number of fines issued to parents.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely that the report as presented be accepted.</p>	Education Welfare Officer
No. 8	<p><u>SCHOOL CATEGORISATION</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education which was presented to inform Scrutiny Members of the Blaenau Gwent school categorisation profile for 2020.</p> <p>The Strategic Education Improvement Manager spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>At the request of the Chair the EAS representative gave a brief explanation of Steps 1, 2 and 3.</p> <p>Step 1 – Redundant / no longer used Step 2 – Leadership Step 3 – Schools requiring support with training and leadership</p> <p>A Member commented that parents needed to be reminded that a school with a red categorisation was not a failing school but needed support in relation to changes in leadership etc. The EAS representative explained that it was important that School Governors inform the community regarding the level of support a school required.</p> <p>A Member referred to schools where there had been a change of leadership but no improvements had yet been</p>	

	<p>seen. The EAS representative confirmed that schools with an Estyn categorisation would need to have red level categorisation of support in relation to changes in leadership.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2, namely that the report as provided be accepted.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>FINAL PERFORMANCE KEY STAGE 4 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education and the Strategic Education Improvement Manager which was presented to provide Members with an update on the final performance information in line with agreed reporting arrangements for Key Stage 4 performance at Local Authority level.</p> <p>The Director of Education spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member referred to the contribution of non GCSE subjects. The EAS representative commented that Head Teachers took the opportunity to have the best points, it was a balance of the two; GCSE and non GCSE.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the report as provided be accepted.</p> <p>Councillor Steve Thomas left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>INSPIRE 2 ACHIEVE AND WORK PERFORMANCE REPORT JANUARY–DECEMBER 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Youth Service Manager which was presented to provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the local Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).</p> <p>The Youth Services Manager spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p>	

	<p>In response to a Member’s question regarding young people supported into employment, the Youth Services Manager said that the team followed up on young people supported into employment and the young people mentioned in the report were currently still in employment.</p> <p>A Member raised concerns that the Department was heavily dependent on grant funding and enquired regarding funding at the end of the programme in 2022. European funding would no longer be available and the Council budget would need to be looked at going forward as not all funding was passported into the schools budgets. The Member requested that the Executive Committee consider budget implications.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>The Chair commented that as funding was due to end in 2022 there was a risk that staff would seek other employment. The Youth Services Manager responded that staff were committed to their role and were used to working in grant funded settings, however, this may be an issue in the last year of funding.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinised the information detailed within the report and contributed by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.</p>	
<p>No. 11</p>	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT EDUCATION ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR NURSERY AND STATUTORY EDUCATION 2021/22</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Education Transformation Manager which was presented to outline the outcome of the annual review and consultation process associated with the Blaenau Gwent Admission Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education.</p> <p>The Education Transformation Manager spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p>	

	<p>In response to a Member's question regarding catchment areas and capacity at Pen-y-Cwm Special School, the Head of Education Transformation reported that currently there were no specific catchment areas for Special Schools, however, it was intended to bring a report forward on the capacity at Pen-y-Cwm school and the report was scheduled into the Forward Work Programme for spring / summer 2020.</p> <p>The Chair commented that consistent implementation of the Admissions Policy was key to successful delivery.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the policy document be accepted.</p>	<p>Head of Education Transformation/ Scrutiny Officer</p>
<p>No. 12</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 29TH APRIL, 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Members agreed that a Special Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee meeting would be arranged for early April, 2020.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting on 29th April, 2020 be approved.</p>	

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 26th February 2020

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
4	<p><u>Minutes of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee – 15th January 2020</u></p> <p>Item 10: Forward Work Programme A Member noted the request for a six-month update on projected results for all schools be added to the Forward Work Programme and a timeline to be provided.</p>	Lynette Jones / Ed Pryce (EAS) / Democratic Team	A Member Briefing Session to be arranged with the EAS. Date to be provided.
5	<p><u>Action Sheet – 15th January 2020</u></p> <p>Re: Executive Member’s response to Councillor Steve Thomas in relation to a meeting at a Blaenau Gwent school – Chair to seek Executive Member’s permission to share response with the Committee.</p>	Chair / Executive Member / Scrutiny and Democratic Officer	Response attached.
6	<p><u>EAS Business Plan and Local Authority Annex 2020-2021</u></p> <p>A Member requested a breakdown on the number of Challenge Adviser in primary and secondary schools.</p>	Ed Pryce, EAS	<p>Current Challenge Adviser allocation:</p> <p>2 Secondary Schools – 2 Secondary Challenge Advisers 2 All through Schools – 1 Secondary / 1 Primary Challenge Adviser 2 Special Schools - 1 Special School Challenge Adviser 19 Primary Schools - 8 different Primary Challenge Advisers</p>

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
7	<p><u>Blaenau Gwent Education Services Draft Self-Evaluation Findings</u></p> <p>Members referred to Appendix 1 and the pupil well-being slide and requested if there was any evaluation on impact to support the statements.</p> <p>School Attendance – A Member Briefing Session was requested, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of pupils taken out of school during term time for holidays; • number of fines issued to parents; • number of parents opting to home educate children to avoid receiving a fine; • understanding the attendance codes. 	<p>Joanne Sims</p> <p>Gavin Metheringham / Lisa Adams</p>	<p>Counselling data information report to be shared with Members.</p> <p>Member Briefing session to be arranged as part of the Forward Work Programme 2020/21.</p>

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee

Action Sheet – 15th January 2020:

Re: Executive Member's response to Councillor Steve Thomas in relation to a meeting at a Blaenau Gwent school – Chair to seek Executive Member's permission to share response with the Committee.

Response:

From: "Stephen.Thomas@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk" <Stephen.Thomas@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk>

Date: Wednesday, 22 January 2020 at 09:21

To: Steve Thomas <steve.thomas58@outlook.com>

Subject: FW: Scrutiny Action Request

Dear Steve.

I am contacting you to address the issue raised in the December Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee regarding a memo I sent in advance of a Group meeting some 7 months ago. As you will no doubt be aware, I had only taken on the role of Executive Member a couple of weeks before the memo was sent, and with hindsight I accept that there is no reason why all members should not have been made aware of the date of an upcoming ESTYN monitoring visit and will endeavour to keep all members informed as appropriate moving forward; as was evident from the all member briefing session which was held before Christmas regarding Brynmawr Foundation School.

I trust that this now settles the matter.

Regards

Councillor Joanne Collins

**Executive Member for Education / Llanhilleth Ward
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
07976922478**

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Agenda Item 7

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: **15th September 2020**

Report Subject: **Proposed Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2020-21**

Portfolio Holder: **Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Councillor Haydn Trollope, Chair of 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)
July 2020	July 2020	01.09.20			15.09.20	Executive FWP – 02.09.20	Council FWP – 24.9.20	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the Education and Learning Scrutiny Work Programme for 2020-21 (Appendix 1) and to seek approval from Committee.

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 recently revised Corporate Plan, agreed by the Council on 23rd July 2020, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
- 2.3 The Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programmes are also aligned to the Audit Committee, Executive Committee and Council Forward Work Programmes.
- 2.4 The Work Programme is a fluid document and there is flexibility to allow for regular review between the Chair and the Committee.
- 2.5 Informal Scrutiny Briefing Sessions were held in July 2020, in order for all Scrutiny Members to contribute to the Forward Work Programmes, prior to formal approval of the Forward Work Programmes at the first Scrutiny Committees in September 2020.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The work programmes have been endorsed by the relevant departments of the Council.
- 3.2 The work programmes have been considered and endorsed by the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny.

3.3 **Option 1**

To agree the Forward Work Programme for the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

Option 2

To suggest any amendments prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme.

DRAFT Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee FWP

Date / Deadlines	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Executive / Council
Tuesday 15th September 2020 Deadline: 28 th August 2020	1. Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy To be published by 1st October	Pre-Decision To consult with Members on the draft Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy for 2021/22.	Claire Gardner	Executive
	2. Post 16 Partnership Agreement	Performance Monitoring Members to consider the new Post 16 arrangements including Partnership Agreement and the establishment of a Partnership Board.	Joanne Sims	Executive
	3. Final Self-Evaluation Report <i>(to include an appendix of the Directorate Improvement Plan)</i>	Performance Monitoring To ensure that Members contribute to the development of the self-evaluation report for Local Government Education Services.	Lynn Phillips / Michelle Jones	Executive Information
	4. LA Governor Policy	Pre-Decision To consider the LA Governor Policy.	Michelle Jones	Executive
	Estyn Summary of School Inspection Outcomes (Cwm Primary School)	<u>Information Only</u> To provide an update on any inspection report outcomes, monitoring visits during this period.	Michelle Jones	Executive Information

DRAFT Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee FWP

Date / Deadlines	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Executive / Council
Tuesday 3rd November 2020 Deadline: 16 th October 2020	1. Provisional School Performance	Performance Monitoring To provide a summary of performance in line with accountability changes to ensure that children and young people are provided with the best start in life. (FP/KS2/KS3 and KS4).	Michelle Jones	Executive Information
	2. Outcome of Strategic Review on Leisure Services	Performance Development To outline the outcome of the review and proposals on the monitoring of Aneurin Leisure Trust in the future.	Lynn Phillips	Executive
	3. Response to COVID-19	Progress Update Members to be informed of the response undertaken by Education to the COVID-19 pandemic.	Lynn Phillips <i>Invitee:</i> Headteachers	Executive

DRAFT Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee FWP

Provisional Date / Deadlines	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Executive / Council
<p>Tuesday 15th December 2020</p> <p>Deadline: 27th November 2020</p>	<p>1. Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Monitoring and the Development of 10 Year WESP Plan.</p> <p><i>Please note the report and Plan will need to be translated to Welsh by the Directorate.</i></p>	<p>Performance Monitoring / Development Members to review the performance of the Council and monitor the associated outcomes, whilst recognising how this monitoring can inform key strategic priorities and a new 10 year WESP.</p>	Claire Gardner	Executive
	<p>2. Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate 2019/20</p>	<p>Performance Monitoring To provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the management of pupil places and the school estate, throughout the 2019/20 academic session.</p>	Claire Gardner	Executive Information
	<p>3. Progress on ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity in Schools</p>	<p>Progress Update To provide Members with an update on the roll out of the ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity project across the school estate.</p>	Lynn Phillips	Executive Information
	<p>4. Improving Schools</p>	<p>Performance Monitoring To provide Members with an update on any inspection report findings and progress within schools which are subject to Council.</p>	Michelle Jones	Executive

DRAFT Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee FWP

Date / Deadlines	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Executive / Council
Tuesday 26th January 2021 Deadline: 8 th January 2021	1. Youth Service Performance	Performance Monitoring To provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise and monitor the performance and impact of the Youth Service comparing with the latest Welsh Government benchmarking data.	Joanne Sims	Executive Information
	2. Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act Readiness	Performance Monitoring To provide Members with an update on the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018), the implications and the progress we are making in terms of readiness for September 2021.	Gavin Metheringham	Executive
	3. 21 st Century Schools Programme Bands A / B Gateway Review Outcome	Performance Monitoring To provide Members with an update on the closure of the 21 st Century Schools Band A programme and the progress made on the Band B programme.	Claire Gardner	Executive Information

DRAFT Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee FWP

Date / Deadlines	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Executive / Council
Tuesday 9th March 2021 Deadline: 19 th February 2021	1. School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education Statutory deadline for the policy to be published by 15th April	Pre-Decision Members to provide their views and comments on the policy, and propose any relevant changes, additions etc. prior to Executive Committee approval.	Claire Gardner	Executive meeting date 14 th April
	2. Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2021/22 <i>Report to include progress on the 2020/21 plan and the VFM report</i>	Pre-Decision To consult Members on the EAS Business Plan for 2021/22 and consider options for 2022 onwards.	Lynn Phillips / Michelle Jones	Executive
	3. Inspire to Achieve / Work Performance	Performance Monitoring Members to consider and monitor the performance in line with targets and spend.	Joanne Sims	Executive Info Item
	4. Final School Performance	Performance Monitoring To provide Members with a summary of performance in line with accountability changes to ensure that children and young people are provided with the best start in life (KS4 final).	Lynn Phillips / Michelle Jones	Executive

DRAFT Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee FWP

Date / Deadlines	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Executive / Council
Tuesday 20th April 2020 Deadline: 2 nd April 2021	1. School Organisation Policy (2021-2024)	Pre-Decision To engage Members in the development of the Blaenau Gwent School Organisation Policy 2021-2024.	Lynn Phillips	Executive
	2. Self-evaluation (SE)	Performance Monitoring Members to contribute to the development of the SE report for LGES and to determine the actions arising from the SER are appropriate and aligned to the service needs for children and young people.	Lynn Phillips	Executive info item
	3. Education Accessibility Strategy	Pre-Decision To consult with Members on the draft Education Accessibility Strategy 2021-2024.	Claire Gardner	Executive

DRAFT Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee FWP

Date / Deadlines	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Executive / Council
Programme of monitoring to be agreed	Aneurin Leisure Trust Performance Monitoring	Performance Monitoring Members to consider the content of the six monthly performance report and to influence areas of focus.	Lynn Phillips <i>Invitee: ALT</i>	Executive
To be confirmed	Welsh Medium Primary Seedling Proposal-Formal Consultation <i>Please note the report and Plan will need to be translated to Welsh by the Directorate.</i>	Consultation To consult with Scrutiny Committee (statutory consultees) on the Welsh medium primary proposal.	Claire Gardner	Executive
To be confirmed	Pen-y-Cwm Capacity Review-Formal Consultation	Consultation To consult with Scrutiny Committee (statutory consultees) on the Pen-y-Cwm capacity proposal.	Claire Gardner	Executive
To be confirmed	Improving Schools	Performance Monitoring To provide Members with an update on any inspection report findings and progress within schools which are subject to Council.	Michelle Jones	Executive info item
To be confirmed	Out of County Placements	Information Only To provide an update to Members.	Gavin Metheringham	
To be confirmed	Elective Home Education	Information Only To provide an update to Members.	Gavin Metheringham	

DRAFT Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee FWP

Date / Deadlines	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Executive / Council
To be confirmed	Helping Elected Members Get to Know Our Schools	Working Group To seek nominations for the Working Group,	Michelle Jones	
To be confirmed	Progress on the Vision for Education	<u>Information Only</u> To provide an update to Members.	Lynn Phillips	
To be confirmed	Interim Staffing Arrangements for the Education Directorate Management Team	<u>Information Only</u> To provide information to Members on the Interim Arrangements.	Lynn Phillips	

Agenda Item 8

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: **15th September 2020**

Report Subject: **Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy 2021/22: Approval and Publication (by October 1st 2020)**

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

Report Submitted by: **Education Transformation Manager – 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)
20.08.20	27.8.20	01.09.20			15.9.20	16.09.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the views of Scrutiny Members in relation to the review of the Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy for the 2021/22 academic session. The Council is required to adopt and publish the policy document by October 1st 2020.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Councils have a duty to publish their home to school and post 16 transport policies in accordance with section 12(5) of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (“the Measure”), and the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 (the “Regulations”). The Council’s policy must be made available by the 1st October proceeding the academic year to which the policy relates. Under the Regulations and the Welsh Government’s Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 (the “Guidance”) the information must be made available:
- 2.2
- on the Council’s website;
 - to parents on request;
 - public libraries; and,
 - distributed to parents of pupils who are in the final year of school and may transfer to another school or educational establishment.
- 2.3 The current policy was published on 1st October 2019 and will come into effect as of September 2020. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is more generous in respect of home to school transport entitlement than the Welsh Government statutory limits. The Council also offer a non-statutory travel grant for post 16 learners of £150.
- 2.4 The policy has been reviewed by the Education Transformation, Inclusion and Transport teams, along with Children’s Services (please refer to

Appendix 1 for the revised draft document). The following minor additions have been proposed and are noted in red within the appended policy document:

- The date has been amended to reflect the academic year to which the policy applies (the academic year proceeding the year within which the policy is published).
- Section 5.0 'Transportation of Children Looked after (CLA)' has been updated, as per learning from this policy year and in order to improve the processing of transport requests.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers the Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy 2021/22 (**Appendix 1**), and recommends it to Executive Committee for approval.

3.2 **Option 2:** Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers the Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy 2020/21 (Appendix 1) and provides any comments or amendments prior to recommending it to Executive Committee for approval.

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

4.1.1 Education is a priority in the Council's Corporate Plan of which the Home to School Post 16 Transport Policy is an essential component. In addition, implementation of the policy will contribute to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The proposed policy is fully compliant with section 12(5) of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 ("the Measure"), and the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 (the "Regulations").

