

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION & LEISURE

JCC MEETING – SCHOOLS AND LEI

23 June 2016

PRESENT:	
Keri Cole	Chief Education Officer
Lisa Haile	HR Manager
Sue Richards	Principal Finance Officer
Ravi Pawar	ASCL
Mererid Lewis Davies	UCAC
Pamela Ireland	NUT
Neil Funnell	GMB
Jordan Marsden	UNISON
APOLOGIES	
Matthew Ferris	(NASUWT)
NOT IN ATTENDANCE:	UNITE (no apologies received) ATL and NAHT (no representative at this time)

AGENDA ITEM NO:	DISCUSSION / DECISION	ACTION BY/DATE
1	Welcome and Apologies Keri Cole (KC) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for attending.	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting 09.02.2016 Were agreed.	
3	Matters arising from the previous minutes LH fed back against the points arising from those minutes. VER Process: Concern was expressed in the last meeting that staff may not get to hear about the VER process in schools. The Voluntary Early Retirement Process was working well. There was no reason to think that head teachers were not partaking or prepared to partake in this exercise. No queries had been received this year as to where the forms or opportunities were and a lot of interest had been shown.	

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	<p>A number of VERs has progressed this year and more and more schools are showing a keen interest.</p> <p>The Capability Procedure: The Capability Procedure was circulated in advance of this meeting as agreed.</p>	
4	<p>Workforce Planning Exercise (Schools)</p> <p>LH confirmed that the School's Workforce Planning Exercise of 2015/2016 had supported to date 14 Voluntary Early Retirements, 6 Settlements and 10 Voluntary Redundancies. Schools were doing all that they could with LA support to negate redundancies wherever possible.</p> <p>Two Schools that had explored the voluntary loss of staff from their structures as far as they could had now progressed to a compulsory redundancy position.</p> <p>Bedwas High School had confirmed a Learning Coach and a Youth Worker Post redundant and whilst work was ongoing to support the two staff affected by this decision to gain suitable alternative employment, one had secured alternative employment to commence in October 2016 and the other was in the process of doing so. Both remained entitled to their redundancy payments under the Local Government Modification Order regulations.</p> <p>Heolddu School have declared a Cover Supervisor Post redundant. The process to identify an individual employee at risk from this position has temporarily halted due to the sickness absence and operation of a member of staff. As in all cases, the School and the Authority will work together to try and negate this eventual redundancy but clearly can offer no guarantee in this regard.</p>	
5	<p>ALN Review Update</p> <p>KC advised that she would take the opportunity at each JCC to talk through key matters affecting education.</p> <p>She asked those present to think of the matters affecting the service in the form of a hexagon with 6 sides:</p> <p>The sides are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards Attendance (currently lowest in Wales) Reducing impact on Poverty Completing EOTAS Review Completing ALN Review 21st Century schools Agenda (those issues that fall beyond the building project). 	

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	<p>and in the middle:</p> <p>The MTFP - where all that we are seeking to do has to be within the context of budget reduction and an ever decreasing pot of money.</p> <p>KC advised that whatever we do, safeguarding will underpin everything and service changes will be managed safely for our staff.</p> <p>KC clarified that the MTFP has pushed all services to look at their essential, desirable and statutory services in terms of downsizing and whilst many of our services are discretionary, we can find that many sit in a grey area. Not to provide a service could lead to it becoming a statutory requirement down the line and officers/members in the decision making process understand this.</p> <p>For example our out of county placements are low because we put a lot of money into interventions. We are looking at all our services in terms of whether they offer value for money; are out of date; could be done better, more efficiently, reconfigured.</p> <p>In terms of the ALN Review - Our map for provision of relevant and appropriate services for our children is reliant on headteachers who are willing to engage with us to provide opportunities for these children as close to school as possible.</p> <p>Bases at schools are becoming more and more challenging per se and this can have an impact on the School's data and categorisation. It is not easy to encourage schools to take on that data position or challenge. Money and Kudos does not come with a base, they are a lot of hard work and headteachers know that.</p> <p>Our ultimate challenge is to look at making this position more equitable for schools in order to make it easier for children to remain at school.</p> <p>There are a number of factors to the ALN Review and the wonders of science has had a great impact on children, enabling them to access mainstream schools with some additional support, e.g. cochlear ear implants.</p> <p>The bases we really need to work harder for are those that can cater for challenging behaviour.</p> <p>KC clarified that four consultation processes commenced this year to review four of the crunchier issues of ALN.</p>	

