

# Public Document Pack

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Chief Officer (Governance)  
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



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To: Cllr Hilary McGuill (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, Cindy Hinds, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Michelle Perfect and David Wisinger

24 September 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

**NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING**  
**SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2021 at 11.00 AM**

Could Members please note the start time of the meeting.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Robins'.

Robert Robins  
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: This will be a remote meeting and 'attendance' will be restricted to Committee Members and those Members of Council who have asked the Head of Democratic Services for an invitation. Such attendees may only speak at the Chair's discretion.

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team on 01352 702345.

## 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 5 - 16)

**Purpose:** To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Joint meeting held with the Education Youth & Culture O&S Committee on 17 June 2021.

### 4 BUDGET 2022/23 - STAGE 2 (Pages 17 - 24)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Cabinet Member for Finance, Social Value and Procurement

**Purpose:** That the Committee reviews and comments on the Social & Health Care cost pressures and overall budget strategy, and advises on any areas of cost efficiency it would like to see explored further.

***Please note that there may be a 10 minute adjournment of this meeting if it lasts longer than two hours***

## **Procedural Note on the conduct of meetings**

The Chair will open the meeting and introduce themselves.

The meeting will be attended by a number of Councillors. Officers will also be in attendance to present reports, with Democratic Services officers acting as hosts of the meeting.

All attendees are asked to ensure their mobile phones are switched off and that any background noise is kept to a minimum.

All microphones are to be kept muted during the meeting and should only be unmuted when invited to speak by the Chair. When invitees have finished speaking they should go back on mute.

To indicate to speak, Councillors will use the chat facility or use the electronic raise hand function. The chat function may also be used for questions, relevant comments and officer advice and updates.

The Chair will call the speakers, with elected Members addressed as 'Councillor' and officers addressed by their job title e.g. Chief Executive' or name. From time to time, the officer advising the Chair will explain procedural points or suggest alternative wording for proposals, to assist the Committee.

If and when a vote is taken, the Chair will explain that only those who oppose the proposal(s), or who wish to abstain will need to indicate, using the chat function. The officer advising the Chair will indicate whether the proposals are carried.

If a more formal vote is needed, this will be by roll call – where each Councillor will be asked in turn (alphabetically) how s/he wishes to vote

At County Council and Planning Committee meetings speaker's times are limited. A bell will be sounded to alert that the speaker has one minute remaining

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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**JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES  
17 JUNE 2021**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Joint Education, Youth & Culture and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committees of Flintshire County Council held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mike Allport, Janet Axworthy, Marion Bateman, Sian Braun, Bob Connah, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Joe Johnson, Tudor Jones, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Michelle Perfect, Ian Smith, Martin White, David Williams and David Wisinger

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:**

Lynn Bartlett, David Hytch and Mrs Rebecca Stark

**APPOLOGIES:** Carol Ellis, Cindy Hinds, Mrs Wendy White

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Patrick Heesom attended as an observer

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

Councillor Ian Roberts, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education; Councillor Christine Jones, Deputy Leader of the Council (Partnerships) & Cabinet Member for Social Services, Chief Officer (Education & Youth), Chief Officer (Social Services), Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) for agenda items 5 and 8) Senior Manager (School Improvement) for agenda item 6), Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) and Senior Manager (Safeguarding and Commissioning) (for agenda item 7)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator, Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Support Officer

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

To appoint a Chair for the meeting

**RESOLVED**

That Councillor Hilary McGuill be appointed as Chair for the joint meeting

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

None were received

**3. RECOGNITION OF DAVID HYTCH AND REBECCA STARK**

The Chair invited Members to pay tribute to the contribution made by David Hytch and Rebecca Stark to the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee, whose terms of office as Co-opted members of the Committee ended in June, 2021. She added that she had worked with David and Rebecca over a number of years and found them to be very knowledgeable people and thanked them for the contributions they had made.

Councillor Dave Healey thanked David and Rebecca for their involvement as active members of the committee long before he joined the Council. The Education Youth & Culture O&S Committee was a robust committee and lay members ensured it remained vigorous and effective in its challenge. He referred to the last meeting where Members had the opportunity to thank David for his contribution over the years especially as Vice Chair and he fully appreciated his support in that role. He then continued to thank Rebecca, as she was unable to attend that meeting, for her support and involvement over the years. Rebecca was always well informed, made valid contributions at committee and was helpful and supportive when called upon to assist with Estyn Inspections which was very much appreciated. The Chair thanked them both again for their valued contributions both at Education Youth and Culture and at the joint Meetings with Social & Health Care.