4.1.2 The Welsh Government's Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 (the "Guidance") requires that the Council's policy must be made available by the 1st October, the year proceeding the academic year to which the policy applies.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to determine and publish the Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy by 1st October 2019, for the 2020/21 academic session. Any changes made to the policy should take account of the following:

- Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 ("the Measure")
- Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 (the "Regulations")

- Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 (the “Guidance”)
- Welsh Government School Admissions and Admissions Appeal Code’s (2013)
- Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2017-20)
- School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act (2013)

5.1.2 Therefore, if the policy does not progress within the programmed timeframe, the Council will not be compliant with section 12(5) of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (“the Measure”), and the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009 (the “Regulations”). In addition, the Council would fail to take account of the most recent developments relating to key areas of dependency on a local, regional and national basis; i.e. developments aligned to the draft Welsh Government Additional Learning Needs Act, Code and associated regulations, along with the Blaenau Gwent admission policy developments. The results of which may negatively impact upon both service users in terms of service and satisfaction, and services in terms of operational issues and budgetary constraints.

5.2 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

5.2.1 The Home to School Transport budget is approximately £1.9m, and the Post 16 budget is approximately £133,290 per annum. Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy was last reviewed in September 2019 and adopted in October 2019 for implementation in 2020/21 academic session.

5.2.2 The forecasted spend for 2020/21 is £1,803,107 (inclusive of staff salaries). The policy seeks to ensure that there is an appropriate framework to aid delivery; therefore, reducing the risk of overspend relating to issue management etc.

5.3 Risk including Mitigating Actions

5.3.1 The risk of not taking the policy forward within the specified timeframe, is that the Council will not be compliant with their statutory duty in respect of home to school transport. In addition, the policy which would therefore be applicable, would be outdated and could negatively impact upon service delivery, service user experience and ultimately spend .The mitigation for this is to ensure that the policy is adopted and published within the required timeframe.

5.4 Legal

5.4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with Welsh Government legislation in line with the administration and review of statutory home to school transport policy arrangements.

5.4.2 Following approval, the policy will be translated into Welsh to meet the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards from the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

5.5 **Human Resources**

5.5.1 The policy document and associated procedures have been developed by the Education and Environment Directorates, in partnership with the Social Services. The Education Transformation Manager and Transport Officer monitor implementation of the policy, and undertake annual reviews in order to inform future policy development.

5.5.2 Transport service operations are undertaken by a dedicated team who sit within Community Services, Highways and Development, working closely with Education who holds the budget, manages policy development and review processes, and Social Services who review and determine transport for Children Looked After.

5.5.3 The Education Directorate Management Team along with Wider Corporate Leadership Team have a key role to play in ensuring that the policy is effectively delivered across service areas.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The Council currently provides free Home to School Transport for approximately 1,330 mainstream pupils each day, via more than 30 established routes. Transport is also provided for approximately 160 pupils via season tickets for public service vehicles. The Council also provides transport for approximately 250 Additional Learning Needs (ALN) pupils on a daily basis. In addition, Council also provides approximately 800 post 16 students with assisted transport in the form of a travel grant.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The policy has been reviewed in order to ensure that there is service user clarity in relation to roles, responsibilities, expectations and awareness. The review process also takes account of key local, regional and national policy and legislative developments. It is therefore anticipated that the existing high levels of client and customer satisfaction will continue, along with improved operational delivery.

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

The policy underwent extensive consultation throughout the summer period 2018, the outcome of which has aided the annual review process in subsequent years, with the distance limits set to remain for the remainder of the current political administration.

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

The policy will cover home to school and post 16 transport provisions for the 2021/22 academic session. The document takes account of key policy and legislative requirements, and annual reviews will continue to be

programmed for the foreseeable future taking on learning from previous years.

6.5 Preventative focus

The policy will support the Council to carry out effective home to school and post 16 transport arrangements; whilst mitigating the risk of service and service user conflict, along with complaints and appeals relating to policy gaps and issues.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

Key management and operational staff across the Council are involved in a detailed review of the document on an annual basis i.e. Education, Social Services and Procurement, along with Community Services, Highways and Development. The review process seeks to ensure compliance with Welsh Government legislation, and ensure that key local, regional, and national policy developments are accounted for, whilst also taking on board learning from the previous academic session.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

The policy is cross-cutting in the sense that it impacts upon Education, Community Services, Highways and Development, Procurement and Children's Services; therefore, service area involvement is key to effective policy implementation.

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

An EqIA impact assessment has been carried out, which determines that there is no adverse impact upon any of the protected characteristics. The policy seeks to ensure equality of access to transport for Blaenau Gwent learners.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 The Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy is reviewed on an annual basis in line with lessons learned, key policy, strategy and legislative reviews/developments.

8. Background Documents / Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Draft Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy 2021/22

REF: HTSPSTP.192

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Home to School & Post 16 Transport Policy **2021/22**

Reviewed: August 2020
Adopted:

Should you have any queries relating to this policy please contact:

Education Transformation Team
Anvil Court
Abertillery
NP13 1DB

Email: 21stcenturyschools@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Telephone Number: 01495 357704 / 01495 35470

Should you have any queries relating to the provision of your child's transport or require support in making an application please contact:

Transport Team
Civic Centre
Ebbw Vale
NP23 6XB

Email: hometoschooltransport@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Telephone Number: 01495 311556

Blaenau Gwent has introduced an on-line application system for parents to apply for Home to School or Post 16 transport for their child(ren). Please visit the link below via the webpage:

<http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/resident/schools-learning/school-transport/>

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1.0 Introduction

This policy document has been produced by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in compliance with the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure, 2008.

The purpose of the policy is ensure that relevant information around home-to-school and post 16 transport arrangements is available to parents/ carers, pupils and partners. The Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Council has developed a code of practice, to support safe travel arrangements. The code of practice forms part of the application process and ensures that both learners and operators are aware of the expectations upon them, whilst accessing/ providing transport.

2.0 Background

The Council has a duty to provide transport in accordance with Learner Travel (Wales) Measure, 2008.

The distance by which entitlement to transport is calculated is defined as the walking distance of the shortest available route, that is deemed to be safe. Route designation is carried out in accordance with the risk assessment procedure as detailed in the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance (2014).

Under section 32 of the Education Act 2002 (which was amended by section 21 of the Measure), Councils have the power to change school session times, **if the change is considered necessary or expedient to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel, or to make travel arrangements more effective or efficient.**

3.0 Who Qualifies: The Main Criteria

Blaenau Gwent Council will provide free transport for children attending their nearest suitable school, where the distance from home to school is over the specified walking distance detailed below:

- more than 1.5 miles from home for children aged under 8 years but of statutory school age; and,
- more than 2 miles from home for children aged 8 years and over.

Distances are measured by using the Council's Digital Information Mapping System, to determine the shortest available safe walking route between the home address and the main gate of the school to be attended.

Parents are able to choose an English-medium, Welsh-medium or a denominational school for their child. The child will qualify for home to school transport to the appropriate catchment area of the school. When the catchment area school is full and unable to admit a pupil, free transport will be provided to the next nearest

available school that has room to take the child, as long as the home is 1.5 miles or more away from the school for pupils under the age of 8 years, or 2 miles for pupils aged 8 and over.

The provision of free school transport will be arranged to coincide with the start and end of the normal school day and shall be provided during the school term time. Home to School transport is not provided for breakfast clubs, after school clubs or summer schools.

Transport will be provided from pick-up points at approved bus stops on the nearest public transport route to the learner's home, where possible.

*All awarded transport will be reviewed periodically in line with changes to circumstances relating to the pupil(s) transport requirements.

4.0 Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

The Council believes and promotes independence for all learners. This encourages independent living as well as health and well-being.

The Council will provide transport assistance for pupils with ALN:

- if existing transport arrangements are deemed unsuitable in line with a learner's needs, alternative arrangements will be determined by the Inclusion Service;
- if it is not appropriate for the pupil to walk to school due to the nature of their additional learning need and/or disability; and/or,
- if it is determined by ALN Panel that there is no appropriate education provision within the County Borough suitable to meet pupil need.

*The above arrangements will be subject to review in line with changes to circumstances relating to the pupil(s) transport requirements.

4.1 Residential School Placements not in the County Borough

Pupils with complex additional learning needs may require residential school placements. When considering placement, the cost of transport will be taken into account.

Transport can be provided on the following basis:

- Weekly or fortnightly boarding – transport for the pupil to return home weekly or fortnightly during term time.
- 38 week termly boarding – transport at the beginning and end of each half term and one additional return journey per half term.
- 51/52 week residential placements – one return journey per term.

Transport will be decided on a case by case basis in line with Blaenau Gwent policy.

If parents choose a school other than the school named by the Council's ALN Panel, it is the parent/carers responsibility to secure transport arrangements for their child and cover the associated costs.

4.2 Requests for Transport: ALN Provision

Pupils requiring ALN transport who live more than 1.5 miles (for those under 8 years of age) or more than 2 miles (for those aged between 8-16 years of age) from their nearest agreed ALN provision, will automatically qualify for free home to school transport.

*Please note in instances where the school is a parental choice and not the provision determined by the ALN Panel, no transport will be provided.

The Council has established a process in order to assess the travel needs of children who may require ALN transport, as follows:

- All requests to ALN Panel for consideration of change of placement will firstly be considered by the Transport team to determine their eligibility for transport on distance grounds.
- The Council's ALN Panel will then consider the request for change of placement, and if agreed, determine the appropriate placement and identify if transport is required to access the agreed placement.
- If it is identified that transport is required, a Pupil Transport Request Form will be completed by the ALN team. The form will be returned to the Transport Officer within 5 working days of the Panel meeting taking place. The Transport Officer will then make the necessary arrangements and complete a journey risk assessment.
- Individual pupil risk assessment forms will only be completed if requested by a parent/carer, or if the pupil has needs that warrant completion of a form such as profound and multiple learning difficulties. The ALN team will coordinate completion of the form. The form will identify the pupils transport needs and the type of transport required.
- The Transport Team require 15 school days upon receipt of the Pupil Transport Request Form, in order to arrange transport.

Where transport has been agreed, the Transport Officer will contact the parent and inform them of the arrangements. In cases where transport requests are refused, parents/carers will receive notification from the ALN team, also indicating their right of appeal.

5.0 Transportation of Children Looked After (CLA)

Children's Services will determine if it is considered appropriate for a child looked after (CLA) to attend a school other than the nearest suitable school to their residence, due to:

- the need to maintain continuity in education; and,
- or maintain contact with siblings and friends.

Transport for children who are looked after will be funded and coordinated by Children's Services with the exception of those cases, whereby placement is agreed by Education with a clear rationale, based on the educational needs of the pupil.

Requests for transport for CLA with ALN will be co-ordinated by the CLA Education Coordinator; however, where placement requests are agreed by the ALN Panel based on meeting the pupils needs, these requests will be funded by Education and administered by the Transport Officer in accordance with the **Belongings Regulations**. The transport application will be made by the CLA Education Coordinator **along with a completed pro-forma which will be submitted to the Transport Officer and copied to the ALN team, detailing the associated requirements.**

In cases where children looked after reside and are educated outside of Blaenau Gwent; transport arrangements will be the responsibility of the Local Authority within which the pupil resides.

Transport is not routinely provided in circumstances where a child or children looked after are in respite accommodation. If it is possible for existing school transport to accommodate the pupil(s) to and from the respite provision without delay or deviation from the route, this can be considered, subject to regular review. Requests must be made to the Transport Officer in advance (where appropriate) and not drivers/escorts/operators directly.

6.0 How to Apply for Home to School Transport

Application forms for transport assistance can be obtained via the following one of two methods:

- You can apply online by accessing the Blaenau Gwent Website: www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk and selecting "My Services" register, Schools and Learning and completing the Home to School or Post 16 transport application form.
- If you do not have internet access then you can still apply by contacting the Councils Contact Centre on 01495 311556 who will complete an application form on your behalf over the telephone.

The Council aims to process all applications received within 10 school days, unless specialist provision is required which may exceed the 10 days dependent on the pupil's need.

7.0 Discretionary Welsh- medium Nursery Transport

In line with the Council's desire to promote access to Welsh-medium education, provided that there is capacity within the current transport arrangements, the Council will offer free transport for nursery pupils who reside over 1.5 miles from their home address to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg.

This discretionary nursery provision may be withdrawn on the basis that it reduces availability of transport places for statutory aged learners.

8.0 Transport Considerations

8.1 Change of Address - Transport Arrangements

Pupils studying for their GCSE exams in years 10 or 11 who change address after the autumn half-term in year 10 will be entitled to free school transport - **usually a bus pass, the Council does not have a duty to provide a separate taxi**; providing that the new address is **over 2 miles walking distance** from their current school. Transport can also be provided on an existing contract. The entitlement to free transport is provided in this instance, if the pupil attended their catchment area school prior to the move. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the pupil is able to access the designated pickup and drop off points if using existing transport, and the pupil is able to access designated bus stops for season ticket holders.

8.2 Schools with Multiple Campuses/Sites

For multi-site/campus schools, if the campus nearest to the pupil's home is unable to offer a place and an alternative campus or site is offered which is over the distance criteria, then free home to school transport will be provided.

8.3 Permanently Excluded & Managed Move Pupils

If a child has been permanently excluded from school, the Council will provide a bus pass as necessary. This will only be applicable in cases when the pupil enrolls at another mainstream provision in Blaenau Gwent.

Where a pupil has moved schools as part of the managed move process, bus passes will be provided to enable the child to attend the new school. This will not apply to pupils where parents have elected to change schools.

8.4 Before & After School Activities

If a pupil attends breakfast club or after school activity/club then it becomes the responsibility of the parent/carer to transport their children to and from activities outside of the normal the school day.

8.5 School Trips

On occasions when school trips fall outside the normal school day, pupils in receipt of free home to school transport will need to be collected from the school as per the arrangements in 8.4 above.

8.6 Escorts

All drivers of home to school transport provision and accompanying escorts are required to have enhanced Disclosure Barring Scheme (DBS) checks. The Council may provide more than one escort on transport should the need arise to do so. All arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis.

The transport provider may change throughout the time a pupil receives Council transport – meaning that drivers and escorts may change; however, where possible, continuity of drivers and escorts will be provided by contracted providers of transport.

8.7 Travel Assistance Reimbursement

Fuel expenses can be claimed in circumstances where appropriate transport cannot be provided, and the need of the pupil is such that the parent/carer may be required to transport their child. This will be assessed via the ALN team in partnership with the Transport Officer and agreed in writing in advance of finalising arrangements.

8.8 Pupils on Exchange Visits

The Council does not provide transport assistance to pupils on exchange visits.

8.9 Pupil Attendance

In circumstances where a pupil is in receipt of free home to school transport and is not attending school regularly, the Council can withdraw the travel offer. This will be determined on a case by case basis. Parents/carers of those found to be in breach of the travel offer due to attendance issues; will resume responsibility for ensuring the travel arrangements of pupils to and from school. This process will be overseen by the Education Welfare Service.

8.10 Preferred Schools/Parental Choice

Parents/carers who choose a school other than the nearest suitable catchment school are responsible for getting their child to and from the school throughout the time that their child attends the school. This is also applicable for pupils with additional learning needs; please refer to section 4.3 for more information.

8.11 Pupils Under 16 years Attending Vocational Training Provision

Blaenau Gwent Council does not provide transport for pupils of compulsory school age attending training provision.

8.12 Dual Residency

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child and the child is permanently resident at more than one address, the Council will provide transport from both addresses, as long as they are both in the catchment area for the school concerned and are located over the required qualifying walking distance.

8.13 Rural Areas/Transport Links

Where appropriate, the Council will use its discretion in determining whether or not a taxi link will need to be provided to an existing bus service for those pupils living in rural locations.

8.14 Temporary Medical Conditions

The Council understands that in some circumstances the health of a mainstream pupil may restrict use of mainstream transport, due to a temporary medical condition. In these instances individual assessments will be undertaken in assessing pupil need and risk.

If an ALN pupil has a temporary medical condition, transport may be provided on request from the ALN team. Transport arrangements provided on medical grounds will be reviewed regularly.

Requests for long-term transport due to a medical condition must be made to the Council's ALN team and accompanied by a letter from the pupil's consultant. The request must outline the pupil's medical condition and health risks encountered should they be required to walk to and from school.

The Council will not accept requests directly from GPs.

8.15 School Organisation Proposals

The Council will provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age, where the closure of a school results in a learner being transferred to another school. Learners already on the register of the closed school will be provided with free transport to the new catchment school or the nearest school, subject to meeting the policy's distance criteria - until the learner finishes education at that school. If the learner leaves this school, entitlement to this discretionary provision will end.

9.0 Post 16 Travel

9.1 Transport Entitlement

All students living in Blaenau Gwent will be provided with a discounted bus ticket or travel grant to the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Ebbw Vale Campus as their designated Post 16 provider; or, the nearest institution where their course is available depending on the following criteria:

- students must be between the ages of 16 to 19 (under 19 prior to the 1st September of the commencement of their course) to qualify;
- students shall reside in the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent;
- students must reside 2 miles or over (nearest walking distance) from their nearest college campus; and, the students should attend a full time course which requires attendance of 16 or more hours per week or a minimum 4 days attendance per week at the institution.

Students and pupils aged 19 or over at the commencement of the course are not eligible for travel assistance from the Council and in these circumstances they are advised to contact their respective college for details of any available transport provision.

