

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM

10 DECEMBER 2019

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

#### BRIDGEND'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES

#### 1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Town and Community Council Forum members with an update in respect of Bridgend's local government education services.

#### 2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority:

- **Supporting a successful economy** – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.

#### 3. Context

- 3.1 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) maintains 60 schools (including 1 pupil referral unit). There are 48 primary schools, including 4 that provide Welsh-medium education. There are 9 secondary schools including 1 Welsh-medium school. In addition, there are 2 special schools and a pupil referral unit.
- 3.2 Bridgend is one of five local authorities in the Central South Consortium joint education service for school improvement. In 2019-2020, the Council's net Education and Family Support Directorate budget is approximately £114m. This represents 42.1% of the Council's total net budget of £271m.
- 3.3 Further information in relation to children and young people in Bridgend is noted below:
- Over a 3-year average, 18.1% of pupils aged 5 to 15 are eligible for free school meals (which is slightly higher than the Wales average of 17.9%).
  - 7.7% of pupils aged 5 and over are fluent in Welsh (which is lower than the Wales average of 16.2%).
  - 6.0% of pupils are from ethnic minorities (which is lower than the Wales average of 11.0%).

- 20.2% of pupils have special educational needs (which is lower than the Wales average of 22.6%).
  - 131 children per 10,000 were looked after by the local authority in 2018 (which is higher than the Wales average of 102 children per 10,000).
- 3.4 The Education and Family Support Directorate is the largest directorate within BCBC. The Education and Family Support Directorate has:
- 947 corporate staff working in non-school settings;
  - 635 corporate staff working in school-based settings; and
  - 3000 staff employed directly by Bridgend schools.
- 3.5 The Education and Family Support Directorate delegated 85.6% of its budget directly to schools in 2019-2020. This delegation rate compares favourably to the all-Wales average of 83.9%. In general terms, however, the amount Bridgend delegates to schools on a 'per pupil' basis is slightly below the all-Wales average (of £4,906) at £4,822.
- 3.6 However, the Education and Family Support Directorate retains £814 per pupil for central services, which is considerably below the all-Wales average of £934. This means that less money is retained by the local authority for centrally provided education services and more money is devolved to schools to support frontline services.
- 3.7 The Education and Family Support Directorate had an overspend at the end of the previous financial year (as at 31 March 2019) of £401k. The two main pressures on the directorate's budget were:
- home-to-school transport; and
  - support for learners with additional needs.

#### **4. Current position**

- 4.1 BCBC was inspected by Estyn during the week commencing 18 March 2019 under the new Local Government Education Services (LGES) Inspection Framework, introduced in September 2018.
- 4.2 The inspection was moderated by an Assistant Director from Estyn. Inspectors from Wales Audit Office (WAO) and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) were members of the inspection team. A wide range of stakeholders were involved in the inspection including elected members, officers, headteachers, learners and members of the public.
- 4.3 The inspection report was published on 31 May 2019. The full text of the report is available on the Estyn website: [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)
- 4.4 While the inspection report was largely positive, Estyn identified several areas for development and made four key recommendations:
- Recommendation 1 - Raise standards of literacy in primary schools

- Recommendation 2 - Improve outcomes for post-16 learners in sixth forms
  - Recommendation 3 – Increase the pace of improvement in schools causing concern
  - Recommendation 4 – Strengthen the role of the Welsh Education Strategic Forum to ensure timely progress in delivering the priorities identified in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- 4.5 BCBC is required to update its plans to address the four main recommendations and to take account of shortcomings identified through the inspection process.
- 4.6 BCBC has developed a post-inspection action plan (PIAP) which is monitored by the local authority's School Improvement Group (SIG). SIG includes a wide range of representatives including:
- Leader of the Council (as chairperson);
  - Chief Executive;
  - Deputy Leader of the Council;
  - Cabinet Member for Education Regeneration;
  - Chair of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 (SOSC1);
  - Corporate Director (Education and Family Support);
  - Senior Challenge Adviser (Central South Consortium); and
  - key officers from BCBC's HR, Finance, Inclusion and School Improvement services.
- 4.7 Progress reports in respect of the PIAP objectives are also provided to Estyn (on a termly basis via the Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) visits) and to SOSC1 (on an annual basis).
- 4.8 The Education and Family Support Directorate has adopted a RAYG (red (worst) / amber / yellow / green (best)) rating model to illustrate progress and outcomes against identified targets within its PIAP. At present (December 2019), of the 24 objectives identified within the PIAP:
- no objective has been identified as demonstrating 'green' progress;
  - 13 objectives have been identified as demonstrating 'yellow' progress;
  - 11 objectives have been identified as demonstrating 'amber' progress; and
  - no objective has been identified as demonstrating 'red' progress.
- 4.9 School performance in Bridgend is generally good. However, a few schools are 'causing concern'. Based on support category information for Bridgend schools:
- 31 schools are 'green';
  - 22 schools are 'yellow';

- 4 schools are 'amber'; and
- 3 schools are 'red'.

4.10 BCBC continues to work closely with Central South Consortium (the local authority's school improvement partner) to ensure 'schools causing concern' (ie those schools in either 'red' or 'amber' support category) are supported in order that they improve.

4.11 Estyn has determined that:

'overall, pupils in Bridgend make good progress between the statutory school ages of five and sixteen.'

While this provides some assurance that statutory education in Bridgend is effective, as noted by Estyn in its report (May 2019) in respect of local government education services in Bridgend, improvement is required at key stage 2 and at post-16. BCBC and Central South Consortium are working with schools to ensure swift improvements in these key areas.

4.12 Additional key information (in relation to learners at Bridgend schools) is provided below:

- Pupil attendance is strong and consistently compares favourably with the all-Wales average.
- Pupil exclusion data is generally in line with the all-Wales average, although, recently, BCBC has seen a rise in fixed-term exclusions.
- In general, progress made by vulnerable learners, is either in line with, or better than, the all-Wales average.

## **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications**

7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 provides a framework for embedding sustainable development principles within the activities of Council and has major implications for the long-term planning of finances and service provision. The seven wellbeing goals identified in the Act have driven the Council's three wellbeing objectives (ie supporting a successful economy, helping people to be more self-reliant and smarter use of resources).

7.2 The wellbeing objectives are designed to complement each other and be part of an integrated way of working to improve wellbeing for people in Bridgend County. In developing the Education and Family Support Directorate's business plan, officers and school-based colleagues have considered the

importance of balancing short-term needs with safeguarding the ability to meet longer-term objectives.

7.3 BCBC's approach to meeting its responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, including acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle, is reflected throughout the Education and Family Support Directorate's business plan; not least as the strategy establishes a long-term vision for improvements in learner outcomes.

## **8. Financial implications**

8.1 There are no explicit financial implications associated with this report.

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1 Town and Community Council Forum members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report.

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**Background Documents:** None.