

EDUCATION AND YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 MARCH 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 21st March, 2019

PRESENT: Councillor David Healey (Chairman)

Councillors: Geoff Collett, Andy Dunbobbin, Patrick Heesom, Kevin Hughes, Tudor Jones, Dave Mackie, Ian Smith, Martin White and David Williams

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Lynn Bartlett

SUBSTITUTES: Councillor Glyn Banks (for Dave Hughes)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Janet Axworthy, Paul Cunningham, Sian Braun

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Ian Roberts, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education; Chief Officer (Education & Youth); Flintshire Play Development Officer; Assistant Director for Playwales; Play Design Officer – Aura Leisure & Libraries and Learning Advisor – Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding

IN ATTENDANCE: Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Support Officer

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair referred to the Match Funding for play areas proposals and asked if he should declare an interest as a Community Councillor. All Members in attendance, apart from Lynn Bartlett and Councillors Tudor Jones and Martin White declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Play Sufficiency Assessment.

42. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on the 20th December 2018 and 31st January 2019 were submitted.

20 December 2018

Councillor Heesom referred to the second recommendation as shown on page 7 of the minutes and asked if a workshop on the repairs and maintenance of schools had been arranged. The Facilitator confirmed this had been arranged for the 12th April at 10.00 am. An email invitation had been sent to all Members and it was agreed to re-circulate this to Councillor Heesom.

Councillor Dave Mackie referred to his comments on page 7 of the minutes and asked that the following wording be included at the end of the 3rd paragraph:-

'which is a form of PFI and an in-depth study, conducted by the National Audit Office of the United Kingdom concluded that the private finance initiative model had proved to be more expensive and less efficient in providing hospitals, schools and other public infrastructure than public financing. There was now only a 10% difference in the cost to the Authority of capital vs MIM funding and urged that MIM not be considered.' Previously there had been a 50% difference but in the report at 3.10 in the report it had changed to 35% so there was only a 10% difference at this point which is why he had asked for this amendment. The Chair thanked Councillor Mackie and felt that his point should be minuted but invited the Cabinet Member and Chief Officer to update Committee on this.

The Cabinet Member for Education provided an update on the MIM model information received from the WLGA and clarified that 81% of the cost would be met by Welsh Government and 19% by Local Authorities on the MIM model.

Councillor Ian Smith asked if there was any information on interest rates charged with regard to the Council's borrowing. In response the Chief Officer explained the situation was constantly changing with uncertainty from Welsh Government on the detail regarding the MIM route for funding together with the Band B and 21st Century Schools Programme.

Councillor Dave Mackie proposed that subject to the amendments listed above the minutes be approved as a correct record. This was seconded by Councillor Geoff Collett.

31 January 2019

The minutes of the meetings held on the 31 January, 2019, were submitted.

Matters arising

The Chair referred to page 12 of the minutes and asked for an update on the contribution from Welsh Government on School Pensions Costs. In response the Chief Officer confirmed the costs had been met by Central Government 85% of which had been passported to Welsh Government who would be providing the other 15%. It was confirmed the schools would receive the full amount of the pensions increase for the next financial year but there was still uncertainty for the future. The Chair commented this was good news and that he hoped in the future pay deals could be funded nationally.

On page 16 Councillor Heesom said that he had expressed an interest in becoming a member of the School Performance Monitoring Group (SPMG) but had not been contacted following the meeting. In response the Chief Officer reported that the cycle of meetings were in the process of being finalised and that an update would follow shortly.

RESOLVED:

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

43. PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) introduced the Flintshire Play Development Officer, Marianne Mannello (Assistant Director for Play Wales) and the Play Design Officer – Aura Leisure & Libraries and invited them to present the report. The report provided an overview of the Flintshire Play Sufficiency Assessment 2019 and the draft Action Plan 2019/2020. The local authority had a statutory duty under the Children and Families Measure Wales 2010 to report to Welsh Government and a draft document would be presented to Welsh Government shortly. The Flintshire Play Sufficiency Assessment was a live document with the Action Plan published annually. This was a statutory requirement and the local authority outlined in the action plan how it was intending to address deficiencies and maintain current levels. The Play Development Officer explained the Council would be able to access funding via action plans towards such schemes as the County play schemes and that a universal service could be provided across the county for all children.

