



## City and County of Swansea

### Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

## Education & Skills Service Transformation Committee

**At:** Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

**On:** Wednesday, 24 January 2024

**Time:** 4.00 pm

**Chair:** Councillor Mike Durke

**Membership:**

Councillors: F M Gordon, B Hopkins, Y V Jardine, L R Jones, S Joy, S Pritchard and T M White

**Watch Online:** <http://tiny.cc/EaS24J>

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### Agenda

	Page No.
<b>1 Apologies for Absence.</b>	
<b>2 Disclosures of Personal &amp; Prejudicial Interests.</b> <a href="http://www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests">www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests</a>	
<b>3 Minutes.</b> To approve & sign the Minutes of the previous meeting(s) as a correct record.	1 - 2
<b>4 Right Schools in Right Places.</b>	3 - 28
<b>5 Work Plan.</b>	29

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 4.00 pm

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Huw Evans'.

**Huw Evans**  
Head of Democratic Services  
Wednesday 17 January 2024

**Contact: Democratic Services - (01792) 636923**

# Agenda Item 3



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the Education & Skills Service Transformation Committee

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday, 13 December 2023 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor M Durke (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

B Hopkins  
Y V Jardine

**Councillor(s)**

L R Jones  
S Pritchard

**Councillor(s)**

S Joy  
T M White

**Officer(s)**

Gareth Borsden  
Sarah Hughes  
Kate Phillips  
Stephanie Williams

Democratic Services Officer  
Team Manager for Education Strategy  
Head of Vulnerable Learner Service  
Principal Lawyer

**Also present**

Councillor R V Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor F M Gordon and Helen Morgan-Ress

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### 22 Disclosures of Personal & Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

### 23 Minutes.

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Education and Skills Service Transformation Committee held on 8 November be approved and signed as a correct record.

### 24 Supporting Sufficient Specialist Places.

The Head of Vulnerable Learners presented a “for information” report regarding the Supporting Sufficient Specialist Places programme. The report outlined both the current position and future plans. Further to the circulated report, she verbally updated members on the proposals and issues contained within the report.

The progress made since the Committee had last discussed the matter in September was outlined and detailed in the report, particularly around the following three areas:

- Data collation and research – data collected from a wide range of different sources and agencies on both current and predicted trends, analysis and

identifying of the key themes arising from the data, change team undertook an away day to consider and review data, clear identification of an increase in need and demand for specialist teaching, year on year increase shown for pre-school ALN needs, potential impact of recent Estyn & National Academy for Education Leadership (NAEL) publications.

- Change team progress – make up of team outlined, regular meetings taking place, team agreed new model and have identified the funding model for the review of the specialist teaching facilities, report to cabinet in the new year which will outline the new model for specialist teaching facilities going forward, headteachers to be updated on these proposals in spring term.
- Pilot projects - two schools involved in the mini bus pilot at Clwyd Primary School and Ysgol Pen y Bryn have now adopted the transport arrangements on a permanent basis due to the benefits identified, grant funding has been secured to purchase two additional mini buses to support the project's sustainability. The Dylan Thomas Cluster Enhanced Provision Project is progressing well with staff now appointed and it is hoped that the provision will open in January 2023 with access for children within the cluster, the pilot is being grant funded and analysis will be critical to assess whether or not all, or part, of the elements should be taken forward as a longer term arrangement.

Members discussed the report and verbal update and asked various questions around the issues and topics detailed above, particularly around the following areas:

- Potential and options and feasibility of expanding the mini bus pilot;
- Availability of staff to operate the mini bus and training issues;
- Increasing demand for ALN services and reduction in local authority budgets;
- Need for increased national funding for ALN provision;

The Officer and Cabinet Member responded accordingly.

The Chair thanked the Head of Vulnerable Learners for her report and update.

## **25 Work Plan.**

The Chair outlined the workplan for the committee for the remainder of 2023/2024.

**Agreed** that the workplan be noted.

The meeting ended at 4.34 pm

**Chair**

# Agenda Item 4



## Report of the Director of Education

Education and Skills Service Transformation Committee  
24 January 2024

### Right Schools in the Right Places

<b>Purpose:</b>	The report presents a draft of the proposed Strategic School Provision Plan for Swansea
<b>Report Author:</b>	Kelly Small
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Aimee Dyer
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Stephanie Williams
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Rhian Millar

#### For Information

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 A report was taken to the Education and Skills Service Transformation Committee (STC) on 26 July 2023 that presented contextual information regarding the school stock in Swansea and proposed the production of a school organisation plan.
- 1.2 A further report was taken to the Education and Skills STF on 8 November 2023 that provided an outline of a proposed School Provision Plan for Swansea.
- 1.3 This report, the third and final for this municipal year, presents a draft Strategic School Provision Plan for consideration.

#### 2. Strategic School Provision Plan

- 2.1 A Strategic School Provision Plan (SSPP) should be produced for consideration by Cabinet.
- 2.2 The SSPP should be a contextual document that draws conclusions about the need to add or to remove school places within the City and County of Swansea. Once adopted, the plan can help the council,

schools, parents and local communities to understand the need for school places and establish future demands. It can provide a basis on which the council and others can consider proposals for opening, closing or changing the character of schools, subject to the availability of resources.