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) was delighted to extend her thanks to David and Becky and said that it had been an absolute pleasure working with them. She paid tribute to their enormous support and challenge over many years on the Education Youth & Culture O&S Committee and School Performance Monitoring Groups and said that education services in Flintshire were in a better place because of the contributions which they both had made. She thanked them both on behalf of herself, the Senior Officer team, schools and the whole portfolio.

The Chair sought consent to move Agenda item 8 to follow agenda item 5. This was moved and seconded.

**4. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN FLINTSHIRE**

The Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) introduced the report and explained the format was different because of the level of data available. The report provided an overview of the work and support provided for looked after children during the academic year 2019//20 which had been impacted by the pandemic.

She provided information on colleagues who supported looked after children, an update on the numbers of children requiring assistance within schools and those requiring specialist support in out of county placements. Information was provided on the number pupils who received Special Educational Needs (SEN) Statements and how this compared nationally. She referred to her involvement on the silver group within the Emergency Response which had enhanced the joint working with Education and Social Services to ensure the needs of looked after children and vulnerable children were identified and supported via the Resilience hubs. Laptops were distributed to this cohort quickly and together with the support provided by the

Vulnerable Learning Coordinator ensured children were able to access online education. She confirmed the services and processes with regard to SEN were quickly moved online to continue to support this cohort as they had a higher level of need.

The Senior Manager then referred to Section 1.06 in the report saying training was a real focus for education with sessions such as Trauma Informed Practice, Nurture and Attachment Theory provided. The authority had purchased the Boxall Profiling and Assessment Tool which identified the pupil's needs and ensured that the support was provided to enable them to progress with schools issued with licences and training supplied to use this tool effectively. The Senior Manager then referred to the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) which was allocated from Welsh Government (WG) via GwE together with an explanation on how schools worked in clusters to put forward bids to apply for the grant. Alternative forms of education with the focus on well-being were highlighted with a range of officer support available for children. She finished by providing information on the outcomes of year 11 pupils from last year who had all achieved what they needed to move on for their future aspirations.

Councillor Dave Mackie said that this was a very interesting report and asked the following questions;-

Firstly at point 1.07 on page 7 he understood how this money was spent but asked if the figure was sufficient and if not should this be better resourced?

Secondly at point 2.01 on page 8 with the changes in the legislation and the funding being allocated where the child lived, was information available on how many children the Authority was gaining or losing and was the situation the same in England with the authority being so close to the border.

In response to the first point the Senior Manager confirmed the Pupil Development Grant (DPG) allowance was fixed per pupil and funded by WG not Flintshire. With schools working in clusters to obtain a set amount of funding this provided a level of resource to pay for a member of staff to support pupils across their cluster of schools. The Chief Officer agreed saying they had more buying power working in clusters.

In response to the second point the Senior Manager referred to the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act and confirmed that information was still awaited from WG. With regard to the out of county numbers the figures were not to hand but she confirmed there were 126 pupils attending Flintshire Schools with the remaining, around 40 pupils, either placed with other authorities in Wales or England. She said there were implications with regard to the workload in Wales for officers with specific roles and responsibilities and that with regard to pupils sent to England there would be implications for the Council. For some there would be no impact at all with the English legislation providing the need for them but there was a cohort where the council would continue to have responsibility.

The recommendations, outlined within the report, were moved and seconded by Councillors Jean Davies and Mike Lowe.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the joint committee actively engaged as Corporate Parents for looked after children, promoting awareness and challenging provision within Flintshire educational settings.
- (b) That the joint committee actively encouraged all educational staff to promote the educational welfare of looked after children within Flintshire establishments at a 'whole school level'.

5. **ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND EDUCATION TRIBUNAL (WALES) ACT 2018**

The Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) introduced the report which provided an update on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales Act (ALNET). The Act was due to come into effect in September 2020 but this had been delayed until September 2021. She provided information on the adjustments WG had made with regard to the conversion of the Statement of SEN into the Individual Development Plan and the implementation for Post 16 with the age range now 0 – 25 years. WG had identified children in specific year groups with SEN needs who would be moving onto the new system at a normal point of transition with the Statement of SEN remaining in place until the conversation took place.

Paula Roberts, the Senior Learning Adviser (ALN) had led on ALN Transformation for Flintshire and had ensured that schools and the local authority were ready for these changes. The operational code was published in April and further implementation guidance was still awaited from WG which hopefully would be received before the end of term and discussions were ongoing regarding responses to a number of questions. Schools were being supported with regard to the “person centred practice” which was core to this and Paula Roberts had been holding training sessions with regard to the code to ensure schools understood what was required of them.

