



## City and County of Swansea

### Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

## Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education

**At:** Committee Room 5, Guildhall, Swansea

**On:** Thursday, 13 February 2020

**Time:** 4.00 pm

**Convenor:** Councillor Lyndon Jones MBE

**Membership:**

Councillors: C Anderson, A M Day, M Durke, S J Gallagher, L S Gibbard, D W Helliwell, B Hopkins, L James, S M Jones, M A Langstone and L J Tyler-Lloyd

Co-opted Members: D Anderson-Thomas and A Roberts

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### Agenda

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<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests</b> <a href="http://www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests">www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests</a>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Letters and Minutes</b>	<b>1 - 12</b>
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**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, 18 February 2020 at 10.30 am

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Huw Evans'.

**Huw Evans**  
**Head of Democratic Services**  
**Thursday, 6 February 2020**

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**Contact: Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer**



**Councillor Lyndon Jones**  
**Convener – Schools Scrutiny**  
**Performance Panel**

*Please ask for:* Councillor Jennifer Raynor  
*Direct Line:* 01792 63 7429  
*E-Mail:* [cllr.jennifer.raynor@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.jennifer.raynor@swansea.gov.uk)  
*Our Ref:* JR/KH  
*Your Ref:*  
*Date:* 21 January 2020

Dear Councillor Jones

Following the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel on 19 December 2019 and in reply to your convenor's letter, I would like to make the following points

- Awareness raising through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GREC) transformational programme involving colleagues from Social Services, Poverty/Prevention and Education is developing well and pays regard to ALN matters, including emotional health;
- Directors in Education and Social Services have regular formal opportunities to provide updates to each other, including those on additional learning needs transformation;
- Suitable opportunities exist within regional boards for cross cutting themes to be tabled, for example, the regional children and young people's transformational board. As a result, colleagues from across departments within Swansea, meet regularly;
- The recent commissioning reviews on providing an integrated and preventative offer to children give due regard to additional learning needs matters, for example, on themes such as pre-school screening;
- The development of integrated strategic plans and policies across the Council's departments, for example, a refreshed transition into adulthood plan (that includes ALN matters) is progressing suitably;
- The development of Swansea's refreshed ALN strategy will ensure that that integrated, collaborative and preventative ways of working underpin the strategy and that other departments contribute too;
- A range of departments will be consulted with when establishing a new structure for additional learning needs; and

- During the next eighteen months, there will be further opportunities to engage across departments on ALN matters before the ALNET Act is implemented in September 2021.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Raynor', written in a cursive style.

**Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Jennifer Raynor**  
**Aelod Y Cabinet Dros Wella Addysg, Dysgu A Sgiliau**  
**Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills**



**To/  
Councillor Jen Raynor  
Cabinet Member for Education  
Improvement, Learning and Skills**

*Please ask for:  
Gofynnwch am:* Scrutiny  
*Direct Line:  
Linell Uniongyrochol:* 01792 637256  
*e-Mail  
e-Bost:* scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk  
*Date  
Dyddiad:* 10 January 2020

**BY EMAIL**

Summary: This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills following the meeting of the Panel on 19 December 2019. It is about the Additional Learning Needs Reform and progress in Swansea.

Dear Councillor Raynor,

**Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 19 December 2019**

At our meeting on the 19 December 2019, we looked at Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform and progress in Swansea. We would like to thank you and Mark Sheridan, Head of Vulnerable Learners Service for attending and discussing the issues with us. We were pleased that the report provided us with an update on the Additional Learning Needs Strategy, progress over the 2018/19 academic year, projected pressures and the revised plan to mitigate them.

We heard the local authority is facing unprecedented change in the area of ALN following the introduction of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET Act 2018). We understand that the Welsh Government have created five ALN Transformation Lead posts to work with the four regions and the further education sector to support and challenge preparations for the implementation of the ALNET Act in September 2021.

We were told that Swansea has engaged well at a regional level with the five other authorities in the South West Region, which covers the same footprint as ERW. Also that an ALN Strategy and Implementation Plan has been developed along with an ALN Strategy Steering Group. We were pleased to hear that this includes parent/carers who will help to oversee its implementation.

The progress made under the seven themes identified in the regional implementation plan were outlined, including that:

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- good progress had been made under the Awareness Raising Theme.
- mixed progress had been made with regard to Workforce Management.
- mixed progress made under the theme of a Person Centred Practice and Individual Development Planning (IDP). We heard that further work is needed to embed the use of the person centred approach into the culture and ethos of schools and other providers (training has been provided but this needs to be further embedded into schools practice). We also heard there are concerns regarding the capacity of the team to manage the conversion from Statements of Special Education Need to LA maintained IDPs (essentially the running of two systems until transformation is completed).
- good progress has been made in understanding the range of early year's settings and providers and that the integration of these services have been initiated under the Pathfinder programme.
- Swansea continues to have significant concerns regarding the extending of the age range from 19 to 25 years, including the need to ensure integrated working between the colleges, health, adult social services, youth offending, education, employers and training providers.
- early dispute resolution and parent partnership is key to avoiding escalating needs, provision and therefore costs, the contract for development of this process has been awarded to SNAP, a parent partnership website for Swansea has gone live and Education are engaging with parents and carers forum. Swansea has also created two Family Liaison posts and these have made a significant impact on the number of tribunals being lodged. We heard however, this work is time consuming and raises capacity issues moving forward.