- 2.3 The SSPP would be a key reference document for school organisation proposals and would align with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) that would run on a parallel timeline, i.e. for a nine-year period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2033, with data refreshed every three years. This will align with the SOP that will run from 1 April 2024 for a nine-year period, with three-year 'waves' as part of that programme.
- 2.4 A first draft of the SSPP is attached at Appendix A. This draft includes the following contents but is not an exhaustive list, and additional sections can be added, particularly through consultation:
- Pupil numbers
  - Capacity/Surplus Capacity
  - Additional Learning Needs
  - School Buildings and Accessibility
  - Vocational Provision
- 2.5 The SSPP can culminate in a section that will give conclusions to influence effective planning of school provision. For example, the conclusions could identify a number on roll or a level of surplus capacity that would trigger a review of school provision in that area.
- 2.6 Appendices have not been included at this stage but can be added if STC is happy to continue with the proposed outline.

### **3. Co-Production and Consultation**

- 3.1 With STC endorsement, the draft SSPP can be shared with relevant officers to review and enhance relevant sections.
- 3.2 A revised draft can be refined through the council's QEd (Quality in Education) Programme Board – a cross-cutting group with representation from the Education Directorate and Corporate Building Services.
- 3.3 Further refinement can take place through headteacher consultative groups and learner voice opportunities.
- 3.4 It is proposed that a final draft is approved by Cabinet, with future school organisation linked to this approved plan. The plan will be refreshed every three years to update statistics and any other relevant data.

## **4. Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
  - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
  - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
  - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

4.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

4.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

4.1.3 This report is for information only. Any initiatives developed following this review will be subject to the IIA process as required.

## **5. Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **Background papers:**

None

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A Draft Strategic School Provision Plan

# Strategic School Provision Plan 2024 – 2033



## Contents

Strategic School Provision Plan.....	1
1. Introduction .....	3
2. Demographic Information .....	6
2.4.1 Pupils Educated at Home by Their Parents .....	9
2.4.2 Pupils Looked After by Local Authorities .....	9
2.4.3 Young Offenders in Secure Provision.....	9
2.4.4 Provision of Home Tuition.....	10
2.4.5 Pupils in Pupil Referral Units and Provision for Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties .....	10
2.4.7 Pupils Educated in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Provision..	10
2.4.8 Volatility of Pupil Numbers.....	10
3. Policies and Principles .....	12
Secondary Schools.....	14
Nursery Provision.....	17
Primary Provision.....	17
Secondary Provision.....	18
Community Provision.....	19
3.7 Additional Learning Needs.....	19
3.8 Accessibility to Schools.....	20
3.9 Parental Preference and Popular Schools .....	21
4. Conclusions.....	23

[highlight other sections in contents?]



# 1. Introduction

1.1 Swansea Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2028 has Improving Education and Skills as a well-being objective priority.

This is because we want:

- all children and young people to attend school regularly, to be included, to be resilient and have successful futures
- all children and young people to have good Welsh-language skills
- to support and maintain effective school leadership
- to support and maintain excellent teaching
- all learners to received their education in environments that are safe and sustainable communities for learning

1.2 This well-being objective will help to:

- ensure young people have the skills to be able to enter local employment opportunities, including those arising from the Swansea Bay City Deal
- ensure children and young people's learning, health and well-being is supported, particularly following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic
- address the inequalities created by the link that exists between educational attainment and economic prosperity
- ensure that the support for the provision of additional learning needs is stronger, less adversarial and places children and young people at the centre of decision making
- ensure equal opportunities for all learners to learn Welsh, speak the language confidently and promotes the benefits of bilingualism/ multilingualism
- ensure leaders and practitioners are supported to maintain delivery of excellent education in all learning settings
- provide a school estate that is suitable, safe, and sustainable

1.3 Steps to meet this well-being objective include:

1.3.1 **Inclusion Strategy** - We will deliver the inclusion strategy to embed universal provision for additional needs, specialist places for additional needs and a whole school approach to emotional health and psychological wellbeing. The strategy will promote attendance, inclusion, learner participation in decision making and reduction in peer-on-peer bullying and harassment in schools.

1.3.2 **Welsh Language Skills Strategy** - We will deliver a strategy that embeds the Siarter Iaitn to all schools. The strategy will ensure that all schools are supported to develop learners' skills within and outside the classroom. We want learners to speak Welsh with confidence when they leave school.

1.3.3 **Equity in Education Strategy** - We will deliver a strategy to embed trauma informed practice across all schools, actions to reduce the impact of poverty on learners and meet

our responsibilities as corporate parents. We want our vulnerable learners to access support in one place through community focussed schools.

