

People Scrutiny Committee

15th September 2016

Education Scrutiny Group

Purpose of Report: Progress report

Since the last meeting of People Scrutiny Committee on 9th June 2016 the following work has been undertaken:

Education Scrutiny Group

The Education Scrutiny Group met on the 9th June 2016 when the following items were considered:

- Education other than at school
- Behaviour pathways
- Exclusions
- Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

This was ahead of a meeting of the School Scrutiny Panel on 17th June 2016.

On the 29th June 2016 the group met to consider a draft report on School Budgets. The outcome of that meeting is attached at Appendix A and was circulated at the Cabinet meeting on the 5th July 2016 which was considering this matter. An extract of the minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 5th July is copied below:

5. SCHOOL BUDGETS 2016/2017

C126- 2016

Cabinet considered the outturn for 2015/16 and the proposed budgets for Powys schools for 2016/17. At the end of 2015/16 there were eighteen schools with a cumulative deficit balance totalling £0.94m. Two schools accounted for over £0.5m of the outturn deficit. The level of reserves held had fallen to £2.9m a reduction of £0.7m over the year.

Twenty seven schools were proposing to set a cumulative deficit balance in 2016/17. Eight of the twenty seven schools did not meet the criteria to be licensed and were considered to be unlicensed. The Portfolio Holder for Education gave an update of the actions being taken by officers of the Schools Service to assist these schools. Cabinet was advised that there would be a report to the next meeting on the budget position at Brecon High School and the Chief Executive also asked for a report on Ysgol Cedewain to come to that meeting.

The Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee expressed concern that the level of schools with unlicensed deficits was unsustainable and that the schools financing scheme meant that some schools were not viable. He wanted the Cabinet to intervene earlier and asked for some of the deadlines set out in the recommendations to be brought forward. He also wanted the Cabinet to consider firmer action against schools with unlicensed budgets including the removal of delegated budgets.

The Head of Schools explained that it would be difficult for schools to respond any quicker because Governing Bodies could not meet during the holidays. Schools were required to set their budgets by 1st May and for future years he would look to bring the report to Cabinet earlier.

In response to questions raised by the opposition group leaders about whether schools would be charged for meetings with Finance, Members were advised that the SLA gave schools a set number of meetings with finance staff without being charged for them. Where there was a charge schools would be advised beforehand. It was also confirmed that the change to school admission age had not been factored in by schools setting their budgets. Finance were working with schools to help them make adjustment to their budgets.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance drew Cabinet's attention to the proposed recovery of carbon credits. Schools had been unaware of this and had not made provision in their budgets and therefore he recommended to Cabinet that the costs be met from the Council's budget management reserve.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
<i>That the costs of recovery of carbon credits be met from the Council's budget management reserve.</i>	<i>Schools were unaware of the costs and have not made provision in their budgets.</i>

Cabinet was concerned at the forecast budgets noting that many schools in surplus in 2016/17 would be in deficit by 2017/18. The Portfolio Holder for Finance wanted schools to report back with their plans for addressing this. The Head of Schools emphasised to the Cabinet that there would be a significant increase in class sizes in many schools as Governing Bodies sought to manage their budgets by reducing staff. Cabinet noted that the key driver of deficits were falling pupil numbers compounded by the Welsh Government's funding formula that did not take account of the costs of providing services in a rural area.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
<i>1. That all planned budgets with a cumulative surplus at 31 March 2017 are approved.</i>	<i>To comply with the Authority's scheme for the financing of schools</i>
<i>2. There is no clawback in respect of the schools outturn figures for 2015/16 as named in paragraph 4.3 of the report.</i>	<i>To comply with the Authority's scheme for the financing of schools</i>
<i>3. That all schools that are potentially subject to clawback for 2016/17 as set out in paragraph 4.5 have their budgets re-assessed after spending plans have been submitted by the 30th September 2016 and a further report brought back to Cabinet during the Autumn Term 2016.</i>	<i>To comply with the Authority's scheme for the financing of schools</i>
<i>4. That the proposed budgets for the following schools who have planned cumulative deficit balances in 2016/17 are licensed:</i> <i>Primary</i> <i>Archdeacon Griffiths C in W A School</i> <i>Brynhafren C P School</i> <i>Llanbister C P School</i> <i>Llanelwedd C in W Primary School</i>	<i>To comply with the Authority's scheme for the financing of schools</i>

