

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 MARCH 2023

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Thursday 23 March 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor Teresa Carberry (Chair)

Councillors: Paul Cunningham, Gladys Healey, Dave Mackie, Ryan McKeown, Andrew Parkhurst, Carolyn Preece, David Richardson and Jason Shallcross

CO-OPTES: Mrs Lynne Bartlett and Lisa Allen

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillor Mel Buckley (for Councillor Gina Maddison), Councillor Ian Hodge (for Councillor Bill Crease)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Ray Hughes and Arnold Woolley

MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors: Mike Allport, Chris Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, David Evans, Richard Lloyd, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Dan Rose and Roy Wakelam

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Marion Bateman, Helen Brown, Carol Ellis, Chrissy Gee, Paul Johnson, Richard Jones, Roz Mansell, Hilary McGuill, Debbie Owen and Antony Wren attended as observers

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Ian Roberts, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure; Chief Executive and Chief Officer (Education & Youth)

Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation); Transportation and Highway Strategy Manager; Regulatory Services Manager; Enforcement Manager and Enforcement Supervisor; Police & Crime Commissioner (for agenda item no 50) Senior Manager School Improvement (for agenda item no 51)

Strategic Finance Manager(Commercial and Housing) and Libraries

Development Manager (for agenda item no 52)

Corporate Manager (Corporate Property and Assets) and Mr Liam Evans-Ford, Executive Director, Theatr Clwyd (for agenda item no. 53)

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillor Carolyn Preece declared a personal and prejudicial interest for Agenda item 8 – Theatr Clwyd Business Plan and indicated that she would leave the meeting ahead of the discussion on this item.

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst declared a personal interest for Agenda item 8 – Theatr Clwyd Business Plan, as he was a member of Theatr Clwyd.

Members were advised that as School Governors they should ensure that this information is included in their Code of Conduct form and if not then they should declare a personal interest for Agenda Item 5. Councillor Roy Wakelam declared a personal interest as a family member had been appointed a School Governor.

48. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 2 February 2023 were approved as moved and seconded by Councillor Dave Mackie and Councillor Carolyn Preece.

Matters Arising

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst referred to his questions on the charging structure model for the school music service, shown on page 8 of the minutes. He said that the point he was making at the meeting was that the hourly charge of £38.20 being the same for group and individual sessions was true in respect to the cost to schools. This was not the situation for the cost to parents or others who fund their children's music lessons where there was a subsidy for group sessions but individual lessons were therefore more expensive and cost more than could be achieved by private lessons.

It was agreed that the minutes be amended to reflect the point made by Councillor Parkhurst.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

49. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

In presenting the report, the Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator confirmed that there were no proposed changes to the current Forward Work Programme and an overview of the items scheduled for the next committee meeting on the 11 May was provided.

Referring to the Actions from the last meeting, the Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator confirmed that an email notification had been sent to Members for the Workshop on Integrated Youth Provision to be held on the 26 July at 2.00 pm. A letter had also been sent to all Head Teachers on the School Music Service. Referring to the questions raised by Councillor Dave Mackie, it was confirmed that the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) had received a response from Aura clarifying that the performance indicators data was provided annually. The end of year quarterly performance reports would be presented to committee in July and the Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator agreed to check that this information was included within this report.

The recommendations, as outlined within the report, were moved by Councillor Carolyn Preece and seconded by Councillor Dave Mackie.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (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; and
- (c) That the progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted.

50. SCHOOL PARKING

Prior to consideration of the report, the Chair commented that every Member had, at some point, received concerns from residents regarding school parking. She said that this continued to be an ongoing issue, that could not rely on a single solution to resolve it. She thanked the Members who had emailed their concerns and points they wished to raise to the Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and welcomed Members of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee to the meeting, who had been invited due to the issue falling within the remit of both Committees. She thanked the authors of the report for the clarification of the roles and responsibilities of all the parties who worked to resolve this issue.