- 1.3.4 **New and Better Schools Strategy** - We want to provide an efficient and effective educational infrastructure to meet current and future demands for school places. We will deliver a transformed schools' estate using our school building and maintenance programme and also respond to the developments set out within the local development plan (LDP) while ensuring community benefits from contracts. We want to reduce our carbon footprint within the school estate and make assets available for community use where local demand exists.
- 1.4 Each council is required to produce a Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) under Sustainable Communities for Learning that covers a nine-year period of capital programme from 1 April 2024 onwards. The SOP is broken down into 'waves' of three year periods, with the first wave seeking commitment and support for deliverable schemes, the second wave seeking in-principle support for projects that need further development and the final wave reflecting longer-term pipeline projects. Every three years the SOP will be refreshed so that the second wave becomes the first wave and so on.
- 1.5 This Strategic School Provision Plan (SSPP) aims to support the above well-being objective and implementation steps by helping the council, schools, promoters, parents and local communities to understand the need for school places and establish future demands. It also provides a basis on which the council, the Welsh Government and others can consider proposals for opening, closing or changing the character of schools, and link to the Strategic Outline Programme under Sustainable Communities for Learning.
- 1.6 The Strategic School Provision Plan will be reviewed every three years in line with the 'waves' of the Strategic Outline Programme.
- 1.7 The Strategic School Provision Plan is intertwined with the Corporate Plan and the Strategic Outline Programme in that it sets out:
- Demographic information relevant to the supply of school places
  - A statement of policies and principles related to securing improved standards of achievement by pupils
  - Conclusions about the need to add or remove school places in particular areas of the Authority
- 1.8 The Strategic School Provision Plan will also address a number of specific issues, including:
- strategies for identifying and meeting demand for support for additional educational needs
  - collaborative arrangements in relation to post-16 education
  - the impact policies and developments elsewhere in the Council will have on school organisation and places, in particular from Planning and Housing
- 1.9 It should be strongly emphasised that the implementation of policies and strategies identified in this Plan will be subject to the availability of resources. Whilst it may be a clear aim to implement a policy, it may only be possible to do this in the longer term if funding is unlikely to be in place in the short or medium term.
- 1.10 Our nine-year plan is aimed at ensuring that we work in a sustainable way so that our plans sustain a suitable school estate with the right schools in the right places. Making

best use of available resources will be at the heart of decision making. This means making sure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This will be at the heart of our transformation programmes. As part of this, we will continue to engage with and seek the views of stakeholders. The principle of sustainability has prevention and integration at its heart and we will develop long-term plans for addressing our Well-being Objectives, working with others. We will also ensure that, through this approach, we meet the requirements of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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## 2. Demographic Information

### 2.1 Background

2.1.1 This section of the Plan – mainly set out in appendices – provides details of a range of demographic issues.

2.1.2 In recent years, the population of school age (3–19 year olds) in the City and County of Swansea has continued to decline. Between XXXX and XXXX it is estimated to have fallen from XXXX to XXXX. Population projections prepared by the council point to the continuation of this trend during the Plan period as follows:

- 0 – 9 age group  
⇒ projected reduction of X% (or X pupils)
- 10 – 19 age group  
⇒ projected reduction of X% (or X pupils)

The decline is principally due to reductions in the number of births. Recorded births in the City and County of Swansea have fallen from X in XXXX to X in XXXX.

2.1.3 This downward trend in the school population has been clearly evident in Swansea over the last ten years, as shown by comparing pupil count figures:

Year	Increase/Decrease in Pupil Numbers Compared to Previous Year				
	Pupils in Primary Schools	Pupils in Secondary Schools (11-16)	Pupils in Post-16 at Secondary Schools	Pupils in Special Schools	Total

	% Increase/Decrease in Pupil Numbers Compared to Previous Year				
Year	Pupils in Primary Schools	Pupils in Secondary Schools (11-16)	Pupils in Post-16 at Secondary Schools	Pupils in Special Schools	Total

2.1.4 However, the reduction in pupil numbers is not occurring evenly across Swansea. Whilst some areas have experienced significant losses, others have experienced growth. This is one factor, albeit a significant one, which is influencing the level of under capacity or surplus places in schools in some parts of the council, compared to others.

2.1.5 In overall terms, in relation to school population, in January 2024 there were X% surplus places in the primary sector and X% surplus places in the secondary sector (as defined by the current formula provided by the Welsh Government [measuring-the-capacity-of-schools-in-wales-circular.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)). However, within these two “global” figures there are significant variations between areas and individual schools. For example, within the secondary sector, a very substantial proportion of the surplus places are located in the East of Swansea, whilst there are only a relatively small number in the West and Northwest. Surplus places in individual schools ranges from X% to X%.

2.1.6 Since Covid restrictions eased, the City and County of Swansea has welcomed a number of asylum-seeking pupils and refugees, as well as the children of university students and hospital workers. This inward migration has helped to slow down the decline in pupil numbers; however visa changes in relation to dependents is likely to reduce the number of children coming to Swansea linked to the university from January 2024 onwards.

## 2.2 Housing

2.2.1 Changes in the population of school age pupils at the local level are primarily brought about as the result of local variations in births and migration. Migration movements are closely related to the perceived desirability of areas as ‘good places’ in which to live (for example where there are parks, open spaces, good transport links etc.), the ability of households to move and the availability of alternative accommodation in the area into which they wish to move. In this context the location of new housing plays an important part.

2.2.2 Since XX more than XXX new dwellings have been developed within the City and County of Swansea. They have not been evenly distributed, and the development of many large new sites has resulted in increasing pupil numbers at local schools – in some cases necessitating their expansion. **[Include information on LDP sites]**

2.2.3 Conversely, schools in other areas have experienced a reduction in pressure and falling pupil numbers as a result of low levels of house-building activity, ageing local population

structures (fewer births), and net out-migration. Such losses have been particularly pronounced within [... wards].

2.2.4 However, as stated earlier, demographic change is only one factor in relation to the issue of under and over capacity of school places. As a result of legislation introduced in the late 1980s and greater emphasis on “parental choice” with regard to the school their children should attend, there is – particularly in the secondary sector – an East to West drift of the school population. This partly accounts for the location of surplus places in certain areas of Swansea. Coupled with the overall reduction in population numbers that is occurring and increased demand for Welsh medium education, this has resulted in a number of schools having significant and increasing levels of spare capacity.

