



EDUCATION, SKILLS AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.00 PM THURSDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2024

***MULTI-LOCATION MEETING - COUNCIL CHAMBER, PORT TALBOT
& MICROSOFT TEAMS***

All mobile telephones to be switched to silent for the duration of the meeting

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PART 1

1. Chair's Announcements
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 5 - 8*)
 - 23rd November 2023
4. Curriculum for Wales Update (*Pages 9 - 12*)
5. Impact of Energy Prices on School Budgets (*Pages 13 - 16*)
6. Pre-Decision Scrutiny
To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board agenda for Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Cabinet Board reports included for Scrutiny Members)

7. Committee Action Log (*Pages 17 - 18*)
8. Forward Work Programme 2023/24 (*Pages 19 - 20*)
9. Urgent Items
Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100BA(6)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
10. Access to Meetings
Access to Meetings to resolve to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

PART 2

11. Pre-Decision Scrutiny of Private Item(s)
To select appropriate private items from the Cabinet Board agenda for Pre-Decision Scrutiny (Cabinet Board reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Friday, 26 January 2024

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor R.Phillips

Vice Chairperson: Councillor D.Thomas

Councillors: W.Carpenter, N.Goldup-John, J.Henton, D.Keogh, C.Lewis, R.Mizen, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, S.H.Reynolds, P.Rogers and R.W.Wood

***Co-opted Voting Members** A. Amor, M.Caddick and L.Newman

***Co-opted Non Voting Members** R.De Benedictis

Notes:

- (1) *If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) *If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*
- (3) *For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised - though Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.*
- (4) *The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.*
- (5) *Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.*

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Minutes of the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

23 November 2023

Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams

Vice Chairperson: Councillor D.Thomas

Councillors: W.Carpenter, N.Goldup-John, J.Henton,
R.Mizen, P.A.Rees, S.Renkes, P.Rogers and
R.W.Wood

**Co-opted Voting
Members:** L.Newman

**Officers In
Attendance** I.Guy, H.Lewis, C.Millis, R.Crowhurst, J.Burge,
C.Saunders, C.Morris, A.Spooner-Cleverly,
K.Windsor-Brown, K.Jones, S.Griffiths,
D.Evans, S.Griffiths, S. McCluskie and
P.Chivers

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors J.Hurley, N.Jenkins and C.Phillips

1. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

It was confirmed that the committee would be scrutinising items 10 and 13 from the Cabinet Board Agenda.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Item 10 (Cabinet Agenda)

Cllr. Phil Rogers – Personal - family member attends Abbey Primary

Cllr. Peter Rees – Personal - family member attends Ysgol Gymraeg
Bro Dur

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

WESP

Members questioned whether the provisional rent free dispensation for Welsh medium childcare facilities operating in Council buildings was continuing.

The Early Years Coordinator confirmed that the situation was currently being assessed and evaluated to ensure the arrangement is equitable. A report will be brought back to the Cabinet Board in the New Year. It was noted that the current arrangement has been beneficial in terms of the WESP.

Members referred to page 182 of the report and the reported decrease in the number of pupils studying in Welsh, post 16, and asked whether consideration had been given to offering post 16 Welsh medium education at the Bro Dur campus.

The Head of Support Services and Transformation confirmed that consideration has been given to a post 16 provision at the Bro Dur campus at some point in the future but no details can be provided at present. There are a wide range of vocational and academic post 16 opportunities in Ystalyfera and staff at the Bro Dur campus work with pupils to help them to transition.

Following scrutiny, members noted the item for information.

Quarter 2 Performance Indicators 23/24 – Environment Directorate

Members referred to page 263 of the report and questioned what was being done to manage any risks in relation to private water supplies until the new laboratory has taken over the contract.

The Head of Planning and Public Protection confirmed that there are a limited number of private water supplies across Neath Port Talbot that require regular risk assessments on an annual basis. The testing issue with regard to the laboratory has now been resolved and it is anticipated that the target will be delivered by the end of quarter three/beginning of quarter four.

Members referred to page 264, item 5 of the report, and questioned why the quarter two target of 55% was not reached and for more information in relation to the lost staff member.

The Head of Planning and Public Protection confirmed that the lost member of staff has recently been replaced. The KPI relates to the food and feed standard work that is undertaken by the Trading Standards Team; Animal Health Officers, have responsibility for inspecting the feed hygiene systems on farms and Trading Standards Officers inspect, feed manufacturers and retailers.

