

Education & Children Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report

2017-18



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Chair's Foreword

As the Chair of the Committee I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year. The report provides a comprehensive summary of the work undertaken by the Committee during the period May 2017 to April 2018.

I would like to thank the Members of the Committee for their valuable input and dedication over the past year. I would also like to thank the co-opted members of the Committee, who have continued to provide an external, and important viewpoint as to the effectiveness of the Authority's provision.

The Committee developed a comprehensive work programme at the start of the municipal year, and continued to play its part in terms of scrutinising performance and contributing to key Council policies and decisions within the remit of Education and Children Services.

We have revised the format of our school visits programme, with visits now being undertaken by smaller, more focussed groups of members with the aim of enabling Members to engage with school leaders on a more personal level. We will continue to visit a wide range of schools, including well-performing, and those that are in need of support. The visits are a vital source of information to members and help to strengthen discussions and decisions at the main committee meetings.

The Welsh Government is leading a programme of change in areas such as Additional Learning Needs and the development of a new Curriculum, and these, coupled with very challenging financial settlements mean that the Committee has an important role to play in ensuring that the Authority continues to deliver high-quality services and support to its pupils and young people within the County.

I would finally like to thank Democratic Services and Education and Children's Services Officers for their input and for their professionalism in supporting the work of the Committee. I look forward to continuing to work with Members, Co-opted Members and Officers in the year ahead.



Councillor Darren Price
Chair of Education & Children Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution requires all Scrutiny Committees to *"prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committees activities over the previous year."*

The main aim of the report is to highlight the work that has been undertaken by the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee during 2017/18. The document may also facilitate discussion on other items that could be included within future work programmes.

The Committee is chaired by Councillor Darren Price and is made up of 14 Elected Members and 5 voting Co-opted Members (3 elected parent governor members, 1 representative from the Church in Wales and 1 representative from the Roman Catholic Church). Support is provided by the Democratic Services Unit and other Council officers as and when required.

This report provides an overview of the work of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee during the 2017/18 municipal year. It gives Members the opportunity to reflect on the achievements during the year and to identify what worked well and where improvements could be made. This analysis is instrumental in developing scrutiny.

2. Overview of the work of the Committee in 2017/18

2.1 Number of Meetings

The Scrutiny Committee held 6 meetings plus 1 joint meeting with the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee during the 2017/18 municipal year.

2.2 The Forward Work Programme

The Scrutiny Committee develops its own Forward Work Programme (FWP). In July 2017 the Committee met informally with officers to identify, discuss and programme items to be considered by the Committee for the forthcoming year. This involved the inclusion of standard items such as performance, budget and action plan monitoring reports. Additional reports were also requested by members at meetings throughout the year and the Forward Work Programme was amended accordingly. In the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined in the FWP, which was confirmed by the Committee at its meeting on 28th September 2017.

The concept and development of the Forward Work Programme and the process for its agreement has allowed each Scrutiny Committee to determine its own agendas.

The benefits of such an approach has led to an improved level of debate and input during Scrutiny Committee meetings.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places long term sustainability at the forefront of how public services are designed and delivered and it places emphasis on public bodies to work in partnership with each other and the public to prevent and tackle problems.

The Education & Children Scrutiny Committee's key responsibilities are:

- Educational Standards & School Performance
- Inclusion & Additional Learning Needs
- Welsh Medium Education
- School Modernisation
- Adult Community Learning
- Youth Services
- Youth Offending
- School meals
- Children's Services including Social Services & Family Support Services

To compliment the work undertaken during formal meetings, the Committee also undertakes other scrutiny functions such as Task and Finish, visits to establishments falling within its remit together with member development sessions

2.3 Performance Monitoring / Strategic Issues

Performance Monitoring Reports - One of the principal roles of Scrutiny Committees is to monitor the performance of services and functions within its remit. They undertake this work mainly through the consideration of performance monitoring reports and various action plan monitoring reports. The performance monitoring reports provide a balanced picture of performance across the relevant service areas. The Education & Children Scrutiny Committee received the Performance Monitoring Report for the Council's 2017/18 Wellbeing Objectives at its meetings in September 2017 and April 2018. The reports mainly focussed on underperforming indicators.