## 2.3 Demographic Details

2.3.1 As previously mentioned, much of the demographic information incorporated in this section of the Plan is set out in appendices (B to N) as follows:

<b><u>Appendix</u></b>	<b><u>Content</u></b>
A	Consultation List.
B	Number of pupils in the council and projected pupil numbers for the nine year period of the Plan
C	The number on roll at each maintained primary school within the council area compared to its capacity and identifying explicitly the number of empty places available at the school. Information on age range and category is also provided.
D	The number on roll at each maintained secondary school within the council area compared to its capacity and identifying explicitly the number of empty places available at the school. Information on age range and category is also provided.
E	Summary of School Data provided in Appendices C and D.
F	Identification of planned places in Specialist Teaching Facilities (STFs) and Special Schools.
G	The number of pupils with additional learning needs placed by the council at non-maintained special schools and independent schools.
H	Number of schools with sixth forms and the number of Further Education Colleges within the council area.
I	Projected Welsh-medium school place requirements linked to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
J	Map of City and County of Swansea showing location of schools.
K	Ages of school buildings
L	Condition of school buildings

M Projected Voluntary Aided school rolls

N Pupil Turnover

## 2.4 Statement of Assumptions Made in Respect of Provision for Pupils

### 2.4.1 Pupils Educated at Home by Their Parents

Parents who elect to home educate their children are provided with helpful links to the Local Authority's *Parent's Guide to Elective Home Education* and the Welsh Government's *Handbook for Home Educators*. Parents are required to write to the Headteacher to inform them of their intention to home educate. The council's Elective Home Education (EHE) Team are notified by the school so that the pupil's name can be taken off roll. The EHE Team will arrange to meet with the parent(s) in order to provide support and information about EHE and local EHE groups. They will also ascertain whether or not an appropriate education is being offered and offer advice as to what could be done to ensure the child's educational needs are being met. Regular visits will be made. If there are any child protection issues or serious concerns, liaison is made with appropriate agencies. A database of all pupils notified to the Education Directorate is kept. There are approximately X pupils in this category.

### 2.4.2 Pupils Looked After by Local Authority

The Education Directorate is a partner with other council services, including Social Services, who are committed to raising the quality of care and life chances of children who are looked after and recognise the importance of education for better outcomes for these pupils. The council aspires to promote continuity of education whenever possible for young people whose lives are characterised by change and uncertainty.

Each school has a member of staff who is the Designated Person for Looked After Children, who will promote the educational aspirations for looked after children and liaise with professionals to support in overall care planning.

The education directorate ensures that the needs of care experienced learners are prioritised in the mainstream and EOTAS admission processes to allow educational consistency during placement changes.

A virtual school model is being developed to ensure collaborative working partnerships with all stakeholders, allowing timely information to be shared and monitored enabling proactive responses.

A personal education plan (PEP) coordinator ensures all children have up to date PEPs which provide learner voice around their educational experience allowing the learners the ability to effect change to policy.

There are approximately XXX young people of school age who are Looked After in the Authority.

### 2.4.3 Secure Provision

If pupils are in secure provision, education will be provided on site. The Education Directorate is informed by Child and Family Services when a pupil is placed in secure accommodation and form part of the multi-agency secure review panel. When a pupil leaves secure provision, a joint decision-making process between Education and officers

from Child and Family Services informs appropriate future education. There are an average of X pupils in this category annually.

#### 2.4.4 Provision of Home Tuition

[Information to be included on provision offered and learner numbers]

#### 2.4.5 Pupils in Pupil Referral Units and Provision for Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

It is recognised that off-site provision is required for some learners. The aim is to support pupils and reintegrate them into mainstream provision, particularly for younger learners. Numbers at the PRU at Maes Derw are as follows:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary age						
Secondary age (Years 7-9)						
Secondary age (Year 8 and above)						

The council has developed on-site provision for children with some moderate behavioural difficulties [Include details]

#### 2.4.6 School Aged Pupils Attending Colleges

In order to provide a varied and appropriate curriculum in Years 10 and 11 for those students for whom a diet of academic study is inappropriate, the City and County of Swansea has developed strong and sustained links with Gower College Swansea and other private training organisations.

The courses the young people follow are ...[Insert]

#### 2.4.7 Education in Healthcare

If a pupil requires education while in a healthcare setting, this provision is determined and arranged by the Health Authority. The Education Department will support the educational element of these arrangements but has no control over the numbers placed. However, appropriate recoupment arrangements are in place for those pupils who need it.

#### 2.4.8 Volatility of Pupil Numbers

There are a number of schools with a high turnover of pupils during the course of every academic year. This results from a variety of factors but in particular children of travellers, university students and hospital staff. This volatility can impact directly on the schools' resources, both human and material. Turnover figures are provided at Appendix N.

### 2.5 **School Reorganisation**

2.5.1 Since April 1996 when the City and County of Swansea came into being, the following major school reorganisation measures have been implemented/proposed [to insert – could categorise by type of proposal]:



- 2.5.2 A statutory proposal is underway to amalgamate the two special schools in Swansea into one school using existing sites, prior to relocation to a proposed new-build school in 2028.
- 2.5.3 A number of the schools in Swansea were built over a century ago (see Appendix L for school build dates).
- 2.5.4 Under the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, a Strategic Outline Programme will be produced that will outline further potential statutory proposals and capital projects.

