

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 6 June 2019

PRESENT: Councillor D. Price (Chair)

Councillors:

L.R. Bowen, K.V. Broom, I.W. Davies, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, G.R. Jones, M.J.A. Lewis, E.M.J.G. Schiavone, B. Thomas, E.G. Thomas and D.T. Williams.

Co-opted Members:

G. Cornock-Evans - Parent Governor
J. Davies - Parent Governor
M. Jones - Parent Governor
D. Richards - Church in Wales Representative
V. Kenny - Roman Catholic Church Representative

Also in attendance: Cllr G. Davies, Executive Board Member for Education and Children

The following Officers were in attendance:

G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
A. Rees, Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing
S. Davies, Head of Access to Education
A. Morgan, Head of Education Services
R. Williams, Additional Needs Provision Manager
G. Kirby, Music Service Coordinator
L. Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP - 10.00 am - 12.10 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.Jenkins and S. Najmi.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM.

The following Declarations of Interest were received :

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
G. Jones	5. Music Service Update	Wife works in the Education Department
D. Jones	5. Music Service Update	Children are beneficiaries of the Music Service and she has relatives working in the Education Department

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS - TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Head of Education Services gave an overview of the report and drew Members' attention to the three overarching aims of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill and the six areas of focus (noted on pages 9 and 10 of the report).

The following observations/questions were raised on the report:

Members noted that the timeline within the report was quite tight and asked whether the department was confident that they could undertake the work required within the timescale. The Additional Needs Provision Manager advised that a significant amount of work had been done in raising awareness, partnership working specifically in relation to Person Centred Planning (PCP), Individual Development Plans and Post 16 Transition. The department had also identified PCP Champions to lead on PCP training, which should ensure that by the end of 2020 all Primary and Secondary Schools will have a PCP Coach. It was also noted that the authority had lead the initial pilot for Individual Development Plans (IDPs) which was based at Ysgol Glan y Mor and its feeder schools, and as a result most schools are familiar with the principle of PCPs and IDPs. The Additional Needs Provision Manager advised that she was confident that the work required was going well.

In response to a question on the partnership with Hywel Dda University Health Board (H DUHB) the Director of Education and Children's Services advised that the six local authorities within H DUHB working with a Designated Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) to support the changes. Although concerns have been raised in relation to the capacity of the Health Board to provide a clinician to attend all school visits, the Code of Practice within the Bill clearly sets out what is expected of each Health Board and their duty in relation to providing what is required. The Director of Education and Children's Services further advised that in most circumstances the authority valued the advice of the Health Board over the structured formal reporting, noting that it could take up to 26 weeks to develop an IDP. However, the presence of the right people e.g. Speech and Language Therapists etc. at planning meetings was encouraging. He also acknowledged that more complex cases were revised annually, during which process there was a need for a more formal approach. The Additional Needs Provision Manager advised that the Health Board has a Multi-Agency Steering Group which local authorities can work with, should the need arise.

Members asked for clarification on the consultation approaches noted in section 5(ii) of the report and asked for further information. The Additional Needs Provision Manager advised that the priorities were to build good partnerships between parents and settings in order to support the rights of the child, and these priorities should be communicated clearly to parents so that they can understand what to expect. The advertised workshops were well attended and links with the inclusion department has improved with the use of Family Liaison Officers. The Director of

Education and Children's Services noted that workshops were held across all six authorities and as well as work on the website, the authorities had commissioned SNAP Cymru to provide independent advice to families. In response to a query on the use of social media, the Director advised that capacity was an issue when it came to responding and managing responses.

Members asked for detailed information in relation to the number of pupils with IDPs and were advised by the Additional Needs Provision Manager that it was close to the figure of one hundred; noting that the high number could be linked to the authority's participation in the pilot scheme for the rollout of IDPs.

In response to a question on the training available to School Governors, noted in the report as an action in autumn 2018; the Director of Education and Children's Services advised that there was a conflict in releasing the training before the Code of Practice consultation has closed. Tier 1 training had already gone through the legal process and was ready to be delivered however, some aspects of Tier 4 training may require some adjustment following the consultation. In response to a further query on the likely changes to the Code of Practice, and whether the authority were agreeable in relation to the new code, the Director advised that overall the changes to the code were positive and centred around a new way of working, it would also align the 22 local authorities under one code. However, there were some concerns in relation to guidance on the transfer of responsibility from schools to the local authority with very little to prevent schools under financial pressures to transfer responsibility for ALN to the local authority. The consultation was due to close on the 16th June and the situation would be clearer when the final code is published.

Members raised the issue of workforce development and asked whether there was specific training available or bespoke courses to support children with ALN in the classroom. The Director of Education and Children's Services advised that there was a national training programme for Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCo) which offered the opportunity to work towards a qualification. There is also local and regional training available for school staff. In relation to upskilling Teaching Assistants the Director advised that Coleg Sir Gâr and UWTSD offer courses in Child Development and a NVQ in supporting children with ALN. Training for ALNCo's was a matter of ongoing development and a four/five day course covering the area under discussion would be rolled out later in the year.

