



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 8TH JANUARY 2019

SUBJECT: DRAFT EDUCATION ATTAINMENT STRATEGY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the work being undertaken to develop an attainment strategy for Caerphilly, to share the progress to date and seek the views of Members on the draft strategy prior to presentation to Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Councils draft attainment strategy is attached at Appendix 1. The draft strategy sets out a proposed vision for improving attainment across our schools that is linked explicitly to the priorities identified within the Councils self-evaluation document and the systemic issues that emerged throughout the summit process that took place over the autumn.
- 2.2 While the attainment strategy is not yet complete, it does contain a draft vision, some key contextual information, a set of guiding principles, a narrative for #teamcaerphilly, and some headline priorities and findings.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The strategy supports the delivery and progression of the Corporate Plan, specifically the Councils adopted Wellbeing Objective 1 – to improve education opportunities for all.
- 3.2 Within this objective, the attainment strategy aims to specifically progress the following outcomes:
2. Raise standards of attainment.
 3. Reduce the impact of poverty on attainment for both vocational and non-vocational qualifications to provide equality of opportunity.
 6. Improve 'Digital Skills' for all ages.
 7. Improve the learning environment.
 8. Safeguard all children and young people in order to create a climate for learning, particularly for those most vulnerable.
- 3.3 The attainment strategy is aligned to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:
- A prosperous Wales – The draft education attainment strategy will help develop a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

- A more equal Wales – The focus within the strategy on driving up standards for vulnerable groups will help create a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The appended strategy has been under development since September 2018. The stages of development are set out below:
1. EAS Professional Advice issued.
 2. One Day Diagnostic undertaken with senior LEA, EAS staff and Cabinet Member assessing the performance and key issues underpinning performance at every secondary school
 3. A Summit meeting held with each secondary school at which Head Teachers were asked to account for performance and any known underlying issues as well as set out their plans for improvement
 4. Further Summit meetings were held with schools where specific issues were identified
 5. Key Priorities for improvement within the Education Service Self Evaluation shared with Scrutiny, CMT and PDM
 6. Initial draft of attainment strategy developed proposing the vision, initial context, guiding principles, narrative, findings and plans
 7. Further revisions of initial draft undertaken to organise findings and actions
 8. Draft attainment strategy shared with the Education Advisory Board December
 9. Draft attainment strategy shared with Schools Causing Concern meeting
- 4.2 The proposed vision within the strategy is described as follows:
- “To raise standards and ensure our learners are healthy, confident, proud and ambitious and can access high quality educational opportunities, settings and experiences.”
- 4.3 A set of guiding principles established by the Caerphilly Learning Group as a means of securing learning excellence have been included in the strategy in order to support its delivery.
- 4.4 The strategy also includes a draft narrative for #TeamCaerphilly, which is the approach that the Council intends to take in everything it will do to improve outcomes. The narrative is aligned directly to the four enabling objectives of Welsh Government’s Education in Wales: Our National Mission policy.
- 4.5 Some of the key priorities and headline findings identified within the strategy are as follows:
- Improve outcomes at end of Key Stage 4 and 5.
 - Improve the performance of boys and pupils identified as e-FSM across all phases of education.
 - Build on the recent increase in attendance data to achieve improvements over time.
 - Reduce the number of exclusions across secondary schools in line with regional and national data.
 - Leaders need to be able to access, and fully engage in, high quality support and development.
 - Focus on improving standards of literacy, particularly in years 7, 8 and 9.
 - Improve the quality of teaching and learning through an enhanced focus on teaching and classroom practice.
 - Ensure all schools take advantage of professional learning opportunities.
 - Enhance resilience of leaders, senior leadership teams and schools through an additional, tailored programme of support.

- 4.6 A strategic plan is currently under development that will include the actions that will drive improvement. The plan will be divided in to actions for schools, actions for the LEA and actions for the EAS. This draft plan will be shared with the Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This proposal contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in the links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that:

Long Term – The strategy is intended to put in place the foundations and interventions required to bring about sustainable improvement in attainment over the long term and to create a highly skilled and ambitious workforce of the future for Caerphilly.

Prevention – Maximising the opportunities for all learners to reach their full potential should increase the likelihood of those learners going on to secure long term employment and become self-reliant.

Integration – the strategy is designed to align and integrate the work of the Schools, Local Education Authority and the Education Achievement Service

Collaboration – the strategy document has been shared with all of the Gwent Local Education Authorities and has been shaped by good practice identified across the region. Opportunities to collaborate on actions will be explored as a matter of course.

Involvement – the process that has shaped the strategy to date has been inclusive of the Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors of secondary schools, the Education Achievement Service, the Local Education Authority and a number of external professionals. As part of the wider consultation on the strategy stakeholder involvement will be widened.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed because the issues covered are for information purposes only, therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It is likely that budget will need to be allocated to the delivery of the associated action plan but as the actions are currently being developed, it is not yet possible to identify the likely quantum. It is anticipated that any required investment will be funded from directorate in year underspends subject to the necessary approvals,

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members of the Scrutiny committee are asked to consider and comment on the content of the draft education attainment strategy prior to presentation to Cabinet.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To ensure that the views of the Scrutiny Committee are considered prior to the education attainment strategy being presented to Cabinet.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

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Consultees: Cllr Philippa Marsden, Cabinet Member Education and Achievement
Christina HARRY, Interim Chief Executive
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Debbie Harteveld, Managing Director EAS
Cllr Colin Mann, Leader of the Plaid Group

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Draft Education Attainment Strategy