We were pleased to hear that the authority now has a better understanding of the impact of the new ALNET Act and the draft Code that indicates the likely statutory obligations on us. We heard staff have been mapping demand and volume of work over the past four years so Swansea has a good knowledge base on which to build upon. The Panel heard that there are concerns about the capacity within education to deliver such a large plan. Presentations have been made to the Corporate Management Team to emphasise a joined up approach and to bolster the capacity of the Education team to deliver all the projects in the plan.

We were encouraged to hear that Swansea is keen to progress the development of a new special school provision and that it is looking to review the number and range of specialist teaching facilities in line with changes in demand.

We recognise the ALNET Act and the implementation of the associated Code will be a huge challenge not only for our education team but also for schools, health, adult social services and a raft of other partners. We are pleased to hear that Swansea had made good initial progress in raising awareness and starting to work with other agencies to develop an integrated local offer that will meet the needs of learners 0-25. The Panel believe two things will be central to making successful progress, firstly be the necessary funding to enable these projects and, secondly good partnership/integrated working. We did express our concern that the Welsh Government have said they expect it to be cost neutral exercise. The Panel plan to follow progress closely and will ask for regular updates, as the planning and implementation of this Act progresses.

We welcome your thoughts on any of the issues raised in our letter but can you please provide a formal written response to the following issue by 31 January 2020.

- How you feel that other internal council departments are engaging and progressing with what is a clearly cross cutting agenda?

Yours sincerely,

**COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES**

Convener, Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

✉ [Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk)



**To/  
Councillor Jen Raynor  
Cabinet Member for Education  
Improvement, Learning and Skills**

Please ask for: **Scrutiny**  
Gofynnwch am:  
Direct Line: **01792 637256**  
Linell Uniongyrochol:  
e-Mail: **scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk**  
e-Bost:  
Date: **31 January 2020**  
Dyddiad:

**BY EMAIL**

Summary: This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills following the meeting of the Panel on 16 January 2020. It is about the Annual Education Performance Data.

Dear Councillor Raynor,

**Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 16 January 2020**

At our meeting on the 16 January 2020, we looked at the Annual Education Performance Data for Swansea for 2018/2019. We would like to thank you and Helen Morgan Rees, Head of Achievement and Partnership for attending and discussing the issues with us. We looked closely at the detailed report you provided which gave us details of performance for all learners in Swansea.

We understand that:

- Foundation phase attainment fell in 2018 and 2019 but the metric for this changed from 2018 so it is difficult to make a comparison with previous data. There is now a different way of judging outcomes although it is not as easy as presenting purely data.
- Key stage 2 and 3 had strong performance overall.
- Key stage 4 outcomes remain strong relative to those across Wales.
- Key stage 5 (post 16) has an overall picture of improvement. However, the Panel would like to see a breakdown of the overall picture by subject type.
- Free School Meal (FSM) learners continue to attain significantly below other pupils, and this is a concern to the Panel and is something we will be monitoring.
- Looked After Children educational outcomes continue to be low but the Panel are aware of the vulnerabilities of this group of children and the volatility of the data used due to the small number in each cohort.

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- Schools in areas of high deprivation continue to experience challenges in improving attainment.
- The gender attainment gap between boys and girls continues to be wide but Estyn has not highlighted this as an area of concern for Swansea.
- Pupil attendance remains consistently strong.
- The numbers of fixed term exclusions have increased over the past 3 years but our data does compare favourably with the all Wales data. The Panel were pleased to hear that the Education Improvement Service do get behind these figures to see if there are areas for improvement or if there is good practice that can be shared. The Panel noted that the figures given do not give the duration of the exclusion. They heard that a fixed term exclusion might be very short, even just one day. The Panel have asked for a breakdown of these figures.
- Pupil Referral numbers have increased. We heard work is continuing across schools to ensure a consistent threshold for behaviour interventions for referral to EOTAS and exclusions. That a complete smoking ban has been introduced at the pupil referral unit and this is having some impact on the exclusion figures. Also, that monies have been devolved to secondary, schools under the behaviour strategy, to develop and improve their graduated response to pupils at risk of EOTAS. The Panel would like to find out more about this so we will schedule it into their future work programme.
- The issue of undeclared exclusions was raised and we heard that Challenge Advisors robustly challenge schools around exclusions, especially those that are permanent. We also understand there has been some controversy across Wales relating to the 'off-rolling of pupils', we were pleased to hear that the practice used in Swansea on this has been highlighted as good practice.

We could clearly see from the data provided the evidence of the challenges that many of our schools face in relation to the deprivation experienced within their catchment areas. We support and emphasise the continued importance of innovative use of the Pupil Development Grant to help improve outcomes for Swansea's most vulnerable pupils.

