

IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September, 2013 (11:00 am)

- PRESENT:** Councillor Ieuan Williams (Chair)
Chief Executive
- Executive : Councillors R.Dew, H.Eifion Jones, Alwyn Rowlands.
- Director of Sustainable Development;
Director of Community, Director of Lifelong Learning.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Committee Services Manager
- ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. Andy Bruce (Wales Audit Office); Mr.Trebor Roberts (School Improvement Officer)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors K.P.Hughes, A.Morris Jones, J.Arwel Roberts, R.Meirion Jones; Professor Mel Ainscow (Chair of the Anglesey Education Recovery Board), Mr.Huw Lloyd Jones (WAO), Mr.Marc Roberts (Local Authority Inspector, CSSIW), Ms.Lisa Hughes and Ms. Sarah King (Welsh Government); Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Function (Resources)

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None to declare

2. APOLOGIES

As above.

3. MINUTES

Submitted and confirmed as a true record, the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Sustainability Board held on 27th June, 2013.

4. UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANGLESEY EDUCATION RECOVERY BOARD.

- (a) Submitted – A summary of progress by the Director of Lifelong Learning on behalf of the Chair of the Anglesey Education Recovery Board.

Reported – That the Board had met on a monthly basis since November 2012 and during that time the Board had experienced excellent co-operation from senior officers and elected members within the Authority. Efforts had also been made to consult with representatives of various local stakeholder groups, particularly headteachers.

The priority during the first few months was to ensure that arrangements were in place to respond effectively to the concerns raised by Inspectors. Over recent months additional capacity had been put in place to address some challenges and more effective corporate

approaches had been adopted to address others. The Board were encouraged by the progress being made and the effective leadership of the Director of Lifelong Learning should not be underestimated.

Looking to the longer term, the Board had challenged the Authority to make significant organisational changes in the belief that these are required in order to develop an education system that is fit for purpose. This would require major structural reforms, as well as rethinking regarding attitudes, roles and responsibilities.

The changes that were being introduced as a result of the Board's involvement could be summarised as follows:-

1. The creation of a self-improving system.

In line with current international thinking, the Board was encouraging restructuring that should enable these practices to be made available to more pupils. This would be achieved through the strengthening of co-operation between schools. Such developments implied new roles for headteachers, who must lead these developments. In the primary sector, a group of effective practitioners had emerged who were now taking the initiative in moving things forward. Similarly in the secondary sector, discussions had taken place with the headteacher group and there was clear commitment to strengthen collaboration between the five schools.

2. The rethinking of support for school improvement.

Moves towards a self-improving system implied very different roles for the LEA and its staff. Previous arrangements tended to imply that it was outsiders that would drive forward school improvement efforts. The new thinking that was being introduced demanded that those within schools must take responsibility for improving themselves. In order to make sure that all children and young people are getting a fair deal, LEA staff need to know the big picture about what is happening in their communities, identifying priorities for action and brokering collaboration. This required significant changes with LEA staff moving away from a command and control perspective, towards one of enabling and facilitating collaborative action. It would also require appropriate responses from the staff of the newly created regional school improvement service. The Board was encouraged that this new approach was now being developed and the new school year was a vital time in ensuring that the changes were introduced with pace.

3. The reorganisation of provision

The Board had argued that urgent action was required to develop a profile of provision that fitted the changing context of the Authority. In particular, the existence of surplus school places in schools across the Authority needed to be addressed in order to make the system more efficient in relation to the use of available resources and effective in using these resources to ensure high standards for all children and young people. The basis of a strategy for dealing with these challenges was now taking shape. In the primary sector this would involve the merging of existing schools through the creation of federations, extensive catchment area reorganisation, based on the remodelling of existing school buildings, the building of new area schools and the closure of schools that were no longer fit for purpose. Turning this ambitious plan into action would be a demanding task.

At the same time, there were significant challenges regarding provision within the secondary sector that had to be addressed, including the need to develop a more effective 14-19 strategy that linked with developments in the further education sector and the changing economic landscape. The Board was encouraged by the recent progress

that had been made in analyzing the situation and formulating a range of possible options. These would be considered at the September meeting of the Board.

