

Meeting of:	CABINET REPORT
Date of meeting:	20 JUNE 2023
Report title:	EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT DIRECTORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026
Report owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT
Responsible officer:	LINDSAY HARVEY CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon policy framework or procedure rules
Executive summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet is requested to approve the Education and Family Support Directorate (EFS) Strategic Plan 2023-2026. • The directorate plays a key role in delivering a wide range of services which impact directly on the lives of children, young people, adults, and families living in Bridgend. • The directorate comprises 6 service areas, served by 28 operational teams, 59 schools and 1 pupil referral unit. Due to the complexity and wide-ranging nature of the directorate, it is essential that the directorate’s activity is underpinned by robust governance, strategic and operational procedures. • The directorate’s three-year strategic plan (attached at Appendix A) is an important part of the directorate’s delivery model as it enables clear alignment with national policy and locally determined priorities. • While the directorate is under no statutory duty to produce a three-year plan, the directorate is keen to engage with stakeholders to ensure service delivery, over the medium term, is well co-ordinated and, wherever possible, meets the needs of service recipients.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet's approval of the Education and Family Support Directorate (EFS) Strategic Plan 2023-2026.
- 1.2 The draft EFS Strategic Plan 2023-2026 is attached at Appendix A.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Education and Family Support Directorate ('the directorate') is Bridgend County Borough Council's (BCBC's) largest directorate with an annual gross revenue budget of around £170m and around 4000 staff. The directorate is also responsible for BCBC's largest capital investment project (that is, the School Modernisation Programme).
- 2.2 The directorate plays a key role in delivering a wide range of services which impact directly on the lives of children, young people, adults, and families living in Bridgend.
- 2.3 The directorate comprises 6 service areas, served by 28 operational teams, 59 schools and 1 pupil referral unit. Due to the complexity and wide-ranging nature of the directorate, it is essential that the directorate's activity is underpinned by robust governance, strategic and operational procedures.
- 2.4 The directorate's mission statement is:

To inspire and support children, young people, adults, and families to achieve better outcomes, leading to prosperous, healthy, safe, and happy communities

- 2.5 The directorate's key deliverables are listed below:

- sector-leading schools (supported by effective professional services) that provide outstanding learning opportunities to secure excellent outcomes for all learners;
- robust safeguarding procedures across all the directorate's service areas;
- an ambitious School Modernisation Programme;
- excellent family support services delivered by the right people, at the right time, to those most in need;
- effective youth support services (including the provision of an appropriate youth justice service offer);
- a high-quality adult learning offer;
- an effective Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to promote the Welsh language and Welsh-medium education;
- outstanding support for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN); and
- effective health and safety advice to all areas of council business.

- 2.6 The directorate's key challenges include:

- the significant, continuing impact of COVID-19 (including pupil behaviour, attendance, and exclusions);
- budget pressures (particularly home-to-school transport and the school modernisation programme);
- curriculum and ALN reform;
- capacity issues (especially in specialist and statutory areas); and
- corporate health and safety compliance and monitoring

3. Current situation/proposal

3.1 The directorate adopts a mature self-evaluation protocol which informs a comprehensive business planning approach. This includes the development of:

- an annual self-evaluation report;
- a comprehensive business plan (which aligns with the BCBC Corporate Plan and complies with regulator expectations);
- a business plan objective progress tracker to ensure agreed objectives are monitored closely; and
- an established risk register to ensure risks across the directorate are managed appropriately.

3.2 The directorate's three-year strategic plan (attached at Appendix A) is an important part of the directorate's delivery model as it enables clear alignment with national policy and locally determined priorities.

3.3 While the directorate is under no statutory duty to produce a three-year plan, the directorate is keen to engage with stakeholders to ensure service delivery, over the medium term, is well co-ordinated and, wherever possible, meets the needs of service recipients.

3.4 In developing the EFS Strategic Plan 2023-2026, feedback has been requested from the following groups to ensure the delivery partner and stakeholder 'voice' informs the directorate's medium-term service delivery model:

- children and young people via school councils and Bridgend Youth Council;
- headteachers;
- school staff;
- school governing bodies (including chairs of school governing bodies);
- Estyn;
- National Academy of Educational Leadership;
- Welsh Government;
- Welsh in Education Forum;
- Cabinet;
- Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1;
- Corporate Management Board; and
- officers (including those with responsibility for family support and adult community learning).

