

Cabinet Meeting 31st January 2022

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK & FINISH GROUP REPORT 2018/19- A REVIEW OF THE CURRENT PROVISION FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATION, CHILDCARE AND PLAY OPPORTUNITIES.

Purpose: That the Cabinet give consideration to the Task & Finish Group's recommendations, which are outlined within the attached report, and review of Carmarthenshire's School Admissions Policy.

Recommendations / key decisions required: To consider the Task and Finish Report recommendations and approve the action to review Carmarthenshire's Education Admissions Policy.

Reasons:

- At its meeting on 14th March 2018, the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a task and finish group to undertake a review into provision for early years education, childcare and play opportunities
- The recommendations contained within the report were formulated by the Group following the consideration of a range of evidence over a series of meetings held between May 2018 and February 2019.
- The report and recommendations were presented to Cabinet Members on the 7th of October 2019 however Members requested further detail in regard to implications e.g. funding, policy.
- An update was ready for presentation in March 2020 however Covid-19 took priority and officers were focused on other issues.
- During January/February 2021 the report was further updated ready for presentation/discussion
- On the 19th April 2021 an update was provided for consideration. An action from that meeting was to develop a separate paper to include further information in relation to the review of school admission arrangements.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted YES- The Education and Children's Scrutiny Committee are awaiting a response to the report and recommendations.

Cabinet Decision Required **YES**

Council Decision Required **NO- not at this point in time- this will depend on the review of our Admissions Policy.**

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr. Glynog Davies

Directorate: Education and Children's Services

Name of Head of Service:
Gareth Morgans

Report Author: Gareth Morgans

Designations:

Director of Education and Children's Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cabinet Meeting

January 31st 2022

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK & FINISH GROUP REPORT 2018/19- A REVIEW OF THE CURRENT PROVISION FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATION, CHILDCARE AND PLAY OPPORTUNITIES.

The Education and Children Scrutiny Committee has a key role to play in monitoring services, development of key policies and strategies, as well as identifying areas for improvement or development within their remit.

As part of their investigative role, Scrutiny Committees can establish a Task & Finish Group during each municipal year. This is a sub-group of the main committee and asked to investigate specific issues and report back findings and recommendations for approval before presenting them to the Executive Board.

The Education and Children Scrutiny Committee agreed in principle to undertake a review into the current provision for early years education, childcare and play, including the following items:-

- Admissions Policy for Schools
- Foundation Phase Provision for 3 year olds
- Standard of provision
- Play
- Childcare
- The new 30 hour Childcare Offer

As a result of the review, a Draft Report was presented to the Scrutiny Committee on the 24th April 2019.

An initial response by officers to the recommendations was presented to Cabinet on the 7th of October 2019. However, Cabinet Members asked officers to provide more detail on the implications of implementing the recommendations e.g. funding, policy. An update was ready for presentation in March 2020 however responding to Covid-19 took priority and officers were focused on other issues.

During January/February 2021 the report was further updated ready for presentation/discussion

On the 19th April 2021 an update was provided for Members to consider. An action from that meeting was to develop a separate paper to include further information in relation to our Admission Policy. This is attached.

In addition officers have been charged to consider the implications of the Senedd Co-operation Agreement between Labour and Plaid Cymru and any possible impact on the recommendations contained in the report.

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: Gareth Morgans

Director of Education and Children's Services

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

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

If the recommendations are supported by the Cabinet there will be changes to Carmarthenshire's related policies which will need to be consulted upon and discussed e.g. Admissions Policy, start of school age. We will also need to consider the impact of the Senedd Co-operation Agreement between Labour and Plaid Cymru.

2. Legal

We are obliged to abide by legislation in respect to many service areas affected by these proposals e.g. School Admissions, 30 Hours Education and Childcare. We will need to consult on changes in line with legislation and follow the appropriate corporate processes.

3. Finance

Implementing the recommendations will require dedicated officer time from a range of service and departments. Implementing some recommendations could result in additional costs.

4. Risk Management Issues

We need to consider the implications of these recommendations on our service delivery and those provided by partners e.g. one identified risk related to developing nursery provision on every school site which could have an adverse impact on some non-maintained providers of education.

5. Staffing Implications

Implementing these recommendations will require input from officers. Many of the recommendations would require substantial additional input e.g. *The Council undertake a formal review of its current admissions policy for full time education for 4 year olds (the rising 4s policy). Financial and service impact modelling should be undertaken to inform any change to the policy, which should be along similar lines to other authorities within the ERW consortium.*

6. Physical Assets

Implementing some of these recommendations could require extending school building to provide additional space for an increased number of pupils or investment in upgrading/remodelling buildings.

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Gareth Morgans

Director of Education and Children's Services

1. **Scrutiny Committee** – The Education & Children Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on the 24th April 2019 and unanimously resolved that the report be received and referred to the Cabinet for its consideration.
2. **Local Member(s)** – N/A
3. **Community / Town Council** – N/A
4. **Relevant Partners**- Mudiad Meithrin, Wales Pre-school Providers Association and Play Wales all addressed the Task & Finish Group during its review.
5. **Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations** – Officers from the Education & Children's Services and Chief Executive's departments contributed to and supported the work of the Task & Finish Group.

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**

YES

Include any observations here

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
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WG33483 Foundation Phase provision for three- and four-year-olds: Guidance for local authorities in Wales -		
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https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/foundation-phase-provision-for-three-and-four-year-oldsguidance-for-local-authorities-in-wales_0.pdf

Estyn - Guidance handbook for inspecting care and education in regulated non-school settings eligible for funding for part-time education -		
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<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/document/guidance-handbook-inspecting-careand-education-regulated-non-school-settings-eligible>

Welsh Government School Admissions Code (005/2013) -		
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<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/school-admissions-code.pdf>

Carmarthenshire County Council – Play Sufficiency Assessment 2016-2019 -		
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http://fis.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/gd4029_playsufficiency_eng-1.pdf