



Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on TBC:

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee met on 21st June 2023 and considered the following documents:

Schools Budgets 2023/24

The Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee thank the Portfolio Holder for a Learning Powys and Finance and Corporate Transformation and officers for attending scrutiny.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee welcomed:
That Secondary Schools are offering as broad a curriculum as possible, given the current financial restraints, however this has to be right for the children and young people of Powys who deserve as broad an education as possible to meet their needs.
- The Committee noted:
The backlog of maintenance works (£80m) has not been factored into budgets presented.
Recovery plans are in place in a number of schools across the Sectors.
- The Committee requested that:
A review of the 13 sites be undertaken for Secondary Schools including and increasing the provision of bilingual schools rather than dual stream.

Cabinet relook at school budgets and address the situation with so many schools going into deficit. Schools with longstanding deficit need to see improvement.

- The Committee remained unconvinced about:
The pace of transformation within the Education Sector.

Sustainable Powys work in reviewing the fiscal position in Education for 24/25.

- The Committee expressed concern:
That virtually every school is in or possibly heading into an overspend position, with the prospect of very little or no surplus budget remaining in the next financial year.

Of possible redundancies in schools due to the current financial position and the lack of progress on the grants awarded for Energy Efficiencies.

Of the effect deficits in schools budgets is having on the mental health of Headteachers, staff and those on the Governing Bodies.

Of the impact on the quality of education within the Primary Sector which has seen a huge deficit swing.

Scrutiny's Recommendation	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1. A review of the 13 sites be undertaken for Secondary Schools, to include and increase the provision of bilingual schools rather than dual stream.			
2. Cabinet relook at school budgets and address the situation with so many schools going into deficit.			
3. Transformation within the Education needs to gather pace with immediate effect.			
4. Grant monies to be released to Education at the earliest opportunity and prior to the finalisation of budgets.			

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e., by 21st September 2023

Membership of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee on :

County Councillors:

G. Thomas, G.D. Jones, D. Bebb, M Beecham, A W Davies, B Davies, G Morgan, D. Meredith, S McNicholas G Preston & L. Roberts

Co-Opted Members:

K. Chedgzoy, S. Davies, M. Evitts.