The Food Risk Assessment Pilot mentioned in the report is being progressed by the Food Standards Agency with the aim of rolling the new scheme out across Wales. The Food Standards Agency recognise that capacity and resources within local authorities across Wales, are limited and the new scheme aims for a more efficient and effective use of resources with a targeted approach to high risk businesses. It is anticipated that once the pilot scheme has been embedded there will be longer term efficiencies of service that all local authorities will benefit from, involvement in the pilot at this stage is a good opportunity to influence how it is set up and rolled out in future. It was noted that in the short term the pilot may have an impact on performance.

Following scrutiny, the item was noted.

5. **COMMITTEE ACTION LOG**

This item was noted.

6. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

This item was noted.

7. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

**Cllr. D Thomas
Chairperson**



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
Thursday 1st February 2024

Report of the Head of Education Development – Christopher Millis

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title: Curriculum for Wales update

Purpose of the Report:

To provide Members with an update on the Curriculum for Wales in NPT schools.

Executive Summary:

The report provides detail of Neath Port Talbot schools progress towards the Curriculum for Wales

Background:

The Curriculum for Wales is the government's response to the fact that we live in a continuously changing world and we need new ideas and creative use of technology. The aim of the curriculum is to address these challenges, to make sure every child has the knowledge, skills and educational experiences they'll need to make the most of life. The school support team in NPT aims to help each school develop its own curriculum, enabling their learners to develop towards the four purposes of the curriculum – the starting point and aspiration for every child and young person in Wales. The four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales are:

- **ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives**
- **enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work**
- **ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world**

- **healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.**

Curriculum for Wales roll-out in Neath Port Talbot

All pupils from Reception class to Year 8 from September 2023 are learning under the Curriculum for Wales. In September 2024 pupils in year 9 will begin learning under the Curriculum for Wales and this will roll-out in subsequent years until 2026 when all 3–16-year-old pupils will be learning under the Curriculum for Wales.

Progress to date and the support NPT schools receive.

Training

All schools have access to a universal professional learning offer that is both national and local. The national events include leadership training from Higher Level Teaching Assistant training through to support for experienced headteachers. There is also national guidance as well as programmes for developing an understanding of curriculum design, a shared understanding of progression and assessing for the future. The NPT specific learning offer includes a teaching and learning programme which provides bespoke support for teaching and learning that is inclusive and innovative. The aim is to enable learners to develop their knowledge, skills, understanding and experiences. There are currently three groups of teachers from primary and secondary schools. Each group has around 16 to 25 teachers (around 50 in total).

A need to understand what progression is in line with the progression code for the Curriculum is key to realising the four purposes. All schools in Neath Port Talbot have made this a particular focus. It has been central to training on inset days, some of which have been carried out collectively as part of shared cluster training, for example all staff from the Dwr y Felin cluster (over 240 staff) met for training on the Curriculum for Wales. All secondary schools engage and participate in termly subject network meetings. There are 14 subject network groups. Individual schools receive support to meet their own needs for example, how are you using rich tasks to support learning?

Curriculum Design

There is a constant focus on learning and encouraging schools to consider what the learning intention is for pupils, why are they teaching it and how will they know pupils have made progress. The shared understanding of progression, providing pupils with a broad and balanced education will develop highly effective learners and over time this will result in better outcomes for pupils in Wales regardless of how they are assessed.

Teaching and learning

The NPT school improvement team has addressed the need to evolve teaching in the Curriculum for Wales by introducing a Learning and Teaching programme for all teachers. The learning and teaching programme is developing well. The pilot group is continuing to trial innovative approaches and it is helping to shape how teachers may design an iterative curriculum. All headteachers have been informed through workshops of the process and many have nominated teachers who they believe will be able to lead the development within their own school. Two senior teachers have been seconded and they have begun to work in NPT schools at both primary and secondary level. Three groups are currently participating and early indications where teaching is being evaluated demonstrate very strong progress in nearly all lessons observed. Levels of pupil engagement are high and teachers are planning for pupils to make highly effective progress in terms of their knowledge, skills and understanding.

The NPT school improvement team support all schools to evaluate learning. Most schools are making good progress in supporting pupils to make progress towards the four purposes of the curriculum. Pre-Curriculum for Wales and particularly at secondary age, many lessons would have had a strong focus on knowledge and skills, Teachers would have felt the pressure of having to cover content as pupils moved closer to GCSEs. Following evaluation activities which focused on learning many teachers have evolved to also include the integral skills (personal effectiveness, creativity and innovation, planning and organising and critical thinking and problem solving). These higher expectations are resulting in greater levels of engagement in learning and pupils making greater progress across a broad and balanced curriculum. This is supported by recent Estyn inspections where inspectors have commented on good progress made by most of NPT schools. In the few examples where progress is limited it is because teachers have low expectations of the progress pupils can make.