We recognise the importance of an ongoing focus on improving, what are long-term challenges locally and nationally, of improving the attainment of free school meal pupils and other vulnerable learners like looked after children as well as those attending the Pupil Referral Unit. We do recognise there are constant challenges to improvement with learners including for example FSM pupils have nearly double the level of additional learning needs.

We were pleased to hear about the improvement in the consistency of the teacher assessment that is now helping to show a more realistic picture of pupil outcomes at Key Stage 2 and 3.

We considered how scrutiny might measure pupil outcomes and performance in the future. We heard that this could be done through the categorisation process, which shows how individual schools in Swansea are performing and what support they each require. We also understand associated measures will be developed. We agreed with you when you said, it will be important for the future data to form part of the dialogue had with everyone around pupil outcomes including parents.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our thank you to Headteacher's, teachers and school staff from across Swansea for the great work they have done over the past year, we recognise that it is proving to be truly inspirational.

We welcome your thoughts on any of the issues raised in our letter. However, can you please provide a formal written response to the following issue by 21 February 2020.

1. Can you provide us with the fixed term exclusion data broken down by duration?

Yours sincerely,

**COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES**

Convener, Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

✉ [Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk)



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education**

Committee Room 3A, Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 16 January 2020 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

C Anderson  
S J Gallagher  
B Hopkins  
M A Langstone

**Councillor(s)**

A M Day  
L S Gibbard  
L James  
J A Raynor

**Councillor(s)**

M Durke  
D W Helliwell  
S M Jones  
L J Tyler-Lloyd

**Co-opted Member(s)**

D Anderson-Thomas

**Co-opted Member(s)**

A Roberts

**Co-opted Member(s)**

**Other Attendees**

Jennifer Raynor

Cabinet Member - Education Improvement, Learning & Skills

**Officer(s)**

Mike Jones  
Helen Morgan - Rees  
Michelle Roberts  
Nick Williams

Information Officer  
Head of Education Achievement & Partnership  
Scrutiny Officer  
Director of Education

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### 1 **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

Cllr Susan Jones and Co-optees Alexander Roberts and Dave Anderson Thomas declared personal interests in Item 4.

### 2 **Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

None

### 3 **Letters and Minutes**

Minutes were received by the Panel.

### 4 **Annual Education Performance (incl. verified data) and School Categorisation**

The Panel thanked Cllr Jennifer Raynor, Nick Williams, Helen Morgan Rees and Mike Jones for providing a detailed report and attending and discussing the issues.

The Panel considered closely the detailed report provided which gave details of performance for all learners in Swansea.

The Panel noted that when looking at the data, the way of monitoring outcomes and performance is changing, as directed by Welsh Government, so this is currently in a state of flux. They heard that this was due to the introduction of the new curriculum and changes to measures, making it impossible to make effective comparisons with previous years. Moving forward performance will focus much more individual pupil outcomes.

The following points were noted from the discussion:

- Foundation phase attainment fell in 2018 and 2019. It is difficult to make a comparison on previous data. There is now a different way of measuring outcomes. Key stage 2 and 3 has strong performance overall.
- Key stage 4 outcomes remain strong relative to those across Wales.
- Key stage 5 (post 16) overall picture of improvement. Panel would like to see a breakdown of the overall picture by subject.
- Free School Meal (FSM) learners continue to attain significantly below other pupils which is of concern to the panel.
- Looked After Children educational outcomes are low but the Panel were aware of the vulnerabilities of this group of children and the volatility of the data used due to the small number in each cohort.
- Schools in areas of high deprivation continue to experience challenges in improving attainment
- The gender attainment gap between boys and girls continues to be wide but Estyn has not highlighted this an issue of concern for Swansea.
- Pupil attendance remain consistently strong
- The numbers of fixed term exclusions have increased over the past 3 years but does compare favourably with the all Wales data. The Panel were pleased to hear that the Education Improvement Service do get behind these figures to see if there are areas for improvement or practice that can be shared. The Panel noted that the figures given do not give duration. They heard that a fixed term exclusion can often be very short, even just one day. The Panel asked for a breakdown of duration.
- Pupil Referral numbers have increased. It was explained that work is continuing across schools to ensure a consistent threshold for behaviour intervention, like referral to EOTAS and exclusions. They heard that a complete smoking ban had been introduced at the school and this has had some impact on the figures. The Panel also heard that monies have been devolved to secondary, schools under the behaviour strategy, to develop and improve their graduated response to pupils at risk of EOTAS. The Panel would like to find out more about this so have agree to schedule it into the future work programme.
- Undeclared exclusions was raised and they Panel heard that Challenge Advisors robustly challenge schools around exclusions especially those that are permanent. The Panel also heard that there has been some controversy across Wales relating to the 'off-rolling of pupils'. The Panel were pleased to hear that Swansea is seen as a good practice example on this issue.

