

Minutes of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Date: 10 July 2002

Time: 2.00pm

Venue: Committee Rooms 3 & 4, National Assembly Building

Attendance:

Members

Gareth Jones, Chair	Plaid Cymru	Conwy
Lorraine Barrett	Labour	Cardiff South and Penarth
Jane Davidson, Assembly Minister	Labour	Pontypridd
Delyth Evans	Labour	Mid and West Wales
Janice Gregory	Labour	Ogmore
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru	Llanelli
Jonathan Morgan	Conservative	South Wales Central
Alun Pugh, Deputy Minister	Labour	Clwyd West
Kirsty Williams	Liberal Democrat	Brecon and Radnorshire

Apologies

Mick Bates

Cynog Dafis

Janice Gregory (second half)

Jonathan Morgan (second half)

Huw Lewis

Substitutions

Delyth Evans for Huw Lewis

Kirsty Williams for Mick Bates (second half)

Committee Secretariat

Chris Reading Clerk

Holly Pembridge Deputy Clerk

Officials

In Attendance:

Richard Davies Director, Department for Training and Education (DfTE)

Mike Harper Head, Teaching and Leadership Division

Elizabeth Taylor Head, Schools Management Division

Elizabeth Williams Head, Youth Policy Team

Russell Dobbins Youth Policy Team

Asmita Raval Youth Policy Team

Michael Jones Schools Management Division

Malcolm Hobbs Schools Management Division

In Attendance:

Anthony Boden Focus Group for Young People

Nina Yasmin Ali	Focus Group for Young People
John Williams	14-19 Project Leader, seconded to Youth Policy Team
Gary Brace	Chief Executive, GTCW
John Andrews	Chair, GTCW
Mal Davies	Deputy Chair, GTCW

Declarations of Interest

Cynog Dafis	Registered Teacher; wife is a Registered Teacher
Jane Davidson	Registered Teacher; husband is a college lecturer and member of the NATFHE Executive
Gareth Jones	Registered Teacher; Member of Conwy County Borough Council; Member of Court, University of Wales
Huw Lewis	Registered Teacher
Mick Bates	Qualified Teacher; wife is a Head Teacher, School Inspector, member of ACCAC and Estyn committees
Jonathan Morgan	School Governor; Member of Court, University of Wales
Lorraine Barrett	School Governor
Helen Mary Jones	Registered Teacher
Alun Pugh	Wife is a college lecturer

Chair's Opening Remarks

0.1 The Chair welcomed the Committee and members of the public to the meeting and asked members if there were any new declarations of interest. There were none.

0.2 The Chair stated that the launch of the Committee's joint report with the Culture Committee on the policy review of the Welsh Language had been extremely successful.

Item One: Extending Entitlement

Paper: ELL 14-02(p.1)

The Chair welcomed officials and two young people from the Young People's Focus Group: Anthony Boden and Nina Yasmin Ali to the meeting. The Minister was accompanied by Iwan Williams who was at the Assembly after winning a place on the 'Business in the Community Quality Placements Career Development Programme'.

The Minister briefly introduced the item and the following issues were raised:

- The Extending Entitlement agenda would provide greater pathways, choice and flexibility for young people in Wales.
- The Assembly had unanimously approved the Directions and Guidance that had been produced in conjunction with the Young People's Partnerships (YPPs).
- It was the first time in Wales or the UK that youth support services would be provided on a statutory basis. The associated legislation would come into effect on 1 October 2002.

Elizabeth Williams, head of the Youth Policy Team, from the Assembly's Department for Training and Education (DfTE) also drew the Committee's attention to the following points:

- Each YPP had been asked to identify and develop three 18-month priorities in relation to local needs.
- The YPPs were made up of a wide variety of organisations and individuals and children were also involved. The national programme of the YPPs fitted in with young people's wishes.
- The European White Paper on Youth had alluded to the best practice undertaken in Wales.