<p><i>Llanfyllin C P School</i> <i>Llangedwyn C in W Voluntary Controlled School</i> <i>Llangors C in W Controlled School</i> <i>Llansantffraid C in W Aided School</i> <i>St Mary's Catholic School</i> <i>Ysgol Dyffryn Trannon</i> <i>Ysgol Glantwymyn</i> <i>Ysgol Gymaeg Dyffryn Y Glowyr</i> <i>Ysgol Llanbrynmair</i> <i>Ysgol Maesydre</i> <i>Ysgol Meifod</i></p> <p><u>Secondary</u> <i>Builth Wells High School</i> <i>Crickhowell High School</i> <i>Ysgol Bro Hyddgen</i> <i>Welshpool High School</i></p>	
<p>5. <i>The Schools named below with planned cumulative three year consecutive deficit balances, including the current year are not licensed and a notice of concern be issued to each Governing Body and that the Governing Bodies of these schools be required to submit a recovery plan to the authority by the 16th September 2016.</i></p> <p><u>Schools:</u> <i>Churchstoke C P School</i> <i>Clyro C in W School</i> <i>Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant C P School</i> <i>Ysgol Dolafon</i> <i>Brecon High School</i> <i>Llanidloes High School</i> <i>Ysgol Maesydderwen</i> <i>Ysgol Cedewain Special School</i></p>	<p><i>To comply with the Authority's scheme for the financing of schools</i></p>
<p>6. <i>A further report on schools with unlicensed deficits is brought to Cabinet by 30 September 2016, to provide a budget update on any proposed actions to be taken as set out in section 2.16 Suspension of Delegation of thy Scheme for Financing Schools.</i></p>	<p><i>To comply with the Authority's scheme for the financing of schools</i></p>
<p>7. <i>Financial surgeries continue in the autumn and spring terms and schools are reminded of the possibility of claw back.</i></p>	<p><i>To comply with the Authority's scheme for the financing of schools</i></p>
<p>8. <i>Existing Loans are monitored.</i></p>	<p><i>To comply with the Authority's scheme for the financing of schools</i></p>

Cabinet also received reports on School budgets relating to Brecon High School and Ysgol Cedewain on 26th July 2016. The Education Scrutiny Group will continue to monitor the school budget position given the concerns highlighted to Cabinet as outlined in Appendix A.

On 12th July 2016 members of the Education Scrutiny Group joined with members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Group to receive a briefing on the Team around the Family, Families First and Flying Start.

School Scrutiny Panel

The School Scrutiny Panel met with leaders of the PRU on 17th June 2016.

The Lead Member took a report to Cabinet on the work of the School Scrutiny Panel which is attached at Appendix B. The Portfolio Holder response to this report is attached at Appendix C. This will be considered at the next meeting of the School Scrutiny Panel.

ERW

On the 21st June 2016 Cllr Roberts-Jones and the Scrutiny Officer attended the ERW offices in Carmarthen along with other scrutiny members and officers from across the ERW region as part of the Estyn/WAO inspection of the Welsh regional education consortia. The Inspection outcome has yet to be published.

The next meeting of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the six ERW authorities has been arranged for 27th September 2016.

Cabinet Work Programme

At the meeting of Council on 16th June 2016 it was:

RESOLVED that full Council has the opportunity to meet and discuss recommendations relating to secondary schools affected by the Council's transformation policy, to express an opinion ahead of decisions taken by Cabinet.

At the meeting of Council on 13th July 2016 it was:

RESOLVED that Full Council meets to discuss recommendations relating to Primary and Secondary School proposals that are affected by the Council's Transformation Policy and Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015, to inform the Cabinet of Council's views prior to any decision being taken by Cabinet.