- The Panel were interested in the role of philosophy to inspire learning and encourage positive behaviour. They heard that philosophy was one of a suite of tools in the behaviour strategy by schools.
- The Panel could clearly see from the data provided, evidence of the challenges that the many of our schools face relating to deprivation within their catchment areas. They would like to support and emphasise the continued importance of innovative use of the Pupil Development Grant to help improve outcomes for Swansea's most vulnerable pupils. A visit to Waunwen Primary School to see how they work with their most vulnerable pupils and their families was suggested by a Panel member.
- The Panel recognise and emphasise the importance of an ongoing focus on improving, what are long-term challenges locally and nationally. Some of these are the attainment gap between boys and girls, improving attainment of Free School Meal pupils and other vulnerable learners like Looked After Children and those attending the Pupil Referral Unit. We recognise there are constant challenges to improvement including for example FSM pupils have nearly double level of additional learning needs.
- The Panel are pleased to see more consistency and improved teacher assessment which is helping to show a far more realistic picture at Key Stage 2 and 3 and also the continued improvement of pupil outcomes at KS5 (Post 16).
- How all the different partners who might influence the outcomes of pupils join-up and work together, including for example health, was raised and whether the scrutiny Panel needs to consider this further by speaking to those partners.
- A question was asked about how scrutiny can measure outcomes and performance in the future ...Councillors heard that through categorisation they will be able to see how schools in Swansea are performing and what support they each require. Also with the introduction of the new curriculum there will be associated measures developed. Cllr Raynor said 'how we assess fairly what measures different people require and put these together to present a comprehensive picture for everyone including parents will be key importance'. This will form part of the dialogue being had around the new curriculum. The Panel agreed that challenge advisors throughout this transition will be an even more important ear on the ground for the Authority.
- The Panel wished to thank Headteacher's, teachers and school staff across Swansea for the great work they have done over the past year. We have some inspirational staff out in our schools.

## **5 Work Programme 2019/2020**

The panel were informed of changes to the Work Programme. On the 30 April the Panel will now look at:

- Education Other than at School (progress update)
- Supporting vulnerable pupils (Pupil Deprivation Grant spend)
- Education Improvement Service Annual Performance Update

A number of possible topics for scrutiny were highlighted at this meeting for inclusion in the new work programme starting in June 2020, including

- Partnership working around education matters (including speaking to Health)

- How secondary schools are using the monies devolved to them as part of the Behaviour Strategy to improve their support for pupils at risk of EOTAS.
- Visit to Waunwen Primary School to look at how they work with their most vulnerable pupils and families.
- How individual schools across Swansea are preparing for the new Curriculum
- Use of case studies to evidence some work being done

**6 For Information - Individual School Estyn Reports published since Oct 2019**

The Panel received the Estyn Inspections for St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and Birchgrove Comprehensive. The Panel wish to congratulate these and all those schools who have had inspections over the past year. Their outcomes evidence the hard work and improvements being made by Headteachers, school staff, school governors and the education improvement service.

The meeting ended at 5.35 pm

# Agenda Item 5



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills

### Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 13 February 2020

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme Update**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To update the scrutiny panel on progress with the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme
<b>Content:</b>	Information on progress with the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	Consider the information provided and make their views known to the Cabinet Member via a Conveners Letter
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Jennifer Raynor, Education Improvement, Learning and Skills
<b>Lead Officer &amp; Report Author:</b>	Brian Roles, Head of Education Planning and Resources Tel: 01792 636357 E-mail: <a href="mailto:brian.roles@swansea.gov.uk">brian.roles@swansea.gov.uk</a>

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 A report to the Scrutiny Panel on the 18 October 2017 provided an update on progress with the 21st Century Schools Programme and the Panel agreed to include a further update on the Programme in the work programme for 2019-2020.
- 1.2 This report will provide an overview of progress to date and the Head of Education Planning and Resources will attend and answer any questions the panel may have.

#### **2. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme**

- 2.1 The Council's 21st Century Schools Programme continues to focus on:
  - Learning environments for children and young people aged from 3 to 19 that will enable the successful implementation of strategies for school improvement and better educational outcomes

- Greater economy through better use of resources to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the education estate and public service provision
- A sustainable education system with all schools meeting a 21<sup>st</sup> century schools standard, and reducing the recurrent costs and carbon footprint

2.2 The priority investment schemes were identified through the following range of complementary objective criteria:

Standards (where there were specific concerns), risk, condition, specific suitability issues, landscape, basic need (where very clear shortfall in places such as Welsh medium), sufficiency (surplus places), viability (size), sustainability (future demographic trends) and deliverability (how readily it could be achieved).

2.3 Major priority options identified through the extensive stakeholder engagement process have been delivered through Band A, and the remaining scheme is due for completion by September 2020.

