

JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
29 JUNE 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Education, Youth & Culture and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committees of Flintshire County Council held on Thursday 29 June 2023.

PRESENT:

Councillors: Mel Buckley, Teresa Carberry, Bill Crease, Paul Cunningham, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, Dennis Hutchinson, Dave Mackie, Gina Maddison, Hilary McGill, Ryan McKeown, Debbie Owen, Andrew Parkhurst, Carolyn Preece, Jason Shallcross, Linda Thomas and Arnold Woolley

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Lisa Allen and Lynn Bartlett

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Marion Bateman, Tina Claydon, Jean Davies and Wendy White

SUBSTITUTION: Councillor Glyn Banks (for Councillor David Richardson)

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Ian Roberts (Leader of the Council); Councillor Mared Eastwood (Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure); Councillor Christine Jones (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing); Chief Officer (Education & Youth), Chief Officer (Social Services), Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) (for minute numbers 3,6 and 7), Learning Adviser for EAL, Gypsy Travellers and Children Looked After (CLA) (for minute numbers 3 and 7), Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) (for minute numbers 3 and 4), Senior Manager for School Improvement (for minute number 5).

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Councillor Teresa Carberry nominated Councillor Arnold Woolley as Chair of the meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Hilary McGill

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Arnold Woolley be appointed as Chair for the joint meeting

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillor Hilary McGill declared a personal interest as a school governor and that her daughter was a teacher.

The Facilitator explained that for any Members who were schools governors and had completed their declaration form, no declaration was required.

3. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN FLINTSHIRE

Prior to presenting the report the Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) introduced Lisa Davies (Learning Adviser for EAL, Gypsy Travellers and Children Looked After (CLA) to Committee.

Referring to the report the Senior Manager clarified that following discussions with the children and young people the terminology for looked after children was changing to “children who were looked after.” The first section outlined the number of children who were supported by this service with most of these young people educated in the Authority’s primary and secondary schools. A third of these young people required specialist provision which was provided outside of Flintshire. Members were directed to the final table in section 1.02 which outlined the increased number of children who were looked after in primary schools.

Following requests by Members, information on the success and outcomes of the twenty-seven young people was provided in Year 11 for 2022, with 48% having a statement of Special Educational Need or Educational Health Care Plan. An overview of the Cognitive Ability Test for all year 7 pupils was also given which had enabled the Authority to establish predictors of the outcomes that could be achieved, and this data had been compared with the actual outcomes of these pupils. Detail on the level of qualifications and progression pathways was given with the majority progressing to further education, with four individuals who were not in education, employment or training. The attendance levels for children who were looked after was very positive as they were supported to engage in their education. There were situations where attendance had been poor and information on the reason for poor attendance was outlined within the report. It was explained that the level of exclusions for children who were looked after was high and work was ongoing with the schools to address this.

Members were referred to section 1.06 in the report which outlined the interventions and initiatives which had been put in place to support vulnerable learners. Information was provided on the appointment of the Nurturing Support Practitioner working with the Nurture Outreach Team, previously the Behavioural Support Service, with an explanation of the name change and focus. The Senior Manager then provided information on the Digital Development Portrait developed by Nurture International to improve nurturing practices and she outlined how beneficial this had been to schools and families to support the development of these individuals.

Children and young people were able to feed back to the service what they felt worked successfully and what could be done differently to support them. Welsh Government (WG) had commissioned Sir Alasdair McDonald to advise on how best to move forward with one of the areas being the development of virtual schools in each local authority to focus on the learners that were looked after. It was explained that an application for additional funding to support this was made to WG which was refused because the model focussed on vulnerable learners and not just those who were looked after. Following further discussions with WG it was disclosed that it was not possible to re-apply until after the current funding stream came to an end in three years’ time. In the meantime, the Learning Advisor for EAL, Gypsy Travellers and

Children Looked After (CLA) had been in discussions with other authorities to understand how that model was working and pulling together all this information which would be provided to the Working Party that had been established across Education and Children's Services. This would enable the Authority to set up the processes that would be required to implement that model.

Responding to the clarification question on the Virtual Head Teacher from Councillor Dave Mackie, the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) explained that the bid to Welsh Government (WG) was to ensure that this cohort of learners had the benefit of the focused leadership similar to a school. As the learners were spread across several schools having that leadership responsibility for this group of learners would ensure that the provision was appropriate, that their progress was monitored similar to a head teacher in a school. The Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) agreed saying that it was looking at the needs of the individual and ensuring that the support services were provided. The model advocated by WG suggested that a range of support was required sitting under the Head Teacher to enable them to conduct their roles effectively.

Councillor Bill Crease was pleased to see that the Working Group would be ensuring the Personal Educational Plans were accurate, consistent and identified the needs and solutions of these individuals in a consistent way. The Senior Manager advised that the Eclipse System was being used for additional learning needs and that the information for the Personal Educational Plans was collated on this system. Schools would have all the information in one place which would improve the knowledge and awareness of these the needs of the individuals.

