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To: Cllr Ian Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Adele Davies-Cooke, Andy Dunbobbin, David Healey, Ray Hughes, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Vicky Perfect, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Carolyn Thomas

Co-opted Members

Janine Beggan, David Hytch, Rebecca Stark, Bernard Stuart and Rev. John Thelwell

9 March 2016

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee which will be held at 10.30 am on Tuesday, 15th March, 2016 in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA to consider the following items

Members are asked to note the meeting start time of 10.30 a.m.

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 MINUTES (Pages 3 - 36)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 15 December 2015, 6 January, 19 January and 5 February, 2016.

4 **WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN** (Pages 37 - 44)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Cabinet Member for Education

Purpose: To consider the Councils response to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

5 **SELF-EVALUATION OF EDUCATION SERVICES** (Pages 45 - 86)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Cabinet Member for Education

Purpose: To update Members on overall Education Service performance

6 **EARLY ENTITLEMENT - CHANGES TO DELIVERY OF TEACHER SUPPORT TO APPROVED SETTINGS** (Pages 87 - 94)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Cabinet Member for Education

Purpose: To consult with the Committee on proposed changes to delivery of teacher support to approved settings

7 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 95 - 102)

Report of Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator

Purpose: To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Yours faithfully



Peter Evans
Democracy & Governance Manager

Agenda Item 3

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **15 DECEMBER 2015**

Minutes of the meeting of the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at 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

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.

46. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS 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

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 these schools.</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 therefore are not pre-determined.</p>

<p>Grateful for the verbal update on provisional specific education grants but can this information be provided to Members in a written format.</p>	<p>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 18th December.</p>
<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>
<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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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 new year to discuss these concerns.</p>	<p>Noted.</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 Service. This has been an excellent</p>	<p>The Council has been enhancing this provision through TRACK which has improved engagement with young people between the</p>

<p>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>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>

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 JANUARY 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Wednesday, 6 January 2016.

PRESENT: David Hytch (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Adele Davies-Cooke, Andy Dunbobbin, David Healey, Colin Legg, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Vicky Perfect and Nigel Steele-Mortimer

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Rebecca Stark and Rev. John Thelwell

APOLOGIES: Councillors Ray Hughes and Carolyn Thomas. Bernard Stuart.

SUBSTITUTION: Councillor Paul Shotton (for Ian Roberts)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Glyn Banks, Christine Jones and Tony Sharps

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Education, Chief Officer (Education and Youth), and Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision

IN ATTENDANCE:

Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator, and Committee Officer

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting and invited Officers to introduce themselves. He advised that the purpose of the meeting was to inform the Committee of the responses from the statutory consultation period for the proposal to close Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain. He briefly explained that the role of the Committee was to scrutinise the Authority's policy and procedures and make recommendations where necessary, however, it was not a decision making body and it would be for the Cabinet to make the actual decision on the proposal to close Ysgol Maes Edwin at its meeting on 19 January 2016.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Paul Cunningham declared a personal interest in the following item as he was Chair of the Governing Body of Ysgol Gwynedd.

Agenda item 3 – School Modernisation – School Standards and Reorganisation Act 2013 – Ysgol Maes Edwin.

Councillor Dave Mackie declared that he had visited Ysgol Maes Edwin at the invitation of the school.

The Chairman invited members of the Committee to make a declaration if they were school governors and a number of members so indicated.

48. SCHOOL MODERNISATION – SCHOOL STANDARDS AND REORGANISATION ACT 2013 – YSGOL MAES EDWIN

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced a report to inform the Committee of the responses from the statutory consultation period for the proposal to close Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain. He advised that comments from the Committee were invited in advance of the Cabinet being requested to conclude on a formal proposal.

The Chief Officer provided background information and referred to the key considerations as detailed in the report. He advised that the proposal to close Ysgol Maes Edwin was put forward on the basis of criteria laid down in the Council's School Modernisation Strategy regarding unfilled places across the primary school portfolio, diminishing resource criteria, small school criteria and Welsh Government categorisation. He reported that formal consultation for Ysgol Maes Edwin commenced on 21 October 2015 and ended on 2 December 2015. The Council had issued consultation documents in accordance with the statutory School Organisation Code and responses had been received from children and young people, community, staff, parents and carers. A copy of the consultation document (children's version) was appended to the report which contained the key issues raised during the consultation period.

The Chief Officer outlined the process if the Cabinet decision was to proceed with the proposal to close Ysgol Maes Edwin. He explained that the Council would publish a Statutory Notice providing a 28 day notice period for objections. If objections were received the Council must publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their responses to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period. The anticipated timeline should the current proposals be implemented was outlined in appendix 4 of the report.

The Chief Officer reported on the issue of unfilled places across the primary school portfolio and referred to the reduction in full time pupils at Ysgol Maes Edwin since September 2015. He also drew attention to the high number of pupils attending Ysgol Maes Edwin who were not attending their local school. The Chief Officer explained that the School population and capacity was lower than the national designation of a small school and school numbers did not meet the minimum requirements of primary school models as noted in the Council's School Modernisation Strategy. He commented on the issue of sustainability concerning curriculum provision and social experience for learners. The Chief Officer referred to the significance of Welsh Government categorisation and advised that Ysgol Maes Edwin was currently identified as category 4 (the lowest for educational standards).

The Chief Officer explained that the concerns and anxieties of pupils, parents, carers and staff were fully acknowledged, however, the Authority had a duty to provide high quality education which could be sustained, was affordable, and in the best interests of pupils and students for the future. The Chief Officer referred to the concerns which had been raised during the consultation and gave an assurance that the Authority would take all practicable steps to ease the transition for all pupils, especially vulnerable learners who had disabilities or Additional Learning Needs. He gave further assurance that the Authority had fully considered all the concerns around school capacity, school admissions, and potential housing yield and confirmed the accuracy of the data contained in the consultation document which had in the main been provided by schools. He emphasised that Estyn held the view that the proposal was likely to at least maintain the current standards and quality of educational provision in the area. Estyn had also noted that the advantages of the proposal had been set out in the consultation document which included the efficient and effective use of resources, a reduction of unfilled pupil places, and reduction in travel to school for the majority of pupils should they choose their local school

Referring to the alternative suggestion to the proposal of a federation being formed, the Chief Officer advised that the Governing Body of Ysgol Maes Edwin had not, to date, been able to confirm a willing partnering school or schools to enable them to pursue a federation.

In summarising his comments the Chief Officer reiterated that the proposal was put forward on the basis of criteria laid down in the Council's School Modernisation Strategy relating to unfilled places across the primary school sector, diminishing resources, small schools, and Welsh Government categorisation. He emphasised that no willing partnering school or schools had put forward a proposal to form a federation with Ysgol Maes Edwin.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Officer for his presentation and invited Members to ask questions.

Councillor Paul Cunningham referred to the possibility of establishing a federation with another school or schools and asked whether enough time had been given to exploring this option. During discussion other Members expressed the same concern. Councillor Cunningham also commented on the capacity of a neighbouring school to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Maes Edwin if it closed. Members sought assurances that there was sufficient capacity at other local schools in the area and expressed the need to ensure that sibling and friendship groups remained together. A question was raised as to whether certain year groups within one neighbouring school were already full.

Mrs. Rebecca Stark commented on the need to consider the impact of a possible closure on parents and referred to the need for childcare provision. She asked if the arrangements for before and after school care at other schools in the area had been taken into consideration. She commented on the additional expense incurred for parents, particularly in the case of sibling

groups, citing the cost of new school uniforms and transport as examples. She asked if consideration could be given to providing some financial assistance to parents experiencing difficulty.

The Chief Officer and Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision, responded to the comments and questions raised. Officers explained that it had been confirmed that no neighbouring school was willing to form a federation with Ysgol Maes Edwin. Officers confirmed that there was sufficient capacity in the local schools network to accommodate pupils from Ysgol Maes Edwin in the event of closure. Members were also informed that the position on capacity was being closely monitored. Concerning the question around year groups being full in one school, the Chief Officer informed of the options available to headteachers to alter class structures at the beginning of each academic year. He commented on the “good” transitional arrangements and support provided by officers and gave an assurance that full co-operation would be in place to assist children and families throughout the process. The Chief Officer agreed to give consideration to the suggestion to financially assist parents with the cost of a new uniform as part of the planned transition arrangements.

Councillor David Healey urged the Authority to proceed with caution. He commended Officers on the provision which had been made for pupils with disabilities at Ysgol Maes Edwin, however, he said it was regrettable this would be lost if the school was to close and commented on the need and cost to ensure similar provision was replicated at other local schools.

Councillor Nancy Matthews referred to the benefits of pupils attending a small school and expressed concerns that these advantages would be lost if pupils transferred from Ysgol Maes Edwin to other local schools. The Chief Officer advised that it was Estyn’s view that the proposal was likely to at least maintain the present standards of education because of the quality of education provision within other local schools. The Chief Officer outlined the importance of supporting all children throughout the transition of school organisational change before, during, and after the process and referred to the provision of individual plans for pupils, especially for vulnerable groups of learners with Additional Learning Needs, in the event of school closure and transfer to other schools. He commented on the learning gained from previous school reorganisations concerning the support arrangements required.

Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer expressed a number of reasons as to why he held the view that Ysgol Maes Edwin should not be closed and referred to the excellent primary school network which currently existed across Flintshire. Councillor Chris Bithell commented on the level of austerity faced by the Authority and the current and future cuts to the level of funding received which had already resulted in maximum savings being achieved in other service areas. The Chief Officer and Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision, reported on the Authority’s statutory responsibility to manage the supply of school places. He referred to the financial impact on all other schools in the area in retaining surplus places as defined by the Welsh

Government, Estyn, and the Welsh Audit Office as no more than 10% of the number of places across the system. Information on the consultation process, which was a legal requirement, was also provided to the Committee.

During discussion further concerns were raised by Members around demography and whether closing Ysgol Maes Edwin would have a negative impact on school places in the future. The impact that the Croes Atti Housing Development would have on pupil numbers in Flint was also raised and information sought around the arrangements concerning S106 funding. Members commented on the improvement in school pupil numbers since 2008.

Members expressed further concerns regarding the projected savings from school closure and how these would be re-invested. The Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision, outlined the projected savings and commented that funding for pupils would 'follow' the pupil in the event of school closure.

Responding to the further comments raised the Chief Officer referred to the community impact assessment which had been undertaken and explained that the loss of the School would impact on a small number of community activities taking place and the range of community facilities within the School. He also advised that the Authority had no plans for the school site should the school close and future usage of the site would be determined following confirmation that it was no longer required for educational purposes.

Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer proposed that the process to close Ysgol Maes Edwin be suspended to allow further opportunity for the option of federation to be considered. Following further discussion it was suggested that the process be suspended for a period of two months. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Nancy Matthews and when put to the vote was carried.

When asked, Officers confirmed that delaying a decision by two months to implement a proposal would significantly prolong the uncertainty for families and the wider community as implementation would no longer be possible for the commencement of the 2016-17 academic year.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer and Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision, for their detailed responses to Members questions. He also thanked members of the public for their attendance and courtesy during the meeting.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Committee recommend to Cabinet that the process be suspended for two months to allow the opportunity for federation to be reviewed; and

- (b) That the comments of the Committee be collated and presented to Cabinet at its meeting on the 19 January 2016.

49. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were five members of the public and one member of the press in attendance

(The meeting started at 10.00am and ended at 12.10pm)

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Chairman

EDUCATION AND YOUTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 JANUARY 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Wednesday, 6th January 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors: Paul Cunningham, Adele Davies-Cooke, Andy Dunbobbin, David Healey, Ray Hughes, Colin Legg, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Vicky Perfect and Nigel Steele-Mortimer

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

David Hytch, Rebecca Stark, and Rev. John Thelwell

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors Tony Sharps and Glyn Banks attended as observers

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Marion Bateman
Councillor Hilary Isherwood (Ward Member)
Bernard Stuart

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Chris Bithell - Cabinet Member for Education, Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Senior Manager – School Planning & Provision and Senior Manager – Business Change and Support

IN ATTENDANCE:

Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

51. SCHOOL MODERNISATION – SCHOOL STANDARDS AND REORGANISATION ACTION 2013 – YSGOL LLANFYNYDD

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced a report to inform the Committee of responses from the statutory consultation period for the proposal to close Ysgol Llanfynydd.

The Chief Officer provided detailed information on the process undertaken since the decision by Cabinet in June 2015 to enter into formal consultation on closure and other school organisation options for Ysgol Llanfynydd by September 2016. He commented on the important role of this Committee to consider the consultation document and the responses from stakeholders and to provide comments to Cabinet to allow a decision to be made on the next stage. Cabinet approved the formal consultation in line with criteria in the Council's School Modernisation Strategy which provided details

of the unfilled places across the primary school portfolio, diminishing resource criteria and small school criteria. An extensive consultation exercise commenced on Wednesday 21 October and ended on Wednesday 2 December 2015 and the views of children and young people had also been sought. The Chief Officer explained that it was no longer a requirement in Wales to hold meetings about school re-organisations but a number of events had been held to allow parents, teachers and pupils to put their views forward. The responses received focused on the following areas of concern:-

- Accuracy of data contained within the consultation document;
- Impact on pupils/transition/friendship groups;
- Education standards;
- Capacity of other schools in the area to accommodate pupils;
- Admissions to other schools should Ysgol Llanfynydd close;
- Transport and traffic

The next stage was for the views of this Committee to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 19th January 2016 and if the Cabinet decision was to proceed with its proposals, the Council would publish a Statutory notice providing a 28 day notice period for objections. If objections were received, the Council must publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their responses to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period. After that period, Cabinet would be asked again to implement the school organisational change for Ysgol Llanfynydd or not. The Chief Officer reiterated that at its meeting in January 2016, Cabinet would not be making a decision on whether to implement the organisational change or not. He acknowledged that this was a lengthy process which would generate an amount of uncertainty for those involved. He paid tribute to the school community, staff and governors and added that the school was continuing to be a purposeful learning environment and was very much a working school. The Chief Officer explained that at September 2015 the school population had 34 pupils with unfilled places at 57.5% and for 44% of the pupils attending, Ysgol Llanfynydd was not their nearest school. The school population and capacity of Ysgol Llanfynydd was lower than national designation of a small school and school numbers did not meet the minimum requirements of primary school models as noted in the Council's School Modernisation Strategy.

