

EDUCATION AND YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 DECEMBER 2015

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 Tuesday, 15th December, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chair)

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Andy Dunbobbin, David Healey, Phil Lightfoot, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, and Nigel Steele Mortimer

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: David Hytch and Rebecca Stark

APOLOGIES: Bernard Stuart

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Derek Butler and Christine Jones

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Aaron Shotton, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Education, Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Corporate Finance Manager, Finance Manager (Education) and Inclusion Service Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Housing & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Overview & Scrutiny Support Officer

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chairman advised that Mrs. Rita Price has resigned as a co-opted member of the Committee. Mr. Bernard Stuart had been nominated as a co-opted member of the Committee and would be attending future meetings. The Chairman suggested that a letter be written to Mrs. Rita Price thanking her for her hard work and dedication to the Committee. This suggestion was supported by the Committee.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

David Hytch and Rebecca Stark both declared a personal interest in the following item due to the close association of family members who accessed the school music service:-

Agenda item 3 – Budget Consultation for 2015/16.

45. BUDGET CONSULTATION FOR 2015/16

The Chairman welcomed the contributors to the meeting.

The Chief Executive and Corporate Finance Manager began the presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Purpose of today's meeting
- Corporate Overview

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) continued the detailed presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Service Business Plan Proposals (Schools)
- Service Business Plan Proposals (Education & Youth)
- Local Pressures and Inflation

The Chief Executive concluded the presentation through outlining the National Timetable and Local Timetable.

The comments and questions which were raised by Members of the Committee on the presentation, together with the responses given, are detailed in Appendix 1 (attached).

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

Presentation slides

46. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 2.00pm and finished at 3.33pm)

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Chairman

APPENDIX 1

2016/17 Budget Consultation.

Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 15th December, 2015

Member Comment/Question	Response
<u>Education & Youth</u>	
<p>Grateful for the information on what are mandatory and non-mandatory duties with regard to the 2016/17 proposals. Personal view that the Council should be looking to made efficiencies within the non-mandatory service areas before looking to the mandatory service areas. Could you provide Members with information on what the total budget for each non-mandatory service is?</p>	<p>An assessment is made of non-mandatory service areas to assess whether the Council wants to provide a basic level of service or pitch it slightly above expectations. The main non-mandatory service area is the school music service and a report on adopting an alternative delivery model for this service will be presented to Overview & Scrutiny in the new year.</p> <p>There had been a major receive of IT support provided to schools. This is a non-mandatory service area but the Council was able to facilitate a robust service for schools. We would not advise reviewing non-mandatory service areas which have gone through rigorous challenge and review to enable efficiencies to be found.</p> <p>A list of related activities to support schools could be provided as part of the factsheets which are to be provided to Members prior to the further budget meetings in January, 2016.</p>
<p>With regard to the £187,000 efficiencies through school modernisation, does this figure relate to the close of John Summers High School, Ysgol Maes Edwin, Ysgol Llanfynydd and Ysgol Mornant Gronant Picton? Is so, what is the saving per school?</p> <p>Is the £187,000 projected efficiencies through school modernisation predicated on the close of all three primary schools? And does this not prejudice/drive the outcome of the consultation process for</p>	<p>This figure related to school modernisation proposals which can be implemented by September 2016. John Summers High School is not expected to close until September 2017.</p> <p>A breakdown of the figures can be provided as part of the factsheets for Members in January, 2016.</p> <p>The Council has a mandatory duty to manage the supply of school places. The risk status on whether these efficiencies can be accepted/delivered is classed as 'red' as they can only be achieved if a decision is taken and</p>

these schools.	therefore are not pre-determined.
Grateful for the verbal update on provisional specific education grants but can this information be provided to Members in a written format.	The detailed presentation slides presented to Cabinet on the Local Government provision settlement 2016/17 will be circulated to all Members prior to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny meeting on Friday 18 th December.
<p>In view of the comments around looking at an alternative delivery model for the school music service, do you have a timescale for this piece of work?</p> <p>Concern with reductions to the school music service which is highly valued and provides children with greater opportunities in the future. Whatever alternative delivery model the Council decided on, hope this is looked at sympathetically.</p> <p>Is there a residual cost for the school music service, and if so, how much is this cost?</p>	<p>A report on alternative delivery model options will be presented to Overview & Scrutiny in the new year with a model in place for either April or September 2017 depending on whether staff would need to be transferred under the adopted model.</p> <p>Recognise that this is an Important part of the curriculum which enriches the learning experience for children which is why the Council is trying to retain the service through the adoption of an alternative delivery model.</p> <p>The majority of the residual cost is around transport costs which amount to an annual cost of approximately £60,000.</p> <p>School music service transport is also being considered by the school transport Task & Finish Group which was set up by this Committee.</p>
Is it wise to make such large efficiencies within the Early Years Education provision as this are of work could reduce the funding needed for children in future years.	The efficiencies can be realised through alternative ways of delivering support which has been more successful than the previous model and enables early year's providers in primary schools to work closer together.
Concerns around the proposal to remove the current vacancy within the Education Psychology Service. The risks in not addressing issues early could cause a negative impact on the social care budget in future years.	The current vacancy was a senior manager post. There is an opportunity to look at and adopt a good practice model to bring practitioners together which will be facilitated by the Education Psychologist. Officers are mindful that the Inclusion Service does not end up bridging the gap for the health service.
Concerns around the Inclusion Service and the working within a consortia which can create a bidding war for funding between schools. Look forward to the workshop on the Inclusion Service in the	Noted.

<p>new year to discuss these concerns.</p>	
<p>With regard to the proposed pressure of £236,000 for school modernisation, does this figure relate to the cost of the post 16 hub, and could Members be given an assurance around this figure, given the possible reduction in children attending the Hub following the decision for a sixth form to remain at Flint High School.</p> <p>If you offset the proposed savings from school modernisation against the proposed pressure this will mean the Council being £49,000 worse off. Is the proposed pressure of £236,000 a one-off cost?</p>	<p>The proposed pressure of £236,000 is not the cost of operating the hub, which is funded through the Welsh Government and shown within the accounts of Coleg Cambria. The pressure related to exit and salary safeguarding costs for the post 16 hub and also the new school at Holywell. This is an estimated cost at this stage.</p> <p>The £236,000 is entirely a one-off cost to meet exit costs and will be met from Council reserves.</p> <p>It may be helpful for information on which budget proposals are on-off costs and which are recurring savings to be provided in the factsheets for Members.</p>
<p>Concern that collaborative projects are not seeking to find reductions and efficiencies within their budgets.</p>	<p>Some collaborative projects provide budget savings instantly by their nature. The Council is reviewing regional agreements, where workable, with officers are currently reviewing GwE School Improvement to assess whether a modest reduction in budget can be found without undermining the integrity of the collaborative project.</p>
<p>With regard to the proposal to reduce the number of senior managers, a report was presented to the Committee earlier in the year which proposed reducing senior managers from 10 to 5. Therefore should this efficiency be a greater number or is this a part year saving.</p>	<p>The current management structure which was presented to the Committee earlier in the year was adopted in September 2015 and therefore is reflected as savings within the 2015/16 budget. The proposed review for 2016/17 is looking for further savings within administration and middle leadership costs.</p>
<p>Concern with regard to proposals to remove posts within the English as an additional language/Gypsy Traveller Support and the Speech and Language Service. Given the Ministerial expectations around speech and language and the rise in immigrants who find themselves in Flintshire concerned that there is a risk to future service delivery. Appreciate the opportunity to make savings by not filling vacancies when arise but concerned that this does not jeopardise the service.</p>	<p>The directive from the Minister is welcomed as speech and language has to be a priority within education. The proposal is to provide training to schools to deliver appropriate levels of support to children with additional language needs with inclusion service staff based in schools to help develop that level of expertise.</p>
<p>Concerns around the proposed reduction in posts within the Inclusion Welfare</p>	<p>The Council has been enhancing this provision through TRACK which has improved</p>

<p>Service. This has been an excellent service in the past and concerns that reductions in this service will have a negative impact on the attitude and attainment of young people.</p>	<p>engagement with young people between the ages of 11 – 19. The proposal will ensure no further overlap of service delivery in the future.</p>
<p>With regard to the proposals for the Educational Psychology Service, Inclusion Welfare Service and Looked After Children Support, have Action For Children been involved in discussions around those proposals.</p>	<p>The proposals are around staffing levels and vacancies. Discussions have been held with the social services action group to address how best to meet the pressures to the service areas.</p>
<p>Concern around the increased number of Looked After Children and the pressure from the introduction of National Government legislation that children cannot remain within the care system for longer than 4 months.</p>	<p>The proposals to re-model the service are around being smarter in the way we work to ensure no duplication of work. The pupil deprivation grant provides schools with the resource to identify the needs of young people. Agree the earlier the intervention the better and that is why the Council is prioritising funding to that area.</p>
<p>Concern around the effect of diminishing budgets and expectations from the Welsh Government on teaching staff. How is the impact on teaching staff going to be monitored and are there mechanisms in place to report concerns back to Welsh Government.</p>	<p>Agree with the concerns. The funding formula is outdated which results in Flintshire being low funded per pupil.</p> <p>There are a number of ways in which the impact on teaching staff can be monitored. Sickness absence is monitored to ensure that appropriate support is provided for long term absences. Officers also continue to meet with trade unions, headteachers and school governor representatives to discuss concerns. Work has also been progressing to reduce the pressure around Key Stage 4 outcomes to ensure that the outcomes expected next summer are not unrealistic targets. There continues to be additional pressure and responsibility put on teaching staff without additional funding and more needs to be done on operational areas.</p>
<p>As the County Council is not finalising the budget until 10th March, 2016 which is a later date than previous years, will Town and Community Councils be given an extension on the date they have to notify the County Council of their precept levels.</p>	<p>The Council is not intending to add any new requirements to Town and Community Council within the 2016/17 financial year, therefore the current timetable remains for them to set their precept remains.</p>