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Improvement and Assurance Board - Education Wednesday, 27 November 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE BOARD - EDUCATION HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 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
Gwynne Jones	GJ	Independent Member
Phil Hodgson	PH	Independent Member

In Attendance – PCC Representatives

			Present for Item:
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
Caroline Rees	CR	Education Advisor	All
Debbie Lewis	DL	Education Advisor	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
Lynette Lovell	LL	Interim Chief Education Officer	All
Ness Young	NY	Corporate Director (Transformation & Resources)	All
Sarah Quibell	SQ	Strategic Improvement Manager (Schools)	All

Apologies

Cllr Matthew Dorrance	MD	Leader of the Labour Group
Alison Bulman	AB	Director of Social Services
Lisa Williams	LW	WAO

1. MINUTES FROM THE MEETING ON 22ND OCTOBER 2019

The Chair welcomed the newly appointed Independent Member, Dr Gwynne Jones to the meeting. Gwynne Jones has spent a large part of his career in education as both a teacher and advisor before working for several Local Authorities and then serving as both Chief Education Officer then Chief Executive at Anglesey.

The Chair advised that following the Estyn Improvement Conference on 28th November, the Board would then decide which areas of the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) it wished to focus on. Today's meeting would focus on the key issues and challenges.

The minutes of the meeting on 22nd October 2019 were agreed as an accurate record. There were no actions arising.

2. POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

CT explained that the team had prepared a short presentation to focus on the high level priorities. This will also be presented to Estyn at the Improvement Conference on 28th November 2019.

Cllr PD advised that the PIAP had been discussed with Scrutiny and each recommendation has been scrutinised by a smaller Scrutiny working group. It had been compiled with the assistance and input of the wider service. Cllr PD stated that he felt assured by the depth and the level of detail.

LL took the Board through the presentation. The team was engaging with stakeholders to address all the recommendations and areas for improvement. The high level priorities had been addressed on the first page of PIAP. Actions have been identified underneath each of the high level priorities and there were lead officers for each recommendation. The PIAP feeds into the integrated business plan which in turn feeds into Vision 2025.

LL highlighted that the challenge for the Service was whether they had sufficient resources to deliver all of the actions as well as make all their efficiency savings.

The Chair noted that that he would have expected the Service to begin by looking at standards and designing a system that could deliver the recommendations rather than focusing on resources.

Cllr PD assured the Chair that the starting point of the Service would be to focus on learner outcomes first and foremost.

Recommendation 1

LL took the Board through the key issues. These included that Challenge Advisors were spending considerable amounts of time working with Headteachers on finance which meant less time to focus on standards and school improvement.

The Chair thanked LL for her very clear overview.

Cllr JGW raised concern that the Service were concentrating on a small number of schools and that their attention was being diverted particularly away from the primary sector.

LL stated that this had been identified in PIAP and while primary inspections had been very good in the past, the Service could not be complacent. For example, a year ago there were 17 schools in Estyn categorisation, but that this had now reduced to 4.

The Chair queried how the PIAP would help to change the focus of the Challenge Advisors from finance to standards.

LL explained that work had already started on this issue and that the emphasis would be on teaching and learning going forward.

Cllr PD reported that the Service had put bursars in catchments areas to support Headteacher in terms of finance and this was already having a positive impact on schools.

GR updated that Secondary Heads had been asked to identify waste and duplication of services and that Heads were working with Finance to look at the curriculum.

Recommendation 2

CR took the Board through the key issues. These included upskilling schools, improving communication between the team and schools, leadership and better strategic planning.

Cllr RP raised that engagement with parents was important as they understood the issues well and could help to identify gaps.

PH asked for clarification on the definition of 'other groups' and requested that this be specified in the PIAP going forward.

Action: FS to circulate SEN/ALN terminology document with the minutes

Cllr RP raised that she was uncomfortable with some of the terminology used for children and young people who did not wish to attend school. This had been highlighted to the team.

CR explained that this terminology had been taken from a Welsh Government document.

The Chair requested that the team looked to use more modern and appropriate terms going forward. It was agreed that this would be done.

Action: LL to update the terminology documents

The Chair stated that he thought that Recommendation 2 needed to be one of the key focuses of the Board going forward.

Recommendation 3

DL took the Board through the key issues. There were already good systems in place corporately to track performance and training has been identified in key areas.

The Chair commented that cultural change across the service required commitment and visibility from the people sitting around the table, but this though necessary was not sufficient.

CT raised that work had been done to re-establish trust with schools and rebuild staff morale. Finance, HR and the Change and Improvement team were all supporting the school service.

EP indicated that if performance management and the quality assurance framework were embedded then this would mean that the Service would see the impact on key performance indicators.

The Leader noted that there needed to be a broader programme of engagement with Elected Members and that Board Members were not aware that they had been invited to the social care workshops. It was agreed that a work programme needed to be established for the Board from January onwards.

Action: Chief Executive to develop a broader programme of engagement for Elected Members.

Recommendations 4 & 5

GR took the Board through the key issues.

There have been positive discussions at both the schools conference and meetings with governors across the county. The timescales were tight, but it was hoped that the Service could engage stakeholders in the spring time with an appropriate vision for Powys.

The Chair raised that the Board needed to be engaged before any proposal was developed and that the right processes needed to be in place to assist with developing the plans going forward.

CT reported that she had discussed with Welsh Government about additional resources and that any such proposal would require the full support of the Board.

The Chair confirmed that the Board would support a proposal subject to reviewing the detail.

EP requested that in order to take a report to Cabinet she required a meeting in mid- December. It was agreed that as the Board was meeting informally on 19th December that an additional meeting could take place on this day.

Cllr JGW raised that he was worried that PIAP did not touch on post-16 provision.

GR indicated that secondary education, post-16 and welsh medium education were covered in all of the 5 recommendations.

GJ commented that to take these plans forward required clear vision and the support of Elected Members. The challenge would be to do this and maintain the rest of the PIAP and recommendation 1 especially within the timescale.

The Leader indicated that work had started before Estyn's inspection, but that there was still a long way to go.

Cllr PD updated on the success of the school conference.

EP reported that the Service was waiting for purdah to be lifted before they could engage with parents.

Chair stated that he would wait until after the improvement Conference, but that he felt that the areas for consideration should be:-

- Vision – resources, standards,
- SEN/ALN
- Leadership

It was agreed that these areas would be confirmed at a meeting in December.

The meeting came to a close at 12:57

Jack Straw
Chair

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