

EDUCATION AND YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 SEPTEMBER 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Thursday, 17th September, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Adele Davies-Cooke, Andy Dunbobbin, David Healey, Colin Legg, Dave Mackie, Vicky Perfect, and Carolyn Thomas

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Janine Beggan, David Hytch, Rita Price and Rebecca Stark

APOLOGIES: Councillors Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Education, and Nigel Steele-Mortimer

SUBSTITUTION: Councillor Veronica Gay (for Nancy Matthews)

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment, Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Organisational Change), and Senior Manager Integrated Youth Provision

IN ATTENDANCE:

Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator, and Committee Officer

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin, Mrs. Janine Beggan and Mr. David Hytch all declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item due to the close association of family members who had a transport place.

Agenda item 7 – School Transport Policy – Task and Finish Group.

28. MINUTES

- (i) The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 July 2015 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

Accuracy

Mr. David Hytch referred to his comments on page 7 referring to the GwE/Regional forums and asked that the words 'at primary school level' be deleted.

Matters arising

Councillor Paul Cunningham asked if any progress had been made on the

setting up of an Education for All Task and Finish Group. The Education and Youth Facilitator explained that she would contact the Head of Inclusion Service following the meeting to arrange the first meeting of the Group.

- (ii) The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 July 2015 and 24 August 2015 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

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

29. SCHOOL MODERNISATION – VERBAL UPDATE

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) provided a verbal report on progress and developments concerning school organisation and modernisation. He advised that all Band A projects which had been approved by the Welsh Government and were progressing on time and in accordance with budget.

The Chief Officer referred to the meeting of the Committee held on 24 August 2015 due to the call-in of the decision of the Cabinet from its meeting held on 6 August 2015. Having considered the decision the Committee was still concerned about it and referred it back to Cabinet for reconsideration. At the meeting of Cabinet held on 15 September 2015, the Cabinet had reaffirmed their commitment to reviewing in detail options for home to school transport. Cabinet had also directed the officer and head teacher planning group to plan in detail for transition taking into account the feedback of the Committee and had reaffirmed its previous decision to refer the proposal of closure of the Sixth Form at John Summers High School from 31 August 2016 and closure of the School from 31 August 2017 to the Welsh Government. Cabinet had stated a commitment to continue to work closely with the local community and to engage in a full public consultation exercise on the future use of the site, should the school be closed.

The Chief Officer outlined the procedure in terms of the next steps and the issuing of statutory notices and explained that the target timetable for adjudication was 16 weeks, however, the process often took far longer. The Chief Officer commented on the period of uncertainty and anxiety which lay ahead for pupils, staff and the local community and gave an assurance that full co-operation and support would be provided by the Authority to give assistance throughout the process.

The Chief Officer advised that other School Organisation reviews were at a much earlier stage in the consultation process. He also reported that the Authority was in the process of commencing work on the consultation arrangements with primary schools under review.

Councillor David Healey commented on the transition arrangements and expressed concerns specifically around the examination groups. He suggested that the Committee may wish to track progress on pupils who were taking their examinations, particularly in Year 10. The Chief Officer responded to the concerns raised by Councillor Healey and advised that the approach taken on John Summers High School followed best practice. He emphasised the

importance of having transition plans in place which were meaningful and supportive for every learner. The Chief Officer also explained that following any school reorganisation or closure a formal evaluation process was undertaken and gave an assurance that this information would provide feedback on the impact of the transition on learners.

During discussion the Chief Officer responded to the further comments and questions raised by members around school modernisation. He confirmed that no review of any school was undertaken until the Authority was in a position to commission a review and said that a verbal update on School Modernisation would be placed on all future agendas.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

30. UPDATE ON THE FLINTSHIRE INTEGRATED YOUTH PROVISION (IYP) DELIVERY AND COLLABORATIVE SERVICE MODEL

The Senior Manager Integrated Youth Provision introduced a report to provide an update on service development from early intervention, Families First, Youth Services and Youth Justice Services into collaborative provision of Integrated Youth Provision (IYP) in accordance with the “Delivering Together plan 2014-2018”. The report also gave an update on the suggested four models of delivery proposed by the Welsh Government and requested support for local plans to maintain an effective and proactive Flintshire youth provision.

The Senior Manager Integrated Youth Provision provided background information and referred to the main considerations which were detailed in the report.

Councillor David Healey expressed concerns around the uncertainty of funding being continued for the Families First programme beyond March 2017. The Senior Manager Integrated Youth Provision responded to the comments and explained that contingency plans were being developed and there was robust reporting of outcomes to Welsh Government leads.