The Chair invited the Committee to ask questions and the following issues were raised in discussion:

- After some discussion concerning Voluntary Sector and Statutory Sector engagement, the Minister stated that she had recently spoken to the Voluntary Sector Partnerships and it was evident that concerns were starting to be resolved. The Minister met regularly with the Voluntary sector partnerships and said that Local Authorities were receiving advice/assistance also.
- There was some concern that there might be overlaps in the provision of the YPPs. The Minister explained that two YPPs might be delivering the same agenda and struggling because there was insufficient take-up of provision. There was a need to look at the best way to invest monies strategically. Elizabeth Williams added that there was a need to re-arrange resources in order to be fair to all YPPs.
- In response to a question concerning the involvement and representation of people from minority/ethnic backgrounds and the existence of a gender balance within the YPPs, the Minister stated that there would indeed be the widest representation from people of both genders from disability, care and minority backgrounds, amongst others.
- It was asserted that only 50 per cent of the (first year) annual delivery plans had been received and members asked if any measures had been taken to encourage the receipt of the remainder. YPP's had been asked for their first draft with a deadline of the end of July. It was vital to ensure that action would take place locally where the YPP's were going to be developed on a firm foundation.
- Members referred to the three local priorities that YPPs were required to develop and inquired

whether these could be rolling priorities. Elizabeth Williams said that the YPPs first priority would be a goal that they could deliver in the short-term future. Officials from DfTE's Youth Policy Division had been working closely with the YPPs- an official had been allocated to each YPP, who would therefore be aware of any proposed rolling priorities.

- Elizabeth Williams was asked how the issue of funding for (the maintenance and improvement) of premises, had been addressed with YPPs. In response, she replied that this was an issue that would be addressed in the five year rolling strategic plans. An audit of provision had already been carried out.
- Members asked what extra resources were being directed at local authority level and to what extent the Minister was instructing local authorities. The Minister responded that £2m was allocated last year and £3.75m had been allocated to LAs this year; this was not ringfenced.
- There had been some concern from practitioners that youth workers would be overburdened by additional responsibilities due to extra meetings and strategic planning. The Minister assured the Committee that the process had been designed to be as simple as possible: there were templates for strategic planning proposals. Projects would be led from the top-down i.e. by the Chief Executive or a nominee. One LEA that the Minister had visited had increased the number of full time youth workers from 3 to 50, which was indicative of engagement by LEAs. Feedback from Canllaw Online and Funky Dragon (formerly Llais Ifanc) would inform discussion.
- There was some concern that young people would not be directly involved in the YPP. Elizabeth Williams said that the main reason for this had been to avoid tokenism. It would be more beneficial to discuss within the YPP, why and how to get young people involved in any debate. The Minister added that this had been the view expressed by young people themselves during committee. The establishment of school councils would young persons' representation on YPPs. The Minister referred the Committee to relevant paragraphs (20-24) in the Directions and Guidance document (paper ELL 14-02(p.1Annex A)).
- Members were interested to know what assistance YPPs would receive to enable them to know how and where to access funding. Elizabeth Williams said officials from DfTE kept in contact with every LEA to disseminate this information.

The Chair thanked the Minister and Elizabeth Williams.

Item Two: 14-19 Curriculum Review

Paper: ELL 14-02

The Minister introduced the item and emphasised the following points:

- That a commitment to undertake a review of the 14-19 curriculum had been made in the *Learning Country* document.
- The project involved partnership working between all those involved in the 14-19 sector and that John Williams (Headteacher, Pen y dre High School, Merthyr) had been appointed 14-19 Project Leader and that Elizabeth Williams (Head of Youth Policy Team) would take the lead on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales.
- That the approach was similar to the Extending Entitlement agenda where individuals were free to think in different kinds of ways.
- That all the work done before consultation had been through an inclusive approach and that there was a great deal to be proud of such as the Welsh Baccalaureate Pilots.
- It was important to ensure that 16 years age was not a cut off point for pupils and that lessons could

be learnt from different countries such as Denmark where 95% of 19 year olds either have qualifications to get a job or Higher Education entry.

- The formal consultation would begin at the end of October 2002 with an action plan for implementation being produced by April 2003.
- That the views of the committee would be taken into account as well as a consultation paper being placed in the public domain via the National Assembly's website, Canllaw online and 'The Funky Dragon', encouraging young people to give their reviews.
- That the key issue surrounding the review was ensuring reliable advice, guidance and support.

The Committee was shown a 10 minute video by the 'Young people's Focus Group'

Nina Yasmin Ali highlighted the following issues:

Overcoming Barriers

The RIMA Project provided pupils whose parents' first language was not English with tutoring to assist with their studies. She acknowledged that this was comforting when seeking help but queried whether this provision should be extended to all rather than being selective.

Guidance Councillors

It was felt that their presence was reassuring where pupils could go in confidence and gain proper advice especially at exam times.

Syllabus

There was concern that pupils were only taught what was on the syllabus rather than having to learn to broaden their knowledge and not just pass an exam.

Course Work

There was a consensus amongst pupils that course work should be the preferred method of assessment. It was felt that pupils should have a choice and that it encouraged pupils to tell teachers what they knew.

