

EDUCATION AND YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 NOVEMBER 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Coleg Cambria, Deeside 6th, Kelsterton Road, Connah's Quay, Deeside, CH5 4BR on Thursday, 17th November, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chairman)

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

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

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillors Ian Dunbar (for Carolyn Thomas) and Paul Shotton (for Peter Curtis)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Phil Lightfoot. Bernard Stuart.

CONTRIBUTORS: Cabinet Member for Environment, Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Senior Manager School Planning and Provision, Senior Manager School Improvement, and senior Manager Inclusion and Provision. (For minute no.26) Rachel Molyneux, Headteacher, St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, and Christine Wineyard, Teacher in Charge of the Learning Centre (Pupil Referral Unit)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator, and Committee Officer

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillor Paul Shotton declared a declaration of interest in the following item as a School Governor of Connah's Quay High School.

Councillor Nancy Matthews also declared a declaration of interest as a School Governor of Nercwys Primary School.

Councillor David Williams declared a declaration of interest as a school governor of Penyffordd School.

Rev. John Thelwell declared a declaration of interest as a representative of St. Asaph Diocese.

Item 5 – School Modernisation update

32. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 October 2016 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

Accuracy

Mr. David Hytch referred to the last sentence of the 3rd paragraph on page 5 and said that the date should be amended from 5th November 2016 to 10th November 2016. He confirmed that the federation had formally commenced from this date.

Mr. Hytch also referred to page 6, first paragraph, and explained that he wanted an assurance that all young people had equal access to achieve higher grades at GCSE or A Level.

Matters arising

Councillor Ian Roberts referred to the information circulated regarding the Flintshire Schools Post 16 Data and asked that the Flint Post 16 Consortium be contacted again to obtain the relevant information.

RESOLVED:

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

33. PERSON CENTRED PLANNING

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced the report and advised that the Welsh Government was undergoing a period of transformation with regard to the education of children and young people with additional learning needs. It was understood that Person Centred Planning (PCP) would form an integral part of the reforms. He invited the Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression to provide an overview of the process and an update on the training offered to prepare schools and pupil referral units in Flintshire.

The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression reported on the main considerations as detailed in the report. She advised that the information captured through the use of PCP would be used to identify an individual's needs and support the agencies involved to design effective and bespoke interventions in partnership with the child and family. The detail from the process would be recorded in an Individual Development Plan which would replace Statements of Special Educational Need.

The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression introduced Mrs. Rachel Molyneux, Headteacher St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, and Christine Wineyard, Teacher in Charge of the Learning Centre (Pupil Referral Unit) and invited Mrs Molyneux to give an overview of how PCP was applied in the classroom. Mrs. Molyneux explained that person-centred planning (PCP) was an holistic approach which provided a way of helping children and young people and their families think about what was important to and for them now and in the future. It was also a continual process of listening and learning and provided a

collection of tools based on shared values that could be used to plan with a child or young person not for them. She detailed the benefits of the system and circulated examples of pupils work.

The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression advised that to support a national understanding of PCP the Welsh Government had proved funding to each local authority for the last two financial years. In Flintshire this had had been used to provide access for two staff from each school and Pupil Referral Unit to attend a two-day training programme. The second phase of the training has been to identify and support Beacon schools who have embraced PCP and are developing and are developing extensive expertise which could be shared with other establishments.

The Chair thanked Mrs. Molyneux for her presentation. Members expressed their support for the initiative and the work being undertaken in schools. In response to the question raised by Councillor Nancy Matthews around more able and talented children, Mrs. Molyneux explained that PCP was a whole class approach and no child was excluded.

Mrs. Rebecca Stark asked how the reforms would be managed in schools. The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression explained that each school would adapt the PCP framework to its pupils own needs.

Councillor David Williams queried whether the personal profile forms were updated as the child progressed through the education system. Mrs. Molyneux gave an assurance that profile forms were continually updated and reviewed.

RESOLVED:

That Members promote the use of Person Centred Planning through their links with schools and the portfolio pupil referral units.