All transport for Post 16 pupils including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), is agreed on a case by case basis by the ALN team in consultation with the Transport Officer. The Council may provide transport up to a maximum of three years.

9.2 Travel Grant

The Council's present policy is to provide travel assistance to those who meet the criteria up to a maximum of £150 per academic session. This will be paid termly as follows: £50 autumn, £50 spring and £50 summer.

9.3 Welsh Medium/Faith Education

Pupils who wish to undertake their Post 16 studies via the medium of Welsh or attend a Faith school are required to travel further distances for their education, with no direct public service bus routes. These students have the opportunity to utilise the existing contract bus provision in lieu of the Travel Grant, if appropriate.

9.4 How to Apply

Applications for transport assistance are available on Blaenau Gwent's website. Parents/Students can submit an application for transport assistance at any time, however, there is always an increase in demand prior to the start of an academic year and parents are advised to allow additional time. The Council sets a target to process all applications received within 10 school/college days, unless specialised provision is required.

Further information can be found on the following website www.coleggwent.gov.uk and <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/resident/schools-learning/school-transport/>

10.0 Procedures

10.1 Safe Routes to School/Learner Travel Arrangements

Safe Routes to school are assessed individually by the Transport Division in line with Welsh Government Learner Travel Measure (2014). A route is considered to be available if it is safe for a child/young person to walk alone or with an accompanying adult, where appropriate. It is recognised that occasions may arise when routes may become hazardous. In these circumstances, the Council reserves the right to provide free home to school transport for distances below the discretionary limits in the interests of the safety of the relevant learners. The Council will assess route safety through using clear Council criteria and a determination will be made on a risk assessment basis, where necessary.

10.2 Extreme Weather

Severe weather may impact on Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's ability to provide Home to School Transport safely. In such circumstances, the safety and wellbeing of the children and transport providers remains our key priority. Where severe weather results in the requirement to cancel transportation, the school will always notify parents at the earliest point to avoid unnecessary disruption.

Up to date weather information is posted on the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's website during periods of severe weather conditions.

If the Home to School Transport provision is cancelled, the Education Transformation team and Transport Officer will advise schools, as best they can,

when transport services are likely to resume. During these periods, the school will aim to keep parents/carers informed of developments.

If transport is cancelled due to extreme weather, the following is applicable:

- where a route is cancelled and a parent/carer takes the decision to transport the child themselves, the parent/carer remains responsible for the return journey or any subsequent costs should a return journey not be possible;
- if a child is unable to attend school due to severe weather, the parent/carer remains responsible for their child; and,
- out of hours emergency contact can be made with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council through the main contact centre – 01495 311556

10.3 Exclusions from Home to School Transport

The Council has an approved travel behaviour code that covers all home to school transport provision. All parties will be required to sign the Blaenau Gwent Transport Behaviour Contract prior to approval of transport provision.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council reserves the right to refuse travel assistance where a child(s)/young person's behaviour is such that, it is unacceptable in line with the travel code and/or presents a significant health and safety risk, or whereby excessive and purposeful damage to vehicles has been identified. In these instances, the Transport team will issue warning letters and parents will receive no more than four letters. The behaviour management process is as follows:

- **Stage 1** - Initially raising the concerns/issues
- **Stage 2** - Informal warning indicating the remedial steps taken and the potential of transport removal
- **Stage 3** - Final warning indicating that transport will be removed.
- **Stage 4** - The school jointly with the Transport team will issue the final letter confirming the removal of transport, citing the reasons for the removal, the date of the proposed removal and the parental route of appeal.

If a pupil is refused/ excluded from transport due to behavioural issues, parents/carers then become responsible for their child's attendance at school and any transport required.

Any wilful damage that incurs cost to the transport provider for either repair or cleaning remains the responsibility of the parent/carer of the pupil concerned. Continued or repeat behaviour that result in wilful damage can result in exclusion from home to school transport.

Please note should a situation arise in during transportation, which constitutes a health and safety hazard, pupils can be removed from the vehicle with a police presence, and further transport provision withdrawn with immediate effect pending investigation.

10.4 ALN Transport Issues & Exclusions

The Transport team will monitor and review issues and incidents relating to ALN transport, and determine with relevant professionals, any reasonable adjustments required to accommodate the pupil(s).

In cases whereby there are recurrent issues i.e. behavioural and or medical, and where it is deemed that:

- the planned transport arrangements no longer meet the needs of the pupil; and/or,
- there are healthy and safety risks to both the pupil and contractor

In these instances, the Transport team will issue warning letters and parents will receive no more than four letters. The behaviour management process is as follows:

- **Stage 1** - Initially raising the concerns/issues
- **Stage 2** - Informal warning indicating the remedial steps taken and the potential of transport review/removal
- **Stage 3** - Final warning indicating that transport will be removed.
- **Stage 4** - Transport will be suspended and parents notified in writing, pending detailed assessment of the risks and transportation needs of the pupil. A Review Group will then be coordinated by the Transport Officer, with representation from relevant services and professionals, in order to determine a suitable solution.

If a pupil is refused or excluded from transport due to behavioural and/or medical issues, parents/carers then become responsible for their child's attendance at school and any transport required, until a suitable solution has been found.

Any wilful damage that incurs cost to the transport provider for either repair or cleaning remains the responsibility of the parent/carer of the pupil concerned. Continued or repeat behaviour that result in wilful damage can result in exclusion from home to school transport.

10.5 Safeguarding

The safety of children/young person on home to school transport or post 16 transport is Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's first priority. In particular, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will ensure that:

- all drivers and escorts have been checked and cleared by the DBS;
- all drivers and escorts will have access to safeguarding training and report any concerns that they may identify to the Transport team, the school and where appropriate, the Police and/ or Social Services;
- all drivers and escorts carry a form of identity;
- lap and diagonal seat belts are provided on all contract vehicles;
- car seats/booster seats are provided in accordance with current Government legislation;
- drivers and escorts receive appropriate training and are familiar with safety and emergency equipment;
- drivers, escorts and operators are aware of their duties, particularly in emergency situations; and,

- wheelchair occupants are correctly restrained. Wheelchairs will need to meet specific authorised crash test requirements (this specification can be confirmed directly by the user in conjunction with our Transport team).

10.6 Home to School/College Transport - Code of Good Practice

Across all of home to school transport provision and post 16 learning, the Council operates a **Code of Practice** for pupils, students, parents, schools and transport operators. The code of practice can be found on the link below;

http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Schools_and_Learning/SchoolTransport_CodeofGoodPractice.pdf

10.7 Free Transport - Right to Withdraw

The Council reserve the right to withdraw awarded transport, if an error is made or where legislation has changed which affects the entitlement of a pupil or pupils using school transport. The Council will honour the transport provision for that pupil(s) for the remainder of the academic half-term, during which the awarding error was identified, or that legislation became effective.

All awarded transport is reviewed periodically.

10.8 Appeals Procedure

Where the one of the following circumstances apply:

- a child or young person is not eligible for travel assistance;
- a change in transport arrangements has been made and the parent/carer notified; and,
- transport has not been agreed.

Parents/carers may ask for the decision to be reconsidered whereby an appeals form will then be issued. Parents/carers may then highlight exceptional circumstances they wish to be considered in relation to their entitlement.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Education Transformation team, and wherever possible forwarded by recorded post to ensure delivery/tracking. All appeal related correspondence should be addressed to:

Education Transformation Manager
Anvil Court
Abertillery
Blaenau Gwent
NP13 1DB

Appeals will then be considered by the Appeals Panel, who look to determine the level of prejudice to the child should they not be granted transport. The prejudice will be considered in relation to the impact in terms of:

- distance
- disability; and/ or,

- medical considerations on the advice of a consultant.

Parents will have 10 working days to submit an appeal from the date that the refusal letter was issued. Their appeal will then be heard within 30 working days from the specific closing date indicated within the refusal letter.

10.9 Monitoring Procedure

All vehicles will be made available for random checks by Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and/ or another appropriate body, when required. Any complaints received by the Council concerning services or vehicles will be investigated in line with the Council's complaints policy. In the event of the complaint being upheld, the necessary and appropriate steps will be taken in accordance with the contract or as a matter of urgency and will be reported in a timely manner to the Education Directorate's Management Team (DMT).

The Council will undertake random checks to contracts, to ensure that they are being operated in accordance with the Council's terms and conditions. As part of this monitoring exercise, the following checks will also be made:

- punctuality;
- adherence to route;
- size of vehicle;
- licences; and,
- staff DBS checks are in place.

All of the above are designed to ensure safe and stress free travel.

11.0 Glossary of Terms

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)	A pupil who has an identified additional learning need
Catchment Area	A marked out geographical area made up of the streets around a school.
Catchment Area School	A school within the catchment area
Children Looked After	Children who are in the care of, or 'accommodated by', a Local Authority.
Child Protection	Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.
Designated Area	A geographical area, which is usually made up of Parishes served by a voluntary aided school (see section 2.2 for Faith/voluntary aided schools).
Nearest Suitable School	For transport purposes, the nearest suitable school may not be the catchment area school.
Officer Review	The process of someone within the Council looking again at an application for transport assistance.
Parent/Carer	Anyone who is responsible for the care of a child. We use the same definition as stated in the Education Act 1996.
Preferred School	Parents have a right to say they prefer a school other than the catchment area school. This is known as 'a preferred school'. This school will remain a preferred school when parents apply for help with transport, throughout the pupil's attendance.
Pupil	A young person who is of compulsory school age, which is the term after the child's fifth birth day and before the last Friday in June in Year 11. For transport purposes the term pupil will also include those in Foundation Stage 2.
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children	Protecting children from abuse and neglect, preventing impairment of their health or development and ensuring that they receive safe and effective care to enable them to have optimum life chances.
Shortest Walking Distance	The shortest safe walkable route between the main access to and from your private property, such as your front gate or the top of your drive and the nearest school gate.
Special Transport Needs	Some pupils may have special transport needs that come from a disability or a special educational need.
Statutory Walking Distance	As set out in section 2, in accordance with the definition provided in the Education Act 1996.
Student	A young person who attends a sixth form or college beyond the statutory school age, which is the last Friday in June in Year 11.
Suitable Walkable Route	A route where a child can walk to and from school safe from traffic – with the parent or another 'responsible adult' if the parent decides this is needed. If a parent cannot do this, the Council is not responsible for escorting your child to school.

11.1 Blaenau Gwent Schools

Blaenau Gwent has the following schools and provision for pupils:

- **Community Maintained Schools** – schools managed by the headteacher and governors, in partnership with the Council. The Council arranges admissions.
- **Voluntary-aided Schools** – schools supported by the relevant Religious Board and the Council jointly. The governors will normally employ all staff and manage admissions. These schools are sometimes called ‘faith’ or ‘denominational’ schools.
- **Foundation Schools** – schools maintained by the Council but the governors are responsible for admissions. For transport assistance purposes, all pupils attending Foundation schools are treated in the same way as pupils attending community schools.
- **Resource Bases** – some mainstream schools have Resource Bases which are Council funded provisions that meet the additional learning needs of pupils whose needs cannot be met in mainstream classes. Resource Bases have a higher level of staffing providing more specialist support to meet pupil need. Pupils access mainstream classes where appropriate and placement into a Resource Base is determined by the Council’s ALN Panel
- **Special School** – a school which caters for pupils with additional learning needs whose needs cannot be appropriately met in a mainstream or Resource Base setting. Special schools receive pupils with a degree of disability and placement is agreed through the Council’s ALN Panel. The Council arranges admissions for all special schools.
- **Pupil Referral Units** - cater for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural Difficulties and provides short term, as well as longer term placements. The Council arranges admission through the Council’s ALN Panel.
- **All Through School 3-16 model** – where there are more than one campus or site associated with the school. The school is responsible for admissions for all site allocation.
- **Welsh Medium School** – caters for children who are being taught through the medium of Welsh as their first language.

For more information on Blaenau Gwent Schools, please refer to the Blaenau Gwent Starting Schools Booklet, which can be found on the Council’s website, via School Admissions.

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Agenda Item 9

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: **15th September 2020**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent - Post 16 Partnership Agreement**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Joanne Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Joanne Sims, Youth Service Manager**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	01.09.20			15.09.20	14.10.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members of the Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise a proposal to establish a Blaenau Gwent Post 16 Partnership Board to oversee the strategic development of academic and vocational provision for learners across the County Borough.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone was established in 2012/2013, following a review of post 16 provision across the County Borough. The post 16 review was a highly contentious school re-organisation project that involved the removal of three sixth forms from secondary schools and the development of a tertiary partnership model in association with Coleg Gwent. The Council project managed the new Learning Zone building to include design, procurement and construction of the £33m post 16 learning establishment.
 - 2.2 There is currently a strong partnership arrangement between the Council and Coleg Gwent, which has matured during recent years. The Learning Zone delivers an annual performance report to the Council, which features as a key component of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee's forward work programme, featuring as part on the Member Briefing Programme.
 - 2.3 In addition to the Learning Zone, a number of post 16 Work Based Learning organisations provide alternative training opportunities across Blaenau Gwent. These organisations include ACT, Sgiliau (a sub contracted provider for ITEC), and Llamau. Furthermore, an Aspire Apprenticeship programme is delivered by BGCBC and further opportunities are available through organisations such as Tai Calon. These partners are active members of the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG), a strategic multi-agency partnership co-ordinating the work around young people who are at risk of becoming or are currently NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

2.4 The Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone's performance in 2020 continues to improve overall. The transformation of post 16 provision across the County Borough has delivered:

- more post 16 learners,
- a greater range of courses, particularly for vocational provision;
- improved attainment levels, in most measures.

2.5 The partnership between the Council and Coleg Gwent has matured and a systematic approach is in place to share data at a strategic and operational level. The partnership will be developed further through the establishment of a Post 16 Partnership Board with representation from the Education Directorate, Coleg Gwent, work based learning providers and Blaenau Gwent secondary school settings. There will also be representation from colleagues in Regeneration to encompass the broader skills and economic development agenda, contributing towards the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan. The intention is for the Partnership Board to be in place by the Autumn term 2020. The draft Terms of Reference for the Blaenau Gwent Post 16 Partnership Board are attached in Appendix 1 and Members' views are sought on the proposed agreement.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report has been discussed and agreed by Education DMT and CLT prior to submission to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee. Members are requested to:

Option 1: To accept the report's proposals as presented in the draft Partnership Agreement.

Option 2: Members are requested to scrutinise the information detailed within the report and make appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee for final approval.

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

4.1 **Corporate Plan Priorities**

Education is a key priority in the Corporate Improvement Plan and the provision of effective post 16 learning opportunities are critical to securing improved life chances for young people across the County Borough.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget***

The establishment of the Post 16 Partnership Board and the delivery of the proposed agreement will have no direct financial implications for the Council, however, there will need to be the effective use of existing resources from all partners to secure added value and better outcomes for all of our learners.

5.2 ***Risk***

The risk of failing to secure improved educational outcomes features on the Corporate Risk Register (CRR), therefore, the establishment of a Post 16 Partnership Board will contribute to mitigating the risk for learners leaving statutory age education provision across the County Borough.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no direct Legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no direct Human Resources implications associated with this report other than the allocation of time from relevant officers to facilitate the establishment of the Post 16 Partnership Board.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

The performance of post 16 learners across the County Borough is shown in the attached FADE document (Appendix 2), which covers both academic and vocational aspects of study. The provisional performance in academic year 2019-20 will be presented to Members as part of the Member Development Programme later in the Autumn term.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

It is expected that the Partnership Board will continue to improve post 16 outcomes across the County Borough.

6.3 ***Involvement***

The Partnership Board has been discussed with the key partners and there is a strong desire to move forward in a truly collaborative fashion. There will be a need to engage with post 16 learners once the formal arrangements are adopted to seek their views on the future of provision in order to meet their needs.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term***

The Partnership Board will need to plan in the short, medium and long term to secure improved educational outcomes for learners. There will be a forward work plan and key priorities have initially been identified for all partners to work towards in the form of outcome statements, discussed in the draft Partnership Agreement.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Partnership Board will oversee all aspects of post 16 provision, however, many of the proposed partners are also members of the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG), that co-ordinates the work around young people who are at risk of becoming or are currently NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Effective collaboration is at the heart of the Partnership Board and the proposed agreement. To facilitate this, all parties will commit to adopt the following principles in their dealings with each other:

- Build trust and a mutual respect for each other's roles and responsibilities;
- Committed to openness, honesty and transparency in communications;
- Adopt a positive and constructive approach demonstrating our commitment to work with and learn from each other;
- Ensure there is early discussion of emerging issues to ensure a 'no surprises' culture;
- Share a commitment to ensuring high quality outcomes; and,
- Agree a formal process for disagreement resolution and always seek positive solutions for partners, learners and their families.

6.7 **Integration** (*across service areas*)

Education and Regeneration will work in an integrated way to support the broader economic impact, particularly relating the post 16 skills agenda.

