

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 22nd DECEMBER 2016

Draft Carmarthenshire Curriculum Declaration

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- Outline opportunities offered by the current national policy agenda in providing the basis for a local curriculum for Carmarthenshire.
- Outline how local ownership of the curriculum can be planned and structured.
- Present a draft Carmarthenshire curriculum declaration for corporate consideration.

Reasons:

- To seek the Scrutiny Committee's views on the Draft Carmarthenshire Curriculum declaration.
- To enable elected members to exercise their scrutiny function regarding the Department for Education and Children's approach to addressing an important component of future curriculum design

To be referred to the Executive Board for decision: YES

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Gareth Jones (Education & Children)

Directorate: Education & Children	Designation:	Tel No. / E-Mail Address:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 22nd DECEMBER 2016

Draft Carmarthenshire Curriculum Declaration

Curriculum reform is currently in the ascendancy in Wales. The Qualified for Life (2014) agenda has spawned a number of key reports which map out future reforms to curriculum and assessment, not least, 'Successful Futures' (Donaldson 2015). 'A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for Life' (2015) is the high level plan for implementing this new curriculum for 3-16 year olds. This plan, which has the Pioneer Schools' programme as its backbone, is currently subject to review and reflection on a national level and, potentially, may be revised. Despite that, and assuming the national rollout remains on track, we expect the new curriculum to be available by September 2018 and operative from 2021.

Allied reports such as 'Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers' (Furlong 2015) and proposed reforms to continuing professional development, such as the ministerial 'New Deal' add impetus and capacity to the reform process. More recently, the OECD are perusing this component of the change process and developing the work of schools as 'learning organisations'.

The above, and a morass of other curriculum-related initiatives (e.g. Lead Creative Schools; Global Futures, 14-19 learning pathways; the Digital Competence Framework) require careful handling and a great deal of planning – especially as much of the change process for this policy area is in flux. However, Welsh Government remain committed to curriculum reform, a sentiment firmly echoed within Carmarthenshire.

We wish to foster a culture of intelligent curriculum design in schools, to innovate and be at the forefront of new developments. There's a lot to be achieved within the timescale outlined, as we seek to capitalise upon a number of key opportunities, most specifically for the purposes of this report, the prospect of greater '**local ownership**' of the curriculum 'within a clear national framework of expectation and support' (Successful Futures recommendation no.62). We wish to embrace the concept of 'Subsidiarity', namely delegating control of the curriculum to the places where it's most likely to have greatest added value, namely in our schools.

The report appended is a power point synopsis of how **local ownership of the curriculum can be planned and structured**. It will become apparent that curriculum design is potentially complex and can be viewed as a multi-layered system – operating at Local Authority, School, subject/phase level and, ultimately and most critically, within the hands of teachers and learners in the classroom.

The report presents the skeletal components of local curriculum design and offers draft high level principles in the form of a draft **Carmarthenshire Curriculum Declaration** for Scrutiny Committee’s consideration. Subject to corporate approval, this blueprint will be further developed in a rolling programme between now and 2021 and will involve school practitioners at every stage of the process. Significant time, creative effort and training will be required to realise this agenda - coupled with a coherent communications strategy - communicated by various media to, and informed by, all major stakeholders.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: **J. Aeron Rees** **Head of Learner Programmes**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NONE

2. Legal

The current National Curriculum dates back to the 1988 Education Reform Act and, over the intervening years, has been subject to several revisions - most notably in 2008 and 2012. School curriculum is thus enshrined in statute and is further informed by a plethora of non-statutory guidance.

The Successful Futures (February 2015) report has received Ministerial approval and will herald an unprecedented phase of curriculum reform up to 2021 and beyond. It is envisaged that the vital components of this programme will be captured in primary legislation, with other aspects covered by non-statutory guidance.

3. Finance

Successful Futures is a major Welsh Government policy initiative, which has been driven forward initially by the Pioneer Schools network. Each Pioneer School has been granted funding to develop this agenda.

Pioneer schools are expected to disseminate early findings and test ideas with their wider school networks and local clusters. Carmarthenshire's vision is that this reform agenda is 'for the many and not the few' i.e. we are of the opinion that all schools need to be engaged. This will entail coordination and support – as outlined by the governance model proposed in the internal 'Paving the Way' report which has already been adopted corporately. Capitalising upon 'in-kind working' and encouraging effective and targeted use of school directed time, potential costs can be kept down. That said, some resource pressure will be inevitable and can be further quantified according to perceived need and availability as the agenda unfolds.

4. ICT

Digital Competence is a major cross-cutting theme in the emerging curriculum, which has been accorded equal status to Literacy and Numeracy. Pioneer Digital schools have been working with Welsh Government to formulate the Digital Competence framework, which was launched in September 2016.

It is foreseen that there will be demands for additional ICT resource in schools as a result of this framework. Additionally, there is a significant training agenda for teachers and school support staff, as we move from the rather mechanical notion of school ICT (using software such as spreadsheets, word processing etc.) to the creation of software and applications, coding and other high level digital competencies.

5. Risk Management Issues

Successful Futures (and associated policy initiatives) has the potential to transform the Welsh education landscape and has been heralded as the *'most thought-provoking and exciting set of proposals for a generation'* (Huw Lewis, former Minister for Education – March 2015). At best, the recommendations should serve to realize an exciting and engaging curriculum, truly fit for 21st Century life and living. However, if implemented half-heartedly or sporadically, there is potential for mediocrity – in curriculum planning, in the resultant teaching and learning and its associated assessment. Failure to fully undertake the reform programme poses risks to school standards and will challenge young peoples' life chances and prospects.

We must therefore get the vision implemented properly and seek to eliminate or nullify any potential risks. The infrastructure to ensure successful implementation needs to be supported – and, in its formative stages, is currently operating on a meager resource base. WG support to underpin the implementation will be necessary and will be actively canvassed.

6. Staffing Implications

As the agenda unfolds, there may be capacity issues to address, which can be assessed by: an appraisal of current staffing deployment within the Learner Programmes division; seeking support with certain operational matters – e.g. via ERW and/or considering short term secondments as funding becomes available. Realising reform of this scale will demand input across the whole system and school leaders and school staff in general will be expected to engage with the proposals, via in-house and school to school activity. Additionally, there will be opportunities for school staff to work on a county-wide and regional basis in various task and finish groups.

An underlying theme pervading through the whole programme will be developing the leadership attributes of the education workforce at all levels. People can, and should be, developed via this agenda – to aid with succession planning, to foster ownership, to help take the principles of school to school working into a state of maturity and to further professionalise the workforce.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: J. Aeron Rees Head of Learner Programmes

1. Local Member(s) – An all-members' development seminar was held on 1st November 2016

2. Community / Town Council – N/A

3. Relevant Partners – Focus Group of school practitioners, secondary timetablers, primary and secondary school head teachers appraised of developments

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Draft Promotional Brochure	\\ntcarmcc\cftp\Education & Skills\Learner Programmes\Local Curriculum\SCHOOLS CURRICULUM BROCHURE(003).pdf
Draft Video Clip	https://www.powtoon.com/online-presentation/fiCnS0LusRL/?mode=movie#/
Proposals for 3-19 Curriculum and Assessment – Reform in Carmarthenshire Schools (Education & Children Scrutiny Committee, 21st January 2016)	Cymraeg http://democratiaeth.sirgar.llyw.cymru/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=153&MId=255&Ver=4 English http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=153&MId=255&Ver=4