

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the special meeting held on 8 October 2018

- PRESENT:** Councillor Dylan Rees (Vice-Chair in the Chair)
- Councillors Lewis Davies, John Griffith, Richard Griffiths, Richard O Jones, Alun Roberts, J Arwel Roberts, Nicola Roberts.
- Co-opted Members : Mr Keith Roberts (The Catholic Church); Mrs Anest Frazer (The Church in Wales).
- Leader of the Council – Councillor Llinos M Huw;
- Councillor R Meirion Jones – Portfolio Holder for Education, Libraries, Youth & Culture);
- Councillor Dafydd R Thomas – Portfolio Holder for Corporate.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive,
Assistant Chief Executive (Partnerships, Community & Services Improvements),
Head of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer (for item 2),
Head of Learning (for item 2),
Head of Profession Human Resources & Transformation, (for item 3),
Head of Democratic Services,
Committee Officer (MEH).
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Robin Williams (Portfolio Holder for Finance), Richard A Dew (Portfolio Holder for Planning and Public Protection), Carwyn Jones (Portfolio Holder for Major Projects and Economic Development), Bob Parry OBE FRAGS (Portfolio Holder for Highways, Property and Waste).
- Head of Children and Families' Services,
- Other Members of the Council invited to the meeting**
- Councillors K P Hughes & Peter S Rogers.
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor A M Jones – Chair;
Councillor Bryan Owen.

The Vice-Chair in the Chair as the Chair had submitted his apologies. The Vice-Chair welcomed Councillor John Griffith to his first meeting of this Committee.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2 ISLE OF ANGLESEY EDUCATION STRATEGY - SCHOOLS' MODERNISATION (2018 UPDATE)

Submitted – a report by the Head of Learning in relation to the Isle of Anglesey Education Strategy - Schools' Modernisation (2018 update).

The Portfolio Holder for Education, Libraries, Youth & Culture reported that the original Education Strategy – Schools' Modernisation was published in 2013 and this document is an update of the Strategy. He noted that this Authority has worked closely with Head Teachers and Elected Members in respect of modernisation of schools programme with 10 smaller primary schools which have been combined into 3 modern 21st century schools in three areas within Band A. By the end of the Band A programme 10% of Anglesey Primary Schools pupils will be receiving their education in 21st century buildings. In Secondary Schools on the Island, the decrease in the numbers and an increase in empty places, together with the cuts faced has resulted in significant budgetary challenges across the secondary sector. The Portfolio Holder also noted that as a result of the above, together with the central government austerity programme, the Education Service must find savings of £5m over the next three years. Welsh Government's 21st Century Modernisation of Schools programme, Band B is to be introduced in 2019, and there will be an opportunity to further modernise Anglesey schools to address local budgetary challenges. It is foreseen that the catchment area of Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch will have to be prioritised within Band B as the number of empty school places is high and that the anticipated increase in number due to Wylfa Newydd, approximately 200 pupils will not make a significant difference. He further said that post-16 education on the Island also needs to be addressed.

The Head of Learning reported that the ambition of this Authority is to ensure that every pupil achieves their full potential. However, he said that the financial situation continues to be challenging in the primary sector and the difference in expenditure per pupil in the primary sector is a cause of concern and is unsustainable for the future. He further said that there are 28% of empty places within the secondary sector on Anglesey which will have to be addressed if secondary education is sustainable within certain areas. The Head of Learning referred to the central government austerity programme, which equates to the Education Service having to find saving of £5m over the next three years and that the Modernisation Strategy must be reviewed in order to establish a schools system which will have modern buildings suitable for the next thirty years to ensure the best opportunities for the authority's pupils. He noted that the education process is facing extensive changes not been seen for a number of years. Headteachers need to have sufficient non-contact time to lead their schools effectively. The post-16 education needs to be reviewed and addressed to gauge whether the current pattern is suitable for the future.

The Head of Learning further reported that Estyn in 2013 referred to the challenges that are facing small school within their 'Small Primary Schools in Wales' report. These include the challenge of teaching mixed age classes containing more than 2 or 3 age groups; limited peer group size and challenge adequacy; limited opportunities for social interaction; difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff and excessive burdens on staff. He outlined the drivers of change for Band B (2019-2026) as outlined within the report.

The Head of Learning referred to leadership and management capacity within the Authority's Schools and noted that the challenges associated with leading and managing schools have increased substantially. Headteachers need sufficient non-contact time to address leadership issues. He noted that the Executive has approved the 'Future Leaders' development programme for prospective Headteachers, non-experienced Headteachers, or those that have been recognised to have potential to undertake a leadership role.

