

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor D. Price [Chair]

Councillors:

L.R. Bowen, K.V. Broom, I.W. Davies, J.P. Jenkins, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, G.R. Jones, M.J.A. Lewis, E.M.J.G. Schiavone, B. Thomas and D.T. Williams

Mr J. Davies – Parent Governor [Llanelli Area]

Mrs M. Jones – Parent Governor [Dinefwr Area]

Mrs V. Kenny – Roman Catholic Church Representative

Mrs J. Voyle-Williams – Church in Wales Representative

The following Officers were in attendance:

Mr S. Davies	-	Head of Access to Education
Mr A. Morgan	-	Head of Education & Children
Mr A. Rees	-	Head of Curriculum & Wellbeing
Ms F. Lewis	-	Service Manager
Ms E. Forsythe	-	Principal Challenge Adviser
Mr J. Buck	-	Performance & Information Officer
Mrs M. Evans Thomas	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen : 10.00 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES AND OTHER MATTERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E.G. Thomas, who was representing the Committee at a conference, and Mrs G. Cornock Evans (Parent Governor Member).

The Chair referred to the tragic passing of Bradley John and extended deepest sympathy, on behalf of the Committee, to Bradley's family and friends and to the staff and pupils at St. John Lloyd School. Grateful thanks were also extended to staff in the Education Department for their support to all concerned at this difficult time.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM

The following declarations of personal interest were made:-

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
G. Jones	4 – Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 1	His wife works in the Education Department.
G. Jones	5 – Provisional Examination and Teacher Assessment Results and Provisional School Attendance Data	His wife works in the Education Department.
G. Jones	7 - Formula Funding for Schools	His wife works in the Education Department.

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1 - 1ST APRIL TO 30TH JUNE 2018

[NOTE: Councillor G. Jones had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

The Committee considered the Performance Monitoring Report for the period 1st April to 30th June 2018 (Quarter 1), which set out the progress against actions and measures in the New Corporate Strategy 2018-23 to deliver the 2018/19 Well-being Objectives relevant to the Committee's remit, as at 30th June, 2018.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Concern was expressed that of the 27 measures reported, 20 have either not started or data is not collected for quarter 1 and 2 are not available. Also the with regard to the 67 actions reported as being on target, it was pointed out that the targets dates are not until 2019/20. The Head of Education Services explained that the term "on target" is historic and what is meant is that in relation to performance in quarter 1, officers do not perceive any challenges to meeting the targets;
- Concern was expressed over the format of the report in that themes 11 and 13 appeared between themes 1 and 2. Officers agreed to look at the formatting of future reports;
- With regard to the percentage of children who have re-registered on the Child Protection Register, officers were asked how the target is set. The Committee was advised that it is a national target and is a comparator across Welsh Authorities;
- With regard to the action to develop Welsh in all our education services, officers were asked about the workshop sessions and whether parents and individual children are targeted. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing explained that the aim of the workshops was to break down the vision into parts. Unfortunately, they were poorly attended and it was hoped to re-run the workshop at the next Primary and Secondary Heads meeting. He added that with regard to involving parents, he goes out to speak to parents with the Authority's Welsh Language Development Manager;
- Schools are being asked to encourage parents to pursue bilingual education for their children and officers were asked what is being done with regard to persuading those parents who have decided against bilingual education. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing explained that all the necessary information is contained in the school prospectus and the Information for Parents booklet which is sent to parents of all children about to start school;
- Reference was made to previous concerns raised by the Committee regarding Mutual Investment Models and private companies making a profit from education and officers were asked for an update. The Head of Access to Education advised the Committee that the concerns raised are shared by other Local Authorities. Officers are awaiting a steer from the Welsh

Government, following which a report will be prepared for presentation to Committee;