As from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 all schools were required to have an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) together with an Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer for Early Years within the Council and she confirmed that these posts were now in place. The Senior Manager provided an update on the ALNET multi agency work which included the Designated Clinical Lead Officer (DECLo) from Health. Information on the new system, the legal protection for children and grant funding which had been used to enable practicing ALNCoS to support schools which had proved invaluable for them. The Senior Manager finished by saying that WG viewed this as a cost neutral process but there were implications for the authority who had expanded the level of officers that were needed to implement the processes from September.

The Chief Officer was grateful for the hard work carried out by the Senior Manager, the Senior Learning Adviser and the team who had worked so hard to support schools. It was because of this team effort that Flintshire was in a strong position with regard to this new Act.

Councillor Mackie agreed with the Chief Officer and said the committee should also thank the Senior Learning Advisor for the work that she has done getting the authority to the place we were now. Councillor Mackie asked the following questions:-

Firstly at point 1.03 in the report he raised concerns that WG had set the timetable for the implementation but local authorities were still waiting for the guidance to be provided to support this. The Senior Manager reported WG had worked hard to try and meet the deadline with pressure from schools and local authorities who were trying to push it back again. The process had commenced in 2007 to provide legal support for all children requiring Additional Learning Needs and that the valid questions raised by Paula Roberts from her prospective in the role had enabled review and discussion. She then provided information on the Commencement Orders with discussions taking place with the Minister to see if these could be revised. WG were listening to the concerns raised and wanted to ensure this was carried out correctly.

Secondly at point 1.08 Councillor Mackie asked for information on the IT system and asked if this was accessible for everyone. The Senior Manager confirmed that the IT system would provide an effective tool for schools to record all interactions with parents, children and young people from the beginning because of the possibility of legal challenge and said that this had not been in place previously. This would prove invaluable for the local authority and schools if cases were taken to tribunal as it recorded the level of intervention and support provided and ensured the Authority met its statutory responsibilities within the timescales set by the Act. Parents were also able to access this information.

Thirdly at point 2.01 Councillor Mackie raised concerns about the last line "the expected increase in legal costs to respond to the anticipated level of legal challenge" He asked for more information on this. The Senior Manager reported on the situation in England which changed its system in 2014 and was now a legalised system around Special Educational Needs. With these changes the legal protection commenced at the point where a child may or may not be identified as having additional learning needs with the recourse to appeal by the child or parent from that point. This had been raised with the Chief Officer and legal colleagues as there was a potential for a lot of legal activity because this was a new system. The Chief Officer reported on the review by the Chief Officer team to identify the implications for the portfolio, finance and legal colleagues because of the Act. As a local authority legal advice had been sought to ensure it was in the best position to advise and support schools to make sure they were ready for any potential challenges. Support within the legal team would need to be factored in to ensure that capacity was in place.

Mrs Bartlett referred to the enormous responsibilities of the ALNCo role in schools and asked if schools had been given guidance on whether this was a paid role and was this consistent across schools. The Senior Manager agreed this was a very comprehensive role and confirmed that an exemplar job description was issued to schools with a recommendation from WG and the authority that this post should sit with a senior member of the leadership team within the school because of the complexity and importance involved. As regards a salary the authority had provided

advice when asked and she then reported on the different ways schools were providing this with some Head Teachers in the role and some having a number of staff working together with one designated person in that role to ensure the processes were in place.

Mrs Stark referred to the new IT system and asked if it was the ALNCo who had responsibility for inputting information for their school or would more staff be trained to do this. She was concerned as there were legal ramifications if the information was not inputted correctly. The Senior Manager confirmed that training initially would be provided for the ALNCo's and agreed that there would need to be close monitoring of the information inputted onto the system to ensure it was accurate if taken to tribunals. An IT System Administrator had been appointed to support the system which was called ECLIPSE and it was proposed a pilot would be launched in September. This system had been purchased by four North Wales Authorities and there had been significant officer involvement to ensure it was working correctly and fit for purpose. The Administrator would be delivering training on the system and supporting schools and it was hoped this would be in all schools by October.

The recommendation, outlined within the report, was moved and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey and Mrs Rebecca Stark.

**RESOLVED:**

That Committee received and considered the report on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

**6. SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION**

The report was presented by the Senior Manager (School Improvement) and provided an update on the discharge of statutory safeguarding duties in schools and the Education portfolio with the format different this year because of the pandemic.

Information was provided on how schools were looking at safeguarding and the challenges in lieu of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, Keeping Learners Safe Guidance and requirements from Estyn. She praised the way pupils and teaching staff had adapted to the different ways of learning both in the classroom and virtually with teachers maintaining contact with children and parents which was a huge area of concern and responsibility for schools. She reported on the close working relationship with colleagues in Children's Services and the Silver Tactical Group and said schools had different challenges every year with safeguarding at the forefront.