6.8 **EqIA**

There is no requirement for an EQIA assessment as all partners will have their own Equality Planning arrangements in place.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Partnership Board will aim to create a culture of accountability to improve outcomes for all post 16 learners. Moreover, subject to agreement of the proposal, the monitoring the outcomes for post 16 learners will feature in the Scrutiny/Executive Forward Work Programmes.

8. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

- Appendix 1 – Draft Partnership Agreement
- Appendix 2 – Post 16 FADE

DRAFT

Blaenau Gwent Post 16 Partnership (BGPP) Agreement

1. Introduction

This document outlines the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which underpins the collaborative intent and activities of the signatory organisations comprising the Blaenau Gwent Post-16 Partnership (BGPP). BGPP is an alliance of those responsible for the public education of 11 to 19 year olds in Blaenau Gwent. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, the leadership of our secondary schools and Coleg Gwent are committed to working together to provide the most equitable and best possible, wide ranging educational provision to our post-16 learners.

To facilitate this, the Memorandum of Understanding creates a framework for:

- Effective communication between all partners;
- Creating a solution focused working relationship;
- Sharing information to enable effective inclusion of learners and improved learner outcomes

All parties agree to act in good faith to support the objectives and principles of this MoU for the benefit of all our learners.

The parties to the agreement are:

- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- Coleg Gwent
- Ysgol Gyfun Tredegar Comprehensive School
- Ebbw Fawr 3-16 Learning Community
- Brynmawr Foundation School
- Abertillery 3 – 16 Learning Community
- The River Centre 3-16 Learning Community
- Pen-y-Cwm School

2. Vision, Values and Outcomes

The parties share the following vision and values for our post-16 learners.

Our Blaenau Gwent offer is one of outstanding educational aspiration and achievement, where every child and young person flourishes, and their learning and achievements are publicly supported and regularly celebrated.

Outcome statements:

- Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone will be a first choice for parents and learners in the area and beyond
- Outcomes for our learners will be at least as good as that for learners in comparable areas in Wales but we will always strive for even more
- We have a shared commitment to continuous improvement, providing access to high quality services to learners and their families

We share a firm commitment to inclusion - education should be accessible for all, offer meaningful and purposeful opportunities and foster the personal development of all the young people in our area.

Outcome statements:

- We will seek to develop our collective inclusive practices by working together to prepare and plan for the implementation of the new ALN Act
- Ensure transition planning is undertaken in a timely manner and informed by person-centred principles

To improve the educational and wellbeing of all of our post-16 learners recognising that this will only be achieved with a focus on our effective communication and collaborative planning.

Outcome statements:

- BGPP will agree an information sharing protocol that encompasses all members and also acts to support the effective partnership working with our primary schools to support transition to Key Stage 3
- Put parents and learners at the heart of our work ensuring there is clear communication with all families through a variety of channels

3. Principles for Effective Joint Working

To deliver partnership working successfully it is important to develop good formal and informal working relations that build trust and share responsibility, whilst respecting difference. To facilitate this, all parties commit to adopt the following principles in their dealings with each other:

- We will build trust and a mutual respect for each other's roles and responsibilities;
- We are committed to openness, honesty and transparency in communications;
- We will adopt a positive and constructive approach demonstrating our commitment to work with and learn from each other;
- We will ensure there is early discussion of emerging issues to ensure a "no surprises" culture;
- We share a commitment to ensuring high quality outcomes;
- We will agree a formal process for disagreement resolution and always seek positive solutions for partners, learners and their families.

4. Partnership Structure and Operational Framework

The BGPP will develop its own action plan that will be reviewed on an annual basis. While this plan will evolve over time, it is anticipated it will initially include:

- Determine and develop a Post-16 strategy
- Provide regular updates to the Public Service Board in addition to member's own governance bodies (see below)
- Report on plans and achievements, including learner outcomes, value added measures and progression. Additionally, agree any changes needed to information sharing agreements to enable these reports to be generated.
- Agree any shared resources, determine tasks as appropriate including establishing task and finish groups to resolve any emerging issues.
- Work with the regional school improvement body, the Education Achievement Service, as necessary to meet the outcomes of BGPP plans.
- Coleg Gwent to present their Annual Performance Report (usually November) to BGCBC Member Briefing
- Review and suggest changes as necessary to the attainment/ added value report for learners in the Borough. This report will be jointly produced by the EAS, the LA and Coleg Gwent giving an overview of learner outcomes from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 5 and will typically be made available in late September each year.

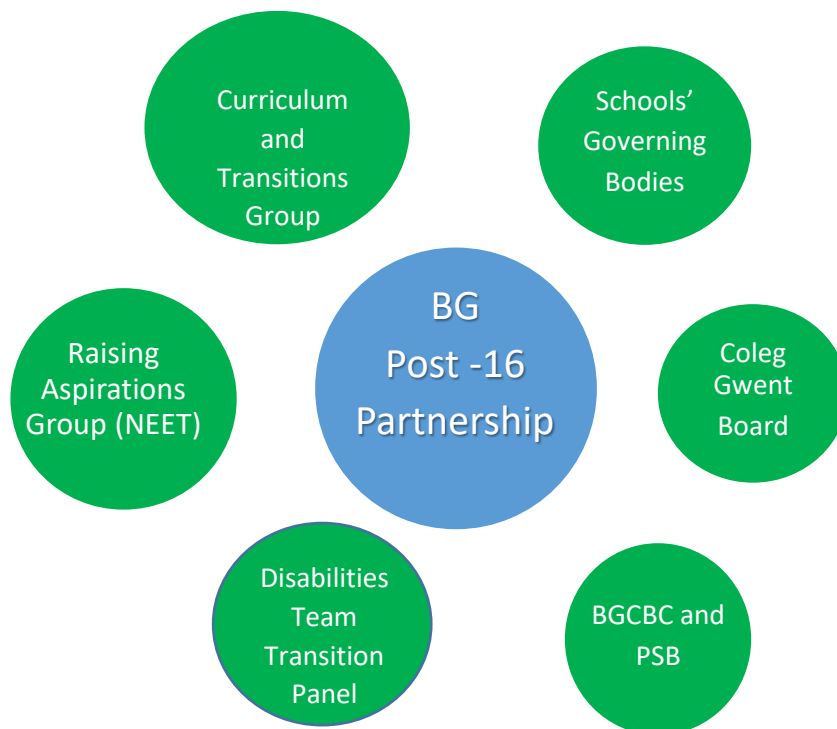


Fig.1 Suggested governance relationships and dependencies

BGPLP will form a Post 16 Partnership comprised of the following membership:

- BG Executive Member for Education
- BG Interim Director of Education
- BG Youth Service Manager (Interim Lead for Post 16 partnerships)
- Headteachers of all Secondary Schools
- Coleg Gwent Principal
- Coleg Gwent Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality)
- Public Health Wales representative
- ABUHB representative
- EAS representative

Administrative support will be provided by BG. The group will meet three times per year with each partner hosting meetings on a rolling basis.

Curriculum and Transition Group – this groups need to be established.

The Post 16 Partnership will ask this group to:

- Review transition arrangements to ensure their effectiveness
- Review KS4 and post-16 learner outcomes and progression on an annual basis
- Support enrichment activities for KS4 and post-16 learners
- Ensure join up with the Raising Aspirations Group to continue to proactively support the work of Blaenau Gwent Local County Borough Council in reducing the number of young people who are NEET

* Head of Learner Services and Head of School from Coleg Gwent; the BGCBC Youth Service Manager (Interim Lead for Post 16 partnership); EAS representative. The group will decide its own chair who will be invited to attend the BG Post 16 Partnership.

5. Governance

Governance arrangements are outlined in fig.1 above. The BGPLP work-plan will be co-constructed by the partners with the clear expectation that each partner will engage with, and seek approval from, their own governance body before agreeing the annual plan.

The Local Authority will issue this agreement to all of the secondary schools in the Borough as an addendum to the existing LA-School partnership agreement.

Specific Partner Responsibilities

The Local Authority will:

- ✓ Provide administration support for BGPP meetings including organising the termly meetings, recording and distribution of minutes etc. However, each partner is expected to host one meeting on a rolling basis;
- ✓ Provide support to keep information sharing protocols up to date and fit for purpose;
- ✓ The LA will work with Coleg Gwent and EAS to co-author a performance report for learners' progress detailing outcomes for learners from Foundation Phase to Key Stage. The exact format and timing of this report will be determined by these partners (To be agreed).
- ✓ Ensure consistent attendance at BGPP meetings.
- ✓ Ensure there is appropriate engagement with agreed transition arrangements as determined by the partnership.

Coleg Gwent will:

- ✓ Keep information sharing protocols up to date and fit for purpose.
- ✓ Ensuring Key Stage 5 data is disaggregated for BG learners and is made available in a way that demonstrates the value added measure for BG learners.
- ✓ Coleg Gwent will work with the LA and EAS to co-author a performance report for learners' progress detailing outcomes for learners from Foundation Phase to Key Stage. The exact format and timing of this report will be determined by these partners (To be agreed).
- ✓ Ensure consistent attendance at BGPP meetings.
- ✓ Agree and timetable transition dates in discussion with Schools.
- ✓ Ensure there is appropriate engagement with agreed transition arrangements as determined by the partnership.

Schools will:

- ✓ Engage in information sharing protocol discussions and agree to share pupil level data to enable pupil progress reporting over time.
- ✓ Agree and timetable transition dates in discussion with Coleg Gwent.
- ✓ Enable the appropriate staff to attend the curriculum and transition group.
- ✓ Ensure consistent attendance at BGPP meetings.
- ✓ Ensure there is appropriate engagement with agreed transition arrangements as determined by the partnership.

Signatories to the agreement:

Date:

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**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Education Directorate Self-Evaluation**

Team/Service: Education Directorate

Title of the evaluation: Post 16 Learning Outcomes

**Date of report: October 2019
Report author: Lynn Phillips/Jo Sims**

Report author:	Lynn Phillips/Jo Sims
Service Area:	Education Directorate
Date report written:	October 2019
Focus for the evaluation	The focus of the FADE is post 16 learner outcomes, including both the Learning Zone and Work Based Learning (WBL) opportunities.
Analysis (A)	<p>The Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone was established in 2012/2013, following a review of post 16 provision across the County Borough. The post 16 review was a highly contentious school re-organisation project that involved the removal of three sixth forms from secondary schools and the development of a tertiary partnership model in association with Coleg Gwent. The Council project managed the new Learning Zone building to include design, procurement and construction of the £33m post 16 learning establishment.</p> <p>There is a strong partnership arrangement between the Council and Coleg Gwent, which has matured during recent years. The Learning Zone delivers an annual performance report to the Council, which features as a key component of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee's forward work programme.</p> <p>In addition to the Learning Zone, a number of post 16 Work Based Learning organisations provide alternative training opportunities across Blaenau Gwent. These organisations include ACT, Sgiliau (a sub contracted provider for ITEC), and Llamau. Furthermore, an Aspire Apprenticeship programme is delivered by BGCBC and further opportunities are available through organisations such as Tai Calon. All of these partners are active members of the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG), a strategic multi-agency partnership co-ordinating the work around young people who are at risk of becoming or are currently NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).</p>

Evaluation (E)**By way of:**

- **Outcomes (or process or change)**
- **Provision**
- **Leadership and management**

This FADE provides an overview report on the Learning Zone's performance, covering a trend analysis over the last 3 years. The FADE details performance information for both 'A' Level results as well as the vocational results.

(i) 'A' Level Results

The Council and Coleg Gwent produce a joint press release on 'A' Level results day. In August 2019, the headline messages included;

- Learning Zone (Ebbw Vale) had a 100% overall pass rate for A*-E, which is 2.6% above the Welsh average and 2.4% for the UK.
- The pass rate for grades A*-C was improved to 75.9%.
- All subjects had a 100% pass rate at the Learning Zone.

Coleg Gwent has provided a more detailed analysis of relative performance and a 3 year trend. Table (1) overleaf breaks down the Learning Zone's 'A' Level performance into the following;

- The total number of entries for 'A' Level over 2017 to 2019;
- The percentages of students who achieved the various grade performances A*/A, A*-C, A*-E between 2017-2019,
- A/S results over the period 2017 to 2019; and,
- The All Wales and UK benchmark for performance against grade ranges.

Table 1:

		No of Entries: A Levels	%A* - E	A* - C	A* - A	No of Entries: A/S Levels	%A* - E	A* - C	A* - A
Benchmark:	Wales	-	97.6% (97.4%)	76.3% (76.3%)	27.0% (26.3%)	-	90.0% (90.0%)	62.0% (61.9%)	20.3% (20.4%)
	UK	-	97.6% (97.6%)	75.8% (77.0%)	25.5% (26.4%)	-	88.8% (90.7%)	61.9% (66.3%)	21.5% (27.5%)
BGLZ:	2019	340	100.0	75.9	15.3	616	90.9	63.5	14.8
	2018	391	98.7	74.4	15.6	663	89.9	58.2	10.3
	2017	415	99.0	73.5	13.3	799	86.9	56.1	12.3

The results detailed in Table (1) highlight some key performance trends, including:

- An overall decrease in the level of entries for 'A' Levels over the 3-year cycle, but this is in line with the national picture in Wales and has been impacted by the introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate;
- Very strong and improving performance (above Welsh average) for A*-E pass grades;
- An overall improvement in A*-A grades over the 3 years; and,
- Improvements in all A/S measures over the 3-year period.

There are also Blaenau Gwent Learners who have participated in A Level courses of study in Coleg Gwent establishments outside of the learning zone (different campuses such as Cross Keys College). The consolidated results for all Blaenau Gwent Learners are shown in the table (2) below/overleaf:

Table 2

Blaenau Gwent - Blaenau Gwent	Wales Benchmark			Blaenau Gwent Learners at Coleg Gwent		
	A*-E	A*-C	A*-A	A*-E (%)	A*-C (%)	A*-A (%)
A Level total	97.60%	76.30%	27.00%	99.46%	76.49%	16.76%
AS Level total	90.00%	62.00%	20.30%	91.63%	64.57%	14.49%

The Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone's performance is benchmarked through their participation in the UK wide 'A Level Information Service' (ALIS) benchmarking model operated by the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM). In 2018, the Learning Zone's added-value performance (based on all students' socio-economic status and predictive grades) places performance in the top quartile of tertiary colleges in the UK. The Learning Zone benchmarking data placed the institution on the 92nd percentile i.e. top 8% for the UK and 1.4 standard deviation above the mean.

ii) Vocational Results

The provision of a broader range of vocational learning opportunities was a key strategic driver behind the creation of the Learning Zone.

The vocational results, again over 3 years, is illustrated in Table (3) overleaf. The performance is categorised into levels (level 2 is GCSE and level 3 is 'A' Level equivalents). The data covers the following areas:

- Enrolments (2018/19),
- 3 years completion (retention) data,
- 3 years attainment – pass mark data,
- Success data – product of completion and attainment data.

(NB. Success is the main matrix by which Estyn make their post 16 judgements. In 2018/19, the Learning Zone realised an overall 85% success rate. Estyn would categorise 85% as a Grade 1 – Excellent).

Table 3:

	Enrols	Completion			Attainment			Success		
	18/19	16/17	17/18	18/19	16/17	17/18	18/19	16/17	17/18	18/19
Main	1,994	93%	93%	90%	92%	93%	93%	86%	87%	84%
Entry	23	97%	97%	91%	100%	100%	100%	97%	97%	91%
Level 1	274	89%	91%	89%	98%	94%	96%	87%	85%	85%
Level 2	284	93%	89%	85%	90%	90%	94%	83%	80%	80%
Level 3	1,377	94%	94%	92%	92%	94%	92%	86%	88%	85%

The table illustrates that the main performance indicator (success) has had a consistently high performance profile over the last 3 years.

The partnership between the Council and Coleg Gwent in this academic year (2019/20) has further developed. A process is now in place that provides the Council with data indicating the level of post 16 withdrawal to enable specific and timely support for individual learners. An example of the data relating to October 2019 is shown in table (4) overleaf. Consequently, the information will enable appropriate support to be provided through partners within the Raising Aspirations Group.

Table 4

Course Followed	No. learners	No. withdrawn	Withdrawn learners	Destinations (if known)
A level	102	3	Personalised data to be shared via WASPI agreement	
AS level	101	2		
Level 1	117	6		
Level 2	156	5		
Level 3	236	1		
Entry Level	2	0		
Access courses	0	0		
Life Skills	21	0		

Work based Learning Providers and Apprenticeships

In addition to Coleg Gwent, there are a number of post 16 providers in Blaenau Gwent, who provide training and apprenticeships for young people via work based learning settings. To date, information from Llamau and Aspire Blaenau Gwent Apprenticeship scheme, gives a sense of the types of courses delivered. Further information will be included when it is received later in the Autumn term.

