

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 21st JANUARY 2016

Proposals for 3-19 Curriculum and Assessment Reform in Carmarthenshire Schools

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- To receive the internal report, entitled 'Palmantu'r Ffordd / Paving the Way'.
- To seek approval for the main findings of Paving the Way, supported by a presentation in the committee.
- Be appraised of complementary work being developed in parallel re the 11-19 component of the overarching review.
- To facilitate elected members being able to exercise their scrutiny function regarding how The Department of Education and Children propose to drive forward major areas of relevant Welsh Government education policy.

Reasons:

- Planning curriculum change emanating from the Welsh Government Qualified for Life agenda (2014) and subsequent reports and policy initiatives, most notably, 'Successful Futures (Donaldson: 2015); Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers (Furlong:2015) and the New Deal for the Education Workforce.
- To appraise the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee of strategic and operational proposals to realise curriculum reform in Carmarthenshire schools and the local learning network to the year 2021 and beyond.
- That members formulate views for submission to the Executive Board for consideration.

To be referred to the Executive Board for decision: YES

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

Directorate: Education & Children	Designations:	Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION & CHILDREN

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Proposals for 3-19 Curriculum and Assessment Reform in Carmarthenshire Schools

'Palmantu'r Ffordd / Paving the Way' is a **3-19 strategic review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Carmarthenshire**. Partially building on existing practice, this internal report offers strategic and operational proposals to promote and develop the **Donaldson** (Successful Futures) recommendations, the **Furlong** Review and the **New Deal** in all our schools and special settings. Reference is made to other policy drivers such as the **Lead Creative Schools** initiative, **Global Futures** and the **Bilingual +1** nation. Currently, the **116 page** document has **47 recommendations**, approaches curriculum and assessment reform at several scales, and is summarised as follows:

- **Macro scale** – picking up Prof. Donaldson's theme, investigating how phenomena such as **Globalisation** and the **Knowledge Economy** will require our learners to gain a wide range of experiences, skills and competencies which will truly equip them for 21st Century life and living. We want all our young people to be **'well qualified and well educated'**. This involves nurturing the **holistic** development of **well rounded young people** as well as developing **employability** skills and other attributes which will facilitate access to the international, national, regional and local economies. In time, this can aid regeneration and will serve to foster a high skill, high wage economy and active citizenship within sustainable and vibrant communities.
- **Meso Scale** – looking at: the LA/local **governance** of Successful Futures; how **Lead Pioneer Schools can work with their wider clusters and networks**; how tasks and activities might be demarcated or allocated in order to deepen understanding and increase capacity; **investigating the interplay between WG/consortium/hub and LA activity** as alluded to in the National High Level Plan launched on 22.10.15 – and how several of the **8 building blocks** and **4 enablers** described therein can be harnessed in order to make progress on the ground; how the concept of **Subsidiarity** can be developed (e.g. in the development of a **Local Curriculum** and **Pupil Offer for Carmarthenshire**).
- **Micro Scale** – Developing models, tools and scaffolds for **whole school** and **departmental/phase curriculum planning**; investigating **the links between curriculum planning** and the **pedagogy** and **assessment** required in order to realise the reformed curriculum – thus embedding the four core purposes of the Successful Futures report.

- Investigating the **Leadership and change management approaches** required at all levels in order to implement Successful Futures effectively.
- Provides **timescales, milestones and draft targets** to implement reform and measure progress.

The report's recommendations are ready to be taken forward and, subject to approval, will be disseminated shortly to a wider audience, via various groups – who will also be charged with various aspects of implementation. Paving the Way is consistent with the aforementioned WG High Level Plan, 'A curriculum for Wales – A curriculum for life' and offers a **way forward** for the **next 6 years and beyond**. The High Level Plan incorporates the deployment of the **Pioneer Schools Network**, which will be initially charged with scoping out the **rudiments of the new curriculum** and the **associated professional learning** required to bring the changes to bear (The New Deal element), with other schools concentrating specifically upon **digital competence**. **Thirteen schools** in Carmarthenshire have been accorded Pioneer School status, which is considered above quota, pro rata.