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst was pleased to see how much positive work was being undertaken to support children who were looked after. He asked the following questions:

- In response to the question on the increased number of pupils in special schools, the Senior Manager confirmed that this was needs based and varied from year to year and cohort to cohort. This level of provision was in response to the needs of the current cohort of pupils. The Learning Advisor said the number varied each year but the number of out of county independent specialist provision had reduced which was positive.
- Responding to the question on the reason for the increased percentage of out of county placements, the Senior Manager said that this would be for wherever these pupils were placed. Out of county did not only refer to the specialist provision but also where they resided with family, carers or foster parents. Sometimes the only provision for an individual could be in an alternative Authority rather than in Flintshire.
- With regard to the question on placement breakdown and outcomes and how this was being addressed, the Senior Manager confirmed that it was dependent upon those individual children and how they were able to cope in particular provisions. Colleagues in Children's Services worked hard to ensure the right placements were made and that they were supported. If that placement broke down, then the services

worked collaboratively to ensure that a learner was moved to an alternative educational placement as quickly as possible.

The Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) reassured members that a stable placement was what was desired for these learners. Over the last two months a renewal of a specialist service with Action for Children “WRAP” worked intensively with foster care placements if they were at risk of breakdown. Intensive therapeutic support would be provided to try and avoid placement breakdown. There were also incidents where some registered residential care homes were not tolerating certain behaviours and were serving immediate notice on children which was not acceptable. This was a pattern which was starting to emerge and one of the reasons Flintshire was now rebalancing and investing in its provision.

- Responding to a question concerning the percentage of children who were looked after who were included in the 15% of Not in Education, Employment or Training. The Senior Manager confirmed the figure for 2021 was 1.8% of the Flintshire population who left school who were not in education, employment or training. There was a higher percentage for those who were looked after.
- With regard to the question on attendance and whether the bar was too low to measure this, the Senior Manager confirmed the figure for persistent absenteeism saying the Authority aspired for attendance rates over 90%, The impact as a result of Covid and the legacy of that was that attendance was significantly reduced across all schools with overall attendance in the region of 90%.

Councillor Parkhurst referred to the last meeting of the Education Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee where he had requested a breakdown of exclusions for children who were looked after compared to other pupils. The absolute number of exclusions was known for 2021/22 which was 1704 with over 20% of children who were looked after having been excluded but he did not know how this compared to other pupils. He referred to the national data which suggested children who were looked after were more likely to be excluded because of their challenging behaviour and asked who advocated for these children when this happened, how robust was this and were the decisions of the schools left unchallenged.

In response, the Senior Manager confirmed that in terms of advocacy the Authority was the Corporate Parent for those children and so had a duty to be supportive of them and she explained how Social Workers and Education Officers participated in that process working with the schools. However it was the head teacher’s decision whether they wished to exclude or not. Work was ongoing with schools to improve their understanding of Trauma Informed Practice which was a priority for the Education and Social Services portfolios on the impact of exclusion on those learners. As school governors she felt Members would have a role to support this move against exclusion for children who were looked after.

Councillor Carol Ellis referred to the unsuccessful funding bid and asked what this would have been used for and what affect not having that funding would make to the service. In response, the Senior Manager confirmed that there was an offer of £40,000 from Welsh Government (WG) to support the implementation of a virtual

Head Teacher and was part funding to put that system in place. In the absence of that funding an Action Plan had been drawn up for Flintshire in response to the recommendations from Sir Alasdair McDonald's report looking at the current situation in Flintshire and the research conducted by the Learning Advisor with other authorities which had identified a way to move forward.

The Chief Officer reassured Members that the portfolio robustly challenged Welsh Government (WG) on the rejection of the plan. The Authority's concern was that this funding was not a sustainable model and would not fully cover the cost of a virtual Head Teacher. The expectation was that the person who undertook that role would have no other senior responsibilities. The funding was insufficient and would put pressure back on the Authority's budget in 3 years' time when it came to an end. It was felt that the Authority's plan was very robust which demonstrated that within the current structure within the Inclusion Service through the expertise of our Senior Officers that there was sufficient capacity to deliver the requirements of the recommendations from Sir Alasdair McDonald.

The Senior Manager said that there was a commitment to monitor the learning outcomes and provision for these learners but there were resource requirements. The development of the Action Plan would ensure that for example that the Personal Educational Plans was a quality document. The Working Group would look at all aspects of the requirements and working with Chief Officers to see if additional resources could be made available to support this going forward with the model which could be used without the virtual school.

The Learning Advisor referred to the aims and recommendations of the virtual schools which were around understanding the needs of the children, the data analysis and ensuring school staff were trained. Although the Authority did not have a virtual school, significant progress had been made on those recommendations using the tool from Nurture International to analyse the wellbeing of all learners, regardless of whether they were in Flintshire schools or not.