The report detailed the concerns that had been raised during the consultation exercise including the views of the pupils who had indicated that they did not want their school to be closed. Concerns had also been expressed for their teachers, the transition to a new school and the loss of friendship groups and all of the consultation responses were included in appendix 2 to the report. On the issue raised about the accuracy of the data, a compliance statement in relation to the current school proposals was included at appendix 1. The Chief Officer confirmed that there was sufficient capacity at other schools to accommodate the pupils from Ysgol Llanfynydd and it had been stated that Ysgol Parc y Llan could accommodate all of the cohort from Ysgol Llanfynydd. He welcomed arrangements in place to the end of the summer term 2016 that the Headteacher from Ysgol Parc y Llan

spent part of the week working at Ysgol Llanfynydd as Acting Headteacher. A suggestion of a federation had been made by a number of consultees but there had currently not been a submission of a business case for a federation and a willing school had not been identified with which to pursue a federation. It was reported that the Governing Body had also requested a reduction in its school funding formula allocation in order to demonstrate a lower operating cost per pupil. However, as the funding formula must be consistently applied across all schools with any changes to the formula being consulted on and agreed, a reduction in funding could not be applied by the Authority for an individual school. The Chief Officer spoke of a managed transition that would be in place for all pupils from Ysgol Llanfynydd, especially for vulnerable learners such as those with additional learning needs. The Council would work alongside pupils, their parents and the relevant school to make appropriate transition arrangements for pupils to familiarise themselves with their new environments, subject to parental preference.

Councillor David Healey sought clarification on the cost of £80,000 reported for the repair of the roof at the school and expressed significant concern about the comments that the school had been overfunded by £1,000 per pupil, particularly as a secondary school that pupils from Ysgol Llanfynydd could attend was one of the lowest funded secondary schools. He asked if Flintshire County Council's Schools Budget Forum could review the funding formula for schools to ensure fairness for all schools. Councillor Healey commented that it was important that pupils received education of an equal standard and he queried whether the education provision could cope at all years. He asked if assurance could be given that families with more than one child in Ysgol Llanfynydd would be placed in one school to prevent additional journeys for parents to different schools to drop off and pick up their children, if Ysgol Llanfynydd was closed. He also asked about the funding of pupils who were educated in Flintshire but lived elsewhere. Councillor Healey also expressed concern about the issue of additional traffic at Abermorddu school if some pupils from Ysgol Llanfynydd were to attend and spoke of a recent conversation with a parent about a child nearly being knocked over by a car outside Abermorddu school. He said that he had raised the issue and that he had been advised that Streetscene were considering implementing changes in the area but Councillor Healey felt that this would not affect the volume of traffic and that dangers would increase if a significant number of additional pupils were to attend Abermorddu school. He also commented on the impact on the community if Ysgol Llanfynydd were to close and spoke of the withdrawal of bus subsidies and the closure of a nearby Household Recycling Centre, both of which had affected those in the community.

In response to the comments made, the Chief Officer advised that if pupils were educated in a Flintshire school, this would be funded by Flintshire County Council and that no funding was received from the authority in which the pupils lived. On education standards, he said that it was the opinion of Estyn that the proposals would at least maintain the quality of learning and there were clearly close links with Ysgol Parc y Llan where the governors had suggested that all of the pupils from Ysgol Llanfynydd could be accommodated at the school through a managed transition. He added that

there were also other schools that had some vacancies. He reminded the Committee that parental choice would need to be considered and that if Ysgol Llanfynydd did close then all practicable steps would be taken to ease the transition for all learners. The Chief Officer commented on the unique issue of overfunding for Ysgol Llanfynydd and advised the Committee that the Schools Budget Forum monitored the funding formula work and that a suggestion could be put forward that monies for this individual school be reviewed.

Councillor Chris Bithell said that the funding for schools had been reviewed in 2013/14 and the amount that Ysgol Llanfynydd received had not been objected to at that time. He added that discussions had taken place on a Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) level about the national funding formula. The formula had been reviewed a number of years ago by Welsh Government (WG) and had resulted in a reduction for Flintshire County Council as the funding was greater for authorities with higher levels of deprivation. On the issue of transport costs, he explained that the Council for the area in which the child lived would be responsible for funding school travel costs if Ysgol Llanfynydd was to close.

On the issue of the cost of £80,000 for the repair to the school roof, the Chief Officer explained that a consistent approach was applied across all schools for independent contractors to carry out condition surveys. He explained that because of the age of the school building, the materials required for the repairs were expensive. The Senior Manager – School Planning & Provision confirmed that the survey work for repairs and maintenance was carried out on a five year cycle and allowed the local authority to prioritise its maintenance programme. If the school remained open, a tendering process would commence when the work was required and the costs would increase each year based on inflation. Councillor Healey queried whether £80,000 would be the cost faced by a third party if the school building was taken over under a Community Asset Transfer if the school was to close. The Chief Officer confirmed that the Council would not determine the future use of a school until after it had become vacant. He added that discussions would need to take place, if the building was transferred, on funding for any necessary repairs and maintenance.

Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer expressed his significant concern about the reviews being undertaken on primary schools in the County. He felt that the documents were a 'justification report' rather than a consultation report to justify closure of the school. He spoke of the comments of Estyn that the education standards should at least be maintained and said that retention should be encouraged as the school numbers had seen very little reduction in recent years. Councillor Steele-Mortimer welcomed the suggestion of a federation but expressed concern that the Headteacher from Ysgol Parc y Llan would only be Acting Head at Ysgol Llanfynydd until the end of the summer term 2016. He felt that a federation could be achieved and indicated that he would later move a recommendation to allow the school more time to explore the option of a federation.

In response, the Chief Officer reiterated his earlier comments that there were no partner schools willing to consider a federation with Ysgol Llanfynydd and that the Acting Headteacher would only be in place until the end of the summer term 2016. He referred to appendix I where comments referred to the awareness of the school modernisation process and the need to 'future proof' education provision for pupils in the county. The pupils from Ysgol Llanfynydd would be welcomed at Ysgol Parc y Llan and the school was able to accommodate the complete cohort if necessary. The Chief Officer added that there would be no disadvantage to pupils on the issue of transport as consideration would be given to more generous arrangements than were specified in the policy. No schools had submitted a business case for a federation with Ysgol Llanfynydd and therefore consideration needed to be given that no schools were willing to work with Ysgol Llanfynydd.

Councillor Bithell referred to the difficult decisions being faced by many Councils because of budget cuts which had been on a scale not experienced before. He said that it was no longer possible to subsidise schools and he commented on other services which were being cut such as libraries and household recycling centres.

Following a query from Councillor Steele-Mortimer about the savings that would be made from closing the school, the Senior Manager – School Planning & Provision explained that estimated total net savings of £186,327 could be achieved based on savings on the formula funding, backlog maintenance and catering less the requirement for transport costs.

Councillor Nancy Matthews asked whether alternative schools offered after school clubs which were currently available at Ysgol Llanfynydd and queried whether parent governors could decide if the school closed or not. She also asked whether a federation would benefit both schools and what the differences were between a shared head and a full federation.

In response, the Chief Officer indicated that he had met with both governing bodies to obtain their views and it had been indicated that the federation in Wales was quite a restrictive model which required joint governance and operating arrangements between both schools. In all documents Ysgol Parc y Llan had not been willing to be part of a federation proposal but had felt that a more sustainable option would be for the current cohort at Ysgol Llanfynydd to move to Ysgol Parc y Llan rather than collaborate on two sites. The Senior Manager – School Planning & Provision explained that Ysgol Llanfynydd did not offer 'wraparound' care but a group had been established in September 2015 to provide before and after school care for the children; he spoke of other schools that also offered such provision.

Mrs. Rebecca Stark commented on the potential transfer of the children to another school, particularly those with additional needs, and sought clarification on how this would be achieved to ensure the children were protected and supported appropriately. She felt that the Committee should monitor the effect of the impact on the children over time to identify whether

any additional support was required. The Chief Officer welcomed the suggestion and agreed that it was appropriate for a report to be submitted to the Committee following the possible closure of a school to ensure that learning requirements were being achieved. He also spoke of the importance of providing support to all pupils during the transition and added that funding for pupils with additional learning needs would follow the pupils to their new schools. This could mean that the member of staff would also be transferred to the new school to practically support the transition.

Mr. David Hytch was saddened by the loss of schools on communities but he understood that difficult decisions had to be made because of austerity cuts. He queried whether the school would still be under review if the costings for the roof were not a consideration. In referring to educational standards, he suggested that some pupils progressed well in smaller schools but there were also some who would be disadvantaged which was a concern. The Chief Officer responded that it was important to recognise that the alternative schools proposed were small village schools and that he had a high level of confidence that they were good schools for the pupils to transfer to.

Councillor Healey sought responses on his earlier questions about increased traffic at Abermorddu school and siblings being able to attend the same school.

The Senior Manager – School Planning & Provision felt that the school closure could result in less traffic if the cohort of pupils moved to Ysgol Parc y Llan as transport would be provided and added that the issue of transport because of parental preference would be a consideration for the authority in which the children lived. Modelling work on transport issues had been undertaken on the basis of pupils transferring to Ysgol Parc y Llan. The Chief Officer indicated that the issues raised about parking problems at Abermorddu school would be considered.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin raised significant concern about the proposal to close Ysgol Llanfynydd and felt that more could have been done to save the school.

Mrs. Stark sought clarification on whether transport would be provided for the children at Ysgol Llanfynydd for the term of their education at a new school. She asked that if the transport policy was reviewed in the future that it ensured protection for children for the period of their education. The Chief Officer confirmed that this was the case for the current cohort at Ysgol Llanfynydd.

As there were no proposals from the Committee following a request from the Chairman, the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator indicated that the comments from the Committee could be submitted to Cabinet to inform their consideration of the proposals. This was moved and duly seconded and on being put to the vote was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the comments made by the Committee be submitted to Cabinet to inform their consideration of the proposals.

52. SCHOOL GOVERNOR VACANCIES

The Senior Manager - Business Change and Support provided a verbal update for the Committee on School Governor Vacancies. She explained that the request for further information had been made by Councillor Nancy Matthews and Mrs. Rebecca Stark.

The Local Education Authority (LEA) had a total of 440 LEA Governor representatives on school governing bodies and over the four year term, a number of vacancies would arise. There were currently eight vacancies that had not been filled for longer than two months and seven were due next term, which was a small number compared to the number of LEA representatives. The Senior Manager explained the process for appointing LEA Governors and advised that any appointments were signed off by the Cabinet Member for Education and the Chief Officer (Education and Youth) under delegated powers. Work was undertaken with the Clerk when vacancies occurred and in the short term, she would continue to work with Ward Members and intelligence from the Head Teachers to try and fill the outstanding vacancies. In the longer term, the Senior Manager had considered whether representatives from the voluntary sector could become governors and she had also considered other alternatives which were still in line with the Council's policies. Details of the process undertaken by Denbighshire County Council in appointing LEA Governor representatives were also provided. Welsh Government was considering a review of the School Governor legislation framework to streamline the regulations and also the current stakeholder model. The Senior Manager explained that this could result in a smaller number of LEA representatives in future. She spoke of the training that needed to be undertaken by School Governors and added that it was a credit to the Governing Bodies that the number of vacancies was low.

Councillor Chris Bithell welcomed the small number of LEA Governor vacancies and suggested that the role was more onerous than it had been in the past. He asked Members to advise him if they were aware of possible LEA Governor representatives that they could not accommodate on their Governing Bodies but who would be prepared to travel as this may be a way of filling some of the outstanding vacancies. The Chairman referred to the difficulty in identifying LEA Governor representatives who were not connected to the school that he was a Governor at. In response, the Senior Manager spoke of the importance of carrying out a School Governing Bodies needs analysis to identify specific areas that appointments could be considered from.

Mrs. Rebecca Stark thanked the Senior Manager for the update and commented on problems in the past because of the long process of appointing LEA Governor representatives. The Senior Manager confirmed that the panel which had previously been in place to make the appointments

was no longer used. Mrs. Stark welcomed the progress that had been made for filling vacancies. She sought further information on the total number of vacancies, not just LEA Governor representatives, on School Governing Bodies, and the Senior Manager confirmed that she would contact schools to obtain the information.

Councillor Paul Cunningham spoke of the reluctance of people to take on the demanding role of being a School Governor and the requirement to undertake mandatory training. He felt that the role could be onerous but that it was also satisfying.

Mr. David Hytch commented on the inevitability of vacancies during the four year cycle. In response to further comments from Mr. Hytch and finding suitable representatives for the School Governing Bodies, the Senior Manager advised that the Cabinet Member and Chief Officer could reject representatives under their delegated powers if they felt that the person was unsuitable. The Chief Officer added that there would need to be strong reasons for rejecting applicants.

Councillor Nancy Matthews spoke of the work that had been undertaken by the Mold Alyn School of Governors on the skills that they felt were required on the Governing Body. She felt that the process to identify individuals with those skills had been smooth and suggested that sometimes people just needed to be asked if they were willing to be a School Governing Body representative. The Senior Manager suggested that consideration was being given to holding an Open Day to raise awareness of the role of School Governing Bodies.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update be received.

53. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the report to consider the Forward Work Programme for the Committee.

The Facilitator advised that a special meeting of the Committee was to be held on 5th February 2016 to consider the School Organisational Change for Ysgol Mornant Gwespyr Picton.

A joint meeting of this Committee and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny had been held in previous years and the Facilitator suggested that the meeting scheduled for 24th March 2016 be used for a joint meeting. This would mean that the report on the Welsh Education Strategic Plan would be submitted to the 25th February 2016 meeting and the Quarter 3 – Improvement Plan Monitoring Reports would be considered at the 28th April 2016 meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme, as amended at the meeting, be approved.

54. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were five members of the public and two members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.49pm)

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Chairman

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EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19th JANUARY 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday 19th January 2016.

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors: Paul Cunningham, Andy Dunbobbin, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, David Healey, Vicky Perfect, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Carolyn Thomas

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Janine Beggan, David Hytch, Rebecca Stark and Bernard Stuart.

SUBSTITUTION: Councillor Hilary McGuill (for Nancy Matthews)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Marion Bateman, Adele Davies-Cooke, Dave Mackie and Rev. John Thelwell

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Bernie Attridge

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

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

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chair welcomed Mr Bernard Stuart to his first meeting as a co-opted member.

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Healey declared a personal interest in agenda item 3 - 2016/17 Budget for the Education & Youth Portfolio as he was a Trustee of Homestart Flintshire who have received funding from Family First in the past.

David Hytch and Rebecca Stark also both declared a personal interest in agenda item 3 – 2016/17 Budget for the Education & Youth Portfolio due to the close association of family members who accessed the school music service.

56. 2016/17 BUDGET FOR THE EDUCATION & YOUTH PORTFOLIO

The Chairman welcomed the contributors to the meeting.

Prior to the commencement of the presentation, the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) reported that whilst there were no new proposals within the proposed 2016/17 budget for the Education & Youth Portfolio, there was

an undertaking to keep the Committee informed during the 2016/17 budget process, therefore it was felt appropriate to provide the Committee with feedback from the meeting of the School Budget Forum meeting held on 8 January, 2016. A copy of the feedback from the School Budget Forum was attached to the report at appendix 1.

The Chief Executive reported that Cabinet had approved on 19th January measures to close the gap through corporate solutions. The Cabinet report, which contained detailed information on the provisional settlement, would be considered at the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 29th January, 2016. A copy of the Cabinet report would be sent to all Members following the meeting.

The Leader of the Council commented on the financial pressures within the Education budget, specifically around pension contributions and pay increases. He outlined the Council's commitments to continue to protect the Education budget as much as possible without impacting on other service areas.

