

LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
11 JULY 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council, held at at Deeside Leisure Centre, Queensferry, Deeside, CH5 1SA on Thursday, 11 July 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Amanda Bragg, Ian Dunbar, Ron Hampson, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, and Paul Shotton

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Carole Burgess, David Hytch, Rita Price, Rebecca Stark and Stephanie Williams

SUBSTITUTIONS: Patrick Heesom for Phil Lightfoot, and Ray Hughes for David Williams

APOLOGIES: Councillor C. Legg

CONTRIBUTORS: Cabinet Member for Education, Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste & Recycling & Leisure, Director of Lifelong Learning, and Principal Leisure Services Officer

IN ATTENDANCE: Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

16. 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.

17. MINUTES

- (i) The minutes of the call-in meeting of the Committee held on 6 June 2013 were submitted.

Councillor P.G. Heesom expressed the view that the comments made in support of each of the options proposed was not reflected in the minutes. The Cabinet Member for Education explained that the matter had been referred back to Cabinet which had reaffirmed its original decision.

Accuracy

Page 4, paragraph 6, Mrs. R. Price asked that the final sentence be amended to read "He stressed that the provision of transport to Welsh medium education was a statutory obligation".

- (ii) The minutes of ordinary meeting of the Committee held on 6 June 2013 were submitted.

Accuracy

Councillor N.M. Matthews asked that the minutes be amended to include her question on the projected numbers for the hub at Connah's Quay.

- (iii) The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Lifelong Learning and Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 June 2013 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

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

18. PRESENTATION FROM ALLIANCE AND LEISURE

The Chairman welcomed the representatives from Alliance and Leisure and invited them to give a presentation to the Committee on working in partnership with Flintshire County Council. He introduced Sarah Watts, Managing Director, Paul Cluett, Commercial Director, John Lever, Partnership Manager, and Julia Goddard, Business and Development Manager. The main points of the presentation were:

- Successes and challenges in partnership working in the current leisure market
- What has been developed in Phases 1, 2 and 3
- Successes
- Challenges
- Next Steps

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste & Recycling & Leisure, welcomed the presentation. He paid tribute to the work undertaken by the late Councillor. R. Macfarlane, Cabinet Member for Leisure, and looked forward to working with the Alliance & Leisure Team to expand on the progress which had been achieved.

The Director of Lifelong Learning commented on the good partnership working arrangement with Alliance & Leisure and on the improvements and enhancements achieved in customer services. He also referred to the benefits to the community in terms of healthier lifestyles and crime prevention through participation in positive activities. He said there was a need to focus carefully across all leisure centres and management to ensure that the Service operated as efficiently as possible and provided value for money.

The Director referred to the challenges which lay ahead and advised that due to the current economic climate and financial restraints the

Committee and the Authority would need to consider which facilities across Flintshire would be affordable and sustainable for the future.

Councillor W.P. Shotton expressed disappointment on the lack of marketing of leisure facilities in the past. He suggested that local hotels which did not have their own leisure facilities could be contacted with the purpose of including the Authority's leisure services as part of their promotional material.

Alliance & Leisure advised that the quality of provision at Deeside Leisure Centre was very high and reported that £100K had been spent on marketing, however, there was still a need for local outreach and development work to be undertaken.

Councillor P.G. Heesom expressed a number of concerns around the lack of leisure facilities provided in the west side of Flintshire and welcomed the Director's comments that the Committee would be tasked with reviewing leisure provision across all Flintshire in the future.

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste & Recycling & Leisure, acknowledged the issues raised by Councillor Heesom and agreed there needed to be an appropriate and affordable level of leisure facilities across Flintshire.

Councillor N.M. Matthews commented on the development of links with the private sector to encourage improvement and use of leisure facilities and cited the holding of corporate events as an example. She commended Officers on the excellent facilities available in the Afon Spa.

The Chairman suggested a number of further marketing initiatives to involve schools and raise awareness of the facilities available to young people.

Mrs. R. Stark welcomed the new Afon spa website, however, she expressed a number of concerns around the Authority's website which she felt was time consuming and wearisome to navigate when sourcing information around leisure provision. She referred to the need for ease and speed of information which was important in terms of keeping young people engaged online.

In his response the Principal Leisure Services Officer referred to the Authority's corporate website and the need to adhere to Flintshire County Council guidelines. He acknowledged the concerns which were raised by Mrs. Stark and explained that the Authority had invested heavily in purchasing new software to improve its website. He said agreement had been reached which had enabled a bespoke and commercially orientated website to be created for the Afon Spa. The Director of Lifelong Learning advised that further bespoke websites would be developed in the near future for other leisure facilities. He advised that an update report would be submitted to the Committee to outline the timeframes for the launch of the websites, electronic payments, and online bookings.

