



Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on 7th MAY 2024

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee met on 23.04.2024 and considered the following documents:

- **Sustainable Communities For Learning Strategic Outline Programme.**

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee thank the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Transformation and officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee welcomed:
 - Sight on the long-term capital programme to reinforce the sense of direction on the schools building programme, given this programme was the largest capital programme of the Council.
 - That Option 3 was an ambitious and appropriate programme.
- The Committee noted:
 - The construction options that were available, timber frames, cassettes and pods made off-site, which could include varying ALN components for individual school requirements.
- The Committee requested that:
 - The Portfolio Holder for a Learning Powys gives assurance that Welsh Medium streams would not be removed from some or all Secondary schools.
 - The capital programme also incorporates closer collaboration across Secondary schools in the provision of Welsh Medium Education, to ensure a full GCSE curriculum for learners in Powys.
 - The classroom dimensions of any new builds or refurbishments, should be of an appropriate size to accommodate increasing learner numbers as a result of merging classes.
- The Committee remained unconvinced about
 - How the Sustainable Communities for Learning Capital programme links with the Sustainable Powys project, the Transformation policy and the WESP.
 - The number of Secondary Schools within Powys, and whether the long-term vision was sufficient to incorporate a rationalisation programme of the schools estate.
 - The Capital programme's long-term view of bilingual education across Powys.

- The Committee expressed concern:
 - That the new build programme stretching to 2030, would mean that a whole cohort of learners could potentially miss out on the education provision they deserve, due to the poor condition of buildings.

Scrutiny's Recommendations to Cabinet are:	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1 That the Portfolio Holder for a Learning Powys gives assurance that Welsh Medium streams would not be removed from some or all Secondary schools.			
2 That the capital programme includes closer collaboration across the Secondary school sector in the provision of Welsh Medium Education, to ensure a full GCSE curriculum for learners.			
3 That the classroom dimensions of any new builds or refurbishments, should be of an appropriate size, to accommodate increasing learner numbers, as a result of merging classes.			
4 That clarification be provided how the Sustainable Communities for Learning Capital programme links with the Sustainable Powys project, the Transformation policy, and the WESP.			
5 That Cabinet considers the number of Secondary Schools within Powys, and whether the long-term vision was sufficient to			

incorporate a rationalisation programme of the schools estate.			
6. That the new build programme stretching to 2030, would mean that a whole cohort of learners could potentially miss out on the education provision they deserve, due to the poor condition of buildings.			

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e. by 23.06.2024

Membership of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee on 23.04.2024:

County Councillors:

G. Thomas, D. Bebb, A W Davies, B Davies, D. Meredith, G Morgan, G Preston, C Robinson, S McNicholas

Co-Opted Members:

K. Chedgzoy, S. Davies.

In attendance Members of Finance Panel: County Councillors C. Walsh, P Lewington.