[Federations – statement from local authority – how many we have in Swansea]

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### **3. Policies and Principles**

#### **3.1 Background**

3.1.1 As indicated in the introduction, improving standards of achievement of pupils must be at the heart of the Strategic School Provision Plan. An appropriate distribution of school places, together with the ability to plan effectively for future needs and demands will undoubtedly help in the drive to raise standards. As previously indicated, the Strategic School Provision Plan should be seen as an integral part of the Corporate Plan which will underpin all that is undertaken by the council and its schools.

3.1.2 The WESP states...[insert relevant details]

3.1.3 This section of the School Organisation Plan sets out a statement of the policies and principles relevant to the provision of school places.

#### **3.2 School Organisation**

3.2.1 The pupil capacity of each school in Swansea is reviewed and monitored each year in accordance with the Welsh Government's Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales (circular no. 021/2011). Schools and clusters of schools with significant levels of surplus capacity are reported to the Education Directorate's School Organisation Team for proposals to be made to address the surplus.

3.2.2 When bringing forward proposals to change the organisation of schools, prime consideration is given to the effect of the proposed change on the standard of education to be provided in the area.

3.2.3 It is important that funding for education is used cost effectively. Some surplus places are necessary to enable schools to cope with fluctuations of pupils but excessive surplus places mean that resources are tied up unproductively. The Audit Commission suggested that action should be taken to rectify the situation if a school has a surplus capacity of more than 25% or 30 unfilled places in a school with a capacity below 90.

3.2.4 In considering the removal of excess places consideration will be given to:

- Whether alternative use of the surplus premises would be an effective way of utilising the accommodation to the full;
- The effect of the proposal on any existing community use of the school premises;
- Any capital investment which would be needed to bring the premises up to a fit standard for delivery of the curriculum;

- The impact on additional learning needs (ALN) provision both at school and county-wide level;

N.B. The Admission Number of a school will need to be reviewed if accommodation is removed.

- 3.2.5 Reorganisation of schools will take into account the Education Directorate's inclusion policy and strategy. In particular any school closure would take the fullest account of the impact on ALN provision both to the locality and the wider county context.
- 3.2.6 The council produces a condition survey of each school... [include details of calculation, add condition as an appendix?] The condition survey will be used as part of the school organisation process as well as prioritising capital spend on properties.
- 3.2.7 Proposals to close schools will be made only where there is evidence that the alternative proposed will offer at least equivalent quality and diversity of education at lower total cost then would have been available had the school remained open. In the case of rural schools particular consideration will be made to the challenges facing smaller schools, home to school transport implications and the overall effect on the community. Two schools – Knelston Primary School and Penclawdd Primary School - are also named as rural schools in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code and have a presumption against closure.
- 3.2.8 Currently any reorganisation proposals with a significant post-16 dimension need approval from Welsh ministers, particularly as post-16 settings receive separate funding from the Welsh Government and have to plan their programmes of education.

### 3.3 Appropriate Size of Schools

- 3.3.1 Identifying an appropriate size of primary or secondary schools is a complex issue as the quality of educational provision is influenced by a number of factors, not just the number of pupils.

#### Primary Schools

- 3.3.2 It should be noted that the Audit Commission indicated that a primary school should ideally have no less than 90 pupils. In January 2024 there were X schools with less than 90 pupils in the City and County of Swansea.
- 3.3.3 Whilst the Authority would not rule out exceptional circumstances when the closure of a small rural school could become necessary, it would need to be clearly demonstrated that:
- such a measure was unavoidable;
  - it would not seriously damage a community; and
  - an alternative, high quality educational provision could be offered within a reasonable distance.

The Welsh Assembly Government has provided councils with similar advice in the case of small and rural schools [School organisation code | GOV.WALES](#).

- 3.3.4 Small primary schools in an urban setting where there is alternative provision nearby, may, on occasion, be in a different position. Much would depend on the level of surplus places both in the area and also within the individual school concerned.
- 3.3.5 A number of strategies could be considered to reduce the level of surplus places in primary schools, including:

- removing surplus demountables
- putting parts of schools to alternative uses
- if there is more than one building, accommodating the school in one building and disposing of the remainder of the site (or putting it to an alternative use).

3.3.6 Closure of a primary school would be a last resort if other strategies for removing surplus places would be insufficient. In any event, the number of surplus places in a school would usually be likely to be a more significant factor than the actual size of the school, although not necessarily so in every case.

### Secondary Schools

3.3.7 As regards secondary schools, the Audit Commission in its report entitled 'Trading Places' provides the following guidelines on an appropriate size of schools to enable the full range of the curriculum to be delivered effectively:

- ⇒ schools with a 6<sup>th</sup> form: at least 700 pupils
- ⇒ schools without a 6<sup>th</sup> form: at least 600 pupils

In January 2024 there were no schools with a 6<sup>th</sup> form within the City and County of Swansea that was below these guidelines. There was 1 secondary school without a 6<sup>th</sup> form that had a roll below these guideline figures.

3.3.8 As in the case of primary schools, a number of criteria would need to be used in relation to the removal of surplus places and possible school closures in the secondary sector. These could include:

- extent of surplus capacity
- future roll projection
- available surplus capacity in neighbouring schools
- impact on the local community
- community use of the school
- unit cost per pupil
- savings generated which could potentially be redirected elsewhere
- transportation costs
- condition of buildings

Strategies for removing surplus accommodation, as outlined for primary schools in paragraph 3.3.5 would also need to be considered.