Llamau Learning 4 Life works with some of the most vulnerable young people (those experienced in care, youth justice system or Substance misuse). Their statistics are outlined below:

Sept 18 - Sept 19 Yearly Total	
No. of Referrals	32
No. of Starts	31
No. of Agored Awards	47
No. of C&G Awards	6
No. of Exits	26
No. of Move On's to Employment	5
No. of Move On's to Further Learning	15
No. of CV's	33
No. of Practice Interviews	12
No. of Site Visits	24
No. of Work Tasters	3
No. of Volunteering	7

Aspire Blaenau Gwent – Shared Apprenticeship Programme

The programme has facilitated over 80 apprentices based within Blaenau Gwent industry on various pathways including:

- Electrical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Applied Science
- IT
- EEP's
- Commercial focused Business Administration
- Quality Engineering

The team are now in a position to measure outcomes due to the first cohort of apprentices completing their apprenticeships. Below are the outcomes for the first cohort which began their apprenticeships in the academic year 2015/16:

Number of apprentices	Completed their framework	Entered Employment	Progressed onto further learning
18	16	14	9
Percentages	89%	78%	50%

The table above demonstrates that the programme has achieved good success within the first cohort of apprentices with over 89% completing their framework. It should also be noted that 50% of the apprentices have also extended their learning once they have completed their initial framework.

Development/Improvement required/Recommendation (R) and Way Forward:

By way of:

- Outcomes (or process or change)
- Provision

The Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone's performance in 2019 continues to improve overall. The transformation of post 16 provision across the County Borough has delivered;

- more post 16 learners,
- a greater range of courses, particularly for vocational provision;
- improved attainment levels, in most measures.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership and management	<p>The Learning Zone will be presenting the 2018/2019 academic year performance to a Member Briefing in the Autumn term and this is an opportunity to have dialogue with Coleg Gwent as we strive for further improvement for all learners across the County Borough.</p> <p>As further WBL results become available, the information will be included within the FADE document.</p> <p>To conclude, the partnership between the Council and Coleg Gwent has matured and a systematic approach is in place to share data at a strategic and operational level. The partnership will be developed further through the establishment of a post 16-partnership board with representation from the Education Directorate, Coleg Gwent and Blaenau Gwent secondary school settings. The intention is for the partnership board to be in place by the spring term 2020.</p>
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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: **15th September 2020**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Education Services DRAFT Self – Evaluation Findings**

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

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Interim 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)
✓	✓	01.09.20			15.09.20	14.10.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide 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.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Blaenau Gwent Education Services are committed to self-review and self-improvement and view these processes as being fundamental to securing ongoing improvement in outcomes, quality and effectiveness. The Education Directorate has adopted a standardised approach for self-evaluation (SE) that is now embedded into the day to day practice. This has been reviewed to align with Estyn's new inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES). This report looks at the emerging findings against the inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES), which will inform evaluations of progress against the key improvement priorities set out in business improvement plans.
- 2.2 The report provides a high-level narrative and the Education Directorate's Self-Evaluation Policy (appendix 1), which sets out the arrangements for effective self-evaluation. The findings from the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) are reflected as actions for improvement in the Directorate's Business Plans at Directorate, Service and Team level. Effective self-evaluation means that the Directorate remains focussed on improving the right things.
- 2.3 A comprehensive data set of school performance, coupled with evaluations of impact and effectiveness of Council based and brokered support feeds into the overall evaluation. It should be noted, however, that self-evaluation is an on-going process and the SER will need to be updated to reflect the 2019-20 provisional KS4 and Post 16 results during the Autumn term 2020.

2.4 A comprehensive self-evaluation process helps identify those areas where progress has been made and where further improvement is required. Emerging findings, via ongoing self-evaluation is captured every Autumn and Spring time as well as via quarterly performance and finance reporting mechanisms. This report details the high-level findings only and these are shown in the Summary SER attached as appendix 2. Moreover, it is the high-level points only, which are presented in the narrative in this report shown under Section 6.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

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

Option 1: to accept the report as presented.

Option 2: Members are requested 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 This report provides the Committee with important and statutory performance monitoring information, as well as opportunity to identify where progress has been made and where further improvement is required.

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

4.1 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan aims for every child to have the best start in life. Through effective self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, 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 as good as it ought to be.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 The Council allocates approximately £42.8 million (2019/20) to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes. The Council's total gross budgeted expenditure per pupil for 2019/20 was £6,372 which is the 4th highest in Wales and £515 above the Welsh average of £5,857.

5.1.2 For 2019/20 the funding delegated to schools was 85.7% which is above the all Wales average and ranked 1st when compared to the family of schools, (Local Authority Budgeted Expenditure on Schools 2019/20). The Education Directorate has an improving position on a 'value for money' basis, in that performance and school categorisation has improved significantly and the

overall central funding has reduced, in line with public sector austerity measures.

- 5.1.3 The Council commissions the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to deliver the statutory functions of school improvement. The annual financial costs being circa £364,000. Schools categorisation profile has improved over the last 5 years against a backdrop of decreasing financial contributions to the EAS: this therefore, effectively represents good value for money. The Education Directorate holds the EAS to account for the impact and effectiveness of their work in schools in Blaenau Gwent.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- 5.2.1 Risk is associated with weak self-evaluation that fails to accurately identify those areas where good progress has been made and where further improvement is needed. Strong self-evaluation helps services target resources at greatest need and hence bring about improvement precisely where it is needed.

- 5.2.2 Risk is associated with underperformance and ineffective processes to improve performance and progress 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.

- 5.2.3 Mitigating actions include:

- strong self-evaluation processes, which accurately identify those areas which need to improve the most;
- the routine monitoring of quantitative and qualitative information, regular quality assurance meetings between the Council and the EAS, regular quality assurance meetings within the Education Directorate and across teams, school inspection findings and school categorisation results; and,
- the progress schools make towards targets is also monitored on a termly basis. School safeguarding processes are also closely monitored.

- 5.2.4 Holistic support packages are devised via regular cross service meetings between OD, Finance, Health and Safety, Education and School Governor Support Services. School level performance data is regularly analysed and evaluated to identify emerging trends.

- 5.2.5 The quality of provision i.e. the quality 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**

This report provides information about statutory, end of Key Stage school performance underpinned by processes set out the School Standards and

Organisation Act Wales (2013) support strategic and operational activity to improve pupil outcomes.

5.4 **Human Resources**

None for this report.

6. **Performance Information**

6.1 **Performance**

Areas where good progress has been made:

- School inspection and school categorisation profile has improved significantly with no primary schools in follow up and excellent practice identified in a number of schools;
- GCSE L2 English and Capped 9 improved;
- GCSE A*/A grades improved in English and Maths;
- Post 16 A-level A*-C and A*-E grades were greater than all-Wales means;
- Value-added progress in English and Maths, reading and numeracy for our 7 and 11 year olds have improved;
- The Youth Service exceeded that of the all-Wales means for reach and accredited learning outcomes ;
- Primary persistent absenteeism reduced to below that of the all-Wales means;
- The School Based Counselling Service provides good support;
- Permanent exclusions reduced;
- Strong progress through the 21st Century schools programme;
- The Headteacher induction and support programme was very well received by aspiring and new Headteachers;
- The staff wellbeing survey was good; and
- The Council and EAS are evidencing improving value for money.

6.2 **Areas where further improvement is required:**

- Higher levels of language acquisition in our very young children in the early years;
- Improved attainment of eFSM pupils and particularly our more able pupils in the early years and throughout education;
- Improve school attendance;
- Progress between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, particularly in English, Maths and Science;
- Further improving provision for pupils with additional learning needs;
- Continuing the work with two schools in an Estyn category; and
- Reduce school exclusions and support parents/carers who opt to Elective Home Educate (EHE).

The Council will continue to work with partners across the Council, for example, Children's Services, Regeneration, Legal, Finance and Organisational Development to focus the work on improving pupil outcomes and supporting school leaders. The Council will also continue to work with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to support our school leaders to improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing. There are changes that it is anticipated be introduced to the reporting and accountability framework for academic year

2020-20 linked to the COVID-19 emergency response, particularly a relaxation in the requirements for School and Council performance reporting arrangements.

6.3 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

The Directorate's self-evaluation processes are aligned with LGES and the regional policy for monitoring, supporting, evaluation and intervention in schools through the categorisation process is derived from the National Categorisation Framework. The categorisation process will be suspended in academic year 2020-21.

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

Analysis of individual school performance data is a key element in ensuring that schools are known well by the Council so that appropriate support and intervention can be directed towards areas of greatest need. Effective self-evaluation processes ensure that resources are targeted at greatest need and secure improvement in longer term.

6.5 *Preventative focus*

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

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

The Council collaborates with neighbouring local authorities through the South East Wales Consortium for the provision of school improvement services from the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and a range of pupil support services for specific groups such as visually and hearing impaired learners.

6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*

Effective monitoring, support, evaluation and intervention are fundamental to the Council's wellbeing objectives.

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

There is no requirement for EQIA assessment since there only a limited change of policy or practice. However, implementation of the Council's monitoring, support, 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 and wellbeing are improved for all children and young people.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 Monitoring of the emerging findings of self-evaluation is an important mechanism for ensuring that Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and the Executive are sufficiently informed to enable them to make informed decisions regarding the quality of education provision and hence pupil outcomes and wellbeing. There are well-established processes in place

to ensure that business plans are considerate of emerging findings for improvement.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Self-Evaluation Policy
- Appendix 2 - High Level Summary

REF: BGESDSEF.216

Blaenau Gwent County Council

EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

SELF EVALUATION POLICY

September 2020

1. Introduction

Blaenau Gwent Education Services are committed to self-review and self-improvement and view these processes as being fundamental to securing ongoing improvement in outcomes, quality and effectiveness.

The Education Directorate has adopted a standard approach for self-evaluation (SE) that is now embedded into the day to day practice. This has been reviewed to align with Estyn's new inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES).

Self-evaluation activities are undertaken throughout the year and the self-evaluation report (SER) for LGES is updated in October and March of every academic year. Updates are aligned to data release dates from Welsh Government and other time points when data and information becomes available.

At the heart of self-evaluation process are four key questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What do we need to do to improve further?
- How are we going to do it?

The established self-evaluation processes allows both the Council and the Education Directorate to take a critical reflective look at practice, performance and effectiveness. In this way, the Council is corporately able to ensure that its work remains focused on those areas that require improvement and is aligned to the provisions set out in the LGES framework and is aligned to our statutory obligations. The Education Directorate endeavours to ensure that all our children and young people and our educational establishments are well supported to achieve and make good progress in all learning settings across the school estate and partners e.g. Coleg Gwent and the Post 16 Learning Zone.

2. Who should be involved?

All relevant stakeholders should be involved in evaluating the Council's Education Services to ensure its continued effectiveness. To achieve this, a range of approaches are used to ensure that any barriers to participation and engagement

are minimised and where possible removed. Moving forward, this will be verified on an annual basis with additional quality assurance processes undertaken to further secure the engagement of stakeholders in this key process. To support this process, a summary SER has been developed at the end of the self-evaluation cycle. The document will highlight the key areas of progress and areas for further improvement and can be used for elected members, schools and wider stakeholders.

The summary SER document is to be distributed to the key stakeholders to ensure that they understand the organisational context and are able to recognise their important contribution to facilitate further improvement. Going forward, this will be managed through core business activities that are aligned to business as usual activities, where officers will provide greater context e.g. breakfast meetings, member briefing sessions, open evenings, parents and other corporate road show events.

For consistency, the following grading question is used in order to assess the response to the question and is used to inform the judgement as to how well the Education Directorate takes account the view of stakeholders in its improvement planning and the services it offers.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
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3. What should be involved?

Self-evaluation will involve:

- Asking deep and searching questions about outcomes and progress, quality of provision and effectiveness of leadership and management;
- Using a range of performance data to inform and guide reflections, including that of matched data to inform judgements about progress for specific groups of learners;
- Using other information such as the Corporate Improvement Plan and family benchmarking data relevant to the particular context;
- Using ongoing reflections and enquiry into practice;
- Considering the needs of children and young people (and the various groups) in context; and,
- Using evidence from a range of sources to inform and support self-evaluation, both qualitative and quantitative.

Officers and commissioned services use a FADE approach to support the collection of this information with individual FADE requirements being set out in a FADE Register. The FADE Register also acts as a deployment list for officers and stakeholders. Deployment of FADEs is kept under review by the Education Directorate's Management Team. The Corporate Director oversees the process and

the compilation of the final SER. To complement this policy a SE Toolkit has been devised comprising aides to support the SE processes.

The toolkit is updated on an annual basis in the summer term based upon the learning from the previous self-evaluation cycle.

4. Why have self-evaluation processes?

- To provide an evidence base upon which to arrive at judgements about pupil outcomes and progress, quality of provision and the effectiveness of leadership and management of Education Services and its future improvement journey;
- To reflect on what has been done to consistently deepen understanding;
- To recognise and celebrate good practice, and where appropriate, use this to support others in line with the Vision for Education and our agreed approach to a school-led, school to school methodology;
- To ensure that stakeholders understand the context of the organisation and the contribution that they can make to further facilitate improvement; and
- To improve the performance, impact and effectiveness of Education Services and its constituent parts, including commissioned services to further enable officers and schools to make informed decisions for our children and young people.

The SE process is a cyclical one and the high level activities are summarised below, however, it should be noted that the COVID-19 response will have an impact on some aspects of self-evaluation work in 2020-21 academic year, such as suspending school categorisation:

Date	What
April to August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisional Teacher Assessment analysis • Performance analysis (school LA vulnerable learners and ALN) • Categorisation review • Self-evaluation toolkit updated • FADES completed in line with the register for last academic year • Improvement tracker for year ahead developed • Emerging findings are reflected as actions in Directorate’s business plans
September to March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All business plans completed on a quarterly basis. • Heads of Service challenge sessions via Wider Corporate Leadership Team (WCLT). • Categorisation confirmed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from current self-evaluation process to inform next process.
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MER: Monitoring (gathering the evidence), Evaluation (arriving at judgments) and Review (making changes as a result) are fundamental components to the improvement process and hence self-evaluation (SE). Findings from SE underpin all business, service and team plans.

There are a range of approaches in place to support this which include:

- Regular reporting to Scrutiny and Executive Committee meetings and Full Council.
- Regular reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).
- Termly Estyn monitoring meetings with the Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) meetings.
- Regular reporting to Directorate Management Team (DMT) meetings.
- Individual – evaluation of the effectiveness and the performance of Heads of Service through peer challenge sessions and the quality assurance FADEs and the resultant business improvement plans.
- Departmental – through team meetings, processes to hold the EAS to account such as regular EAS/ other commissioned service quality assurance meetings, DMT, FADE approach, Directorate business plan
- Monitoring by specific officer groups e.g. ALN QA, School Admission Forum, Budget Forum, JCC, HT meetings etc.
- Headteachers – engagement with Headteachers occurs throughout the year and evaluated as part of the agreed approach to self-evaluation. This work is further supplemented by a two yearly questionnaire of the assessment of the quality of the services offered by education, which coupled with the level of buy back of SLA services offered to schools which are arranged on a 3 yearly basis provide an overview of the level of satisfaction. Engagement on the draft summary SER takes place at cluster level and is facilitated by Education DMT representatives in the latter part of the autumn term. This work is concluded with the final SER presented to Headteachers for final comment in the spring term.

5. Summary

The purpose of self-evaluation is to secure ongoing improvement across services, particularly to enhance wellbeing and progress in pupil outcomes. Self-evaluation is not done in isolation and will be influenced by stakeholders with a key interest and ability to support the implementation of any identified agreed action.

The provision of high quality and tailored education services, which both support and challenge learners is a complex process frequently requiring highly effective

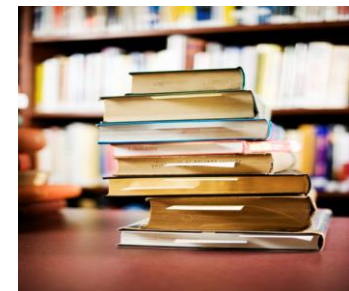
partnership and collaborative working and the involvement of stakeholders being a fundamental aspect to the Council's now mature approach to SE. The Self-Evaluation Policy is considerate of these complex arrangements and seeks to simplify and share the understanding, process and purpose of effective self-evaluation so that ongoing improvement is secured.

This policy is under review in September 2020 and features in the Council's Scrutiny/Executive forward work programmes. The implementation of this policy will be monitored via regular DMT meetings, through performance coaching sessions with relevant officers and by elected members via the forward work programme.

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Education Directorate Self-Evaluation Summary Report Date: Summer 2020



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Blaenau Gwent - Context

Blaenau Gwent has 25 schools and their status is detailed below:

- 2 are Maintained 3-16 Learning Communities,
- 1 Foundation Comprehensive,
- 1 Maintained Comprehensive,
- 1 x Maintained 3-18 Special School,
- 1 x Maintained 3-16 SEBD Special School; and,
- 19 Primaries (of which 4 are voluntary aided / faith schools)

There are currently circa 9,000+ pupils on roll across all Blaenau Gwent schools. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) captures the extent of deprivation as a proportion of residents living in each lower super output area (LSOA). The eight considerations of the WIMD are: income; employment; health; education, skills and training; geographical access to services; housing; physical environment; and community safety. Blaenau Gwent has the highest percentage of its LSOAs areas in the most deprived areas across Wales at 10%, for income (19.1%), education (27.7%), and community safety (23.4%).

