

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 25 November 2019

PRESENT: Councillor D. Price (Chair)

Councillors:

L.R. Bowen, K.V. Broom, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, G.R. Jones, M.J.A. Lewis, D.T. Williams, S.M. Allen (In place of I. Davies) and W.T. Evans (In place of E. Schiavone)

Co-opted Members:

V. Kenny - Roman Catholic Church Representative
M. Jones - Parent Governor

Also in attendance:

Councillor G. Davies, Executive Board Member for Education & Children

The following Officers were in attendance:

G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
S. Davies, Head of Access to Education
R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services
S. Nolan, Group Accountant
A. Rees, Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing
A. Thomas, Head of Education Services and Inclusion
L. Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP. - 10.00 am - 12.20 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E. Schiavone, I. Davies, J. Jenkins, B. Thomas, E. Thomas, Mr J. Davies, Mrs G Cornock-Evans and Revd D. Richards.

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

There were no declarations of party whips.

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
D. Price	4	Wife is employed by UWTSD
L. Bowen	6	Relative works at Ysgol Llangynnwr
S. Allen	6	Member of the Governing Body at Ysgol Llys Hywel

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no questions had been received.

4. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF STAFF

[NOTE: Councillor D. Price had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

During the 2019/20 forward work programme planning the Committee identified the Recruitment and Retention of Staff as an area of interest and requested a detailed report.

Members noted the following matters/questions in relation to the report –

Members referred to the headline findings of the report by the Education Workforce Council on behalf of the Welsh Government; referenced on page 17 of the report, which outlined the experiences of registered education practitioners in Wales. The findings noted a significant amount of school teachers planned to leave the profession within the next three years and noted that the significant workload was an area of dissatisfaction for many respondents. The Head of Education Services and Inclusion referenced page 23 of the report which outlined the work undertaken to provide guidance to teachers on ways in which workload pressures could be reduced. The guidance also sought to clarify what is expected of teachers in relation to marking and planning, and to provide consistent advice endorsed by Estyn.

In response to a query on whether teachers who had completed the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) were able to find relevant posts and whether adequate applications were received for headteacher vacancies, the Head of Education Services and Inclusion advised that he believed that despite the continued pressure on teachers an adequate number of headteachers were coming through. It was accepted that not every graduate of the NPQH intended to pursue a headteacher post. He acknowledged some of the challenges in relation to identifying individuals with the required attributes and noted that a more strategic approach was planned

Members noted that a significant number of vacancies advertised in Carmarthenshire were for temporary posts and asked whether this was the situation nationally. The Director of Education and Children's Services advised that this was most likely a reflection of the funding position of most schools

In clarifying an issue raised on the recruitment of sufficient bilingual staff the Director of Education and Children's Services advised that there was some regional work undertaken by ERW as well as a national scheme to encourage bilingual primary school teachers to retrain as secondary Welsh teachers. He further noted that Carmarthenshire was in a strong position when it came to the recruitment of bilingual staff.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. CARMARTHENSHIRE YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

Members received an overview of the report on Carmarthenshire Youth Support Services from the Principal Youth Support Services Manager.

Members raised the following matters/questions in relation to the report –

In noting the significant increase in the Welsh Government Support Grant in 2019/20 Members questioned what the funding was intended for and whether it would continue at that level in subsequent years. The Principal Youth Support Services Manager advised that the increase in funding included allocations to improve emotional health and wellbeing and homeless prevention. The Officer noted that the service had employed an additional eight members of staff including a Homeless Coordinator. There wasn't an indication to date on the level of subsequent funding.

In response to a question on workforce development the Principal Youth Support Services Manager advised that the service has its own training plan which adheres to national occupational standards. UWTSD also run a dedicated youth work course which the Youth Service supports. The Education Workforce Council require Youth Workers to register with them which has increased the recognition of Youth Work professionally.

Members referenced the number of referrals received and asked whether there was a notable rural/urban split and whether the same level of service was provided across the county. The Principal Youth Support Services Manager advised that a consistent service is provided across the county and the same service received regardless of location. It was further noted that the service often works with the family of the young person referred and supported the transition from children to adult services where onward support was identified.

