

LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 JUNE 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, 6 June 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Amanda Bragg, Ian Dunbar, Ron Hampson, Stella Jones, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Paul Shotton and Nigel Steele-Mortimer

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: David Hytch, Ms. C. Burgess, Mrs. R. Price and Stephanie Williams

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors Patrick Heesom for David Williams, Mike Peers for Colin Legg and Mike Reece for Ann Minshull

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Adele Davies-Cooke and Phil Lightfoot
Rebecca Stark

CONTRIBUTORS:

Cabinet Member for Education, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Development and Resources, and Head of Culture and Leisure.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

8. 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 and A. Bragg (who were not school governors) declared an interest as school governors.

9. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chairman sought nominations for a Vice-Chairman for the Committee.

Councillor W.P. Shotton proposed that Mr. D. Hytch be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee. Councillor A.I. Dunbar seconded the proposal and when put to vote Mr. D. Hytch was appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. D. Hytch be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

10. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 April 2013 were submitted.

Accuracy

Page 3: Councillor P.G. Heesom referred to his recorded comment on the School Meal Service and asked that the wider concerns to which he had referred be included.

Page 5: the misspelling of the word deprivation to be corrected.

RESOLVED:

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

11. QUARTER 4 AND YEAR END SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Director introduced a report to request that the Committee consider the 2012/13 Quarter 4/Year end service reports for the period January-March 2013.

Schools' Services

The Director of Lifelong Learning referred to the key considerations and performance across all work streams and invited Members to submit questions.

During discussion the Director provided an update to Councillor N.M. Matthews on the raising of standards by transforming teaching and learning through effective use of technologies.

Councillor D.I. Mackie sought further clarification on the information and data provided in the report. The Director acknowledged the point made and explained that the Improvement Plan for 2013/14 should be simpler and the priorities more easily identifiable.

Mr. D. Hytch referred to the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) and the appointment of System Leaders to replace primary phase Link Officers. He asked what Officer assistance could be provided to support school Governing Bodies in the future. In his response the Director advised that there was no shortage of professional advice to support interventions in individual schools that were causing concern, however, it was not the role of the Authority to create dependence and it was impracticable to provide Officer attendance at all governing body meetings.

Councillor R.C. Bithell commented on the support and guidance provided to school governors through the School Governors Development and Training Programme and suggested that it may be helpful if all Members attended some of the training sessions delivered.

Councillor P.G. Heesom emphasised the need to broaden the training provided and suggested that it would be helpful if DVDs, or similar media could be produced so that it could be revisited and shared with those school governors and school staff who had been unable to participate.

In response to a query from Councillor M.J. Peers regarding the recent Estyn inspection of six primary schools the Director advised that Inspection Reports had been published in respect of three schools so far and Members would be notified of the outstanding Reports as soon as they were published.

Development and Resources

Responding to a comment made by Councillor M. Bateman concerning the closure of an all weather pitch at a local school and the condition, suitability and sufficiency of education assets, the Head of Culture and Leisure advised that a pilot project had been set up within the Asset board to review the Authority's entire Leisure property portfolio.

The Chairman referred to the closure of the Nat West branch in Flint and the implications for school banking procedures in the area. He commented on the agreement between the Authority and the Nat West Bank to provide banking services to schools and asked what alternative provision was being made to enable schools to access banking facilities within their local community. The Head of Development and Resources acknowledged the issue raised and said he would pursue the matter with the Bank on behalf of the Authority.

Councillor A.I. Dunbar referred to the Facilities Review and the proposal to develop an on-line payment system for school meals. He expressed concerns on behalf of families who did not have access to a computer. The Head of Development and Resources advised that there were a number of locations within the County where individuals could gain access to a computer and said that the initiative was being progressed to ensure access was available to all.

Mr. D. Hytch made reference to the specification and design of new schools and asked what arrangements were in place to ensure headteachers and governing bodies were involved in the process. The Head of Development and Resources explained that headteachers, staff, and Chairs of Governors were always consulted in the initial stages of the design and scoping of a new school.

Discussion took place on school modernisation and the areas schools review, development of the proposed new schools at Holywell and Queensferry, the post-16 'Hub' at Connah's Quay being developed in partnership with Deeside College, and the implications for both Saltney and Flint. Councillor N.M. Matthews asked what the projected numbers were for the 'Hub' at Connah's Quay.

The Director, Cabinet Member for Education and Head of Development and Resources responded to the questions and concerns raised around, the 'Hub', provision for faith based education, terms and conditions of service for teaching staff, and funding.

Culture and Leisure

The Head of Culture and Leisure gave an overview of the key messages across work streams in Culture and Leisure and highlighted performance in service areas.

Councillor A.I. Dunbar expressed his thanks to the Head of Culture and Leisure for his commitment and attendance at a recent meeting of Connah's Quay Town Council.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be noted.

12. OUTCOME OF ESTYN MONITORING VISIT

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced a report on the outcome of the Estyn Monitoring visit on Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People. He provided background information and outlined the key considerations in the report.

The Cabinet Member for Education commented that it had been acknowledged by Estyn that elected members and senior officers were committed to taking difficult decisions to improve provision and make effective use of resources, and understood the priorities for improvement.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

13. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Member Engagement Manager introduced the Forward Work Programme of the Committee. He advised that the next meeting of the Committee would be a joint meeting of the Lifelong Learning and Social & Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be held on 11 June 2013.

Members were advised that a workshop to enable the Committee to consider populating the forward work programme had been arranged for Tuesday, 9 July 2013. Members were also informed that the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 11 July 2013 would be held at Deeside Leisure Centre and that a site visit would take place at 1.00pm prior to the start of the meeting at 2.00pm.

Members reviewed the current programme and agreed that the following items would be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 11 July 2013:

- Alliance Leisure
- Annual update report on Sport and Leisure Business Plan

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be agreed.

14. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 3.40 pm and ended at 5.00 pm.

15. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

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Chairman