In response to a comment on the successful bids for funding, the Assistant Director of Play Wales explained that national lobbying continued to try and secure funding but this was still reliant on the money available at the end of the financial year.

Councillor Mackie congratulated the Play Development Officer for her dedication saying she was enthusiastic, determined and caring and that the report was exceptional.

Councillor Patrick Heesom asked for information on the Strategy which linked play areas which were part of Aura. In response the Play Development Officer said the council was connected to Aura with the Play Sufficiency Assessment and that play areas was a huge part of this.

Councillor Heesom then raised a number of questions regarding the 106 agreement funding for play areas which was provided by developers into the School provision and asked if some of this money could be used for youth provision which would be very beneficial. The Play Design Officer responded to say that Section 106 Funding had two components, the education contribution and the public open space contribution, which were not the same. He outlined the decision process for the allocation of the funding whether on sports pitches or play areas for example, public open space facilities, and the consultation undertaken with Local Members and Town and Community Councils.

Councillor Heesom stated the 106 Agreement funding was a very significant amount of money and asked how the funding was monitored. The Play Design Officer said that a survey report to assess the condition of all playgrounds was carried out and published. The Assistant Director Play Wales reported on discussions being held across Wales regarding the Section 106 Agreement funding to look at all areas of open space where children could play. This was not an easy process but with the national template there was potential to look at where the Section 106 money had been spent in schools and the possibility of extending the schools opening hours of the facilities to make it more of a community benefit which would contribute to the open space assessment

and Local Development Plan. Councillor Heesom was pleased to hear that but said that it was not always where the development was being built that the play areas were required and felt there should be a way of reporting to indicate the fairness in the distribution.

Councillor Ian Smith commented that councils were stretched financially and asked what would happen if the funding for the summer play scheme ceased. In response the Play Development Officer confirmed if the plan was not in place and the slippage from Welsh Government was not received then this would be a concern. The Plan enabled councils to access grants agreed by partners with town and community councils' involvement and the legislation allowed progress to be made.

Councillor Smith added that this was not statutory funding requirement for the Council. To which the Play Development Officer agreed but said it was a statutory duty for the Council to assess and secure funding and that this was so much easier with the plan in place to enable the Council to move quickly once funding became available. The Assistant Director added there were a lot of local authorities in Wales that did not have a comprehensive summer play scheme programme or good working relationships with open spaces and countryside services. She referred to the document and the 9 matters within it which the local authority had to respond to and said the local authority still had a duty to assess. She reported on what other local authorities were doing to provide play areas for children and the budgets provided for this.

Councillor David Williams referred to the Section 106 agreement funding accessed within his ward and the successful working relationship his community had with the Play Design Officer. The Community was able to negotiate and improve play provision which benefited the whole community not just the isolated development area. He reported on a village meeting to encourage the involvement of children via the youth clubs, who then circulated information around the schools etc. to determine what play equipment children would like placed in the play areas.

Councillor Tudor Jones asked if children and young people had been involved in drafting the Action Plan 2019/20. In response the Play Development Officer confirmed that they had involved young people in a number of pieces of work and referred members to pages 5, 6 & 7 of the document and the consultation undertaken with 600 children which had just been finalised. Councillor Tudor Jones was pleased to see they had been consulted.

Councillor Glyn Banks thanked the team for an excellent report and for the support Llanasa had received from the Play Design Officer. He commented on there being no provision for a designated play space to be provided and well maintained on a gypsy traveller sites until 2023 and asked why this date could not be brought forward. It was confirmed that this was still unknown at present because of other work and legislation being carried out on Gypsy Travellers sites. The Play Development Officer would provide further information on this if available.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin said it was a fantastic report and at the heart of this was the wellbeing of our children and people in society. He referred to the

Social and Well-Being Programme and that this opened up other opportunities. The Play Development Officer reported the projects in the Action plan were based around these Programmes our “little moments of well-being” and that we had a duty to provide the best service we possibly could.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee support the draft Play Sufficiency Assessment 2019 and draft Action Plan 2019/20, which will be sent to Welsh Government at the end of March 2019; and
- (b) That the Committee support the continued development of a strategic Flintshire Play Sufficiency Implementation Group to provide a multi-agency forum to monitor the Play Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan 2019/20.

44. HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND PRE SCHOOL PROGRAMME

The Learning Advisor – Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding presented the report which provided an update to Committee on the outcome of the School Health Research Network. The report detailed progress made with the Healthy Schools Scheme, Healthy Pre-School Scheme which all our school participated in and School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP). The Healthy Schools Programme had been active for 17 years and provided a whole school approach to well-being and had now extended to the Healthy Pre-School Schools. She provided an update on the training carried out within the last 12 months and referred members to the targets shown at Section 1.04 of the report which had been met and she was pleased to confirm that 10% of schools had met the national quality award status.

She continued to provide information on the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) which provided breakfast, lunch and physical and cooking opportunities on two sites with proposals to extend this to Flint High and Queensferry Primary School. She referred Members to the School Health Research Network (SHRN) in partnership with Welsh Government policy makers, Cardiff University, Public Health Wales, Cancer Research UK and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods to obtain data on well-being. All secondary pupils took part in the study in the Autumn of 2017 with 82% of all pupils taking part in the survey. The survey covered food, fitness and physical activity, emotional health, substance use and misuse and sex and relationships. This was an achievement getting schools to take part especially because of the importance of the data. In the Spring of 2018 every school had received their individual report and in November 2018 the first county report was finalised. There was an embargo on national data from Welsh Gov until April. There were Action Plans in all schools which were pupil led in all High Schools and a County Action Plan was being developed which would be shared once national data was released. Representatives from the University of Cardiff had visited two school events and she then provided information on the highlights. Flintshire was within the national average and this was 4 year action plan and with another survey taking place this autumn. The data would be used as evidence and ensure parental engagement opportunities in the action plans.

Councillor Kevin Hughes said that this was an excellent report but that it did not make pleasant reading when it came to the figures on alcohol at 51% and drugs at 31% commenting that Cannabis was a gateway drug which should not be underestimated. He raised concerns with the figure 22% of 13 years or younger who were sexually active when the age of consent was 16 years, which were very worrying statistics. Society was failing these children and that parents needed to be more involved. As regards to the figure of 41% of bullying he asked how much was online bullying. He also asked how confident the Council was on accuracy of the figures.

The Learning Advisor clarified the statistics were a result of pressures on the national curriculum on schools and personal and social education had been squeezed with some schools having 1 health day per half term. The Health and Well-being had six strands on the new national curriculum which would change how schools prioritised health and well-being. The survey was conducted online with every child having to provide parental consent and held in similar conditions to an exam in the IT suite at the school. With regard to accuracy it was difficult to prove but there was a separate question regarding on line bullying where 23% reported they were cyber bullied which was above the national average

Councillor Tudor Jones agreed it was an excellent report well delivered and also agreed with Councillor Hughes comments. He referred to changing attitudes towards smoking for example which was on the decline. He asked when this survey would be repeated and which would be key to hopefully seeing an improvement. He referred to the school holiday enrichment programmes and commented on parents struggling to afford the meals and asked if any thought been given to making the school year four terms a year

The Chief Officer responded saying in England individual authorities had the power to make that decision but Welsh Government had asked local authorities to harmonise the holidays to assist parents who may live in one authority but work in another authority. She was not aware of any changes by Welsh Government nationally on this. She acknowledged the long holiday periods had an impact on children's learning and wondered if this could be a future agenda item but added she had not seen anything from the teaching professionals on this.

Councillor Heesom was concerned with the gap between peer groups and the figures of 70% of children who counted on their friends was worrying. This should be used as something to build on. The Chief Officer referred to the Council Plan priorities and service plans and School improvement works which were focused on this. All Head Teachers were in agreement with these priorities. She reported on the Curriculum model's accountability measures and performance indications with social education at the heart of the curriculum. The Minister had announced changes with core issues around new curriculum published at the end of April.

Councillor Heesom referred to a document which went to the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee this week which discussed re-consolidating social values which was relevant to this and offered a mix of what officers were saying. The Learning Advisor confirmed she had met

with representatives including youth councils engaged in all areas of the local authority and identified well-being as one of the priority action areas.