The Chief Executive began the presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Purpose of today's meeting
- Settlement Context
- Settlement Headlines

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

- Service Business Plan Proposals (Schools)
- Service Business Plan Proposals (Education & Youth (excluding schools))
- Local Pressures and Inflation
- Schools Allocations
- Education Grants 2016/17
- Next steps and timescales

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) provided a detailed explanation on the proposal from the Welsh Government (WG) to incorporate the Education Improvement Grant into the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). An announcement on this was expected in April, 2016. He also reported that the Young People's Co-ordinator would be making recommendations to the Operational Board on how the reduction in Families First Grant would be managed.

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.

57. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.02pm)

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Chairman

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2016/17 Budget Consultation

Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 19th January, 2016

Member Comment/Question	Response
<p>Within the service business plan proposals it identified £523,000 savings. This differs to the £741,000 savings which were initially identified in December, 2015. Could an explanation be provided on why the identified savings have changed?</p>	<p>The initial savings identified in December, 2015 has reduced slightly as a result of the revised savings within the school music service from £61,000 to £30,000. The remaining gap is the £187,000 proposed savings through school modernisation which is shown separately as this comes under the separate schools delegated budget.</p>
<p>During the recent Children’s Service Forum meeting, concerns were raised around the withdrawal of financial support to Looked After Children (LAC) leaving care and starting University. Why has this funding been withdrawn as it is a small amount of young people needing this support?</p>	<p>The only change proposed within the Education & Youth portfolio affecting LAC is around the role of the LAC Education Officer. This funding may have been withdrawn because of the withdrawal of a specific grant.</p> <p>We will look into this and report back.</p>
<p>Could you provide a breakdown of the £187,000 proposed savings for school modernisation?</p>	<p>The £187,000 is a saving which has been projected by the Education Finance Team through the funding formula for individual schools. This figure includes the projected savings from the amalgamation of the infants and junior schools in Holywell and school re-organisation of Ysgol Maes Edwin, Ysgol Llanfynydd and Ysgol Mornant. The acceptability and deliverability has been assessed as a red risk as they require Cabinet decisions which are yet to be made.</p>
<p>With regard to Additional Learning Needs funding being fully delegated to schools, how does this effect the management of contracts of employment for support staff?</p>	<p>The management of contracts of employment for support staff will fall on the individual schools and the model is in line with the one adopted by many English and Welsh Local Authorities. Plans are in place to ensure that there are adequate support mechanisms from Finance and Human Resources to assist schools with reducing budgets.</p>
<p>Concerned that the announcement on whether the Education Improvement Grant will be transferred to the RSG and what the</p>	<p>The advice being given to individual schools is similar to the advice given for the 2015/16 budget, which is, to assume a certain reduction</p>

likely reduction will be will not be made by the Welsh Government until April.

in the grant. The Council have spoken to officers within the Welsh Government who have confirmed that they are not looking to destabilise the grant, therefore the assumption is that the reduction won't be too high.

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) are also concerned about the timescales in announcing the Education Improvement Grant funding for each Local Authority and this will be raised again at a meeting with the WLGA in the next coming days.

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
5 FEBRUARY 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Friday, 5 February 2016.

PRESENT: Ian Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors: Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Andy Dunbobbin, David Healey, Phil Lightfoot, Dave Mackie, Vicky Perfect, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Carolyn Thomas

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Janine Beggan, David Hytch, Rebecca Stark, Bernard Stuart, and Rev. John Thelwell

APOLOGIES: Councillors Marion Bateman, Adele Davies-Cooke, and Ray Hughes

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillors Mike Peers (for Nancy Matthews) and Gareth Roberts (for Colin Legg)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, and Tony Sharps

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Chris Bithell, Cabinet Member for Education, Chief Officer (Education and Youth), and Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision and Primary Link Officer

IN ATTENDANCE:

Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator, and Committee Officer

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting and invited Officers to introduce themselves. He advised that the purpose of the meeting was to inform the Committee of the outcome of the consultation process for school organisational change at Ysgol Mornant Gwespyr, Picton. The Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator briefly explained that the role of the Committee was to scrutinise the Authority's policy and procedures and make recommendations where necessary, however, it was not a decision making body and it would be for the Cabinet to make the actual decision on the proposal to close Ysgol Mornant, Gwespyr Picton.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman invited members of the Committee to make a declaration if they were school governors and a number of members so indicated.

59. SCHOOL MODERNISATION – SCHOOL STANDARDS AND REORGANISATION ACT 2013 – YSGOL MORNANT, GWESPYR PICTON

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced a report to inform the Committee of the responses from the statutory consultation period for the proposal to close Ysgol Mornant, Gwespwr Picton. He advised that comments from the Committee were invited in advance of the Cabinet being requested to conclude on a formal proposal.

The Chief Officer provided background information and context and expressed praise for the Welsh Education Strategic Partnership (WESP) in Flintshire which had undertaken an ambitious agenda to improve Welsh and learning and social opportunities within the County during the last 5 years. He advised that the WESP had also delivered an innovative practice which had been adopted across the country. Estyn Inspectors had recognised the quality of practice within Flintshire as being a good example to share with other authorities. The Chief Officer commented on local examples of the work which had made a real impact in terms of opportunities for children and young people and referred to new areas of provision through working in partnership and new areas of provision in the primary sector.

The Chief Officer commented on the County's good track record for the education, development and training of its workforce and referred to the partnership between Coleg Cambria and Wrexham County Council and the substantial work programme which was greatly valued and recommended.

The Chief Officer commented on the period of uncertainty and anxiety that any educational review created and said that such controversial and emotive concerns were fully acknowledged by the Authority. He expressed praise for the children, parents, carers, staff and Governing Body of Ysgol Mornant which had worked constructively to seek solutions to the challenges faced by the school. The Chief Officer referred to the suggestion of a federation which had been put forward by Ysgol Mornant's Governing Body and a number of consultees and advised that the governing body had actively sought potential federal partners. He commented on the development opportunities for colleagues in educational provision as a result of constructive partnerships and explained that the Governing Body of Ysgol Croes Atti, Flint, had given careful consideration to how to support Ysgol Mornant in the way ahead but could not move forward with a Federation proposal although it would support Ysgol Mornant and partners in the future.

The Chief Officer expressed further praise for the Governing Body and the leadership team of Ysgol Maes Garmon, which were committed to supporting the community at Ysgol Mornant and to looking at opportunities for creating greater resilience with their partnership primary schools and exploring the feasibility of federation with Ysgol Mornant. The Chief Officer referred to the challenges faced by Ysgol Mornant and referred to the recommendation in the Hill review around how schools should work more collaboratively to address the challenges that smaller schools faced. He

explained that federations provided the opportunity to work together to bring sustainability and resilience to small schools to enable them to raise standards in quality of education provision for children and young people. He commented on the benefits of federations in terms of increased opportunities to develop leadership, recruitment and retainment of staff, the sharing of expertise, resources and facilities, increased motivation, and improvement in the quality of transition to secondary education. He explained that federations did not bring financial savings to the Authority but could ease financial pressures in schools as resources and staffing could be shared and deployed. However, in order for federations to come about there needed to be a commitment from willing governing bodies and from the local and wider community to be mobilised and to provide practical solutions and support.

Councillor Chris Bithell advised that the proposal to close Ysgol Mornant was put forward on the basis of criteria laid down in the Council's School Modernisation Strategy regarding unfilled places across the primary school portfolio, diminishing resource criteria, small school criteria and Welsh Government categorisation. He reiterated that the concerns and anxieties of pupils, parents, carers and staff were fully acknowledged, however, the Authority had a duty to provide high quality education which was affordable, sustainable, and in the best interests of children and young people for the future. He commented on the unprecedented cuts to the current and future level of funding faced by the Authority and said that every authority in England and Wales was in the same position of financial austerity. Councillor Bithell explained that the School population and capacity was lower than the national designation of a small school and school numbers did not meet the minimum requirements of primary school models as noted in the Council's School Modernisation Strategy. He also commented on the issue of sustainability concerning curriculum provision and the Welsh Government categorisation of standards.

Councillor Bithell referred to the issues raised during the consultation process which had highlighted the benefits of the school. He said that the impact that any proposed closure would have on the Welsh language and the community had been pointed out and it was evident that the school was highly regarded. Referring to the suggestion of a federation being formed, Councillor Bithell confirmed that the Authority would be willing to consider this option, however, a firm proposal had to be put forward for analysis and no such formal proposal had yet been submitted from a willing partnering school. He urged that serious consideration be given to this alternative.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Officer and Councillor Bithell for their presentations. He invited Councillor Glyn Banks, the local Member for the Ward, to speak.

Councillor Banks thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak at the meeting. He expressed praise for the Welsh medium provision which had been made available by the Authority in other areas of Flintshire and commented on the need for similar provision to be made locally. He thanked all who had given their support in the campaign against the proposal to close

Ysgol Mornant and praised parents, carers, children, and members of the public for their attendance and courtesy during the meeting.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin proposed that the Committee recommends to Cabinet that it does not issue the Statutory Notice to Ysgol Mornant but works towards a federation of schools using welsh medium education. The proposal was duly seconded by Councillor David Healey.

Councillor David Healey congratulated Officers on the fair and unbiased way they had presented the case for closure and said that the concept of federation brought hope and was worth exploring more fully. Councillors Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Peter Curtis also spoke in support of the proposal put forward by Councillor Dunbobbin and commented on the importance of retaining and expanding local welsh medium language education and provision.

The Chief Officer explained that representatives of Ysgol Maes Garmon had stated that they wished to engage further with the Governors at Ysgol Mornant and the Council to explore ways in which Welsh Medium provision could be sustained in the area. A meeting of the Governing Body of Ysgol Maes Garmon would be held next week to consider the federation proposal with a willing partner(s). Ysgol Mornant Governing Body supported the proposal in principle. The Chief Officer outlined the next steps if an agreement was reached between the two governing bodies to pursue a federation proposal. He advised that officers would work closely with any willing schools to put together a package of resilience and sustainability to find solutions for the long term provision of welsh medium education in the area.

During discussion Officers responded to the further questions and concerns raised by Members around school admissions, alternative provision in other local schools, transition arrangements, school transport, early years provision, siblings and family groups, and before and after school care. Members also commented on the need to address local demand for welsh culture and language. The Chief Officer acknowledged and responded to the points raised and explained that the legislation in place in relation to school organisation applied to all schools; as did the admissions policy. He also advised that it was a matter of parental preference as to where parents decided their children were educated.

In response to a question from Mrs. Rebecca Stark, the Chief Officer confirmed that if the proposal to form a federation was not successful a further report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer, Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision, and Primary Link Officer, for their detailed responses to Members questions.

RESOLVED

That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that it does not issue the Statutory Notice to Ysgol Mornant but works towards a federation of schools using welsh medium education.

60. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were forty-six members of the public and three members of the press in attendance

(The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 4.08 pm)

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Chairman

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EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 15 th March 2016
Report Subject	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the requirements upon local authorities to produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to demonstrate how they will meet the Welsh Government's outcomes and targets outlined in the Welsh Medium Education Strategy (WMES). The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act (2013) places a statutory requirement on local authorities to prepare and introduce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, implemented from 1st April 2014 to cover a period of three years to March 2017, reviewing it on an annual basis. The Act enables Welsh Ministers to approve the Plan as submitted, approve the Plan with modifications or reject the plan and require local authorities to prepare another Plan.

This report provides specific details about Flintshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan - how the Council meets its obligations in promoting Welsh-medium education, assesses the demand for Welsh-medium education, increases the number of pupils accessing their education through the medium of Welsh and improves standards of pupil attainment in both Welsh first and second language.

The format of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is set by Welsh Government on a standard template which focuses on seven key target areas. Local authorities are required to demonstrate how they are meeting these targets on an annual basis. Plans are required to be submitted to Welsh Government by 20th December each year. There is a statutory requirement to consult on the Plan with a prescribed list of stakeholders for a period of eight weeks. The Plan is then considered by Ministers and feedback provided. Plans are operational from April 1st each year. The local authority's WESP must be published on its website by June 1st each year and copied made available in its offices and other suitable places.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members receive the report on the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.
2	That members consider the progress made by the Council against the targets in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.
3	That members note the effective, multi-agency, partnership working within the Welsh in Education Strategic Forum which creates and monitors the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN
1.01	<p>The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) has been in place since April 2014 and since then has been updated on an annual basis, in line with Welsh Government (WG) guidelines. Flintshire's WESP was approved by Welsh Ministers following a small number of minor modifications. The latest updated WESP was submitted in draft form by the deadline of 20th December 2015 and the final version, following a period of consultation with statutory consultees, was submitted to WG on March 3rd 2016. Flintshire County Council is currently awaiting feedback on this Plan. This final WESP covering the period 2016-17, following any further recommendations for modification by Welsh Government, will then be published on the Council's website by the statutory deadline of 1st June 2016.</p>
1.02	<p>The responsibility for producing the WESP sits with the Senior Manager for School Improvement within the Education & Youth Portfolio. The Plan is produced, however, by a very effective partnership approach between officers of the local authority, representatives from Welsh and English medium schools and other key organisations with an interest in promoting Welsh-medium education and the Welsh language. This wide ranging group is known as the Welsh in Education Strategic Forum. The remit of this forum is to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Agree, implement and review a co-ordinated approach that best delivers the requirement of the Welsh Government's Welsh medium Education Strategy within Flintshire.- Be responsible for the delivery of the action plan incorporating seven key outcomes.- Monitor, evaluate and consider the impact of the delivery of the action plan in raising standards in Welsh first and second language.- Forum representatives are expected to consult with and feedback to their respective associate stakeholders. <p>The Forum is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth, and the Chief Officer is Vice-Chair and meets four times a year. Sub-groups related to each of the targets meet regularly during the autumn term to produce the refreshed plan for submission to WG each December.</p>

	<p>The membership of the Forum is as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cabinet Member - Chief Officer - Senior Managers for School Improvement, Inclusion & Progression and Integrated Youth Services - Pupil Services Manager - Welsh in Education Team Manager - Headteacher representatives from Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools - Headteacher representatives from English-medium primary and secondary schools - Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint - Mudiad Methrin - Urdd Gobaith Cymru - Coleg Cambria - Parent Representative – RHAG/Syfflag - Governor Representative <p>The Forum works very effectively as a multi-agency platform for delivering and monitoring the WESP. All members bring high levels of knowledge and expertise to the Forum which are freely shared to achieve the common vision of promoting Welsh-medium education and the Welsh language. The Forum is also very robust in holding the local authority to account in its delivery of the Plan and achieving the targets contained within it.</p>
1.03	<p>The WESP has to begin with a vision statement by the local authority on its aims for Welsh-medium education. Flintshire’s vision, agreed by the Forum, is as follows:-</p> <p>“Flintshire County Council endeavours to increase the number of fluent Welsh speakers within its boundaries, with the aim of creating an increasingly bilingual county and country.</p> <p>Flintshire County Council is committed to supporting, expanding and promoting Welsh-medium education within the whole community, increasing the number and percentage of pupils receiving Welsh-medium education in compliance with the Welsh Government’s Welsh-medium Education Strategy of developing learners who are fully bilingual (i.e. fluent in both English and Welsh.)”</p> <p>Part 2 of the WESP contains an Action Plan outlining the 7 key outcomes/targets in the government’s Welsh-medium Education Strategy. The Plan is expected to contain answers to a number of prompt questions in relation to each outcome. These are designed to demonstrate the local authority’s current position, the policies in place, the processes and activities designed to achieve the targets and the progress expected. The Plan is updated every year to show the actual progress made.</p> <p>The targets are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More seven-year old children being taught through the medium of Welsh. 2. More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer

	<p>from primary to secondary school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. More learners aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh. 4. More learners aged 16-19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh. 5. More learners with higher-level Welsh-language skills. 6. Welsh-medium provision for learners with additional learning needs. 7. Workforce planning and continuing professional development. <p>Section 3 of the Plan contains a variety of appendices which provide performance data, details of the membership of the Forum and the range of statutory consultees.</p>
1.04	<p>One of the statutory requirements placed on the Council is to regularly assess the demand for Welsh-medium education. In accordance with the 2013 Act, the Council undertakes a detailed survey every three years and uses the information from this to plan for future provision. The first assessment was undertaken in 2009, the second in 2013 and this is next due to be refreshed in 2016.</p> <p>As a direct result of the response to the 2013 survey, which indicated that there was a growing demand for Welsh-medium education in the Deeside area, and the reorganisation of primary education in Shotton which resulted the release of the Shotton Infants site, the Council was able to expand Welsh-medium provision in this area of the authority. Parents indicated in the survey that having Welsh-medium provision in the local community, rather than having to travel longer distances to either Flint or Mold, would make it more likely that they would choose to educate their children through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>The Shotton Infants building is now known as Ysgol Croes Atti Glannau Dyfrdwy. This is a satellite of Ysgol Croes Atti, Flint and is under the leadership and management of the Headteacher and Governing Body of this school in a joint arrangement with the local authority. This new Welsh-medium provision opened in September 2014 for nursery and reception aged pupils with the plan to grow it from ‘the bottom up’ and ensure its sustainability. This satellite provides facilities for Welsh-medium education to the communities of Connah’s Quay, Shotton, Queensferry and Garden City, easing the pressure on Ysgol Croes Atti (Flint) and Ysgol Glanrafon (Mold).</p> <p>In conjunction with Mudiad Meithrin, (the Welsh-medium pre-school association), a Cylch (Welsh-medium playgroup) has also been established on this site which provides early education and wrap around care for pupils. There is also a parent and toddler group which meets on the site. Providing a range of early years services to support child development and improve Welsh language skills is a critical factor in encouraging parents to choose Welsh-medium education, particularly if they are not Welsh speaking themselves.</p> <p>This approach of jointly located services is a core element of the Council’s strategy to encourage more parents to choose Welsh medium education in order to meet Outcome 1 of the WESP (to increase the number of 7 year olds in Welsh-medium education).</p>

	<p>In 2015 the Council extended its number of Welsh-medium approved settings for the delivery of early education (Early Entitlement) from 5 to 7 – one based at the Glannau Dyfdrwy site and another in Garden City. Children from these settings will be actively encouraged to transfer into the Welsh-medium primary school provision at Glannau Dyfdrwy.</p> <p>The pupil numbers at Ysgol Croes Atti Glannau Dyfdrwy have almost doubled in the first year, from 13 in September 2014 to 25 in September 2015. Admissions requests for September 2016 are currently being processed but are very encouraging so far. This new provision represents real success in delivering the targets in the WESP.</p>
1.05	<p>The plan comprises 50+ pages of detailed reporting against each target and can be found on Flintshire County Council’s website and is hyperlinked to this report.</p> <p>Key successes in meeting the targets in the Plan for 2015-16 recently submitted to Welsh government include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil numbers assessed through the medium of Welsh in Year 2 (7 yr olds) increasing by 13 pupils, an increase of 12.5% overall. - The percentage of Flintshire 7 yr olds in Welsh-medium education increasing by 0.8% from 5.8% to 6.6% in 2015. - The numbers of Year 2 pupils in 2015 already exceeding the target set for 2017, requiring the target to be revised upwards to 120 pupils. - The numbers of nursery pupils in Welsh-medium primary schools increasing by 1.6%, representing 7.5% of the total nursery population in Flintshire. - The number of primary aged pupils being educated in the Welsh medium sector rising from 896 in 2014 to 903 in 2015. - The opening of Ysgol Croes Atti Glannau Dyfdrwy on time for September 2014. - The expansion of Welsh-medium early education approved providers from 5 to 7 settings. - The expansion of Ysgol Glanrafon, Mold by the provision of a mobile classroom to meet rising pupil numbers. - An increase in the number of learners from English-medium primary schools choosing to access Welsh-medium secondary education through the ‘Trochi’ programme at Ysgol Maes Garmon from 11 in 2014 to 13 in 2015. - Increase in number of pupils in Year 9 at Ysgol Maes Garmon being assessed in Welsh first language – 75 pupils in 2014 rising to 89 pupils in 2015. - Increase in number of pupils achieving A*-C Welsh (first language) at Ysgol Maes Garmon from 59.7% in 2014 to 72% in 2015. - 100% learners at Ysgol Maes Garmon achieving the Level 1 Threshold (5 passes A-G) at GCSE in 2014 and 2015. - Increasing trend of performance of 7 year olds assessed in Language, Literacy & Communication (Welsh first language) at the expected level over three years. 84.4% in 2013 to 91.18% in 2015. - Improved performance at KS3 in Welsh (first language) from 56% in 2014 to 80% in 2015.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rising trend of performance of pupils in Welsh second language at the end of Key Stage 2 (11 yr olds) from 61.2% in 2013 to 75.6% in 2015 at the expected level (National Curriculum Level 4). Also an increase in the higher than expected level from 80% in 2013 to 85.7% in 2015 (National Curriculum Level 5). - Rising trend in performance at Welsh Second Language GCSE (Short Course) from 58% pupils achieving grade A*-C in 2013 to 63.6% in 2015. - 100% pass rate for Welsh first language and Welsh second language at A level. - High levels of participation in professional development opportunities delivered through the Welsh in Education Team locally and through the joint arrangement with Denbighshire and Conwy. - Introduction of the sabbatical training courses in conjunction with Bangor University (Canolfan Bedwyr) for teachers and classroom assistants with good participation levels from Flintshire schools eg on the Entrance Level Sabbatical Course held in September 2015, 9 out of the 11 participants were from Flintshire.
1.06	<p>Targets for improvement in future plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing to increase the number of pupils in Welsh-medium education at all phases. - Continuing to raise standards of pupil attainment in both Welsh first and second language, particularly at Key Stage 2 (11 year olds). - Improving the rates of transition from Welsh-medium primary school to Welsh-medium secondary school. - Increasing number of pupils from Cylch Garden City choosing Welsh-medium education at Ysgol Croes Atti Glannau Dyfdrwy. - Completing the demand survey for Welsh-medium education in 2016. - Responding to the outcomes of the demand survey and exploring options in other areas of the authority to increase Welsh-medium provision. - Creating a federation arrangement between two schools to protect Welsh-medium education in the north Flintshire area of the authority.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None attached.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Paper copies of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan can be made available on request by contacting:-</p> <p>Contact Officer: Claire Homard Senior Manager School Improvement</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 704019</p> <p>E-mail: claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Welsh-medium education – where pupils are taught all subjects (except English) in Welsh and Welsh is the main language of the school.
7.02	English-medium education – where pupils are taught all subjects in English, are taught Welsh as a second language and English is the main language of the school.
7.03	Federation - The federation of schools is a legal process which enables schools to work together through a formal structured process by sharing a governing body that will make decisions in the best interest of all the schools, staff and pupils in that federation.

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EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 15 th March 2016
Report Subject	Self-Evaluation of Education Services
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flintshire County Council undertakes an annual self-evaluation against the framework for local authority education services established by Estyn. The report includes a copy of the current self-evaluation and requests Members' consideration of this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members contribute their evaluative ideas and evidence in relation to the 2015/16 draft self-evaluation.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS
1.01	The prime purpose of self-evaluation is to lead to service improvements, including in outcomes achieved by learners. Self-evaluation is not an exercise that can be carried out by leaders or a task-group working in isolation. It can be influential only when team members, school based colleagues, Councillors, partner organisations and learners are able to contribute their ideas to the process, are aware of the findings and take action based upon them.
1.02	Estyn's manual sets out that self-evaluation is a process, not a one-off event. At the heart of self-evaluation are three questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How well are we doing?• How do we know?• How can we improve things further?
1.03	The process of self-evaluation should be continuous and an embedded part of local authority work, as part of the cycle which includes planning for improvement, undertaking improvement work and monitoring and evaluating improvement. The emphasis should always be on an evaluation of the impact of each aspect of provision on the standards and wellbeing of learners.
1.04	Self-evaluation should be based on a wide range of information about strengths and areas for improvement which is collected throughout the year, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• analysis of data from examinations, tests or evaluation activities at an individual learner, course, learning area, subject, department, school or agency level, as well as at whole local authority level;• evaluating the quality of the educational services being offered to schools and their impact on learners;• focusing the work and outcomes of the scrutiny committee;• evaluating the quality of planning and evaluation, recording and reporting;• sampling the views of stakeholders;• auditing practice against policies and procedures such as those for safeguarding or health and safety;• reviewing progress against strategic plans;• reviewing how well the authority is implementing national policies; and• researching best or different practice from other local authorities and providers of education and training services to children and young people.
1.05	The attached Self-Evaluation document outlines the views and findings of officers and partners regarding the education services operating within Flintshire.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Self-Evaluation document outlines the perceived strengths along with key issues and challenges. The resource implications of these will be identified through the development planning process which builds on the self-evaluation.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The document has been co-constructed with input from Local Authority Officers, GwE partners and school representatives.
3.02	Education & Youth Scrutiny provides the opportunity for Members to participate in the process of self-evaluation.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The Self-Evaluation process feeds into the Portfolio development plan which outlines the associated risks and mitigating factors.
4.02	<p>Areas of risk identified through the self-evaluation process to date are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of suitable experienced leaders to take on Headship roles; • The ability of regional partnership arrangements to deliver effectively whilst offering value for money; • Continue to improve standards for learners whilst reducing the number of learners who are Education Other Than at School (EOTAS); • The ability of the LA and schools to respond effectively to the proposed Additional Learning Reforms against a backdrop of reducing budgets; and • Capacity to deliver the School Modernisation Programme.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Self-Evaluation 2015/16

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Estyn LA Handbook:</p> <p>Guidance for the inspection of local authority education services for children and young people</p> <p>Contact Officer: Ian Budd Chief Officer (Education & Youth) Telephone: 01352 704010 E-mail: ian.budd@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	GwE: Regional School Improvement Service commissioned by Flintshire County Council.
7.02	EOTAS: Education Other Than At School applies to children and young people who do not access their education within a maintained school setting. Examples of alternatives are independent schools, pupil referral units and home education.
7.03	Estyn: The education & training inspectorate for Wales.
7.04	School Modernisation Strategy: Flintshire county Council has a strategy which guides its statutory work in terms of ensuring sufficient and suitable education provision for children across the county.



FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
EDUCATION & YOUTH SERVICES

**SELF EVALUATION
DOCUMENT
JANUARY 2016**

Ceri Shotton

Current performance:

- Outcomes at all key stages have improved in recent years. There have been particularly positive improvements in primary school categorisation (under the national model) and in learner outcomes at Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.
- The percentage of learners leaving school without a qualification and the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) are low. At 1.3% in 2014 the proportion of Year 11 NEETS was lowest in Wales and lowest ever Flintshire figure.
- School inspection outcomes throughout the current six year inspection cycle are in line with the ranking expectations for Flintshire.
- Public confidence in local education is high. People in Flintshire gave the second highest rating for the state of education in the 2015 National Survey for Wales (7.1 Flintshire, 7.2 Conwy).
- Support for additional learning needs and social inclusion is good.
- The level of attendance in secondary schools is a strength, with an upward trend of improvement. There are few permanent exclusions and some innovative prevention programmes to support schools to engage pupils to retain good attendance, e.g. work with traveller community by Youth Services and Inclusion Staff.
- The Authority has made good progress in developing its School Modernisation programme.
- Senior leaders understand clearly the impact of wellbeing, safeguarding and regeneration on educational outcomes.

However:

- Although at December 2015 there are no schools in Estyn intervention, the proportion of schools requiring follow-up activity after an inspection is still too high
- Attendance at primary schools continues to fluctuate and remains below the Welsh average
- We remain committed to securing continuous improvement in all phases of education, including improving the percentage of pupils achieving higher levels in subjects and CSI at the end of each key stage

- In contrast to earlier self-evaluations there are signs that we need to focus increased effort in renewing school improvement approaches to secure improved learner outcomes at Key Stage 4, including raising level 2 inclusive in 6 schools by raising maths and /or English outcomes
- Continue work to reduce the gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils by improving outcomes for FSM pupils
- Schools need to focus on further developing Welsh 1st language and performance of pupils in National Tests.

Capacity to Improve:

- Key plans align well at all levels and senior leaders work in a positive way with a range of strategic partners across public services and third sector to set high level priorities together.
- The Authority and its partners have a clear commitment to learners and developing a learning culture in the county.
- The Authority has a track record of identifying and intervening where hurdles to effective working hinder progress.
- Senior leaders have taken difficult decisions which are responded to proactively.
- The Authority analyses data and first-hand evidence well to make accurate evaluations of the quality and impact of services and monitor trends and unmet needs.
- The Authority has addressed all of the recommendations from previous Estyn inspections well.
- The Authority has a good record of effectively managing its education budget and improving efficiency and utilising additional external grants to enhance our offer.
- Scrutiny has examined difficult aspects of the authority's work successfully, and has informed decision making by the Cabinet well.
- The collaborative arrangements for School Improvement in North Wales are maturing and are beginning to "add value" to local educational provision.
- Scrutiny has examined difficult aspects of the Authority's work successfully, and has informed decision making by the Cabinet well.

However:

- The Authority still needs to take further key decisions in relation to school organisation to deliver efficient use of resources to benefit learners.
- The Authority needs to have successfully implemented major organisational and service change to meet budgetary constraints for forthcoming years.

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Standards

Outcomes:

- **Results and trends in performance compared with national averages, similar providers and prior attainment**
- **Standards of groups of learners**
- **Skills**

Whilst performance against headline attainment indicators over the last three years has, overall, been below our expected levels at Foundation and Key Stage 2 when compared to other Local Authorities, almost all key indicators are steadily improving. Outcomes across all main indicators in Foundation Phase in 2015 improved on performance in 2014 including the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator (FPOI). Core Subject Indicator (CSI) 2015 performance improved on the previous year by 1.8%, with progress made by both boys and girls. This improvement trend continues across virtually all areas of learning/subjects except for W1L at KS2 which dipped. Data also shows that performance at the higher level in FPO6 improved across all areas of learning compared to 2014. At KS2, performance at the higher level 5 also improved across nearly all subject areas with a slight dip of 0.3% in Welsh First Language compared to 2014.

