

Meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1

16 September 2024

Recommendations / Information requested

| | Recommendations / Information Requested: | Response: | Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted: |
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| <p>Education, Early Years & Young People Directorate (EEYYP) Strategic Plan 2023–2026 Update</p> | | | |
| <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> | | | |
| <p>1</p> | <p>T1: Pupil and staff wellbeing</p> <p>Members expressed concern about Learning Support staff leaving schools for employment in other sectors to potentially earn more and in more flexible or hybrid roles. Discussions with Invited Headteachers included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Losing staff at key times with four weeks' notice; - The length of time taken for the recruitment process; - A significant reduction in the quality and number of applications for such vacancies creating a challenge for schools. <p>Following discussions and given concerns about the challenging impact of the above on schools, the Committee recommended that the</p> | <p>The Educational Psychology Team has produced a guide for schools that focus on best practice to support staff wellbeing.</p> <p>Schools continue to receive support from local authority human resources officers in relation to recruitment and retention issues.</p> <p>EEYYP officers will continue to closely monitor the situation via the Performance and Financial Monitoring Board.</p> | <p>Accepted</p> |

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| | <p>situation be monitored and kept under review to provide assurance. (LH)</p> | | |
| 2 | <p>T2: Support for Pupil behaviour, attendance and exclusions</p> <p>Members asked what was being done to increase capacity in the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in the Bridge Alternative Provision and in Heronsbridge School, as there was concern at the number of children placed in other schools, which may not be the most suitable environment for them. Officers responded assuring the Committee that a lot of work had been carried out to review available provision. Heronsbridge had been over capacity for a while and there were plans to look at the possibility of an available building which could potentially be used for additional classrooms depending on grants available and taking into consideration any financial implications on the school. Over the coming term a longer-term plan for capacity would be developed aiming to meet developing needs and increased demand in the service.</p> <p>The Committee felt it was important to ensure that all was being examined to</p> | <p>A five-year provision action plan is being developed to plan for the increasing demands on specialist additional learning needs provision across Bridgend.</p> <p>Senior leaders within the Learner Support Group, along with headteacher colleagues, are working together to consider the options available to meet demand, specifically around pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD).</p> <p>The Communication and Relationships Team (CART) has introduced weekly training sessions for school staff to provide upskill opportunities with a focus on behaviour management, de-escalation and working with children with neurodevelopmental difficulties.</p> | Accepted |

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| | extend provision in the special schools and recommended that the longer-term plan for capacity be reported to a future meeting of the Committee and added to the Forward Work Programme. (LH) | | |
| 3 | <p>T11: Effective Childcare and early years offer.</p> <p>Members referred to the proposal made as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2024-25 regarding the removal of nursery provision in primary schools and asked what progress had been made on ensuring there was enough childcare provision. Officers advised a full childcare sufficiency assessment would be carried out to look at the potential demand for childcare a prior to consideration of nursery provision. That information would be gathered in the next 6-8 weeks and would give people the opportunity to have their say, and to obtain the best information possible, before a future decision is considered. Prior to submitting a consultation report, a plan for any shortfall in childcare places would be prepared.</p> | <p>A Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) consultation was undertaken between 21 October 2024 and 30 November 2024. The aim of the consultation was to measure the nature and extent of the need for, and supply of, childcare in the county borough; identify gaps in the market, and plan how to support the market to address them.</p> <p>The results from all consultation activity will be analysed and a report produced, which will be presented to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 (SOSC 1) at a future date.</p> | Accepted |