2.4 Band B remains consistent with local policies, priorities and commitments, as well as the priorities and specific criteria set down by the Welsh Government (WG) as follows:

*To provide an efficient and effective educational infrastructure that will meet current and future demand for places by 2024*

- Ensuring the right size schools in the right location, with enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education, whilst ensuring effective and efficient use of the educational estate
- Reducing backlog maintenance costs by at least 50% whilst improving any category C or D condition buildings to A or B

*To optimise the use of infrastructure and resources to deliver public services for our communities by 2024. This includes:*

- Flexibility of assets with the aspiration that all facilities receiving investment commit to making assets available for community use if local demand exists
- Co-located public services on site if local demand exists

2.5 The robust basis of the Council's programme has been repeatedly scrutinised by the WG and subject to their ultimate approval. As with any plan it is not a static document, and indeed, the whole programme has required successive reviews in the light of the changing timescales and financial parameters for the programme. It has also continued to evolve in the light of changing demands (demographic trends and condition and business continuity issues), political priorities, capital resourcing, and fresh opportunities (such as the Local Development Plan).



### **3. Band B Scoping and Delivery**

- 3.1 The programme to transform Swansea's schools' estate continues with access to capital investment through the Council's approved 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme (SOP). The approved programme envelope is £149.7 million, since amended to £149.5m, to reflect the reciprocal increase in the Band A programme. This is subject to the approval of individual project business cases. The individual forecast project cost at SOP stage is subject to review as the project intelligence is increased with for example ground investigations, other surveys, and the identification of abnormal costs. This is defined in the strategic and outline business cases and the full business case when approval of final project cost is sought from Cabinet and WG.
- 3.2 Gorseinon Primary is carried over from Band A. This is a new build 1.5 form entry primary school future proofed to 2 form entry to replace the current category C and C- condition buildings which are currently located across split sites. The revised FPR7 and change request to WG for the value of £6.882m were approved in February 2019. Work started on site in June 2019, and the new playground was completed and opened to the public in July 2019. The school building is now watertight and is on schedule to open to pupils in September 2020.
- 3.3 The £9.642m new build, bespoke Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) facility on the Cockett House site is also under construction. The demolition phase was completed in January 2019, the current main contractor appointed in May 2019 and the new facilities are on track to open to pupils in the autumn of 2020.
- 3.4 The proposed new build for the Welsh medium YGG Tan-y-lan at Beaconsview Road, Clase obtained planning permission in May 2019 and it is anticipated that the construction phase will commence in early summer 2020. This new build will enable the capacity to increase from 130 to 420 places plus nursery; an additional 290 places plus nursery. The total estimated cost of the new build for YGG Tan-y-lan is £9.9m. Of that just over £1m is to be 100% funded by WG against the Welsh-medium grant, with the £8.881m remaining cost against the overall Band B programme envelope. It is expected that the new school build will open to pupils in the autumn of 2021, subject to Cabinet and WG approvals.
- 3.5 The proposed new build for another Welsh medium primary; YGG Tirdeunaw obtained planning permission in September 2019 and it is anticipated that construction will start in the spring of 2020 and open to pupils in the autumn of 2021. This new build will enable the capacity to increase from 420 to 525 places plus nursery; an additional 105 places plus nursery. The school is currently situated at the former Daniel James Comprehensive School site. The new build will be on part of the current YGG Bryntawe site in Penlan. The total estimated cost of the new build for YGG Tirdeunaw is £11.551m. Of that £1.270m is to

be 100% funded by WG against the Welsh-medium grant, with the £10.280m remaining cost against the overall Band B programme envelope.

- 3.6 The proposed extension and remodelling to the Welsh medium secondary school YG Gwyr, to increase capacity by 195 to give an overall capacity of 1273, obtained planning approval in May 2019. The total estimated cost of the project for YG Gwyr is £6.718m and it is planned to commence construction in spring 2020 with a phased handover from April to September 2021.
- 3.7 The first stage contract has been awarded for the pre-construction phase works for the remodelling, refurbishment and extension of Bishopston Comprehensive School to address conditional and suitability issues. The total estimated cost of the project for at outline business case stage was £11.866m. At this stage it is anticipated that work will start on site in July 2020, with a phased completion extending to October 2022.
- 3.8 Work will continue to develop detailed business cases for the remaining priority capital schemes, as officer capacity and resources allow, in order to access the remaining available WG capital investment at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.9 The Band B Programme is almost three times the size of Band A and we are seeking to deliver it with less officer capacity and resources across the Council. This reduced capacity and resilience within the Council is exacerbated by the demands of other capital funding initiatives that we are also seeking to deliver in relation to Reducing Infant Class Sizes, Childcare Grant, Flying Start and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Hubs. There is also a lack of capacity and resilience outside the authority as the number of contractors on the current Framework has reduced, and the financial risks for those remaining have increased.
- 3.10 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act underpins the programme to transform Swansea's schools by taking a long term approach to the development, maintenance and improvement in schools in relation to demographic trends and household projections. We work closely with Corporate Building services and other services within the Council to ensure that developments will meet demands in the future and any new and existing buildings are as energy efficient as possible and/or carbon neutral.