The Chair also welcomed Mr. Andrew Dunbobbin, Police & Crime Commissioner to the meeting, who is in attendance to provide information on the role of the Police where there were concerns of school parking.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) presented the report which provided Members with an overview of the problems currently experienced within the vicinity of the County's schools, whilst also outlining the roles and responsibilities of all parties with a view to seeking a collaborative approach and effective solution. She provided information on how the teams within the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio were organised, the resources which were available to support this, how the legislation worked and what could be achieved.

The Transportation Manager commented that parking near schools was an historical problem experienced by every local authority with the reasons for this being the location of schools, inconsiderate and dangerous driving and parking by individuals as more parents were driving to school rather than walking. Information on the Active Travel measures and improved infrastructure which included safer routes in community schemes, was given together with an overview of the constraints on what could be achieved at school sites. From a road safety prospective, parental behaviour caused many of the problems around schools, which also linked to the wider congestion on the road network, pollution, and emissions.

The Transportation Manager reported that a high volume of complaints were received around parking and traffic congestion together with requests for road safety reviews and the small Transport Traffic team who supporting this had

to undertake assessments, design schemes and then bid for available grant funding. Referring to Enforcement he provided information on the small team of Civil Parking Officers who were also required to undertake other enforcement duties. An outline of the areas of highway enforcement that were covered by North Wales Police and the Council and the hierarchy of responsibility regarding traffic management and parking was outlined within the report.

The Regulatory Services Manager provided an overview of the Civil Parking Enforcement Team, which consisted of 10 Officers, 1 Supervisor and 1 Manager. This team had a very broad remit, and she outlined the traffic, environmental and other areas of work they covered, with the demand on this team increasing. Information on the enforcement provided across the 78 schools, with 25 schools having active traffic restrictions in place and an explanation of the variation of traffic restrictions was given. Enforcement Officers were scheduled to attend schools daily especially where multiple or ongoing complaints had been received. They wore visible uniforms and confirmed that most parents complied with the traffic regulations in place when they were present, with the non-compliance happening when they were not present. The team tried to visit all schools, but because of the size of the team and number of schools it was not possible to attend every school every day as the resources were spread across the whole network.

The Transportation Manager explained that parking on clear ways was an instant fine, but double and single yellow lines allowed for a car to stop for up to 5 minutes. The process of Traffic Regulatory Orders (TROs) was a very complex, expensive process and could take between 6 months and 2 years to complete and once these restrictions were in place, they would also affect the local residents. The use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and CCTV was also explained but these were only effective when clear ways “school keep clear” zigzags and crossing points were present.

A number of questions and comments were made by Members which were attached at Appendix 1 of the minutes. The comments made by Members would be collated for the work of the Task & Finish Group to form a basis for their investigation for solutions to this issue.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure said that this was an issue for all schools and that the cost of putting restrictions in place outside schools was also very expensive. This was an issue for parents, who by their actions, were causing these problems and he appealed to them to consider if it was necessary to park at the school gates or on pavements. He agreed with the proposal to set up a Task and Finish Group, which would enable local Members to highlight their individual concerns for their schools. He felt examples of good practice, such as walking buses, should also be considered as part of the work of the Task & Finish Group.

The Police & Crime Commissioner thanked the Committee for the invitation and outlined that he was the first Police & Crime Commissioner in North Wales to include road safety in his Police & Crime Plan. He said that he was pleased to work with the Authority and all Local Authorities across North Wales to tackle this issue outside of schools to ensure that children were kept safe. He reported on the research work his team had undertaken, looking at what

schemes were available in Wales and England and commented on the School Streets Scheme in Redbridge, a London Borough Council. The Scheme had designated zones which at specified times ensured that certain streets were blocked off or had traffic diverted to take the pressure from the school and enable children to get to school safely. Contact had been made with Redbridge Borough Council to gain a better understanding on how they undertook this work and he agreed to share the link to the website with Members for information following the meeting. Referring to the recommendations of the report, he said he would welcome the opportunity to work with the Task & Finish Group and said that he looked forward to seeing how this developed to ensure that children were as safe as they could be going to school.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure said that many of the mitigation measures involved additional financial resources. He hoped that when the Task & Finish Group put forward its recommendations that Members from across the chamber supported any necessary increases for staffing costs and maintenance costs for highways. He hoped the Task & Finish Group would focus on educating or altering the perception of the small minority of parents who were causing these problems.