It was noted that the report did not contain detailed information on the grant provision to the 3rd Sector. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing advised that this information would be circulated by email to Members.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

6. DETERMINATION - PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION AT YSGOL Y DDWYLAN, YSGOL GRIFFITH JONES, YSGOL LLANGYNNWR AND YSGOL LLYS HYWEL

[NOTE: Councillor L. Bowen and S. Allen had earlier declared an interest in this item and left the Chamber for the duration of the Agenda item.]

Members considered the submissions received to the individual Statutory Notices in relation to changing the nature of provision at Ysgol y Ddwylan, Ysgol Griffith Jones, Ysgol Llangynnwyr and Ysgol Llys Hywel. Being satisfied that there were no other related proposals; Members acknowledged that the statutory proposals had

been consulted upon and published in accordance with the School Organisation Code and contain all the relevant information. Members considered the consultation documents and consultation reports, the objections and responses to the notices in the objection report.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to recommend that the Executive Board implement the proposal as laid out in the Statutory Notice in relation to changing the nature of provision at Ysgol y Ddwylan, Ysgol Griffith Jones, Ysgol Llangynnwr and Ysgol Llys Hywel.

7. DETERMINATION - PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION AT YSGOL RHYS PRITCHARD

Members considered the submissions received to the Statutory Notice in relation to changing the nature of provision at Ysgol Rhys Pritchard. Being satisfied that there were no other related proposals; Members acknowledged that the statutory proposal had been consulted upon and published in accordance with the School Organisation Code and contained all the relevant information. Members considered the consultation document and consultation report, the objections and responses to the notices in the objection report.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to recommend that the Executive Board implement the proposal as laid out in the Statutory Notice in relation to changing the nature of provision at Ysgol Rhys Pritchard.

8. EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES BUDGET UPDATE

At the meeting held on 15th October 2019 (minute 7.3 refers) the Committee requested a report on the forecast overspend of the Education and Children's Services Department. The Director of Education and Children's Services gave an overview of the current position, and measures already undertaken and noted within the Action Plan, to overcome current pressures.

Members raised the following matters/questions in relation to the report –

Members referenced the letter sent to the 30 schools facing a deficit budget and asked for an indication to the type of efficiencies likely to be identified. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing advised that he and the Head of Education Services and Inclusion had met with the Headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body of each school and acknowledged that some negative comments had been made in relation to the letter sent, however the message within the letter was clear and that several positive conversations had arisen. Identified schools have been asked to identify efficiencies and submit a three-year budget strategy; it was expected that the budgets would contain reductions in staffing costs, routine expenditure and some reduction in relation to curriculum volume.

Members acknowledged that over ten years of austerity and real term budget reductions are likely to have affected the current financial position but asked whether there were any other identified strategies for improvement. The Director of

Education and Children's Services advised that employing some support staff and Teaching Assistants centrally, a review of historical terms of employment and the development of more robust School Governor training were amongst several areas identified.

It was noted that at page 137 the report referred to '*options in relation to rationalisation*', Members asked for clarification on the type of rationalisation under consideration. The Director of Education and Children's Services advised that as well as a review of current catchment areas, consideration would be given to the sustainability of the current footprint of primary schools and federations across the county. A review of the Modernising Education Programme would also be undertaken.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

9. REFERRAL FROM THE POLICY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a request from the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee to reverse its decision to receive Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring reports via e-mail, outside of the committee process. Members agreed that they did not wish to reverse their decision and in forming that decision noted the following –

- that the decision to circulate the noted report outside of the committee process was in alignment with the training provided by the Centre for Public Scrutiny in March 2019 which advised Members to consider the timeliness of reports presented for scrutiny
- that Committee had reviewed the main stresses of the Revenue Budget through Task & Finish Groups, Reports and Briefings

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to note the referral.

10. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

Members reviewed the Forward Work Programme and considered reports circulated outside of the committee process since the last meeting on the 15th October 2019.

It was noted that due to delays in the preparation of the 2020/21 Budget Plan it was likely that the meeting in December would be postponed until January. Items marked on the Forward Work Programme for the January meeting should be moved to the meeting scheduled for the 19th February 2020.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items be received.

CHAIR

DATE