Next steps:

- To continue to support schools in evaluating the progress pupils make.
- To continue to support schools in evaluating the impact teaching has on pupils.
- To continue our partnership with other services in the LA, Welsh government, colleagues in the Middle Tier, Estyn, Higher Education Institutes and our schools.
- To continue the learning and teaching programme for NPT teachers

Financial Impacts:

- No implications

Integrated Impact Assessment:

- The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to “pay due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- There is no requirement for an integrated impact assessment as this is a matter for information

Valleys Communities Impacts:

All Neath Port Talbot schools are included within this report

Workforce Impacts:

- No implications

Legal Impacts:

- No implications

Consultation:

- ‘There is no requirement for external consultation on this item’

Recommendations:

- Matter for information. No recommendations are required.

Implementation of Decision:

- Matter for information. No decisions are required.

Appendices:

N/A

Officer Contact:

Mike Daley – Lead Education Support Officer m.daley@npt.gov.uk

Chris Millis – Head of Education Development c.d.millis@npt.gov.uk

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

1st February 2024

Matter for information

Wards affected – All

Impact of Energy Prices on School Budgets

Purpose of Report

To update members on the impact of increased energy prices on school budgets.

Introduction

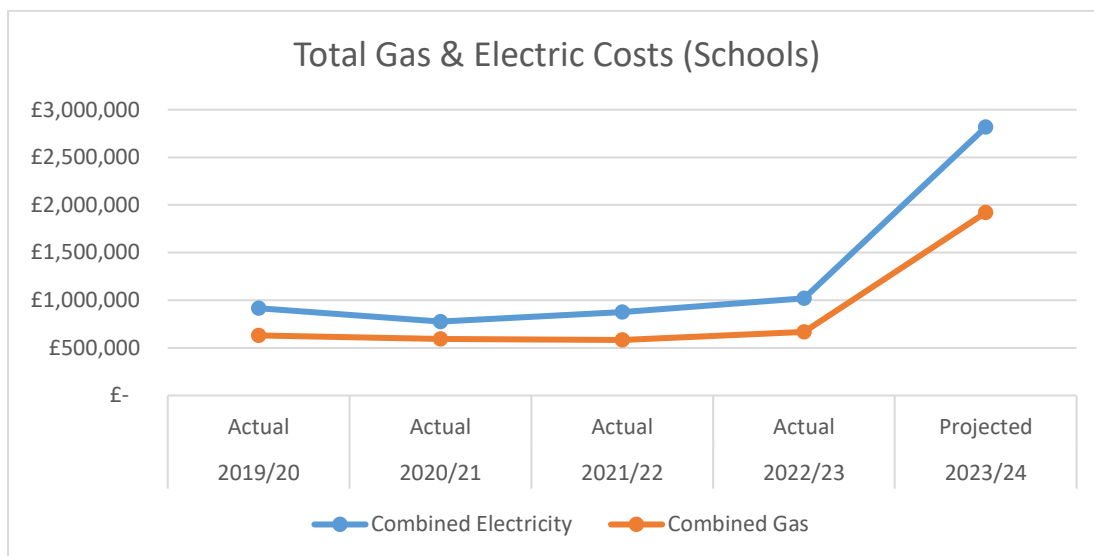
In recent years Neath Port Talbot schools have faced considerable budget challenges, including most recently the impact of rising energy costs. This report outlines the increases that schools are experiencing along with some actions being planned or already undertaken to help mitigate the impact where possible.

Impact

In the last 4 years both gas and electricity prices have risen significantly as seen below.

Sector	Energy Type	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual *	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Projected	Variance 22/23 v 23/24	% change
Primary & Special	Electricity	£ 530,681	£ 464,473	£ 503,482	£ 615,363	£ 1,351,321	£ 735,958	120%
	Gas	£ 402,495	£ 372,800	£ 338,024	£ 420,573	£ 1,001,979	£ 581,406	138%
	Sub Total	£ 933,177	£ 837,274	£ 841,505	£ 1,035,936	£ 2,353,300	£ 1,317,364	127%
Secondary	Electricity	£ 386,382	£ 311,640	£ 372,498	£ 406,352	£ 1,465,258	£ 1,058,906	261%
	Gas	£ 228,548	£ 219,601	£ 245,118	£ 246,649	£ 918,216	£ 671,567	272%
	Sub Total	£ 614,930	£ 531,241	£ 617,616	£ 653,001	£ 2,383,474	£ 1,730,473	265%
Combined	Electricity	£ 917,063	£ 776,113	£ 875,980	£ 1,021,715	£ 2,816,579	£ 1,794,864	176%
	Gas	£ 631,043	£ 592,402	£ 583,142	£ 667,222	£ 1,920,195	£ 1,252,973	188%
	Total	£ 1,548,106	£ 1,368,515	£ 1,459,121	£ 1,688,937	£ 4,736,774	£ 3,047,837	180%

