

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

Date: 26 November 2018

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors D Williams (Chair), J Cleverly, R Hayat, H Thomas, K Thomas, C Townsend, J Watkins and T Watkins

Co-opted Members : R Penn (Church in Wales)

In Attendance: Councillor Gail Giles (Cabinet Member for Education)

D Cooke (Scrutiny Adviser), L Davies (Governance Officer), M Dacey (Head of GEMS), J Harris (Strategic Director - People), S Morgan (Chief Education Officer) and K Rees (Assistant Head of Education - Inclusion)

Apologies: Councillors K Critchley and J Guy

1 **Declarations of Interest**

None.

2 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 October 2018**

The minutes of the Meeting held on 9 October 2018 were approved as a true and accurate record.

3 **Mid-Year Service Plan Review - Education**

Attendees:

- Councillor Gail Giles - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
- James Harris - Strategic Director - People
- Sarah Morgan - Chief Education Officer
- Martin Dacey - Assistant Head of Education
- Katy Rees – Assistant Head of Education – Inclusion

The Cabinet Member for Education presented a brief overview to the Committee and highlighted the key areas from the report for consideration.

Members asked the following questions:

- Members discussed the presentation of the report and how they felt that more insight and detail was needed in the Officer update. They also discussed how the graphs on the front page did not have titles on the axis, and there were a number of formatting issues throughout. Members stated that any acronyms used should

have the full name provided in the first instance. The Officers commented that they could address the use of acronyms on the report, but the graphs and any formatting issues were out of their control. The Scrutiny Advisor explained that the Committees feedback would be passed to the Performance and Research Business Partner.

- Members asked for an updated explanation of the remodelling of the Pupil Referral Centre (PRU). The Chief Education Officer apologised, explaining that the report was not available at this time. The Officer explained that there had been some careful planning around the remodelling the PRU. The Authority had initially been looking for a building big enough to accommodate the remodelling of the PRU. This had created a lot of background work, which included the assessment of capital assets, capital headroom and analysing previous and emerging trends to ensure the PRU remained fit for purpose. The Officer continued to state that ESTYN had confidence in the new PRU management and leadership structure. This new management and leadership structure had had an overall positive effect on the staffing and sickness levels, which should be reflected in the achievement of the young people.
- Members enquired if the Authority had any Out of County young people attending the PRU? If so, what was the transport costs associated with these and who paid? The Officer confirmed that there were no young people on Out of County placements in the PRU, and any transport costs were tracked and managed by NCC.
- A Member commented that in some schools they had Year 13 Pupils acting as learning mentors for younger pupils who need extra support. The Member asked if all schools had had that in place. The Chairperson commented if that had been the case then it must have been after careful selection, and only in place to inspire the pupil who needs the extra support. Another Member commented that learning mentors should not be used as a child teacher. The Officer replied that they can only comment on what they control. This report looks at the central Education department and that the individual actions of schools and teachers were not something that they reported on.
- Members asked the Officers for a breakdown of staff at the PRU. The Assistant Head of Education - Inclusion informed the Committee that there were both Teachers and Support Staff working at the PRU and more accurate figures would be provided at a later date.
- Members queried how the Education department monitored the PRU if it was in the Red after a 2 year period. The Officer explained that it was a long and sometimes challenging process supporting a school to move from the Red to another categorisation. Movement to Amber or Yellow would be expected, but that movement could have taken place within, or at the end of, the 2 year period.
- A Member asked the Officers to explain how the teaching rota at the PRU is managed and about how the transition to a mainstream school was dealt with. The Officers replied explaining that a teacher from the school would have met with the young person, as well as Learning Support Centre Staff, to prepare and support the pupil's transfer back to mainstream schooling. The Officers also commented that schools must have taken ownership over pupils and have taken a restorative approach in the return to mainstream schooling. The Officer went on to state that PRU members of staff have limited time and resources, and schools need to continue with their links to the PRU to ensure all pupils were supported to remain engaged and were able to move back to mainstream school.