34. SCHOOL MODERNISATION UPDATE

The Chief Officer introduced a report to give an update on progress of the School Modernisation Programme. He provided background information and advised that the former Holywell High School building had been demolished and that the project remained on time and within budget. The Chief Officer reported that at the meeting of Cabinet held on 18 October 2016, approval had been given for the development of the school capital project at Connah's Quay High School to design development, tender and full business case submission to the Welsh Government (WG) in line with programme criteria. At the same meeting Cabinet had also approved the capital project at Penyffordd to design development, tender, and full business case submission to the WG. The Chief Officer advised that the remaining funding from 21st Century Schools Band A programme would be used on Queensferry Campus to support the modernisation of inclusion provision in the area.

The Chief Officer reported that at its meeting on 18 October 2016, Cabinet had also agreed to allow more time for the Governors and Diocesan Authority to work through strategic options for collaboration and sustainability of the Diocesan

school estate. He explained that a report to Cabinet on Nercwys VA School Review was appended to the report.

The Chief Officer commented on the recent Ministerial announcement concerning a small frontline grant which was available for schools. He also referred to the work to be undertaken regarding the national approach to federation and the need for any small and rural schools which may face closure in the future to consider this option, having tried all other possible solutions beforehand.

The Chairman invited Members to raise questions.

Referring to the capital project at Connah's Quay High School, Councillor Paul Shotton asked if the contractor had been named. The Senior Manager School Planning and Provision advised that a submission of interest had been received and evaluated and the contractor would be identified next week. In response to the comments made by Councillor Shotton, the Senior Manager School Planning and Provision agreed to provide the Committee with information on who pays for the bus service for out-of-county pupils and in-county pupils attending Deeside 6th.

Mr. David Hytch commented on the need to ensure all young people had access to 6th form education and raised concerns around the admissions policy for Deeside 6th. Mr. Hytch asked that a breakdown of the information circulated at the last meeting on which secondary schools pupils at the Deeside 6th had attended be circulated to the Committee.

The Chief Officer referred to the performance profile across Flintshire and commented that too many learners were not achieving the grades they should be. Further work was needed to improve the advice and guidance given to young people to ensure that all information was as informed as it could be on the pathways available to them. He confirmed that the admission policy at Deeside 6th mirrored that of school sixth forms across Flintshire.

Councillor Nancy Matthews commented on the importance of acknowledging the achievements of pupils who gained lower grades as well as those who gained high grades. The Chief Officer stated that all pupils should be supported and encouraged to reach their full potential. Councillor Paul Shotton commented on the need to encourage and support pupils who wished to pursue the training and apprenticeship schemes which were available to them.

Councillor Dave Mackie referred to the change in government policy and the effect it would have on small and rural schools. He said the Authority was under pressure to reduce its surplus places in schools and asked if the change in policy was in relation to surplus places. Councillor Mackie also commented on the transition support arrangements for pupils of John Summers High School and sought an assurance that pupils were getting full support wherever they transferred to. The Chief Officer responded to the concerns and outlined the managed transition programme for pupils at John Summers High School and the commitment given to partner schools around funding, staffing adjustments, and joint activities.

Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer asked if a report on the Cabinet Secretary for Education statement around rural schools be presented to the next meeting of the Committee. Ian Budd agreed to provide a copy of the statement to the Committee. He explained that further information was being awaited and that an update report could be provided in due course. The Chief Officer commented on the further work to be undertaken in line with the national approach to Federation.

Councillor Mackie raised concerns that the proposals for Penyffordd School and Nercwys Primary School had not been reported to this Committee prior to being presented to Cabinet. The Chief Officer explained that both the proposals for Penyffordd School had previously been presented to the Committee during consideration of the School Modernisation Programme update and had been awaiting capital funding to be made available.

The Chairman referred to an email sent by Councillor David Williams concerning the proposals for Penyffordd School. Councillor Williams explained that the purpose of the email was to advise Scrutiny of his concerns over the proposed location of the new school in Pen-y-ffordd and the level of consultation with local members during the initial site appraisals. In the documents provided to Members there were two appraisal matrices, one of officers and the other taken from an independent feasibility study that he had carried out. The County Council's officer appraisal preferred Abbots Lane as the preferred site, whilst his own concluded in favour of the Youth Club site.

