

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

INFORMATION REPORT TO CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 MARCH 2018

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

FESTIVAL OF LEARNING – SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY AND PROJECTED OUTCOMES

1. Purpose of report

1.1 This report informs members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the activities planned for the Festival of Learning and the proposed objectives and anticipated outcomes.

2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 The information in this report relates to the following strategic priority in the Corporate Plan:

- Supporting a successful economy

2.2 The event relates directly to the strategic priority in the Corporate Plan to 'support a successful economy' and the Directorate commitments to 'provide the learning and development opportunities for staff to meet future service needs' and to 'develop more effective practice in respect of ensuring children and young people are actively involved in policy development and the decision-making process through developing our participation strategy so that their views, thoughts, wishes and feelings are appropriately represented'.

2.3 It will also address the first recommendation noted in the last Estyn inspection of the local authority to improve outcomes for learners by strengthening consistency across all schools; and it fits well with Welsh Government and Central South Consortium's identification of sharing effective practice as a key element in self-improving school systems, as recognised by all schools across the county borough.

3. Background

3.1 In October 2012, Estyn judged education services for children and young people in Bridgend to be in need of further Estyn monitoring. Estyn undertook follow-up visits in March and December 2014. It is likely, therefore, that the local authority will be visited again by Estyn shortly.

3.2 Bridgend's post-inspection action plan (PIAP) contained five recommendations. The first recommendation noted the need for the local authority to improve outcomes for learners by strengthening consistency across all schools.

3.3 Similarly, Welsh Government and Central South Consortium identify sharing effective practice as a key element in self-improving school systems.

3.4 Following consultation with the Bridgend Federation of Primary Schools (BFPS) and the Bridgend Association of Secondary Headteachers (BASH), the ability to share effective practice across schools was identified as an important factor in improving standards.

- 3.5 Further to additional consultation with schools (via an online survey in May 2017 and further discussion with headteachers in June 2017), the concept of a pan-local authority continuing professional development event was developed.
- 3.6 As a consequence, a 'Festival of Learning' event has been planned during the week commencing Monday 25 June 2018. It involves all schools working together as part of the 'Team Bridgend' vision along with school councils in Bridgend, Bridgend College, related local authority service areas and external providers. The event will be developed in line with the principles outlined in UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The Festival of Learning will include four key events:
- **Professional learning development workshops** to share good practice are being jointly planned, provided and attended by all schools and Bridgend College as well as by local authority officers and external providers (including the Children's Commissioner's Officer and Participation Team). The workshops will be held in the respective organisations and school staff will book into those identified to address the strategic priorities of the school. The learning offer will be linked with school development plans, post-inspection action plans and Bridgend College's strategic objectives. Details of what the workshops will provide are being collated and this will be used to help schools determine which ones to attend (see Appendix A). The additional funding identified in Section 7 of the report will be mainly used to support supply cover and transport costs.
 - **Symposium** for senior leaders with a focus on their wellbeing. It is anticipated that if senior leaders' wellbeing is improved this will have a positive impact on everyone else in the school and, ultimately, on pupil outcomes.
 - **Learners' Day - showcase event** – schools will present examples of work related to their team 'Strategy on a Page' (SOAPs) (see Appendix E). This is likely to reflect examples of what 'makes children happy in their schools' – the theme for the Learners' Day.
 - **Learners' Day - Learner Voice Forum** – school councils will consider 'What makes children happy in school' in advance of the day and their cluster responses will be recorded in a short film. As part of the focus on wellbeing at the event the clusters of school councils will be asked to consider what will 'make them happier in their school and community'. The views of the learners will be captured and will help to inform decision making within the Directorate.
- 4.2 The workshops will provide an opportunity to further develop partnership working and collaboration, as exemplified in the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership, introduced in September 2017 as part of Welsh Government's workforce development. 'These professional standards are an important aspect of supporting all practitioners to actively engage in professional learning with the purpose of developing individual and collective expertise to make a collaborative, coherent, innovative and sustainable research-led impact on all learners.' Refer to <http://learning.gov.wales/resources/collections/professional-standards?lang=en> (Learning Wales, 30 November 2017) for further details.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that around 1000 staff from across Bridgend will benefit directly from the Festival of Learning activities. Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) will be able to reflect upon

their learning in the collaborative activities in the workshops and in the showcase event. They will be able to cite these experiences as evidence to support their Professional Learning Passport as part of their statutory induction year. They will also have the opportunity to submit their reflections on their learning for accreditation towards a Master's qualification – supporting the aspiration of Welsh Government that all teachers will hold this qualification. Likewise, this opportunity will be available to all teaching staff and leaders from September 2018.