The Police and Crime Commissioner fully understood the challenges that all public services faced within their respective budgets and wished to offer some financial support to explore a pilot scheme identified through the Task & Finish Group. He would welcome the opportunity of working with the Task & Finish Group and said that there was the possibility of applying for funding through PACT and Innovate to Grow, which would then have to go through the application process.

The recommendations, as outlined within the report, were moved by Councillor Carolyn Preece and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee note the historical issues associated with parking within the vicinity of schools and recognise the responsibilities of highway users in accordance with the requirements of the Highway Code;
- (b) That the Committee note the hierarchy of responsibility in relation to the management of traffic within the vicinity of schools and acknowledges the role of enforcement as a reactive measure, rather than a means to prevent initial occurrence; and
- (c) That the Committee approves the creation of a joint Task & Finish Group in order to explore the issues in further detail and develop a collaborative and preventative approach with key stakeholders, which will involve:-
 - Elected Members from the Education, Youth & Culture OSC and Environment & Economy OSC;
 - Officers from both the Education & Youth and Streetscene & Transportation portfolios;
 - Head Teachers
 - Elected Members invited to attend as required;

- Officers from North Wales Police invited to attend as required.

51. ANTI-RACIST WALES ACTION PLAN

Prior to consideration of the report, the Chair welcomed the report and said that as a former teacher she was aware of the work undertaken in schools to highlight this issue. As a member of Flintshire's City of Sanctuary she fully endorsed Wales being a Nation of Sanctuary and said that lives were enriched by diversity and enhanced by the experienced of additional cultures. Education was a means of bringing about societal change, dispelling stereotypes and untruths which was why she welcomed the report.

The Senior Manager (School Improvement) thanked the Chair for her comments and introduced the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan which had been developed in collaboration with a wide range of communities and organisation across all parts of Wales.

On the 20th of July 2022, the Welsh Government (WG) published the National Anti-racist Wales Action Plan which required the public sector, third sector and government funded private sector to work to the Actions set out in the Plan. The vision within the Plan was active, dynamic and allowed for change when required to ensure the Plan was appropriate to meet the 2030 vision set by WG. The Senior Manager outlined the policy areas covered within the plan which related to Education and Welsh Language and provided information on the goals and priorities for Education and schools especially within the new Curriculum with Wales being the first country to make a mandatory element within the Curriculum for pupils to learn about ethnic diversity within Wales and the wider world. Some of this work was already being undertaken within schools through specific workshops, professional development opportunities and e-Learning modules for practitioners in schools working with partners for Show Racism the Red Card, the North Wales Regional Equality Network and Victims Support Cymru. Schools were also signposted through Hwb to resources which could be used in the classroom.

The Senior Manager reported on the work carried out across the portfolio to support the Action Plan which included a wide range of activities and measures which could be used moving forward. The Council's response to the Action Plan sat with the Corporate Equalities Board which fed into the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. In referring to the recommendations within the report, the Senior Manager sought the Committee's views on how often an update report should be presented to future meetings.

Councillor Paul Johnson welcomed the report and the Philosophy for Children, Colleagues and Communities (P4C) which he felt allowed for children to ask questions about what was fair, unfair, just and unjust. He referred to his time working as an Education Officer for UNICEF where children were told what their rights were in school which enabled them to understand not only what their rights were but the rights of other pupils and felt that understanding as a child what your rights were as a human being was part of that process.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure agreed with the comments made. He felt

Flintshire schools carried out excellent work in this area and he thanked the staff for the action they took ensuring that Flintshire was a racially fair County.

A number of Members spoke in support of the report and thanked Officers for the work undertaken.

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) thanked Members for their positive comments on the report and echoed the thanks to the Senior Manager and her team. Referring to the recommendation outlined within the report she felt it would be manageable to bring an annual report to the Committee which would include an overview of actions undertaken, evidence of the impacts of those actions and any appropriate data sets.