Foreign Exchange

There was greater benefit to be gained from going to foreign countries and staying with families rather than learning from text books or purely visiting sites.

Variety of Subjects

It was felt that there was not enough integration and inter-link between schools and institutions.

GCSE's

There was a feeling amongst pupils that there were too many GCSE's and that a reduction was required.

This would subsequently allow pupils to give greater focus to those subjects which they were likely to continue with at A-Level.

RIMA Project

This project also involved a week long summer school. Pupils were described as being initially sceptical of the idea but had subsequently found it a brilliant experience.

Disability Integration

The integration of disabled pupils into able bodied schools was believed to be necessary in order to raise pupil awareness and understanding.

Report

It was acknowledged that the opportunity to speak to the committee had been a pioneering one.

Anthony Boden raised the following points:

- That Wales was a country of huge potential and that there was a worrying lack of focuss on culture in the curriculum. There needed to be a broad based system focused on national and world cultures.
- It was also disappointing that pupils were unaware of world affairs. He felt that pupils should set aside one hour a week for discussion on this topic, without having an exam at the end. This would broaden pupils characters.
- Opportunities for foreign travel should be made available for all pupils culminating in improvement of individuals' education.

The Chair then invited members to discuss the review and the following issues were raised:

- Members acknowledged that pupils were under greater pressure today than in the past with pupils having to be constantly working hard. They also commented that the pupils' desire for wider choice and opportunity to specialise supported the new Welsh Baccalaureate that was being piloted.
- There was some discussion regarding Guidance Councillors and whether their support was during school hours, solely to pupils of non-English speaking parents and from an employee of the school. Members were informed that the support was given during school hours, solely to pupils of non English speaking parents and came from employees external to the school.
- There was also a general consensus among members that pupils weren't being taught enough about wider world affairs. More time was necessary to develop ideas and members broadly agreed that giving pupils a choice between exams and coursework could be beneficial.
- Members were interested to know whether the pupils felt that implementing the new curriculum at 14-19 was sufficient or whether it was possible to begin even earlier. The pupils felt that it could be advantageous to begin earlier though they felt that pupils need to be consulted on what they want to learn. It was also noted that the introduction of A/S Level exams only a year after GCSE exams had caused many pupils problems.

Elizabeth Williams gave a brief overview of the project highlighting the intention of making the most of the expertise on offer in Wales and the importance of including young people themselves.

John Williams gave a summary report of the Project Team's findings thus far and of their proposed areas of study:

- It was noted that the team had analysed different types of targets. One model was based on the Danish system where pupils have to gain either qualifications towards employment or higher education. Variations of this model had also been discussed.
- In the above model, pupils wouldn't be able to opt out until they had gained an intermediate qualification. This qualification would not normally be achieved until the age of 16.
- English, Welsh and Mathematics were generally considered the core requirements. Work related learning was also considered core to the project as it was still envisaged that many pupils would still not be ready for employment. Informal or extra curricular teaching was also an option.
- It was considered that those who didn't achieve an intermediate qualification by age 16 should do so by age 19. There was also debate on whether a strong work based training approach was necessary for those who did not gain the qualification by age 16.
- There was a proposition that the present GCSE structure would be more suitable if it was foundation lead. More use could be made of existing assessment points. The idea that all courses should have an applied element could also be met through key skills.
- It had also been proposed that a credit and qualifications framework be applied to all courses - this could be a vehicle for accrediting work based teaching. Following the success of the Welsh Baccalaureate there was also discussion on the possibility of lowering the age of commencement of courses to 14. The introduction of quality 'kite marks' for non formal learning providers would also be explored.
- Concern had also been raised regarding teachers and other language providers' workload. The issue of cross boundary collaboration between the two would be examined.
- Additional funding was likely to be needed as most initiatives were not deliverable under the existing provision. Promotion of widening access was required as well as the development of a benefit system.

The Minister commented that the review would promote imaginative thinking from both pupils and other stakeholders from the sector. The review would also mean the committee to being further involved in policy development as well as young people. A website for the review would be available soon and feedback comments would be encouraged.

Members indicated that they were keen to hold another session on the item early in the autumn term.

Item Three: General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) – Continuing Professional Development – Framework for Teachers

Paper: ELL 14-02(p.3)

Members had previously received copies of the GTCW's advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the final report on 'An Evaluation of the General Teaching Council for Wales of the Professional Development Pilot Projects 2001-2002' by Professors David Egan and Roy James.