**Appendices:**

None

**Background papers:**

[Cabinet report 20 July 2017](#) (link to full report) Quality in Education (QEd) - Emerging Proposals and Investment Priorities for the Next Band of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

# Agenda Item 6



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills

Overview Briefing for Education Scrutiny Performance Panel  
13 February 2020

### Briefing on School Transport

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide an overview of the current home to school transport arrangements, challenges and opportunities.
<b>Content:</b>	Information on the current demands, cost pressures and other challenges in relation to home to school transport and continuing robust management action.
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	Consider the information provided and make their views known to the Cabinet Member via a Conveners Letter.
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Jennifer Raynor, Education Improvement, Learning and Skills
<b>Lead Officer &amp; Report Author:</b>	Brian Roles, Head of Education Planning and Resources Tel: 01792 636357 E-mail: <a href="mailto:brian.roles@swansea.gov.uk">brian.roles@swansea.gov.uk</a>
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Paul Cridland

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Council provides home to school transport on the basis of its published Home to School Transport Policy (see link in appendices). This is in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's (WG's) Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. Free transport is provided for pupils who live two miles or more from their catchment area primary school or three miles or more from their catchment area secondary school. The distance is measured by the shortest available walking route in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy, the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and the WG's Learner Travel - Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance (June 2014). Free transport is provided from the beginning of the school year in which pupils reach the age of five but is not provided for younger / nursery aged children.

- 1.2 For children with statements of additional learning needs, the general transport policy described above applies. The Council will provide free transport for children with additional learning needs where they are placed by the Education Directorate at a mainstream school other than their local catchment school, at a specialist teaching facility other than at their local school, or in a special school, as long as they live 2 miles or more away in the case of primary pupils and 3 miles or more in the case of secondary school pupils.

The local authority does have discretion to provide free home to school transport according to the nature of the additional learning needs of the child. If the Education Directorate feels that a child's needs can be met at their local mainstream school, but the parents choose an alternative mainstream school, the parent is then responsible for any transport arrangements and costs.

- 1.3 Details of pupils in receipt of free home to school transport are as follows:

	<b>2018/2019</b>	<b>2017/2018</b>	<b>2016/2017</b>	<b>2015/2016</b>
Number of mainstream pupils	4,366	4,410	4,552	4,300
Cost of transport for mainstream pupils	£3.627m	£3.387m	£3.629m	£3.764m
Number of ALN pupils	678	692	676	694
Cost of transport for ALN pupils	£4.071m	£3.564m	£3.256m	£3.736m
Number of mainstream contracts	151	139	140	161
Number of ALN contracts	409	422	359	400

- 1.4 Whilst expectations continue to be raised nationally, the number of pupils in receipt of free transport has remained fairly stable. However, the overall cost of transport provision has increased significantly against a base budget that has generally not reflected even contract indexation rates. The medium term financial plan and operational plans reflect the need to identify further significant actions to mitigate the cost pressures and seek to ensure longer term sustainability.

## **2. Statutory Requirements**

- 2.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 requires local authorities to provide home to school transport for eligible children. In deciding whether or not free transport should be provided, the council is required to take into account the age of the child, the nature of the route, any wish the parent may have for the child to be educated at a school

which provides religious education, any wish of the parent for the child to be provided with education in Welsh, the needs of disabled learners or learners with learning difficulties, and any particular needs of learners who are children 'looked after' by a local authority.

2.2 This area of provision supports a number of corporate priorities, organisational aims and objectives including:

- Improving Education and Skills
- Tackling Poverty
- Transformation and Sustainability

2.3 Most of the cost of home to school transport relates to areas of statutory provision, as set out in the approved local policy. Any changes in the limited remaining areas of discretionary policy require a full statutory consultation process and inevitably the risk of legal challenge, including potential Judicial Review.

### **3. How is Home to School transport delivered?**

3.1 The home to school transport policy (see link in appendix) is overseen by the Education Directorate, whilst the Integrated Transport Unit within Place are responsible for the operational delivery of the transport needs in accordance with the approved policy.

### **4. Key Stakeholders**

4.1 WG determines national policy and the expectations of local authority provision through the Learner Travel measure. Parents and pupils are most directly impacted by the policy and local arrangements and will understandably focus on the perceived safety of walking routes, rather than the objectively assessed availability of such routes. Community police and local councillors will also have a view on such matters. Availability is assessed in accordance with specific guidelines that may not reflect an individual's view of the safety of a particular walking route.

### **5. Finance**

5.1 Significant savings have been delivered over recent years, in addition to the mitigation of other inflationary cost drivers), through consistently robust management of the service and regular re-tendering of bus and taxi operator contracts and routes, to as far as possible optimise efficiency of delivery. This has been achieved without any reliance on costly external consultancy support. These savings particularly relate to special needs transport but also reflect the impact of the improved 'spread' of Welsh medium primary and secondary provision over recent years through the Quality in Education (QEd) strategic programme. Significant savings have also been achieved by regular retendering of

mainstream school contracts, approximately ¼ of routes are retendered each year.