3.3.9 All the above criteria and others would need to be carefully analysed before reaching a conclusion on the possible removal of surplus places. Whilst it would therefore be misleading to be too precise about an appropriate size for a secondary (or primary) school, it is accepted that an analysis of this type needs to be undertaken in order to clarify the longer-term distribution of school places across the City and County of Swansea, in areas of both under and over capacity.

### 3.4 Appropriate Size of Class/Teaching Group

- 3.4.1 Trying to define an 'appropriate' size for a class or teaching group is difficult as what may be 'appropriate' for one school may not be appropriate in another, and there will be differences by subject, age of learners etc. The Curriculum for Wales will also impact on how learning takes place in a school.
- 3.4.2 An 'appropriate' size of a class or teaching group will therefore depend on a number of variables, including:
- Welsh Government statutory limits at 'infant' ages (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2)
  - Welsh Assembly Government targets at 'junior' ages (Years 3-6)
  - the overall size of the school
  - whether it is a mixed or single age class
  - the management/organisational structures in place
  - the views of staff, governors and parents
- 3.4.3 Despite the difficulties involved in defining an appropriate size of class, research undoubtedly demonstrates that this factor has a bearing on performance. Generally, therefore, the smaller the class the more effective the teaching and learning process is likely to be. The City and County of Swansea will thus continue to work towards achieving this aim.
- 3.4.4 Infant class size legislation (Section 1 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Education (Infant Class Sizes) (Wales) Regulations 1998) requires all schools with Key Stage 1 pupils to comply with class size limits. From September 2001 all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils had to be in classes of 30 or less unless defined exceptions apply. It is unclear if the Welsh Government will review this legislation in line with the Curriculum for Wales.
- 3.4.5 The Welsh Assembly Government also introduced a target that Key Stage 2 class sizes should be 30 or less by Autumn 2003.
- 3.4.6 The Authority's Admission Arrangements recognise the maximum class size limits in the primary sector.
- 3.4.7 Education Officers monitor primary class sizes with the headteacher representatives on the Primary Finance Group to ensure schools strive to meet the class size limits. Any increases in mixed age classes and mixed year groups due to the implementation of class size limits are also monitored.
- 3.4.8 In relation to decisions about adding or removing school places, it is unlikely that, in most cases, class sizes would be one of the most significant factors involved. The circumstances where it could play an important part might be, for example, where a school had a significantly increasing roll (that was projected to continue to rise) and where there was a lack of available space. In these circumstances, the provision of additional accommodation would be carefully considered alongside the options of having two teachers in one class (to meet class size limits) or reducing the Admission Number of the school if the necessary criteria relating to accommodation allowed for this to be an option.
- 3.4.9 The City and County of Swansea has provided additional places at a number of primary and secondary schools where it has been clearly demonstrated that:
- there is an increasing roll and pupil projections indicate that this is likely to continue;

- there is insufficient surplus capacity on the site to accommodate the additional numbers;
- other exceptional factors apply such as the requirement to reduce class sizes to 30 pupils or less.

### 3.5 Diversity of Provision

- 3.5.1 The basic principle upon which the diversity of education provision within the City and County of Swansea is based is one of ensuring that all learners are provided with the opportunity and support they need to access learning and realise their potential. This provision is designed to ensure that each learner is provided with:
- an equality of opportunity
  - an appropriate curriculum designed to fulfil individual, local and national needs which celebrates the ethnic and cultural diversity found within the City and County of Swansea.
- 3.5.2 The council provides a choice of type of education, across both the primary and secondary phases, through, for example:
- English and Welsh medium schools
  - Denominational schools
- 3.5.3 The diversity of provision in Swansea is aimed, as far as possible, at taking account of equal opportunities issues and legislation, including the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.5.4 There is support for pupils and whole school training provided by the Education Directorate's Ethnic Minority Language and Achievement Service, who provide support to XX EAL learners in over XX schools with XX different languages to help facilitate access to the curriculum and achievement of individual academic potential. Schools are also supported by the team in overcoming cultural and other barriers to learning and in the development of home to school links with parents from ethnic minority communities via translating and interpreting services. All Schools, irrespective of the composition of pupils from minority ethnic groups provide an education that develops pupils' awareness of their responsibilities as citizens in a racially diverse society.
- 3.5.5 Swansea has a long history of welcoming asylum seekers and refugees from many parts of the world, providing a safe haven for people who fear for their own and their family's safety. The Education Directorate, together with other organisations, continues to be proactive in the provision of appropriate support structures to assist schools that are host to asylum seekers. [Include City of Sanctuary]
- 3.5.6 Schools provide a range of educational provision that offers parents a reasonable choice of the type of schooling they wish their children to receive.
- 3.5.7 There is an ongoing process of monitoring the number of pupils, against the basic principle of provision, across each school and types of schools. The provision available has, and will be, further developed to ensure that there is an efficient use of resources. The process of monitoring enables issues to be identified and appropriate proposals to be developed in relation to the type of educational provision to be made available within the council.
- 3.5.8 An analysis of the anticipated pupil numbers in each of the types of schools, however, demonstrates that there is a growing demand, in both phases, for Welsh medium education (See Appendix I).

3.5.9 The above themes are explored in more detail in the ensuing section on Accessibility of Provision.

### 3.6 Accessibility of Provision

3.6.1 There is a section later in this Plan on physical accessibility to provision (section X). However, in terms of accessibility to different types of educational provision, it is the City and County of Swansea's clear aim to offer as comprehensive a range of facilities and opportunities as is feasible.

