

LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
10 OCTOBER 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Hawarden Records Office, Hawarden, Deeside, on Thursday, 10 October 2013

PRESENT: **Councillor Ian Roberts (Chairman)**

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

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: David Hytch, Rebecca Stark and Stephanie Williams

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors Carolyn Thomas (for Phil Lightfoot)

CONTRIBUTORS: Cabinet Member for Education, Director of Lifelong Learning, Finance Manager, and Interim Facilities Manager

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

35. 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.

36. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 September 2013 were submitted.

Matters arising

Forward Work Programme

Councillor N.M. Matthews suggested that the Committee hold one of its meetings at Flint High School to visit their sixth form. Councillor I.B. Roberts suggested that the next meeting of the Committee on 14 November 2013 be held at Flint High School and said that he would arrange this through the Head Teacher.

RESOLVED:

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

37. SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA REVIEW

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced a report to update members on progress of the Formula Funding Review. He provided background information and invited Lucy Morris, Project Manager, to provide an overview of the recent work of the project groups.

The Project Manager advised that three project teams had been established representing the primary, secondary and specialist sectors with school representation on each. Detailed analysis work of the spend profiles across schools had been undertaken and discussed with the project groups. Updates on progress had been presented to the School Budget Forum, Headteacher representative groups and trade unions. The Project Manager outlined the approach taken to review the funding formula and advised that the modelling had produced alternative ways of distributing funds to schools, based on a review of the regulatory framework, the physical capacity of schools and a desire to simplify the administration and understanding of the funding.

The Project Manager explained that a consultation document on the Secondary Schools Funding Formula Review had been distributed to secondary schools. The Primary schools consultation document had been delayed due to issues raised by the primary project group and the School Budget Forum, however, it was intended that the document would be issued to schools week commencing 14 October 2013. She advised that a timeline for implementation and the key principles to underpin consultation were appended to the report.

Members welcomed the update and expressed thanks to the Director of Lifelong Learning, Project Manager and the Project team for their hard work and commitment to revise the current formula.

During discussion members expressed the need for financial data to be provided to schools as part of the consultation process to facilitate forward planning. Members also raised concerns in relation to transition arrangements, efficient configuration of classes, funding for administration in large primary schools, and funding for additional learning needs. The Director and Officers responded to the issues raised and reiterated the key objectives to achieve greater transparency, consistency and equity in how funding was distributed to schools. The Director commented on the Hill Review and the need for increasing school autonomy and collaborative working.

Mr. D. Hytch referred to the principle for funding for Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time and expressed the view that the Authority should establish the principle that every child should be taught by a qualified teacher all the time. In his response the Director of Lifelong Learning advised that the principle detailed in appendix 2 to the report was well established practice in accordance with the National workload agreement.

Members raised further concerns around training and development of school administration staff, and S106 Agreement funding from residential developers. Officers advised that the Authority aimed to improve training and development opportunities for support staff in schools, and also provided

clarification on the legal framework regarding S106 Agreements (including clarity that this was not within the legal scope of a school funding formula).

The Chairman advised that the outcome of the consultation process would be reported to members at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 19 December 2013. It was agreed that a workshop be scheduled prior to the meeting to consider case studies of how the revised funding formula would impact on schools in Flintshire.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the key principles and options to underpin school funding in Flintshire be noted;
- (b) That a further report on the outcome of the consultation process be reported to members at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 19 December 2013; and
- (c) That a workshop be held prior to a meeting of the Committee in December 2013 to consider case studies of how the revised funding formula would impact on schools in Flintshire.

38. DEVELOPING THE LOCAL EDUCATION SYSTEM APPROACH TO THE HILL REVIEW OF EDUCATION SERVICES

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced a report on the Authority's formal response to the Welsh Government's consultation on the Hill Review and to update the Committee on latest developments.

The Director provided a presentation on the Hill Review which covered the following main points:

- Purpose
- Hill Review – the history
- 5 key areas
- WLGA & ADEW Evidence to Hill
- Key issues for national model
- Next steps

It was agreed that the Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator would distribute statements released by the WLGA and WG in relation to the Hill Review to members following the meeting.