- 4.4 Over 120 pupils should benefit by participating in the Learners' Day where they will showcase aspects of their learning from throughout the year, linked to their school's 'Team Bridgend' SOAP. Furthermore, and in addition to these 120 pupils, all members of the respective school councils will be involved in pre-Festival of Learning activities (a summary of which is to be captured on film) in preparation for the Learner Voice Forum where representatives from the school councils will be given the opportunity to link in with the local authority's Youth Council and with the Participation Team from the Children's Commissioner's Office. Their views will contribute to decision making within the Directorate.
- 4.5 All pupils will benefit indirectly as a consequence of the continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities offered to teachers and leaders in schools through a series of workshop activities provided by schools, Bridgend College, local authority officers and from higher education institutions (ie University of Cardiff and University of South Wales). This collaboration will provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect upon and celebrate existing good practice, encouraging others to reflect and refine their teaching accordingly. Through collaboration, it is anticipated that good teaching can be improved further, and, in the longer term, this cultural shift is likely to impact positively on standards across the county borough.
- 4.6 Invitations have been sent to some external agencies to be involved in relevant aspects of the event, including the Children's Commissioner for Wales, delegates from Public Health Wales, Schools Health Research Network (SHRN), to higher education institutions and will be extended to the First Minister, Cabinet Secretary for Education, Welsh Government, Estyn, and to all elected members, the Youth Mayor and to local businesses among others. An attempt has been made to minimise costs as far as possible and speakers have been engaged at no cost, where possible.
- 4.7 An inspirational speaker has been approached to make the keynote speech to headteachers and senior leaders at the symposium event and to speak to the children at the Learners' Day. This decision reflects the positive feedback received about the speaker and offers an attempt to bring in a new perspective, aiding professional learning across the local authority. It is expected that there will be approximately 300 delegates attending this event.
- 4.8 It is anticipated that as a result of the event a local authority policy approach to wellbeing in schools will be developed to impact positively on outcomes for children and there will be an online brochure capturing the outcomes of the week (informed by case studies prepared by participant schools).
- 4.9 The Festival of Learning will focus on the following priorities, aligned with the new Estyn framework:
 - Standards
 - Wellbeing and attitudes to learning
 - Teaching and learning experiences

- Care, support and guidance
- Leadership and management

4.10 As part of 'Team Bridgend', schools have developed shared strategies as part of the joint practice development and these have been summarised in the SOAP documents. It is anticipated that this joint strategic working will facilitate a long-lasting, embedded approach to school improvement, aiding greater consistency between schools and enhanced learning experiences for all children.

4.11 There will be a specific focus on wellbeing and attitudes to learning. The principle benefits identified are envisaged to improve the wellbeing culture of schools/learning organisations, making them 'fit for purpose in the 21st century'. This must be set in the wider context of curriculum reform in Wales and configured to bring about more wide-ranging changes in how teachers teach, how learners learn, how schools serve their communities and how services can collaborate in the multi-agency arena (a priority in the Education and Family Support Directorate's business plan).

4.12 Anticipated outcomes include:

- improved well-being for senior leaders;
- improved learning opportunities for teachers;
- improved teaching for children;
- improved involvement of a wide cross-section of learners in key decisions;
- multi-agency working between schools and other agencies/organisations, including local businesses;
- opportunities for accreditation towards further qualifications for teachers and leaders; and
- a cultural shift towards greater collaboration in teaching and learning.

4.13 It is expected that pre- and post-event surveys will be developed in advance of the event to help measure the changes and capture the outcomes. The CSC 'Readiness Tool' will assist in this measurement as it will take progress measurements twice a year from 2018-2026 (see Appendix B). It is designed for preparing for Curriculum Wales by 2020 focussing on six key areas:

- Pedagogy
- Innovating learning experiences
- Leading and collaborating professional learning
- Language and culture
- Assessment and progress
- Relationships and wellbeing

4.14 A benefits realisation plan and a benefits realisation map have been drawn up to provide more details of anticipated benefits (see Appendix C and Appendix D).

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules.

5.1 There is no impact on the Council's policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no direct equality impact issues arising from this report.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The 'Art of Brilliance' has provided a quotation of £2.6k (plus modest expenses) to deliver this work for senior leaders and for pupils. This would be funded from the Central South Consortium (CSC)/local authority annex (a service level agreement). It is anticipated that this will represent a cost of approximately £4.50/delegate or pupil.
- 7.2 Funding of £15k has been made available from CSC to help 'improve cluster working and performance across clusters through engagement of schools in 'Team Bridgend''.
- 7.3 Additional one-off funding (£65k) to support this event approved by Council on the 28 February 2018 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2019 to 2021-2022 will ensure that the whole event is able to go ahead. It will provide funding to:
- pay for the external keynote speaker at the Symposium and Learners' Day;
 - pay venue hire, where applicable;
 - cover the cost of supply teachers and for travel expenses to enable staff to participate in the collaborative workshop events;
 - cover transport costs associated with bringing pupils together for the Learner Voice Forum; and
 - cover transport costs associated with the showcase event.
- 7.4 Without any funding, the event could not go ahead at all. The £15k from the CSC LA Annex will ensure that there is some 'Team Bridgend' collaborative work (including the Learner Voice Forum) but without this funding this would be severely reduced. The Symposium and showcase events would not be possible without this one-off funding.
- 7.5 If funding is not available to fund staff release (and transport costs), staff will be unable to run/attend workshops. If we are unable to fund a venue to host the Learners' Day, then we will lose the opportunity to bring together pupils from all Bridgend schools and Bridgend College, in a single event, to support 'learner voice'. If we are unable to financially support the symposium event, we will lose the opportunity to engage a wide variety of delivery partners and stakeholders in meaningful, professional discussion.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the plans for the Festival of Learning and the anticipated benefits associated with the event.

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Background documents

- Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership (Learning Wales, 30 November 2017)
<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/collections/professional-standards?lang=en>

Appendices

- Appendix A Details of Workshop Offers (as of February 2018)
- Appendix B 'Curriculum 2020 'Readiness Tool'
- Appendix C Benefits Realisation Plan
- Appendix D Benefits Realisation Map
- Appendix E 'Team Bridgend' Strategy On A Page (SOAP)