The Committee considered the Officer's report and the information presented and made the following points:-

- The Vice-Chair referred to a recent statement by the Prime Minister that austerity programme has to come to an end and questioned whether the £5m savings facing the Education Service over the next three years will be required? The Head of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer responded that he considered that the Prime Minister said that austerity will come to an end after Brexit. He said that the local government draft settlement for 2019/20 is awaited from Welsh Government on the 9th October, 2018 and he did not expect to receive any further details as part of the settlement. He noted that a Comprehensive Spending Review will be published in the Summer of 2019 and it is during the period that austerity may come to an end;
- The Committee referred to the requirement to review the post-16 education provision on the Island and concerns were expressed that pupils are having to move from one secondary school to another to receive their chosen subjects in A Level. It was further expressed that these pupils may be travelling to more than one school to receive their education and they seem to lose a contact with their main school. The Head of Learning responded that consultation needs to be made to gauge the requirement to review the post-16 education on the Island. The Committee expressed concerns that some pupils are leaving secondary schools on the Island to receive post-16 education. The Chief Executive responded that it is imperative that the review of post-16 education needs to be address this;
- Clarification was sought as to the budget requirement to address the severe deficiencies in a number of school sites and buildings and whether the service is able to address these issue whilst having to make £5m savings over the next three years. The Head of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer explained in detail the process for financing new school projects. He noted that Welsh Government is now investigating different scenarios as to the financial model to fund the 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme. The Head of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer gave an example that Ysgol Rhyd y Llan total cost was £6m and the authority borrowed £2.5m which equates to £100k per year. He noted that a saving of £72k had been realised by closing the three

schools in the area. It also gave the opportunity to dispose small school buildings which required continued maintenance and reduced empty places with the catchment area. The Committee further expressed that due to uncertainties as regards to Brexit and funding for central government to Welsh Government could be reduced and will have an effect on resources to local authorities to move forward with the schools modernisation programme. The Head of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer responded that there was some assurance with the funding towards Band B of the school modernisation programme but Welsh Government are considering an option as regard to Band C with regard to 'Mutual Investment Model' which is a scheme that investor/developer build schools and the local authorities will be paying a fee over a period of time as regards to maintenance of the buildings;

- Clarification was sought that a recent publication in the local press indicated that this Authority was to close schools with less than 120 pupils; it was expressed that there is no mention within the Education Strategy as regards to this statement. The Head of Learning responded that each area will be considered and the educational provision will be gauged with empty places and the condition of the school buildings and other cost factors;
- The Committee referred to the consultation process as regards to the schools modernisation process and whether lessons can be learnt from the recent consultation on the closing of schools on the Island and that the public are satisfied that their voice has been listened to. The Head of Learning responded that a consultation process seems to have been more productive within smaller groups;
- Clarification was sought as to when the expenditure per head/person will be equal within the school on across Anglesey. The Head of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer responded that funding towards schools is distributed by an allocated formula which is driven by a number of pupils on a school register. Smaller primary schools receive what is equal to additional finance to maintain minimum staffing levels i.e. at least one Head Teacher and teacher on site. The expenditure per pupils in the primary sector on Anglesey was the 5th highest out of 22 authorities in Wales in 2018/19, down from the 3rd highest in 2017/18;
- Concern was expressed that the opening of the new Santes Dwynwen Primary School at Newborough was delayed and that a penalty clause needs to be attached to any provision of building a new school in the future;
- Concerns were expressed that Headteachers are unable to be afforded appropriate non-contact time within schools. The Head of Learning responded that within larger schools non-contact time for Headteachers is able to be sustained but when budgetary savings are forced on schools the issue will become more problematic and will put pressure on Headteachers in having to teach and lead the schools;
- Members of the Committee considered that it would be advantageous to view a Lifelong Learning School together and one of the new 21st Century School on the Island.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Executive :-

- **To agree to adopt the Isle of Anglesey School Modernisation Education Strategy (Update 2018) which will take effect from 15 October, 2018**

onwards and that attention be given to the Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones catchment area;

- To agree that Officers start the consultation process within the Band B areas over the next 12 months. The Committee also made the following comments:-
 - Recognise the need to act urgently in relation to Post 16 Education on the Island;
 - It should be considered how affordable it would be to implement the strategy in future;
 - That attention needs to be given to the condition of schools on the Island.
 - Every effort should be made while implementing the strategy to keep Post 16 pupils on the Island;
 - Attention should be given to addressing the issue of 'cost per head' of pupils across the Island;
 - Recognise the need to implement the best options for specific areas and that there is no mention in the document to closing schools with less than 120 pupils;
 - Attention should be given to non-contact time of Head Teachers in Schools;
 - Imperative that timetables for building new schools are realised;
 - That appropriate and considerate arrangements are made during the consultation period in order to give the public an opportunity to express their views/concerns;
 - Consider arrangements for Members to visit a lifelong learning schools and one of the new schools that have recently been built on the Island.