3.6.2 Parents have a choice of Welsh Medium or English Medium or denominational education for their child.

#### Nursery Provision

3.6.3 In the City and County of Swansea, children may attend school part-time after their third birthday. Approximately X% of all nursery age children in the county receive part-time nursery education from council maintained schools.

3.6.4 There were XX pupils on roll in these nursery classes/schools in January 2024. The number of nursery pupils has reduced from X in X and reflects the falling birth rate in Swansea.

#### Primary Provision

3.6.5 The provision of primary education is delivered by 77 schools. This comprises:

- English medium primary schools (62)
- Welsh medium primary schools (10)
- Voluntary aided primary schools (5)

3.6.6 There is therefore a variety of primary provision across the City and County of Swansea and a number of policies and principles need to be highlighted in relation to school places:

##### ⇒ **Welsh Medium Primary Education**

There has been a growth in demand for Welsh Medium Education and this is projected to continue. [WESP statement]

All parents who express a preference for their child to attend Welsh medium provision are given a place in the catchment area school. Current data indicates that the increasing demand for Welsh medium primary places can be accommodated at Swansea schools in total yet individual schools are facing accommodation pressures (see Appendix I).

##### **Religious/Denominational Primary Education**

There is both Church-in-Wales and Catholic educational provision available to primary age children in the City and County of Swansea. Demand has fallen slightly over the last few years for Catholic provision (see Appendix M).

The Education Directorate and Diocesan Boards will continue to develop a close working relationship regarding the provision of school places at an appropriate level.

As with the provision of Welsh medium places, it is vital that a strategic view is taken to ensure that adding or removing school places in one type of provision is fairly assessed in terms of its potential impact on another type.



## Secondary Provision

3.6.7 The provision of secondary education is delivered through a number of secondary schools as follows:

- 11 English medium secondary schools - 7 schools 11-16 - 4 schools 11-18 (i.e. with a 6<sup>th</sup> form)
- 2 Welsh medium secondary schools (11-18)
- 1 Catholic Voluntary Aided secondary school (11-18).

3.6.8 As mentioned in the earlier chapter on Demographic Information and in paragraph X, there is a significant level of surplus places in the secondary sector, particularly in the East of Swansea, and a variety of strategies for addressing this are set out in paragraph X.

3.6.9 As with primary schools, there is therefore a diversity of provision with the aim of offering the maximum level of accessibility to parents. Again, there are certain key policies and principles that need to be highlighted in relation to accessibility to school places:

⇒ **Welsh Medium Secondary Education**

There are currently two 11-18 Welsh medium secondary schools in the City and County of Swansea. The demand for secondary Welsh medium education is projected to continue to increase over the coming years (see appendix I) Future provision will be linked to the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

⇒ **Post-16 Provision**

There is currently a 'mixed economy' of post-16 provision within the City and County of Swansea. The education provision for students aged 16 plus is provided through seven council-maintained schools, a tertiary college and a range of training organisations. The number of students choosing a post-16 education through providers in schools...[insert trends ].

In addition to the basic principle on which education provision is made available, the Education Directorate will continue to work with schools to ensure that there is:

- a breadth of educational opportunities available to learners; and
- an efficient use of resources.

The council supports the concept of harnessing the strengths of sixth forms, tertiary colleges and workplace training in a partnership to pursue the aim of providing the best education and training for young people and for lifelong learning. The breadth of opportunities available to learners can only be enlarged through such a partnership. [Insert Swansea Skills Partnership info]

The council will continue to support collaborative work between schools, tertiary colleges and training providers to ensure that all courses are viable within the concept of a broad provision of opportunities.

There is collaborative work taking place between school sixth forms, particularly between the following schools:

[Insert details]

[Insert City Deal information]

Appendix H shows the capacity in Swansea of schools with 6<sup>th</sup> forms.



## Vocational Provision

3.6.10 A number of secondary schools provide vocational provision alongside general education qualifications [include details]

## Community Provision

3.6.11 Schools play an important and pivotal role in the community. Schools not only provide education for pupils and create community spirit amongst parents, but they also have the opportunity and often the facilities to reach out to the whole community.

3.6.12 A community focused school is one that provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community. Across Swansea many schools already provide some community services including adult learning, ICT facilities and community sports programmes. [In conclusion we could say that the council will encourage and expand depending on available resources]

3.6.13 [Insert information on Community Focused Schools and Family Engagement Officers]

## **3.7 Additional Learning Needs**

3.7.1 The City and County of Swansea is rightly proud of its policy of inclusion for children with Additional Learning Needs.

3.7.2 The Additional Learning Needs principles and policies in the City and County of Swansea have therefore been well mapped out and developed over a number of years and there is a strong commitment to continue to pursue them, amongst both the council and its schools.

3.7.3 Within Swansea there is a pattern of provision that reflects its inclusive philosophy in so far as there are only 2 designated special schools catering for a small number of children. A small number of young people are placed Out of County but together these represent X% of the school population. The remainder of children are educated in mainstream schools – either in mainstream classrooms or in Specialist Teaching Facilities (STFs) which are hosted in mainstream schools.

3.7.4 These facilities have been developed to address the needs of children with particular difficulties. The STF provision currently includes facilities for children with learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties, hearing impairment, autism, profound and multiple learning difficulties and children with social and emotional difficulties. Appendix F shows the number of planned places available at primary and secondary STFs for pupils with additional learning needs.

