

LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
10 JANUARY 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Thursday, 10 January 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors Marion Bateman, Amanda Bragg, Ian Dunbar, Ron Hampson, Phil Lightfoot, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Ann Minshull, Paul Shotton, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Carolyn Thomas

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Carole Burgess, David Hytch and Rebecca Stark

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors Kenworthy (for Mrs. R. Price)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Adele Davies-Cooke, Stella Jones and Colin Legg.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor P.G. Heesom

CONTRIBUTORS: Cabinet Member for Education, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Development and Resources, Head of Culture and Leisure, and Principal Leisure Services Officer

IN ATTENDANCE: Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

The Chairman advised Members of the need to declare a personal interest in school related items on the agenda if they were school or college governors. All Members present except Councillors R.C. Bithell, A. Bragg, W. P. Shotton, A.I. Dunbar and P.R. Lightfoot (who were not school governors) declared an interest as school governors.

42. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 December 2012 were submitted.

Matters arising

School Balances

The Facilitator advised that a further letter had not been sent to the Minister as a response from the Minister to a letter sent in December 2011 on behalf of the Committee was being considered at the next meeting of the School Budget Forum on 31 January 2013.

Forward Work Programme

The Facilitator reported that an item on the School Music Service had been scheduled for the meeting of the Committee to be held on 25 April 2013.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

43. LEISURE STRATEGY 2009 - 2014

The Principal Leisure Services Officer introduced a progress report regarding the achievement of the three key strategic priorities identified in the County Council's Leisure Strategy 2009-14. He gave background information and outlined the main considerations which referred to the increased participation in physical activity, quality management of leisure facilities and renewal of the County's leisure provision.

Councillor D.I. Mackie asked whether there were proposals to change the programme of Summer Play Schemes provided to local communities in Flintshire. In his response the Director of Lifelong Learning and the Principal Leisure Services Officer commented on the reduction in funding for the provision of Summer Play Schemes and the ongoing work with Town and Community Councils concerning match funding and opportunities to maximise provision and resources.

During discussion further concerns and questions were raised by Members concerning provision on consistency, funding, tariffs, removal of obsolete play equipment, and replacement of play surfaces in smaller leisure facilities. The Chairman emphasised the need to ensure that Town and Community Councils were given as much advance notice as possible concerning the removal of play equipment as this had a potential impact on minor authority budgets. The Director of Lifelong Learning responded to the concerns raised and advised that there was a planned programme for removal of play equipment. He said that information could be shared with Town and Community Councils in relation to play areas which were in need of renewal.

It was suggested that a Task Group be formed by a small number of Members to consider the arrangements for play schemes for 2013 and beyond. In response to the Chairman's request for volunteers Councillors M. Bateman, N.M. Matthews, C.A. Thomas, R.C. Bithell and D.I. Mackie volunteered to serve on the Group.

Councillor R.G. Hampson and Mrs. R. Stark expressed concerns regarding the facilities for car parking at Buckley Leisure Centre. The Principal Leisure Services Officer acknowledged the issues raised and explained that discussions had taken place around improving the situation and a capital bid was to be submitted concerning these arrangements.

Members congratulated Officers on their achievements and the excellent facilities provided at Deeside and Flint Leisure Centres, however, they felt that marketing could be improved to broaden participation in all of the services

provided and cited the spa, ice rink and extreme sports as examples. The Principal Leisure Services Officer commented on the range of marketing systems which were used and referred to the use of targeted advertising and a proposal to create a specific website.

Councillor N.M. Matthews asked if there had been an increase in new membership of the Leisure Centres. The Director of Lifelong Learning referred to the compilation of statistics for national benchmarking. Councillor Matthews also referred to the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) and expressed concern that individuals were not always referred to their local leisure centre. The Principal Leisure Services Officer agreed to make further enquiries concerning any specific case raised by Councillor Matthews.

Councillor A. Bragg commented on the provision of sport for disabled people and it was agreed that the Principal Leisure Services Officer would provide further information on disability sports services.

In response to a request from the Chairman it was agreed that the Leisure Strategy would be reviewed. The Director also agreed to ensure that Town and Community Councils had access to the Play Areas Survey undertaken by Play Safe and Space Consultancy.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a Task Group be formed by Councillors M. Bateman, N.M. Matthews, C.A. Thomas, R.C. Bithell and D.I. Mackie to consider the arrangements for play schemes for 2013 and beyond;
- (b) That the Principal Leisure Services Officer would provide further information on disability sports services.
- (b) That the Leisure Strategy be reviewed; and
- (c) That Town and Community Councils be given access to the Play Areas Survey undertaken by Play Safe and Space Consultancy.

44. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the Forward Work Programme of the Committee. She advised that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 25 January 2013 to consider the budget proposals 2013/2014.

Members reviewed the current programme and agreed that the following items would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee on 14 February 2013:

- Incidents of arson, vandalism and burglaries in Flintshire schools
- Pupil Attainment
- Saltney Library update
- School Modernisation

The Facilitator advised that the Learning Exchange Team from Wrexham would be observing the meeting of the Committee to be held on 14 February 2013 as part of the Welsh Audit Scrutiny Improvement Study.

Following a suggestion put forward by Councillor N.R. Steele-Mortimer it was agreed that representatives of Alliance Leisure be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the Leisure Strategy.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be agreed; and
- (b) That representatives of Alliance Leisure be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the Leisure Strategy.

45. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

46. COSTS OF REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE - SCHOOL BUILDINGS

The Head of Development and Resources introduced a report to inform Members of the expenditure on school building repairs and maintenance. He commented on the significant decrease in 'backlog maintenance' in schools from previous years as a result of ongoing capital investment in the education portfolio.

Members raised concerns regarding how frequently Condition surveys were undertaken on schools and the lapse of time since a survey had been conducted on some schools. In his response the Head of Service explained that condition surveys were undertaken on a five year cycle and surveys had been carried out on every school building via the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). Surveys were usually updated at the rate of 20% per annum (budget dependant) and on a rolling programme to meet Welsh Government requirements. Repair and maintenance works were prioritised according to agreed schedules and grading.

Mrs. R. Stark referred to the information distributed during the meeting concerning Consortium of Local Authorities Wales (CLAW) performance indicators for corporate property maintenance and asked if a breakdown could be provided in future in relation to individual schools.

Members referred to the condition of school toilets. The Head of Service advised that school toilets were dealt with as a separate matter and addressed according to priority. The Director of Lifelong Learning agreed to provide

Members with a copy of the toilet condition surveys and also referred to the bog-standard website which promoted better toilet facilities for pupils.

Mr. D. Hytch welcomed the reduction in the backlog for school repairs and maintenance but expressed concern that this could also be as a result of the annual reduction of the budget. The Head of Service advised that the repairs and maintenance budget was a significant part of the overall Lifelong Learning budget which had been reduced by 10% per annum in line with the need to reduce the overall budget of the Council.

Councillor M. Bateman raised the subject of S106 agreements and asked what happened to any funding received as a result. The Head of Service explained that S106 contributions were only made by developers in those instances where there was an increase in capacity or a school was likely to be oversubscribed as a result of a new development. S106 funding was not provided for the repair and maintenance of school buildings.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That a breakdown be provided in relation to individual schools from the Consortium of Local Authorities Wales (CLAW) performance indicators for corporate property maintenance; and
- (c) That the Director of Lifelong Learning agreed to provide Members with a copy of the toilet condition surveys

47. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.55 pm)

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Chairman