

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE BOARD -
EDUCATION HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD
WELLS, POWYS ON TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2019**

PRESENT

Jack Straw (Chair)	JS	Independent Member
Cllr Rosemarie Harris	RH	Executive Leader
Cllr Aled Davies	AD	Deputy Leader
Cllr James Gibson-Watt	JGW	Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

In Attendance – PCC Representatives

			Present for Item:
Alison Bulman	AB	Director of Social Services	All
Caroline Turner	CT	Chief Executive	All
Cllr Graham Breeze	GB	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance	All
Cllr Myfanwy Alexander	MA	Portfolio Holder for Adult Services	All
Cllr Phyl Davies	PD	Portfolio Holder for Education	All
Cllr Rachel Powell	RP	Portfolio Holder for Young People	All
Debbie Lewis	DL	Education Advisor	All
Dylan Owen	DO	Head of Commissioning (Children & Adults)	All
Emma Palmer	EP	Head of Transformation & Communications	All
Francesca Sandwell	FS	PA to Senior Leadership Team (secretariat)	All
Geraint Rees	GR	Education Advisor	All
Jane Thomas	JT	Head of Financial Services	All
Lisa Williams	LW	WAO	All
Lynette Lovell	LL	Interim Chief Education Officer	All
Ness Young	NY	Corporate Director (Transformation)	All
Phil Hodgson	PH	WLGA Adviser	All
Sara Leahy	SL	WAO - observer	All
Sarah Quibell	SQ	Strategic Improvement Manager (Schools)	All

Apologies

Cllr Matthew Dorrance	MD	Leader of the Labour Group
Caroline Rees	CR	Education Advisor

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair took the Board through the revised Terms of Reference approved by the Minister. The Chair highlighted they were clear and concise, with the inclusion of Education in Section 4. By the next Board meeting in November, it is hoped that Welsh Government will have identified an education representative to sit on the Board.

The Chair highlighted that the next meeting of the Board will take place the day before the Estyn improvement conference so the focus of that meeting would be to go through the documents before they are presented to Estyn. After the Estyn improvement conference, the Chair, together with the Leader and Chief Executive, will agree which areas they wish the Board to focus on.

CT indicated that the Education Board would take a similar approach to the Social Care Board, with workshops taking place from January 2020. The workshops would provide an opportunity to focus on a single subject with key officers to share information and advice.

2.	ESTYN REPORT
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Cllr PD confirmed that the Local Authority fully accepted Estyn's findings. The team was making strides in the right direction and there was an appetite for change from headteachers, which was welcomed.

LL took the Board through the Estyn report and emphasised that there were no quick fixes for the 5 recommendations. Work has started on the post inspection action plan (PIAP) before the Estyn report had been published.

The Chair asked LL whether she was confident that she had the right expertise to support the specific recommendation going forward, for example with SEN/ALN.

LL explained that she was confident that she had the right team behind her. CR, for example, was a former HMI for SEN/ALN and is leading on recommendation 2.

CT raised that GR has worked as a secondary headteacher and for Local Authorities helping to turn around failing schools, as well as working for Welsh Government and ERW. DL and LL were both experienced headteachers successfully leading large primary schools and helping Local Authorities to turnaround failing schools. DL has also worked for the regional consortium and Welsh Government.

3.	POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN
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DL presented Recommendation 1

- The Chair queried whether the recommendations has been considered together rather than separately
- GR reported that the team understood that the recommendations could not be achieved in isolation. For example, there is a link between school organisation and the impact this will have on the budget. If a school has a challenging budget then it will struggle to recruit and without strong leadership it will be difficult to improve pupil outcomes. Therefore, the solutions in Recommendations 4 and 5 will help to improve Recommendation 1.
- Cllr MA challenged whether attendance and curriculum choice were linked. GR reported that this was not a straightforward dual relationship, but were instead rather complex, taking into account attendance, choice, achievement and satisfaction which could lead to a level of disengagement.

DL presented Recommendation 2

- PH raised that it would be interesting to understand that link between ALN/SEN and Social Services.
- Cllr Powell highlighted that there was often a correlation between exclusions and attendance with more challenging young people.
- DL noted that that strengthening the links between schools and stakeholders including youth services and social services was included in the PIAP.

DL presented Recommendation 3

- No questions were asked by the Board.

GR presented Recommendation 4

- The Chair asked the Leader whether there was the political will to make the difficult decisions.
- The Leader assured the Chair that the solutions were obvious to her and her Cabinet, and that the appetite was there.
- Cllr MA commented that the Council needed to take into account lessons learnt from previous school closures and the cost of school transport.
- EP acknowledged that the cost of school transport needed to be considered, but the overruling element needed to be the quality of education. The cost of doing nothing for learners was too high.
- NY noted that pupil outcomes would confirm whether the decisions made were the right ones. Already, schools were providing subjects digitally for students and this needed to be explored further.
- PH queried how the interface between the public and parents be handled.
- Cllr PD explained that the team had met with headteachers and would be hosting a follow up event with them. The plans for schools transformation would then be communicated to staff and governing bodies and this would help with engaging the public.

GR presented Recommendation 5

- No questions were asked by the Board.

EP went through her schools transformation data presentation with the Board

Primary schools

- The Chair acknowledged that it not yet known what is practical and doable. Different compromises and choices would need to be made and this would present a challenge.

Secondary schools

- Cllr MA noted that the budget share needed to reflect the dual stream, as these schools were more expensive to run.

Post 16

The Chair thanked EP and her team for the work they were doing and noted that this would help to inform decisions and create robust debate to help formulate a response. It was noted that this would be a positive development for Estyn.

The meeting came to a close at 15:17

Jack Straw – Chair