

People Scrutiny Committee

9th June 2016

Education Scrutiny Group

Purpose of Report: Progress report

Since the last meeting of People Scrutiny Committee on 17th March 2016 the following work has been undertaken:

Education Scrutiny Group

The Education Scrutiny Group met on the 7th April 2016 where the following matters were considered:

- Outcome of the consultation on the proposed change of age of admission to primary school
- School services Asset Management Plan including pupil projections and capacity.

The proposed change of age of admission to primary school was considered at Cabinet on 16th April 2016. The Chair raised the issue of continuity of provision at 12.5 hours for those children in the Flying Start areas who currently receive 12.5 hours a week from the age of 2 which drops to 10 hours from the age of 3. A further issue identified by the scrutiny group was with regard to the impact on childcare and how children whose parents work are unable to access 2 or 2.5 hours a day if they are already in paid childcare.

The School Services Asset Management Plan was also considered at Cabinet on 16th April 2016. The Education Scrutiny Group agreed to undertake further examination of the calculation of pupil projection figures.

An extract from the Cabinet minutes of 16th April 2016 are attached at Appendix A.

School Scrutiny Panel

The Lead Member has taken a report to Cabinet on the work of the School Scrutiny Panel which is attached at Appendix B.

ERW

The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the six ERW authorities met on 11th March 2016. A copy of the outcome letter from that meeting is attached to this agenda. The next meeting of this group is due to be held in Pembrokeshire in September 2016.

ERW has an Estyn Inspection in June. Cllr Roberts-Jones is representing the Lead Member and with the Scrutiny Officer will be attending a session with Estyn Inspectors

and other Scrutiny Members and Officers from across the ERW region on 21st June 2016.

Cabinet Work Programme

There have been a number of items coming to Cabinet which the Lead Member has requested that scrutiny have sight of before they go back to Cabinet including:

- Primary School Modernisation proposals at:
 - Ysgol Dolafon – removal of Welsh Medium Stream (went to Cabinet 15th December 2015 and 22nd March 2016. A formal notice was published on 7th April 2016 and the discontinuation of the Welsh Stream at Ysgol Dolafon from 31st August 2016 was confirmed at Cabinet on 24th May 2016)
 - Nantmel (went to Cabinet 15th December 2015)
 - Llanbister (went to Cabinet 21st January 2016)
 - Llanfihangel Rhydithon (went to Cabinet 21st January 2016)
- Secondary School Modernisation proposals at Llandrindod High School/Builth High School and Brecon High School/Gwernyfed High School (went to Cabinet on 23rd February 2016)

The Lead Member will continue to attend Cabinet to make observations on education matters as appropriate.

Education Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

9 th June 2016	EOTAS provision – behaviour pathways and exclusion. Background of PRU provision and governance
29 th June 2016	School budgets
6 th July 2016	School Scrutiny 3 – Powys PRU
11 th July 2016	Calculation of pupil projections and capacity
19 th September 2016 10.00am	Standards data – verified for FP, KS2 and KS3 – unverified for KS4 and KS5 Ian Roberts Attendance, exclusions – Ian Roberts
29 th September 2016	School Scrutiny 4 – update on schools already been to School Scrutiny Panel Agree schools to invite to sessions 5 and 6
Autumn Term 1.30pm	School Scrutiny 5
Autumn Term 1.30pm	School Scrutiny 6
28 th November 2016 10.00am	Quarter 2 Performance (Level 1 Monitoring Report) Ian Roberts Retention rates at Sixth Form School budgets update

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Sources/background papers:

Membership: (pre May 2016)

County Councillors: **D.R. Jones**,

M. Mackenzie, E. R. Davies, K. Roberts-Jones, Miss A. Holloway, S. McNicholas,
A. Davies.

Parent Governor Representative Mrs A. Davies and Mrs L. Jenkin.

Church Representative Mrs M. Evitts

1.	OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE AGE OF ADMISSION IN TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS	C63- 2016
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Cabinet considered responses to the consultation on the proposal to raise the age of admission to primary schools for the 2017-18 school year from the start of the term in which a child has their 4th birthday to the start of the school year following a child's 4th birthday. This would bring the policy in line with the majority of Welsh authorities along with the neighbouring English authorities. It was further recommended that funded 3+ provision is extended from the current 2 terms to up to 5 terms of provision and that the funded hours are increased to 12.50 hours per week from the current 10.00 hours per week.

8 consultation meetings had been held and a total of 679 responses to an online questionnaire had been received, together with a further 43 paper responses. The majority of the responses were received from parents of current or prospective primary aged pupils. The responses showed that 80% of the respondents were against the proposed change to the age of admission, with 16% of the respondents being in favour of the Council's proposal and 4% with no strong view either way.