The Chair invited the John Andrews to make a brief introduction, in which the following issues were raised:

- CPD had been an issue/priority since the GTCW's inception
- It had been apparent from meetings with the teaching unions that CPD provision varied between schools and LEAs
- In the past, little attention had been paid to the individual careers of teachers
- There was a need to create exciting opportunities for professional development in light of recruitment and retention and the performance management structure.
- Currently, the evaluation pilot projects were in phase two. The feedback from the teaching profession on phase one had been very positive indeed. 1400 teachers had benefitted from phase one and 500 teachers on phase two. It was possible there was a need for a third phase pilot project and it was vital to keep the momentum going in this area. The GTCW was working towards a goal of individual entitlement for all teachers to be in place by 2004.
- In order for every teacher to have their £500-£600 entitlement by 2004, £20 m was needed to make this happen.

Gary Brace then delivered a PowerPoint presentation summarising the GTCW's advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on CPD. Mal Davies also gave a short oral presentation to the Committee, which is summarised as follows:

- Some schools had responded more positively than others to CPD, this was perhaps to do with different management styles in schools.
- Performance Management demands should be identified in planning at both school level and LEA level.
- Long term gains of CPD would manifest in reflective professionals. There should not be a quick-fix approach to up-skilling the teaching profession.
- There was also a need to increase the availability and CPD prospects of supply teachers.

The Chair invited the Committee to discuss issues surrounding the CPD framework with presenters. The following issues were raised in discussion:

- One member made reference to Annex B of the GTCW's advice on CPD and stated that the acquisition of Welsh language skills should be included in this list of activities considered to be appropriate to CPD. Presenters told the Committee that this list was not exhaustive and that GEST funds could be applied to this kind of activity.
- It was felt that teachers who had been involved in the teaching profession from over twenty years or more would be a hard to reach group in relation to taking on CPD opportunities. The Committee heard that there would be a challenge in enthusing those teachers who had acquired over twenty years of service and letting these teachers know that they could still adopt new approaches etc. Teachers in long-service would have to overcome the challenge of reviewing their own performance but should take pride in their achievements but look at any gaps in their personal performance. Many teachers with over 20 years' service would also be approaching retirement.
- Members referred to the tension that lay between the costs to schools of releasing staff to follow CPD opportunities and the hiring of supply teaching staff to cover in their absence. It was felt that schools need not necessarily be disrupted by teachers' absence due to CPD activities. In South Lanarkshire in Scotland, a pool of supply teachers to support teachers undertaking CPD had been established. Presenters also told the Committee that as a result of the registration process, the number of supply teachers had been greater than originally anticipated.
- Some members felt that it was necessary to be explicit by the meaning of 'universal entitlement'. Also, teachers might opt not to take on CPD opportunities because of potential stress on colleagues.

Therefore, it would be helpful to advise teachers that pursuing CPD opportunities on an informal basis would not necessarily be disruptive to colleagues within schools. Members heard that headteachers and their staff had been the authors of projects for phase one and two of the pilot schemes; visits to observe colleagues had been popular – this had involved teachers being released.

- GTCW estimated that some £20m was needed to guarantee all teachers their individual entitlement. Members asked for a breakdown of this figure. GTCW told the Committee that about £500 per teacher was required for a basic entitlement.
- The Minister said she was delighted that CPD was targeted to the whole spectrum of teachers and that teachers did not have to ‘bank’ time with regard to sabbaticals. The system had sufficient flexibility to allow some teachers to undertake more expensive CPD training early in their career, if this was deemed to be appropriate.
- The Minister also asked when presenters envisaged the money available for CPD would be commensurate with the number of applications received. The Minister was informed that during phase two, 1004 teachers had applied for and received their individual grants and there had been 127 school initiatives. Out of the £5m available, £2.2m had been spent. This momentum would need to be sustained in order to have allocated all the funding by March 2003. If phase two were to continue as phase one had, then the funding would be allocated by February 2003.

The Chair thanked presenters for appearing before the Committee.

Item Four: Local Education Authority (LEA) Budgets

Paper: ELL 14-02(p.4)

Elizabeth Taylor, Head of Schools Management Division from the Assembly’s Department for Training and Education (DfTE) spoke to the paper and highlighted the following key issues:

