

LIFELONG LEARNING
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 FEBRUARY, 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 23 February, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor R.P. Macfarlane (Chairman)

Councillors: R.C. Bithell, R. Dolphin, F. Gillmore, H.T. Howorth, H.T. Isherwood, C. Legg, D.I. Mackie, A.P. Shotton and C.A. Thomas

CO-OPTED MEMBER: Mr. D. Hytch

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor A. Woolley

SUBSTITUTION: Councillors J.B. Attridge for E.F. Evans, Q.R.H. Dodd for H.J. McGuill and J.E. Falshaw for D.L. Mackie

APOLOGIES: Councillor W.O. Thomas, Mrs. C. Burgess and Mrs. R. Stark

CONTRIBUTORS: Executive Member for Education, Chief Executive, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Schools Services, Head of Development and Resources, Secondary Phase Officer and Primary Phase Officer

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

71. 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 Councillor R.C. Bithell (who is not a school governor) declared an interest as school governors.

72. VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman indicated that there would be a change in the order of the agenda and the item on Estyn Inspection of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People would be brought forward.

73. ESTYN INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced a report which detailed the outcome of the recent Estyn Inspection into Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People (LAESCYP).

The Director advised that several sections of the report had matched the Authority's own view of its progress and performance including support for additional learning needs, promoting social inclusion and well-being, access and school places, partnership working and resources management. However, the current report did not clearly identify the progress and achievement being made by children, young people and schools in Flintshire. The accuracy of the section on standards had been in dispute since October 2011 as it was believed that a narrow interpretation of data around Free School Meal benchmarking information by the inspectors, within an inflexible inspection framework, had led to a doubtful judgement. The judgement was not supported by the good outcome on the recent inspection of 14-19 year old provision in Flintshire, learner outcomes and the excellent inspection outcomes for local schools in their individual inspections.

The Director drew attention to the positive performance outcomes for 2010 and 2011 which were attached to the report and advised that they reflected well on the commitment of learners, families, staff, governors and support services. He emphasised that Flintshire was one of the top performing education services in Wales.

Members were informed that a draft action plan was currently being prepared in response to the Estyn report which would be presented for consideration at a meeting of the Committee to be held on 22 March 2012.

The Chief Executive advised that the Authority had registered its concerns about Estyn's judgement of 'adequate' in relation to 'Standards'. As there had not been a satisfactory resolution of the complaint at the Stage 1 referral the Authority had now moved to Stage 2 of Estyn's complaints procedure. The Chief Executive gave an overview of the areas of disagreement and dissatisfaction which had been expressed in correspondence to Estyn's Complaints Officer.

During discussion the Chief Executive and Director of Lifelong Learning responded to the questions and concerns expressed by Members around reduction in surplus places, entitlement and uptake of free school meals, and looked after children.

Councillor C.A. Thomas raised a number of concerns around leadership and commented that there had been a lack of communication with Members regarding decision making on the School Modernisation Strategy and School Budget formula to assist in taking strategies forward. She also commented that parents needed to be made aware that even if receiving a moderate income there could still be an entitlement for their children to

receive Free School Meals. The Chief Executive responded to the comments made and advised that schools had been involved in the early process concerning leadership. He made reference to the schools funding formula and the positive work and support undertaken to complete the review this year.

The Executive Member for Education gave an update on the School Modernisation consultation process and said that he expected the Authority to be in a position in May this year to progress with work proposed in the Holywell and Connah's Quay areas. He also commented on the matter of school balances, which was subject to further direction from the Welsh Government, and said that work would be undertaken with the Committee to resolve concerns arising from school budgets.

Councillor H.T. Isherwood raised concerns around the production of Personal Education Plans for looked-after children and bullying in schools. The Director responded to the issues raised and said that the need for further development had been identified in the self evaluation report.

Councillor Q.R.H. Dodd raised the matter of out of county placements into the Authority.

Councillor J.B. Attridge referred to a FOI request he had submitted for a copy of the first draft of the Estyn report which had been refused. The Chief Executive explained why the request had been refused and emphasised that the document was the property of Estyn.

The Chairman advised that an Action Plan was currently being produced to respond to the recommendations made for improvement in the Estyn report. The draft Plan would be submitted to a meeting of the Committee to be held in March and to Executive on 27 March 2012 before submission to Estyn. The Chairman proposed that an additional recommendation be included that the Committee endorsed the Authority's intention to progress to Stage 2 of Estyn's complaints procedure, which was agreed.

The Chief Executive said that the Authority would continue to work with Estyn to resolve the concerns raised about the judgement which the Authority deemed inappropriate.

Councillor C. Legg expressed his thanks to Officers for their hard work and commitment during the Estyn Inspection.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Estyn Report and the conclusions about the Local Authority's Education Services be received and noted;

- (b) That the Action Plan be submitted for consideration by the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to adoption by the Executive and submission to Estyn; and
- (c) That the Committee endorsed the Authority's intention to progress to Stage 2 of Estyn's complaints procedure.

74. PUPIL ATTAINMENT 2010/2011 AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL PHASES

The Head of Schools Services offered to provide a joint update on Pupil Attainment 2010/2011 and the Improvement Strategies for Primary and Secondary School Phases.

The Head of Service advised that the Welsh Government had produced a set of results, by Local Authority area, of pupil attainment at the end of Key Stages 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. He introduced Janice Dickens, Primary Schools Phase Officer and Kevin Grandfield, Secondary Schools Phase Officer, and invited them to present an analysis of pupil attainment in statutory assessment and public examinations in the academic year 2010/2011 for pupils in years 2, 6, 9, 11 and 13 in Flintshire. During discussion Officers responded in detail to the questions and concerns raised by Members around standards and leadership in schools.

Members were also asked to note the progress made with regard to the 2010/2011 improvement strategies and the priorities within the 2011/2012 strategies for the Primary School Phase and Secondary School Phase.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the reports be received and the attainment of Flintshire pupils for 2010/11 be noted; and
- (b) That the progress made with regard to the 2010/2011 improvement strategies and the priorities within the 2011/2012 strategies for the Primary School Phase and the Secondary School Phase be noted.

75. 14-19 EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

The Director of Lifelong Learning provided a verbal update on the School Modernisation consultation process. He made reference to the programme for the consultation meetings which had been considered by County Council and said that Area Schools Review booklets had been distributed and copies made available for Members. Consultation would also be undertaken with school staff, school governors and young people. If Members required any further information he asked that they contact the Directorate of Lifelong Learning.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

76. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the Forward Work Programme of the Committee.

Members reviewed the current programme and agreed that the following items be considered at the next meeting of the Committee on 22 March 2012:

- Q3 Performance report
- Incidents of arson, vandalism and burglaries in Flintshire schools
- Accidents in schools
- Progress report on the planning and funding for the relocation of Saltney Library
- 14-19 educational provision

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be agreed.

77. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There was one member of the press in attendance and no members of the public present.

78. DURATION OF THE MEETING

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and concluded at 4.50 p.m.

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Chairman

**SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S
CODE OF CONDUCT**

LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE		DATE: 23 February, 2012
MEMBER	ITEM	MINUTE NO.
<p>Councillors: J.B. Attridge, R.P. Macfarlane, Q.R.H. Dodd, R. Dolphin, J.E. Falshaw, F. Gillmore, H.T. Howorth, H.T. Isherwood, C. Legg, D.I. Mackie, A.P. Shotton and C.A. Thomas</p> <p><u>CO-OPTED MEMBERS:</u> Mr. D. Hytch, Mrs. T. Millington and</p>	<p>Estyn inspection of local authority education services for children and young people</p>	73