The response to Covid 19 and the ALN Act had resulted in the new procedures for safeguarding and appropriate training was provided to support this. She referred to the challenges with remote and blended learning with children having access to the internet and social media and confirmed a detailed report would be brought to the next meeting of Education Youth & Culture O&OC.

The Senior Manager then provided detailed information on the updated Wales Procedures, Update of the Schools Guidance, virtual training and professional

support for Head Teachers, Governors and schools. She confirmed Claire Sinnott had co-ordinated this and provided an overview of the Safeguarding in Education Panel and its links with the Corporate Safeguarding Panel. The Panel met regularly to ensure schools had the processes in place, were supported, monitored and held to account around safeguarding which was something which never stood still and was always changing. She reassured members that this was constantly challenged and moving forward. The Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) praised the positive working between schools, education and social services with children at the forefront and that this was reinforced with the work of the Silver Tactical Group which he felt privileged to be a part of. The Chief Officer valued the contribution from the Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) which enabled robust responses to support vulnerable children and young people throughout the pandemic.

The Deputy Leader of the Council (Partnerships) & Cabinet Member for Social Services referred to the work covered within the Corporate Safeguarding Panel which ensure all children were supported and received the best care but that this had been carried out differently. During the pandemic Education and Social Care especially ensured all the families were monitored virtually and in person to ensure they received the support they needed. She was really proud of the way Flintshire responded to safeguarding and were always proactive developing new procedures, training and the great partnership working for children and adults. The Chief Officer (Social Services) added that he co-chaired the Safeguarding Panel with the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) and that with the support of the Cabinet Members for Social Services, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Assets this had solidified the corporate safeguarding approach over recent years. Safeguarding was always changing and this required constant challenge, learning and development and that the new procedures were a significant step in Wales and colleagues across the council had managed this well to ensure it moved forward.

Councillor Gladys Healey referred to children who were home schooled and asked who monitored these children to ensure they were well cared for. She also asked who paid for children who were home schooled. Flintshire had a duty of care for these children and she had concerns unless a parent was a teacher how could they follow and teach the curriculum.

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) responded to say the issue of home elective education was an entirety in itself and suggested that this item be included on the Forward Work Programme for the Education Youth & Culture Committee for this cycle. The report would contain the processes that the local authority undertook, its statutory responsibilities and monitoring of the quality of education provided. The Chief Officer stated that these children sat outside of the authority's systems as those parents had chosen to take them out of school and they were their responsibility. The authority did not receive funding for these children but monitored the quality of curriculum provided. She added that the challenge was the level of intervention powers the authority had and that this would be outlined within the report. She continued to say that if a child was unable to attend school because of particular reasons then the Inclusion and Progression Service would be able to provide suitable provision. In cases where the parent's first choice school was full she confirmed that parents would be offered other places in schools but it would be their choice to accept that alternative place or elect to home educate their child. The

Chief Officer suggested that the report be circulated to both the Education Youth & Culture and Social & Health Care Committees which was agreed.

Councillor Tudor Jones commented that this was an excellent report which had achieved so much prior to impact of the pandemic. He asked the following questions:-

- Under consultation in the report it stated “none required” he asked in view of what had been happening of the last few months should a consultation be considered.
- At point 1.06 in the report it stated that it was an updated document October 2020 but since then there had been an enormous amount of information about inappropriate use of e-communications amongst children with bullying and sexting now moving online with children highlighting the consequences which had happened to them. He asked if this document was the place that this could be addressed
- At point 1.04 he referred to the bullet points and asked if this was where we responded quickly to what had been revealed by the children in the last few months as widespread vindictive and damaging bullying. Was this the place to address these issues and add to the document which would strengthen our actions on how we keep safe these children who were victims? He was distressed to read that a school had suggested its girls should wear cycling shorts under their skirts to prevent up-skirting by mobile phones and he felt that this was making the victims responsible for what was happening to them and that the authority should be intervening with whoever was perpetrating these offences.

In response the Senior Manager shared the concerns of Councillor Jones at the reports from our young people and welcomed the WG and Minister’s response to ask Estyn to investigate this and look at the culture that some of our young people find themselves in. She reassured members that the authority would be working with Estyn and schools and must never be complacent. She referred members to the Keeping Learners Safe section on Hwb which was the WG platform for school resources and provision which also provided supporting documentation for those issues available for schools and practitioners. The team at WG had been coordinating a range of resources and documentation together with guidance for schools with keeping learners safe guidance updated regularly and this was promoted to schools. She confirmed specific advice had been provided to schools regarding inappropriate images shared on social media. She provided information on the UK Council for Internet Safety and the work of Education Working Group but the challenges were that the digital world moved so quickly and that this needed to be responsive to need. This was a social issue as well as school issue and governing bodies should be involved in asking questions and that this was on the agenda for the next meeting. She continued to provide information on the support and advice given to schools through training, links with Children’s Services and enhanced support for the designated staff at schools and the plan moving forward.