All Members will therefore have an opportunity to express their view on school transformation proposals prior to these matters coming to Cabinet for decision.
to

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

Education Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

15 th September 1.30pm	Progress on preparing for the change in age of admission
19 th September 2016 10.00am	Standards data – verified for FP, KS2 and KS3 – unverified for KS4 and KS5 Attendance, exclusions

29 th September 2016 10.00am	School Scrutiny 4 – update on schools already been to School Scrutiny Panel Agree schools to invite to sessions 5 and 6
11 th October 2.00pm	ERW support to Powys schools in SM
2 nd November 2.00pm	Calculation of pupil projections and capacity
10 th November 10.00am	Scrutiny briefing on SSP schools
16 th November 10.00am	School Scrutiny 5
28 th November 2016 10.00am	Quarter 2 Performance (Level 1 Monitoring Report) Retention rates at Sixth Form School budgets update
29 th November 1.30pm	School Scrutiny 6

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Sources/background papers:

Membership:

County Councillors: **D. R. Jones**,
A. Davies, E. R. Davies, Miss A. Holloway, M. Mackenzie, S. McNicholas K.
Roberts-Jones, G. Vaughan.
Parent Governor Representative Mrs A. Davies and Mrs L. Jenkin.
Church Representative Mrs M. Evitts



People Scrutiny Committee
Education Scrutiny Group
School budgets report to Cabinet 5th July 2016
Scrutiny Observations

Introduction

The Education Scrutiny Group received a copy of the draft report on 22nd June 2016 and met with the Professional Lead Finance and Finance Business Partner on 29th June 2016 to consider the report.

Observations

Scrutiny notes the declining position regarding school budgets where the level of planned surpluses (for licenced and unlicensed budgets) is, as of June 2016, 85% against a permitted maximum of 40%. It is noted that in the last three years schools have consistently underspent and the report notes that the position should significantly improve '*if this trend continues*'. The increased period of austerity may mean that this underspend cannot be relied upon and would **wish to draw to the attention of Cabinet the risk that schools deficit budgets pose to the Councils General Fund.**

Scrutiny notes that the figures provided within the report project the position prior to the Cabinet decision taken in April to change the age of admission. It is noted within the report that the effect of this change will be calculated over the summer and made available to schools in the Autumn Term. The report acknowledges (with regard to the decision not to claw back surplus funds) that schools would need to plan ahead to smooth this change. This will be difficult for schools to do without early indications of the impact of the changes. **The Portfolio Holder is urged to arrange for these calculations to be made and conveyed to schools promptly so that the impact on budgets can be assessed. A further report outlining the impact of these changes is requested to be brought back to Cabinet in the first half of the autumn term.**

**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**

Response to Education Scrutiny Group report presented to Cabinet on 24th May 2016.

Cllr Arwel Jones Portfolio holder for Education

In response to the issues raised in the conclusions of the Education Scrutiny Group report presented to Cabinet on 23rd May 2016 , the Portfolio Holder for Education and the Cabinet provides the following response :

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

Response:

The educational performance in respect of achievement and attainment is a priority for the Council and Cabinet as evidenced in the One Powys Plan.

The Schools Service through the ERW alliance of six local authorities team of challenge advisors consistently implements the regional strategy for School Improvement through the regional team of Challenge Advisors to achieve the ERW vision of ;

“a consistently high performing school network across the region with every school a good school offering high standards of teaching under good leadership resulting in all learners achieving their maximum potential”.

This vision is aligned in Powys through the School Service Business Plan which in 2016-2017 identifies the following main objectives for school improvement:

- To improve standards in all phases and key stages with a particular focus on improving the performance of eFSM learners and performance at higher levels.
- To improve outcomes at key stage 4
- To improve the quality of leadership, including governors, across our schools with a specific focus on secondary schools.

The Portfolio holder for Education takes the following actions to challenge school performance and the support, monitoring and intervention of the School Improvement Service

- Regular challenge at School Service quarterly performance review meetings to ensure all intended actions are being implemented with an end of year evaluation of impact through analysis of key performance data.

It is acknowledged that significant issues exist in respect of inspection outcomes in secondary schools. The predominant concerns are the schools in special measures or significant improvement. In order to ensure greater challenge to the rate of improvement further action to be taken is as follows:

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/MEMBER
Portfolio Holder to attend Secondary School “Improvement Board” meetings	As from September, 2016	Portfolio Holder Head of Schools Service Senior Challenge Advisor

- b) It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder assures Cabinet that the ERW Challenge Advisor Service is providing the appropriate level of support and challenge in Powys schools and he is continually advised of schools causing concern.**

Response:

The Portfolio Holder through his weekly meetings with the Head of Schools Service is continually advised of school performance. This includes schools causing concern and also schools which are performing well. Inspection outcomes are shared with the

Portfolio Holder with support to be provided discussed.

The Head of Schools Services writes to all schools following the publication of inspection reports. The Portfolio Holder receives a copy of all letters.

It is acknowledged that capacity to supporting secondary schools has been an issue. Recruitment to Challenge Advisor posts of suitably qualified and experienced leaders from secondary schools is a challenge for all regions due to the salary scales involved. Powys, however has been successful in appointing an additional challenge advisor with proven experience, for secondary schools who will commence in post at the beginning of the new academic year in September 2016.

Further action to be taken:

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/MEMBER
Post inspection outcome letters to be copied to the Leader of the cabinet	From September 2016	Head of Schools
Portfolio Holder to attend Schools Service Management Team meetings once per term to receive monitoring reports relating to Schools Causing Concern	From September, 2016	Portfolio Holder Head of Schools Senior Challenge Advisor
Cabinet to receive annual performance reports based on previous years school performance outcomes to include end of year outcomes/ National Model categorisation and Estyn outcomes	Annually in late Autumn Term	Portfolio Holder Head of Schools

c)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.

Response:

Challenge Advisors are responsible for supporting and monitoring governor effectiveness.

Through the ERW ladder of support and intervention framework schools are categorised for capacity to improve.

The Governor's role in challenging their school is part of this categorisation with judgements made against a range of criteria which includes:

- a) School leaders and governors challenge underperformance effectively and are largely successful in securing the required improvement
- b) The school's leaders and governors do not always challenge underperformance effectively
- c) The school's leaders and governors do not challenge underperformance effectively

The judgement on the above is then a contributory factor to the bespoke menu of support provided to a school which may include bespoke governor training. To improve the quality of school governance the Schools Service has a comprehensive training programme in place which for 2016-2017 includes:

- Inclusive School (ALN/Inclusion)
- Budget
- LAC
- Difficult conversations (HR)
- Managing change (HR)
- Performance Management linked to professional standards
- Child Protection
- Safeguarding
- Asking the right questions
- Info sessions on Hwb
- Preparing for curriculum change, successful futures including digital competency framework
- Mandatory training for clerks
- Mandatory training for Chairs
- Mandatory training for understanding and analysing data

In addition during 2016-17 it is intended to;

- Provide bespoke workshop sessions for all governors who have responsibility for the performance management of headteachers, together with the production of revised guidance documentation
- Provide a bespoke workshop for elected members who are school governors on their roles and responsibilities in challenging school performance including the setting of performance management objectives

d) 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 pupils of Powys is of the highest standard and that where it is apparent that these standards are falling short then appropriate action is taken within the powers available to the local authority be taken to address this.

Response;

The Local Authority has a range of strategies to improve the performance of schools.

This includes:

- a) Providing a bespoke menu of support following classification during the Autumn Term.
- b) Half termly monitoring of schools classified as in the red support category, or following an Estyn inspection a school is judged to require Estyn monitoring, is in need of “significant improvement (SI) or special measures(SM)”
- c) Establishing Improvement Boards for schools requiring Estyn monitoring, who are in “need of significant improvement” or special measures or in the red support category who are not making sufficient progress
- d) Consideration and issuing of a formal warning notice under section 3 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 where matters are not resolved within a measurable period
- e) Implementing a school re-organisation programme which includes a focus on standards.