

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:**           **LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE:**               **MONDAY, 31 MARCH 2014**

**REPORT BY:**       **MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER**

**SUBJECT:**           **REQUEST FROM A MEMBER**

**1.00**   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To enable the committee to receive a request for consideration of an item which has been made by a Member of the committee.

**2.00**   **BACKGROUND**

**2.01**   Members will be aware that Mr David Hytch is a co-opted member of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee, elected by parent governors to represent them. As a member of the committee, he has a right to put an item on the agenda of a meeting for the committee to consider.

**2.02**   The Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee currently has five statutory co-optees as follows:

Reverend John Thelwell, representing the Church in Wales Diocese of St Asaph;

Mrs Rita Price, representing the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wrexham;

Mr David Hytch, elected by parent governors; currently a governor at Maes Garmon Welsh Medium High School;

Mrs Rebecca Stark, elected by parent governors;

Mrs Stephanie Williams, elected by parent governors.

**2.03**   The five statutory co-optees have the right to vote on all education issues considered by the committee (Paragraph 8 to schedule 1, Local Government Act 2000 and the Parent Governor Representatives and Church Representatives (Wales) Regulations 2001.

**3.00**   **CONSIDERATIONS**

**3.01**   As a governor from Maes Garmon, Mr Hytch is currently able to represent the interests of Welsh medium education on the committee. However, he has suggested that it would be appropriate for the committee to give formal consideration to the co-option of a

specific Welsh medium education representative in addition to the statutory co-optees.

**3.02** Section 76 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 provides the mechanism for the co-option of persons that are not members of an authority onto its overview & scrutiny committees. The guidance also states (8.4) 'Co-option can serve to strengthen Members' community leadership role through the provision of alternative perspectives and the facilitation of stronger area-based networks and contacts' It is suggested in the Statutory Guidance made under Section 76 that committees should ensure that additional co-opted members are able to:

(i) represent the interests of the population that receives services provided by or commissioned by public service providers;

And/or,

(ii) contribute expert knowledge or skills that will lead to a rigorous and objective scrutiny of the issues under review;

And/or,

(iii) live or work in the county or county borough area.

**3.03** Whilst section 76 provides for co-options in addition to those statutorily required, such additional co-optees are not entitled to vote. However, as the emphasis at overview & scrutiny committees is quality of member contributions, rather than on voting, this should not present a problem.

**3.04**

In July 2010 the Welsh Government published its Welsh Medium Education Strategy in fulfilment of the One Wales commitment. The Policy places an obligation on Local Authorities throughout Wales to produce and implement a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, which encompasses a development strategy for both first (i.e. Welsh medium) and second language Welsh (i.e. in English medium schools). The Welsh Education Forum (WEF) was revived in order to plan strategically, monitor and evaluate the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2012 – 15 (WESP), which was approved by the Council (cf. ELL Scrutiny Committee meeting of 22/3/12) and accepted by the Welsh Government in 2012; a members' workshop was held as part of the process. The Forum, chaired by the Director or the Cabinet Member, meets regularly to refine and update the Plan in the light of the Welsh Government's response; an updated Plan for 2014 – 17 has just been submitted. As part of Flintshire's commitment to extending access to Welsh medium education throughout the County, a Welsh medium satellite school will open in the erstwhile Shotton Infants School building in September 2014.

- 3.05** At its meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013, the WEF requested that consideration be given to representation from the Welsh medium sector being admitted to the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.06** In considering the request, the committee may wish to bear in mind that by acceding this request, a precedent may be created. This could result in other parties making a request that they be considered for co-option to the committee. Such requests could be dealt with on a case by case basis, bearing in mind the degree to which the organisations seeking co-option are able to demonstrate the benefits to the committee of their having such a role.
- 3.07** If the committee decides that there should be a co-opted member representing Welsh medium education, then the Welsh Education Forum could be invited to nominate one of its members to become a co-opted member of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.08** If such an invitation is to be made, It is suggested that the term of office of such a co-opted member be for a period of three years (as it currently is for the statutory co-optees) This would effectively mean that the co-optee would remain a member of the committee for the rest of the life of this council, unless he or she resigns their membership. The option would also be open to the Welsh Education Forum to change its representative, if it was felt that such a change would be to the benefit of the Forum and the committee.
- 3.09** If the committee determines that the Welsh Education Forum should be invited to nominate a representative, it should be borne in mind that that a Council employee could not become a co-opted member as this is precluded under Section 80 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 3.10** Appropriate induction training would be given to a new co-optee to ensure that that are familiar with how the committee in particular and overview & scrutiny in general is conducted in Flintshire.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01** That the committee determines whether to invite the Welsh Education Forum to nominate a representative of that body for co-option to the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01** Co-optees to the committee are eligible to claim the co-optee's allowance of £99 per half day meeting and mileage allowance of 45pence per mile.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 Not applicable.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 Not applicable.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 There is a clear expectation that the local authority will promote the principles underpinning the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 Cabinet Member for Education, Director of Lifelong Learning and the Chairman and members of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 The Cabinet Member for Education has responded that this issue is for the Lifelong Learning Committee to determine.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 None.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

E mail from Mr Hytch to Member Engagement Manager dated 24/11/13.

Minutes of the Welsh education Forum dated 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

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