- 5.2 Wherever possible the fullest possible use of the Council's in-house fleet is ensured before contracting with other operators. Constructive discussion has taken place with the relevant officers in the Education Directorate and the Integrated Transport Unit which indicates little scope for further savings to be delivered in this area at the moment due to the age and make up of the current fleet. However, further detailed work on this area forms part of the wider corporate transport review.
- 5.3 National changes to criteria regarding 'safe' routes, outside the Council's control, are likely to significantly increase costs of provision in the future as well as undermining some of the work that has been undertaken to deliver 'invest to save' options through investment in 'available walking routes'.
- 5.4 Home to School transport currently (2019-20 projections) includes the following key areas of spending:
- Transport for special educational needs (SEN) pupils (£2.8m) – by its very nature this represents the most significant single element of cost as well as the area of greatest demand and cost pressure, reflecting the legal requirement to provide appropriate (often specialist / adapted) transport to meet stated needs, generally requiring passenger assistants.
  - Transport to English medium secondary schools (£1.3m), generally reflecting a lack of available walking routes to specific schools. There are a small number of particularly large sums in relation to specific schools, for example Bishopston.
  - Transport to Welsh medium secondary schools (£0.9m), where the far larger catchment areas mean that there is inevitably a greater proportion of pupils who will be more than 3 miles away and therefore eligible for free transport.
  - Transport to Special Schools (£1.3m) – again reflecting the legal requirement to provide appropriate (often specialist / adapted) transport to meet stated needs, requiring passenger assistants, and reflecting the increased number of school places.
  - Transport to Voluntary Aided Schools (£0.4m primary & £0.3m secondary)
  - Transport to Welsh medium primary schools (£0.5m) – again reflecting the larger catchment areas but reducing relatively over time as the County wide coverage of provision has been improved. Passenger assistants are provided
  - Transport to English medium primary schools (0.2m) – whilst there is generally appropriate provision within 2 miles of pupils homes, costs are incurred in respect of more rural locations of pupils, particularly the North Gower and the lack of available walking routes. Passenger assistants are provided

- The largely discretionary financial assistance that is currently provided to post 16 learners (£0.6m in total), although the element which supports the stated needs of pupils is statutory and amounts to almost £0.3m of this total cost.

## **6. Current Performance Trends**

6.1 The latest total projected spend in 2019-20 amounts to £8.3m against an approved budget of £7.6m, a reported gross overspend of around £0.7m offset in part by an underspend of £0.2m against transport for SEN pupils in out of county placements.

6.2 Continuing robust management action has continued to identify and realise savings to mitigate the scale of cost and demand pressures facing the services.

- significant work has already been undertaken and is continuing to identify efficiency savings in the provision of transport for learners under existing policy constraints. These delivered savings amounted to £96,614 in 2018/2019 and £204,273 in a full year (2019/2020) through a detailed review of current delivery arrangements
- of these most recent measures the largest single saving relates directly to a review of post 16 transport payments and has generated savings of £41,600 in 2018/2019 and £62,400 in a full year (2019/2020). This represents an earlier delivery against a specific Medium Term Financial Plan savings target and consequently reduces the further potential savings from any policy change
- whilst significant, the above savings are more than offset by the growing cost pressures and demands across home to school transport budgets as a whole. Moreover, whilst the scale of cost and demand pressures have not previously been reflected in approved base budgets, any general 'efficiency' savings realised (£141,873) have been captured corporately towards wider Council savings targets, and the base budgets adjusted accordingly, leaving the cost and demand pressures as a reported overspend against the Education Directorate budget

## **7. Future Challenges and Opportunities**

7.1 As can be seen from the analysis above, the most significant areas of transport costs, as well as most of the areas of continuing pressure, relate to areas of statutory SEN provision. There are also significant areas of mainstream transport provision which would remain no matter what policy changes were to be considered for the relatively smaller areas of remaining discretionary provision. Consequently, it is proposed that work continues to focus on the areas outlined in the following paragraphs.

7.2 Further tightening of ALN (Special Education Needs, Special Teaching Facilities and Special Schools) and Post 16 demands as well as continuing to build capacity within Swansea Council to meet the needs of all learners. This could further mitigate areas of particular pressure within the home to school transport budget as a whole. Transport provision here will still need to be considered in line with the review of the mainstream education travel policy, but there is scope for the consideration of additional aspects, such as:

- expectations around the use of motability cars
- review of petrol allowances to parents
- independent travel training provision
- time limiting and regular reviews of transport provision

7.3 There will be a considerable degree of overlap and interdependencies with other reviews where similar provisions will be considered (e.g. the use of motability cars may apply equally to Social Care clients) and the role of the ITU in provision of more efficient corporate transport will also need to be considered.

7.4 The Education Other Than At Schools (EOTAS) service includes Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Home Tuition. Work will include reviews of policy and process with a view to identifying opportunities for a more corporate provision of transport services should this prove financially beneficial and a refinement of current transport provision.

7.5 The Highways and Transportation Commissioning Review identified the creation of new/improved walking routes between schools (and communities) as a potential revenue saving in the medium term. This saving would be realised by a reduced burden on the authority to provide statutory transport for education where a 'safe' walking route within a statutory radius (2 miles and 3 miles) exists.

Three routes were proposed, offering potential savings of £280k per annum:

Birchgrove (£80k)  
Kingsbridge (£80k)  
Clyne (£120k)

Work has already commenced on constructing the route between Gowerton and Kingsbridge with completion due in March 2020. Feasibility studies are under way on the other 2 routes. Subject to feasibility and acquisition of land etc., the creation of these routes will require capital investment through Local Transport Grant.