The report addressed the four main issues that had been raised in the consultation process:

- 1. The impact that the change would have on the educational outcomes and progression of Nursery aged children prior to their admission to school at the start of the Reception year.*
- 2. The availability of adequate places in the enhanced 3+ provision for all entitled children.*
- 3. The number of hours of pre-school provision offered and funded by the Authority*
- 4. The impact the proposal will have on parental childcare costs with children having a delay in commencing full time school provision of up to 3 terms.*

The Portfolio Holder for Education and officers answered questions from the Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee and political group leaders. It was confirmed that there would be continuity of provision for those children accessing Flying Start at 12½ hours a week. The Chair of the People Scrutiny noted that flexible provision could mitigate the impact on childcare but that this had not been considered in the report. Officers advised that there would be opportunities to consider flexible provision when services were recommissioned.

The impact on school budgets was approximately £3,200 per child which, for the school with the largest number of children affected, would amount to £135,000. Officers confirmed that the proposals would result in a funding reduction of £2.7m equivalent to 60 teaching posts. Any redundancy costs would be funded centrally. The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted that the estimated saving resulting from the proposals was £1,226,000 in a full year. The Medium Term Financial Strategy had required £1.5m savings and he asked that the Schools service come forward with proposals on how to make up the shortfall.

County Councillor William Powell spoke against the recommendations citing the findings of the consultation and parents' concerns over childcare and education standards. He asked the Cabinet to defer a decision for 12 months to give families time to make alternative provision. Responding to the point made about standards, it was explained that the impact on standards had not been assessed as significant. The Head of Schools confirmed that each setting had teacher support and each was subject to inspection by Estyn.

Cabinet noted the comments made but also noted the need to deliver services within the budget set by Council and for all services to contribute to the savings target.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decisions:
<p>1. That the Authority as the admission authority for Community and Church Controlled Primary Schools approve that the age of admission to Primary Schools be amended to the start of the school year following a child's fourth birthday for the 2017-18 Admissions Year and future years.</p>	<p>To confirm admission arrangements into primary schools for the 2017-18 school year by 15th April 2016 as required under the Admission Code of Practice arrangements.</p>
<p>2. That the level of funded 3+ pre-school provision is increased from 10 hours per week to 12.50 hours per week from the start of the 2017-18 School Year.</p>	<p>To provide and commission an extended sustainable network of pre-school settings.</p>
<p>3. That officers bring forward proposals for implementing changes to the primary school Fair Funding Formula arrangements in respect of the above change for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 and future years.</p>	<p>To provide funding arrangements for 2017-18 and 2018-19 to reflect the admission arrangements.</p>
<p>4. That the Council undertakes a tender process for the re-commissioning of the extended 3+ provision.</p>	<p>To register the provision provided through schools and maintained settings correctly.</p>
<p>5. That officers undertake any required consultation under the School Organisation Code in respect of pre-school and primary school provision following the re-commissioning of the extended 3+ provision.</p>	<p>To allow all children to have access to a funded 3+ pre-school place</p>
<p>6. That further work is undertaken with the schools in the Llanfyllin Catchment area, Llanelwedd C in W School and Llangattock C in W School to identify the proposed actions required to meet the</p>	

<p>Authority's responsibility in respect to pre-school provision, together with any required capital investment requirements.</p> <p>7. That the Authority undertakes further work to identify and develop the required places for the delivery of 3+ provision in the identified areas.</p> <p>8. That officers monitor the proposals for funded childcare provision following the outcome of the Welsh Government elections in May.</p> <p>9. That Cabinet approve the Senior Manager – Central Services as the Project Sponsor to the project.</p> <p>10. That a detailed project plan be developed and presented by the Project Sponsor to the Transforming Learning Programme Board.</p> <p>11. That the Council approve the recruitment of a Project Manager on a fixed term contract to 31st December 2017 to support and lead the re-commissioning of extended 3+ provision and to support schools in reducing staffing levels as a result of the reduction in funding. The post to be funded through the management of change budget at a cost of approximately £39,000 (pending Job Evaluation)</p> <p>12. That settings which propose to have 2 year olds in the same setting as 3 and 4 year olds are required to submit a business case on how they will meet the required educational outcomes.</p>	<p>To ensure that the project is managed and reported through the Authority's Transforming Learning Programme Board.</p> <p>To maintain education progression and standards.</p>
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<p>2.</p>	<p>SCHOOLS SERVICE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN - SECTION A PUPIL PROJECTIONS, CAPACITY AND SUFFICIENCY</p>	<p>C64- 2016</p>
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Cabinet considered the first section of the revised Schools Service Asset Management Plan and the current and projected position in relation to pupil numbers up to 2019 against the available capacity within the Authority's Primary and Secondary Schools. The report identified those schools with significant surplus places and those schools

with a potential shortage of places. Cabinet accepted the point made by the leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrat group that any review of Section 106 agreements should include those of the relevant National Park Authorities. It was also confirmed that the Schools Service did use data from Powys Teaching Health Board on births within the county.