3.7.5 In January 2024 there were X primary schools hosting STFs (X% of schools). There were 13 schools hosting STFs at secondary level in January 2024 (93% of schools). A programme of development is being undertaken (subject to budget approval) to ensure that:

- each locality is served by an STF for learning difficulties at primary and secondary level;
- sufficient places are available at primary and secondary level to address the needs of children with:
  - ⇒ speech and language difficulties

- ⇒ sensory impairment
- ⇒ autism
- ⇒ emotional and behavioural problems
- ⇒ profound and multiple learning difficulties

[Link to STF review]

- 3.7.6 The council currently supports the education of most children with Additional Learning Needs in mainstream schools. These children will have a range of difficulties including learning difficulties, sensory impairment and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Children supported in a mainstream context will have difficulties of a lesser nature than those requiring STF or special school placement. In these instances children will attend their local schools and planning for their placement will be done on an individual basis.
- 3.7.7 In relation to children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.. [Include details of school provision]
- 3.7.8 Other children currently educated off site include those who are:
- emotionally fragile
  - have severe emotional/psychiatric needs
  - those too sick to attend school
  - pregnant schoolgirls/young mothers.
- Wherever possible these children will be provided for in mainstream schools with individual packages of support but off site provision will continue to be a requirement in some cases.
- 3.7.9 It is recognised that for some pupils off-site provision at the Pupil Referral Unit is required (see paragraph X).
- 3.7.10 There are on average X children a day receiving home tuition (X being supported for emotional and behavioural difficulties).
- 3.7.11 Appendix G gives details of the number of out of county and independent school places used for ALN pupils where they cannot be supported within City and County of Swansea provision.

## 3.8 Accessibility to Schools

- 3.8.1 The City and County of Swansea makes a generous provision for transporting pupils to schools although needs to be mindful of the resources available and best value.
- 3.8.2 In the primary phase, the longest travelling time is X minutes but this applies to X schools only, in Gower, which is a rural area. A very small number of children travel X miles to one of these schools.
- 3.8.3 The council provides free home to school transport for all primary age pupils who live 2 miles and more from their catchment school, as per requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure. This includes pupils whose parents chose a voluntary aided or Welsh Medium school. X primary age pupils receive this free transport, X% of the total number of primary age pupils.
- 3.8.4 In the secondary phase, pupils who live in Gower may have a X-minute journey to attend one of two secondary schools. Most pupils have journeys that are significantly less; in all, approximately X secondary pupils receive home to school transport which represents X% of secondary pupils who travel more than 3 miles to school. [Insert trend]

- 3.8.5 Pupils that attend a school other than their catchment area school are not eligible to receive free home to school transport (unless attending certain specialist provision).
- 3.8.6 The council will regularly review provision to ensure value-for-money together with minimising unnecessary journeys and damage to the environment.
- 3.8.7 The council is committed to promoting and developing “Safe Routes to Schools” that will encourage walking and cycling and reduce dependence on car transport.

### **3.9 Parental Preference and Popular Schools**

3.9.1 Underlying the policies and principles is the need to address under capacity and surplus places in schools in order to secure improved standards of achievement in all schools, regardless of their location or the type of provision.

3.9.2 The council will continue to pursue policies that maximise both:

- diversity of provision, and
- accessibility of provision,

and thereby offer as much parental choice as possible, whilst at the same time making the most effective use of existing accommodation.

3.9.3 There is no guarantee of a catchment area place if a parent seeks admission to an oversubscribed school outside the admissions round. This decision is based on legal advice.

If a council maintained school is oversubscribed, places are allocated according to the following criteria:

- [Insert]

In each criteria, if there are more requests than places, distance from home to school is the deciding factor with those living nearest to the school receiving the places.

Voluntary aided schools each have their own admissions procedures and criteria for over-subscription.

The Authority’s Admissions Policy recognises the Welsh Government guidance on Admissions and Appeals. In September 2023, X Year 7 admission appeals were heard in the admissions cycle. Of these, X were admitted, x refused, X withdrew and X were admitted prior to appeal.

3.9.4 The expansion of any school is, and will continue to be, very carefully considered in each case bearing in mind a number of factors including:

- whether these additional places are for catchment area pupils. If they were for ‘preferred placements’ (out of catchment area) then there would be a low priority in order to make effective use of all existing places in the area;
- whether this was a rural school and no alternative provision was located within a reasonable distance;
- whether this was a denominational or Welsh medium school and no alternative provision was located within a reasonable distance, or if the demand for places outstripped the supply;
- the impact on the local community of not making additional provision;
- the overall impact on school places, particularly in the secondary sector and in schools where there are high numbers of surplus places.

- the financial resources available to the Authority and best value considerations.

3.9.5 Some popular secondary schools are currently under enormous pressure to admit pupils but have insufficient accommodation to enable this to happen without additional build and/or larger classes. Negotiations will occur with governing bodies about how this pressure can be reduced without the need for additional build and leading over time to fewer preferred placements.

DRAFT

## 4. Conclusions

[To be determined]

DRAFT

### Education & Skills STC - Work Plan 2023-2024

Meeting Date	Agenda Items
14 June 2023	Workplan Discussion
26 July 2023	Right Schools in Right Places
27 September 2023	Supporting Sufficient Specialist Places
8 November 2023	Right Schools in Right Places
13 December 2023	Supporting Sufficient Specialist Places
24 January 2024	Right Schools in Right Places
6 March 2024	Supporting Sufficient Specialist Places
17 April 2024	End of Year Report