Improving primary school outcomes remains a key priority within the Council's Education Improvement and Modernisation Strategy. A new target setting tool has recently been introduced by GwE for schools across the region and is being used effectively to support them in this process. Challenge Advisers have scrutinised these targets with school leadership

teams to encourage high aspirations in order to improve future performance. This system builds upon a previous Local Authority target setting process which has proven to be successful, as reflected in improving outcomes across the primary phase.

At Key Stage 3 outcomes continued the trend of improvement in 2015 with county aggregate outcomes higher than in 2014 in all core and non-core subjects. Improvement and outcomes exceeding targets were secured in English, Welsh, Maths, Science, CSI overall as well as CSI for both boys and girls. Outcomes were both improved and above target in eight out of nine non-core subjects. Performance in IT, whilst up 1.8% on 2014 was just 0.2% short of the target set. Targets have also been set with schools for performance in Level 6 and Level 7 and were CSI to be calculated on these levels, outcomes would also show a positive trend.

KEY STAGE 3 2013 to 2015 – CSI									
SCHOOL	CSI L5+ %			CSI L6+ %			CSI L7+ %		
	2013	2014	2015 Prov	2013	2014	2015 Prov	2013	2014	2015 Prov
LA TOTAL	80.0	84.3	87.2	37.8	44.0	48.1	8.2	11.2	13.0
Secondary Schools Only TOTAL	81.5	85.8	88.2	38.5	44.8	48.7	8.3	11.4	13.1

The Welsh Government Statistical Bulletin “achievement and entitlement to free school meals in Wales 2014”, published on 28 January 2015 reports Key Stage 3 CSI for mainstream maintained schools in Flintshire as being at 85.8% compared to an expected benchmark comparison of 86.2%.

At Key Stage 4 in 2015 the outcomes achieved by learners in mainstream schools were less than target on 2014 in indicators. Whilst Flintshire has historically performed well, some schools experienced a significant dip in performance in 2015 which has been investigated and remedial action taken.

“Achievement and entitlement to free school meals in Wales 2014” reports the percentage achieving the Level 2+ indicator in Flintshire mainstream maintained schools as being at

65.1% compared to an expected benchmark comparison of 62.3%. Average Capped Points in Flintshire is 355.5 with the benchmark at 357.9.

Flintshire Inspection Outcomes

Inspection outcomes over the current six year inspection cycle in Flintshire have been in line with expectations given Flintshire’s deprivation ranking. There are no schools currently in an Estyn intervention category as at December 2015.

The spring and summer terms of 2015 have seen a significant number of successes in removing primary schools from categories of follow up. However, the overall aim is to reduce the number of schools being placed in follow up in the first instance and have more schools achieve judgements of good or excellent

Schools Inspections 2014-15	Inspection Judgements	Follow Up Categories
11 Primary Schools Inspected	7 judged Good/Good 1 judged Good/Excellent	1 invited to submit Excellent practice case studies 2 LA Monitoring
	1 Adequate/Good 2 Adequate/Adequate	3 Estyn Monitoring
Current Performance Prospects for Improvement	Good = 73% Good/Excellent = 82%	
7 Primary Schools in follow up from 2013-14 cycle		3 removed from LAM, 1 recommended for removal -pending Estyn decision August 1 removed from EM, 1 awaiting autumn revisit (making good progress) 1 removed from Special Measures (pending verification)

2 schools in follow up from 2012-13 cycle		2 removed from In Need of Significant Improvement
2 Secondary School Inspected	1 judged Good/Excellent 1 judged Excellent/Excellent	Invited to submit Excellent practice case study
Current Performance Prospects for Improvement	Good = 50% Excellent 50% Excellent =100%	

Key Question Performance

Sept 14 – July 15	Number	%
11 Schools (9 Pri/2 Sec)		
Good or Better All 3 KQ	8	73%
Good or Better KQ1	8	73%
Good or Better KQ2	9	82%
Good or Better KQ3	9	82%
Adequate in 2 or more KQ	2	18%
Unsatisfactory in one or more KQ	0	0%
Excellent in one or more KQ	1	18%

Comparative Performance across Flintshire Schools

81 schools in total (67 Primary, 12 Secondary, 2 Specialist)

@ July 2015	Number	%
No Follow Up	74	91.4%
LA Monitoring	4	4.9%
Estyn Monitoring	3	3.7%
Significant Improvement	0	0
Special Measures	0	0
	81	100%

Good outcomes have been maintained in Estyn inspections in the funded non-maintained sector during the last academic year. Of the four settings inspected, three received a 'good' judgement for current performance and prospects. Of those, one setting was judged to be 'excellent' in a quality indicator and invited to write a case study. One setting which had only joined the Early Entitlement scheme a couple of months previously has been placed in Estyn Monitoring but is responding positively to support. During the year as a whole, four other settings were removed from Local Authority Monitoring. In the recently published HMI thematic review of 10% provision, Flintshire was used as an excellent practice case study.

Progression & Outcomes

Children and young people progress successfully to the next stage in their education and from school to further education, training or employment. The percentage of young people who are NEET has been significantly below average for Wales and has been on a downward trend between 2009 and 2014 (with 2013 as an exception). Work to minimise the level of young people not in education, employment and training is a high priority for the Local Service Board's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. The 14-19 Network had a particular focus on reducing Year 11 NEETS in 2014 and the partnership working with all providers and Careers Wales reduced the figure to just 1.3% in 2014, (3.6% in 2013) this was the lowest value recorded in Wales. Significant improvement has also been secured on the wider indicators of engagement for 16 to 24 year olds.

The trend in participation and attainment in Welsh and Welsh as a second language are improving overall. There was a slight decrease in the proportion of learners achieving a Full or Short Course GCSE A* to C in 2015 compared to 2014 (52.5% compared to 53.0%). Opportunities to engage in broader language initiatives within universal services e.g. Youth Services and URDD collaborations have improved and continue to underpin positive outcomes. Schools are now starting to plan for the cessation of the Short Course from September 2017

Overall, vulnerable learners and those learners who are at risk of underachievement achieve well. These learners have responded well to targeted interventions which have impacted on standards of wellbeing and consequently outcomes. For example, the percentage of learners leaving school without a qualification has significantly decreased in 2014 at key stage 4 with 99.7% achieving a recognised qualification compared to 99.3% in 2013. Wales Government discontinued this collection after 2013

In 2014 the average points score for Looked After Children (LAC) was 358 (199 in 2013) which was in the top quartile, whilst the performance learners from traveller families from Foundation Phase through to KS3 continues to show a general positive trend of Improvement, as demonstrated by the table below:

Percentage Achieving FPOI/CSI				
Key Stage	2012	2013	2014	2015
FP	26%	50%	57%	60%
KS2	33%	61%	50%	77%
KS3	20%	50%	50%	66%

Outcomes at Key Stage 4 for the cohort of Flintshire learners who are entitled to FSM are good compared to their counterparts across Wales with the Flintshire outcomes higher than Wales in each of the last three years. In 2014 93.2% of Flintshire FSM learners achieved the

L1 threshold compared to 87.8% across Wales. At level 2+ in 2014 the figures were Flintshire 37.3% and Wales 27.8%. In 2015 LA 35.2, Wales 31.6l

Learners in alternative provision for those not attending school, and those supported by the Integrated Youth Provision Service, gain useful relevant qualifications. Many of these learners develop skills and experiences which help them to continue in education and training as evidenced through the low percentage of NEET (1.3%) for the county in 2014. In addition, a good percentage of learners gain accreditation or informal recognition for their participation in the Integrated Youth Provision Service and wider youth support services working within high schools and our specialist grant funded support services and health services.

Key sources of evidence:	Key issues & challenges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance data for FP; KS2; KS3; KS4; KS5 + national tests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA Core Data Set • LA Annual Report to Elected Members • 2015 National categorisation data [primary and secondary]. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of Estyn judgements for primary/secondary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to raise attainment in Key Stage 4, with particular focus on Level 2 inclusive and higher grades • Secure improvements in Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards in Welsh 1st Language • Secure improvements in the outcomes of new literacy and numeracy tests • Reduce the proportion of schools requiring follow-up activity after an inspection • Outcomes achieved by those at risk of not maintaining their secondary school place through Key Stage 4.

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Wellbeing

Outcomes:

- Attitudes to keeping healthy and safe

- Participation and enjoyment in learning
- Community involvement and decision making

Overall, school inspection reports indicate that learners exhibit good standards of behaviour, and that they are involved well in decisions about their life in the authority's schools or maintained settings. The inspection reports also show that learners participate well in learning activities. There are good outcomes in relation to the targets in the local authority and partnership plans.

Attendance is high in secondary schools and is consistently above the Welsh average. WG verified data for the school year 2014/15 confirms there is a marked improvement in attendance at secondary level (93.8 % to 94.2%), with unauthorised absence in both the primary and secondary sector recorded as 0.3%, the lowest value in Wales. Attendance within the primary sector shows a slight fluctuation at 94.7% as compared with 94.8% in 2013/14.

Permanent exclusion levels are low. The local authority continues to work with schools to reduce the number of school days lost to exclusion. The Managed Moves protocol is fully embedded and is used as one of the tools to support this.

Learners participate well in a comprehensive range of activities which contribute towards improving their wellbeing. Standards of wellbeing are good in nearly all schools inspected in the current cycle. Pupils enjoy happy, safe and purposeful environments. Standards of behaviour are good and children and young people develop their attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and behaviours well.

Learners engage well in provision which supports them to lead healthy lifestyles. They gain awareness of aspects such as substance misuse and receive recognition for learning achieved. Nearly all learners involved with school based counselling service report a positive impact on their lives and make considerable gains in confidence and in personal and emotional awareness. These learners respond well to interventions and demonstrate

improvements in attitudes, behaviour, and educational attainment. Four Flintshire Primary Schools have successfully gained the National Quality Award for Healthy Schools

Youth Services in Flintshire are now delivered in an integrated way with enhanced collaboration between providers in all sectors. Youth Justice and Drugs and Alcohol teams have been integrated into the Youth Services portfolio to form the Integrated Youth Provision (IYP) service. The IYP service has a varied scope and reach across all partners and utilises the Welsh Government Youth Support Grant and the Families First grant to support third sector provision. Young people participate well in IYP service activities across all sectors. The service has an outcomes focussed plan to steer direction and to measure impact. Increases in Duke of Edinburgh Award participation and the broadened scope and reach with better outcomes are particularly encouraging. The prevention element within Youth Justice has been enhanced by the collaborative work between all elements of the IYP Staff and volunteers. The plans to co locate these staff within the new delivery model will further enhance these opportunities. The targeted work with groups has enabled coproduction work with several partners to benefit our most vulnerable young people.

The evidence from data is that there is good take-up of programmes of physical activity and participation rates in specific schemes are particularly high. Participation levels in sports development programmes and extra-curricular sports activities are good. The percentage of learners involved has increased over the last three years; in particular girls have been targeted and their participation has increased. The impact of these activities on healthy lifestyles is analysed well and learners report positive impact on their lives. The opportunities offered by grant funded projects e.g. Families First also enhances and sustains behaviour changes and decreases inequality of opportunity for access to provision.

Learners participate in, and influence the development of, strategic documents. They also develop specific versions to aid accessibility for other children and young people. Learner views shape decisions in some policy areas and school inspection reports indicate that learners are involved well in decisions about their lives in school and in our young people's focused work outside formal education e.g. in Integrated Youth Provision.

The percentage of learners continuing in education or employment post 16 is amongst the

best in Wales. The level of young people not in education, training or employment is the lowest in Wales. Rapid positive progress is also being made with wider indicators such as job seekers allowance claimants between the ages of 16 and 24. The Authority's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework has been praised by the Welsh Government. The Families First programme young people focused projects have been reviewed and a process of re-commissioning has been undertaken to ensure funding is targeted at the identified areas of need. This has resulted in some funding being directed towards a younger age range to identify those at risk of becoming NEET earlier and set up prevention strategies. Integrated Youth Provision has developed an innovative new project (Resilience project) in partnership with the third sector. Resilience will complement the emerging TRAC project and will offer key workers to support the TRAC delivery. The Dragons Den strategy for engaging employer mentors and young people in entrepreneurial activities is rapidly being rolled out across other Authorities following positive impact in Flintshire.

Key sources of evidence:	Key issues & challenges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Government statistical bulletins (attendance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to raise attendance levels • Continue to reduce the number and length of fixed term exclusions

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Quality Indicator: 2.1 Support for school improvement

Outcomes:

- Local Authority support, monitoring, challenge and intervention
- The Authority's work in raising standards in priority areas, including curriculum support
- Support for school leadership, management and governance

The Local Authority provides effective and appropriate monitoring, support, challenge and intervention for all schools, including special schools and pupil referral units, delivered through GwE as a joint education service between North Wales Authorities. Flintshire's Chief Education Officer is regional lead director for the service, whilst the lead member for education is an active member of the Joint Committee. Senior officers contribute to the leadership of school improvement strategies locally, regionally and nationally through leadership of professional networks.

Partnership agreements clearly set out arrangements to support, monitor, challenge and intervene in schools. Work with specific schools in amber and red categories has been characterised by clear timetables for action and definitive agreed targets and outcomes. As the service which undertakes termly monitoring visits on behalf of the authorities, GwE is well-informed about standards of achievement in schools, and this is supported by the judgements of the institutions themselves in evaluation questionnaires.

Data and contextual information are used forensically to categorise schools and to agree on an appropriate level of intervention and support. Challenge Advisers now know their link schools well which has also resulted in better quality pre-inspection reports for Estyn.

Effective use has been made of a vast range of data on standards and quality of education to monitor and evaluate performance and to challenge schools and individual subject departments but the impact of the work has been more significant in underperforming schools where a high percentage have made more mature use of data when evaluating and findings trends, when identifying areas for improvement and when prioritising courses of action in relation to standards. A more mature level of approach is also evident in these schools re: target setting procedures e.g. more intelligent use of assessments, FFT data, FSM family performance thresholds and lines of regression etc. However, a more consistent approach must be taken to ensure that schools across the performance range are challenged on their performance and specifically on the achievements of individual pupils/groups of pupils.

Regular contacts are made with every school to monitor and challenge standards and quality of leadership. Those schools of concern locally or/and in an Estyn follow-up category are visited more frequently. The findings of these visits are used to help authorities determine a risk

category for their schools and to target additional support. In each instance, a report is sent to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, with GwE's work now firmly integrated into local School Performance Monitoring Practice. As a result of this additional support and the intensified scrutiny and accountability most schools have made good progress. In specific instances, the Challenge Adviser attends meetings of the Governing Body and School Performance Monitoring Group to present their reports. Each monitoring visit has a focus area, however standards of achievement and progress towards priorities and targets are a common thread. Self-evaluations and School Development Plans are crucial to driving improvements within institutions and are therefore central to all discussions with schools.