Whilst the creation of such routes is clearly a positive action there is likely to be a degree of opposition from parents who will challenge



these routes as being unsuitable for their children to walk to school. Should such objections succeed and a route ultimately be found to be 'not available' then any saving associated with that route would disappear.

- 7.6 The Welsh Government Mytravel pass for those aged 16-21 that provides a 30% saving on journeys could provide further opportunities but there needs to be a viable public bus service for a travel card to be any help.

## **8. Risks**

- 8.1 There will always be a risk of challenge where the demands and expectations of parents are not met and when changes in provision are proposed.
- 8.2 There is also a continuing risk of further national policy changes which could further raise expectations of home to school transport as well as in future potentially limiting the income that can be generated from the sale of surplus seats.

## **9. Key Issues in Summary**

- 9.1 These include:
- the statutory and emotive nature of home to school transport provision, particularly with other national policy drivers, for example in relation to the Welsh language, poverty, and post 16
  - the likely legal and other challenges to any further review of the limited areas of remaining discretionary transport provision
  - the scale of demand and cost pressures, exacerbated by the raising of expectations nationally
  - the significant impact of continuing robust management action against a base budget that has generally not reflected any contract indexation
  - the challenging savings targets (including those captured corporately) to further mitigate the scale of cost pressures, requiring a particular focus on ALN as part of wider strategic review of delivery models
- 9.2 Budget overspends in previous years, as well as the current financial year, reflect both the continuing raising of parental expectations, as well as the scale of demand and cost pressures whilst budgets have largely remained unchanged in cash terms, even without specific savings targets.
- 9.3 The service aims to achieve a sustainable level of provision in the longer term, continuing to improve the consistency and rigour with which transport needs are assessed and reviewed, coherent with wider educational outcomes such as the encouragement of

independent travel. Future budget proposals reflect the anticipated continuing demand and cost pressures, as well as further challenging savings targets from further action to mitigate the scale of these pressures. Whilst challenging, the proposed medium term financial plan should provide a realistic basis on which to deliver services over the next few years.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Home to School Transport Policy / link

# Agenda Item 7

## Education Scrutiny Performance Panel Work Programme 2019/2020

Date	Items to be discussed
<b>Meeting 1</b> 13 Jun 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Key issues facing Education/Schools over coming year</li> <li>2. Panel discuss, plan and agree work programme for coming year</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 2</b> 11 Jul 19	<b>School 1 - Dylan Thomas Community Comprehensive School visit</b> Good Practice: Wellbeing: How the school meets the needs of their children, the challenges they face and the way they meet them. School visit to see approach at school level.
<b>Meeting 3</b> 12 Sep 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elective Home Education</li> <li>2. Performance of pupils receiving Free School Meals</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 4</b> 17 Oct 19	<b>School 2 – Penclawdd Primary School</b> (Red) Meet with Headteacher and Chair of Governors at School (include preparation session with the Challenge Adviser)
<b>Meeting 5</b> 14 Nov 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing on Healthy Schools Initiative</li> <li>2. National Mission and Developing a Transformational Curriculum. This session will consider how schools are responding to the draft new curriculum for Wales and the related 4 enabling objectives.</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 6</b> 19 Dec 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Session looking at Additional Learning Needs Reform and progress in Swansea</li> <li>2. Annual Audit of Schools report (for information)</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 7</b> 16 Jan 20 4pm	1. Annual Education Performance (incl. verified data) and School Categorisation (Cabinet Member invited) including Looked After Children Educational Outcomes
<b>Meeting 8</b> 13 Feb 20 4pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme Update (including progress with EOTAS new build)</li> <li>2. Session on School Transport</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 9</b> 18 Feb 20 10.30am	Annual Budget as it relates to Education matters
<b>Meeting 10</b> 12 Mar 20 2pm	<b>School 3 –Pentrehafod Comprehensive School - confirmed</b> To look at Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) prevention - a school visit to see the approach at school level
<b>Meeting 11</b> 30 Apr 20 4pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Other Than At School - progress with improving outcomes</li> <li>• Education Improvement Service Performance update and ERW progress against priorities locally and regionally (Annual)</li> <li>• Supporting Vulnerable Learners - Pupil Development Grant spend (Annual)</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 12</b> 21 May 20 TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roundtable with PISA (formally the Swansea Skills Partnership)</li> <li>• Planning year ahead in Scrutiny</li> </ul>
<b>Work Programme 2020/21</b>	
<b>Meeting 1</b> June TBA	<b>Session on Post 16 – Pupil performance at sixth form and colleges – TBC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for and performance of post 16 pupils in sixth form and colleges</li> <li>• Speak to sixth form Headteachers, Education Improvement Service and Cabinet Member</li> <li>• ERW Leader of Learning for this aspect (ERW)</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 2</b> July TBA	<b>School 1 - Waunwen Primary School</b> , visit to discuss how they work with their most vulnerable pupils