Carmarthenshire County Council's Draft Annual Report 2016/17 - As part of its performance monitoring role the Committee received relevant information from the Council's key strategies and plans. In September 2017 the Committee considered the Council's draft Annual Report for 2016/17 which included extracts for its service remit the second year progress report on the Corporate Strategy 2015-20.

Education & Children Departmental Draft Business Plan 2018/19-2021 – In December the Committee considered the Education & Children Departmental Draft Business Plan 2018/19-2021 which detailed the department's aims and objectives for 2018-21. This provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment upon the priorities outlined for the department for the three year period.

Draft Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services on the effectiveness of Social Care Services in Carmarthenshire 2016/17 - In June 2017, during a joint meeting with the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee, members received the Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Social Care Services in Carmarthenshire for 2016/17. Members noted that there was a statutory requirement for the Director of Social Services to report annually to Council on the delivery, performance and risks, as well as plans for the improvement of the whole range of Social Services. It was noted that the presentation of this report to scrutiny members was an important element within the development of the final document.

Corporate Strategy – In April 2017 the Committee considered the elements of the draft new Corporate Strategy 2018-23 relevant to its remit.

Actions & Referrals - During the course of the municipal year several requests for additional items are made by members of the Committee to assist them in discharging their scrutiny role. Actions & Referrals updates are presented to Committee which provide an update on progress in relation to these requests.

2.4 Revenue & Capital Budgets

Budget Monitoring Reports - The Committee received quarterly reports on the departmental and corporate revenue and capital budgets at the meetings held in September and March. These reports enabled members to monitor the level of spend in each area and the progress made in connection with any capital works.

Revenue Budget Strategy 2018/19-2021 - As well as monitoring the current budget, the Committee was also consulted on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2018/19 to 20/21. The report provided the Committee with the current proposals for the Revenue Budget for 2018/19 together with the indicative figures for the 2019/20 and 2020/2021 financial years.

Outcome:

As part of the widespread consultation undertaken on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21, the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee considered the budget proposals and a number of comments were raised. Whilst the Committee did not put forward any recommendations to change the budget proposals, it did resolve “that, whilst noting the proposals for the delivery of efficiency savings for the Education & Children Department, the Committee’s concerns regarding any reduction in respite care provision be relayed to the Executive Board”. The Executive Board, at its meeting held on 5th February, 2018, whilst considering the report, proposed an amendment to the efficiency proposals that “The Respite Centre proposal be reviewed and the department give further consideration to service provision options resulting in a reversal in budget of £200k in 2018/19 and £200k in 2019/20”. This proposal was duly considered and endorsed by Council at the meeting held on 21st February, 2018.

2.5 Schools

- 2.5.1 Provisional Examination and Teacher Assessment Results and Provisional School Attendance Data** - The Committee received the provisional examination and teacher assessment results together with the provisional attendance data in September 2017. The verified performance data was reported to the Committee as part of the annual School Performance and Achievement report in January 2018.
- 2.5.2 School Budgets** – In November the Committee considered a report providing an overview of the regulations that encompass the allocation of school budgets, the budget process and the calculation of the delegated budget received from the Local Authority.
- 2.5.3 TIC Programme Update** – The Committee received a report and presentation providing an update on the TIC (Transformation, Innovation, Change) Programme – Support for Schools. The Authority’s TIC programme has helped deliver almost £11.5m savings since its inception and the Tic Schools’ Programme aimed to apply TIC principles of collaborative working, reducing waste and sharing good practice to support schools in reducing costs, whilst at the same time protecting the quality of front-line service and improving outcomes.
- 2.5.4 Revised Estyn Inspection Framework** – In November the Committee considered a report on the Revised Estyn Inspection Framework, which is used for all inspections of education and training providers in Wales.

2.5.5 Modernising Education Programme

In November 2017 the Committee considered the MEP Strategic Outline Programme Band B Update which outlined an updated prioritised programme for investment as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

Outcomes:

The Committee queried how consultation is undertaken with communities, governors, schools etc. and unanimously resolved to recommend to the Executive Board “that the importance be stressed of consulting with the community, school and interested parties before projects proceed”. The Executive Board thereupon considered the report on 18th December, 2018 and resolved “that the recommendations received from the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee held on 27th November be noted.”