3.5 Further to consultation with stakeholders and delivery partners, the directorate has identified the following 15 'strategic themes' to underpin this three-year strategic plan:

- T1 Pupil and staff wellbeing
- T2 Support for pupil behaviour, attendance, and exclusions
- T3 Support for vulnerable children and young people
- T4 Support for children and young people with ALN
- T5 Curriculum for Wales and assessment
- T6 High-quality teaching and learning
- T7 Effective leadership and governance
- T8 Robust safeguarding procedures across all the directorate's service areas
- T9 Ambitious School Modernisation Programme
- T10 Appropriate family support services delivered by the right people, at the right time, to those most in need
- T11 Effective childcare and early years offer
- T12 Effective youth support and youth justice services
- T13 Meaningful adult in the community learning offer
- T14 Effective Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to promote the Welsh language and Welsh-medium education
- T15 Effective health and safety advice to all areas of council business (ensuring business resilience and continuity)

3.6 The EFS Strategic Plan 2023-2026 provides further narrative in respect of each of the strategic themes including:

- an overview of each theme;
- an assessment of the directorate's current and projected performance;
- a summary of notable successes to date;
- how we will work with partners to improve service delivery;
- the high-level resources required to secure improvement; and
- a list of success indicators; and
- how the theme aligns with national and local policy.

3.7 The three-year strategic plan also sets out a broad delivery schedule which identifies the anticipated dates of key activities.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty, and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been undertaken (see Appendix B). The Welsh Language Impact Assessment has identified that there will be a positive impact on the Welsh language as a result of this proposed plan. A key strategic theme within the three-year plan is the delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and a strong school modernisation agenda focused on creating additional places in the local authority's Welsh-medium schools. Furthermore, the plan supports an effective childcare and early years offer, including support for Welsh-medium places.

4.2 As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services,

and functions. It is not necessary to conduct an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts because of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The well-being goals and principles prescribed for within the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 connect directly to the approach to supporting schools. The approach to supporting schools is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle and more specifically as follows:

Long term The approach to education and family support services focuses on meeting the needs of a wide range of service beneficiaries including children, young people, adults, and families.

Prevention The focus of education and family support services is upon early identification of need and ensuring that there is appropriate provision in place to meet individual needs.

Integration The approach to education and family support services addresses the need for a coherent delivery of economic, social, environmental, and cultural outcomes.

Collaboration A fundamental principal of the approach to education and family support focuses on improving collaboration and creating a unified system.

Involvement Ensuring that children, young people, adults, and families are at the heart of the system and that needs are discussed in a person-centred way.

6. Climate change implications

6.1 The local authority's 'Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy' and Welsh Government's carbon reduction commitments will also be addressed through the School Modernisation Programme, as all new provision will be designed to ensure that net zero carbon 'in operation' and embodied carbon targets are achieved. In addition, the designs of our learning environments will embrace sustainability and biodiversity to enhance the surrounding environment and support active travel.

7. Safeguarding and corporate parent implications

7.1 The directorate has a robust approach to safeguarding, and this is detailed within the strategic plan. The EFS Strategic Plan 2023-2026 is aligned with BCBC's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

8. Financial implications

8.1 The current annual revenue budget for the Education and Family Support Directorate is approximately £138m for 2023-2024. In addition to the annual

revenue budget, for 2022-2023, the directorate also received in the region of £38m in external grant funding and managed approximately £5.8m of capital funding (mainly in respect of the Council's School Modernisation Programme).

- 8.2 BCBC's Medium-Term Financial Strategy sets out the Council's financial priorities over the next four years. Alongside other service areas, the directorate faces several significant challenges over the next few years to meet demand while ensuring services are delivered more efficiently.
- 8.3 It is important to note that the EFS Strategic Plan 2023-2026 is predicated on a stable funding scenario and any significant changes to the directorate's budget may have a material impact on its ability to deliver the objectives identified within the plan.
- 8.4 This matter will be closely monitored and will be subject to further scrutiny during the lifespan of the plan.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the EFS Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

Background Documents

None