The Chief Officer confirmed that it remained the view of planning, capital programme and education officers, that the Abbots Lane site was the best site for the development and mitigated key programme risks, including planning, suitability and ownership. This was supported by the Governing Body and the other Penyffordd County Councillor. He also confirmed that there was ongoing extensive engagement with local Councillors and other key stakeholders in order to deliver the approved project.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin questioned what knowledge and expertise Councillor Williams had to be in a position to dispute the findings of officers. Councillor Williams responded by advising that as a lifetime resident, he was in such a position through his local knowledge of the infrastructure of the village and daily contact with a broad section of village residents who questioned the wisdom of Abbots Lane. He also advised that his feasibility study had been carried out by a developer who had built several schools in North Wales, including Flintshire, together with one of the Countries top architects in school design who proved that a new school of the required specification could be built to comply with all national requirements.

Councillor Ian Roberts referred to the enrichment programmes for the Deeside 6th outlined within the brochure and asked if a response could be provided to the Committee on:-

- how much of this was happening?
- information on the range of clubs/choirs
- how the Seren Network was operating at the Deeside 6th

Mrs. Rebecca Stark asked what budget per capita was going to Deeside 6th compared to school 6th forms. Ian Budd explained that this was a different funding mechanism but would provide the Committee with an answer on this.

RESOLVED

That progress of the School Modernisation Programme be noted.

35. WELSH ADVISORY SERVICE

The Senior Manager School Improvement (Claire Homard) introduced the report to provide an overview of the work of the Welsh Advisory Service which provides support services to primary schools to raise standards in Welsh and Welsh as a second language.

The Senior Manager School Improvement reported on the main considerations as detailed in the report. She advised that there were 5 Welsh-Medium primary schools in the Authority and referred to assessment outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 in Flintshire's Welsh-Medium schools in 2016. She also reported that there had been a strong upward trend in Welsh second language results, taught in English medium schools, at the end of Key Stage 2 over the last 5 years.

The Senior Manager School Improvement commented on the Welsh Government's new Welsh Language Strategy and its target of creating 1m Welsh speakers by 2050. She explained that training staff continued to be a priority for the Welsh Advisory Service and emphasised the need for the workforce within Flintshire's boundaries to possess the necessary language skills and appropriate methodology to deliver age appropriate and sufficiently challenging schemes of work to pupils. She commented on the difficulties being experienced in recruiting staff with Welsh language skills.

The Senior Manager School Improvement agreed to invite headteachers to give a presentation during consideration of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan at the next meeting of the Committee on 15th December.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the work undertaken by the Welsh Advisory Service be noted; and
- (b) That the work of the Welsh Advisory Service in supporting schools to raise standards of Welsh in Flintshire schools be endorsed.

36. 14-19 PROGRESSION

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) reported that at the meeting of the Committee held on 13 October 2016, it had been recommended that a report to enable the Committee to consider establishing a Task and Finish Group to review 14-19 education progression be presented to the next meeting. The report enabled the Committee to consider if, at this time, if it would be beneficial to set up a Task & Finish Group.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Committee agreed not to establish a Task & Finish Group at this time; and
- (b) That the Committee await the outcome of the work being undertaken by the officer working group, with a report being presented to the Committee when this work has been completed.

37. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the report to consider the Forward Work Programme for the Committee. She drew attention to the proposed venue for the next meeting of the Committee which would be held on 15 December 2016 at Hawarden High School, and said a tour of the facility would commence at 1.00 pm. Following a suggestion from the Chair, the Committee agreed that the school council be invited to give a presentation on the school meal service as part of the School Meal Service report at the meeting. The Committee also agreed that Members be invited to have a school meal if they wanted before the start of the meeting.

Following concerns raised by Councillor Dave Mackie regarding the shortage of applicants for teaching vacancy posts, it was agreed that a report on skilled education workforce shortages be presented to the Committee at the meeting scheduled to be held on 2 February 2017.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved; and
- (b) That the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair and officers, be authorised to vary the work programme between meetings, as the need arises.

38. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 2.00p.m.and ended at 4.39 p.m.)

.....
Chairman