Members questioned the progress monitoring of the implementation plan, both locally and regionally. The Director of Education and Children's Services advised that regionally there was a strategic group to monitor progress overall, of which he was the Chair, locally the implementation plan forms part of the Departmental Business Plan and will be monitored alongside other performance measures. The Director also noted that there was some additional capacity to drive some areas of change and to track and map development, and in due course the cost of this would be evaluated in relation to its impact. The Additional Needs Provision Manager advised that the Welsh Government had distributed an ALN readiness survey, the results of which should highlight areas where there is a need for further development.

The Chair noted that the funding of ALN was a consistent overspend for the department, and the issue was considered as a suitable topic for the next Task & Finish Group. It was agreed that a scoping document should be prepared on this

issue for Members to review. In response to this the Director of Education and Children Services advised that the transformation of the service should see a reduction in costs, and gave an example of the practice of having an assistant supporting a pupil for an entire lesson, when the need for support may only be at the start/end of a lesson. The new model allowed for greater flexibility in how pupils are supported and how needs can be met in the most effective way.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that

4.1 the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Programme Update be received.

4.2 that a scoping document on ALN Funding should be presented at the next committee meeting on the 4th July 2019.

5. MUSIC SERVICE UPDATE: MAY/JUNE 2019

The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing gave an overview of the report and drew members' attention to the recent and ongoing achievements of the Music Service.

The following observations/questions were raised on the report:

In answer to a question on the shortfall which was noted in the report as having reduced over previous years, the Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing advised that the previous year's shortfall was £147,000 and could be considered as related to the core funding element of the service's finances.

Members asked for further information in relation to the integration of the Music Service within the new curriculum and its effect on future provision. The Music Service Coordinator advised that some guidance had already been released and many of the areas covered by Expressive Arts are already in place, however it was unclear whether further guidance would be given by the Welsh Government. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing advised that there are a few fields within Expressive Arts that require cross subject skills. Several local authorities have placed Music within Expressive Arts, possibly in order to attract more grant funding, others have included Music within Humanities. It was noted that each of these models have potential and risk attached, however if further guidance is received from Welsh Government the situation could be very different in six to nine months. It was also noted that the Welsh Government were withholding funding to employ a consultancy to improve provision across Wales, with a remit to improve access and to look at existing best practice, this could further shape the future of the service.

Whilst acknowledging the confines of the budget, Members asked for clarification on costs passed on to pupils and the advice given to schools in relation to costs. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing advised that pupils are charged varying amounts e.g. £30 per term, which included ensembles and lessons. Pupils who qualify for Free Schools Meals (FSM) and pupils who are studying towards GCSE or A Level Music are not charged. However, some schools do not pass on charges to pupils. The Music Service Coordinator acknowledged that schools could source music lessons at a lower rate from external sources, but it would not include ensemble, orchestra and residential courses. Through charging for music lessons schools and the service has seen an improvement in attendance, practice and development. The Director of Education and Children's Services advised that the

decision to pass on charges, or not, was a matter for each Governing Body; they can be advised by the Music Service but the decision lies with each individual school. £86,289 was made available by the Welsh Government to support and enhance music provision within any one of nine possible areas, of which FSM Support was one area. The Director acknowledged that schools could benefit from clearer guidance in relation to charges and their application.

Members asked whether anything further could be done to encourage participation. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing advised that there already programmes in place to encourage broader participation, including a Music for All pilot, and the Peripatetic Music Tour. The service had also engaged with Heol Goffa on Music Therapy programmes. It was acknowledged by Members that Music enriched other areas of education and supported the wellbeing of pupils of all ages.

In response to a question on whether the Music Service had worked with the TIC Team to identify efficiencies, the Music Service Coordinator advised that they had not started a review yet, although some work had been done to develop Parent Pay to reduce processing work.

The Executive Board Member for Education and Children thanked the Music Service for the work undertaken and noted the significant successes at the recent Urdd National Eisteddfod. The Executive Board Member advised that he was willing to accept any overspend, in order to support the work of the Music Service. The Committee noted their agreement that service should continue, whilst acknowledging the overspend.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that

- 5.1 the report be received**
- 5.2 the Executive Board be requested to sufficiently support the service financially, in order to continue and maintain the current standard of service**
- 5.3 consideration be given to providing Governing Bodies with clearer guidance in relation to charging for use of the Music Service, particularly in relation to pupils in receipt of Free School Meals**
- 5.4 the Music Service be supported by the TIC team to identify efficiencies**

6. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee noted the reasons for the non-submission of the following report:-

- Fostering Annual Report

RESOLVED that the information should be circulated to members outside of the committee process.

7. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee considered the list of forthcoming items and agreed that the items should be presented to the next meeting.

With reference to the Digital Schools Strategy Update, Members requested that the following information be included within, or noted alongside the report –

- How the strategy is funded, and the level of capital expenditure
- Training available for teachers
- Schools succeeding in this area and schools less progressive in their development
- The level of support given to school governors to understand this agenda
- The support available to schools that do not have the required infrastructure. Is this just a matter for schools in rural areas?
- The strategy in relation to the changes to the new curriculum

Members also reviewed the decision of the committee to only circulate the Agenda for the meeting electronically, and agreed that all future meetings would be paperless – acknowledging that all Council meetings would be paperless from the 2nd of September 2019.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that

- 7.1 the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on 4th July 2019, be agreed**
- 7.2 all future meetings of the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee should be paperless**

CHAIR

DATE