



SPECIAL EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH OCTOBER 2022

SUBJECT: EDUCATION STRATEGY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consult with Members on the revised Education Strategy 2022-2025. CCBC supports Welsh Government's plans for "Renew and Reform", acknowledging the disruption to learning experienced by all learners during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is acknowledged that certain groups, in particular the more vulnerable and disadvantaged, children in Early Years education, pupils learning the Welsh language, and young people in post-16 provision have been more affected by the pandemic. Other key factors to consider include the implementation of Curriculum for Wales alongside ALN reform. The strategy, therefore, is focused on addressing these priorities.
- 1.2 The new Education Strategy will build on the successes of Shared Ambitions which shifted decision-making from short-term to long-term and school improvement approaches from 'challenge' to 'support'.
- 1.3 This report is submitted to the Education Scrutiny Committee to seek their views prior to consideration by Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report introduces the new Education Strategy 2022-25 which is attached at Appendix 1. The Education Strategy has been developed in consultation with Local Authority staff (education and cross-directorate), schools, parents and carers, pupils (mainstream, looked after, educated other than at school), young people 11-25, unions, governors, further education colleges, Careers Wales, social services and the Education Achievement Service. The key issues identified by each of these consultee groups are represented in the strategy.

The Education Strategy redefines the vision for all children, young people and adults accessing education in Caerphilly County Borough council. 'Pursuing excellence together' will lead to a culture of trust, strong working relationships and a passion for making a difference. This will lead to sustained improvement over the coming years.

We have great aspirations which are sometimes constrained, but never defined, by circumstance. The vision commits to an unwavering commitment to excellence.

- 2.2 The Education Strategy reasserts the Local Authority's approach in identifying and resetting priorities based on high expectations and ambition for all learners (standards, progress, provision, wellbeing). It sets out to ensure that all stakeholders engage and adopt the vision, agreeing a common approach towards addressing the priorities identified in the strategy.
- 2.3 The Education Strategy seeks to reach agreement on a set of principles around how we work together to maximise efficiency and productivity. It also outlines a clear approach to the principles of Evaluation and Improvement.
- 2.4 Rigorous self-evaluation over the past year has led to the identification of twelve key objectives for improvement over the next three years. These are set out in section eight of the attached Education Strategy.
- 2.5 In the Curriculum for Wales, Welsh Government sets out to establish a new kind of learning journey for children, pupils and young people. The Education Strategy sets out how this will be taken forward across all the stages of learning from 0 to 25 and beyond.
- 2.6 The Education Strategy explores the roles and responsibilities of schools, and the key partnerships with the Education Achievement Service, local and regional services, schools, child care settings and other educational settings, emphasising the importance of working together to understand and support the needs of all children and young people and the commitment to those who are most vulnerable.
- 2.7 The Education Strategy does not exist in isolation. It is shaped and supported by a range of internal strategies that complements and supports the ambition contained in this strategy. These form a complex network of interwoven strands and relationships that unify to achieve the main areas for development. These key strategies are described in section ten of the Education Strategy.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members note the content of the report and provide their views as part of the consultation process.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that Members' views can be considered and reflected in the report for Cabinet.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The new Education Strategy 2022-25 sets out to identify and re-set the educational priorities for Caerphilly post Covid-19 and for the next three years.
- 5.2 The Education Strategy also outlines how we will know if we are making a difference to children and young people, through a set of principles for evaluation and improvement both at school and Local Authority level.

- 5.3 The approach fits coherently with the responsibilities linked to the Curriculum for Wales, the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Tribunal Act (2018), the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Welsh Government Renew and Reform post-Covid-19, the Tertiary Education Bill, the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, Children's Rights in Wales, Flying Start and Childcare, Parenting & Inequality strategy and the universal offer of free school meals for primary pupils.
- 5.4 The strategy recognises the cost-of-living pressures being faced by families across the County Borough and it will seek to alleviate those and reduce the impact of poverty and disadvantage on the educational achievement of affected learners.

Conclusion

- 5.5 The LA is committed and ambitious in its approach to transforming the lives of children, young people and adults. This new Education Strategy for 2022-25 brings together the principles and values underpinning this ambition and keeps the progress of pupils and young people firmly at the centre. The approach reinforces the need for partnership working and a proactive approach to supporting all children, ensuring they are included and can achieve. The strategy renews the emphasis on support for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and cost of living crisis.
- 5.6 This inclusive approach will continue to develop the excellent working relationships between the Local Authority, schools and other stakeholders and support the focus on raising standards for all.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been felt to be necessary in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The approach being developed keeps children at the centre, promotes equality of opportunity, and reinforces the importance of partnership working to achieve our ambition.
- 7.2 The information gathered and reviewed as part of the Integrated Impact Assessment and through the consultation process supports the benefits of developing the approach to supporting children in this way.
- 7.3 Therefore, Members are asked to consider this Integrated Impact Assessment (Appendix 2) alongside this Scrutiny Report in support of progressing to implementation from the Autumn Term 2022.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The purpose of this report is present a strategy that identifies the key priorities for the education directorate for the next three years. This will ensure that all financial spend appropriately supports activities and resources, resulting in an improvement in the performance measures outlined in appendix 1 of the strategy.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific staffing implications linked to this approach.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees based on consultations undertaken to date.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Education Act 1996
Equality Act 2010
United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child
Inclusion and Pupil Support Guidance Welsh Government 2016
Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act (2018)
Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021
Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022

Author: Paul Warren – Strategic Lead for School Improvement
(warrep1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services and Housing
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Jo Rao, Vice Chair Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities
Steve Harris, Head of Corporate Finance and S151 Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Sue Richards, Head of Transformation and Education Planning and Strategy
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager
Kath Beaven, Lead for Wellbeing and Equity (EAS)
Debbie Hartevelde, Managing Director (EAS)
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services

Appendices

Appendix 1: Education Strategy 2022-25

Appendix 2: Integrated Impact Assessment