In conclusion, the Board believed that this challenging programme of reform had the potential to make the Anglesey education system outstanding by international standards. However, this would only happen with the energetic support of elected members, not least about changes in provision and working practices that may sometimes be opposed by some sections of the local community. This being the case, there was a need for a new consensus around an agreed long-term strategy to ensure that all children and young people on Anglesey experienced an excellent education.

The Leader reported that he and the Chief Executive had this morning received a letter from Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Education and Skills in respect of changes that he had made to the membership of the Anglesey Education Recovery Board.

The Minister was pleased how well the Authority had worked with the Recovery Board and with the very good progress being made in addressing the recommendations of the Estyn inspection in 2012. In recognition of this, the Minister proposed to re-constitute the current Recovery Board into a more streamlined body providing specific advice and challenge to the members and officers of Anglesey.

The Board would now consist of 3 members and an advisor (Mr. Geraint Rees) currently seconded to the Minister's Department. Geraint Rees would act as an advisor and as interim chair to the revised Board while it was established. The Minister also intended to appoint Eileen Barnes Vachell, former London Challenge Adviser and Rob Scully of Carmarthenshire Council's Education Department to this streamlined structure. Both these individuals brought with them a wealth of experience particularly linked to transformational school reorganisation and improvement. The other member would be Viv Thomas who would remain on the Board as he had experience in school reorganisation and provided continuity from the existing Board to the newly constituted Board.

Board meeting would move to a 6 weekly cycle which would bring the Board in line with the other recovery boards in operation around Wales.

The Improvement and Sustainability Board noted and welcomed the contents of the report together with the update provided by the Minister for Education and Skills.

- (b) Submitted – A report by the Director of Lifelong Learning, drawing attention to the provisional results for 2012-13 since the Estyn inspection.

The number of pupils receiving free school meals had risen during the last year and presently 19.1% of Anglesey pupils had the right to receive free school meals. This placed the Authority in 13th position in Wales.

Concern was expressed at today's meeting as to the number of families not taking advantage of free school meals at primary and secondary school level. The Director was requested to continue last year's campaign to encourage parents or guardians to make an application for their child to receive free school meals, subject to the necessary benefit criteria being met.

Taking into consideration that the 2013 figures were not yet verified, the result for Foundation Phase had shown improvement over the last two years with the 2013 results showing that 85.8% had achieved the FPI and placing Anglesey in sixth position nationally. Over the last two years the percentage of schools in the two upper quartiles

had improved. In 2012, 66% of schools were in the upper quarters, the corresponding figure in 2013 was 64% (to be confirmed).

KS2 results had improved again this year. The percentage of pupils achieving the CSI (i.e. receiving L4 or above in mathematics, science and either Welsh or English) was by now 88%, an improvement of 3.3% on 2012 results which placed Anglesey third nationally. The results for English, Welsh, mathematics and science had all shown improvement on previous results. The Authority's comparative position in Welsh was low but consideration must be taken of the fact that a high percentage of Anglesey pupils were assessed in Welsh first language (in comparison with other authorities), even though a substantial number were from English speaking homes. By means of a table, the report referred to the percentage of schools in different quartiles. This year 62% of schools were in the upper two FSM quartiles. This was the best result for Anglesey over the last 5 years.

Overall, the 2013 KS3 performance was good with the performance of pupils achieving CSI this year being 81.5%, an increase of 3.6% since 2012 and an improvement of 19.6% since 2009. The percentage achieving L5+ and L6+ in all the core subjects had improved. Four of the five secondary schools were likely to have CSI results in the upper two FSM quarters.

KS4 results were yet to be confirmed. The most important indicator was the L2+ threshold and this year's improvement was around 2.5%, representing an increase of around 7% since 2011. This improvement had been achieved in spite of the disappointing performance in mathematics in one school and English in another. The 2013 L2+ results were likely to place Anglesey in 10th position nationally, an improvement since 2011. The work that had been done in tracking pupil progress and early intervention in two schools had had a positive impact on the results and the challenge was to ensure consistency across schools.

Attendance levels at secondary schools had improved over the last three years, moving the Authority from 18th in Wales in 2010-11 to 7th in 2012-13. Anglesey's performance was now 0.6% above the Welsh average and only 0.4% behind the best performing authority in Wales. Attendance levels at primary schools although not finalised, had improved this year with all schools having an attendance of over 90%. Nine schools had an attendance level of between 90% and 93% and these schools would be targeted during the current year. The number of days lost due to fixed term exclusions had fallen significantly in both the secondary and primary and no pupils had been given permanent exclusions during the 2012-13 academic year.