The energy market remains volatile and price is not within the direct control of the Council. The projected costs for this financial year on gas and electric in schools are £3m higher than last financial year which equates to a 180% increase overall



The schools budget for 2023-24 did include an additional £1.2m for energy costs and a further one off amount of £721k has also recently been agreed which will be transferred to schools in the near future. However there remains an estimated shortfall of £1.1m on school budgets in 2023-24 for energy costs alone.

Looking ahead to 2024-25 the draft budget does not currently include any further uplifts for energy, although it is presently anticipated that rates will fall in April and again in July this year.

A significant number of schools are going to face challenges in balancing their budgets and it is anticipated that there will be an increased number of schools who will be ending this financial year with a budget deficit.

Mitigating Actions

Currently the following projects/programmes are being progressed to support schools improve their energy performance with the aim of reducing the impact of energy costs.

- Controls/Building Management Systems (BMS) Review Programme
- Engagement support:
 - *Energy Sparks initiative
 - *Energy good practice engagement material sent direct to schools
- Solar PV Programme – Stage 1 implementation of 14 schools

BMS is a computer-based system installed to control and monitor a building’s electrical equipment such as ventilation, lighting, energy, fire systems, and security systems. It

has an important role to play in managing demand for energy in a cost-effective way, helping to reduce energy costs and provide optimum comfort for users of the buildings.

The Energy Sparks initiative is due to commence this term with all schools who are interested in taking part. A meeting has been arranged with the respective Chairs of the primary and secondary Headteacher groups to gain their support and to outline in detail the expected benefits.

In summary, Energy Sparks is an online energy analysis tool and energy education programme specifically designed to help schools reduce their electricity and gas usage through the analysis of smart meter data. Energy Sparks helps schools reduce their carbon emissions, and make a real contribution to addressing the 'climate emergency'.

Energy Sparks is currently working with over 750 schools and report that most schools participating with Energy Sparks can expect to achieve energy savings of around 10% in their first year of engagement, resulting in cost savings of around £2500-£6000 (depending on tariffs) and 8 tonnes of CO2 based on an average 2 form entry primary school.

The planned Solar PV programme is in its early stages. To date 14 schools have been identified as having the potential capability for installation of solar PV panels. Work is ongoing on further investigating feasibility.

The environment directorate are currently progressing recruitment to a number of posts to assist with the work in supporting schools to reduce their energy consumption and costs.

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

There is no requirement for an IIA as this report is for information only.

Workforce Impacts

There are no direct adverse workforce impacts identified as a result of this report. However the increased energy costs will add to the budget pressures experienced by schools and may indirectly lead to adverse workforce impacts.

Risks

The additional budget costs increases the risk that schools are not able to set a balanced budget in March 2024.

Legal Impact

There is no direct legal impact as result of this report. The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the SSFA) sets out the legal framework within which LAs allocate their education expenditure to schools. The School

Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010 came into force on 1 September 2010 for the financial years 2011-12 onwards.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members note the contents of this report.

Officer Contact

Andrew Thomas - Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning
a.d.thomas@npt.gov.uk

Rhiannon Crowhurst – Head of Support Services and Transformation
r.crowhurst@npt.gov.uk

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee - Actions and Referrals Update – 2023-24

<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Minuted Action / Referral / Request</u>	<u>Progress Update</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Target / Completion Date</u>	<u>Completed / On-going</u>
28.9.2023	Q1 Performance Indicators 23/24 Education Directorate	Members asked for information on outreach youth workers and what support they could give.	Youth Service Report to be presented to the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board 1 st February 2024	Chris Millis	1 st February 2024	

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Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

(All starting 2pm unless otherwise stated)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Contact Officer
2023		
28 th September	Annual Report 2022 - 2023	Chair of Education Skills & Wellbeing Scrutiny Pamela Chivers (Scrutiny Officer)
	Update on the roll out of Universal Primary Free School Meals	Rhiannon Crowhurst
23 rd November		
2024		
1 st February	Curriculum for Wales update	Chris Millis
	Impact of energy prices on School budgets	Rhiannon Crowhurst/Julie Merryfield
14 th March	Pupil Attendance Update	Chris Millis
	Pupil Exclusions	Chris Millis
25 th April	Professional Learning Offers available for school based staff	Chris Millis

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