Councillor Glyn Banks said this was an excellent report but was very concerned with the bullying figures at 41% and asked what was proposed to improve this. He referred to the sexual active figures and commented it was difficult to stop young people having sex and asked if a 13 year old girl and 14 year old boy went to the school nurse could they get contraception from the school. The Learning Advisor responded to the first point on Bullying saying Welsh Government had just completed a consultation on “Respecting Others Guidance” which would be issued this year. There had been a lot of misunderstanding on what was meant by bullying and the National Guidance had been working on a clear definition of bullying and this would be integrated into the council’s policy across all schools.

She then responded to the question of contraception and outlined the work which had taken place over the last 5 years working around the sex education policy specifically the support provided by the school nurse being able to provide emergency contraception and condoms on site as part of her role. Every school had adopted the county policy with a risk assessment of the pupils being carried out before any emergency contraception was provided.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin commented this was an emotive subject but it did highlight how seriously the council took its corporate parenting and fostering responsibilities. Cllr Tudor Jones said that he looked forward to seeing the data from the next survey carried out being presented to the Committee. The Learning Advisor offered to share the County Action Plan with the Committee once the national data was released.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made in both the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme and the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Schemes in Flintshire, be noted;
- (b) That the overview of key issues for children and young people in Flintshire, which may impact their ability to reach their full potential at school, be noted; and
- (c) That the Committee wish to highlight a need for further education and preventative measures, and the need for all agency partners and parents/carers to work together to educate and deliver change.

45. QUARTER 3 COUNCIL PLAN 2018/19 MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Officer introduced a report to present the monitoring of progress for the Quarter 3 (October to December 2018) position of 2018/19 for the Council Plan priority ‘Learning Council’ relevant to the Committee. The following areas of the report were highlighted:-

- The Cabinet Member reported on a recent national meeting where the question of staff training days had been raised and he was delighted with

this news. Whilst acknowledging the impact on parents finding childcare for an extra day it was invaluable for teaching staff to have that day together;

- The Minority and Ethnic Achievement grant (MEAG) was still unresolved and still remained a risk;
- School Admissions for September 2019 had commenced but there remained a need for flexibility to deal with peaks in admissions; and
- A workshop on school repairs and maintenance had been arranged for 12th April but there had been a recent announcement that Welsh Government would be making funding available for Local Authorities for schools to support their capital programmes. Further information was being awaited.

The Chair referred to the extra staff training day to discuss the new curriculum which was invaluable for schools to work together and consider best practices. The Chief Officer agreed saying the Minister would like to see local authorities working regionally together to establish best practice.

The Chair welcomed the money proposed for school repairs but added the capital receipts were not there. In response the Chief Officer confirmed that the income funding would enable the council to offset some which had already incurred around repairs and maintenance and this would then free that money to be re-invested.

In response to a question from Councillor Tudor Jones around the ability to increase capacity at a school where amalgamation with another school had been considered, the Chief Officer said that through a combination of some dedicated grant funding and the funding from Welsh Government, this could be addressed

Councillor Patrick Heesom referred to the previous shocking report and how we were dealing with young people, classroom, social and at 1.09 embedding the youth council revitalising some of the young people's opportunities, the Youth Service was of great importance and highly valued. In response it was confirmed the Integrated Youth Provision were mobile and flexible in the front line team getting out into communities to tackle drug and Alcohol issues.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

46. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration. During discussion the Committee agreed the following changes to the Programme:-

- The Chair referred to the 16th May meeting and wondered if a representative from Secondary Heads Association should be invited to explain how they see the impacts on schools of the post 16 proposals. The Cabinet Member commented that the vast majority of post 16 pupils

which could be affected were from Coleg Cambria and that a representative from the Coleg should also be invited to attend.

- The Chief Officer then referred to the joint meeting with Social & Health Care on the 7th June and reported that Estyn would be holding an inspection of the Council on the week commencing 3rd of June. There was a lot of work for Officers prior to this Inspection and asked Committee if the joint meeting could be re-scheduled in the light of this.

Councillor Glyn Banks asked that the best wishes of the Committee be passed to Councillor Sian Braun as she had broken her fibula and tibia. He also asked that a letter of congratulations be sent to Mr. David Hytch following his recent wedding.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft Forward Work Programme as amended, be approved; and
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

47. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS 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