

Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: Schools Asset Management Plan

The Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee met on the 14th September 2018 and considered the following documents:

- Cabinet Report on Schools Strategic Asset Management Plan for Schools (SSAMP) 2018-24
- Schools Strategic Asset Management Plan 2018 – 2024 v1 draft for comments
- Appendix A – Schools Building Condition, Suitability and Sufficiency data 2018
- Appendix B Certification requirements

The Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee thank the Head of Learning, Senior Manager School Transformation and School Capital and Property Manager for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny make the following observations:

A number of Members are Governors of the schools listed in Appendix A and questions were raised regarding the accuracy of the information as the capacity stated did not accord with their understanding of the capacity at their schools. It is understood that a review of capacity is currently being undertaken which should ensure that the capacity of every school is correct.

The report references Vision 2025 and the following two measures in the Vision relate to this Management Plan:

Reduction in the number of our school buildings with an overall condition standard of C or D from 132 to 120 by 2025

Reduce surplus places to 14% in primary (Baseline 16.7%) and 21% in secondary (Baseline 24%) by 2020

To be able to track these measures it is necessary to have the correct baseline data and confirmation is sought that the figures regarding capacity contained within the report are correct.

A number of years ago a piece of work was undertaken mapping the location of secondary pupils across the County and the schools that they attended. It does not appear that this type of information is used to ensure that investment in schools is appropriately targeted to those schools which will continue to be viable in the near to middle future. The authority should ensure that it is not targeting scant resources on schools which may be unviable in the near future.

It is accepted that safeguarding issues are prioritised but it was acknowledged that there was a shortage of funds set aside for small scale improvements.

The development of an overall maintenance plan for the estate will be undertaken by utilising the Schools Asset Database. It is acknowledged within the report that this is incomplete.

Concerns were expressed at the working relationship between the Heart of Wales Property Service and individual schools which would be issued with a new Service Level Agreement during the autumn term.

Scrutiny welcome the proposals set out within the Asset Management Plan to deal with Risk and would hope that by following the Risk Management Strategy it would be hoped that the problems that arose with the schools in Welshpool could be avoided.

Recommendations

- **That the capacity figures included in Appendix A of the report are checked for accuracy**
- **That the Schools Asset Management Plan reflects the viability of schools in the short to medium term to ensure that resources are spent most appropriately**
- **That funding is prioritised within that available for schools' maintenance for those matters which are of a safeguarding concern**
- **That the Schools Asset Database is promptly completed within a defined timeframe to be set out within the report**
- **That the scoring methodology referred to in section 4.2 of the report as approved by Cabinet in 2015 is attached as an Appendix to the 2018-2024 plan**
- **That the Schools Asset Database is kept up to date on an annual basis to ensure that there is confidence that the Major Improvements Plan and Maintenance Plan for the estate are targeting resources to those areas most in need**

Membership of the Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 14th September 2018

County Councillors **P Roberts (in the Chair)**, G Breeze, K W Curry, B Davies, S. Davies, D Evans, L George, D R Jones, E M Jones, G Jones, D Jones-Poston, I McIntosh, J Pugh, E Roderick, D Selby, G Thomas and R Williams.

Parent Governor A Davies and S Davies and Church Representative M Evitts