Under the standard model, the autumn visit focuses additionally on outcomes; the spring visit on standards of achievement in learners' books; and the summer visit on quality of leadership at all levels. In an attempt to ensure consistency and transparency of visits, a matrix is used to reach a judgement on the quality of the various elements. This ensures that regional themes are operational, that good practices are identified and shared, and that further support is targeted on a risk basis. As a result of the above action [and specific focus on joint observation and scrutiny], the capacity of the Senior Management Teams and Middle Leaders to evaluate quality of teaching and learning in schools, has improved. However, a minority of schools need further support to evaluate standards in specific departments.

There has been a relentless focus on standards in those schools which have been targeted and there is evidence from a number of sources, including Estyn inspection and end of key stage performance that a high percentage of those schools have improved radically since 2013-2014. It is judged that GwE's strategies and procedures for challenging and supporting those schools which were significantly underperforming have been very effective and have resulted in firm improvements.

Although there are strengths in the support element of GwE's work with amber/red category school e.g. developing more robust self-evaluation procedures and more effective use of data, which has resulted in improvements across both sectors, it is judged that further work remains to be done to ensure that a more appropriate balance is struck between challenging and supporting so that all schools can easily access quality guidance, across a range of aspects and

priorities. This is the key idea behind the new approach taken by GwE from 2015-16 where schools will no longer be in receipt of just generic support.

High performing schools are encouraged to participate in peer challenge and support mechanisms, school to school support projects and pioneer programmes where this is appropriate. Flintshire schools are disproportionately represented in national pioneer programmes, recognising not only that they have school improvement expertise to share but also their willingness to collaborate.

Developing Leadership:

Flintshire is well represented on the National Leadership Development Board, with practitioners also contributing to leadership development regionally and locally. As well as prioritising leadership as part of termly monitoring visits, we have intensified the work with a number of schools and individuals using a targeted approach. There are several examples of Challenge Advisers working with 'good practice' school head teachers to provide target schools with guidance and support – in the form of individual sessions or group workshops. Good practice has been shared in strategic forums and presented directly to category schools too. A range of training or guidance sessions have been delivered by either the LA or GwE for senior and middle leaders across a range of developmental work. GwE are developing and delivering training across the range of leadership positions, including middle and senior leaders. Effective NPQH selection, support and assessment processes are operational with current recognised effective leaders within the education sector in North Wales used for delivery of the programme.

With regard to Headteachers' Performance Management procedures, all Challenge Advisers have been trained to act as a member of the relevant Governing Body panel. Effective use is made of the Autumn Term Monitoring Visit to collate evidence for determining possible objectives and progress is monitored in subsequent meetings.

Specific work has been undertaken with schools where Governance is causing concern, including advising, coaching and strengthening governing bodies to increase the rigour of challenge and support within the school community. Work has been undertaken collaboratively

in North East Wales to upskill Governors and Elected Members with priority given to improving their understanding of data and of the requirements of challenging Headteachers. The Authority has placed appropriate emphasis on supporting governing bodies to analyse performance data more robustly. As a result most governing bodies have a good understanding of how their school performs in relation to other, similar schools.

School to School Collaboration:

GwE Challenge Advisors monitor and evaluate progress on a termly basis to ensure accountability and effective progress across the region and school>school collaboration is now included as a line of inquiry in all termly monitoring visits. School leaders jointly presented progress with the Flintshire model to a recent meeting of the Authority's Scrutiny Panel.

As part of the wider strategy, and the multi-layered approach, GwE and the Local Authorities, in partnership with Headteachers, have identified best practice relating to leadership and teaching and learning. Schools/departments and individuals, supported by GwE funding, will operate as lead practitioners to support peers. In Flintshire, Mold Alun is leading for Science developments across the region. The Secondary Forums have continued to operate with administration and leadership passing over from the LA to GwE. The established model will ensure that we will have ease of access to a wider support package for schools and that the support is rooted in best regional practice. The model also allows for capacity building at our best performing schools.

Literacy and Numeracy

A regional Literacy and Numeracy Strategy has been developed in collaboration with key partners including representatives from schools, LA teams, who are still delivering support on specific aspects of this agenda (e.g. Welsh Advisory Teams, Foundation Phase) and the National Support Programme.

Generally, in the 2014 National Tests GwE's performance was above the Wales average on the SS>85 indicator in all except the Welsh Reading test. Performance was strongest in the Numerical Reasoning test. A common area for development in 3 of the 4 tests is the % of

learners achieving the higher score indicator of >115. During the coming year the analysis of the National Tests will be used to support the targeting of specific schools.

Support continues to be allocated in response to requests from Challenge Advisors and focuses on individual teachers with regards to planning and delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. In schools where the support is most effective, the AP's input, as part of a wider team including the Challenge Advisor, leads to an improvement in the quality of teaching, as noted by Estyn or GwE reviews.

Training on Numerical Reasoning for Numeracy Co-ordinators, offered to the region's primary schools in November 2014, was over-subscribed. 270 places were available on 9 sessions in venues across the region. A further training event on Extended Writing was offered in Flintshire only in response to identified commissioning need. All training is followed-up by practical class-based support in targeted schools.

Promoting and Developing the Welsh Language:

The Local Authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) was approved by Welsh Government and is the driver for improving Welsh outcomes for learners and promotion of the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The WESP Forwm meets regularly and demonstrates strong partnership working between the LA and its partner organisations e.g. Mudiad Meithrin, Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Coleg Cambria and Syfflag. The partnership has proved effective in developing and enriching opportunities for learners in individual school communities.

Developing 14-19 provision:

An effective regional infrastructure has been operational for a number of years and an experienced steering group, under the lead of a regional co-ordinator, oversees all developments related to the phase. As a result, the region has ensured that all maintained secondary schools and FE colleges within North Wales have met their statutory local curriculum requirements at pre and post 16. Aspects of the work have led to national recognition and specifically in relation to collaboration between FE Colleges and schools. The focus of the local

14-19 Network is on Youth Engagement and Progression, in line with national guidelines and in 2015 the Network has introduced courses for KS4 learners designed to help maintain the place of more learners at their school. The Network has also arranged IOSH training for staff from all schools the Inclusion Service in arranging Extended Work Experience placements as a response to Careers Wales withdrawing from this activity.

Developing the Foundation Phase:

Foundation Phase Officers meet regularly to standardise practices across the region, and on a termly basis with Challenge Advisers as part of LA/GwE meetings in order to share information. The Challenge Advisers have collaborated with the LA's to effectively deploy the Foundation Phase officers in target schools as required. GwE and Foundation Phase Officers have also conducted end of phase moderation sessions with target schools. Training for the introduction of the Foundation Phase Profile has been successfully delivered to all schools ready for implementation in September 2015.

School Performance Monitoring Group:

The School Performance Monitoring Group has been successful in securing improvement in targeted schools. Selection of schools to be part of the Monitoring Group is based on:

- LA/GwE agreed outcomes on 'Capacity to Improve'
- Estyn Outcomes
- Data Profile
- Risk Factors e.g. change of leadership

The methodology has been extended to secondary schools with Holywell High School, John Summers High School, St Davids High School and St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School being identified as schools in need of a similarly intense level of support and challenge. This is an important given the increasingly positive profile of primary sector performance (evidenced through learner and school national categorisation model outcomes) against increasing issues being identified in the Secondary sector.

The national categorisation system is ensuring consistency in how schools are evaluated and

supported. The Partnership Agreement ensures that schools have a good understanding of this process and of the level of support they can expect in order to bring about improvement. In most cases, the criteria are used appropriately to target strategic intervention.

The proportion of schools identified as requiring follow-up monitoring as a result of inspection remains too high in comparison with other authorities. The Authority has recently used appropriate powers to improve schools through the School Performance Monitoring Group and issues warning notices where required.

Challenge Advisers and Officers analyse performance data well and provide good support for schools' self-evaluation procedures. Officers produce performance reports on schools that are detailed, with an appropriate level of challenge. Whole school reviews, jointly undertaken by GwE Challenge Advisers, Local Authority officers and schools' senior management teams, have improved capacity at school level and help to develop the concept of shared leadership. Effective strategies have been established to respond to national priorities that focus on raising standards in priority areas. For example, support for literacy is good with a strong emphasis on improving reading skills. Good progress has been made in supporting schools and other young people focussed providers to improve standards and quality of provision for 14 to 19-year-olds.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key sources of evidence • LA/SchoolPartnership Agreement • Examples of : • Hub meetings • Pre termly monitoring visit briefing documents for Challenge Advisers • Termly monitoring visit reports • Quality assurance monitoring reports by SMT for termly visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issues & challenges • Reduce the number of schools requiring follow-up activity as a result of inspection • Ensure that Regional / Hub arrangements deliver value for money • Impact on performance and outcomes in targeted schools • Increase level of challenge and support for 'coasting' good schools so that they
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of feedback from stakeholder survey following all termly visits. • Prospectus of GwE Development Programme for Leadership. • School to School Regional Strategy • Action Plan re: deployment of underspend to support S to S Strategy • Regional Literacy and Numeracy Strategy • Report to Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Federations & Clusters and school performance 	<p>become excellent schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further strengthen the role of the Governing Body as a 'critical friend' in schools • Further improve the quality of support to improve self-evaluation and improvement planning in schools • Further develop work done by Gwynedd and Ynys Mon re: use of Language Charter to promote the development of the Welsh language across the region
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Quality Indicator: 2.2

Support for Additional Learning Needs

Outcomes:

- **Work to meet its statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN)**
- **Work in raising standards for children and young people with ALN**
- **Provision for children and young people with ALN, including provision that is commissioned and/or provided by or with other agencies**
- **Work with parents and carers of children and young people with ALN**

There are clear and widely understood protocols and decision-making processes to assess and decide on support for pupils with additional learning needs. Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs have access to an appropriate range of support and make good progress.

Assessments are carried out at an early stage. Timescales for completing the statutory process and issuing statements are good (87.7% without exceptions, 100% with exceptions for 2014-15). This is significantly above the Welsh average of 64.5% and 95.6% respectively. Pupils placed by the Authority in independent special schools have their learning and behavioural needs assessed before placement and monitored subsequently.

There is effective and co-ordinated advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people supported through the Parent Partnership, which has a positive impact on outcomes. The Family Information Service provision is a central one stop shop with an excellent website which also supports parents and carers to access appropriate up to date relevant information and support and signposts to a varied menu of provision from all sectors. There is good continuation of services and effective transition support to help children and young people move between different stages of learning.

Support for additional learning needs and inclusion is good. Many of the pupils with statements, and others identified as having additional learning needs, achieve well and are in

mainstream schools. Well-developed consultation with schools enables the authority to delegate most of its resources for additional learning needs. It effectively monitors the impact of these resources on pupils' progress.

The authority has been successful in reducing the number of appeals to the SEN Tribunal for Wales and this figure remains consistently low (1 appeal in 2013-2014 and 1 appeal in 2014-15)). It is working to reduce the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs whilst balancing this with appropriate access to support for pupils.

Schools receive good training to develop their expertise in meeting a range of needs. Appropriate training is helping staff to understand pupils' additional needs in order to support individual development planning. The local authority is responding proactively to the proposed integration of Person-Centred planning into the national reforms. All key inclusion officers have accessed detailed training and the programme has now been extended to include representatives from all schools and Pupils Referral Units and officers with the target of completing all settings by the end of July 2016.

Officers work together and share information well. They make good use of provision mapping to hold schools to account about pupils' achievements.

<p>Key sources of evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENTW Annual Report 2014 (when published) <p>Education Improvement Plan</p>	<p>Key issues & challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity of schools to provide tiered provision for Children & Young People with ALN and to record the progress of pupils with ALN • Support schools in readiness for ALN Reform.
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Quality Indicator: 2.3 Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing

Outcomes:

- **Work to promote social inclusion and wellbeing of all children and young people, including behaviour, preventing exclusion and education otherwise than at school (EOTAS)**
- **Promoting attendance and keeping children and young people in education, employment and training**
- **Youth support services and personal support**
- **Safeguarding arrangements**

School attendance rates generally follow an upward trend. School attendance is a high priority both for the Welsh Government and local authorities in their aim to improve standards. Flintshire secondary schools have demonstrated a consistent trend of improvement with figures being above the national average for Wales. Unauthorised absence in both primary (0.3%) and secondary schools (0.3%) are at the lowest values in Wales for both sectors.

Key sources of evidence:

Improvement Plan

Quality Indicator: 2.4 Access and School Places

Outcomes:

- **The provision of an appropriate range and number of school places**
- **Admission to schools**
- **Co-ordination of early years and play to ensure sufficiency**
- **Co-ordination of youth support services to ensure access to entitlements**

Since 2010 and the formation of the Schools Modernisation Strategy the Authority has undertaken the following work:

- New Primary School in Connahs Quay (Ysgol Cae'r Nant) – September 2012
- Closure of Ysgol Rhos y Cae School - Sept 2013
- Closure of the Croft Nursery and transfer of provision to the neighbouring Queensferry and St. Ethelwold's Primary Schools – July 2014
- New Welsh medium satellite provision in Shotton (Ysgol Croes Atti- Glannau Dyfdrwy) - September 2014
- Construction of new Shotton Primary School (Ysgol Ty Ffynnon) - September 2014
- Hawarden Village Primary school – buildings joined April 2016
- The Local Authority has completed its statutory proposal programme of infant and junior amalgamation. Amalgamations reduced the number of schools from 14 infant/junior schools to 7 primary schools.
- Post 16 transformation proposals have been approved in relation to Buckley, Holywell, and Connah's Quay, with further proposals underway at Shotton/Queensferry and Saltney.

The Authority has also reached implementation phase of its 21st Century Schools and Post 16 Transformation programmes. The Outline Business Case for both of the latter programmes has received ministerial support. (2014-2017 Band A Programme Circa £64m). The £200m+ North Wales Capital Procurement Framework jointly led by Flintshire and Denbighshire is now in place. This is recognised as sector leading by Welsh Government, with a range of innovations in social commitments and efficiency. Good progress has been made with the detailed build for the £31m investment in the Holywell Community Campus and the £14.7m post-16 Hub in Connah's Quay.

As At September 2015, Flintshire's level of surplus places (17.75% primary, 20.15% secondary and 18.9% overall) is better the Welsh average, but not yet meeting Ministerial targets. There is a key need to continue our programme to reduce unfilled places in schools to ensure that resources are used to maintain and improve learners' educational experience and outcomes by maintaining low pupil teacher ratios and an appropriate learning environment. This work will be undertaken through the linked capital programme and revised modernisation strategy. Current work includes consultations at Llanfynydd, Flint Mountain and Gwespyr/Picton (primary) and Queensferry (secondary).

The modernisation of the school estate has been a key corporate priority for the authority for many years and remains so. We will develop its strategies to ensure that we are maximising the potential investment opportunities that may be available via Welsh Government funding.