ACTION : As noted above.

3 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (IMPROVEMENT PLAN) 2017/18

Submitted – a report by the Head of Transformation and Human Resources in relation to the above.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate reported that the Annual Performance Plan looks back on the Council's performance for 2017/18 together with the Council's progress against the Authority's Wellbeing Objectives. The Portfolio Holder outlined the Council's achievements during 2017/18 as noted in the report. He further referred to the Performance Indicators for 2017/18 and services are improving even though the Council faced having to make savings of £2.5m within the budget. The National Indicators, known as Performance Accountability Measures (PAM) are published and compare every local authority against the same indicators. In 2017/18, 50% of the indicators for this Authority had improved, 36% declined in performance and 14% of the indicators are new. He noted that each year the PAM indicators are reviewed and new performance indicators are introduced to monitor performance on a national basis.

The Committee considered the Officer's report and the information presented and made the following points :-

- Clarification was sought as to the how the 2017/18 performance indicators have an effect on work programmes for the next few years and whether priority needs to be given to some services which have been highlighted as risks. The Chief Executive responded that the Performance Report gives an indication as to how the Council is performing at a given time. He said that the most important matter is that the Council continues to improves services provided;
- Reference was made that the Island have suffered pockets of deprivation with high levels of young people unemployed and also young people leaving the Island to find work. Questions were raised as to how many people have been able to take advantage of employment opportunities following recent developments on the Island i.e. Llangefni Link Road, Bluestone project, Msparc in Gaerwen etc., and whether this has improved the Island economy. The Head of Profession Human Resources & Transformation responded that if people are in employment they are able to contribute to the local economy and be able to improve their quality of life. The figures as regards to young people who have been successful in gaining employment with new organisations will need to be sought by another department and will be forwarded to members in due course. The Leader of the Council said that the objectives within the Performance Plan have been set by the Council and she referred to the Menai Science Park which is the only facility in Wales that offers such a facility and it is premature at the moment to evaluate the effect of such a facility has on the economy of the Island;
- Clarification was sought as to whether the 36% of the PAM which have declined in performance are more of a concern than others. The Chief Executive responded that every performance indicator is important and that reasons why performance against indicators have declined needs to be investigated;
- Concerns expressed that one of the performance indicators shows that a high level of school leavers are not in training nor in continued education. Reference was made that employment opportunities is expected due to the economic developments on the Island in the near future and these opportunities needs to be sourced for local young people. The Leader of the Council responded that the TRAC & OPUC Group has been established to support individuals who are considered to be furthest from the labour market with multiple, complex barriers to employment, specifically long-term unemployed and/or economically inactive who are not in education or training. She noted that Communities Forward are also working closely with these young people to source training and employment. She stressed that as this Authority is smaller compared to other local authorities, one person within this category can increase the % within the performance indicators as regards to young people leaving employment without entering into continued education/training;
- Clarification was sought that reference is made within the report that part of the revenue raised through the additional 25% premium on empty homes and holiday homes is used to develop social housing; it was expressed that part of the premium was to be available to support first time buyers. The Leader of the Council responded that part of the revenue raised is used to support first time buyers (which has been awarded in full to young people on the Island) and the premium is not used to build social housing. She noted that it is the HRA funding that will be used to build social housing on the Island. It was further noted that

part of the funding from the additional premium on empty/holiday homes is used as grant funding towards helping people to put central heating and roofs on homes; this is an innovative grant funding scheme. The Head of Profession Human Resources & Transformation stated that the above comments will be included within the Performance Report before submitting to the Executive and full Council in due course.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Executive :-

- **That the final version of the 2017/18 Performance Report should be published by the statutory date at the end of October and that Officers complete this in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Corporate so that it can be published as part of the full Council’s agenda at its meeting to be held on 22 October, 2018;**
- **That Section 3.2 of the Councils Constitution be amended to include approving decisions for the Council’s Wellbeing Statement and Objectives in accordance with the 2016 Future Generations Act as a function that the Full Council must fulfil.**
- **To authorise the Head of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer to make the necessary changes to the matters that have been assigned as functions that must be approved by the full Council in the Councils Constitution together with any changes which must be made as a result to reflect this.**

ACTION : As noted above.

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
VICE-CHAIR IN THE CHAIR**