

EDUCATION AND YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 FEBRUARY 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Thursday, 1st February, 2018

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

Councillors: Janet Axworthy, Geoff Collett, Paul Cunningham, Patrick Heesom, Kevin Hughes, Tudor Jones, Dave Mackie, Ian Smith, and David Williams

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Lynn Bartlett and Rebecca Stark

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillors Paul Johnson (for Andy Dunbobbin) and David Wisinger (for Martin White)

APOLOGIES: Councillors David Healey, Sian Braun, and Dave Hughes. Mr Bernard Stuart. Interim Senior Manager School Improvement Systems

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Ian Roberts (Cabinet Member for Education), Interim Chief Officer (Education and Youth) and Learning Advisor – Health Wellbeing and Safeguarding

IN ATTENDANCE:

Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

40. HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMME

The Learning Advisor, Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding, introduced a report to provide an update on the service and how schools were meeting Welsh Government (WG) targets. She provided background information and reported on the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) and the Healthy & Sustainable Pre Schools Scheme (HSPSS) as detailed in the report. The Learning Advisor also reported on the School Health Research Network (SHRN) and the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP). The Healthy Schools and Pre-Schools Work Programme April 2017 – March 2018 was appended to the report.

Councillor Kevin Hughes commented on the reduced funding available for schools and the potential impact on health and wellbeing for children and young people. The Learning Advisor commented that a lack of funding in Primary schools might limit the number of activities and external expertise that schools may wish to engage with. In response to the further comments from Councillor Hughes concerning the importance of good oral health and diet in young children

the Learning Advisor explained that oral health was included in the nutritional criteria.

Councillor Paul Cunningham said all schools in Flintshire were to be congratulated on their achievements to promote Healthy Schools. The Cabinet Member for Education suggested that all Members and co-opted Members of the Education & Youth OSC be invited to the Healthy Schools Presentation Event. The Learning Advisor agreed to invite the Committee once a date had been set.

During discussion the Learning Advisor provided further information on the progress of secondary schools through the Healthy Schools Scheme.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made to date on the Healthy Schools and Pre-Schools Schemes be noted and schools be congratulated on the work done to date; and
- (b) That Members support schools and pre-schools to actively engage in all phases of the schemes.

41. LEARNER OUTCOMES

The Interim Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced the report to provide an update on Learner Outcomes in 2017. She provided background information and advised that the Regional School Improvement and Effectiveness Service (GwE) continued to work closely with the Local Authority to ensure that all schools, and particularly secondary schools, were accurately tracking pupil progress towards published targets to ensure a better match between predicted and actual outcomes.

Councillor Dave Mackie expressed a number of concerns regarding Key Stage 4 results and expressed the view that there had been a continuous decline in performance at KS4 in recent years. He felt that Flintshire's ranking in the performance tables should be higher than 6th position. The Interim Chief Officer (Education and Youth) responded to the comments and concerns raised and explained that Flintshire's minimum position was 6th but the aspiration was higher.

Councillor Dave Mackie referred to the Key Stage 5 Results - 2017, as detailed in appendix 2 of the report and asked if comparative data could be provided with the Deeside Sixth and Coleg Cambria. The Cabinet Member for Education and Interim Chief Officer responded to the comments and concerns raised by Councillor Mackie and explained that the entry criteria for students to Deeside Sixth differed to that in Flintshire secondary schools.

Councillor Geoff Collett also commented on the Key Stage 5 results and asked that information on the number of students who did not complete their courses and details on why they didn't be provided in future Learner Outcomes Reports. The Interim Chief Officer agreed to collate this information for future reports.

In response to the comments made by Councillor Kevin Hughes concerning school attendance and unauthorised absence, the Interim Chief Officer advised that the WG allowed parents to have up to 10 days unauthorised absence. She explained that despite the best efforts of schools to dissuade parents from taking their children out of school during term time and the information provided on the impact of a day lost in education some parents viewed the decision as an 'entitlement'. The Interim Chief Officer gave an assurance that schools had rigorous processes and data in place to identify patterns of attendance and robust procedures to address the issue of pupil's non-attendance.

Mrs. Rebecca Stark said that schools should be commended on their performance in the current financial climate and asked that this be passed on to schools. She also commented on the need to provide personal support to headteachers and staff who were in the 'front line' of the impact of financial cuts to the education budget. The Interim Chief Officer acknowledged that schools were under significant pressure and gave an assurance that dedicated support was available from mental health practitioners and as much support as possible was being provided.

Mrs. Rebecca Stark asked that future reports include information on student projected targets and the actual achievement. The Interim Chief Officer agreed to look at this for future reports.

Councillor Kevin Hughes said schools should be congratulated on the excellent work undertaken and the opportunities provided to pupils through the Welsh Bacalaureate scheme.

Following questions around the transport subsidy to the Deeside Sixth, the Interim Chief Officer agreed to raise with the Partnership Board what funding mechanism was in place for students who attended Deeside Sixth from England.

Members raised further questions around targets and projected outcomes for pupils, and the vocational pathways available for students who aspired to study at higher education but did not achieve the entry qualifications for an academic route. In response to the comments and concerns which were raised the Cabinet Member for Education and Interim Chief Officer gave a commitment to provide a workshop on all aspects of Post 16 education across Flintshire.

The Chair proposed that the Committee supported and endorsed the work of secondary Flintshire schools in assisting young people in realising their potential and this was agreed by members.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and verified attainment of Flintshire children and young people at Key Stages 4 and 5 for the year 2016-17 be noted; and
- (b) That the Committee supports and endorses the work of secondary Flintshire schools in assisting young people in realising their potential.

42. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration. She advised that the Quarter 3 Improvement Monitoring Report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on 12 April 2018. The Facilitator also advised that the following two items would be added to the forward work programme, with reports being submitted when appropriate:-

- Outcome of the School Health Research Network; and
- Update on the School Holiday Enrichment Programme

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be amended; and
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

43. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the public or press in attendance

(The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 4.50 pm)

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Chairman