

Date of Meeting	Item	Members wished to make the following comments and conclusions:	Response/Comments
13-Oct-2016	Estyn Report of Central South Consortium	<p>1. The Committee commented on the lack of a communication between Educational Leaders, the Consortium and FE Leaders and expressed concern over educational public services not integrating and working together effectively. Members recommended that a greater link is made between the FE Sector and Local Authority Education, including the Consortium.</p>	<p>Educational leaders, the Consortium and FE have a variety of opportunities to work together both strategically and operationally. Bridgend College and BCBC are both represented on the high level PSB which operates at a strategic level. Bridgend College also attends the Director designated meetings of the Secondary Heads Forum. At a more operational level the College is a member of the FLG (Formal Learning Group) consisting of senior curriculum managers and where discussions over the Post 16 provision across BCBC take place. Further, the College is represented at Principal level on the Strategic Review Board (SRB) and also on the Post 16 Operational Board that reports to the SRB. These two Boards are concerned with a strategic review of Post 16 provision across BCBC. There are a number of other fora where Education and the College work collaboratively such as in developing responses to ALN reform and as part of the regional ALN Innovation project and also in regional reviews with Welsh Government on Post 16 Planning & Funding. There is also a close working partnership between Pencoed Comprehensive and Bridgend College to form the Penybont 6th Form College. The Consortium is represented in Bridgend through the Senior Challenge Adviser who is a member of the Education Senior Management Team and sits on both the SRB and Post 16 Operational Board as well as the Secondary Heads Forum. There are also regular informal meetings between the Senior Management of the College and that of the Education Service.</p>
		<p>2. The Committee expressed concern over Estyn's 'Adequate' judgement for 'Support for School Improvement' given that this was the key role of the Consortium. Members commented that the lack of consistency of Challenge Advisers in schools due to a high staff turnover in the Consortium could potentially have a significant impact on support for schools. The Committee asked for further information on the turnover of Challenge Advisers in schools to consider how substantial an issue this is.</p>	<p>Although the overall judgement concerning support for school improvement was adequate, this was largely because aspects of the work were at an early stage of development. As such, inspectors judged that more time was needed to demonstrate their impact.</p> <p>Apart from the need to strengthen the evaluation of teaching and leadership in a few challenge advisers' reports, the majority of the references to the work of challenge advisers in supporting and challenging schools to improve are positive. The inspection report contains the following statements:</p> <p>"The consortium has a clear vision and strategy to improve schools that is understood by most stakeholders and underpins the support for school improvement well."</p> <p>"The consortium's 'Support and Challenge Framework' provides useful guidance for challenge advisers, local authority officers and schools. The framework outlines the process for categorising schools clearly."</p> <p>"Consortium leaders are developing the arrangements for collecting data to inform school improvement processes and to improve their knowledge of schools well.....Many challenge advisers use this data appropriately to challenge each school's view of its standards and capacity to improve, and to make informed decisions about the school's support needs."</p> <p>"The categorisation process is increasingly robust and fair, and identifies clearly those aspects that require improvement".</p> <p>"The consortium has suitable processes to quality assure the work of challenge advisers. Senior challenge advisers make joint visits with challenge advisers and review the quality of reports to schools. These activities have improved the quality and consistency of reports to schools".</p> <p>As Cabinet Members will be aware, it is necessary from time to time to make changes to the challenge advisers attached to schools. These usually occur at the start of the academic year and are usually for one of the following reasons: challenge advisers on secondment return to their school; a challenge adviser is promoted to a senior post or is appointed to another position; a challenge adviser reaches retirement.</p> <p>In 2016-2017, there are seven challenge advisers attached to Bridgend's primary schools. Of these, four were working with the schools in the previous year and one other had worked with the authority's schools in another capacity. The two new appointments are challenge advisers with extensive experience either as a headteacher or as a school improvement adviser.</p> <p>In the secondary sector, there are five challenge advisers attached to the authority's schools. Of these, three have been working with the authority's schools in the previous year. The two new appointments are advisers with extensive experience of secondary headship themselves.</p> <p>The consortium always seeks to minimise changes to the attachment of challenge advisers to schools but where changes occur these are carefully considered. I hope that Members will be reassured by the inspector's confidence in the consortium's quality assurance procedures as set out in the inspection report and the consortium's commitment to providing support and challenge of high quality at all times.</p>
		<p>3. The Committee asked that Officers ensure that any future school performance information presented to the Committee includes comparative data with other Local Authorities in order to understand where Bridgend stands in the bigger national picture.</p>	<p>Members may wish to note the following link to school performance information published by Welsh Government which provides comparative data for all local authorities http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/end-foundation-phase-outcomes-national-curriculum-teacher-assessment-core-subjects-key-stages-2-3/?lang=en</p>
		<p>4. The Committee requested that they receive the survey data from the survey carried out with School Governors on the role of the Consortium.</p>	<p>The survey data emanating from the survey carried out with school governors wasn't published by Estyn for any of the Consortia across Wales. We can however report that CSC received a 30% response rate from across the Consortium and Estyn informed CSC that responses were mostly positive.</p>
	Early help and Permanence Strategy and Action Plan	<p>1. The Committee recommend that the Joint Action Plan be revisited as the evidence for a number of actions do not support the outcomes. For example, Members commented that a Health Visitor part of the front door arrangements, or a new referral form, does not provide evidence that Children and Young People's needs are identified and met in a more timely manner. Further clarification is needed in order for the action plan to be used and monitored effectively.</p>	<p>The lead officers will review the joint action plan taking into account the comments made and present a revised version to the Early Intervention and Safeguarding Board for sign off.</p>

<p>2. The Committee reiterated the concerns of the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny in relation to the numbers of LAC within the County Borough. Given the Authority's social and economic position in Wales, its current numbers of LAC were significantly high in comparison with other LAs, ranking 4th highest. The Committee acknowledged the work that was being undertaken by Cardiff University into LAC figures in Wales, and requested that they receive this as soon as it is available.</p>	<p>The research by Cardiff University has not yet been published and will be circulated as soon as it is available.</p>
<p>3. Officers reported that recent checks made by courts had confirmed that all children that are currently Looked After, needed to be Looked After. Members therefore commented that if this is the case the issues may lie in the preventative work, before children and young people are hitting those levels and agreed to test this on the research findings from Cardiff University.</p>	<p>This refers to children who are subject to court proceedings and officers explained that judges hearing these cases were satisfied that the thresholds had been met for children to become looked after in these circumstances. (see attached report referred to above)</p>
<p>4. The Committee requested further detail as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) whether the numbers of children in foster care as illustrated in the Table on Page 31 of the report are with foster parents or with family members; b) how long these children are staying with family members; and c) how are the LA encouraging family members to take on a special guardianship orders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Placement with parents mean that the children have looked after status but are with either or both parents being cared for. They are not in receipt of fostering allowances. b. There will be a number of children who will go on to have their orders changed or discharged, the courts are agreeing care plans to the Local Authority to reassess those. c. All identified potential family carers for children and young people are assessed via a unified assessment, this enables the court to a professional assessment which will recommend, relative fostering, a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order. The courts and all associated professionals have a responsibility to make the order that is least intrusive to a child's right to a family life/ arrangements and this is usually after the order has been in effect for a one year period.
<p>5. The Committee requested that they receive further detailed information of the funding for Families First.</p>	<p>See attached report</p>
<p>6. The Committee requested that they receive feedback gathered from Just Ask service users in relation to their views on the user friendliness of the Civic Office site.</p>	<p>We are currently sharing footfall data. No such survey has been completed.</p>