Mr Hytch referred to the Office for Standards and Education report and the website [everyonesinvited.com](http://everyonesinvited.com) which allowed incidents to be reported and said that half of Flintshire secondary schools had incidents reported on there including sadly a couple of primary schools. The Children's Commissioner felt that this could be the tip of the iceberg and has called for an Estyn Review. He asked the following questions:-

Firstly with regard to inappropriate enquiries by local media he asked if there were strategies in place to field these without exposing individuals and schools.

Secondly would a more in depth view of how to combat issues which were wider than schools, the authority and governing bodies who had to play their part in protecting youngsters. This culture was more widespread than the pre-digital age and he hoped that the Education Youth & Culture Committee would be able to look at this in detail.

The Chief Officer referred to the email communications between herself and Mr Hytch and reassured him that if a school received a press enquiry they were to direct it to the Council's press office who would work with the school to make appropriate statements. She referred to the website and the schools identified and advised that officers were working with those schools. This was on the agenda for forthcoming portfolio and corporate safeguarding meetings. She also reported on the engagement with schools and Secondary Heads Federation meeting.

Councillor Marion Bateman thanked the officers for all their dedication and hard work. She referred to an incident which was brought to her attention (not in Flintshire) of a 6 year old child who was participating in a remote learning lesson in lockdown where the teacher was at home. The 6 year old was left in the care of older nephew who, once they logged onto the lesson, left the child alone in the house. This became clear to the teacher during the course of the lesson. Councillor Bateman asked if that were to happen in Flintshire what action would the teacher take and would it be carried out immediately.

In response the Chief Officer confirmed that the teacher would follow the school's child safeguarding procedures and raise it as a concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer who would take the appropriate action and speak to Children's Services for this to be investigated. She felt very confident that because of the level of training on this that no member of staff would feel reticent about this. The Senior Manager confirmed clear guidance had been provided to schools at the start of the pandemic together with the national guidance from WG. There should always be two members of staff on screen to enable the Designated Safeguarding Officer to be contacted and that there was always someone in school who could action this immediately.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services referred to Councillor Healey's point on home educated children saying that she had been pressing WG for a register for children who were home schooled for a number of years. The Cabinet Member and Chief Officer (Social Services) had met the new Police & Crime Commissioner who had agreed to add his support and hopefully he would be able to progress this further.

Mr Hytch fully supported the comments made by Councillor Jones regarding online bullying with evidence supporting an increase during the pandemic. He referred to the stance the Education Youth & Culture committee made not to make hostile comments online which was backed by Full Council and it was hoped that this could be carried through to schools at assemblies to change the culture. Unfortunately this was not the schools responsibility as this was happening at home in children's bedrooms but schools received the blame however they could change the behaviour.

The recommendations, outlined within the report, were moved and seconded by Councillors Janet Axworthy and Ian Smith

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the content of the safeguarding in education report be noted.
- (b) That the positive work undertaken by Flintshire schools to safeguard children and young people during the pandemic be noted.

**7. MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY**

The report was presented by the Chief Officer (Social Services) and Deputy Leader of the Council (Partnerships) and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Senior Manager (Children and Workforce). The report included an update on the multi-agency service to provide intensive therapeutic support to young people. He congratulated the North East Wales Multisystemic Therapy Team (MST) who had received an award for "Whatever it takes" which went above and beyond what was recognised throughout the MST Programme and was given to individuals within the MST community who had demonstrated outstanding and meritorious service. He explained that this team was planned, initiated, delivered and succeeded throughout the pandemic from scratch.

The Senior Manager introduced the report which provided an overview of the team's partnership approach and that North Wales had secured WG funding to look at creating partnership projects to transform the way Children's Services worked. The money was regional but came in via a local Health Board footprint for Wrexham, Flintshire and BCUHB. The project had just received an interim evaluation from Oxford Brooks University in terms of an evidence base about this service. What had shone through was the positive partnership working with Education, Social Services and Schools to provide intensive support for children and families who were on the edge of care. This enabled intensive, preventative support to avoid the need for children to become looked after and ensured that they could safely remain with their families.

The presentation included detailed information on:-

- Baseline Assessment - What works? - Common features - Objectives
- Why MST? - About MST - MST Therapist aim to:
- Implementation
- Support to date
- Evaluation - Evaluation Findings
- Key Findings
- Phase 2

The Chair found this so refreshing in particular the staff who were working 24/7 and asked the Senior Manager to take back the committee's praise to them for their work stepping in to support the parents.

Councillor Mackie commented that if these families were supported to achieve real change as regards parenting this would hopefully filter through into the next generation and so on which was so important. He was very pleased to note 1.08 regarding the team "Whatever it takes" which was very positive.

He referred to page 34 the Analysis the last paragraph on Family History and asked if the authority had got it right in the past when working with these families as regards interventions and would moving to this new system break the cycle.

In response the Senior Manager explained that the behaviour of some of the families they were working was entrenched and generational and that with the child protection work it focused the mind of families to bring around change. Once the children came off the Child Protection Register working with Social Services became voluntary and could not be enforced. This service would provide a more therapeutic model from CAMHS colleagues to address the underlying issues for the parents and children and show how they could achieve change themselves. He said issues such as substance misuse and low mental health required time to work through and previously social workers were not able to devote that amount of time because of workload. This service brought all of the expertise together looking at the whole family to ensure sustainable change. He referred to the strong Early Years, Flying Start services supporting parents from 0 – 7 years but when the teenage years were reached the offer was not as good as it should be and that this project highlighted where the authority wanted to go with our services and offer for families.

The Chair referred to Where We Go Next in the report and suggested that a service similar to Mockingbird providing an all family environment where they could go when they needed help be considered.

Councillor Cunningham referred to page 40 in the report "Out of Hours Support 24/7" which proved that the excellent service was working and said he did not think the authority got it wrong in the past it just maybe did not work for them.

The Chair felt the authority was learning all the time and that this could work but was worried about the number of people that were turned away because the staff or capacity was not available for everyone.

The Senior Manager referred to the Council's ambition on delivery of in house residential care which was discussed at the council seminar. As we moved forward it was realised that it was not about the building it was the care, support, assessment and therapy that happened in that building that was important. MST Fit which was on residential care and as it expands there would be an MST Fit team in place to work with those children. He added that the aim was where it was safe and appropriate to do so, children would return home or move onto foster care and that Flintshire's approach to Out of County was building on the learning through MST and how we brought those initiatives together.

The Chief Officer commented that the national media was full of stories on Children's Services and challenges about the high numbers of looked after children in Wales compared to other parts of the UK. He added that the service was continually learning and MST had shown how to refresh and improve further the spectrum of services. There were so many positive initiatives in Flintshire around Children's Service which were encouraging including Mockingbird, MST, Residential Care wing, workforce approaches and Early Help Hub. He paid tribute to Craig, Jenny Frost and Peter Robson for taking forward the service in a very challenging period for all public services over the last 18 months.

Councillor Mackie said he was very impressed with the number of initiatives which were brought to the Social & Health Care Committee which made his job of scrutiny very difficult because he was seeing good projects coming forward which were intended to have positive affect on everything that was going on.

The recommendations, outlined within the report, were moved and seconded by Paul Cunningham and Jean Davies.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee endorsed the work to safely reduce the numbers of children in need of care through the provision of intensive targeted MST support for families.
- (b) That the Committee supported the establishment of a local authority Children's Residential Care as part of an approach to rebalance care provision for children, with a focus on ensuring an affordable and sufficient range of local high quality placements.

**8. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There was no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.03 pm)

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**Chairman**



## SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday, 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Budget 2022/23 – Stage 2
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Social Value and Cabinet Member for Social and Health
<b>Report Author</b>	Corporate Finance Manager, Chief Executive
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As in past years the budget for 2022/23 will be built up in stages.

The first stage was concluded in July where we established a robust baseline of cost pressures. The review by Overview and Scrutiny Committees throughout September and October will form stage 2 with Stage 3 being the identification of the funding solutions to ensure a legal and balanced budget.

In July, Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the updated position on the budget for 2022/23 which showed that we have a minimum additional revenue budget requirement of an estimated £16.750m. The cost pressures identified were referred to the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees with a request that they all undergo a rigorous review.

The details of the cost pressures for Social Care – which fall within the remit of this Committee - are included within this report. The Committee is invited to review these cost pressures and risks, and to advise on any areas of cost efficiency it believes should be explored further and the reasoning behind the request.

A slide presentation will be made at the meeting.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee reviews and comments on the Social Care cost pressures.
2	That the Committee advises on any areas of cost efficiency it believes should be explored further.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE BUDGET POSITION 2022/23</b>																																
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1.03	The purpose of this report is to set out in detail of the cost pressures for Social Care that are included within the minimum budget requirement.																																
1.04	<p><b>Social Services Portfolio Pressures</b></p> <p>These are set out in the paragraphs which follow.</p>																																
1.05	<p><b><u>Table 1: Social Care Pressures</u></b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Pressure Title</th> <th>£m</th> <th>Note</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b>Prior Year Decision/Approval</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Registered Residential Care Home</li> </ul> </td> <td>0.413</td> <td>1.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b>Legislative/Unavoidable Indexation Pressures</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liberty Protection Safeguards</li> </ul> </td> <td>0.300</td> <td>2.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b>Requiring National Resolution</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Care Commissioning</li> </ul> </td> <td>1.952</td> <td>3.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b>Strategic Decisions</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition to Adulthood</li> </ul> </td> <td>0.943</td> <td>4.</td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Services Group Homes</li> </ul> </td> <td>0.300</td> <td>5.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Pressure Title	£m	Note	<b>Prior Year Decision/Approval</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Registered Residential Care Home</li> </ul>	0.413	1.	<b>Legislative/Unavoidable Indexation Pressures</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liberty Protection Safeguards</li> </ul>	0.300	2.	<b>Requiring National Resolution</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Care Commissioning</li> </ul>	1.952	3.	<b>Strategic Decisions</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition to Adulthood</li> </ul>	0.943	4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Services Group Homes</li> </ul>	0.300	5.
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• Increased Homecare Capacity	0.150	6.
• Special Guardianship Orders (SGO)	0.050	7.
<b>New Posts</b>		
• Transformation Fund	0.100	8.

1. Children's Residential Care Home – This is to provide in-county provision for residential placements and reduce future reliance on independent care providers. The pressure reflects 9 month's costs from an annual total of £0.550m, a pressure for three month's costs was included within the 2020/21 budget.
2. Liberty Protection Safeguards – Changes are being introduced through the Mental Capacity (Amendments) 2019 Act which is to abolish Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and replace with a new system, Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS). The legislation is due to come into force in April 2022 and will result in the need to change processes within the service, requiring additional social work capacity, an Authorising Body post and increased medical assessments.
3. Social Care Commissioning – This is the funding required to support the minimum inflationary increases for the fragile social care provider market in 2022/23. The pressure assumes an inflationary increase which is yet to be agreed. The care sector is also competing against other sectors, such as supermarkets, to attract more staff and is behind in terms of hourly rate of pay offered. Welsh Government support is required urgently to meet the Real Living Wages and additional care provider costs which are significantly greater than the funding set aside in the MTFS.
4. Transition to Adulthood – Social Services have a list of known young people with a learning disability coming through to adulthood, this funding will support these people through a progression model which includes pathways to higher education, work placements, day time services, domiciliary or supported living.
5. Children's Services Group Homes – This is to provide in-county provision for residential placements using Flintshire's housing stock and using small community based homes for young people who need to be supported in small groups or in solo provision. In the medium and long term the investment will enable us to support children in their communities and works to maximise step down to foster placements and even family reunification, where appropriate, in a planned and supported way.
6. Increased Homecare Capacity – The funding is to increase the capacity of the in-house homecare team. Over the next 2 to 3 years the in-house team aims to increase its market share, with more focus on delivering reablement, dementia care and supporting very complex

families. This will result in greater overall domiciliary capacity and reduce some of the risk to market stability.

7. Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) – This financial allocation would enable us to proactively encourage carers to move to SGO arrangements where we consider this would be in the best interest of the child (or children). Under these arrangements carers seek a court order that effectively moves parental responsibility from the Local Authority to the carers, which enables a more natural family based arrangement
8. Transformation Fund - This pressure represents the salaries, on-costs, and limited support budget to provide additional posts (or contribute to posts at a regional level) to carry on the work of the four North Wales Regional Transformation Projects. It is anticipated that Welsh Government funding for these projects will cease in April 2022, exit strategies are being developed to ensure key services continue but these cannot take place without a small number of workers to deliver and develop the services on a regional basis.

1.06

**Table 2: Joint Pressure - Social Care and Education & Youth**

Pressure Title	£m	Note
<b>Strategic</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of County Placements</li> </ul>	1.000	1.

1. Out of County Placements – The demand for residential placements nationally has grown. Like many authorities this financial year has seen an unprecedented growth in demand attributed to children and young people experiencing a crisis

1.07

This is currently a challenging period of time for Social Services with significant market stability risks due to staff recruitment and the levels of fees paid to independent care providers, which needs assistance at a national level for Flintshire to successfully meet these challenges.

Additionally the Integrated Care Fund, which contributes to financially support many of the portfolio's core services such as Older People's residential care and Children's Services for meeting complex needs, ceases at the end of this financial year. Future funding has been approved by Welsh Government from April 2022 to March 2027 however details such as the funding allocations and eligibility criteria, have yet to be shared.