- In relation to proposed modernisation projects at Ysgol Rhys Pritchard, officers were asked if the catchment areas in the Dinefwr area are going to be looked at. The Head of Access to Education agreed that the catchment areas need looking at as they haven't been reviewed since 2010 due to a lack of resources. However, he pointed out that the fundamental question to be addressed moving forward is whether we need catchment areas and he was in the process of looking into this option and finding out what other Local Authorities do;
- Reference was made to the recent tragic event at St. John Lloyd School and to two other similar untimely deaths in the county and officers were asked if they are happy that mental and physical health is enough of a priority for the Authority. The Head of Education Services assured the Committee that it is a priority, however, one body cannot address this issue alone and a multi-agency approach was essential. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing stressed the importance of ensuring that schools are places which are welcoming, safe and empathetic. He added that a Wellbeing Strategy is being formulated, which is scheduled in the forward work programme to be scrutinised in March 2019. The safeguarding and wellbeing of our children is of utmost importance and wellbeing, care, support and guidance form part of the training package offered to all schools.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION AND TEACHER ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND PROVISIONAL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DATA

[NOTE: Councillor G. Jones had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

The Committee considered a report providing an overview of the performance data for Carmarthenshire Schools. The Committee noted that the data provided in respect of KS4/5 remained provisional at this stage.

The following observations were raised on the report:-

- It was pointed out that progress should be consistent from year to year and officers were asked why this was not the case and why we aren't seeing progress in relation to staff absence. The Head of Education Services informed the Committee that it was hoped that the supply teacher pilot scheme in the Llanelli area will yield positive results in that respect. The Principal Challenge Adviser explained that there are Support Officers at schools to help with reducing levels of stress. Challenge Advisers focus on the specific needs of the school.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

6. NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the National Adoption Service Annual Report for 2017/18 which had been compiled by the National Adoption Service (NAS) and

detailed the work and performance of the five National Adoption Service Regions that comprise the NAS.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made to the increase in the number of people who are asking for help and officers were asked why this is the case. The Service Manager explained that the increase could be attributed to an increased awareness due to the fact that there is more information available and also initiatives to raise awareness of the support available;
- With regard to the additional funding allocated to voluntary organisations by the Welsh Government, officers were asked if it would have been better for the money to have been allocated to the Region. The Service Manager explained that, whilst the Region would have welcomed the funding, there is only a finite amount of money available and it was felt that it would be better to develop things nationally so as to benefit all;
- Officers were asked how rigorous the process is of ensuring that children are placed with the right adopters. The Service Manager explained that there are regular reviews between selection and completion of the formal adoption process.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

7. FORMULA FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS

[NOTE: Councillor G. Jones had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

The Committee considered a report providing an overview of current arrangements for funding our schools in line with Welsh Government practice and procedures.

The majority of funding for pre-16 provision in maintained schools comes from the Welsh Government's local government budget, via the Revenue Support Grant. Schools also receive specific grants, mainly from Welsh Government.

The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) is allocated to Local Authorities to deliver the services for which they are responsible, using a commonly agreed formula. The other main sources of funding for Local Authority budgets are council tax and non-domestic rates incomes, and specific grants.

The amount of RSG each Local Authority in Wales receives is announced annually in the Local Government Settlement. This is un-hypothecated, meaning that the amount of money within the RSG that Local Authorities should use to provide their services is not stipulated. However, the Welsh Government does include in the settlement an Indicator-Based Assessment (IBA) for each service area, which is a national calculation of the money each Council needs to spend to provide a standard level of service. The Welsh Government says IBAs are not spending targets and it is for each Local Authority to determine its own spending priorities from its overall funding allocation and what it can raise from council tax.

Following receipt of their settlement allocation from the Welsh Government, Local Authorities set budgets for the service areas for which they are responsible, including education, according to local needs and priorities.

The Schools Budget covers expenditure which is directly aimed at supporting schools. It comprises expenditure on services for which the Local Authority may retain funding centrally, such as other ALN funding, school meals and milk.

The amount of expenditure retained centrally is deducted from the Schools Budgets and the remainder makes up the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) i.e. funding delegated to schools.

RESOLVED

7.1 that the report be received;

7.2 that a workshop session on Formula Funding for Schools and the £0.5m funding for the School Development Fund be arranged for members of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee.

8. EXPLANATION FOR NON SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee noted the reasons for the non-submission of the following report:-

- £0.5m funding for School Development Fund

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

9. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee considered the list of forthcoming items and agreed that the items should be presented to the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on 26th November, 2018 be agreed.

10. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:-

11.1. 14TH MAY, 2018;

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14th May, 2018 be signed as a correct record.

11.2. 5TH JULY, 2018.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5th July, 2018 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE