

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Venue
By Zoom

Meeting Date
Wednesday, 13 September 2023

Meeting Time
2.00 pm

For further information please contact

**Katharine Flanagan-Jones,
Democratic and Scrutiny Support
Officer**

katharine-maria.flanagan-
jones@powys.gov.uk



County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG

07/09/2023

Mae croeso i chi siarad yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg yn y cyfarfod. Rhowch wybod pa iaith rydych am ei defnyddio erbyn hanner dydd, ddau ddiwrnod gwaith cyn y cyfarfod.

The use of Welsh by participants is welcomed. If you wish to use Welsh please inform us by noon, two working days before the meeting

AGENDA

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| 1. | APOLOGIES |
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To receive apologies for absence.

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| 2. | DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST |
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To receive any disclosures of interest by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

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| 3. | DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP |
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To receive disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

(NB: Members are reminded that under Section 78 Members having been given a prohibited party whip cannot vote on a matter before the Committee.)

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| 4. | MINUTES |
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To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 19th July 2023 as a correct record.

(Pages 3 - 16)

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| 5. | PERFORMANCE AND RISK Q1 |
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To receive and consider the Performance and Risk reports of Quarter 1 2023/24

(Pages 17 - 34)

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| 6. | UPDATE ON EARLY YEARS PROVISION |
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To receive and consider a report on Early Years Provision.

(Pages 35 - 40)

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| 7. | CURRICULUM FOR WALES |
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To receive and consider a presentation on the Curriculum for Wales.

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| 8. | SECONDARY SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY - PROGRESSION AND LEARNING |
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To receive and consider a report on the Secondary Schools Improvement Strategy.

(Pages 41 - 48)

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| 9. | ADMISSIONS CODE & CAPACITY |
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To receive and consider a presentation on the Admissions Code / Capacity.

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| 10. | WORK PROGRAMME |
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To note that future meetings of the Committee are scheduled as follows:

(Pages 49 - 52)

Committee Reflection

Following the close of the meeting the Committee is asked to spend 5 to 10 minutes reflecting on today's meeting.

Public Document Pack

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee Wednesday, 19 July 2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD BY ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2023

Present:

County Councillor Gwynfor Thomas (Chair)

County Councillors: G D Jones, D Bebb, M Beecham, AW Davies, D Meredith, G Morgan, S McNicholas, G Preston.

Co-opted Member: K Chedgzoy, S Davies, M Evitts.

Cabinet portfolio Holders in Attendance:

County Councillors:

P Roberts, Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys

D Thomas, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation

Officers: Georgie Bevan, Head of Schools Service, Sarah Quibell, Service Manager for Education Support Services, Helen Quarrell, Inclusion Manager Youth Services, Simon Anderson, Inclusion Manager and Karen Jenkins, Inclusion Manager.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

County Councillors:

Lucy Roberts, Jackie Charlton, Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys and Sandra Davies, Cabinet Member for Youth Services

Officers:

Lynette Lovell, Director of Education and Children

Jane Thomas, Head of Finance

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members relating to items for consideration on the agenda.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4. MINUTES

Documents Considered:

- Minutes 31.05.2023 and 21.06.2023

Minutes agreed by Committee members present as a true and accurate reflection of the meetings and ratified accordingly by the Chair.

5. YOUTH SERVICE STRATEGY

Background

Presentation delivered by Helen Quarrell, Inclusion Manager, Youth Services.

The Strategy will strengthen the youth work offer across Powys through:

- Emphasising the voice of the young person.
- Developing relationships.
- Provide information.
- Improved planning, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Equity and sufficiency of youth work support.
- A needs led menu of provision.

Current delivery:

- Open Access / Universal youth club
- Open Access / Universal school youth worker
- Youth Intervention Service (YIS)
- Detached Youth Work Team – 16+, NEETS and homelessness
- Commissioned Services – Urdd and YFC
- Youth Homelessness Coordinator

The Vision:

- Inspiring young people of Powys, through outstanding youth work to reach their full potential and make a positive transition into adulthood.

Challenges:

- Resources
- Rural Isolation and opportunities in Powys
- Post-COVID young people presenting with more complex issues.
- Recruitment and retention
- Limited data
- Communication between services.

Next Steps:

- To unify the service
- To engage on the draft strategy
- Strengthen self-evaluation.
- Improve data collection, reporting mechanisms and feedback.
- Promotion and marketing
- Recruit to key posts in the structure
- Improve the sustainability of the service.
- Support voluntary sector service provision.

| Points raised by the Panel: | Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members. |
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| Chair commented that the draft strategy was a very aspirational document. | |
| Was there enough resource within the service to achieve and implement the strategy, were there measures in place to demonstrate progress with the linked funding. Self-assessment is vital, there are many stakeholders who need opinions heard to progress the service, the young person, parents and other youth groups and organisations were plans in place to capture this information. | The service receives feedback from the professionally qualified Youth Workers. It is acknowledged that the current data is limited in respect of NEETS as Powys does not have a high national percentage. The strategy is ambitious and would be reviewing data from the community schools model as well as the new National Youth strategy. The Quality and Engagement Officer role would be to reach out to stakeholders, seek feedback, and |

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| <p>Were there any issues recruiting staff to key posts, is the service following the Grow Our Own strategy of other service areas.</p> | <p>inform data.</p> <p>There have been issues with recruitment, locally and nationally, the Principal Officer Group are reviewing how to make youth worker roles more attractive.</p> <p>With regard to the Grow our Own, many of the staff within the Community Open Access team began as 6hrs / week volunteers and have become employees and undertaken their Level 2 & 3 or degrees and are qualified youth workers.</p> |
| <p>What links have been made with the other youth groups i.e., the Urdd, YFC, Scouts and Guide organisations or the Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) award scheme.</p> | <p>We are limited in terms of the uniformed groups (Scouts and Guides) however this would be an area to develop. The DoE scheme is supported through schools and youth clubs, many DoE participants undertake their voluntary work through Youth Clubs.</p> |
| <p>To achieve the strategy will take considerable resource was pleasing to note that staffing cuts are not anticipated. Would it be correct that the Urdd no longer receive funding from Powys.</p> <p>The YFC is a well-established movement with a membership in Powys of between 1800-2000, which has struggled to maintain the level of support and education, Committee would urge Youth Services to further develop existing links, particularly around grant funding to ensure these groups continue to be successful.</p> | <p>Both the Urdd and the YFC receive substantial grant contributions. The YFC receive funds for emotional health and wellbeing through Youth Support Grant, and the Urdd receive funds from the Welsh Language provision in a Rural Area, both movements provide data which is forwarded to the Welsh Government, as well as local quarterly reporting and compliance meetings.</p> <p>The service has worked hard to ensure that the structure is in place to realise the strategy within the budget. In addition, a position to support with administration of grants, the application and monitoring working with other communities to further support the team and progress.</p> |
| <p>On a positive note, Llanfair Caereinion Community Town Council has recently established a Youth Club with a grant from Awards Wales of £10k over 2 years, information on applicable grant funding etc. should be shared with other towns and villages throughout Powys looking to set up youth groups and clubs.</p> <p>Chair asked if Youth Services were aware of this and other grant opportunities.</p> | <p>The service were successful with the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) with an amount under the criteria ringfenced for Voluntary clubs. The service will be reaching out to existing clubs, and those who are commencing the journey requesting support.</p> |
| <p>What criterion is set against the SPF, as all aware of the difficulties with the rurality of</p> | <p>The SPF is for set up and delivery. The service will disseminate information,</p> |

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| <p>Powys</p> <p>Within the market towns that currently have PCC led youth clubs, what were numbers of young people attending. Conversely in towns without a youth club how many children were the Youth Services engaging with.</p> | <p>including to Members.</p> <p>We have 5 market town with youth clubs, with numbers ranged for 50-100 over the 2 nights per week. Post Covid the numbers were slow to start off with, links can be shared with members of social media posts that show the activities undertaken.</p> <p>Provision for young people in areas where there are not youth clubs are supported in a variety of ways: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open access youth workers work within schools who works with young people in groups. • Youth Intervention Workers who attend schools on a referral basis for 1:1 support to a young person. • The 16+ detached team, work with young people in the community. |
| <p>Were timescales included for the future work programmed. Where would the service hope to be this time next year, delivering the Strategy or still preparing.</p> <p>What access is there for young people in the more rural areas, as they would have huge distances to travel to existing clubs.</p> <p>The use of grants for the setup of new clubs is great, however, could there be a focus on the smaller existing groups that are struggling, who would benefit from additional revenue funding.</p> <p>The Committee requested to have an indication of the Youth Services budgets, listing elements of delivery.</p> <p>Request for an indication of the total Shared Prosperity Fund and how much</p> | <p>In respect of timescales, there would be a period of consultation on the strategy, establish the agreed structure to progress work. The expectation is all the above would be completed, posts filled, and work being delivered to support young people.</p> <p>Youth Services had run a pilot in Hay on Wye for those young people unable to access one of the 5 main towns Youth centres, the Service has worked with a voluntary group along with PAVO, there are some qualified youth workers and the offer of training in level 2 and 3 youth work qualifications will be continued to the voluntary groups.</p> <p>In terms of the SPF and voluntary groups, this would be reviewed in more detail the set up and delivery, to understand if this could be separated to assist and sustain those established groups.</p> <p>Funding is quite a complex picture between baseline and grants which have different T&C's. The Service is working closely with the Accountants regarding all these elements.</p> |

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| <p>potential work could be undertaken utilising these funds. Continual funding via Grants limits long term sustainability and planning.</p> | <p>The budgets could be shared with Committee in due course and would include figures within each zone.</p> |
| <p>PCC Youth Services, use the YFC data provide to inform WG statistics. Some of Powys' YFC's are run by voluntary leaders, with the Chair appointed via an AGM, and an Advisory Committee. How would a Powys youth worker engage with the YFC clubs and assist committee members deal with complex issues as sexual or mental health issues, for which they are not trained. PCC could use the YFC, Urdd movements and Uniformed Groups to reach many young people in rural areas and develop expertise within these youth groups in such issues as those mentioned.</p> | <p>The Youth Services Equalities and Engagement Officer has reached out to each of the YFC Federations and arranged meetings with the Coordinators, to develop a programme of engagement and training which would include workshops on sexual health, emotional health, and well-being. Looking at rolling out the C-card by PTHB with the YFC.</p> |
| <p>Post covid young people do have more MH issues, suicides are higher, are youth services reaching out to other stakeholders and MH Charities i.e., DPJ which works a lot with the 16-26years old cohort.</p> | <p>DPJ have been working very closely with the YFC and this is an area that PCC Youth Services needs to develop the relationship further which will moving forward form part of the Strategy.</p> |
| <p>Question raised to the Portfolio Holders present for the introduction of a Youth Champion, a Councillor dedicated to highlight youth services and carry the banner for the service within the Council Membership.</p> | <p>The Service will also engage with the Junior Start-Well Board to look at the possibility of a Youth Services Champion.</p> |

Actions: -

- The Youth Service will disseminate information on the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), including to Members.
- Links to be shared with Committee Members of social media posts that show the activities undertaken.
- The Youth Service will also engage with the Junior Start-Well Board to look at the possibility of a Youth Services Champion

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee welcomed:
 - That Youth Services will share the Shared Prosperity Funding criteria with the Committee as the funding is open to communities to apply, to assist set-up and delivery for youth projects and clubs.
 - That Youth Services are reaching out to YFC coordinators to develop training in sexual health and C-card via PTHB.
- The Committee noted:

- That the draft Youth Services Strategy was a very aspirational document, however Committee remain unsure how this would be progressed and fully implemented.
- The Committee requested that:
 - As self-assessment is vital, the various stakeholders need a voice into the process to capture opinion and enhance progress.
 - Youth Services extend links with and to other youth groups, YFC, the Urdd, the DPJ Foundation, etc., and the uniformed groups (Scouts Guides etc.)
 - As mental health issues and suicide in young people have increased post Covid 19 Pandemic, links to be made by Youth Services to groups, in Powys, who deal with these particular issues for example DPJ Foundation.
 - A Youth Services Champion be appointed, as per other service areas within the Council, to help highlight issues and drive progress.
- The Committee remained unconvinced about:
 - The resource within Youth Services being sufficient to meet the aspirations of the strategy.
- The Committee expressed concern:
 - That continued grant funding into Youth Services, clubs, and projects rather than baseline funding, limits long-term development and growth.

Scrutiny's Recommendations to Cabinet

1. A Youth Services Champion be appointed, as per other service areas within the Council, to help highlight issues and drive progress.
2. The resource within Youth Services to be sufficient to meet the aspirations of the strategy.

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| 6. ALN - ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS |
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Background

Presentation delivered by Simon Anderson and Karen Jenkins, Inclusion Managers.

Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 - ALNET
Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021

Implementation Timeline – Extension

- SEN to ALN
- A Unified plan
- Increased participation of children and young people
- Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution
- Increased Collaboration
- Clear and consistent Rights of Appeal
- A Mandatory ALN Code
- Welsh Language
- 0-25 age range

Challenge

- Converting the Statutory and Non-Statutory documentation over to the new system
- Under the new Act all Statements must be converted into the new LA Individual Development Plan (IDP) where appropriate.

- Those younger children who had Early Year Action/ Action Plus plans must now have a LA IDP where appropriate.
- Previously Non-Statutory – School Action Plus IEP / School Action IEP, under the New Act these must be converted to School IDP's and are Statutory, with Governing Bodies responsibility to ensure that the School IDP is delivered.
- Universal Learning Provision (ULP) is for those children who, do not meet the threshold for a school IDP, but require some form of support. These children will not have a statutory document as under the Act they are not determined to have an additional learning need.

Statutory Posts Under the ALNET Act 2018

- ALNCO – Schools must have a named responsible individual; they must be a qualified teacher and have completed their NQT year.
- Early Years Additional Learning Needs Officer – Responsibility of the LA to look after all non-statutory school age children, keeping provision under review and having their needs met.
- Designated Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) – Health Board role, to ensure links between Health Board and Education remain open and provision reviewed.

Self-Evaluation – Recognised Strengths Feedback

- Drop-in sessions.
- Tyfu system and quick responses from Tyfu.
- Termly ALNCO Forums
- Training and consultations
- School Guides / information on the HWB/bulletins
- Cluster ALNCO champions
- CLA (Children Looked After) virtual school.
- Secondary nurture funding
- Support for vulnerable groups

Self-Evaluation – Areas for Development

- Visiting schools to see children rather than rely of documentation.
- Reduce bureaucracy related to Tyfu and referrals.
- Funding Formula
- ALNCO time
- Support with Transition
- Neuro Divergent (ND) waiting time is a Health Board (HB) issue, schools pass this information now to the Schools Service who enter details onto the Tyfu system and pass to the HB.

Forward Work Plan - 8 priorities for 2023-24

1. Extend Satellite provision, improve provision for learners with most complex needs.
2. Review and improve the provision to support learners who are ND.
3. Improve the monitoring, evaluation, and support for children with ALN aged 0-5yrs.
4. Review and extend the EOTAS provision offer in Powys.
5. Improve the processes for monitoring and evaluating progress and outcomes.
6. Improve communication and partnership working with stakeholders.
7. Improve the consistency of provision for learners with ALN across Powys.
8. Provide a Robust local offer for learners with ALN aged 14-25yrs.

| Points raised by the Panel: | Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members. |
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| <p>Chair acknowledged the challenge of the transition from SEN to ALNET, adhering to the Act to be fully operational by 2024.</p> | |
| <p>Quite a sobering report, given the worrying position the service was in, however Committee were reassured that problems within schools have been identified.</p> <p>Having spoken with schools, ALN was seen as a high-level concern. The noted theme was of a “them and us” culture, where schools felt isolated, with information difficult to access. The transition under the new Act has to happen at pace, further ALNCO staff cannot leave posts citing lack of support from the Schools Service.</p> <p>In terms of training, are teaching staff given training on the use of restraint, aware that some schools are still waiting for this and seek assurance that this will be addressed for sake of both teacher and pupil.</p> | <p>We acknowledge the incredibly difficult time and have not sought to minimise the pressure felt by ALNCO’s. The new system has forced a statutory position onto them, with no direct additional funding from Welsh Government for the role within schools, therefore used grant funding to support ALNCO’s.</p> <p>The Service does respond as quickly as possible and provide the Committee with the assurance that issues raised by schools would be reviewed and responded to as urgently as possible. The encouraged and preferred method would be to use de-escalation techniques rather than restrain. Restraint should only be used as a last resort for the safety of children and staff.</p> <p>The LA have funded and provided Team Teach training. PCC have invested in a train the trainer course for the Executive Head of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), to deliver the Team Teach training through our schools.</p> <p>The Team Teach training is a 2-day course, and there are issues in arranging appropriate times for staff to attend.</p> <p>For reference other LA’s have schools tender and contract courses at their own cost. Our schools, if finding course times difficult to suit, they do have the option to contract as per other LA’s.</p> <p>Some schools have not encountered such instances previously, the Schools Service role would be to provide the appropriate support once aware, to a school struggling with an</p> |

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| <p>Schools feel pushed into the only way forward would be permanent expulsion. No one wants to restrain a learner, however for safety of the children and staff, in certain circumstances and isolated events, it is the only course of action.</p> | <p>issue,</p> <p>The Service is aware of the risk of one Team Teach trained professional within the LA and have begun discussions to review and possibly extend access to training.</p> <p>The service would reemphasise the focus onto de-escalation and ensuring resilience within the service to deliver the training.</p> <p>How do we build on the expertise and knowledge present within schools to deal with challenging behaviours.</p> <p>How do we capture impact of the training, that it has the desired effect and outcomes, modelling those elements as move forward.</p> <p>In terms of Team Teach it would be fair to state that there is a backlog, there is a limit to the numbers that course can be provided on any given course. We would have gaps when schools cancel places which cannot be filled at short notice.</p> |
| <p>In relation to Brynbach would the Governing Body have feedback, as this is a satellite centre.</p> | <p>Governing Body may have update as there are aspects of the satellite provision that the school can hopefully utilise. Will discuss with the relevant headteacher.</p> |
| <p>How many ALNCO's are there within Powys.</p> | <p>Every school has to have an ALNCO. There was one ALNCO shared between two schools, every other school has their own ALNCO. There is an option explored for a Cluster ALNCO with smaller schools</p> |
| <p>There remains a reliance on other services and agencies i.e., speech therapy, how many children are waiting for adequate Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) in schools and would require monitoring very closely with the PTHB.</p> | <p>It would be difficult to monitor from a LA perspective as have no control over therapies. We will relay urgency of messages, as all services PTHB are stretched. We have appointed a SAL specialist teacher, not a therapist, who would work with schools on strategies for learning with speech and language as the focus.</p> <p>The DECLO is a Health Board position, whose remit covers Powys, Swansea Bay, and Hywel Dda Health Boards. Schools Service meet the DECLO regularly to update on all</p> |

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| | <p>concerns and those within Powys schools.</p> <p>Cabinet Member, The DECLO is a member of the Inclusion Board, agreement reached for a special two item meeting in September: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth Strategy 2. Reviewing waiting times for assessments and support across a variety of ND, Psychology, behavioural issues where PTHB involved. <p>Expected outcomes would be certainty for schools on waiting times for assessments.</p> <p>Discussions have been held at Cabinet level in regard to the strategic relationship with PTHB, making sure that all these points of discussion are also raised at Director level.</p> <p>There is a significant amount of time for an assessment window, which is a challenge for schools to be able to capture evidence, but also the variability of ALNCO's may mean the information on Tyfu is not as detailed as required.</p> <p>The are ongoing conversations with Headteachers to look at more bespoke tailored support to teachers for the PIP Panels and Y-PIPS.</p> |
| <p>Scrutiny requires an update on the Special School Satellite at Crossgates, to review the level of expertise and ensure this is of the highest level for our learners.</p> | |
| <p>How do parents raise issues or concerns in respect of their children having possible Dyslexia or an ALN and have been advised they would be required to undergo a private assessment, which not all parents can afford, which places those pupils at a major disadvantage.</p> <p>The additional workload placed onto ALNCO's under the new Act is tremendous, in an area of high turnover of staff, which has a detrimental impact on children. What structures are in place to</p> | <p>In terms of Dyslexia, in particular, the LA emphasise that the work or reports to be completed are needs led, rather than diagnosis led. Diagnoses are not required to provide the relevant support for a young person.</p> <p>The promoted message would be that teaching strategies for ALN are good for all children regardless of having a diagnosis.</p> <p>We acknowledge that a diagnosis does open certain doors for young people and families, however in terms</p> |

provide further assistance to ALNCO's to give time to focus on, develop on and learn in the role away from teaching. Are support staff given training with ELSA (Emotional, Literacy Support).

of the support from schools this would remain needs led.

Dyslexia falls into the field of Persistent Literacy Difficulty (PLD). The LA's Educational Psychologists (EP'S) deliver training to schools on how to work with children and young people who have PLD.

More than 12 months ago we appointed a specialist teacher to work with schools and look at how they can support pupils who have PLD.

The Code states that and ALNCO must have an adequate amount of time released from work to undertake ALNCO. It is an area that is very difficult to manage, especially within small schools, where a head teacher may be the ALNCO, Safeguarding and designated lead for CLA (Children Looked After) etc., and therefore we have petitioned WG to look at the role of the ALNCO in detail, the level of anxiety and pressure, which the Minister has agreed to do.

We offer and EP's provide ELSA and MELSA training to all LSA's who are available to undertake training.

Under the new ALN code if a parent believes their child has ALN, the school has a certain timeframe to formally respond including a reasoning rationale.

The specialist teacher will go into schools, where there are exceptional circumstances to assist and support school staff and their ALNCO.

Discussions are ongoing within the Service in terms of ALN funding and the current funding formula, there is a national directive around the role of the ALNCO.

Workload and pressures would look different from school to school, there are nuances throughout the system and there is not a one size fits all model and will have to work on a more bespoke formula. We have

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| | <p>ALNCO champions, work to be completed on how we envisage support to ALNCO's and what outcome do we require.</p> |
| <p>Within the reports to Scrutiny Committee, 46% of children had come forward requesting ALN support and 46% were refused. Acknowledge the processes would have been followed, however it remains those children have a need of some kind. What happens to those children, post-Covid behaviours in schools have increased, we have higher expulsion numbers, and an increase in home educated children, is there a correlation for both increases to the 46%, are those children supported or would we be reliant on schools to notice issues.</p> | <p>We have a more multi agency holistic team brought together within the Service to make sure learners do not slip through the net. We are aware of and reviewing the increased exclusions, are they an escalation of behaviours or one-off cases. More EWO's (Education Welfare Officers) have been recruited to assist with behaviour and attendance elements. HE (Home Education) service, falls under the EWO team, why not in school, are they predominantly ALN, what support is provided. Secured additional transformation funding, to support case workers and IDP conversions.</p> |
| <p>School governors have mentioned terms such as crisis point, system broken or not working within schools. The policy is great, but implementation and delivery is not there. It is noted that the Service has recognised some of these issues, therefore to the Portfolio Holder, is there enough resource and budget to cope with the transformation.</p> | <p>Cabinet Member at this stage the genuine answer is unknown. Additional funding set aside to support the transition, with migration into the development plans. Increases in behavioural and /or developmental problems post pandemic. Challenges of completed assessments with very significant support required 5 or 6 figure sums for any particular case. Officers have been challenged to roll expertise recognised by Estyn away from the centre and into the schools. Until completed, difficult to state if quantum of money is correct or ALN. Upon reviewing the Integrated Business Plans, funding bids can be developed at the appropriate time.</p> |

Actions

- Update on Satellite schools to be brought as part of the next scheduled ALN agenda item to Scrutiny.

Observations:

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee welcomed:
 - The opening of Bryn Bach as a satellite service linked to Brynllawarch Hall.
 - That every school in Powys should have an ALNCO, with an option available for smaller schools to have a cluster ALNCO.

- That ELSA/MELSA training was offered to LSA's.
- The Committee noted:
 - The challenge to the Schools Service to be fully operational by 2024 with the transition from SEN to ALN Code for Wales.
- The Committee remained unconvinced about:
 - The resource within the budget to support the new ALN Code and Transformation, the planned implementation recognises some of the issues raised, however School Governors are reporting they are at crisis point, with the ALN system in its current format not working.
- The Committee expressed concern:
 - That ALN remains a high concern within schools, with re-occurring themes of isolation, lack of pace for required information from the Schools Service.
 - That some schools are awaiting training for restraint (Team -Teach via PRU Head Teacher), aware that de-escalation resilience was re-emphasised within the service and restraint was a last resort.
 - Of the workload and pressure on members of staff who are ALNCO, as well as teaching staff. Pleased to note that the Welsh Government has been petitioned to review the added pressure and anxiety levels of ALNCO to teaching staff.

Scrutiny's Recommendations to Cabinet

1. That the resource within the budget was sufficient to support the new ALN Code and Transformation. Whilst the planned implementation recognises some of the issues raised, School Governors are reporting they are at crisis point, with the ALN system in its current format not working.

2. That the Cabinet back the petition to WG to review in respect of the added pressure and anxiety onto teaching staff who are also ALNCO's.

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| 7. | SCHOOL VISITS |
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Background:

Discussion held whether the Committee would find visits, be they virtual or in person, or working groups, following specific criteria for reason and purpose, beneficial to the Committee in understanding issues faced by School staff and learners.

| Points raised by the Panel: | Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members. |
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| Comment made that visits would prove more beneficial than working groups | There is merit in visiting schools, however as a Service have to remain conscious of the well-being and workload on teaching staff and would not want any visits to add further pressures. Any visits would have to be managed, well-planned and with clearly set parameters for the particular school(s) involved. |
| Health and Care Scrutiny Committee have | |

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| taken a similar approach which has been helpful for the development of the Committee Membership. | |
| Links could be made through Scrutiny training, to enable Head Teachers, Business Managers etc. to attend Scrutiny Committee, for areas they require further information. | |
| Chair noted that all Members' were in favour of school visits and would liaise with the Schools Service to implement over the next academic year. | |

Actions

- Chair to link with Head of Schools Service on a programme of in person and virtual visits by Committee with Schools over the 2023/24 academic year.

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| 8. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME |
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Comments:

Items to be added – Transformation and Schools Transport.

County Councillor R G Thomas (Chair)

CABINET EXECUTIVE
19 September 2023

REPORT AUTHOR: Councillor James Gibson-Watt
(Leader, and Cabinet Member for an Open and
Transparent Powys)

REPORT TITLE: Corporate Strategic and Equality Plan Scorecard: Quarter
1 Performance

REPORT FOR: Endorsement and Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report presents the Council's 2023 to 2024 Quarter 1 (April to June) Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard. Cabinet are asked to review the performance, and confirm that they are assured by the performance or that they are satisfied that remedial actions will effectively improve performance where this is not on track.
- 1.2. The full content of the Scorecard is available on the Council's website by visiting: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/14124/Corporate-Plan-Updates>.

2. Background

- 2.1. **Objective 1: We will improve people's awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices.**

Overall, progress against this objective has been broadly positive as we have sought to improve how we work with our people and communities. Three measures were allocated as 'off track', which were:

- 'Percentage (children) using Intervention and Prevention remain with families safely (89% against a target of 91%)
- 'Percentage accessing Intervention and Prevention that demonstrate positive progression (80% against a target of 88%)
- 'Percentage of people report achieving their family goal through Early Help' (82% against a target of 90%)

Importantly, the percentage of customers satisfied with their responses when contacting the Council exceeded the target (84% against a target of 82%).

It was announced that the Digital Transformation Programme approved work to investigate the potential of AI (artificial intelligence) Chat across our customer channels. The aim is to support a 24/7 conversational self-serve chat experience that will enable our customers to access information and answers faster.

A range of updates were made to the Council's website to provide more information, including:

- Information about Adult Services.
- New voter ID information for elections. All canvass communications now provide voters with options of how to respond, including a choice of voting methods.
- The Apprenticeship and Work Experience pages, which are now aligned to the new branding used in the Recruitment and Retention Project.

The Dewis Cymru self-help well-being website was also promoted, which provides access to around 6,000 local and national services, will help the people of Powys to choose services that best meet their needs.

Finance and Education Services both reflected on their use of social media and the benefits of promoting information using different communications channels to maximise the opportunities for all. The Education Service identified that there is an opportunity to provide enhanced information to schools and families about admissions and admissions processes and will be exploring how they develop this.

Colleagues from the Workforce and Organisational Development Team attended a range of recruitment events to promote career opportunities with the Council, and to provide support to those applying for roles. This includes targeted, difficult to recruit roles, such as Reablement.

The number of people accessing leisure facilities and the satisfaction levels with those services were notably higher than the targets. The Leisure Review was ongoing during the quarter, and data and insight were being used to better understand leisure centre usage, costs, distance to facilities, the facilities available, and so on, as part of the evidence-based decision-making process. The review will close on 28 August 2023.

Although a significant percentage of children using Intervention and Prevention remain with their families safely, currently the percentage accessing Intervention and Prevention that demonstrate a positive progression is slightly lower than the target. However, a number of children and their families were 'stepped down' to the Early Help service or to more specialist services like the Youth Justice Service before they reached their goals. Similarly, the percentage of people that report achieving their family goal through Early Help is slightly lower than hoped for. Children's Service will be reviewing the distance travelled tool, as well as the model of crisis intervention that is used.

2.2. Objective 2: We will support good quality, sustainable, employment opportunities and pursue real living wage accreditation.

Progress against this objective has been extremely positive as the Council seeks to address the workforce challenges that face the County. However, there still remains a significant amount to do due to the challenging workforce situation which is being experienced nationally.

Only one measure was allocated as 'off track', which was the 'Percentage of staff who feel proud / very proud to work for the Council'. However, the achievement of 80% equalled last year's result, and was only marginally lower than the target of

81%. This evidence helps support the work surrounding the retention of staff currently being undertaken to ensure that existing staff are supported and retained within the Council.

The Council supported a variety of degree schemes:

- Staff from across Social Services were invited to apply to join the next cohort of the 'Grow Our Own' Social Work scheme, which has been successful in strengthening the Social Care workforce by enabling the appointment of 8 'Newly Qualified Social Workers'.
- Interviews started for (Social Services) degree sponsorship, which included 7 applicants from Adult Services and 7 from Children's Services.
- In addition, all Council staff were eligible to apply to undertake the 1-year social work degree, for which there were 3 applicants at time of reporting.
- The Digital Teams were invited to apply to undertake a Degree Apprenticeship in Applied Software Engineering through the Open University.

An apprentice was successfully employed within the Property Design Service. The Highways, Transport and Recycling Service considered that the apprenticeship scheme had been 'a huge success' within the Service and would become a rolling programme.

Reflection during the quarter identified that project roles being advertised within the Economy and Digital Service were not attracting applicants, and as a result work was ongoing with Workforce and Organisational Development to improve the advertising of such roles and to approach internal staff with relevant matching skills.

We have also looked at how we recruit differently. A three-week course was developed as a pilot to support members of the public to gain the Level 1 Food Hygiene Certificate. It is hoped that this will assist them in gaining the skills needed to apply for catering vacancies within the Council, which are roles that are hard to recruit to.

Additionally, Housing have undertaken recruitment for tradespeople differently by visiting a series of locations across Powys, which resulted in a better than expected number of applicants, and the number of tradespeople being recruited being significantly beyond what was originally planned for.

There was an increase in attendance at the recruitment roadshows for Children's Services following a successful recruitment (leaflet) campaign for our in-house therapeutic home.

Powys County Council has signed up to become an Endometriosis Friendly Employer, the first local authority in the UK to do so. By becoming an Endometriosis Friendly Employer, Powys County Council is showing a commitment to support staff who have the condition and tackling stigma and changing culture surrounding endometriosis in the workplace.

Data about disability employment (paid / voluntary) was reviewed to establish a baseline and start work on the Live Well Forum, which is co-produced with the people of Powys to develop meaningful employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. There is now a better understanding of the financial sustainability of different organisations. However, it was acknowledged that further work is needed

to determine who delivers accessible employment opportunities in Powys, how these are coordinated, and how these data are collected and used.

Recipients of Direct Payments (in relation to Adult Services) received an uplift on their rate to facilitate the real living wage, and the Finance Service identified the need to encourage more contractors to pay a real living wage. [All employees of the Council receive a real living wage.] The real living wage activity is an important ambition for the Council to strengthen the county for the people of Powys by increasing fairness and supporting personal and economic resilience.

Please note that:

- Data is not yet available for the measure 'Number of guaranteed interviews offered to (eligible) Armed Forces veterans'; it is due to be reported in quarter 2.
- It was not possible to report against the measure 'Workforce quality and diversity better compares to Powys' demographics' during quarter 1. This measure is under review to ensure that it presents accurate and relevant data in future reports.
- It was not possible to report against the measure 'Job applicants and staff reflect (generally) the equality and diversity of Powys' during quarter 1. This measure is under review to ensure that it presents accurate and relevant data in future reports.

2.3. Objective 3: We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys.

Progress against this objective has been extremely positive despite the Council operating against a challenging socioeconomic backdrop.

Of the 13 measures, only one measure was allocated as 'off track', which was 'The number of households who are homeless' (408 against a target of 304). During the quarter, 79 homeless households were accommodated permanently by the Council, in our own stock, through housing associations and in the private sector. It is important to note that this is an indicator of homelessness in Powys and is impacted by wider external factors beyond the control of the Council.

The number of households registered with 'Homes in Powys' for affordable and secure homes was higher than expected. Similarly, the number of homeless households was significantly higher than hoped. Nevertheless, it is pleasing to report that the number of rough sleepers was lower than expected, as was the number of households living in temporary accommodation. The Housing Service identified the opportunity to maintain close contact with residents and tenants as a way of helping them to feel confident in contacting the Council for advice and help. Positively, at the time of reporting, the percentage of rental income lost through Council unoccupied housing was also slightly lower than expected.

An accommodation tracking form was developed by Adult Services to provide intelligence on future accommodation needs of individuals with a disability. This has resulted in the identification of a potential need in a specific area of the county, which can now be investigated.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registration was gained for an in-house residential provision in South Powys, offering 2 additional (child) residential placements. A further 3 additional places became operational for those (children) aged 16+ in Mid Powys.

A new partnership was formed between the Council's Preventative and Restorative Justice Team and Freedom Leisure to support families in accessing facilities in the Llandrindod Wells area as part of the 'Turn Around Project'. This contributes to creating a 'stronger' Powys, where communities succeed together and are personally resilient.

The rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) continues and will include Year 3 learners from September 2023. 190,490 meals have been provided since 01 September 2022.

The Money Advice Service has been strengthened, using Shared Prosperity Funding to support additional staff to offer free and confidential advice to residents.

The decision-making process (the Impact Assessment) has been developed with specialist support to strengthen guidance about the climate and nature emergency.

3. Advice

- 3.1. That Cabinet receive the Quarter 1 (2023-2024) Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard that is published on the Council's website: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/14124/Corporate-Plan-Updates> and review the Council's progress against the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan.
- 3.2. That Cabinet recognise that this report is the first time that the Council is reporting against its new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan (CSEP) and, as such, the Council is keen to evolve and embed the process over the coming months.
- 3.3. It should be acknowledged that the measures within the CSEP are under continuous review and improvement. The measures do not yet all include reporting from all services, as mechanisms are still under development to support this aspiration. For example, CSEP measure 1 reports the '*Number of contacts to Powys County Council (Number of times people have contacted the Council)*', but at present includes data from Economy and Digital and Housing Services only.
- 3.4. It is requested that Cabinet's attention is drawn to the objective 2 action that states 'By March 2026, we will establish a fair pay commission that will set out how the Council will become a fully accredited living wage employer. We will do this in consultation with trade unions and our partners'. The Council already pays a Real Living Wage to all the staff it directly employs. The aspiration to seek accreditation is contingent on the Council's contractors paying their staff a Real Living Wage, and work will be undertaken to gain insight into the current wage arrangements that exist within contractor organisations. This information will enable the Council to plan progress towards achieving this aim.

3.5. The Council continues to seek to engage with the people of Powys to help achieve our ambition of being a stronger, fairer, greener Powys. In particular, our engagement activities contribute to our aim to be an open, well-run, Council where people's voices are heard and help us to shape our work and priorities. An update on progress is provided here as supporting information. During quarter 1, 3,190 external people visited our Engagement Hub, of which 589 people participated in our engagement and consultation activities. Of those that responded to our ongoing engagement project, 28% felt they had opportunities to have their say and participate in decision-making, and 25% said they speak positively about the Council. Seven external engagement projects were started during the period, which were:

- Do you have a minute? (Ongoing engagement project)
- Powys Winter Roads Service Review
- Powys Arts Strategy
- Customer Service Review (public)
- Local Housing Market Assessment (open until 10th July)
- Housing Need in Llanfair Ym Mochnant
- Ystradgynlais Replacement of Outdoor Synthetic Pitch (open until 15th July)

A further 348 people joined the Powys People's Panel by opting in through their My Powys Account, which brings the total to 4,837 members.

4. Resource Implications

4.1. Services set out their objectives that contribute to the delivery of the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan in their individual Integrated Business Plans. The activity undertaken and reported in this quarter has been delivered from within service budgets. Any subsequent remedial action to improve performance will be considered by the relevant service, it is anticipated that this can be delivered from existing resources.

4.2. The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the report.

5. Legal implications

5.1. Professional Lead – Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer notes the content of the report. There are no other legal matters arising from the report.

6. Data Protection

6.1. Not applicable. No identifiable information is contained within the reporting.

7. Comment from local member(s)

- 7.1. Comments were not sought from individual members, as the performance report is equally applicable to the whole county.

8. Impact Assessment

- 8.1. An impact assessment has not been undertaken for the quarterly performance updates as it does not include any proposals or service changes. However, the impact assessment of the CSEP is available [here](#).

9. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 9.1. Confirm they are assured that performance is progressing well, or that mitigating actions have been identified and reflected in updates to service Integrated Business Plans.
- 9.2. Confirm they are satisfied that any remedial actions will effectively improve performance in line with outcomes set out in the [Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan](#).
- 9.3. Consider for approval the introduction of a **new measure** to support Objective 1 (We will improve people's awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices.):
- **Number of 'keeping in touch' visits**; this is in relation to Housing Services and would enable the team to regularly demonstrate some key work that is being undertaken to support the Council's tenants.
- 9.4. Note the following **clarifications** to measure wording:
- **Measure 4**: 'Number of people accessing leisure facilities' has been amended to 'Number of people participating in leisure activities'; this clarifies that it will measure participations rather than people.
 - **Measure 9**: 'Percentage increase in user (active) participations' has been amended to 'The number of (active) user participations'; this reflects the number of participations rather than measuring a percentage increase.
 - **Measure 15**: 'Number of apprentices within the Council' has been updated to clarify that it reports the number of new apprentices; it now reads: 'Number of new apprentices within the Council'.
 - **Measure 19**: 'Staff turnover rate' has been updated to clarify that it is the: 'Staff turnover rate during the quarter'.
 - **Measure 20**: 'Sickness absence rate' has been updated to clarify that it is the: 'Average days sickness per full time equivalent employee'.
 - **Measure 35**: 'A reduction in the child poverty rate' has been amended to 'A reduction in the child absolute poverty rate'; this clarifies that absolute poverty is the basis of measurement.

- **Measure 36:** 'Number of families with children who are living in absolute poverty in Powys' has been amended to 'Number of children living in absolute poverty'; this is because the relevant data is not available for families.

Contact Officer: Catherine James (Head of Transformation and Democratic Services)

Tel: 01597 826768

Email: catherine.james@powys.gov.uk

Head of Service: Catherine James (Head of Transformation and Democratic Services)

Corporate Director: Emma Palmer (Director of Corporate Services)

Appendix A: Technical Notes and Background

- A. This is the first presentation of the Council's progress against the new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan. The Quarter 1 Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard shows the Council's performance against its expectations between April and June 2023.
- B. The new performance year commenced on 01 April 2023 to coincide with the publication of the Council's new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan: Stronger, Fairer, Greener. (We abbreviate references to this plan as 'CSEP'.)
- C. The purpose of the CSEP is to present the well-being priorities for the Council for the years 2023 to 2027, which support the seven national well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Council's priorities are its three corporate well-being objectives, which are:
1. We will improve people's awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices.
 2. We will support good quality, sustainable, employment, providing training opportunities, and pursuing real living wage employer accreditation.
 3. We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys.
- D. The CSEP contains all the priority work for the Council, driven by the Cabinet's work programme and ambitions. The objectives and measures integrate the equality objectives and measures to ensure that we work towards a fairer Powys in all aspects of our work, and that equality is at the heart of our approach.
- E. The well-being objectives are organisation-wide areas of focus that we actively pursue so that we can make positive improvements to our services. The performance process helps the Council to reflect on the year so far, to evaluate its approaches and contributions, to consider what has been learned, and to plan what actions can or should be taken to support ongoing progress.
- F. The new reporting system only provides the following options for identifying progress against a measure target:
- On track
 - Off track
 - No data (data not due to be reported)
 - Not reported (data unexpectedly unavailable or not yet provided)

Importantly, measure statuses are automatically calculated by the system as an indicator to identify whether the progress towards the activity met planned expectations (the targets). These statuses are used as conversation starts to enable activities to be considered in a more detailed context to determine what went well, where more or different support or resource may be necessary, and what lessons may be learned.

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| Report Title: | Corporate Strategic and Equality Plan Scorecard: Quarter 1 Performance |
| Lead Officer: | Catherine James, Head of Transformation and Democratic Services |

Key Issues in the report highlighted by Lead Officer

1. It should be acknowledged that the measures within the CSEP are under continuous review and improvement. The measures do not yet all include reporting from all services, as mechanisms are still under development to support this aspiration. For example, CSEP measure 1 reports the '*Number of contacts to Powys County Council (Number of times people have contacted the Council)*', but at present includes data from Economy and Digital and Housing Services only.
2. It is requested that the committee's attention is drawn to the objective 2 action that states 'By March 2026, we will establish a fair pay commission that will set out how the Council will become a fully accredited living wage employer. We will do this in consultation with trade unions and our partners'. The Council already pays a Real Living Wage to all the staff it directly employs. The aspiration to seek accreditation is contingent on the Council's contractors paying their staff a Real Living Wage, and work will be undertaken to gain insight into the current wage arrangements that exist within contractor organisations. This information will enable the Council to plan progress towards achieving this aim.
3. Please note the following clarifications to measure wording:
 - **Measure 15:** ('Number of apprentices within the Council') has been updated to clarify that it reports the number of new apprentices. It now reads: 'Number of (new) apprentices within the Council'.
 - **Measure 19:** ('Staff turnover rate') has been updated to clarify that it is the: 'Staff turnover rate during the quarter'.
 - **Measure 20:** ('Sickness absence rate') has been updated to clarify that it is the: 'Average days sickness per full time equivalent employee'.
4. The following amendments have been presented to Cabinet for decision (19 September 2023). Proposed amendments to the following measures:
 - **Measure 4: Amend** from: 'Number of people accessing leisure facilities' to 'Number of people participating in leisure activities'; this will clarify that it will measure participations rather than people.
 - **Measure 6:** Amend from 'Percentage of leisure users who are satisfied or more than satisfied with the service' to 'Net Promoter Score of leisure users who are satisfied or more than satisfied with the service'; this will reflect that percentages are not being to measure satisfaction.
 - **Measure 9:** Amend from 'Percentage increase in user (active) participations' to 'The number of (active) user participations'; this will reflect the number of participations rather than measuring a percentage increase.
 - **Measure 35:** Amend from: 'A reduction in the child poverty rate' to 'A reduction in the child absolute poverty rate'; this will clarify that absolute poverty is the basis of measurement.
 - **Measure 36:** Amend from: 'Number of families with children who are living in absolute poverty in Powys' to 'Number of children living in absolute poverty'; this is because relevant data are not available for families.

For reference:

APPENDIX 1 – QUESTION BANK (Extracted from the Performance Document)

What should we think about when reviewing our performance and business plans? The bullets below are a brief example of the types of questions we should ask ourselves when we are evaluating our performance.

- **What are you concerned about?**
 - What plays on your mind? What would you change if you could?
- **Have there been any situational/policy changes which have impacted upon delivery?**
 - These may be internal, external, local, or national – please think about the broader environment and bigger picture.
- **How much have we achieved this quarter?**
 - This is a good place to share any measurements you may use, such as % customer satisfaction, number of surveys circulated and number returned, % planned activity completed within timescale, etc.
- **How do we know how well it has gone?**
 - What did we achieve?
 - What did we learn? Are there any lessons learned/areas of good practice which could be noted / shared wider?
 - Who has benefited from what we've done? How? What difference has been made?
 - What have residents, partners, and regulators said during the quarter (including engagement activities, complaints, compliments, and audits) about your service?
 - What messages do you need to share with the people of Powys? How have you planned to progress them?
- **Have any risks or issues changed, or have new ones been identified? Have any risks been de-escalated?**
 - Has the risk / issue register been updated?
- **Do we have the necessary resources to progress this work?**
 - For example, identify any issues with workforce, finance, assets, and other resources.
 - Are you delivering within budget?
 - If the necessary resources are not available, what plans have been put in place? Can the activity continue?
- **Do we need any support from others (other services, partners, etc.)?**
 - For example, where delivery is dependent upon support services like Transformation and Democratic Services, Digital and Economy Services, or strategic partners like PTHB, we need to liaise with them to keep them informed and to seek assistance where they can help unblock some barriers to completion.
- **Other**
 - Is there anything that may affect whether this activity can be achieved as planned and within timescale and current resources?
 - What can we do differently?
 - What changes do we need to make to our action plan (including our Integrated Business Plan) based on what has happened and what we've learned this quarter?
 - Do any activities need to be escalated to discuss whether they should be put on hold or ceased entirely?

Key Feeders (tick all that apply)

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| Strategic Risk | | Cabinet Work Plan | |
| Director / Head of Service Key Issue | | External / Internal Inspection | |
| Existing Commitment / Annual Report | | Performance / Finance Issue | ✓ |
| Suggestion from Public | | Referral from Council / Committee | |
| Corporate Improvement Plan | ✓ | Impacting Public / other services | |

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| Service Integrated Business Plan | | | |
| Suggestion from Members | | | |
| Partnerships | | | |

Scrutiny Impact (tick all that apply)

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|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|---|
| Policy Review | | Performance | ✓ |
| Informing Policy Development | | Evidence Gathering | |
| Risk | | Corporate Improvement Plan | ✓ |
| Service Integrated Business Plan | | Partnerships | |
| Pre-Decision Scrutiny | | Finance / Budget | |

Other (please specify)

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| N/A |
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Suggested scrutiny activity - Committee's Role:

Scrutinising the progress, processes, and impact of performance and performance management within the Council.

- Responsibility to continuously ask whether we are doing what we said we would do, and whether we are doing it well.
- Reviewing, analysing, and evaluating the performance of the Council, including the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard, for quality, relevance, and usefulness.
- Identifying and voicing any queries or concerns that arise, helping to ensure robust procedures and activities.
- Working with Cabinet to seek assurance and develop performance and performance approaches.
- Balancing the concerns of the people and communities of Powys with issues of strategic risk and importance.
- Supporting the voice of the people of Powys to be heard in the decision-making process.

On what specific elements of the report would scrutiny comment add value

- Review and evaluation: informed enquiry / recommendations; to review the information, ask questions, make enquiries, and make recommendations.
- Seek assurance and clarification about progress towards achieving the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan priorities, and ensuring that service priorities will be met effectively, efficiently, and within the allocated timescales and resources.

Example questions:

- a. Is the content accessible and easy to understand?
- b. Does the information provide a clear understanding of what work the Council is undertaking to meet the ambitions of *Stronger, Fairer, Greener*?
- c. Are the targets provided against measures appropriate e.g. too high/too low etc?
- d. Does the Committee feel the future actions will help achieve the objective and to what extent?
- e. Based on your work as a Committee in the last quarter, is there anything the Committee aware of which they feel should be considered within the report?
- f. Based on your work as a Committee, does the information interact with any resource (workforce or finance) challenges identified?
- g. Thinking around access to services, can the Committee provide views based upon the aspirations of the Plan and what is being delivered so far based upon the information provided?
- h. Thinking around workforce and real living wage accreditations, can the Committee provide views based upon the aspirations of the Plan and what is being delivered so far based upon the information provided?
- i. Thinking around poverty and inequality, can the Committee provide views based upon the aspirations of the Plan and what is being delivered so far based upon the information provided?
- j. Is there anything identified within the report which the Committee would like a further follow up/deep dive session around?

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee, 13 September 2023
Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee, 18 September 2023
Health and Care Scrutiny Committee, 22 September 2023

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| Report Author: | Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Leader, and Cabinet Member for an Open and Transparent Powys |
| Lead Officer: | Catherine James, Head of Transformation and Democratic Services |
| Report Title: | Corporate Strategic and Equality Plan Scorecard: Quarter 1 Performance |
| Report For: | Information |

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the Council's 2023 to 2024 Quarter 1 (April to June) Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard.
- 1.2. The Scorecard is available on the Council's website by visiting: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/14124/Corporate-Plan-Updates>

2. Background

- 2.1. This is the first presentation of the Council's progress against the new [Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan](#). The Quarter 1 Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard shows the Council's performance against its expectations between April and June 2023.
- 2.2. The new performance year commenced on 01 April 2023 to coincide with the publication of the Council's new [Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan](#): Stronger, Fairer, Greener. (We abbreviate references to this plan as 'CSEP'.)
- 2.3. The purpose of the CSEP is to present the well-being priorities for the Council for the years 2023 to 2027, which support the [seven national well-being goals](#) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Council's priorities are its three corporate well-being objectives, which are:
 1. We will improve people's awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices.
 2. We will support good quality, sustainable, employment, providing training opportunities, and pursuing real living wage employer accreditation.
 3. We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys.
- 2.4. The CSEP contains all the priority work for the Council, driven by the Cabinet's work programme and ambitions. The objectives and measures integrate the equality objectives and measures to ensure that we work towards a fairer Powys in all aspects of our work, and that equality is at the heart of our approach.

- 2.5. The well-being objectives are organisation-wide areas of focus that we actively pursue so that we can make positive improvements to our services. The performance process helps the Council to reflect on the year so far, to evaluate its approaches and contributions, to consider what has been learned, and to plan what actions can or should be taken to support ongoing progress.
- 2.6. All council services and staff help to contribute to meeting the Council's ambition. Each service has provided a written update about how they have contributed towards the achievement of the Council's three corporate objectives and, where appropriate, the supporting measures.
- 2.7. The new reporting system only provides the following options for identifying progress against a measure target:
 - On track
 - Off track
 - No data (data not due to be reported)
 - Not reported (data unexpectedly unavailable or not yet provided)

Importantly, measure statuses are automatically calculated by the system as an indicator to identify whether the progress towards the activity met planned expectations (the targets). These statuses are used as conversation starts to enable activities to be considered in a more detailed context to determine what went well, where more or different support or resource may be necessary, and what lessons may be learned.

3. Advice

- 3.1. That the committee receive the Quarter 1 (2023-2024) Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard that is published on the Council's website: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/14124/Corporate-Plan-Updates> and review the Council's progress against the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan.
- 3.2. That the committee recognise that this report is the first time that the Council is reporting against its new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan (CSEP) and, as such, the Council is keen to progress and improve the quality and content of the reporting.
- 3.3. All Directors, Heads of Service, and Senior Managers are asked to review the appropriateness and relevance of the reporting on an ongoing basis to support the continuous improvement and to identify areas to which their work contributes. The Council's long-term aspiration is to use each quarter's reporting to develop a relevant and informative source of information that is used both as a mechanism for recognising achievements and opportunities and as a means of identifying patterns and areas in need of further development or adaptation.

4. Resource Implications

4.1. Services set out their objectives that contribute to the delivery of the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan in their individual Integrated Business Plans. The activity undertaken and reported in this quarter has been delivered from within service budgets. Any subsequent remedial action to improve performance will be considered by the relevant service, it is anticipated that this can be delivered from existing resources.

4.2. The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the report.

5. Legal implications

5.1. Professional Lead – Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer notes the content of the report. There are no other legal matters arising from the report.

6. Data Protection

6.1. Not applicable. No identifiable information is contained within the reporting.

7. Comment from local member(s)

7.1. Comments were not sought from individual members, as the performance report is equally applicable to the whole county.

8. Impact Assessment

8.1. An impact assessment has not been undertaken for the quarterly performance updates as it does not include any proposals or service changes. However, the impact assessment of the CSEP is available [here](#).

9. Recommendations

That the committee:

9.1. Consider whether they are assured that performance is progressing well, or that mitigating actions have been identified.

9.2. Consider whether they are satisfied that any future actions identified within the CSEP Scorecard will effectively improve performance in line with outcomes set out in the [Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan](#).

Contact Officer: Catherine James (Head of Transformation and Democratic Services)

Tel: 01597 826768

Email: catherine.james@powys.gov.uk

Head of Service: Catherine James (Head of Transformation and Democratic Services)

Corporate Director: Emma Palmer (Director of Corporate Services)

SCRUTINY REPORT NEW TEMPLATE

6

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee Date

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|----------------------|---|
| Report Title: | Update on Early Years Education Provision |
| Lead Officer: | Eurig Towns |

Key Issues in the report highlighted by Lead Officer

Key Feeders (tick all that apply)

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Strategic Risk | | Cabinet Work Plan | |
| Director / Head of Service Key Issue | | External / Internal Inspection | |
| Existing Commitment / Annual Report | X | Performance / Finance Issue | |
| Suggestion from Public | | Referral from Council / Committee | |
| Corporate Improvement Plan | | Impacting Public / other services | |
| Service Integrated Business Plan | | | |
| Suggestion from Members | | | |
| Partnerships | | | |

Scrutiny Impact (tick all that apply)

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| Policy Review | | Performance | |
| Informing Policy Development | | Evidence Gathering | |
| Risk | | Corporate Improvement Plan | |
| Service Integrated Business Plan | | Partnerships | |
| Pre-Decision Scrutiny | | Finance / Budget | |

Other (please specify)

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| For information on standards and provision in Early Years education |
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Suggested scrutiny activity - Committee's Role:

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|--|
| To be aware of the current standards and provision for Early Years education across Powys. |
|--|

On what specific elements of the report would scrutiny comment add value

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|---|
| The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee requested an update on standards and provision in Early Years education. |
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CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee Date

Report Author: County Councillor Pete Roberts
Portfolio Holder for a Learning Powys

Lead Officer: Eurig Towns

Report Title: Update on Early Years Provision

Report For: Information

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee with an update on the standards and progress of Early Years education in Powys.

2. Background

2.1 The local authority has a statutory requirement to provide a minimum of 10 hours per week of pre-school Early Years education to all children from the start of the term following his/her third birthday until s/he commences school on a full-time basis, normally at the start of the school year following their fourth birthday. However, Early Years education is not statutory and it is a parental decision as to whether they apply for and take up a place for Early Years education for their child or children.

2.2 Since September 2017, Early Years education has been provided through dedicated English and Welsh medium Early Years settings across Powys. As of September 2023, there are currently 72 Early Years settings in Powys, 18 Welsh medium providers and 54 English medium providers.

2.3 The number of children in each setting ranges from 5 children to 82 children. There are three admission periods over the course of an academic year. These coincide with the start of each academic term. As admissions are staggered over the course of the year, due to children accessing Early Years education following their third birthday, settings are at their lowest capacity in the autumn term and are often close to or at capacity by the summer term.

2.4 The number of children accessing Early Years education in Powys remains fairly stable.

| Academic year | Number of Children accessing EY education |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 2018-19 (pre-pandemic) | 1398 Full Time Equivalent Places (FTE) |
| 2019-20 (Covid Pandemic) | 1367 FTE |
| 2020-21 (Impacted by Covid Pandemic) | 1320 FTE |
| 2021-22 | 1401 FT |
| 2022-23 | 1386 FTE |

2.5 All settings are supported by a designated Foundation Learning Advisory Teacher. This team of 5 teachers is led by Sharon Hughes, Senior Foundation Phase Advisory teacher. Their support ranges from on-site visits to individual and cluster online support meetings. During these support visits they deliver bespoke educational support to address individual needs of

each setting. They also provide face-to face and online training sessions, available to all settings.

3. Outcomes

3.1 Early Years settings have joint inspections from Estyn and Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW). Each setting will be inspected at least once every six years.

3.2 Inspections restarted following the pandemic in February 2022. Inspections focus on six inspection areas and settings can be placed in follow up categories if they are deemed as not providing a high quality of education or that the care and support for children does not meet CIW regulations.

3.3 Inspection reports from February 2022 to March 2023 did not contain judgements for each individual inspection area. These were removed during the Covid pandemic and recovery period. However, settings could still be placed in a category for follow up. In March 2023, Estyn and CIW reinstated judgements for each individual inspection area.

3.4 In 2021-22, 10 Early Years settings in Powys were jointly inspected, nine had successful inspections and did not need any follow up activity, one setting was placed in review. This setting was inspected in June 2022, following a reinspection in November 2022, the setting was deemed to have made strong progress in addressing their recommendations and was removed from any further follow up activity.

3.5 In 2022-23, 11 Early Years settings received joint inspections from Estyn and CIW. Ten settings had successful inspections and required no further follow up activity. One setting was placed in review in October 2022, however, by April 2023, this setting had made strong progress and was removed from any further follow up activity.

3.6 At the start of the 2023-24 academic year, there are no Powys Early Years setting in any follow up category.

4. Provision & Support

4.1 Early Years settings are implementing the Curriculum for Wales for non-maintained funded settings ready for September 2023. This will ensure appropriate learning experiences for our youngest learners who receive their education provision in childcare settings. This non-maintained curriculum will act as a precursor to the schools' Curriculum for Wales.

4.2 During the summer term of 2021, 4 Powys Early Years settings (Little Steps Childcare, Jigsaw pre-school, Carreghofa Owlets and Cylch yn yr Ysgol) and 2 Powys child minders expressed an interest and were chosen by Welsh Government to pilot the new non-maintained curriculum for funded settings. As part of the pilot, they, along with the Foundation Learning Advisory Teachers, were responsible for delivering and scrutinising the draft document, then providing valuable feedback about the content, vocabulary and usability to Welsh Government. As a result, the settings increased their knowledge & understanding of the curriculum before the draft was published in January 2022, ready for implementation from September 2023. In addition, the settings provided useful feedback to the advisory team, helping to shape training for other settings as part of the dedicated support programme for all settings. As a result, settings across Powys are prepared for the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales for non-maintained funded settings.

4.3 In 2020, the Foundation Learning Team were invited by Dr Sue Evans to complete the Incredible Beginnings programme specifically for pre-school settings. This is based on the

Incredible Years programme, used by many schools. Following this, three members of the team proceeded to become trainers of the programme with the founder, Dr Carolyn Webster-Stratton. To date the advisory team has successfully trained 4 cohorts of practitioners. The positive feedback from practitioners includes *'This is the best training I have ever done and everyone should attend'* and *'I felt it was all extremely useful. I have been able to use the 'tools' provided to build better relationships with the children'*. The feedback of cohorts trained by Powys Teaching Health Board and the Foundation Learning team has also been shared world-wide ([Incredible Beginnings® program](#)). The support provided through this programme has been particularly relevant to settings following the pandemic period. Participants reported a statistically significant reduction in their perception of child difficulties (emotional problems, hyperactivity, conduct problems, and peer problems), reporting an increase in their use of positive teacher practices, and highly rated their satisfaction with the program.

4.4 Each year the Foundation Learning team ask for feedback from settings as to the quality and impact of the support provided. For the previous academic year 2022-23, settings rated all training provided to them as at least good. All settings stated that they thought the guidance on curriculum had been very effective or effective. Also, 95% of settings thought that the overall support provided by the Foundation Learning Advisory teachers was good to excellent.

4.5 Four of the Foundation Phase Advisory Teachers are trained Early Years Estyn inspectors. This has been beneficial in supporting our settings, ensuring they have high quality support, focused on improving education and leadership within each setting. The team of advisory teachers have a very good understanding of the quality of education in each setting and are able to provide bespoke support based on the individual needs of the setting. The impact of their work not only evidenced through the positive feedback from settings but also through the quality of inspection outcomes within Powys's Early Years settings.

5. Funding

5.1 The 2022/23 budget to deliver Early Years education in Powys was £1,691,370.

5.2 The Powys Funding Formula established for Early Years settings in 2017 is based on the number of adults needed to staff a setting. The ratio of adults to children is 1:8. The minimum number of adults funded for any setting is two adults which complies with CIW regulations. For the first sixteen children, Powys fund one setting leader and one assistant. Then for every eight additional children Powys fund an additional assistant. This formula was implemented due to some settings across Powys being very small and to ensure access for children for both Welsh and English medium settings.

5.3 In January 2022, Welsh Government amended the funding formula for Early Years education and stipulated that by April 2024, all children across Wales must be funded at £5 per hour for their 10 hours of education provision.

5.4 As Powys's current funding formula is based on the number of adults needed to support a setting, on a ratio of 1 adult to 8 children, with a minimum of two adults, Powys finance and Early Years officers have been modelling the impact of the change as a result of the new national funding formula. As funding will be determined by the number of children on role, based on figures from the last two years, most settings would be financially viable. However, there are a very few settings, those with less than 8 children accessing Early Years education at that setting, that will not generate enough income to be financially viable.

6. Contracts to Deliver Early Years Education

6.1 Contracts to deliver Early Years education were awarded to settings in 2017. The initial duration of contracts was five years, with an option of a two-year extension. Due to the pandemic and the impact this had on gathering quality information on standards, provision and financial viability for settings, the contract extension was activated in 2021. With the introduction of the new funding formula from Welsh Government in April 2024, an application for an additional year's exemption was made, thus allowing settings to gather information to support their application for a new contract based on the new funding formula.

6.2 The tendering process for Early Years education will begin in September 2024. Contracts will be awarded for the five-year period, starting in September 2025.

6.3 As part of the work in preparation for the retendering process, an Early Years workstream has been established within the transformation programme. The workstream are reviewing the early years support across education and Children's Services, to look at and reduce any duplication of work whilst ensuring standards of provision are at least maintained across both English and Welsh medium provision.

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| Contact Officer: | Eurig Towns |
| Tel: | 01597 826453 |
| Email: | eurig.towns@powys.gov.uk |
| Head of Service: | Georgie Bevan |
| Corporate Director: | Lynette Lovell |

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8

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee 13th September 2023

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Report Title: | Secondary Schools Improvement Strategy |
| Lead Officer: | Cressy Murphy |

Key Issues in the report highlighted by Lead Officer

Progress made in realising the aims of the Secondary School Improvement Strategy has been slow and now needs to gain in pace with the Secondary School Improvement Team working closely with schools in line with the Estyn visit improvement plan. This will include: Improving relationships with Headteachers, Improvements to Teaching and Learning and Improvements in the reporting systems.