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	<p>Funding and registration - where the LA have attempted to stamp out all 'anomalies' of funding.</p> <p>Education Psychology - One growing area of need is children's mental health. An educational psychologist has recently been recruited and we are also looking to appoint a Clinical Psychologist and CAMS nurse.</p> <p>We are looking at the funding that we have and are protecting the areas where there is great need. Where we have had difficulty recruiting we are experimenting with options.</p> <p>Additional support Funding – This is where we are looking at transferring money to Schools, whilst protecting staff flexibility for schools to deploy staff with the relevant skills to meet pupil needs.</p> <p>The review supports that there needs to be more clarity around the Teaching Assistant and Learning Support Assistant workforce in terms of their roles with pupils. The criteria to ensure the best placement of a member of staff with a pupil can be more robust and more targeted for best effect for both parties.</p> <p>Challenging Behaviour – It is true that no one wants to house a provision/base for children with challenging needs but we are absolutely committed to meeting the needs of these children. This consultation group is on hold at the moment.</p>	
6	<p>Newbridge SRB</p> <p>KC advised that:</p> <p>This is a long established base that I would have never chosen to close. Newbridge School is however growing and the decision of the governors is that they need the space. I have been working with the School over a period of time now to support them in their decision to close the base. The lead officer is Jacky Elias.</p> <p>Decisions have to be made where to place the children in this base next and in this regard we will work closely with individual pupils and parents.</p> <p>The transition path for staff is a process that the School holds responsibility for.</p>	

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	<p>NF confirmed that members had approached the union, clearly confused over this position and what would happen next.</p> <p>KC confirmed that we will support the head teacher to give a clear message and we will look to resolve this position with the School over the next year, year and a half.</p> <p>NF advised that responses to issues requested from the head teacher did not answer the staffs' questions. There have been no clear responses coming back from the School on any of the staffs' issues. They were told their numbers would need to reduce but going into the summer holidays, the head teacher is not engaging with them.</p> <p>KC advised that the Authority puts money into the School to fund the base for that year. She advised, I did meet with the Governors some time ago and this appeared to be a relatively simple position for the School to follow through their agreed processes. Usually in a school of this size, the first position to cover is whether the staff can be absorbed into the School.</p> <p>NF referred to a member of staff who was being taken through a 3 stage process to end his contract and advised the member of staff had originally been taken on to cover the sickness of a member of staff and had continued in that role since 2012 under a renewable fixed term contract each year.</p> <p>LH advised that her team are clarifying any issues on contract status with the School and guiding them as to the appropriate position in those circumstances. LH agreed that the staff were currently clearly confused as to who held responsibility for them despite consistent references to this responsibility resting with the School.</p> <p>KC advised the School needed to validate the contract position and respond in relevance to the agreed procedures. She advised this is no different to head teachers advising that they can no longer provide a specific class at School.</p> <p>The question was asked about alternative provision for these pupils.</p> <p>KC advised:</p> <p>Key Stage 2 – There is provision for Key Stage 2 at the PRU Learning Centre currently and one of our priorities is to look at the possibility of extending the PRU.</p>	

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	<p>EOTAS - Over recent months there has been a resurgence in EOTAS and other authorities are experiencing the same. Authorities are experiencing pressure on Key Stage 4 and more and more children are struggling to access school.</p> <p>In Caerphilly we do not take children out of School if we do not need to. In the last week we have had experience of 3 children suffering psychotic episodes and we are increasingly hearing of children suffering with eating disorders and phobias. The pressures on the Service are certainly increasing.</p> <p>Learning Pathway Centres (LPC) – In our exploration of options for children, we have actively worked with head teachers to provide 3 Learning Pathway Centres across the Borough. These are not bases behind the back door, these present a way for schools to work together to keep children at school where they should be. The pathway centres will offer some flexibility in the curriculum and schools can work together to provide programmes that will have best effect for the individual child. The LA will support this by boosting resources on the 3 school sites.</p> <p>The question was asked, what might this look like? KC confirmed the packages will be bespoke but will include 2/3 days at School - Maths/English. Farm Work may be an option for the other 2 days. The other elements of this provision will be bespoke to fit the child to best effect.</p> <p>The Centres will be supported by a Teacher in a Charge and the School will have the money for a teacher but it will be up to them as to whether they second a teacher or support the curriculum via a number of teachers. The Centres will also have a designated Youth Worker and Family Worker.</p> <p>The LA will facilitate and support a School to school Agreement to place a child. These centres will meet the needs of Children who have lost their way and who cannot do a full day at school. They will however benefit and potentially excel at the mix, the different things they can do, the work experience that they will get. These centres will not be for your higher end challenging pupils.</p> <p>It will be a year down the line before we will be able to report on any benefits from this way of working but schools are actively engaging with us.</p>	