In September 2017 the Committee considered reports detailing MEP proposals to increase the capacity at Gorslas School from 110 to 210 and to increase the age range at Ysgol Parc y Tywyn from 4-11 to 3-11. A post consultation report on the proposals was also presented to Committee for consideration in January 2018.

Outcomes:

The Committee endorsed the proposals which were then considered by the Executive Board on 26th February, 2018 when it was resolved that the proposals be implemented.

2.5.6 School Leadership and Data Contextual Paper 2016/17 - In January the Committee considered a report which highlighted some of the current challenges facing our schools and the Education Service and provided an overview of contextual school data and leadership arrangements.

Outcomes:

Following concern expressed by the Committee over difficulties being encountered in recruiting headteachers which would be compounded by the number of headteachers who would be retiring over the next few years, the Committee resolved “that a report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee on the steps being taken by the Authority to attract more people into teaching and to attract more teachers to progress to become headteachers”.

2.5.7 Carmarthenshire 11-19 Curriculum Review Update – In January the Committee considered the Carmarthenshire 11-19 Curriculum Review Update and scrutinised progress on the recommendations contained in the Action Plan.

2.5.8 Categorisation of Schools 2018 – In March the Committee considered a report which provided a detailed overview of the outcomes of the 2017/18 round of national categorisation and data demonstrating each school's national categorisation support requirements and improvement.

2.5.9 Elective Home Education – the Committee received a report providing an analysis of the current landscape in relation to Elective Home Education

Outcomes:

The Committee resolved that a report be presented to a future meeting regarding the positive behaviour approaches being implemented by the Authority in relation to bullying.

It was also resolved that a letter be sent on the Committee's behalf to the Welsh Government expressing the Committee's concerns with regard to problems being experienced with home schooled and flexi schooled children.

2.5.10 ERW Curriculum Update – The Committee received a presentation by Mr Alan Edwards, ERW Head of Teaching and Learning which provided an overview of progress and developments within the school curriculum

2.5.11 Welsh In Education Strategic Plan – In April 2017 the Committee considered the updated Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), the production and implementation of which is a statutory requirement for the Authority.

2.5.12 Digital Schools Strategy – In April the Committee considered the Digital Schools Strategy 2018-21 which was the first ever such strategy for Carmarthenshire and which set out the Authority's vision for the provision of ICT Services to schools over the coming years, to ensure that schools have the appropriate technology.

2.6 Children's Services / Safeguarding

2.6.1 Carmarthenshire Youth Support Service Business Plan 2017/20 - the Committee considered the Carmarthenshire Youth Support Service's

Business Plan for 2017-20 which provided information about the structure, governance arrangements and resources available. The Plan also detailed the main areas of activity and identified the principal risks associated with children and young people in the Youth Justice System.

2.6.2 Adoption Service Annual Report – the Committee considered the Adoption Service Annual Report for 2016/17 which had been compiled by the National Adoption Service (NAS) and detailed the work and performance of the five Regional Adoption Services that comprise the NAS.

2.6.3 Behaviour Service Review – In December the Committee considered a report detailing proposals for the remodelling of Carmarthenshire's Behaviour Support Services.

2.6.4 Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2017 – The Committee considered the Corporate Parenting Annual Report which provided an overview of how well the Local Authority is meeting its corporate parenting duties under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014. The report detailed outcomes for children and young people up to the age of 25 looked after by the Local Authority and an update on progress against targets set in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

2.6.5 Fostering Service Annual Report - In April the Committee considered the Fostering Service Annual Report which provided information on the performance and quality of care provided in relation to the fostering service within Carmarthenshire, which was a requirement under the statutory regulations of the Fostering Service in Wales.

2.7 Additional Reports Requested

During the course of the year, the Committee requested reports on the following topics to be included in the Forward Work Programme:-

- The steps being taken by the Authority to attract more people into teaching and to attract more teachers to progress to become headteachers;
- School Redundancy and Early Voluntary Retirement, detailing the approach taken and progress made;
- Recruitment and Retention of Staff;
- Problems being faced by the County's Music Service;
- Positive behaviour approaches being implemented by the Authority in relation to Bullying.