The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals in Blaenau Gwent was almost 30% during 2010-16 and the highest of all LAs in Wales by a significant margin. The proportions declined during 2016-19, but BG remained the 2nd highest in Wales for all LA schools and highest for secondary schools during 2018-19. Given the evidential relationship between pupil performance and deprivation (using eFSM as a proxy indicator), pupil outcomes in BG would be expected to be among the lowest in Wales. However, within Blaenau Gwent we have high ambitions for all of our learners and our socio-economic standing is a challenge that we are working to overcome to the benefit of all of our children and young people.

Overall, the 2019 WIMD figures and high eFSM eligibility reflect very high levels of deprivation within the authority. They also indicate the significant consideration required to improve educational outcomes to levels within other similar LAs and to consistently match the all-Wales averages. 2018-19 performance figures show that Blaenau Gwent has achieved parity, and indeed, out-performed some LAs in a number of measures confirming the progress being made within its schools.

The 2020 KS4 and Post 16 KS5 provisional results will be included in the Summary SER during the Autumn term to inform the on-going self-evaluation process, however, there is recognition the outcomes were awarded via the Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs) and/or the awarding examination body's assessed grade.

Executive Summary:

This Executive Summary is a high-level analysis of key strategic areas of progress, and importantly, aspects of work identified for improvement across the Estyn Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework. There are clearly more details in the Main Self-Evaluation Report (SER), however, the Executive Summary provides a high-level synopsis to enable the Education Directorate, the Council and key partners to understand and focus on critical strands of work to continue to improve outcomes for children and young people across the County Borough. The information detailed in this document regularly features in the self-evaluation reports presented to Scrutiny and Executive Committees. The Council will continue to work with partners across the Council, for example, Children's Services, Regeneration, Legal, Finance and Organisational Development to focus the work on improving pupil outcomes and supporting school leaders. The Council will also continue to work with partners, such as the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to support our school leaders to improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing. There are changes that will be introduced to the reporting and accountability framework for academic year 2020-20 linked to the COVID-19 emergency response, particularly a relaxation in the requirements for School and Council performance reporting arrangements. Clearly, the Education Directorate will need to remain focussed on self-evaluation procedures, as outlined in the review of the SE Policy 2020, particularly an analysis of the provisional KS4 and Post 16 results during the Autumn term 2020.

Blaenau Gwent's Education Services are committed to self-review and self-improvement and view these processes as being fundamental to securing ongoing improvement in outcomes, quality and effectiveness. The Education Directorate has adopted a standardised approach for self-evaluation (SE) that is now embedded into the day to day practice. This has been reviewed to align with Estyn's new inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES). This Summary SER looks at the emerging findings against the inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES), which will inform evaluations of progress against the key improvement priorities set out in business and improvement plans.

Key Strategic Areas of Progress

Areas where good progress has been made:

School inspection and school categorisation profile has improved significantly with no primary schools in follow up and excellent practice identified in a number of schools;

- GCSE L2 English and Capped 9 improved;
- GCSE A*/A grades improved in English and Maths;
- Post 16 A-level A*-C and A*-E grades were greater than all-Wales means;
- Value-added progress in English and Maths, reading and numeracy for our 7 and 11 year olds have improved;
- The Youth Service exceeded that of the all-Wales means for reach and accredited learning outcomes;

- Primary persistent absenteeism reduced to below that of the all-Wales means;
- The School Based Counselling Service provides good support;
- Permanent exclusions reduced;
- Strong progress through the 21st Century schools programme;
- The Headteacher induction and support programme was very well received by aspiring and new Headteachers;
- The staff wellbeing survey was good; and
- The Council and EAS are evidencing improving value for money.

Key Strategic Areas for Improvement

Areas where further improvement is required:

- Higher levels of language acquisition in our very young children in the early years;
- Improved attainment of eFSM pupils and particularly our more able pupils in the early years and throughout education;
- Improve school attendance;
- Reducing the gender gap between boys and girls;
- Progress between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, particularly in English, Maths and Science;
- Further improving provision for pupils with additional learning needs;
- Continuing the work with two schools in an Estyn category; and,
- Reduce school exclusions and support parents/carers who opt to Elective Home Educate (EHE).

1.1 Standards and Progress Overall - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

Foundation Phase

- Almost two-thirds of schools improved LLCE results in 2019, while a similar proportion of schools exceeded their targets in MD.

Key Stage 2

- LA-level FP-KS2 value-added progress in:
 - NC maths was above the national figure.
 - Language was a little higher than expected in 2019.
 - Progress in reading was seen in about two-thirds of mainstream schools (about half in 2019) and numeracy reasoning was better than expected in most schools.

- The majority of schools had similar or higher L4+ results compared to their 2019 targets.
- School categorisation and inspection outcomes have improved in recent years.

Key Stage 3

- Two out of four schools improved L5+ English outcomes & three schools improved their L5+ oracy & writing results in 2019.
- L6+ outcomes improved for English 2017-19 and particularly for 2019.
- Three of the four schools improved L6+ outcomes in English and Welsh 2nd language during 2019 and three schools improved their reading & writing results.
- At LA-level literacy outcomes (oracy, reading & writing) all improved in 2019 with modest improvements made in MFL & PE.
- LA-level KS2-3 value-added progress in reading improved from the previous year
- LA-level progress in numeracy reasoning was also better than expected and twice that for reading.
- 3 of the 4 mainstream secondary schools maintained or improved progress for NC English

Key Stage 4

- Capped 9 points score improved in 2019 and achieved the LA target
- The proportion of learners gaining A*/A grades improved in both English and maths in 2019.
- The LA-level Welsh Bacc result was higher than expected in relation to the LA's eFSM entitlement.
- Higher than expected ranking in relation to eFSM except for numeracy & science. This was particularly so for the Skills Challenge Certificate result which ranked 7th out of the 22 Welsh LAs.
- The proportion of learners attaining A*-C grades in Welsh 1st language increased in 2019 with an improving trend during the last 2 years. 17% of the Welsh-medium cohort attained A*/A grades in Welsh 1st language.
- Abertillery improved outcomes in all but one performance indicator in 2019.
- The proportion of learners gaining A*/A grades in maths improved in every mainstream school in 2019 and in 3 out of 4 mainstream schools for English & capped 9 points scores.

Post-16

- At A level and AS level, the proportions of learners attaining A*-C and A*-E grades were a higher than the all-Wales means in 2019.
- For vocational courses, attainment rates in 2019 were similar to or higher than in the previous year except for L3.
- Entry level learners were 100% successful.

Youth Service

- In 2018/19, 2,010 (17%) of 11-25 year olds were registered as Reach and supported by the Youth Service (Wales 16%). Of these, 301 (15%) gained 456 nationally recognised accreditations.
- In addition, the Youth Service recorded 7,298 anonymous contacts during 2018-19 through the 11-18 Counselling Service, C Card, detached youth work, outreach and out of school activities and events, 1,000 more than previous year.
- Current data indicates 1.69% of learners being NEET. The all Wales figure has not yet been published.

1.1 Standards and Progress Overall - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

Areas identified for Improvement and Action Required

Foundation Phase

- BG and national averages at LO4+ and LO5+ fell for all performance indicators during the last 2 years with the fall being greater for BG in 2019, increasing the performance gap.
- LO6+ differences between BG and national means in 2019 were greatest for PSD.
- A majority of schools attained lower than target results in 2019 indicating inaccuracy and unreliability within school target setting procedures.
- **There is a need to develop value-added procedures for Reception Year to Y2 in order to determine the progress made by pupils within the Foundation Phase.**

Key Stage 2

- Welsh and Welsh 2nd language outcomes fell to a greater extent in 2019 with the latter having a declining trend during the last 2 years.
- L4+ writing outcomes fell more noticeably in 2019.
- Underperforming schools (for NC assessments) the same as in previous years and these continue to be of concern with regard to pupils' learning and standards achieved.
- FP-KS2 value-added progress in NC language moved below the national figure.
- **A minority of schools had inconsistencies between NC and national test progress scores. This questions the accuracy and reliability of assessment procedures within these centres.**

Key Stage 3

- L5+ outcomes fell in 2019, particularly for maths, science art, history and geography. All results were lower than the 2019 national means and particularly so for MFL and history. These falls reflect those observed within Wales as a whole. There is a concern regarding assessment reliability at two of the four LA schools.
- A majority of schools had results below their 2019 targets at both L5+ & L6+. Results also indicate target setting as generally unreliable in schools at KS3 (as in previous years).
- LA-level KS2-3 value-added progress in NC English and maths fell considerably in 2019 and was well below the national figure in both subjects. Progress in NC maths was barely adequate and was unsatisfactory in NC English.
- A significant proportion of pupils regressed more than 10 SAS points in both reading and numeracy reasoning during 2016-19. An inordinate number of these pupils were from one centre.
- Some schools had inconsistencies between NC and national test progress scores. This questions the accuracy and reliability of assessment procedures within these centres.

Key Stage 4

- Results for the new National Measures and in relation to the LA's eFSM entitlement were all lower than the national means.
- The proportion of learners gaining L2+ and 5 A*/A grades in 2019 was below the LA targets and fell by about 2%, well below the national mean.
- L2 maths & numeracy outcomes fell in 3 out of the 4 mainstream schools in 2019.
- Learner outcomes for Tredegar fell in over one-half of performance indicators in 2019.
- KS3-4 value-added progress
 - declined for both English and maths in nearly all schools during 2017-19 compared with previous years.
 - for maths was much weaker than for English in all mainstream schools.
- Too many pupils failed to progress (or even regressed) in English and particularly in maths in KS4 during 2017-19. On average, pupils at Abertillery and Brynmawr made no progress or regressed in maths during 2017-19.
- For WG modelled estimates, all residuals were negative except for the Welsh Bacc Skills Challenge result.
- Welsh 2nd language full-course results fell for all grade indicators in 2019 (as was the case nationally) and were lower than the all-Wales figures for higher grade levels.
- The proportion of pupils achieving no qualifications doubled to 2.4% in 2019 and was over twice as high as the all-Wales average.

Post 16

- The proportion of learners attaining higher level grades (A*/A) at both A and AS level has increased in 2019, although is still below the Wales benchmark level so is an area for further improvement.
- There has been a small dip in vocational success rates in 2018-2019 and there is room for improvement at L2 courses, which is currently at 80% completion rate. Success rates across the board, however, remain relatively strong.
- Embed process initiated in October 2019 where Coleg Gwent provides monthly updates on retention rates and specific learner withdrawals.

Risk Considerations

- The risk of failure to continue to make progress on raising educational standards features in the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) and risk mitigation is monitored by Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Elected Members via Scrutiny and the Executive Committees.

1.2 Standards and Progress of Specific Groups - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

Foundation Phase

- All LO6+ gender differences were lower than the all-Wales means and particularly so for LLCE.
- Almost one-third of statemented pupils attained LO5+ in LLCE and MD. Both results were higher than the 2018 national means.

Key Stage 2

- L4+gender differences were lower than the all-Wales means.

- Mean progress scores for boys & girls (as NC levels) were higher than expected during KS2. On average, boys had lower FP outcomes in 2015 but made similar NC progress to girls during KS2.
- Boys made greater progress in both reading and numeracy reasoning during 2015-19.
- Mean progress scores (as NC levels) for eFSM & non eFSM pupils were similar to or higher than expected.
- Over one-half of ethnic minority pupils attained L5 in both English and maths. The mean NC levels were higher than for the whole Y6 cohort in 2019 and national test scores in both reading and numeracy reasoning were also higher.
- All but one LAC progressed at least 2 NC levels for language during KS2 and all but 2 did so in maths during 2019.
- The mean NC progress rates for LAC during 2015-19 were similar to those for the whole cohort in both subject areas.

Key Stage 3

- L6+ gender differences were lower than the all-Wales means in each core subject, lower than the previous year for most non-core subjects and lower than the national means for about one-half of non-core subjects. L6+ English results also improved in 2019 with a consequent narrowing of the performance gap compared with national outcomes.
- On average, boys made greater progress in numeracy reasoning than girls during KS3 and so reversed the gender gap.
- eFSM and non-Efsm – 2019:
 - differences were lower than the national averages at both L5+ and L6+
 - eFSM pupils made greater progress at reading and numeracy, narrowing the performance gap
 - Mean progress scores in reading and numeracy reasoning were better than expected
- Statemented pupils made, on average, very good progress in reading & numeracy reasoning throughout 2016-19.
- All but 2 of the 16 ethnic minority pupils with matched NC results attained L5 or better in English and maths in 2019. Over two-thirds of EM pupils attained L6 or better in both subjects.
- 2 pupils reached L7 in English and 5 did so in maths.
- The mean progress rates for LAC in reading and numeracy reasoning during 2016-19 were notably higher than the whole cohort.

Key Stage 4

- KS3-4 progress for eFSM pupils during 2017-19 was similar to or better than that for non-eFSM pupils.
- MAT pupils made far more progress than the Y11 cohort as a whole in both English language / literacy and in maths / numeracy during 2017-19.
- The proportions of SEN pupils attaining A*-C and A*-G grades in English language and maths was relatively high, much improved compared to previous year and generally similar to those for non-SEN pupils.
- Ethnic minority pupils had similar outcomes and average progress rates to non-EM pupils in English language.
- In English language / literature and in maths / numeracy compared to the whole Y11 cohort:
 - Young offenders generally had higher outcomes
 - LAC had similar outcomes
 - Low attenders had similar or higher outcomes

1.2 Standards and Progress of Specific Groups - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

Areas identified for improvement and Required Action

Foundation Phase:

- Boys' outcomes continue to be below those of girls in each main performance indicator. However, girls' higher level (LO6+) results have fallen noticeably more than for boys during the last 2 years.
- eFSM pupils had lower outcomes than non-eFSM pupils in nearly all performance indicators in 2019 and the differences generally increased during 2017-19.
- Except for LLCW (attributable to just one Welsh medium school in BG), LO6+ outcomes were lower than for Wales as a whole during the last 4 years.
- BG pupils on SA and SA+ had lower outcomes than those seen nationally (in 2018)

Key Stage 2

- Boys' outcomes continue to be below those of girls in each main performance indicator. While L5+ gender gaps closed in 2019, this was due to girls' results falling more than for boys.
- eFSM pupils had lower outcomes than non-eFSM pupils in all performance indicators in 2019. The differences were higher than the national means for most indicators and increased during 2017-19.
- eFSM pupils made less progress than non-eFSM pupils during KS2.
- About 6% fewer BG pupils attained L5+ in English and about 7% fewer in maths compared to Wales in 2019.
- Only one BG pupil was recorded as attaining L6+ (in English) in 2019.
- About 4% fewer BG pupils attained SAS >115 in reading and about 7% fewer in numeracy reasoning compared to Wales in 2019.
- The proportions of pupils attaining L4 or better in language fell for all SEN groups in 2019. All outcomes were below the 2018 national means.
- SA and SA+ pupils had considerably lower reading scores than non-SEN pupils in 2015 and, on average, made much less progress during KS2.
- SA pupils had considerably lower numeracy reasoning scores than non-SEN pupils in 2015 and, on average, regressed in in this skill area during KS2.

Key Stage 3

- Boys' outcomes continue to be below those of girls in a majority of performance indicators. While L5+ & L6+ gender gaps closed in 2019, this was predominantly due to girls' results falling more than for boys.
- Boys' mean NC progress scores were lower than for the girls in both English & maths.
- Boys made less NC progress than girls in both subjects during KS3 and so widened the gender gap.
- eFSM pupils had lower outcomes than non-eFSM pupils in all performance indicators in 2019 (but the differences were lower than the national means).

- eFSM pupils made less progress than non-eFSM pupils during KS3 and so widened the performance gap.
- L6+ outcomes in maths & particularly science fell during the last 3 years and decreased a little more than that observed nationally
- About 10% fewer BG pupils attained L6+ in English and in maths compared to Wales in 2019.
- About 7% fewer BG pupils attained L7+ in English and about 12% fewer in maths compared to Wales in 2019.
- Except for statemented pupils, SEN results were lower than the 2018 national means.
- On average, SEN pupils made less NC progress than non-SEN pupils during KS3 and particularly so for SA+ pupils in maths.
- On average, SA and SA+ pupils made much less progress in reading and numeracy reasoning than non-SEN pupils during KS3.
- NC and national test scores of young offenders were much lower than mainstream averages. Progress rates were also lower than for mainstream pupils. A significant proportion of YOs failed to progress in either NC English or NC maths during KS3.
- Both NC and national test outcomes were, on average, lower for LAC than for other mainstream pupils

Key Stage 4

- Boys' outcomes continue to be below those of girls in each main performance indicator. Where the performance gaps between boys and girls narrowed, it was usually due to a fall in girls' outcomes rather than an improvement in those for boys.
- The proportion of pupils attaining 5 A*/A grades fell by about 2% in 2019 and was well below the national mean.
- KS3-4 progress rates for boys and girls in English language / literacy during 2017-19 were just about adequate while those for maths / numeracy were unsatisfactory. The weak progress in maths was a main contributing factor to low school and LA performance at GCSE.
- River Centre pupils had lower outcomes and average progress rates in English language / literature and in maths / numeracy compared to the whole Y11 cohort.
- Ethnic Minority pupils had lower outcomes and KS3-4 progression rates in maths / numeracy than in language. This suggest that support for language development is generally effective at KS4 but that EM pupils may find more difficulty in transposing their language skills within a mathematical context.