RESOLVED:	Reason for Decision:
<p><i>That officers be authorised to</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="193 488 810 741"><i>1. Undertake the further work identified in the Proposal section of the report on those schools identified in Appendices A and B that will have potential pupil place and suitability issues in the period to 2019.</i> <li data-bbox="193 779 810 1032"><i>2. Identify those schools that have significant surplus spaces and bring forward proposals on how the Authority and school reduces and / or removes a level of the surplus spaces to provide occupancy levels of between 85% and 105%.</i> <li data-bbox="193 1070 810 1361"><i>3. Implement a 5 year rolling programme of building condition re-assessments, commencing with schools previously assessed as grade C or D with the funding being allocated from the £48,000 centrally retained budget for repairs and maintenance.</i> <li data-bbox="193 1429 810 1585"><i>4. Develop Business Justification Cases in respect of schools with a projected shortage of pupil places and other identified factors.</i> <li data-bbox="193 1615 810 1727"><i>5. Undertake a review of the Authority's Section 106 strategy to include National Parks.</i> 	<p><i>To develop a robust methodology for pupil number projections.</i></p> <p><i>To ensure efficient use of resources.</i></p> <p><i>To update the Authority's understanding of the condition of its school stock and to inform future investment strategies.</i></p> <p><i>To meet the aims of the Authority's and Welsh Government's 21st Century School aspirations in respect to school building condition and suitability.</i></p> <p><i>To ensure developer contributions to required school developments are maximised.</i></p>

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**EDUCATION
SCRUTINY REPORT
SCHOOL SCRUTINY PANEL**

County Councillors: D. R. Jones (Lead Member)
On behalf of the Education Scrutiny Group

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE OF REPORT: May 2016

STATUS OF REPORT: DRAFT

Background

Education falls within the remit of the People Scrutiny Committee and has a working group comprised of members of that Committee which has been in place since June 2012. The Chair of People Scrutiny Committee is Lead Member of the Education Scrutiny Group (ESG).

Since 2014 Powys has been part of the ERW regional consortium of six local authorities which work together to agree a regional business plan and strategy to deliver school improvement services. The Lead Member and one other Member attend twice yearly meetings with the Members from the other five ERW authorities.

It became apparent from speaking with Members from other ERW authorities that in some other areas Scrutiny Members were undertaking direct school scrutiny. The approaches were different in the different authorities with some scrutiny groups visiting schools (where the visits had started when there was concern regarding the school modernisation process) to schools being brought before the full Scrutiny Committee.

The Lead Member also noted that Estyn were keen that scrutiny should start to take a more proactive role in calling schools to account in respect of their standards.

Training was arranged in June 2015 for the Education Scrutiny Group on performance, leadership and provision with a focus on evaluating performance and the characteristics of schools causing concern. Questioning techniques were also covered. The training was provided by a former Estyn Inspector.

Process

- Chair of People Scrutiny Committee, in conjunction with Head of Schools to decide which schools to be scrutinised based on
 - Estyn Inspection outcome
 - Autumn term visit outcome
 - Financial situation
- Scrutiny Officer to write to Head teacher and Chair of Governors on behalf of the Chair of People Scrutiny Committee requesting attendance
- Panel of 5 Members plus reserve to be chosen (School Scrutiny Panel)
- Briefing to Panel from Scrutiny Officer on
 - Core data information
 - Estyn Inspection Report
 - Autumn Term visit report, school action plan and half termly reports on progress against school action plan (Schools Service to provide)
 - School budget (if an issue)
- Pre-meeting of School Scrutiny Panel with Challenge Advisor to provide professional guidance and advice on reports being scrutinised and in particular to hone questions and identify key areas/themes on which to focus.
- Head Teacher and Chair of Governors attend meeting to discuss standards, performance and if appropriate action plan in response to adverse Estyn Inspection – meeting observed by representatives from Schools Service (Head of Schools Service and Senior Challenge Advisor)
- Member scrutiny and support – challenge poor performance and recognise good performance.
- Outcome reported by way of a letter from the Chair of the Working Group to Head Teacher and Chair of Governors to include:
 - Recommendations

- Observations
 - Opportunities for shared learning
- Also to be copied to Education Scrutiny Group and Schools Service.