3. Other Scrutiny Activity

3.1 Task and Finish

At the Committee's Forward Work Programme planning session held in July 2017 (held later than usual due to the elections in May) there was some discussion around possible topics for a Task and Finish review and it was decided to wait and see if any issues of concern/meriting further investigation arose during the course of the year.

At the meeting held in March 2018 it was agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to review Early Years Education, Childcare and Play in Carmarthenshire. The key aims and objectives for the review were detailed in a planning and scoping document which was endorsed at that meeting along with the membership of the Task and Finish Group, as follows:-

Councillor Darren Price (Chair)
Councillor Kim Broom
Councillor Dot Jones
Councillor Jean Lewis
Councillor Bill Thomas
Councillor Edward Thomas

3.2 Site Visits

The programme of school visits commenced in the 2009/10 municipal year and by the end of the October 2015, the Committee had visited all the county's primary, secondary and special schools, along with the 3 integrated family centres. In 2016/17 the Committee began re-visiting schools, linking in with the School Improvement Panel's work programme and the Authority's Modernising Education Programme proposals. It was felt that the visits tended to focus on premises issues and in November 2017 the Committee considered a report entitled Scrutiny School Visits Framework which proposed that the school visits programme's focus be realigned to facilitate broader discussion on aspects chosen as greater priorities e.g. leadership, teaching, learning and outcomes. However, it was not intended to preclude or ignore any elements of premises related issues which may arise and require attention.

The Committee continued with its programme of school visits with the new emphasis as detailed above and the following 3 schools were visits during the Spring Term of 2018:-

- Llechyfedach Tumble Federation
- Llangunnor
- Bryngwyn Glanymor Federation

At the meeting held on 23rd April, 2018 the Committee considered the School Visits Feedback report which provided an overview of the school visits undertaken during the Spring Term 2018. The enabled the Committee to undertake their key role in monitoring school leadership, provision and standards within the county's schools. It also assisted in determining future priorities as a result of any issues raised.

3.3 Development Sessions

Following the local government elections held in May 2017, a Councillor Induction Programme was provided for all elected members. The programme was designed primarily for new Councillors but was also open to those who were re-elected. The induction programme was geared to provide members with the requisite knowledge, skills and understanding to assist them in serving as a Councillor. The following induction sessions were held:-

- Ethics, Standards, Legal Duties and Responsibilities - May 2017;
- Finance including Budgeting & Treasury Management - May 2017;
- Introduction to Marketing and Media - June 2017;
- Decisions for Future Generations (Well-being of Future Generations Act) – July 2017;
- Safeguarding & Violence Against Women & Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Act – September 2017.

In addition to the induction programme, the following all-member development sessions were held during 2017/18:-

- Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act - September 2017;
- Data Management and Freedom of Information Act – September 2017;
- Health & Safety (including Corporate Manslaughter) - September 2017;
- Welsh Local Government Association Regional Workshop - October 2017;
- Digital Transformation Seminar - October 2017;
- Substance Misuse - December 2017;
- Local Housing Company - March 2018;
- Financial Exploitation Safeguarding Scheme - March 2018.

In addition to the above, several departmental budget seminars were held.

4. Challenges

Following the local government elections in May 2017 the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee saw a new cohort of members. The newly elected members worked with the rest of the Committee to familiarise themselves with the decision making process and the topics within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee's portfolio. This year also saw three new Parent Governor Members join the Committee in April 2018, following the end of the term of office of their predecessors. The new co-opted members have settled in well and are making a valuable contribution at meetings.

5. Future Work

The Committee has made significant progress and will continue to concentrate on topics where Members' input will result in positive outcomes to drive forward service improvement. To ensure that the best use is being made of meeting time and with the benefit of the added value of pre-meetings, the Committee is keen to achieve a more streamlined scrutiny process.

The future work of the Committee will be considered as part of the Forward Work Programme planning session. The FWP will continue to be monitored during the course of the year, together with the Executive Board FWP.

6. Support for the Scrutiny Function

Support for Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny function is provided by the Democratic Services Unit, based in the Administration & Law Division of the Chief Executive's Department.