The Improvement and Sustainability Board noted that pleasing progress was continuing to be made in relation to all recommendations.

5. UPDATE ON PROGRESS IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

Submitted – A progress report by the Service Improvement Manager against the Service Delivery Plan.

Reported – That recent WLGA publication of National Service indicators for 2012-13 showed that of the six indicators that related specifically to Children Services, Ynys Mon was the best in Wales in two of these, fifth in another and the remainder were above the all-Wales average.

The Business Plan for 2013-14 focused on the consolidation and embedding of the improvements, accompanied by the start of a review and modernisation process of the Service in both the management and operation of both frontline provision and the back office

function. To reflect this change, the role of the Service Improvement Board had been agreed to become one of more supporting and scrutinising the performance process, while still retaining the function of monitoring performance.

Details of notable progress made were referred to at Para 2 of the report and remaining areas of concern and challenges were referred to at Para 3 of the report.

The last couple of months had seen the start of a mostly new management team within the Service which had meant some challenges in ensuring consistency of delivery within and across teams, and new styles and approaches settling in. Performance by and large, had been successfully maintained and the new managers were starting to develop a more cohesive and team approach, although the challenges of managing the operation of a Children's Service continued.

The progress of last year had set a new benchmark and set of expectations for the Service which, along with the injection of new staff and managers, had helped stimulate a more optimistic and positive view of the Service and its capability to manage and improve further. There was a positive vibe within the service and recognition within partner agencies that it was a different and improved service.

There were still significant challenges for the Service as the Department looked to the implications of new and changing legislation and continuing budgetary pressures, together in the face of patterns of demand that showed no sign of decreasing. Whilst these could have a positive impact in terms of driving change and efficiency there remained concern that the ability to deliver services to meet statutory obligations would be stretched. Thus over the coming year, the Service would be making the argument on an invest to save basis for additional (albeit mostly temporary) capacity to make the required changes.

The Improvement and Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report and welcomed the progress being made.

6. PROGRAMME BOARDS' PROGRESS REPORT

Submitted – A joint report by the Corporate Directors on developments as regards the Transformation Programme Boards.

Reported by the Director of Sustainable Development – That the Transformation Plan identified three Programme Boards to oversee and drive change programmes and projects within the Council and with external collaborators. These were to be known as the Island Enterprise, Service Excellence and Business Transformation Programme Boards. Details of their remit was provided at paragraphs 1.1 – 1.3 of the report.

All three Boards would provide oversight, direction and make recommendations to the Executive on funding change programmes and projects. This would give confidence that anticipated benefits to the Council and communities on Anglesey were being realised and ensure that activities were delivered in accordance with Anglesey's corporate objectives and transformation culture themes.

Following the establishing meetings, the first full meeting with all members in attendance took place at the end of June, with the main aim of briefing new members on the purpose of the Boards and their role collectively and individually. The agenda for the next meeting(s) had been agreed, with the identification of the programme/project/task leads that would be invited to report.

The next meetings would take place between 13-20th September and each Board would receive a verbal report with associated project documentation from the Leads of the

Programme/Projects and Tasks (detailed at Para 3.1 of the report). Work would continue with the Programme and Project Leads and Managers to ensure that they were supported to deliver their programmes and projects effectively, the appropriate governance arrangements were maintained and documentation was in place to ensure effective and developed reporting mechanisms. Each Board would also identify the key messages / decisions / outcomes to be shared with all staff and Members on MonITor.

During August and September the Authority engaged with the citizens of Anglesey on the priorities of the Corporate Plan and proposals for savings. Work would continue to ensure that these corporate priorities were delivered through the projects, within the portfolios of the Transformation Boards.

Mr. Andy Bruce stated that he was encouraged by the progress and feedback being made with regard to the various matters referred to at today's meeting. He mentioned that the Project Boards would take a while to become embedded in the system and that there would be a requirement to keep Board members focused upon their respective Terms of Reference.

The Improvement and Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report and the progress being made.

The meeting concluded at 12 noon

**COUNCILLOR IEUAN WILLIAMS
CHAIR**