Progress

Since the summer of 2015 the following schools have been brought before the School Scrutiny Panel:

8 th June 2015	Builth County Primary School
3 rd July 2015	Llandrindod High School
11 th November 2015	Llandrindod County Primary School (Cefnlllys)
18 th November 2015	Ysgol Bro Hyddgen
7 th March 2016	Builth High School

A copy of the outcome letters to all of these schools is attached at Appendix A

Review

On 29th February 2016 the Education Scrutiny Group met to review the progress made by those schools which have attended School Scrutiny Panel. The Group also review the progress made by those schools in Powys which are currently assessed by Estyn as requiring Special Measures.

The outcome of this meeting is as follows:

Schools which have attended School Scrutiny Panel

Builth County Primary School

That the half termly monitoring reports of Builth Primary School be reviewed in conjunction with their provisional results in June 2016 when a view will be taken as to whether or not it is necessary to ask the school to attend a further meeting with the School Scrutiny Panel.

Llandrindod County Primary School

The school is working with the local authority to make improvements. ESG will review the half termly monitoring reports of Llandrindod CP School in conjunction with their provisional results in June 2016 when a view will be taken as to whether or not it is necessary to ask the school to attend a further meeting with the School Scrutiny Panel.

Ysgol Bro Hyddgen

That the Head teacher, Chair, Vice-Chair and all the LEA Governors of Ysgol Bro Hyddgen be invited to a meeting of the School Scrutiny Panel in the first half of the summer term 2016. (It has since been agreed to consider the results of the summer 2016 exams before coming to a view as to whether or not it is necessary to ask the school to attend a further meeting with the School Scrutiny Panel)

Schools which have attended School Scrutiny Panel and are in Special Measures

Llandrindod High School

To review the Autumn Core Visit and half termly monitoring visit papers before coming to a view as to whether or not it is necessary to ask the school to attend a further meeting with the School Scrutiny Panel.

Schools in Special Measures

Brecon High School

That Brecon High School remains on the list of potential schools to attend School Scrutiny Panel when the summer programme for the Panel is considered.

Llanbister County Primary School

The outcome letter from a recent inspection is imminent and therefore this school was not discussed. The outcome letter will be considered when School Scrutiny Panel next reviews these schools.

Builth High School

Builth High School were called to School Scrutiny Panel on 7th March 2016 after the review meeting on 29th January 2016.

Summary

Powys has 12 secondary schools of which three are in the Estyn Category of Special Measure (Brecon High School, Builth High School and Llandrindod High School) and two remain in the category of Estyn Monitoring (Newtown High School and Caereinion). Across Wales there are only seven secondary schools in Special Measures. This position raises questions both regarding the level of support and challenge that the schools receive both from the ERW Challenge Advisory service and from the individual school Governing Bodies and regarding school leadership. From the School Scrutiny sessions which have been held the Panel has concluded that a theme of issues regarding Governing Body effectiveness and Challenge Advisory Service capacity is of concern.

The School Scrutiny Panel will continue to ask schools to attend where standards indicate that performance is not at the required level.

Conclusion

A priority in the One Powys Plan is *'All children and young people are supported to achieve their full potential'*.

The position of three Powys Secondary Schools in Special Measures and two in Estyn Monitoring is of extreme concern to scrutiny.

It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Education and the Cabinet take the necessary steps to ensure that rapid and sustained improvement in school performance is evidenced in those schools which are underperforming.

It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder assures Cabinet that the ERW Challenge Advisory service is providing the appropriate level of support and challenge to Powys Schools and that he is kept continually advised of schools causing concern

It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder provides assurance that School Governing Bodies provide the appropriate level of support and challenge to their individual school.

It is apparent that there is far from equal access to the One Powys Plan priority for many pupils. Cabinet are urged to take the appropriate action to ensure that the education provided to all the pupils of Powys is of the highest standard and that where it is apparent that these standards are falling short then appropriate action within the powers available to the LA be taken to address this.

Confidential background papers used to prepare report:

- **Outcomes from following School Scrutiny Panels:**
 - **8th June 2015 Builth Wells CP School**
 - **3rd July 2015 Llandrindod Wells High School**
 - **11th November 2015 Llandrindod CP School**
 - **18th November 2015 Ysgol Bro Hyddgen**
 - **7th March 2016 Builth Wells High School**