Mrs. R. Stark welcomed the proposals in the Hill Review on rationalisation of initiatives and correlation in terms of classroom size. She commented on the impact of initiatives on individual pupils and expressed a need for greater consideration to be given to how outcomes were reported to pupils.

Councillor C. Legg referred to school performance and asked if evidence could be provided on where and how improvements had been achieved. The Director advised that the annual report of the School Performance Monitoring

Group which would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee would provide members with case studies to show improved outcomes in relation to school performance. A full review of learner outcomes also features annually in the Scrutiny forward work programme.

Mr. D. Hytch welcomed the findings of the Hill Review which identified that greater autonomy for schools did not on its own result in school improvements.

In response to the questions raised by Councillor A.I. Dunbar regarding timelines for implementation the Director advised that a further report outlining the Authority's approach to the proposals set out in the Review would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That a further report outlining the Authority's approach to the proposals set out in the Review be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

39. VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman indicated that there would be a change in the order of the agenda and the item on the School Kitchen Ventilation Replacement Scheme would be brought forward.

40. SCHOOL KITCHEN VENTILATION REPLACEMENT SCHEME

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced Rudy Imhoof, the Interim Facilities Manager, and invited him to update members on the ventilation upgrade works undertaken in Flintshire schools. The Interim Facilities Manager provided background information and outlined the factors which had resulted in delays to planned works carried out over the Summer period.

Councillor N.R. Steele-Mortimer welcomed the update and thanked the Director and the Interim Facilities Manager for addressing the specific problems encountered at one primary school.

In response to the issues raised by members concerning ventilation upgrade works the Director referred to the formal process for reviewing contract managers. Regarding the specific matters raised by Councillor D.I. Mackie concerning a school in his Ward, the Interim Facilities Manager agreed to pursue the issues raised following the meeting.

Mr. D. Hytch referred to the excellent educational support provided by the Authority but highlighted a number of shortcomings in the property services which had had an adverse impact on the reputation of the Authority.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

41. FLINTSHIRE MUSIC SERVICE REVIEW

The Director of Lifelong Learning introduced a report to update on progress in developing the Flintshire Music Service operating model approved by Cabinet in April 2013.

The Director advised that the Music Service was performing well against service specification. The level of pupil participation was higher than last year and financial targets were being achieved.

The Director referred to the concerns raised by members at the last meeting of the Committee and advised that a response would be circulated to members following the meeting. The Chairman suggested that the item be deferred until the meeting of the Committee to be held on 19 December 2013 to enable members to consider the responses.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update be noted;
- (b) That a copy of the service responses to the concerns raised by members at the meeting of the Committee held on 5 September 2013 be circulated to the Committee following the meeting; and
- (c) That the item be deferred and submitted to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 19 December 2013

42. LEISURE SERVICES REVIEW TASK & FINISH GROUP

The Chairman asked the Committee to consider setting up a Task and Finish Group to review Leisure Services. A draft project plan was appended to the report for the scrutiny exercise.

In response to the Chairman's request Councillors M. Bateman, S. Jones, D.I. Mackie, and N.M. Matthews volunteered to serve on the above Group.

It was agreed that an invitation be extended to the Chairman of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee to sit on the Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be received; and
- (b) That a Leisure Services Review Task and Finish Group be formed by Councillors M. Bateman, S. Jones, D.I. Mackie, and N.M. Matthews; and

- (c) That an invitation be extended to the Chairman of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee to sit on the Task and Finish Group.

43. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

Following earlier discussions it was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at Flint High School on 14 November 2013. Members reviewed the current programme and agreed that the following items be considered at the next meeting:

- Quarterly performance reporting
- Apprenticeship and training opportunities
- School Performance Report – including attendance and exclusions
- Annual Report – School Performance Monitoring Group
- School Balances

The Chairman informed members that corporate parenting training had been arranged for 25 October 2013. Councillor R.C. Bithell emphasised the need for members to attend the training.

It was agreed that a workshop on the funding formula review be held on the rise of the meeting of the Committee to be held on 5 December 2013 to consider the Budget. It was also agreed that the following items be included on the agenda for consideration at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 19 December 2013:

- School Music Service update
- Funding Formula Review update

RESOLVED:

That subject to the above the forward work programme be agreed.

44. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 2.00pm and ended at 4.40 pm)

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Chairman