Councillor D.I. Mackie commented on the need to be kept informed of issues around access to information on the Authority's website and welcomed an update report on future developments.

Mr. D. Hytch thanked Officers for the guided tour of facilities at Deeside Leisure Centre and commended staff on the high level of customer service provided. He asked whether similar training packages to enhance the customer experience could be shared with other leisure facilities in the County.

The Chairman thanked the representatives of Alliance & Leisure for the presentation and suggested it might be helpful to have a further presentation at some point in the future to provide an update on developments.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be received;
- (b) That an update report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to outline the timeframes for the launch of the websites, electronic payments, and online bookings; and
- (c) That thanks be passed to the staff at Deeside Leisure Centre, on behalf of the Committee, for their assistance in providing a tour of the facilities and the high level of customer service provided.

19. SPORT AND LEISURE BUSINESS PLAN 2013-2017 – A LOCAL AUTHORITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH SPORT WALES

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced a report to inform the Committee on the Sport Flintshire four year Business Plan with its five high level outcomes which measure the success of the 'Every Child hooked on Sport for Life' aspiration. The Plan also outlined the priorities and programme detail in delivery, monitoring, success and funding. He provided background information and introduced Sian Williams, Sports Development Officer, and invited her to report in further detail on the Plan and the outcomes.

The Sports Development Officer reported that the Plan addressed the sector wide Vision for Sport in Wales and Community Sport Strategy for Wales. The Plan also contributed to a number of Council priorities and statutory plans within the Authority, most notably Core Aim 4 within the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

The Sports Development Officer advised that the Sport Flintshire Team had planned programmes which met local need and national targets and during the last 4 years had exceeded aims set. She provided some key data on the programmes and achievements and explained that many of the programmes and projects being delivered as part of the business plan offered

local opportunities for Flintshire residents to participate in predominantly no cost or low cost activities.

Members were asked to consider the Summary Sport Flintshire Business Plan 2013-2017 which was appended to the report.

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste & Recycling & Leisure, congratulated Officers and staff on their achievements and outcomes and on maximising to best use the available funding to provide a service across the whole of the County. He also commended the work of the young volunteers at Deeside Leisure Centre.

Councillor N.M. Matthews sought further information on the provision for 0-7 year olds. In her response the Sports Development Officer advised that the current provision for 0-7 year olds had been reviewed with a view to providing a more efficient service. New programmes had been launched and further projects were to be introduced in the near future. She agreed to provide a further report to the Committee on the growth of sports development activities for that age group.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Sport and Leisure Business Plan 2013 -2017 be endorsed; and
- (b) That the Sports Development Officer, provides a further report to a future meeting of the Committee on the growth of sports development activities for 0-7 year olds.

20. DIRECTORATE PLAN

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced a report to provide an overview of the renewed Directorate Plan for 2013/14 as part of the Council Governance Framework. Members were invited to consider the Plan and identify any issues which ought to be included in the forward work plan for the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman referred to the detailed discussions which had taken place at the recent Forward Work Planning workshop held on 9 July 2013.

Councillor W.P. Shotton referred to the information that Flintshire was one of the highest performing local authorities in Wales on indicators at Key Stages 3 and 4. However, further improvement was required in the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2, and specific intervention strategies for Literacy and Numeracy were working well. He also congratulated Officers on the new build of Ysgol Cae'r Nant which had been completed on time and in budget. The Director commended the work of Members who were involved in the School Performance Monitoring Group.

Councillor W.P. Shotton referred to a possible skills shortage in the labour market in the future and asked if provision was being made in terms of

apprenticeships and training opportunities to address the matter. The Director referred to a report which had recently been submitted to the Local Service Board. He advised that a dedicated internship work experience programme for graduates was to be launched and that together with neighbouring local authorities in North Wales it was hoped to introduce a Skills Academy to address the issue. He advised that a further update report would be provided to the Committee on this subject in due course.

Mr. D. Hytch referred to page 21 of the Directorate Plan and the list of key Strategic Partnerships and asked that school governors be included in the list. The Director expressed his thanks to school Governing Bodies for their support and commitment to school communities.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That a further update be provided to a future meeting of the Committee on developments to address a possible skills shortage in the labour market in the future.

21. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Housing and Learning 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 5 September 2013 at County Hall. Members were also informed that the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 10 October 2013 would be held at Hawarden Records Office.

The Facilitator advised that following the Forward Planning workshop held on 9 July 2013, the forward work programme would be populated to include the topics suggested by Members.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be agreed.

22. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.30 pm.

23. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

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Chairman