Key Feeders (tick all that apply)

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Strategic Risk | | Cabinet Work Plan | |
| Director / Head of Service Key Issue | | External / Internal Inspection | |
| Existing Commitment / Annual Report | X | Performance / Finance Issue | |
| Suggestion from Public | | Referral from Council / Committee | |
| Corporate Improvement Plan | | Impacting Public / other services | |
| Service Integrated Business Plan | | | |
| Suggestion from Members | | | |
| Partnerships | | | |

Scrutiny Impact (tick all that apply)

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| Policy Review | | Performance | |
| Informing Policy Development | | Evidence Gathering | |
| Risk | | Corporate Improvement Plan | |
| Service Integrated Business Plan | | Partnerships | |
| Pre-Decision Scrutiny | | Finance / Budget | |

Other (please specify)

Suggested scrutiny activity - Committee's Role:

To be aware of the progress made in realising the Secondary School Improvement Strategy and to scrutinise the effectiveness of the team working with the secondary schools across Powys. To scrutinise how effectively the schools are responding to the challenge and support provided by the team.

On what specific elements of the report would scrutiny comment add value

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Date

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| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Report Author: | County Councillor Pete Roberts Portfolio Holder for a Learning Powys |
| Lead Officer: | Cressy Murphy |
| Report Title: | Secondary Schools Improvement Strategy |
| Report For: | Information and Discussion |

1. Purpose

The purpose of the report is to provide the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the work undertaken by Schools Service and schools, in collaboration with key partners to support the implementation of the Secondary School Improvement Strategy

2. Background

2.1 The Secondary School Improvement Strategy (SSIS) was developed in February 2021 as a key stepping-stone to support the ambitious vision for Powys. An integral part of the SSIS, in line with Education in Wales: Our National Mission, is to encourage and promote collaboration between secondary schools to share good practice, innovate and improve in order to achieve the highest possible standards and move towards becoming a high achieving, self-improving LA.

2.2 The implementation of the SSIS will drive sustainable school improvement, guided by effective self-evaluation and improvement planning, and provide all school leaders with the necessary support to improve practice. This will eventually lead to a network of excellent schools, working within a collaborative environment, to spread excellence across the secondary sector. In addition, the emphasis placed on continuous school improvement, sharing and learning from good practice, at whole school and departmental level, in relation to learning and teaching, leadership and the curriculum and its implementation will address the seven dimensions for schools as learning organisations (SLO).

2.3 The SSIS noted that the focus in the short term would be

- ensuring consistency in the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning
- improving learning and teaching
- improving literacy and numeracy standards across secondary schools
- implementing an agreed strategy to improve leadership development, professional learning and to develop school to school collaboration.

2.4 The implementation of the SSIS was hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic. The lockdowns and restrictions limited the amount of time that officers and consultants could visit schools and work alongside leaders and also changed the immediate focus of the school support required. The challenges faced by secondary schools during this time resulted in the majority of time and energy being focussed on managing the day-to-day challenges, detracting the focus from their long-term strategic aims. One positive impact that emerged as a result of the pandemic is the use of digital technology to access Professional Learning (PL) activities.

2.5 The decommissioning of ERW also stalled progress against the recommendations in the SSIS, and in addition, the dependency on external consultants in the design and delivery of professional learning events and in developing school-to-school collaborations had some effect on the implementation of the SSIS in that it has limited SIAs' capacity to ensure the necessary follow-up and evaluate the effect of these initiatives on school improvement.

- 2.6 Following the demise of ERW, and the significant challenge that the LA had faced in recruiting secondary Challenge Advisers and a Secondary School Improvement Manager a secondary school improvement team consisting of a Secondary School Improvement Manager (SSIM) and five subject specialist advisers were appointed and took up post in September 2022.
- 2.7 The need to establish new methods of working and develop a baseline of provision and standards in secondary schools led to an element of plateauing in the support and challenge provided in the initial stages of the team's work which was identified in the recent Estyn visit.
- 2.8 The initial focus of the team has been on establishing a strong understanding of the strengths and areas for development for individual schools, on developing leadership practice with a strong emphasis on the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning and on developing literacy and numeracy skills of learners across Powys secondary schools.
- 2.9 This work has placed the team (and thus the LA) in a suitable position to evaluate progress against the SSIS priorities and further develop the support provided to ensure a bespoke and targeted approach to have a positive impact in schools. In addition, the SSIM (Secondary school improvement manager) has a clear picture of the changes required to further develop the work of the team, improve the support and challenge provided, ensure consistency across the team and develop the system to track the effect of the advisers' work.

3. Priority 1: Ensuring consistency in the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning

- 3.1 The secondary team provided training, available to all Headteachers on the new school improvement guidance and development plan writing. All schools received feedback on their school development plans and were supported and challenged to improve them in line with the new guidance through 'Support and Challenge meetings'. As a result of this the majority of schools improved their development plans, with more focused priority areas informed by first hand evidence.
- 3.2 All schools have received support from school improvement advisers (SIAs) to develop their approaches to self-evaluation. By January 2023 schools had developed a calendar of appropriate activities based on gathering first hand evidence of learning which led to identification of broad areas of strength and areas to improve. There are however, too many cases where school leaders do not identify the specific features of learning that require development precisely enough, and not all schools triangulate the evidence between different monitoring activities well enough. There has been an over-reliance on the use of examination data to provide information on the progress that learners are making in lessons and over time, which is not in line with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales.
- 3.3 School improvement advisers and subject advisers have worked alongside school leaders to model effective approaches to learner centred self-evaluation processes. This has included doing joint lesson observation, learning walks, looking at work and listening to learners followed by professional dialogue about the findings. This work, alongside the work of the Support and Challenge meetings, has seen a number of schools make significant progress in their understanding of learner centred evaluation. This work is still in its initial stages, and therefore improving self-evaluation and improvement planning processes remains an important focus for the LA.

4. Priority 2: Improving teaching and learning

4.1 In January 2023 the secondary team worked closely with schools to evaluate standards of learning and teaching across Powys secondary and all-age schools. The findings from these visits have allowed the team to begin to develop suitable support for the schools. Strengths across Powys include that in nearly all cases there are positive relationships between learners and adults in schools. Learners listen carefully to input from teachers, and are courteous and polite to adults and their peers. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge, and many give clear explanations and support learners to build on their prior knowledge successfully. However, in too many cases teachers have low expectations of what the learners are capable of achieving, the pace of learning is too slow and teachers over direct the learning. As a result far too many learners in Powys do not make the progress over time that they are capable of. Improving teaching and learning experiences will continue to be a priority for the service.

4.2 The secondary team are developing links with the Curriculum for Wales (CfW) and PL Team to provide a variety of PL opportunities linked to learning and teaching and supporting clusters with the development of CfW through targeted, staggered INSET sessions to ensure all PCC officers can support each cluster and provide bespoke guidance. The feedback from the majority of clusters has been positive and they have found the CfW INSET PL sessions helpful in developing a shared understanding of progression in learning, which is a mandatory expectation for all schools and clusters.

4.3 In cases where schools have requested the support, the secondary subject advisers have worked closely with middle leaders and teachers in schools to build on the work undertaken in the Cluster INSETs and support practitioners to develop teaching practice in line with the twelve pedagogical principles of Curriculum for Wales. There has been positive feedback in response to the work of the subject advisers, with many Headteachers stating that the support was 'extremely useful'.

4.4 The OLEVI Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP) has been offered to nearly all clusters of schools. Six secondary school clusters have taken part in the OTP, with at least one teacher from these schools attending the training. One of the secondary schools involved has stated that the OTP has had a significant impact on improving learning and teaching across the school. The impact of the OTP training on developing whole school approaches to pedagogy has been variable. Where it has been effective, schools have shared the pedagogy with all teaching staff and developed a whole school approach which underpins their understanding of pedagogy and has given staff the confidence to try new techniques. These staff have used the questioning techniques to draw out higher level responses from learners, especially impacting on the development of MAT learners. However, in a few schools, the OTP techniques have not been shared across the whole school and therefore it is not used consistently across classes and is having a limited impact on improving pedagogy.

4.5 Eight facilitators from across Powys have been trained as OLEVI trainers, and they facilitated their first OTP programme in autumn 2022. This programme will be developed into the new academic year and offered to all secondary and all-age schools. Training from the OLEVI trainers will be followed up by support from the school improvement advisers to ensure the approaches are embedded across the school and impact all practitioners.

5. Priority 3: improving literacy and numeracy standards across secondary schools

5.1 Following the return to school after the lockdowns, regression was seen in learners' key skills, resilience and social and emotional skills. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) 2022 report states that overall, "the evidence shows that Covid-related disruption has caused learning loss in both maths and reading, though there is some variability in different studies' findings on which subject has been more affected." Most evidence shows that by summer 2021, learners had not yet recovered from the learning they had lost during 2020 and 2021 in both maths and reading and in

fact a recent study (DfE, 2022) found that in secondary reading, learning losses have increased since the end of the 2021 summer term. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Welsh medium literacy has also been captured and the July 2021 WG report evidences the significant impact upon the Welsh medium provision particularly the learners who lived in non-Welsh speaking households during the lockdowns.

Moving forward it is essential that practitioners focus on the identification of the gaps in learning and provide effective formative feedback to close the learning gap. It has been argued by some researchers that now is not the time for marks, levels, or grades but a greater focus in building confidence in our learners by focusing on the key skills which will act as a springboard to all learning.

5.3 In 2021-22 all secondary schools were given the opportunity to participate in the LA's "reading behaviours" programme with the expectation that this would improve reading standards across the ability spectrum and in individual subjects across all schools. Progress in relation to literacy and numeracy and in particular the impact of the reading behaviour programme was the subject of the LA's summer monitoring visits in 2022. The overall evaluation was that less progress had been made than expected. The following actions formed part of the overall recommendations:

- Literacy/numeracy development plans should include key, measurable targets for ensuring individual subject contributions to literacy/numeracy across the curriculum, and all schools should identify a leader(s) responsible for developing the provision for literacy and numeracy skills across the school.
- Ensuring that literacy/numeracy rich tasks are appropriate and sufficiently challenging to meet the needs of all learners and Curriculum for Wales expectations.
- Professional learning programme needed for staff to develop expertise in oracy (speaking and listening), embed reading behaviours as an essential part of classroom practice and establish techniques to improve learners writing across the curriculum.
- Professional learning programme for staff to develop expertise in developing numeracy across the curriculum.
- Establish suitable systems to evaluate literacy/numeracy standards across the school that include lesson observation, book scrutiny, learning walks, teacher and learner voice.
- Ensure that all practitioners in the school know and understand what good practice in literacy/numeracy across the curriculum looks like.