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| | <p>The Committee recommended that a further report be provided to SOSC 1 on the outcome of the review of the sufficiency of childcare places, prior to Cabinet consideration of Nursery provision. (LH)</p> | | |
| <p><u>Information Requested:</u></p> | | | |
| <p>4</p> | <p>T1: Pupil and staff wellbeing</p> <p>Members raised the removal of the balance updates for school dinner accounts in Secondary Schools and there no longer being a breakdown of what the money put into the pupils' accounts was spent on, which was important to help parents to support their children to make informed nutritional choices.</p> <p>Officers advised that the introduction of the Universal Primary Free School meals had meant a fundamental change to systems and enabled reporting to Welsh Government (WG). Whilst the current system would remain, schools had the option of investing in systems such as pay parent that could be linked to their corporate financial systems, and schools</p> | <p>Officers have written to all secondary schools to ascertain their arrangements and future plans. Following receipt, these will be reported to the committee at a future date.</p> | <p>Accepted</p> |

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| | <p>were making progress in investing in 'reevaluation units/machines' and a written update on progress across the nine secondary schools could be provided.</p> <p>Following Discussions, the Committee requested a written update on progress across the secondary schools, be provided to Members of the Committee. (LH)</p> | | |
| 5 | <p>T8: Robust safeguarding procedures across all the directorate's service areas</p> <p>Members referred to Schools across Wales and the UK undertaking lockdown risk assessments to demonstrate how they protect staff and pupils from security threats and asked what the plans were for proportionate and sensible procedures. Officers advised they had worked closely with schools over a number of years on emergency procedures and these were refreshed last summer whilst working closely with the Emergency Planning Team and Health and Safety Unit. Welsh Government had also produced guidance, in line with which the Authority's Policy had been adopted.</p> | <p>Comprehensive guidance on lockdown procedures has been circulated to all schools this term. We have worked closely with schools on these emergency procedures, which were refreshed last summer. The council has adopted the Welsh Government guidance, and the local authority guidance is aligned with the national guidance. We emphasise the importance of having robust safeguarding procedures across the council service areas, particularly in schools.</p> <p>Members will be informed whenever lockdown procedures need to be invoked.</p> | Accepted |

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| | <p>The Committee agreed on the importance of the procedures being as robust as possible and welcomed any feedback from Estyn inspections on those procedures once they had taken place. (LH)</p> | | |
| <p>6</p> | <p>T5: Curriculum for Wales and assessment</p> <p>The Committee were pleased to see the new Curriculum for Wales being successfully rolled out across the Borough and asked given the focus being very much on hands on learning and access to play, how the Authority was ensuring that schools were adequately prepared to be able to deliver the new curriculum. Officers explained there was a significant amount of investment into new schools and upgrading schools across the local authority, in addition they worked closely with Welsh Government on the community focused schools grant and maintenance grant using those whenever possible to make the learning environment accessible and exciting for learners.</p> | <p>Confidential information sent to Members only.</p> | <p>Accepted</p> |

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| | <p>Members queried how the grant funding was allocated between the schools. Officers responded that the overall figure of the Community focused school grant and maintenance grant was managed by the Communities Directorate and allocation figures could be provided to Members of the Committee.</p> <p>Following the discussions, the Committee requested a breakdown of the allocation of the Community Focussed School Grant and Maintenance Grant be provided to Members of the Committee. (LH/JN)</p> | | |
| General | | | |
| <u>Request:</u> | | | |
| 7 | <p>The Committee welcomed the suggestion that the Directorate Strategic Plan be reported to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 annually to benefit from the Committee's ongoing monitoring and requested that it be added to the Forward Work Programme for the future year. (Scrutiny)</p> | <p>To be actioned by Scrutiny, in conjunction with Scrutiny Chair.</p> | <p>Accepted</p> |
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| Forward Work Programme Update | | | |
| <u>Request:</u> | | | |
| 8 | <p>The Committee requested that when Attendance, Behaviour and Exclusions was scheduled to be reported to the Committee that the following be invited to attend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary school headteachers where in the main exclusions were coming from. - Ysgol Bryn Castell Headteacher as a school that provides education for pupils with complex Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). - Officer(s) from the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision team that specifically support children with behavioural difficulty. (LH/Scrutiny) | <p>To be actioned by Scrutiny, in conjunction with the Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People.</p> | <p>Accepted</p> |