The Authority has an up to date Asset Management system and data from the system is used to influence decision making on Capital investment in schools. Priorities for investment for the schools capital programme are clear, linked to strategy, funded and agreed and based upon up-to-date information and to data contained within the Authority's Asset Management system.

An accessibility strategy has been in place since 2004, all schools have accessibility plans, physical barriers in all schools have been identified the Authority has undertaken a rolling programme of ensuring a network of schools in all areas of the County are made fully accessible. This programme of improvement continues and is linked to the capital programme & the modernisation strategy.

The Authority has made significant investment in its school buildings since 2001, removing surplus places and reducing the number of schools. The authority has developed a system to analyse the benefits arising from its investment in terms of improving the condition, suitability and efficiency of its schools, and is contributing to a Welsh Government task group in this area.

Despite this significant investment, the Authority's data shows that the school portfolio still requires significant further investment:-

Schools - Condition Category (January 2015)

Category	Percentage %
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A	3%
B	86%
C	11%
D	0

Schools -Suitability Category (Sept 2014)

Category	Percentage %
A	3%
B	42%
C	42%
D	13%

Admission arrangements are determined in accordance with the School Admissions Code and are made clear to schools, parents. Children moving in to the area are accommodated in relevant schools without delay. A high percentage of parental preferences continue to be met in the main admissions round. However, due to oversubscription at some schools in both the primary and secondary sector the number of appeals has increased in recent years. All appeals are heard in accordance with the requirements of the School Appeals Code within 30 school days.

There is a good range of early years, play and youth support services provision which meets the needs and children, young people and their families. The authority regularly audits this provision and provides appropriate support to secure ongoing improvements in quality.

There is an appropriate range of early years Foundation Phase learning and play provision which meets the needs of children and their families. The authority works effectively in partnership with the voluntary sector to plan and deliver provision, using surplus capacity in primary schools where it is appropriate to do so. Two new Welsh medium early years' providers have been approved in 2015 to meet the demand identified through sufficiency

surveys. The authority monitors the standards within maintained and non-maintained settings well and provides well-targeted support to improve the quality of the learning provided.

The authority co-ordinates youth support services effectively, based on a thorough analysis of need. As a result, young people can access a range of appropriate support services.

<p>Key sources of evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft School Modernisation Policy 	<p>Key issues & challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to address the renewed programme of school modernisation.
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Question 3: How good are leadership & management?

Quality Indicator: 3.1 Leadership

Outcomes:

- The impact of leadership
- Strategic direction and meeting national and local priorities
- Elected members and other supervisory boards

Officers and elected members share a common vision, values and purpose focused through the Authority’s streamlined improvement planning arrangements. This is embodied through the Local Authority’s streamlined Improvement Plan. Leaders communicate high expectations for securing improvement and challenge schools positively to good effect, for example, through the School Standards Monitoring Group.

Policies and initiatives are implemented consistently. Officers and elected members use relevant management information about performance to address issues of underperformance and to set objectives and targets that are strategic priorities. Progress against the Authority’s priorities is monitored corporately and the outcomes for schools are

generally improving.

Cabinet members now show determination in challenging and supporting services and taking difficult decisions to bring about necessary improvements, for example, on the school modernisation programme.

The Local Authority and its partners have a clear commitment to learners and developing a learning culture in the county. Senior leaders have very high aspirations for children and young people and they understand clearly the impact of wider regeneration and social care on educational outcomes. Service structures and resource planning effectively support the delivery of the shared priorities embedded in the Single Integrated Plan for Flintshire and services recognise and understand how they contribute to the outcomes.

Senior management restructuring has enhanced the team's agility and ability to respond rapidly to changing circumstances. Senior leaders work in a sophisticated way with a range of strategic partners across public services to set high level priorities together and deliver their vision for the people of Flintshire. Senior leaders have put structures in place to guide cooperation and lead by example. The extensive use of secondments, joint appointments and collaborative initiatives means that staff at all levels recognise and understand each other's strengths whilst working confidently within their own specialisms.

The Authority has a track record of identifying and intervening where hurdles to effective working hinder progress. Difficult decisions are responded to proactively. Where appropriate the Leadership, other elected members, the Chief Executive or other senior managers intervene effectively to overcome obstacles. Systems leadership and the delegation of resources support the efforts to place the learner first. Leadership is shared and operational staff can take decisions promptly to support learners and their families so that they stay engaged in learning.

Scrutiny task and finish groups (including the School Performance Monitoring Group) have successfully examined key aspects of the authority's work, and have informed decision making well. Elected members have developed their understanding and expertise through working in small groups to analyse specific aspects of education. In addition, the ongoing

programme of scrutiny committee is raising the level and quality of challenge to schools.

Key sources of evidence:	Key issues & challenges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan • Flintshire County Council Improvement Plan • Revised Operating Structure • Wales Audit Office Annual Report (June 2014) • Annual Report of the School Performance Monitoring Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding revised organisational structures • Review of Education Services in Wales – implications for school improvement and local authorities • Attracting good leaders to senior roles in schools

Quality Indicator: 3.2 Improving quality

Outcomes:

- Self-evaluation, including listening to learners and others
- Planning improvement

- **Involvement in professional learning communities**

Leaders, managers and elected members have an accurate picture and understanding of the authority's strengths and weaknesses. They routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities.

The Authority undertakes a wide range of self-evaluation activities that cover most aspects of the work of the service. It analyses data and first-hand evidence well to make accurate evaluations of the quality and impact of services. The arrangements also identify clearly the areas for improvement and help ensure that progress against strategic and other plans is reviewed effectively.

The Authority engages well with partners, service users and other stakeholders in its evaluation processes and in planning for improvement. For example, the Integrated Youth Strategy "Delivering Together 2014 – 2018" featured full engagement of young people's representatives in its development.

Performance data is consistently used to monitor progress and plan for improvement. There is a sustained focus on achieving progress against the Authority's priorities. The Authority regularly seeks the views of students, schools and the Authority's partners.

The Authority has effective performance management arrangements which bring about improvements. They also help ensure that objectives for individual officers link well to operational and strategic priorities. Key plans align well at all levels and help elected members to understand and make effective use of performance information. The well-defined performance management cycle allows them to monitor the progress of improvement plans and take timely remedial action.

The area benefits from well-established professional learning communities within and across schools from across the Authority to enable schools to develop and share their professional knowledge. There are effective networks of professional practice with other authorities and their partners. A priority for GwE is the enhancement of subject support networks and school to school support arrangements.

Collaborative working across local authorities is seen as a priority and this is developing at a good pace. Senior officers have contributed significantly to the development of a regional and national school improvement developments and regional collaborations for supporting programmes.

The Authority has addressed well all of the recommendations from previous Estyn inspections.

Key sources of evidence:	Key issues & challenges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan for Flintshire • Flintshire County Council Improvement Plan • School Improvement Plan • Draft Integrated Youth Strategy • Q2 Performance Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to build a school-led resilient school improvement system, through enhanced collaborative working

Quality Indicator: 3.3 Partnership working

Outcomes:

- **Strategic partnerships**
- **Joint planning, resourcing and quality assurance**

Partnership activities make a strong contribution to widening the range of choices for learners and this has benefits for their standards and wellbeing. The Authority takes a leading role in developing joint working practices and promotes trust and good communication between partners.

The Authority's officers focus well on joint planning and resourcing as well as building capacity for continuous improvement. The Authority has strong links with the community, good liaison and communication with schools, parents/carers and works effectively with other agencies enabling officers to deliver joined-up programmes that improve outcomes and wellbeing for learners. The Family Information Service is an important conduit to enable access to relevant up to date information to all to support these aims.

Senior managers demonstrate significant commitment to developing strategic partnerships across all aspects of the practice of the Authority. Through the work of Local Service Board (LSB), the Authority and its partners have joint ownership of priorities and outcomes. These aims are communicated clearly in the LSB's Single Integrated Plan.

The Authority makes very good use of its partnerships to deliver services which improve outcomes and wellbeing for children and young people. These include effective partnerships between the Authority, the police, local health board, voluntary agencies, other local education authorities and integrated youth support services. The Authority monitors and co-ordinates the work of these partners well. Individual partners have a good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses in the services they deliver and collective contributions and co-production can be evidenced.

Partnership working between the Authority, further and higher education establishments, employers and secondary schools in developing the work of the 14-19 network is recognised as good. They successfully promote co-operation and remove unhelpful competition between providers. They also enable school governors, the college, employers and the Authority to plan, monitor and resource an effective 14-19 curriculum that meets the needs of learners well. Collaboration in development and transition to the new post 16 hub at

Connahs Quay has been recognised by the Welsh Government through publication of a national case study.

Partnership working between education, children's services and health are very good. Highly effective, integrated planning across partners supports the smooth transition of pupils with complex needs into education, across key stages and from school to adult services.

Partnership working between schools and the Authority is good. There is a high level of trust and a common understanding of the need to work together to raise standards and to improve services for all children and young people.

The Authority has valuable information about the range of interventions supporting children, young people and their families and utilises several data sets and evaluation reports to feed in to the overarching Single Integrated Plan. This includes useful outcome data on the progress of children and young people, and on the outcomes of collaborative delivery approaches.

Many externally funded initiatives track the progress of learners and service users and their families effectively, e.g. Families First, Flying Start and Youth Support Grant. In the best examples, early bespoke interventions with families make measurable contributions to improved educational outcomes for learners e.g. the Team Around the Family Impact assessment report. There is also a new Integrated Youth Provision Plan which has a results based accountability evaluation methodology approach.

However, the partnership does not yet fully capture the overall performance of partner interventions or track consistently the progress of children and young people. This means that opportunities are missed to make the best use of resources and interventions across sector and service boundaries. In particular, the early intervention work by wider support services with learners and their families is not yet fully known and built upon by schools or school improvement services. The Family Information Service support should be used to address this area of concern in future.

<p>Key sources of evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Integrated Plan • Improvement Plan • School Improvement Plan • Draft Integrated Youth Strategy 	<p>Key issues & challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the most of partners' information on vulnerable families in planning for progression • Maintaining partnership priorities in a time of diminishing resources
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Quality Indicator: 3.4 Resource management

Outcomes:

- **Management of resources**
- **Value for money**

Education reform and investment has remained a priority for the Local Authority despite the challenging financial climate. The high strategic priority given to the education service is reflected in the Authority's allocation of both revenue and capital resources. The schools' delegated budgets have been protected from efficiency reductions in recent years.

Business partner arrangements in human resources and finance have been strengthened in recent years. The method of distributing funding has been completely renewed following fundamental review with schools. Meanwhile, human resources policies have also been reviewed through collaborative working at local, regional and national level.

The Authority's spending decisions relate adequately to strategic priorities for improvement and benefits for schools and their learners. Recent work on medium term financial planning and the fundamental review of the school funding formula give further positive prospects as does completion of school workforce remodelling as part of the single status agreement.

Staffing, accommodation and financial resources are soundly managed and deployed to support learning and improvement. The Authority reviews the outcomes of its financial plans

to make sure that money is spent wisely and has a positive impact on standards.

Partnership activity provides good value for money because it contributes to extensive opportunities and improved outcomes for learners in aspects which the Authority and its schools alone could not provide.

The Authority has been successful in securing grant funding for both revenue and capital projects but is also committed to contributing half of the current £64m school modernisation investment in schools from its own resources.

School balances are at an unprecedentedly low level in the secondary phase. Primary balances have increased during 2014-15 in the primary phase. The Authority is proactive in providing schools with appropriate support and challenge in those schools where surpluses are too high and where there are deficits.

The Authority has a good record of effectively managing its education budget and improving efficiency. Joint working with a range of partners has been effective in increasing the Authority's capacity to support learners.

Overall, the Authority's schools continue to provide good value for money and the Council is seeking further efficiency within the education system (WAO 2015).

Key sources of evidence:

- Medium Term Financial Plan
- School Funding Formula

School balances report

Appendix 1:

Excerpt from WAO Annual Improvement Report- March 2015

Flintshire schools continue to provide good value for money and the Council is seeking further efficiency within the education system

The National Survey for Wales, conducted on behalf of the Welsh Government, indicates that the public in Flintshire has more confidence in the local education service than in any other council in Wales.

Results in Flintshire primary schools in 2014 consolidated the improvements of the previous year. The proportion of seven-year olds achieving the expected standards was slightly below the Wales average while the proportion of 11 year-olds achieving the expected standards was the same as the Wales average at 84.5 per cent. In secondary schools, 84.3 per cent of 14 year-olds achieved the core subject indicator, the fifth highest proportion among councils in Wales. At key stage 4, performance fell slightly compared with 2013, but the proportion of 16 year-olds who gained five or more good GCSE grades that included the important subjects of mathematics and English or Welsh (first language) remained well above average and was the third highest in Wales.

Eligibility for free school-meals – a proxy measure for levels of deprivation – is well below the national average in Flintshire. We would therefore expect school performance in Flintshire as a whole to be above national averages. Levels of attainment in primary schools are therefore a little below what might be expected. Performance in too many primary and secondary schools nevertheless compared unfavourably with that in schools elsewhere in Wales with similar levels of deprivation.

We reported last year that there had been a steady fall in the number of 16-year old school leavers in Flintshire who are not in employment, education or training. However, in 2013 (the latest year for which data is available), the proportion increased sharply to 3.6 per cent, only marginally better than the national average.

Attendance rates in secondary schools have been among the best in Wales in recent years and continue to compare favourably with the Wales average.

The Council is responsible for ensuring an adequate supply of school places in an efficient manner. By merging infant and junior schools, the Council reduced the number of primary schools it maintains from 71 to 68 during 2013. Nevertheless, the capacity of the primary and secondary school systems increased slightly. In January 2014, there were some 4,300 surplus

places in Flintshire schools (15.9 per cent of the total) distributed across the 80 schools. Surplus capacity remains lower in Flintshire than the Wales average of 17 per cent, but the gap closed during 2013. Thirty per cent of Flintshire schools have significant surplus capacity as defined by the Welsh Government as compared with 24.7 per cent across Wales.

The Council continues to address the modernisation of its schools estate and recognises the potential for further efficiencies. Plans to co-locate primary and secondary schools on a single site in Holywell are innovative and likely to improve significantly the working environment for pupils and staff. Prudent concerns about the future viability of another secondary school have led to the postponement of plans to refurbish the school.

As in previous years, the cost of Flintshire's education system as a whole remains well below that in most Welsh councils. For 2014-15, the Council set an education budget (excluding specific grants) of £109.6 million, equivalent to £4,781 per pupil compared with an average across Wales of £4,939 per pupil. Although there are areas to improve, the broadly positive outcomes outlined above suggest that the schools service continues to provide good value for money.

The Council has reviewed its school funding formula and implemented the resulting changes. The Welsh Government has calculated that, in 2014-15, the Council delegated 81.3 per cent of relevant funding to its schools. This is a slightly lower rate than in other councils in North Wales. The Council has recognised the need to review the support services that it provides for schools and the way that they are funded. This review process has the potential to increase the level of delegated funding and increase schools' accountability for procuring the level of support they require.



EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 15 th March 2016
Report Subject	Early Entitlement – Changes to Delivery of Teacher Support to Approved Settings
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early Entitlement is the term which refers to the provision of part time education for three year olds. Children who become three years old between September and Easter are entitled to 10 hours of free early years education in a school or approved setting in the non-maintained sector e.g. day nursery, playgroup or childminder, prior to receiving their nursery education in primary school. Summer born children go straight into school nursery provision following their third birthday.

Funding for the provision of Early Entitlement comes via two main funding streams, the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to the Council and the Foundation Phase grant element within the Education Improvement Grant (EIG). The council's budget provides funding to the setting/school to deliver the free place for the child and the core costs of running the Early Entitlement service. The Foundation Phase grant element of the EIG funds the provision of qualified teacher time into the non-maintained settings where staff are not required to be teachers e.g. childminders, playgroups and day nurseries approved by Flintshire County Council as a suitable providers. This teacher input is designed to ensure high standards of provision as funded settings are required to deliver the Foundation Phase and are inspected by Estyn, against the same framework as schools.

In response to the financial austerity faced by the Council and the reduction in the amount of funding available both through the RSG and the EIG, the number of staff in the core Early Entitlement team available to deliver the statutory teacher input has reduced – staff who have retired have not been replaced, some staff have reduced their hours and voluntary redundancies have also been accessed. By September 2014 the number of teachers required to deliver the amount of statutory teaching time for the number of approved settings in the authority was reaching a critical mass and alternative delivery models needed to be developed.

With the ongoing need for financial efficiencies, the service also needed to continue to reduce its budget and find more cost effective ways of delivering the teacher input. These changes were part of an overall package of efficiencies which included a reduction in the amount paid for each pupil place and a reduction in the amount of financial support provided for resources and sustainability to settings in the voluntary sector.

The new model of teacher input into approved early years' settings has been achieved by the engagement of a number of teachers in schools to work alongside the core Early Entitlement team. Paying supply costs for a member of the school's Foundation Phase team to be released to deliver the support into the funded setting is more cost efficient than employing a member of staff in the local authority, with all the associated 'on costs'. This new model has also brought other benefits which will be outlined in the report below.

This report is a response to an earlier request by the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide a detailed update about this change to the model of service delivery which was run as a pilot during 2014-15. It has proven to be successful so has been expanded to include more settings for 2015-16. It is the view of the service manager that this mixed model of delivery is the way forward to ensure the quality of the service and achieve financial efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members consider the report on the changes to the delivery model for teacher support within Early Entitlement.
2	That members support the new mixed model of delivery i.e. a small central core team of expert Early Entitlement teachers and appropriately identified Foundation Phase teachers in schools.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE EARLY ENTITLEMENT DELIVERY MODEL
1.01	<p>Flintshire has a long tradition of providing early years education services in the non-maintained sector. This encompasses private day nurseries, child minders and playgroups. The provision of part time education for three year olds prior to starting nursery class was established by the Welsh Government in 2003 and this was funded initially by a specific grant which was later included in the core funding to councils, the Revenue Support Grant.</p> <p>Since 2003, parents of children born within the parameters of the scheme (between September and Easter) are entitled to 10 hours of free education at a setting of their choice. This provision is classified as education and therefore different to the traditional childcare/play activities provided in the non-maintained sector. Where there is not an approved provider within the non-maintained sector in the community, often in rural areas, schools are encouraged to offer this provision.</p>

	<p>To ensure that Flintshire delivered the requirements of this early education scheme, a dedicated team of qualified and highly experienced early years teachers and learning assistants was established, working out of the Westwood Centre in Buckley. The role of the teachers, supported by the learning assistants, is to ensure that high standards of education are being delivered by these settings. This core team has provided all the teacher input into approved settings since 2003.</p>
1.02	<p>Over the last few years, with the need to make financial efficiencies to balance the Council's budget, the Early Entitlement service has been required to make changes to the way it operates. From an original team of 6.7 fte teachers, by September 2014 the team reduced to 4.6 fte. This has been achieved by not replacing staff when they have retired and allowing staff to reduce their hours. However, by September 2014 the service had reached the point where there were insufficient teachers to provide the statutory teacher input into settings alongside their other core responsibilities.</p>
1.03	<p>The solution was to approach 10 schools where there was excellent Foundation Phase practice, where the local approved playgroup delivering Early Entitlement was either co-located or nearby and the vast majority of children subsequently transferred into that school for their nursery provision.</p> <p>These 10 schools and 10 partnered settings were then approached by letter, followed up with meetings, inviting them to pilot this new way of working where the Foundation Phase teacher in the school would deliver the statutory teacher input to the setting to assure the quality of the curriculum and provide support and guidance, rather than a member of the core Early Entitlement Team. All 10 schools and settings agreed to this new approach for the next round of Early Entitlement funding from January 2015 to July 2015.</p> <p>Over the years, the core Early Entitlement team has developed a comprehensive package of documentation, training and support which has been very successful in supporting approved settings delivering this early education. As Early Years expert practitioners the staff in this team have a wealth of knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum and the specific developmental needs of three year olds. It was essential, therefore, that the teachers engaged in the schools to deliver this new model were trained and made familiar with Early Entitlement requirements and processes. This was essential to maintain the quality of the service.</p> <p>The 10 teachers, along with their head teachers, were invited to a 2 day training session during the autumn term of 2015 to prepare them for their new role. These teachers were trained by the Head of Service and the core Early Entitlement team. Visits to the setting were also arranged to start building positive working relationships and ensure a smooth handover. Members of the Early Entitlement team who had previously supported the setting continued to act as a 'buddy' to the new teacher. The new model of support began in January 2015. The 10 schools received funding to cover the required number of visits to the setting and to participate in training and review sessions. This was initially funded at £250 per full day and schools received funding for the equivalent of 12 full</p>

days. Review sessions with the schools and the settings were held during the year to review progress and to deal with any issues.

The schools and playgroups participating in phase 1 of this pilot scheme were as follows:

Setting	School
Kinnerton Under 5'S PG	Higher Kinnerton
Sunbeams PG	Ysgol y Waun
Jigsaw PG	Ysgol Bryn Deva
Broughton PG	Broughton CP
Busy Bees	Flint Gwynedd
St David's PG	St David's RC
Tiny Tots	Ysgol Rhos Helyg
Cilfan PG	Cornist Park
Ewloe Green PG	Ewloe Green Primary
Carmel PG	Ysgol Bro Carmel

1.04

Feedback over the two terms of this new method of working provided evidence that it was a successful model e.g.

- The settings appreciated having input from the teachers in the local school and felt this developed a closer working relationship between them which benefited the children, particular on transfer into nursery.
- The setting staff reported that they believed that teachers in the school better understood the challenges they faced delivering this provision and valued the early education they provided to the children.
- Children who had specific needs were identified sooner to the school so that transition arrangements could be better planned.
- The teachers in schools reported that they had a better understanding of how the non-maintained sector worked, the challenges they faced and had greater respect for the work that was being done with the three year olds in developing their skills and knowledge prior to arriving in schools.
- The teachers in schools were able to share some of the latest curriculum developments e.g. literacy & numeracy framework and new approaches to teaching e.g. Numicon, with their settings.
- Some settings were able to have access to facilities on the school site to enhance their curriculum offer e.g. forest area for outdoor learning.
- There were also many examples of resources, planning and other important documents being shared.
- The transition of this group of Early Entitlement children into the school nursery class was reported to be so much smoother as a result of the school and setting working more closely together.

	<p>The review meetings provided opportunities for issues and anxieties to be shared and problems resolved. The Early Entitlement Team Leader acted as the main point of contact for the pilot schools and settings and individual Early Entitlement teachers provided support to the school-based teachers who had taken over their setting.</p> <p>At the end of the year, all schools and settings involved in the pilot scheme agreed it had been a success and that they were happy to continue the following year.</p>																				
1.05	<p>By July 2015, with the further reduction of the core Early Entitlement team due to an agreed voluntary redundancy, reducing the core team to 3.7 fte, it was agreed with the Chief Officer that this model of delivery be extended to another cohort of schools.</p> <p>The same methodology was used to identify potential schools and settings. Letters were sent and meetings held to engage the next cohort and from January 2016 these additional schools and settings are working in this way, following a programme of training.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="304 857 1134 1478"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="304 857 746 920">Setting</th> <th data-bbox="746 857 1134 920">School</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 920 746 981">Bagillt PG</td> <td data-bbox="746 920 1134 981">Ysgol Merllyn</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 981 746 1041">Oaktree PG</td> <td data-bbox="746 981 1134 1041">Southdown</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 1041 746 1102">Little Learners</td> <td data-bbox="746 1041 1134 1102">Ysgol Gronant</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 1102 746 1162">Treuddyn Under 5's</td> <td data-bbox="746 1102 1134 1162">Parc y Llan</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 1162 746 1223">Cylch Fflint</td> <td data-bbox="746 1162 1134 1223">Croes Atti</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 1223 746 1283">Cylch Garden City</td> <td data-bbox="746 1223 1134 1283">Croes Atti</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 1283 746 1344">Woodland Imps PG</td> <td data-bbox="746 1283 1134 1344">Mynydd Isa</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 1344 746 1404">Argoed PG</td> <td data-bbox="746 1344 1134 1404">Mynydd Isa</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 1404 746 1464">Playmates PG</td> <td data-bbox="746 1404 1134 1464">Bryn Coch</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In order to continue making financial efficiencies, the day rate paid to schools has been reduced from £250 per day to £220 per day.</p> <p>This second cohort are now well underway and their progress is being monitored.</p>	Setting	School	Bagillt PG	Ysgol Merllyn	Oaktree PG	Southdown	Little Learners	Ysgol Gronant	Treuddyn Under 5's	Parc y Llan	Cylch Fflint	Croes Atti	Cylch Garden City	Croes Atti	Woodland Imps PG	Mynydd Isa	Argoed PG	Mynydd Isa	Playmates PG	Bryn Coch
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1.06	<p>It is the view of the service manager that there may be a small number of schools and settings who could be engaged for phase 3 but that it is essential that a core team of Early Entitlement specialist teachers/assistants be retained to provide the expert support and guidance to settings, provide training and produce appropriate resources for all funded settings.</p>																				

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The financial commitments in relation to the content of this report are already identified within the core council funding and the Education Improvement Grant received by the authority. This model is providing greater financial efficiency.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Consultation regarding this change of delivery model was undertaken with the Early Entitlement Partnership Board and the Primary Headteacher Federation. Both endorsed the new approach.
3.02	This approach was also discussed with Estyn when they visited the local authority as part of a thematic review on the work of the support teachers for Early Entitlement and was acknowledged by the lead inspector to be a positive and pragmatic solution.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	There are no major risks in relation to this report.
4.02	The potential withdrawal of schools from this new approach would present some risk that would need to be managed by the service.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Officer: Claire Homard – Senior Manager - School Improvement Telephone: 01352 704019 E-mail: claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Early Entitlement - the provision of 10 hours per week (term time only) of early years education to three year olds prior to accessing nursery education in schools.

7.02	Non-maintained – establishments which are not maintained by the Local Authority e.g. private or voluntary sector.
7.03	On-costs – the additional employment costs borne by the employer e.g. national insurance, pension contributions etc.
7.04	Estyn – Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.
7.05	Foundation Phase – the statutory curriculum for all 3-7 year olds in Wales.

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EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 15 th March, 2016
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme
Cabinet Member	Not applicable
Report Author	Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	<p>In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?2. Is it an area of major change or risk?3. Are there issues of concern in performance?4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?
2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.
3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Publication of this report constitutes consultation.
4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.
5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Current Forward Work Programme
6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Ceri Shotton Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 702305</p> <p>E-mail: ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Improvement Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.

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CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible / Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
<p>24 March 2016</p> <p>Joint meeting with the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>Corporate Parenting</p>	<p>To advise and report on the progress of corporate parenting within the Local Authority.</p>	<p>Assurance/Monitoring</p>	<p>Senior Manager – Children’s and Workforce</p>	<p>17 March 2016</p>
	<p>Educational Attainment of Looked After Children</p>	<p>To update Members on the attainment of Looked after Children in Flintshire in the 2014-15 academic year</p>	<p>Assurance/Monitoring</p>	<p>Head of Inclusion Service</p>	
	<p>Safeguarding and Child Protection</p>	<p>To provide Members with statistical information in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding</p>	<p>Assurance/Monitoring</p>	<p>Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning</p>	
	<p>Early Years/Flying Start</p>	<p>To provide Members with information to demonstrate how both the early years programme and family first programme operate in FCC to support families in line with the Welsh Government Strategy</p>	<p>Assurance/Monitoring</p>	<p>Early Years and Family Support Manager</p>	

28 April 2016	Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE)	To receive an update on progress with the development of the regional school effectiveness and improvement service, to include a presentation from the Chief Officer of GwE.	Assurance/Monitoring	Chief Officer Education & Youth	21 April 2016
	Quarter 3 – Improvement Plan Monitoring Reports	To enable Members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring	Assurance/Monitoring	Education & Youth Facilitator	
	Learner Outcomes – to include attendance and exclusions	To provide Members with a summary of learner outcomes across primary and secondary school.	Assurance/Monitoring	Head of Inclusion Service	
9 June 2016	Q4 – Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Reports and Chief Officer Performance Report	To enable Members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring.	Assurance/Monitoring	Education & Youth Facilitator	2 June 2016
	Skills Shortage	To enable the Committee to review what measures schools have in place to reduce the skills shortage	Assurance/Monitoring	Head of Inclusion Service	

7 July 2016					30 June 2016
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Items to be scheduled

- School Governors – following the outcome of the national governance review
- Review/monitoring report following school re-organisation – September 2017

INFORMATION REPORTS TO BE CIRCULATED TO THE COMMITTEE

Item	Purpose of information report	Month
Incidents of arson, vandalism and burglaries in Flintshire schools	Information reports on incidents of arson, vandalism and burglaries in Flintshire schools	March
Health & Safety in Schools	Information report on accidents during the academic year and the actions taken to support schools in achieving healthy and safe environment	December

Suggested Venues for future meetings

- Hawarden High School
- Sychdyn Primary School
- Southdown Primary School
- Ysgol Y Felin, Holywell

REGULAR ITEMS

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
	School Modernisation	To update Members on the progress made with School Modernisation	Chief Officer Education and Youth
January	Self-evaluation on education services	To update Members on overall service performance	Senior Manager – Inclusion & Progression
February	Learner Outcomes – include attendance and exclusions in annual learner outcomes report	To provide Members with a summary of learner outcomes across primary and secondary school	Chief Officer Education and Youth
April	Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE)	To receive an update on progress with the development of the regional school effectiveness and improvement service, to include a presentation from the Chief Officer of GwE.	Chief Officer Education and Youth
November	School Balances	To provide the Committee with details of the closing balances held by Flintshire schools at the end of the financial year	Finance Manager
Annually	Learning from the School Performance Monitoring Group (SPMG)	To receive the annual report on progress and learning from the SPMG	Senior Manager – School Improvement