- The Committee asked what type of children attended the PRU and whether each child would have been able to return to a mainstream school. The Officer informed the Committee that when a child was returned from PRU to a mainstream school the staff would have worked with and supported the individual throughout the process. Mainstream schools could also use internal exclusions to aid the re-integration of the pupil.
- Members spoke about the how the service plans monitor the five year Corporate Plan. The Committee would have liked milestones to be set, and where possible to be narrative and quantitative data to have been provided, on how the Actions supported the delivery of the Corporate Plan. The Officer explained that this was a mid-year review of the Service Plan only.
- Members enquired if nurse school attendance was monitored. The Officer replied that nurse school attendance was not mandatory; however the Authority was mindful that when it engaged with the schools, it promoted the importance of good attendance. The Officer continued that attendance monitoring was carried out in all other schools month by month. Any patterns or trends related to attendance were looked into. If the school missed a target for attendance the Local Authority would support the Head to work with other professionals and schools to implement ways of improving.
- Members enquired as to when implementation of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) & Education Tribunal Act would start. Members were informed that they would be receiving a briefing in the New Year on the ALN framework and ALN Act.
- A Member requested to know what had been put in place for the anti-bullying provision. The Officer confirmed that training for staff had taken place in two schools to deliver the anti-bullying training provision, with a focus on racism. The training covered all age groups and focused on learner intelligence. The Local Authority received positive feedback post training. The Officer went onto inform the Committee that when high profile attacks happen they look for possible hate crime links.
- A Member wished to know what had the outcome of the self-evaluation of GEMS been. The Officers replied explaining that in spring 2018 it had been indicated that GEMS funding could be cut, but additional funding had been found. The Officer went on to explain that due to the insecurity of the funding some staff left to pursue other employment opportunities. Discussions with the Welsh Government had confirmed no funding will be available beyond 2020.
- The Officer informed the Committee that Newport the overall surplus of mainstream school places had been under the WG target of 10%. This would change when the new primary, Glas Llyn, school opened in September 2019. The Officer went onto explain that the Education department analysed live data to react to where school places would be needed in the future and look at potentially building and extending existing schools.
- The Officers explained to the Members that schools must have a license to be in a deficit budget position, and it was the responsibility of the school to ensure a deficit recovery plan prior to the licence being issued by the Chief Education Officer. The Officer went on to explain that some schools were able to implement the plan and recover within a year. Whereas some schools had a two or three year deficit license plan. This was purely decided on a school to school basis. A

Member went on to ask Officers what percentage of schools have been able to come back to a black position? The Officer informed the Member that there were four schools with a deficit license this year, two of the schools have already achieved returned to black. The Officer explained that some schools acted within the year so did not have to have a deficit budget. The Officers also commented that the Authority put a huge awareness on supporting schools with a Deficit Budget.

- The Committee discussed the Educational Resource Analysis. The Officers informed the Committee that the employee head count it is the total number of staff, including GEMS. The Officer explained that there are 66 separate vacancies, some of which were not on a permanent basis and can hard to fill. There are also highly specialist roles, such as Romanian language speakers, which were also difficult to fill. A Member asked if the demands for foreign language speakers were due to refugees and asylum seekers being moved into the area. The Officer explained that there had been an increase of asylum seekers and Syrian refugees moved to the area by the Home Office, however the largest incomers to the area were EU migrants, a trend that would continue.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending.

Conclusion - Comments to the Cabinet

The Committee noted the mid-year service plan review and agreed to forward the minutes to the Cabinet as a summary of the issues raised.

The Committee wished to make the following comments to the Cabinet:

1. There needed to be more information included in the update for each action. This information should have included the deadline the Service Area intended to complete the Objective/Action by, and how it was related to the five year Corporate Plan and its Commitments.
2. References to new or developing work streams (Arrow project) to be explained to provide context to the updates in the report. As well as all acronyms being preceded by the full title and acronym in brackets

The Committee requested the following information from Officers;

1. Number of young people in the PRU, and information on the young person's school year, school and from which area of Newport they are from.
2. An information report on the work programme and action plan for supporting NEET young people.
3. An information report on how Learning Champions in schools were raising the aspirations of the Looked After Children.
4. What is the full time equivalent of the '66 current vacancies' in Education?

4 Scrutiny Adviser Reports

Attendees:

- Daniel Cooke – Scrutiny Adviser

a) Forward Work Programme Update

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the Forward Work Programme, and informed the Committee of the topics due to be discussed at the next two committee meetings:

Tuesday 4 December, the agenda items;

- Adult and Community Services Service Plan - Mid Year Review
- Children and Young People Service Plan – Mid Year Review

Tuesday 15 January 2019, the agenda item;

- Draft Budget Proposals

Councillor Joan Watkins gave her apologies for the meetings on 4 December 2018, and 15 January 2019.

Rebecca Penn gave her apologies for the meeting on 15 January 2019.

b) Action Arising

None

c) Information Reports

None.

d) Scrutiny Letters

None.

The meeting terminated at 13:00