Pioneer Schools will be expected to work closely with their **local clusters of schools and networks** and further capacity for curriculum reform will be built by incorporating our **14 Lead Creative Schools** (a parallel and complementary WG/Arts Council for Wales initiative), again above quota, pro rata.

Synergy will be sought throughout with developments at regional and national levels.

11-19 Curriculum Review Update

Since July 2015, the Learning Transformation Manager has been undertaking a review of the 11-19 curriculum in Carmarthenshire. This work has been carried out in parallel with the development of the Paving the Way document and follows discussions between the local authority and Coleg Sir Gâr regarding the development of a strategic vision for education in the County.

This review focuses how the local learning network can identify and implement a Carmarthenshire curriculum at Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Post 16 in school, college and training provider settings. This work is informed by statutory changes made to the curriculum by the Welsh Government and the needs of the local and regional economy. The review identifies how the existing partnership structures will need to evolve in order deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of all 11-19 learners in the county.

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 1888 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 and the New Deal are major Welsh Government policy initiatives, which will be driven forward initially by the Pioneer Schools network. Each Pioneer Curriculum and New Deal school has been granted the sum of £7,500 to initiate developmental activity for the period between January – March 2016. Further funding is expected in the new financial year, but is yet to be announced.

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 interim report. Capitalising upon 'in-kind working' and encouraging effective and targeted use of school directed time, potential costs can be kept down, with scope for area coordination being part funded from the Pioneer Schools pot. 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 will be accorded equal status to Literacy and Numeracy. Pioneer Digital schools are working with Welsh Government to formulate the Digital Competence framework, which will be launched in September 2016.

It is foreseen that there will be demands for additional ICT resource in schools as a result of this framework, the extent and nature of which needs to be determined in advance of the new curriculum becoming available.

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, Minister for Education – March 2015). At best, the recommendations should serve to realize an exciting and engaging curriculum, truly fit for 21stC 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). The newly formed DepNet group – i.e. the secondary school senior leaders' forum - could provide further input. 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 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) – N/A

2. Community / Town Council – N/A

3. Relevant Partners – Short of sending full findings, certain ‘work in progress’ summary documentation has been shared with ERW and WG to gauge synergy with regional / national policy and to canvass opinions. Feedback has been very positive, the direction of travel is generating interest at WG and is considered to be ‘well ahead of the game’.

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

High Level summaries and progress shared with Schools’ Strategy and Budget Forum; Primary and Secondary Head teachers.

Distributed for info: 3x 3rd Tier managers within LP; Regional Hub School Improvement Lead; Principal Challenge Adviser.

11-19 Component of the review – Task and Finish Steering group, with representatives from secondary schools and Further Education.

**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
Successful Futures (The Donaldson Report) – Executive Summary	http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150303-great-debate-summary-cy.pdf http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150303-great-debate-summary-en.pdf?utm_source=great-debate&utm_medium=summary&utm_campaign=dfes
Successful Futures (The Donaldson Report) – Full Report – February 2015	http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150317-successful-futures-en.pdf http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150317-successful-futures-cy.pdf
Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers (The Furlong Report) – March 2015	http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150309-teaching-tomorrows-teachers-final.pdf http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150309-teaching-tomorrows-teachers-cy.pdf
A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life – October 2015	http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/151021-a-curriculum-for-wales-a-curriculum-for-life-en.pdf http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/151021-a-curriculum-for-wales-a-curriculum-for-life-w.pdf
Lead Creative Schools – prospectus (Arts Council for Wales / WG) – May 2015	http://www.artscouncilofwales.org.uk/what-we-do/creative-learning/the-lead-creative-schools-scheme http://www.artscouncilofwales.org.uk/what-we-do/creative-learning/cynllun-yr-ysgolion-creadigol-arweiniol?diablo.lang=cym
Palmantu'r Ffordd / Paving the Way – Full Report -	Internal Document – Education & Children Department, Carmarthenshire County Council
Palmantu'r Ffordd / Paving the Way – Powerpoint Executive Summary	Internal Document – Education & Children Department, Carmarthenshire County Council
11-19 Review Update (Matt Morden)	Internal Document – Education & Children Department, Carmarthenshire County Council