- This would be the first analysis of the budgets local authorities had set for education for 2002-03. There would be a further analysis in the Autumn, drawing on comparison with budgets set in England.
- Overall local authority education budgets had increased by £101m (6.8%) to £1,590m. This was funding for youth services, under fives’ provision not in schools (i.e. playgroups), adult and community education, other continuing education including mandatory and discretionary student awards and non-school strategic management, centrally provided LEA services for schools and schools delegated budgets. This was in line with the overall increase in revenue budgets of 6.77% allowed for in the local government revenue settlement – taking into account adjustments affecting education spending. The increase was net of grants, apart from the grant of £89.843m from ELWa for post-16 provision for schools.
- School services budgets, exclusive of grants (apart from ELWa monies) had increased by 6.9%. Inclusive of all grants, the increase was 5.8% - reflecting the fact that special grants in 2001-02 were £43m; to date in 2002-03, they were £28.2m.
- If the proposed further £18.7m special grant for threshold, upper pay spine and leadership costs were to be included, then the funding increase for schools services would increase by 7% from £89m to £108m.
- Schools delegated budgets had increased by almost £83m – growth of 7.1% to £1,250m. As in 2001-02, 81% of schools services funding had been delegated to schools. Of the amounts retained for centrally provided services, 1.6% would be attributable to LEA administrative functions, compared

with 1.7% in 2001-02.

- The range in the level of increase in local authorities' school services budgets – 3.3% to 11.8% was a reflection of the discretion local authorities had in setting their budgets in light of local needs and circumstances. Swansea LEA had chosen to place particular emphasis on youth provision – which is why its overall education budget had increased by 5.4% but their schools budget by 3.3%. Ceredigion with an increase of 4.6 % remained to be the highest spending authority per pupil. At the other end of the scale, the Vale of Glamorgan LEA with an increase of 11.8% had put in significant resources from a low base, which meant that they were still the lowest funding authority per pupil.
- The range in per pupil funding of £906 remained unchanged in cash terms from the position in 2001-02. If it had grown in line with increases in provision it would have gone up by around £60.

The Chair thanked Elizabeth Taylor for her introduction and then invited members to ask questions. The following issues were raised in discussion:

- There was some concern that in spite of increased expenditure, some schools felt that they were no better off than before and that there was still variation between LEAs regarding their figures for funding per pupil. The Committee was referred to the figures set out in Table 6. The two biggest variants were the size of schools and transport costs which pushed up per pupil funding in rural authorities. For example, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire LEAs had large numbers of small schools. In terms of whether schools found themselves better off, growth in the cost of teacher's pay accounted for much of the increase in funding. The teachers' pay award for 2002 was 4% - around £40m for Wales. The costs of threshold and upper pay spine progression were expected to be up by around £20m.
- One member commented that there were large variations in the per pupil central administration spend between different LEAs as set out in Table 6 and asked whether this could be due to different accounting practices. Elizabeth Taylor explained that accounting procedures should not differ though at a detailed level there could be some difference in approach. The more likely explanation was that in large authorities there were economies of scale e.g. all authorities have to have committee structures for education regardless of the number of pupils in the authority's schools.
- In response to a question concerning the differentials and whether there was a correlation with deprivation, Elizabeth Taylor stated that there was not but that deprivation ought to be reflected to some extent in the per pupil costs for (free) schools meals (Table 6).
- There was some discussion regarding any balance between core funding and initiative-driven funding. The Minister told the Committee that she was clearly committed to limiting the amount of initiative-driven funding through the education system in Wales. The special grant for the reduction of infant class sizes had been consolidated into the local government revenue settlement.
- Members asked if there were plans to make cross-border (England and Wales) comparisons of per pupil funding and whether such an analysis could extend to looking at the funding for individual beacon schools and specialist schools in England. The Minister confirmed that the comparative analysis would be provided in the Autumn and that cross border county per pupil comparisons would be provided. It would not be possible to go

down to individual school level since the basis for a like for like comparison had to be the section 52 education budget returns from LEAs.

- The Minister explained to the Committee that the information on the charts demonstrated the discretion LEAs had in making budgetary decisions. The Vale of Glamorgan LEA were to be congratulated for their substantial budget increase, though because they were starting from a low base they remained the lowest funding authority on a per pupil basis. In contrast Ceredigion had had a relatively low budget increase but because they were starting from a high base they were still the highest funding authority in per pupil terms.. The Minister emphasised that she was committed to allowing authorities to make their own decisions and to the principle of local democracy.

The Chair thanked Elizabeth Taylor for her presentation.

Item Five: Minutes of the previous meeting

Due to the additional meeting on 4 July, the minutes of both 4 July and 10 July (this meeting) would be ratified at the next Committee meeting due to take place in the Autumn term.

There were two Papers to Note:

Revised CCET guidance

Paper: ELL 14-02(p.5)

Policy Review – School of the Future: Terms of Reference (which were ratified)

Paper: ELL 14-02(p.6)

Committee Secretariat July 2002