The Senior Manager (School Improvement) thanked Members for their support and recognition of the work undertaken with colleagues in schools. She thanked Claire Sinnott and the Healthy Schools Team as much of this work was already being undertaken in schools.

The Chair suggested that recommendation 3, as outlined within the report, be amended to reflect that the Committee receive annual update reports on the Anti-racist Action Plan. The recommendation, as outlined within the report, together with the suggested amendment from the Chair were moved by Councillor Gladys Healey and seconded by Carolyn Preece.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee support the vision of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and the actions set out for education;
- (b) That the Committee confirmed that it had received an appropriate level of assurance regarding the work of the Education & Youth Portfolio in meeting the requirement of the Anti-racist Action Plan for Wales;
- (c) That the Committee receive annual update reports on the Anti-racist Action Plan and that it be added to the Forward Work Programme.

52. COUNCIL PLAN 2023-28 DEVELOPMENT

The Chief Executive introduced the report on the Council Plan 2023-28. He reported that a full review had been undertaken to ensure the appropriateness and relevance of the well-being objectives, priorities and sub-priorities going forward. This included a review of the current Council Plan 2022-23 to determine:

- Priority actions that continue from 2023 onwards for sustained attention;
- Priority actions which could be removed as they have been completed or become operational (business as usual); and
- Emerging new priority areas, actions and measures for 2023-28

The Chief Executive advised that the priorities of the Council Plan 2023-28 relevant to the Committee were outlined and attached at Appendix 1 and 2 of the report.

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst referred to the measurement for a reduction in the number of permanent exclusions or fixed term exclusions as shown on page 50 of the report and questioned that the target seemed to be an increase from the baseline data. In response the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) explained the difference between the baseline date and the target was because it was recorded in 2021/22 in a period when data was not collected because of the pandemic. As a result of the pandemic there had been a significant increase in the number of children and young people who were struggling to maintain their place in school.

Councillor Parkhurst asked what the numbers were being reduced from. If the baseline was not appropriate because of the pandemic what were the numbers of the current baseline. In response the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) reported that she did not have the current figures to hand but would be happy to provide the information following the meeting.

Councillor Dave Mackie commented that a report on school exclusions was due to be presented at the next Committee meeting. He asked if the report could include what schools were doing and what extra facilities were being provided. He felt that this was a wider issue because schools had changed how they worked to effect or reduce the number of permanent exclusions which highlighted how big this problem was.

In response the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) referred to the footnote which stated that this figure had considered the pre-Covid situation in terms of exclusion levels. She advised that a detailed report would be provided at the May Committee meeting which would outline the new approaches and systems which the local authority had adopted. Included in the report would be information on what the schools were undertaking such as modifications of the curriculum, their offers of alternative models and work across the Portfolio with the Youth Justice Service and Youth Services.

Councillor David Mackie commented that the extra provisions required were very costly for every school whose budgets were under such pressure. He asked if the extra facilities were likely to continue with schools looking at their budgets. In response, the Chief Officer recognised the challenges around school budgets and said that schools continued to put the needs of their learners at the forefront of their decision making. There was also a significant knock-on effect on the Portfolio because when young people were no longer in school there was still a statutory responsibility to make appropriate provision for them. These cost pressures were being managed within the Portfolio and she welcomed any grant funding from Welsh Government (WG) who recognised that there were still issues post pandemic and the Portfolio made effective use of that funding where possible.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor Carolyn Preece.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the Council Plan 2023-28 Part 1 and Part 2 documents that outline the actions, measures and risks that underpin the Priorities, Sub-Priorities and Well-being objectives of the Council Plan 2023-28.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 – TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item as this was considered to contain exempt information by virtue of paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

53. THEATR CLWYD BUSINESS PLAN

The Chair welcomed Mr Liam Evans-Ford and the Corporate Manager to the meeting.

The Corporate Manager and Mr. Liam Evans-Ford jointly presented the report which outlined the trading accounts for the Theatr Clwyd Trust and a summary of the key elements of the Theatr Clwyd Business Plan 2023-2029.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee commend the report to Cabinet.

54. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 4.45 pm)

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Chair