Risk Considerations

- The risk of failure to continue to make progress on raising educational standards features in the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) and risk mitigation is monitored by Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Elected Members via Scrutiny and the Executive Committees.

1.3 Well-being and Attitudes to Learning - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- Standards of wellbeing and attitudes to learning are good in most primary and secondary schools. High proportions of both primary pupils and their parents expressed positive views about their children's wellbeing in schools.
- All pre-schools and schools participate in effective Healthy School programmes with exemplar work being recognised nationally and there are effective sport and physical activity programmes e.g. swimming programmes with high levels of achievement for learners in place. The proportions of CYP attending sports centres and enjoying PE in school on a weekly basis is higher than the national averages.

- An effective 11-18 counselling service in place for with very positive feedback from attendees, with an extended service for 18-25 year olds.
- BG is one of only a very few Councils to have a fully compliant 3rd School Sport Survey to inform more targeted work.
- 3 out of 4 BG secondary schools exceeded the WG modelled figures for attendance in 2018-19.
- Relatively low rate of fixed-term exclusions compared with other LAs in Wales.
- Improving procedures for tracking Children Missing Education (CME).
- An improving trend of increased opportunities for *pupil voice* in BG schools and greater learner participation in decision-making.
- Accredited outcomes for registered young people with the Youth Services are strong and above the Welsh mean.

1.3 Well-being and Attitudes to Learning - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

Attendance and persistent absenteeism - Primary:

- To improve primary school attendance in BG from 94.3% to equate at least to the all-Wales mean of 94.5%
- To reduce primary unauthorised absence in BG from 1.4% to that of the all-Wales means which is 1.3%
- To work to reduce PA in the primary sector to well below that of the all-Wales means i.e. Wales= 1.7%, BG=1.6%

Attendance and persistent absenteeism - Secondary:

- To improve secondary school attendance from 92.9% to 93.8% (all-Wales means)
- To reduce unauthorised absence in the secondary sector in BG from 2.2% to below that of the all-Wales means (1.6%)
- To reduce persistent absenteeism in the secondary sector in BG from 4.1% to below that of the all-Wales means (also currently 4.1%)
- To continue to reduce the numbers of pupils excluded in primary and secondary sectors.
- To continue to improve pupil behaviour in one school in particular and staff response to pupil concerns
- To further enhance pupil voice activities to inform self-evaluation planning activities

Risk Considerations

- The risk is that school attendance has an impact on pupil progression and learning, particularly in light of the COVID-19 emergency.

2.1 Support for school improvement - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The LA has improved and detailed knowledge of individual, class and school performance particularly in relation to value-added progress.
- Improved coordination of support to schools via good partnership working between the LA and EAS
- Improved School Categorisation and School Inspection profile over the last 3 years.
- Good outcomes / progress for identified vulnerable groups in recent years.
- The Council is swift in its use of statutory powers which are kept under review

- The process for the appointment of LA Governors is now well established and there is evidence of improved governance in a majority of schools.

2.1 Support for school improvement - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- Partnership work between BG Inclusion Services and EAS Challenge Advisers needs to continue.
- Support to improve early language acquisition and general skill development in the early years.
- Support to improve the effectiveness of learning & teaching of English / reading & maths / numeracy within KS3 & 4 with a particular focus on eFSM pupils and vulnerable groups.
- Support to improve the effectiveness of PDG grant planning and implementation
- Increasing the number / proportions of learners who achieve higher level outcomes at each key stage, but particularly in the Foundation Phase
- Support for assessment and target setting procedures within schools, with a particular focus on formative (assessment for learning).
- Increasing opportunities for schools to share good practice.

Risk Considerations

- The risk is that the COVID-19 emergency response has impacted upon learner progression across the board, but particularly in KS4 and early year's skill development e.g. language acquisition.

2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

Good progress has been made through the comprehensive ALN Provision Improvement Plan:

- The River Centre is now open, ASD provision is in place,
- The ALN Service has undergone a review and is being reconfigured to meet the diversity of present need,
- Resource Base provision has improved, particularly for pupils who experience Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD),
- Excellent practice has been secured in Pen-y-Cwm Special School,
- Estyn judgements in school inspections for care support and guidance remain good or better.

Practice to identify pupil progress using matched data (also for specific pupils groups) is now in its second year and is helping to identify where further improvement in provision is needed, for example,

- in KS3 in particular and in identified schools
- in the progress rates between KS 3 and KS 4 in English and Maths, and
- to secure improved progress for all vulnerable groups, including eFSM and particularly during and between KS3 and KS 4

2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

Areas identified for improvement and Required Action

- The quality and effectiveness of support to increase attainment of young pupils in the early years and at the end of the Foundation Phase (particularly eFSM but not solely) needs to improve so that progress rates going forward for these learners is accelerated significantly.
- The quality and effectiveness of support provided for all vulnerable learners needs to improve so that attainment and progress increases significantly both during and between KS 3 and 4. The quality of provision and effectiveness of leadership and management of inclusion, in these Key Stages, need to improve, particularly in identified schools and settings and for the specific groups in this report.
- Exclusions: Monitoring of pupil level exclusion data by all Inclusion teams has improved and is effective, informing the quality of Officers' work and dialogue with individual schools. The establishment of the Safer Schools Partnership approach is beginning to support improved partnership work which will help reduce exclusions in the longer term. Work is currently mainly focussed on two secondary settings in particular to reduce exclusions.
- Revolving Door Approach: effective support in the River Centre is provided to pupils presenting with difficult behaviour and those reluctant to attend school. However, further developments are needed to develop capacity within mainstream settings to enable pupils to remain in and return back to their host schools, particularly for KS 3 pupils. There needs to be a service agreement in place between the River Centre and the Council to formalise the arrangements.
- ALN: the LA and EAS need to work more closely to support schools in improving analysis of pupils with SEN who perform below expected levels to ensure that all pupils show good progress in line with their ability from their individual baselines, particularly for those pupils in KS 3 at SA and SA +level. Such analyses is to include the impact of targeted interventions
- ALN in Early Years: Panel arrangements are effective in providing support for EY pupils with ALN. However, developing ALN capacity-building in EY is in the early stages of development and needs to be accelerated.
- EHE practice for those on the cusp of EHE needs to be more targeted. The Action Plan needs to be fully implemented.
- CME: The local authority needs to continue to monitor CME practices and address any gaps as they arise and embed the agreed processes and ensure that regular reporting continues.
- Young People who offend: all children involved with YOS to have access to 25 hours of education. At KS3 & 4, teachers and schools need to improve levels of support for pupils in line with required improvements for mainstream pupils. Schools / the LA will review their current methodology for SEN categorisation in KS4 to ensure pupils receive the required support necessary for them to attain outcomes aligned to their ability a particular emphasis on improving progress and outcomes of pupils in GCSE maths. Ensure the YOS fully implement their Literacy & Numeracy Strategy. Ensure that the recommendations made by ESTYN via their thematic report are fully implemented.
- EPS Service: to secure better blended working with Children's Services to explore how the EPS can work more effectively within Early Years settings. Work with colleagues in the wider Inclusion team and regionally to continue to provide support and challenge for schools in line with the ALNET Act. In particular, this will need to look at developing ALNCos' role to become more strategic, while also building the skills of the wider workforce to meet the needs of vulnerable learners. Work to develop more consistent practice within and between schools around

behaviour management, in its widest sense, to include a re-focus on the high quality research undertaken by the EPS around SEBD, literacy and assessment as well as developing schools' understanding of the ACEs agenda (with awareness training provided via EAS on a cluster-basis) and further attention to schools supporting the work of their ELSAs.

- Pregnant School Girls and Young Mums: To ensure that as a local authority we are made aware of these pupils in a timely basis, so that exclusions, attendance, support and any alternative provisions are monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis and in compliance with the policy.
- Review the Pen-y-Cwm capacity to meet the increasing demand for places.

Risk Considerations

- The strategic risk relates to the readiness for the implementation of the ALNET Bill's approach to supporting learners presenting ALN and meeting the increasing demand for places in Pen-y-Cwm.

2.3 Support for Other Services - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The Council's 21st Century Schools investment objectives are clearly aligned to the Vision for Education in improving educational standards and this is evidenced in a positive Gateway Review in 2019. Preparations for the Band B programme are well structured and deliverable.
- The Youth Service is good, taking account of its statutory duties and meeting them effectively, providing a wide range of universal and targeted opportunities for young people aged 11-25. Effective participation structures are embedded across the Youth Service. The Independent 11-18 Counselling Service is very effective. The service is line managed by the Youth Service, which allows a co-ordinated approach to wellbeing between all projects.
- The Council has an enhanced knowledge of school capacity linked to the effective annual monitoring processes that are in place; along with an on-going facilities review/management protocols and effective admissions processes. This is evidenced by the annual review and publication of the School Admissions Policy.
- Strong progress is being made in relation to surplus places reduction, with the Council seeing an overall reduction in both the primary and secondary sectors over the last 6 years; with a continued decrease projected for both primary and secondary over the next 2 years, taking the primary percentage to 11% and secondary to 9%, by the 2021/22 academic year – with the overall combined projected status as 12%. There are very few sufficiency issues within Blaenau Gwent schools at present.
- Blaenau Gwent's Post 16 provision is provided in partnership with Coleg Gwent at the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone in Ebbw Vale. The Learning Zone's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) recognises that there is an effective partnership approach between the Council and Coleg Gwent, which is resulting in improvements to the participation rates of Post 16 learners, a broadening of the learning offer and increasing attainment levels for both academic and vocational learners. The 'A' Level A*-E pass rate is approaching 99% and well above the national average and the vocational learning success rate (retention/attainment) is over 80% against all levels. The ALIS tertiary benchmarking data places the Learning Zone in the top 8% of Post 16 learning institutions for added value across the UK.
- The Council have a highly effective system in place linked to forecasting and monitoring pupil place requirements; this is evidenced pupil projection accuracy, which was at 97 % for primary 94% for secondary during the 2016/17 academic session and has been continually high over the last 3 academic years.

- The Council has good arrangements in place to support the coordination of early years, childcare and play to ensure sufficiency. Childcare is a rapidly developing sector in Blaenau Gwent and has grown from 142 registered places in 2002 to 1332 places currently. The sector continues to develop in response to emerging needs.

2.3 Support for Other Services - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- The delivery of the WESP targets is dependent upon the Welsh medium seedling proposal and the need to secure the revenue.
- The ET and Youth Services are very dependent upon external funding and sustainability is a key consideration. Therefore, continued monitoring of team capacity is required in order to assess capacity requirements and secure/ sustain the positive progression of service priorities. The ESF Inspire funding risk needs to be escalated.
- There is a need to consider the management of the home to school and college transport operations and/or how the Environment/Regeneration and Education Directorates develop procedures, and agreements that are able to more effectively address identified gaps in reviewing the policy.
- A review of online admissions is required, in order to further improve parental engagement with the admissions process, and address the current ineffective online system. A business case is under development, in line with the use of Capita One's online module, which is the system used within current neighbouring and other Councils throughout Wales. This will require investment, which will be beneficial in the long-term and could enhance partnership working and data monitoring with other Council.

Risk Considerations

- There are risks associated with the revenue implications associated with the Welsh medium proposal as well as the Youth Services Inspire initiative, which is currently funded through European (ESF) funding.
- Responding to the COVID-19 emergency to ensure that learner progression is maintained in safe settings.

3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The improving School Categorisation and School Inspection profile over the last 3 years demonstrates the increased effectiveness of leaders and managers in Local Government Education Services in Blaenau Gwent.
- The Council considers all evidence and implements its full use of statutory powers, where applicable.
- The impact of good, effective leadership is demonstrated through programme completion for example, the opening of Six Bells, the River Centre, good progress through the 21st Century Schools Band A programme and approval of Band B programme for 2019 to 2025 period.
- Regional leadership is being exercised well by senior officers.

3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- To initiate the recruitment process for the appointment of a Corporate Director of Education post during the Autumn term 2020. This will be followed with a review of the Education Directorate's structural requirements.
- To continue to develop officer expertise through the Professional Learning Offer.
- To further develop member led self-evaluation activity across key service areas located within Local Government Education Services, for example via the Scrutiny sub-group looking at wellbeing in schools.
- To continue to develop member understanding and effectiveness via the Member Development Programme.

Risk Considerations

- There are risks associated with securing effective Corporate Director leadership for the Education Directorate, with recruitment initiated in the Autumn term.

3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The Self-Evaluation Policy (reviewed September 2020) and the SE Toolkit clearly sets out the ongoing cycle for self-evaluation processes and reporting. The FADE approach to writing evaluations is now embedded into routine practice. Processes are totally aligned with corporate policy. The Education Directorate is confident in its SE processes and their ability to sustain continual improvement. The Council is swift in its action and use of full statutory powers where applicable, to secure the improvement required.
- Partnership working between the Council and the EAS is strong and is subject to significant joint working and quality assurance. Impact evaluations reveal that the EAS and direct work of Challenge Advisers is having a positive impact on outcomes, provision and the quality of leadership. The School Categorisation and School Inspection profile has improved significantly over the last 3 years effectively evidencing the effectiveness of our self-evaluation processes. Improvement has been secured in EFLC (out of SI), in Glyncoed Primary School and to a certain degree in ALC (ESTYN monitoring visit summer term 2019). Progress in ALC will continue to be monitored.

3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- To continue to engage members in meaningful self-evaluation activity, for example the Scrutiny sub-group looking at wellbeing in schools.
- To continue to ensure that business plans bring about the improvement required.
- To continue to engage with a wider stakeholder group when undertaking evaluations, particularly Headteachers.
- To establish the Post 16 Partnership Board formally during the Autumn term 2020.

Risk Considerations

- The risk is that self-evaluation and improvement planning fails to deliver improved outcomes for learners.

3.3 Professional learning - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- Senior Officers now hold Chair positions across a number of all Wales groups; this supports their ongoing professional development.
- 121 coaching sessions are embedded as routine practice.
- PDR underpinned by an effective 360 process is now also an embedded process. This also includes contributions from Headteachers for senior Officer's PDR i.e. the Corporate Director for Education and Head of Education Transformation.
- New Headteacher and aspiring deputy induction learning offer is in place and led by an experienced Headteacher.

3.3 Professional learning - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- To engage in more formal evaluations of the impact and effectiveness of CPD for Directorate officers.
- To develop further cost neutral ways in which officers can continue to engage in professional development activity set against a backdrop of Council austerity measures.

Risk Considerations

- The risk is that there is less resources to support professional learning and this impacts on the Directorate and schools' improvement journeys.

3.4 Safeguarding - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The Safeguarding Matrix approach to capturing information is helpful and supports the ongoing improvement in practice in this area.
- The close working arrangements between Education and Social Services have developed well, further supporting a coherence of approach regarding safeguarding in schools and settings. The Safeguarding Policy is regularly reviewed and understood by key stakeholders.
- Recent work to respond to community safety issues, counter potential terrorism and extremist behaviours has progressed well, for example, the Safer School Partnership, the Respect and Resilience Action Plan.
- The Operation Encompass work has progressed very well and supports schools in this regard.
- Quality assurance processes to test the robustness of safeguarding processes have been implemented and inform ongoing work in this area.
- The new Council Policy requiring all school Governors to be DBS cleared is being implemented.

3.4 Safeguarding - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- Continue to develop policy and practice that is responsive to emerging school concerns in line with the Vision for Education of school led improvement in a contextual safeguarding approach.
- Full implementation of VAWDASV (Group 1) training needs to be achieved at school level, as well as the implementation of Group 2 training across all LGES settings.
- The 360-degree safe Cymru Policy needs to be agreed by the Executive and implemented in all schools.
- Digitalisation of the safeguarding matrix to be developed and streamlined to enable greater readability, including the roll-out of MyConcern now that the Council has secured a revenue budget.
- Provide greater flexibility in the training offer to increase the uptake of safeguarding training by school governors

Risk Considerations

- There is a risk that the roll-out of the safeguarding package MyConcern is not implemented fully across the school estate.