During discussion the Senior Manager Integrated Youth Provision also responded to the questions and comments raised by Councillor Carolyn Thomas regarding playgroups and playschemes. Councillor Thomas also commented on the need to look at the provision of caretaking services and associated costs. The Senior Manager Integrated Youth Provision advised that the report requested support to introduce a review of caretaking delivery and hire costs for centres as part of the budget reduction measures.

The Senior Manager Integrated Youth Provision advised that a letter would be sent to all Members to invite them to attend a workshop on Integrated Youth Provision to be held on 2 December 2015.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin drew attention to the Mindfulness and Skills in the Community projects.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee support the new delivery model, recognising that Integrated Youth Provision is delivering increased outcomes despite resource reductions; and
- (b) That the collaborative and co-commissioned service model being developed in partnership with the third sector be supported.

31. QUARTER 1 – IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORTS

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced the Quarter 1 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report for consideration. The report presented the monitoring of progress for the first quarter of 2015/16 focusing on the areas of under performance relevant to the Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members were advised that detailed sub priority reports were appended to the report.

Councillor Mackie referred to the risks on page 54 and commented on the information that the number of school places would not be sufficient to meet future demands. The Chief Officer explained that the risk was attributable to the number of surplus places at schools.

Mr David Hytch commented on the use of Werrington Youth Offenders Institution (YOI) based in Staffordshire. The Chief Officer responded to the comments and said that very few young people were referred to the YOI and commented on the proactive working relationship between the Werrington YOI and the Authority's Youth Offending Team.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

32. SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY – TASK & FINISH GROUP

The Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced a report to seek the Committee's views on setting up a Task and Finish Group to review the School Transport Policy. She advised that a detailed review of the current Policy was being undertaken by officers with the Education and Youth portfolio focusing particularly around discretionary entitlement and costs.

Councillor Bernie Attridge suggested that if the Committee decided to establish a Task and Finish Group its remit should encompass all aspects of school transport provision to include statutory and non statutory provision.

During discussion members raised a number of concerns around discretionary transport provision. Mrs. Rita Price emphasised the importance of equalities impact assessments when considering any future proposals to change the school transport policy.

Councillor Attridge advised that due to current and future financial cut backs on funding non statutory provision would be at risk and could not be guaranteed.

During discussion the Committee agreed to the setting up of a Task and Finish Group to review the School Transport Policy. In response to a request for nominations for membership the following members volunteered to serve on the Group: Councillors Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Andy Dunbobbin, Nancy Matthews and Carolyn Thomas. Mr. David Hytch, Mrs Rita Price and Mrs. Rebecca Stark also put their names forward. It was agreed that a meeting of the Task & Finish Group be arranged as soon as possible in consultation with the Chief Officer (Education and Youth) and the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee agreed to establish a School Transport Task & Finish Group; and
- (b) That Councillors: Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Andy Dunbobbin, Nancy Matthews, Carolyn Thomas, and Co-opted members Mr. David Hytch, Mrs. Rita Price and Mrs. Rebecca Stark be nominated to sit on the School Transport Task & Finish Group.

33. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the forward work programme of the Committee. The Chairman advised members that there was one item on the Programme for consideration at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 22 October 2015 and asked members if they wished to defer the item to the next meeting scheduled for 3 December 2015. It was agreed that the meeting on 22 October 2015 be cancelled and that the following report be included on the list of items scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee on 3 December:-

- School Balances – to include Licensed School Deficits

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be noted.

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

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following item by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

35. SCHOOL SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (PROPERTY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE)

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) introduced a report to provide an update on the development of the Service Level Agreement covering Property Repairs and Maintenance. He provided background information and referred to the key considerations as detailed in the report.

During discussion the Chief Officer responded to the concerns raised around the cost of purchasing services from service providers and the need to ensure “fair pricing” when procuring external services.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas asked if Schools and Governing Bodies were aware of what funding was available from S106 agreements. The Chief Officer agreed to speak to the Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) about the matter.

Councillor Veronica Gay asked if schools were able to undertake their own tendering process for repair and maintenance works. The Chief Officer responded and referred to the guidance provided on the repair and maintenance works which came under the Authority’s responsibility and those which were the responsibility of schools.

Mrs. Rebecca Stark asked if reference could be made within the document to the guidance notes available to schools. The Chief Officer agreed to include the guidance notes within the body of the Service Level Agreement document.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed Service Level Agreement covering Property Repairs and Maintenance be endorsed.

36. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no members of the public or the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00pm and ended at 3.50pm)

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Chairman