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	<p>LH confirmed that the advert for a Teacher In Charge has recently been placed to Caerphilly schools encouraging a secondment.</p> <p>KC advised: One School had recently withdrawn from the opportunity to provide a centre at their school and we are looking at options to provide the 3rd base. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni will in due course be supported to mirror this position.</p> <p>RP spoke about the danger of children falling off the pathway of education completely with education focus moving to GCSE rather than vocational education and double science becoming compulsory that many children will not be able to access.</p> <p>KC confirmed that funding schools through measures such as active pathways has been around for a long time and learning pathways is another way forward to support these pupils.</p> <p>KC confirmed that she will be supporting the pathway centres as soon as they are geographical locations are confirmed.</p>	
7	<p>Cwmcarn High School</p> <p>KC confirmed that the budget out turn for Cwmcarn High School shows them to be £340,000 in deficit this year.</p> <p>JB (Agency Headteacher) left the School in March 2015 and Mrs Perry has now taking over as Executive Headteacher.</p> <p>The budget for next year will be set against a maximum 51 pupil entry and all will be aware that the Governors have taken the decision to progress closure of the school over the next two years.</p> <p>LH confirmed that prior to this decision of the governors, Mrs Perry had no option but to support the school to downsize regardless. The numbers of staff outweigh the number of pupils that they are catering for extensively in comparison to the budget they have available to pay staff. Some classes are running with very small numbers that would not be considered viable in any other school and this is a position that the school cannot sustain for any length of time.</p>	

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	<p>A meeting with staff was held at the beginning of June and 23 volunteers had come forward to seek redeployment and/or progress an interest in redundancy. The Authority will now look very closely at finding redeployment/ match opportunities for these staff by revisiting the workforce planning exercise of 2015/2016.</p> <p>KC confirmed that the 'Inquest' that was scheduled this week could result in a further pupil blow for the school. Many hours of staff time (HR and Finance) have been spent at the school and Mrs Perry is working to support the staff in this context whilst running the school to ensure a continuing education for the pupils.</p> <p>SR confirmed that the school is continuing to lose numbers following this decision. Neighbouring schools are inheriting children that might have ordinarily looked to Cwmcarn High School.</p> <p>KC advised that this is a position that will be managed sensitively. There needs to be an onus on placing staff and securing longevity of employment whilst continuing the education for pupils. We can call upon neighbouring schools to help.</p> <p>SR confirmed that Mrs Perry had undertaken extensive work on planning/ understanding the curriculum and the skills mix of staff in situ. She will understand and seek to manage the risk position attached to staff leaving.</p> <p>The question was asked: This appears to be a desperate situation, shouldn't we be fighting more to get the pupils back in?</p> <p>KC advised the community is changing, they have always shared a catchment with Newbridge and Risca Schools and the pupils could have always chosen to go to one or any of these schools. All schools in the equation are signed up to best for the pupils in this circumstance and to work for the well-being of all parties affected by this position.</p> <p>Parents want confidence that their child will be settled at school. They don't enter into a school with a thought of changing them to another in a year or two's time. They are likely to make the decision to go elsewhere now that this decision has been made. JB tried hard to engage the parental community and primary catchment to re-engage with Cwmcarn High but had little to no joy.</p>	

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	<p>RP referred to the extent of involvement from the LA and asked might they revert to maintained status? KC confirmed that consideration of this has been parked since the Governors decision to progress closure. Our priority now is to work for the staff and the pupils.</p> <p>NF asked about the catering and cleaning contracts. These appeared to have got lost in the consultation process. KC advised that she would work with HR to engage Mrs Perry in this regard.</p>	
8	<p>Capability Procedure</p> <p>All parties present heard how regional officers had been involved in the negotiation of this policy and all agreed that it met the WG position.</p> <p>It was agreed to recommend the Capability Procedure to Schools.</p>	
9	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Dates of the next JCC meetings to follow.</p>	