5.4 Training on the planning for the effective development of learners' numeracy skills has been delivered to all schools during 2022-23. All schools have engaged positively with the training and have worked with subject advisers to develop approaches to numeracy in individual subject areas. Most schools have now appointed dedicated 'numeracy coordinators' whose role it is to develop numeracy across the curriculum. From the evidence seen on school visits there has been strong progress in schools' approaches to the evaluation of numeracy, and improvements have been noted in planning for developing numeracy. Standardised numeracy methods have been agreed and shared with staff in many schools and the mapping of numeracy opportunities across the curriculum has begun in many schools. Many schools have focussed on improving learners' ability to synthesise and present information through the use of graphs, an area which has been highlighted by Estyn as in need of improvement across Wales. Schools have worked with subject advisers to develop the use of graphs in different subjects across the curriculum. Where requested officers have provided training and support in effective intervention strategies for improving numeracy skills, including through the medium of Welsh. One school that received the training has reported an increase in confidence and their fluency with number operations.

5.5 Schools are beginning to improve their provision for developing literacy across the curriculum based on the needs of their learners. Officers have enabled the sharing of good practice through network meetings and have shared strategies and exemplars, for example spelling and oracy strategies, explicit vocabulary instruction and Talk for Writing. A literacy audit tool has been shared with all schools, and schools have been supported to assess literacy provision and develop their literacy improvement plans. Subject advisers have built on this by working directly with schools to

demonstrate how these approaches can be used in practice. In addition to this the LA have brokered 'Voice 21 training' for all secondary and all-age schools. This is a comprehensive training and follow up programme to support schools to develop and implement outstanding provision for the development of oracy across the school. This training will begin in autumn 2023.

5.6 Research on the instruction of literacy with language is a comprehensive Welsh literacy intervention package focussed on reading in years 3 to 6 and endorsed by Welsh Government. All all-age schools have received training in this approach and will implement the interventions from September 2023. This work will improve the reading skills of learners in Welsh and English medium schools and across clusters so that they are able to progress their learning more rapidly in the secondary phase.

5.7 Literacy and numeracy networks have been established, and well attended by schools. These networks allow identified best practice in literacy and numeracy to be shared, and support collaborative working between as well as within schools. Training has been provided to new literacy and numeracy coordinators in understanding and being effective in their role, training has also been provided to newly qualified teachers and non-specialist teachers. Subject advisers have worked closely with schools to identify the precise areas of literacy and numeracy that they need to develop in each subject area and have supported them to develop subject specific approaches to literacy and numeracy through joint planning, modelling and professional learning opportunities. This has led to an increased understanding of what good practice in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum looks like.

6. Implementing an agreed strategy to improve leadership development, professional learning and to develop school to school collaboration

6.1 During the pandemic the LA and schools worked closely to begin a leadership development programme and increase school to school collaboration. This was well-received by schools however, the impact of these two programmes was affected by

- the pandemic and in particular its effect on the time and energy available for professional learning
- an overly full professional learning programme for Headteachers and senior leaders that did not allow sufficient time at school level to share and then implement some of the key messages presented in the sessions
- a minority of individual sessions were not directly linked to LA and school priorities
- the lack of a strategic approach when deciding on school-to-school collaborative groups
- LA and school improvement advisers not fully involved in the sessions and as a result were not in a position to follow up on the learning in schools

6.2 Since September 2022 SIAs have worked closely with school leaders in a coaching and mentoring capacity with a focus on a re-engaging with strategic thinking and planning in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. Examples include where school improvement advisers have supported leaders to realise a vision for improving teaching and learning experiences and embed that culture across the school, there has been leadership support for curriculum planning and development, and for effective line management and performance management. Feedback from headteachers and school leaders has been positive, with nearly all leaders describing the support they have received as 'extremely useful' or 'somewhat useful'.

6.3 Acting and newly appointed Headteachers have been assigned a mentor, and for those who have worked in Powys previously that mentor has been from out of county in order to bring an external perspective. This has been well received and one headteacher stated that the choice

of mentor being tailored to their needs has been extremely beneficial. Recruitment of strong school leaders in the secondary sector has also been improved and is already having a positive impact on standards and provision.

6.4 Schools have been signposted to the most appropriate national leadership development programmes by LA officers, including the national senior leadership development programme, the middle leadership development programme and the NPQH qualification. Attendance from secondary practitioners at these programmes has declined over the 2022-23 academic year, and this has largely been due to pressures in schools around staffing and cover and the level of commitment necessary to attend. Where leaders have attended these programmes there has been a positive impact on leadership practice, and all leaders attending have been able to demonstrate their impact on the school development plan.

7. Wellbeing

7.1 In addition to the above, secondary schools have reported an increased level of challenge in relation to promoting good levels attendance, behaviour and a positive and resilient attitude to learning. As these aspects have a direct impact on teaching and learning and on creating the conditions for individual learners and teachers to succeed then improving attendance, inclusion and attitudes to learning of secondary age learners has been added to the priorities for the SSIS.

7.2 All schools receive support from a dedicated Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to work with them to develop approaches to improving attendance and relationships with learners and their families. Where the need for further support for wellbeing and attendance has been identified we have provided additional bespoke support through school improvement advisers. This support has resulted in an increase in attendance across the county, and attendance in Powys remains well above the Welsh national average.

8. Conclusions and next steps

8.1 The evaluation of the SSIS priorities has shown that progress was not in line with expectations during the academic year 2021-22. As referred to previously this can be largely attributed to the impact of the pandemic, including schools being focussed on day-to-day challenges which detracted from the focus on strategic planning. In addition, there have been recruitment challenges within the service.

8.2 Early in the academic year 2022-23 two schools received Estyn monitoring visits and as a result were placed into 'Special Measures'. In addition, one school received a core inspection and was placed into 'Estyn review'. This has placed additional pressure on the new team due to the need to provide intense support for those schools. Five secondary or all-age schools are due inspection in 2023-24.

8.3 Whilst progress was initially slow in 2022-23 due to the induction of a whole new team as has been identified by Estyn in their recent visit, the need to establish a baseline across the county, progress against the priorities has increased at a steady rate through the rest of the academic year. Improvements have been seen in self-evaluation and improvement planning, and in the planning for the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, the LA now have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of individual schools, and are able to tailor support to their specific needs. This is beginning to ensure that support is more focussed and precise, which leads to greater and more sustainable impact.

8.4 Support for the development of Welsh language in secondary schools is an area for development for the service. There is not currently a Welsh speaking officer in the secondary school improvement team due to challenges with recruitment. The SSIM has brokered Welsh medium support for schools through the MWEP, external consultants and by working closely with the primary improvement team however, going forward the need for a dedicated Welsh speaking school improvement adviser should be considered.

8.5 As a result of the findings in this report the SSIS has been revised and updated. The short-term priorities for the revised SSIS are listed below:

1. Improving the quality of learning and teaching experiences across Powys secondary and all-age schools.
2. Improving self-evaluation and improvement planning processes in secondary and all-age schools.
3. Improving standards in literacy and numeracy for learners in secondary and all-age schools.
4. Improving attendance, inclusion and attitudes to learning of secondary age learners.
5. Implementing an agreed strategy to strengthen leadership at all levels and develop school-to-school collaboration.

8.6 Priority 1 improving the quality of learning and teaching experiences will always be the main focus of the service, and the following four priorities will all build towards and support the realisation of priority 1.

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| Contact Officer: | Cressy Murphy |
| Tel: | 01597 827380 |
| Email: | cressida.murphy@powys.gov.uk |
| Head of Service: | Georgie Bevan |
| Corporate Director: | Lynette Lovell |

10

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme 2023

2023

| Date and Time | Type and Detail | Notes |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Jan 18-01-23 11:00 – 12:00 | Pre-Meeting Catchment Review – Admissions | |
| 18-01-23 14.00 – 16.30 | Committee - Public Well-Being Assessment – relevant sections New CIP – relevant sections for scrutiny Catchment Review – Admissions Schools Funding Formula Performance and Risk Q3 All Heads of Service Finance All Heads of Service | |
| Jan | Work Programming | |
| Jan | Pre-Meeting | |
| 30-01-23 10.00 – 12.30 | Committee - Public Budget Scrutiny | |
| Feb | Pre-Meeting (if required) | |
| 10-02-23 14.00 – 16.30 | Committee - Public School Transport | |
| 27/02/23 – 06/03/23 | Virtual Scrutiny – Ysgol y Cribarth | |
| 15/03/23 14.00 – 16.30 | Closed session: – Self-Assessment | Committee members only, face to face / hybrid |
| 29-03-23 14.00 – 16.30 | Committee - Public Mid Wales Education Partnership – Business Plan Regional Skills Partnership | Anwen Orrells & Lynette Lovell to attend. Aggie Caesar-Homden Nigel Brinn, Diane Reynolds and Nicola Williams |

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme 2023

| Date and Time | Type and Detail | Notes |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| | Appoint 2 Members to the joint Working Group on Leisure. | Chair |
| Mid – May (1.5hrs) | Closed session: – Self-Assessment Feedback | Committee members only |
| 30-05-23 14:00-15:00 | PRE-MEET | |
| 31-05-23 14.00 – 16.30 | Committee - Public AGM – Electing Vice Chair Closed Workshop Finance – Benchmarking tool School Improvement Guidance School Self-Evaluation Processes | Nancy Owen Eurig Towns Eurig Towns |
| | | |
| 21/06/23 pm | Music Plan School Budgets (b/fwd at request of Committee) | Lynsey McGrohan Jane Thomas / Mari Thomas |
| June 29/06/23 16:00-17:00 | (pre-meet slot) Confidential Committee Briefing – School Energy Efficiency Criteria | Nigel Brinn / Lynette Lovell |
| 19-07-23 14.00 – 16.30 | Committee - Public ALN Youth Strategy | Simon Anderson Helen Quarrell |
| 11 th Sept | Pre-meet committee members | |
| Sept 13/09 2pm -5pm | Performance and Risk Q1 (between 12/09 & prior to cabinet 19/09) (max1/2hr) Update on Early Years Provision (max1/2hr) Curriculum for Wales (max 1/2hr) Secondary Schools Improvement Strategy Progression and Learning (max 1hr) Estyn Letter update incl. Admissions Code / Capacity (max 1/2hr) | James Langridge – Thomas Eurig Towns Lynette Lovell / Georgie Bevan Cressy Murphy Lynette Lovell / Georgie Bevan |

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme 2023

| Date and Time | Type and Detail | Notes |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Sept 18 th 10am | PRE-MEET – committee members | |
| 20-09-23 14.00 – 16.30 | Committee - Public Schools Transformation (2hrs) | Marianne Evans |
| Oct | PRE-MEET | |
| 01-11-23 14.00 – 16.30 | Committee - Public Finance - School Budgets Progression and Learning (Incl. LA level verified exam data) Post 16 WESP Update | Mari Thomas / Jane Thomas TBC Chris James /Francesca Sandwell Georgie Bevan |
| Dec | PRE-MEET | |
| 13-12-23 14.00 – 16.30 | Committee - Public Cluster Business Support Model – Closed Workshop – DATE TO BE CONFIRMED | |

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