Support for the Scrutiny function includes:

- Formulating, in accordance with the FWP, and despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of 4 working days prior to the meeting;
- Providing support and constitutional advice to the Scrutiny Committees and to members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring items arising from those meetings are actioned;
- Giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to executive and non-executive members of the Council and its officers;
- Managing the strategic development of Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire through engaging in national and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the

Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum and meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs with the Executive Board;

- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as and when guidance is published;
- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny Committees' forward work programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny Committee members;
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the administration of scrutiny task and finish groups, assisting in writing reports in conjunction with the groups and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews;
- Assisting with the Scrutiny member development programme.

For more information on Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire including forward work programmes, task and finish reports and annual reports, visit the County Council's website at: www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or e-mail scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

7. Attendance

Attendance by members of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee during the 2017/18 year is shown in the table below. A total of 6 meetings were held between May 2017 and April 2018.

Scrutiny Committee Member	Meetings Attended	%
Cllr. Liam Bowen	4	66%
Cllr. Kim Broom	5	83%
Cllr. Ieuan Wyn Davies	4	66%
Cllr. John Jenkins	3	50%
Cllr. Betsan Jones	5	83%
Cllr. Dot Jones	6	100%
Cllr. Gary Jones	4	66%
Cllr. Jean Lewis	6	100%
Cllr. Kevin Madge (replaced by Cllr. Bill Thomas on 18/10/17)	1 of 1	n/a
Cllr. Shahana Najmi	4	66%
Cllr. Darren Price	6	100%
Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone	6	100%

Cllr. Bill Thomas	5 of 5	100%
Cllr. Edward Thomas	5	83%
Cllr. Dorian Williams	6	100%

Parent Governor Representatives	Meetings Attended	%
Mrs Georgina Cornock-Evans (as of 01/04/18)	1 of 1	n/a
Mr James Davies (as of 01/04/18)	1 of 1	n/a
Mrs Emma Heyes (up to 20/11/17)	0 of 2	n/a
Mrs Kate Hill (up to 31/03/18)	1 of 5	n/a
Mrs Melanie Jones (as of 01/04/18)	1 of 1	n/a
Mrs Alex Pickles (up to 31/03/18)	3 of 5	n/a

Church Representatives	Meetings Attended	%
Mrs Vera Kenny	6	100%
Mrs Jean Voyle Williams	4	66%

Substitutes	Meetings Attended
Cllr. Anthony Davies	1
Cllr. Rob Evans	1
Cllr. Tyssul Evans	1
Cllr. Susan Phillips	1
Cllr. Bill Thomas (replaced Cllr. Kevin Madge as a member of the Committee on 18/10/17)	1

Executive Board Member	Meetings Attended
Cllr. Glynog Davies	5

Attendance at the Joint Meeting of the Social Care & Health and Education & Children Scrutiny Committees held on 23rd June, 2017 is shown in the table below.

Scrutiny Committee Member	Attended
Cllr. Liam Bowen	0
Cllr. Kim Broom	1
Cllr. Ieuan Wyn Davies	1
Cllr. John Jenkins	1
Cllr. Betsan Jones	0
Cllr. Dot Jones	0
Cllr. Gary Jones	1
Cllr. Jean Lewis	1
Cllr. Kevin Madge (replaced by Cllr. Bill Thomas on 18/10/17)	1
Cllr. Shahana Najmi	0
Cllr. Darren Price	1
Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone	1
Cllr. Bill Thomas (replaced Cllr. Kevin Madge as a member of the Committee on 18/10/17)	n/a
Cllr. Edward Thomas	1
Cllr. Dorian Williams	1
Parent Governor Representatives	
Mrs Georgina Cornock-Evans (as of 01/04/18)	n/a
Mr James Davies (as of 01/04/18)	n/a
Mrs Emma Heyes (up to 31/03/18)	0
Mrs Kate Hill (up to 31/03/18)	0
Mrs Melanie Jones (as of 01/04/18)	n/a
Mrs Alex Pickles (up to 31/03/18)	0
Church Representatives	
Mrs Vera Kenny	1
Mrs Jean Voyle Williams	0