3.5 Use of Resources - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The school's Individual Schools Budget (ISB) has been prioritised. Schools have been given a 1.59% uplift for 19/20. Predicted for 20/21 is approximately 5% which is slightly above the Council increase of 4.9%. Capital has been secured to match fund the 21st Century Schools Programme.
- Strategic Education Improvement Manager and Service Manager for Inclusion now in post and fully functional.
- Staffing review of officers without line management responsibility completed.
- Financial Efficiency Savings: devised, approved and budget agreed for 2019/20. No savings are required for FY 20/21.
- SENCOM Review completed – BG contributed extensively to the review and supports the findings.
- GEMS provide good value for money
- Arrangements with the regional Education Achievement Service (EAS) provide good value for money.
- There is good engagement of Blaenau Gwent elected members in the governance arrangements of the EAS; thereby effectively holding the EAS to account.
- Use of resources i.e. Education staffing have been significantly streamlined to ensure greater value for money.
- 21st Century Band B Programme has been approved
- The Education Transformation, Youth Service and Inclusion Services provide good value for money.
- Schools have worked strategically with the Directorate to establish a Premature Retirement Contribution budget for staff terminations.
- Majority of schools have signed up to the 3 year SLA arrangement for support services with the Council.

3.5 Use of Resources - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- Bridging the Gap Programme to continue to seek greater effectiveness and efficiencies, where available.
- To review the Education Directorate Professional Learning Programme so that it provides an effective, overarching strategy; which links professional learning with the findings of self-evaluation and the broad aims of the Directorate.
- To evaluate the impact and effectiveness of staff professional learning on outcomes, wellbeing, provision and the quality of leadership of LGES.
- The viability of other SEWC regional services needs to be kept under close review to ensure sustainability and value for money going forward.
- Schools' deficit balances in the secondary sector have increased and need to be kept under close review going forward; timely support to be provided by the LA.
- To escalate the risk level for Youth Service's funding, as ESF comes to an end in 2022.
- There will need to be close monitoring and support for schools predicting surplus and deficit budgets, particularly for the two all-through schools;
- Effective monitoring of the out of county placement revenue budget is required; and,
- Facilitating robust Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and partnership arrangements with key partners, such as the EAS to ensure effective and sustainable provision for schools.

Risk Considerations

- Failure to deliver the corporate revenue savings requirements, in line with the Bridging the Gap proposals. This is likely to be impacted by the continued response to the COVID-19 arrangements moving forward.

Agenda Item 11

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: **15th September 2020**

Report Subject: **Revised LA Governor Policy**

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

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Jones, Strategic Education Improvement Manager**

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	01.09.20			15.09.2020	14.10.20		

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consult Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee on the revised Local Authority Governor Policy prior to consideration at the Executive Committee.

2 Scope and Background

- 2.1 The original Local Authority Governor policy was agreed and implemented during the 2014-15 academic year and established a Member Panel process for the appointment and removal of Local Authority Appointed Governors.
- 2.2 Education and Learning Scrutiny Members will be aware that each maintained school must have a governing body constituted in accordance with the Education Act 2002.
- 2.3 The governing bodies of all maintained schools are corporate bodies. As such, a corporate body has a legal identity separate from that of its members.
- 2.4 As governing bodies are corporate bodies, individual governors are generally protected from personal liability as a result of the governing body's decisions and actions. Provided they act honestly, reasonably and in good faith, any liability will fall on the governing body even if it has exceeded its powers, rather than on individual members.
- 2.5 All school governing bodies are a combination of appointed or elected governors of various types. The composition of each governing body will depend upon the number and age range of pupils at the school and the category of the school

- 2.6 All governing bodies have four key groups of governors; these are:
- **Parent Governors** are elected by the parents or appointed by the governing body to represent the interests of parents on the governing body.
 - **Teacher Governors** are elected by fellow teaching staff at the school.
 - **Staff Governors** are elected from and by the non-teaching staff employed to work at the school.
 - **Local Education Authority (LEA) Governors** are appointed by the Local Authority. Local Authority's can appoint any eligible person as an LEA governor. For example, not all LEA governors are councillors, they may include any person who is interested in supporting schools and whose appointment has the support of the authority.

2.7 In addition to these, the Headteacher (or acting Headteacher) is a member of the governing body unless he or she chooses not to be. Also, different categories of governing bodies may also include some governors of the following types: sponsor, community governor foundation governor etc.

2.8 The revised policy has been strengthened to ensure that the local authority can discharge its statutory function in a timely manner and is considerate of current operational panel arrangements. Consultation on the development of the policy has also taken place with the EAS and the current Local Authority Governor Appointment Panel at their meeting held on 10th July 2020. The main changes to the policy are summarised below and for ease of reference are: -

- Confirmation of the quorum for meetings;
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities of LA Governor Panel, Full Council and the role of the Executive Member for Education;
- Declaration of interests' section updated; and,
- Operational and management arrangements of the LA governor panel further strengthened and aligned to current practice to further support the timely appointment / removal of LA governors.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report has been approved by Education DMT, CLT for submission to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee. The options are:

3.2 **Option 1**

Members are requested to scrutinise the information detailed within the report and policy and to make appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

3.3 **Option 2**

Accept the report and policy 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 **Statutory Responsibility**

4.1.1 Each maintained school must have a governing body constituted in accordance with the Education Act 2002, which sets out the framework for the establishment of governing bodies. The Local Authority is responsible for the appointment of Local Authority governors.

4.1.2 **Corporate Improvement Plan**

Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan activity
Support a fairer sustainable economy and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support all learners to achieve improved outcomes• To improve pupil outcomes , progress and wellbeing

4.1.3 **Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan**

The statutory framework is clearly aligned to the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan which aims for everyone to have the best start in life. The plan seeks to ensure that the education provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress is as good as it should be.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 There are no direct financial implications for this policy report. However, the Council allocates approximately £42 million to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes.

5.1.2 Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional EAS arrangements of approximately £300,000+ from the core Education Directorate revenue budget. The EAS is the Council's commissioned school improvement service commissioned to work directly with schools to provide professional challenge and support to improve and this service hosts the Governor Support function.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

5.2.1 Risk is associated with underperformance and ineffective processes to improve performance 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.

5.3 **Legal**

- 5.3.1 Each maintained school must have a governing body constituted in accordance with the Education Act 2002 which sets out the framework for the establishment of governing bodies. The Local Authority is responsible for the appointment of Local Authority governors and for assessing the effectiveness of the work of governing bodies to support school improvement.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information.**

- 6.1.1 The most recent Local Government Education Services (LGES) self-evaluation report dated March 2020 confirmed that the process for the appointment of Local Authority Governors is now well established and there is evidence of improved governance in a majority of schools. The Spring term Local Authority termly overview from the EAS, which is the latest data available prior to the Covid emergency identified that there were 58 (15%) vacancies across Blaenau Gwent's schools. This is consistent with the rate of vacancies for the Autumn term. It is anticipated that the changes to the proposed policy will further improve this and moving forward this committee will receive termly updates on the level of governor vacancies.

- 6.1.2 Moreover, as part of usual business arrangements Governor Support officers contact all Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of governing bodies that currently hold vacancies with the details and relevant forms to support the management of vacancies. In addition, the Local Authority Governor Panel now receives details of Local Authority governors whose term of office has come to an end/is due to end in the following term as well as details of the attendance and uptake of training by appointed Local Authority governors.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

- 6.2.1 Through the appointment process, Local Authority governors can then play an active role in the improvement journey of schools, and in doing so, contribute to the corporate and wellbeing objectives of the Council.

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

- 6.3.1 The primary purpose of governing bodies is to ensure the quality of education provision and to act as the accountable bodies for school. The governing body has responsibility for ensuring the good conduct and high standards of educational achievement in the school.

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

- 6.4.1 The revised policy demonstrates the mature approach to the process to secure effective governance and is aligned with the Welsh Government's strategic document Education in Wales: Our national Mission, the Council's

agreed Vision for Education and the Local Government Inspection framework.

6.5 Preventative focus

6.5.1 A key element of the Council's work is to monitor settings and ensure appropriate support to secure continuing high standards. As part of this work the effectiveness of Governing Bodies is scrutinised which includes the level and type of vacancies on governing bodies. Also, Estyn Inspection reports reflect the extent to which settings and Local Authorities have been effective in achieving this requirement.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

6.6.1 Educational school improvement is delivered on a regional basis through the South East Wales Consortium in collaboration with Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Councils. The EAS host the Governor Support function on behalf of all Councils within the consortia.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

6.7.1 Ensuring that schools deliver high quality education provision to secure high pupil outcomes relates directly to the corporate outcomes for 2020/22 within the Corporate Improvement Plan.

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

6.8.1 An EQIA has been completed for this report and no positive or negative impact has been identified.

7 Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 This report sets out the proposed Local Authority Governor Policy that deals with the recruitment and removal of Local Authority governors. Effective governance is a key consideration of leadership and management of schools and a properly constituted governing body is essential for school working arrangements.

7.2 Consequently, the effective management of Local Authority governors is key to securing school improvement and the proposed policy will help facilitate improved governance across the school estate.

8. Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Policy for the Appointment of LA Governors

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Directorate of Education Policy for the Appointment of LA Governors Academic Year 2020 /2021

1.0 Introduction

A Panel for the Appointment of Local Authority (LA) Governors has been established to consider all matters relating to the appointment and removal of LA governors. In making appointments the Panel should note that LA governors cannot be mandated by the LA to take any particular line. They may represent the LA view but in all cases the interests of the school are paramount and all governors must abide by the governing body's rules and code of conduct.

2.0 Membership and terms of reference of the Advisory Panel for the Appointment of LA Governors

The Panel for the Appointment of LA Governors will comprise of:

- 3 Majority group members (including the Executive Member for Education who will Chair the Panel),
- 3 members from the minority group.

The business arrangements for the meeting will be convened in line with the usual arrangements for Council business and include full secretariat support.

LA governor Panel meetings will be held every half term and arranged in accordance with other Council meetings with dates placed in diaries during the agenda setting process for Council business.

A representative of:

- the Blaenau Gwent School Governors' Association (BSGA), as determined by the Management Committee of that Association, will be invited to attend the Panel in an advisory capacity (i.e. without voting rights)
- a representative of the commissioned EAS Governor support service will attend to provide advice in relation to the governance arrangements including performance

information in relation to attendance, training etc. relevant to any individual application.

- a member of the Education Directorates Departmental Management Team will attend to offer school improvement advice on the school's circumstances and other information as required

In the event of any of the six members of the Panel or the BSGA representative being unable to attend, named substitutes will be eligible to take their place to ensure that all these groups are adequately represented when the Panel meets.

The quorum from the Panel meeting will be **2** which must include one representative **from both the majority and minority groups.**

The Panel for the Appointment of LA Governors will be responsible for appointing LA Governors. Full Council will **endorse** the recommendation of the Panel regarding the appointment of LA governors in line with the approved criteria contained within this policy. However, full Council have to agree the recommendation of the Panel to remove individuals. As such, the date of appointment of any LA governor will be from the date of the Panel.

Should the Council not endorse any recommendations of the Panel regarding any LA governor appointments Council will refer them back to the Panel in the first instance stating appropriate reasons for doing so. In the event of a dispute the matter will be referred to the Councils Monitoring officer for guidance as to how best to proceed.

The Council has an obligation to fill vacancies within 6 months of their notification. In the event of failure by the Panel to make an appointment, or no applications being received. Where this occurs the Executive Member will ask full Council at their next meeting to nominate an LA governor for the school(s) in question.

3.0 Criteria for the appointment of LA governors

The Panel shall apply the following criteria when considering appointments. In applying these criteria, the Panel should consider the appointment of local members wherever

possible and also the experience, skills, expertise and potential contribution to the school of all applicants. Factors for consideration include: -

- Experience as an effective school governor measured in terms of regular attendance and the contribution made during their term(s) of office.
- Willingness to share their individual skills and expertise within the context of the governing body.
- A genuine desire to help improve standards of education within the school in partnership with the Headteacher and the rest of the governing body.
- A knowledge of and an interest in the community in which the school is situated.
- A knowledge of modern education issues.
- A commitment to regular attendance at full governing body meetings as well as meetings of any committees of the governing body to which they are elected.
- A commitment to attend governor training courses organised by the Local Authority/EAS to update their skills and knowledge to enhance their ability and effectiveness as a governor, including the completion of mandatory training within specified timeframes.
- Where a school has developed their school improvement plan and identified a shortage of skills amongst the governing body the panel will give primary consideration to this criterion when recommending individuals to vacancies.

The Governor Support Officer will ensure that the panel is appropriately appraised of this information. To assist the Panel in making their decision applicants will be required to submit an application form outlining their skills and experience that they can bring to the role.

4.0 Criteria for the removal of LA Governors

In exceptional circumstances, the Panel can recommend that full Council remove LA governors as the appointing authority but this power must be used reasonably as it may be open to challenge. Any queries relating to the removal of LA governors should be referred to the Governor Support Unit of the EAS in the first instance.

Disqualification or the suspension of LA governors, or indeed any governors, is dealt with in Schedule 6 of The Education (School Government) (Wales) Regulations 1999 and is outside the remit of this Panel. However, whilst outside their remit of the Panel the Governor Support Unit will report any such disqualifications or suspensions in respect of LA Governors to the next Panel meeting. Similarly, should suspensions be lifted these will also be reported to the LA Governor Panel.

In the case of any such removals or disqualifications the LA governors concerned will be contacted by the Governor Support Unit and informed accordingly.

5.0 Declaration of Interests

In accordance with Council policy and good practice, members of the Advisory Panel should not preside over:

- where there is an interest in the application being considered.

Should any member(s) of the Panel need to withdraw during the consideration of any appointment(s) the party or organisation that they represent may choose to nominate a substitute providing they are not a governor at the school with a vacancy.

6.0 Operational Procedures

The Governor Support Unit will notify the relevant schools Governing Body the term before of any governor vacancy which is scheduled to end in the next term. This will enable LA governors who wish to reapply to do so in ample time of their term of office ending.

In preparation for each Panel Meeting Governor Support will provide a report of current and future vacancies for the term ahead that will be circulated with the papers for each Panel Meeting.

To improve the recruitment of LA governors this report will be placed on the agenda for Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee as well as full Council so that all members are cognisant of the level of LA governor vacancies and able to support timely recruitment.

Individuals wishing to apply or reapply for a LA governor vacancy will need to apply on the application form (Appendix 1). The application form contains guidance on how to complete the form. All applications will be redacted by the secretariat prior to circulation to Panel members to ensure compliance with GDPR. Anyone who has not completed an application form should not be appointed or re-appointed as an LA governor.

Governors should be chosen on the basis of the contribution which they can bring to a school in terms of their skills and experience. The application form is the fairest method of ensuring that the Council does everything in its power to comply with this requirement when making LA governor appointments.

Should the Governing Body of the School wish the Panel to take into consideration any views expressed by the governing body of the school concerned this should be done in writing to the clerk to the LA Governor Appointment Panel. However, the decision of the LA Governor Panel will be final on all matters relating to LA governor appointments.

The Advisory Panel will meet on a half termly basis and should vacancies increase between panels consideration will be given to calling a special meeting of the panel. This way, vacancies will be considered soon after they become known and it will avoid the situation where schools are without their full complement of LA governors for long periods of time therefore increasing the burden on the remaining members of the governing body.

If the LA, for whatever reason, fails to make an appointment of an LA governor at a particular school within six months of being notified, and Council fail to appoint an LA governor to the vacancy the nominee of the governing body will automatically be appointed.

The agenda, redacted application forms and LA term of office report will only be circulated to Panel Members.

Minutes of Panel meetings will continue to be reported to full Council as a Part I item, notwithstanding the fact that the application forms themselves would remain exempt from public inspection.

Only Panel Members are entitled to attend meetings of the Panel. The only exception is where substitutes are required. There is no entitlement for other Members of the Council to attend meetings of the Panel where they have not been asked to do so.

Once the Panel has met to consider its recommendations on all the current LA governor vacancies these recommendations will be reported to the next scheduled full Council meeting. Similarly, the Governor Support Unit will also contact the Headteacher, Chair and Clerk to the Governing Body with details of appointees.

In the case of LA governors who are not reappointed they will also be contacted by the Governor Support Unit and informed accordingly.

Any queries relating to the procedure for the appointment or removal of LA governors should be referred to the Governor Support Unit in the EAS

7.0 Advertisements for LA Governors

Details of LA Governor vacancies including the names of schools with vacancies will be:

- Included in the papers for Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and full Council
- Placed on the agenda for Blaenau Gwent School Governors' Association (BSGA) management committee,
- Council website
- Social Media
- Promoted through the Managing Directors message to draw these vacancies to the attention of their staff living in the Blaenau Gwent locality.
- Email to school Headteacher to seek expressions of interest in the post

8.0 DBS Arrangements

Currently there is no legal requirement for school governors to be subject to police clearance prior to them taking up their appointments. However, the Safeguarding in Education Policy has an explicit requirement for all governors to undertake a DBS check upon appointment. This information is monitored on a termly basis.

Policy approval:

The Policy is subject to approval by Executive on _____

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