Despite current and past financial; challenges Flintshire continues to deliver progressing practice, by delivering quality enhancement programmes such as Progress for Providers, and developing our own in-house care provision. These practices are now being duplicated and developed within other local authorities in Wales.

1.08	<p><b>Organisational Capacity</b></p> <p>The capacity of the organisation has been reduced over a number of years, in some areas of service management and operations, due to the need to reduce budget overheads to achieve our efficiency targets. The experience of managing the pandemic and endemic situation over the past 18 months has led to some increases in workload in certain areas, and the Council has set out some priorities which will require additional capacity in the Council Plan and through the leadership of the Council.</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Chief Officer Team have reviewed these capacity needs in depth. We have prioritised a number of requests for additional posts to supplement operational teams for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as potential cost pressures for 2022/23 onwards. These requests are all supported by business cases. Our recommendation to Council will be that these requests are supported in order of priority. The extent to which this list of requests can be funded will depend on the financial “headroom” we will have when we are on the verge of setting the annual budget in the new year.</p> <p>From amongst this set of requests a small number have been prioritised for accelerated approval within 2021/22 and in advance of the annual budget setting. This accelerated approval will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet in September.</p>														
1.09	<p><b>Budget Timeline</b></p> <p>An outline of the local budget timeline at this stage is set out in the table below:</p> <p><b><u>Table 6: Budget Timeline</u></b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 1294 1385 1563"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Event</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>September/October</td> <td>Overview and Scrutiny Committees</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20/21 December</td> <td>WG Draft Budget/Provisional Settlement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14 December</td> <td>Cabinet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18 January</td> <td>Cabinet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15 February</td> <td>Cabinet and Council</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 March</td> <td>WG Final Budget/Settlement</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Event	September/October	Overview and Scrutiny Committees	20/21 December	WG Draft Budget/Provisional Settlement	14 December	Cabinet	18 January	Cabinet	15 February	Cabinet and Council	1 March	WG Final Budget/Settlement
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Revenue:</b> the revenue implications for the 2022/23 budget are set out in the report.</p> <p><b>Capital:</b> there are no new implications for the approved capital programme for either the current financial year or for future financial years – the capital programme will be subject to a separate report</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	Member and Group Leader Briefings June/July 2021 Corporate Resource Overview and Scrutiny Committee Individual Scrutiny Meetings September/October

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	As set out in the report.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	No appendices.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	MTFS and Budget 2022/23 Cabinet Report 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2021 Presentation to CROSC July 2021 Summary Budget 2022/23 report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2021

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS):</b> a written strategy which gives a forecast of the financial resources which will be available to a Council for a given period, and sets out plans for how best to deploy those resources to meet its priorities, duties and obligations.</p> <p><b>Revenue:</b> a term used to describe the day to day costs of running Council services and income deriving from those services. It also includes charges for the repayment of debt, including interest, and may include direct financing of capital expenditure.</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> a statement expressing the Council's policies and service levels in financial terms for a particular financial year. In its broadest sense it includes both the revenue budget and capital programme and any authorised amendments to them.</p> <p><b>Budget Requirement:</b> The amount of resource required to meet the Councils financial priorities in a financial year.</p> <p><b>Forecast:</b> An estimate of the level of resource needed in the future based on a set of demands or priorities.</p>

**Capital:** Expenditure on the acquisition of **non-current assets** or expenditure which extends the useful life of an existing asset.

**Revenue Support Grant:** the annual amount of money the Council receives from Welsh Government to fund what it does alongside the Council Tax and other income the Council raises locally. Councils can decide how to use this grant across services although their freedom to allocate according to local choice can be limited by guidelines set by Government.

**Specific Grants:** An award of funding from a grant provider (e.g. Welsh Government) which must be used for a pre-defined purpose.

**Welsh Local Government Association:** the representative body for unitary councils, fire and rescue authorities and national parks authorities in Wales.

**Financial Year:** the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April.

**Local Government Funding Formula:** The system through which the annual funding needs of each council is assessed at a national level and under which each council's Aggregate External Finance (AEF) is set. The revenue support grant is distributed according to that formula.

**Aggregate External Finance (AEF):** The support for local revenue spending from the Welsh Government and is made up of formula grant including the revenue support grant and the distributable part of non-domestic rates.

**Provisional Local Government Settlement:** The Provisional Settlement is the draft budget for local government published by the Welsh Government for consultation. The Final Local Government Settlement is set following the consultation.

**Funding Floor:** a guaranteed level of funding for councils who come under the all-Wales average change in the annual Settlement. A floor has been a feature of the Settlement for many years.

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