Councillor Hilary McGuill referred to Corporate Parents saying that all Councillors were corporate parents and asked when training for all Members would commence. In response, the Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) confirmed that training on Corporate Parenting had been added to the Training Programme.

Councillor McGuill referred the four children were not in education, employment or training and asked if it was known what these children were doing at present. In response the Senior Manager confirmed that the Engagement Progression Coordinator had responsibility to monitor the provision and engagement for all young people up to the age of 18 years under the Youth Engagement Progression Framework. The Coordinator monitored all learners across Flintshire who were not engaged and what support was being offered to them. The Senior Manager agreed to gather this information and circulate to Committee.

Councillor McGuill then referred to Exclusions and asked where the Authority was within the Welsh national figures. The Senior Manager reported that Covid had severely impacted the comparison data previously collected by WG. When that data

was available it did not contain a breakdown with regard to different cohorts so it would be difficult to compare with other authorities.

The first recommendation, outlined within the report, was moved and seconded by Councillors Hilary McGuill and Teresa Carberry.

The second recommendation, outlined within the report, was moved and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey and Teresa Carberry.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Members actively engage as Corporate Parents for children who were looked after, promoting awareness and challenge provision within Flintshire educational settings; and
- (b) That Members actively encourage all education staff to promote the educational welfare of children who were looked after within Flintshire establishments at a 'whole school level.'

4. HELP AND SUPPORT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS

The Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) presented the report which included an overview of the range of support provided for children who were looked after in Flintshire and the recommended service priorities for the work undertaken with these children. The priority and focus was around preventing children from becoming looked after and Members were directed to sections of the report which highlighted the range of services working together to ensure when safe and appropriate that children did not enter the care system. The commitment to ensure that parents, carers, families, who had the capacity to safely support their children, were supported which included a range of support and therapies which were accessed via Action for Children. Information on the range of support provided to support children once they came into the care system was set out in the report.

An outline of the Active Offer was given which included the right for each child to access an independent advocate and information on the scope of what this covered was given. Members were referred to section 1.16 in the report which promoted "Listening and hearing the voice of looked after children." The Children's Services Forum linked into the Young Persons Participation Group where young people met to explore themes which were important to them, and these young people represented Flintshire on national forums. The Senior Manager commented on a young person's visit to meet the First Minister in Cardiff where discussions included the care leavers services and the "When I am Ready" initiative. The service had recently obtained grant funding to purchase a bespoke App "Mind of my own" and an overview of the benefits using this App was provided.

The Senior Manager then moved on to Corporate Parenting advising that the Authority was responsible for 250 children with the Corporate Parenting Strategy developed in 2018 and endorsed in 2019. It was proposed to review this in the autumn. An overview of the five themes within the Corporate Parenting Strategy was given which included Home, Education and Learning, Health and Well-being,

Leisure and Employment Opportunities. An outline of the work of the Personal Assistants supporting these young people was also provided. Across Wales a Young People and Adults Charter had been developed to support them in the care system, when they were care leavers and about to become parents. The working group was ensuring that the Charter was able to undertake and deliver the additional expectations to these young people. The Health Liaison Officer for the Early Help Hub had procured funding to provide further education and training for care leavers this would provide continued learning opportunities for these young people.

In response to a comment from Councillor Bill Crease on Corporate Training the Chief Officer (Social Services) reported that this had been raised as a priority and that he would take this as an action from the meeting to ensure that it was provided as soon as possible to Members.

Councillor Hilary McGuill felt the Corporate Parenting Training was a priority and should be provided before September for all Members. Referring to the recommendations she wished to add "that the Corporate Training was progressed as a priority." This was supported by the Committee.

Councillor McGuill referred to the Welsh Government (WG) announcement for money for care leavers and asked how this affected Flintshire's care leavers. She asked how much they received and was it possible to ensure the money was spent wisely on driving lessons or money management. In response, the Senior Manager explained the "Basic Income Pilot" was a 2-year WG initiative for a specific cohort of care leavers. For that 2-year period it guaranteed them a monthly income of £1600 to use toward their rent. These young people with the help of their PAs entered the application process. The Citizens Advice Bureau offered advice around budget management with practical support provided for setting up the Direct Debits to pay their rent and provided advice on budgeting and saving. Links had been made with WG around learning with an evaluation process taking place to understand the strengths, benefits, risks and challenges which would be fed back to WG. Overall, this had been very positive and he suggested that a report on this be brought to Committee at a later date.

Councillor McGuill asked how many young people would be affected. In response the Senior Manager agreed to obtain this information and circulate it to Members following the meeting.

Councillor Gladys Healey had concerns that when these young people left care and were placed in accommodation and that they would be targeted by drug gangs and seen as vulnerable. She felt when the money ran out would they be pulled into selling drugs to make money especially if they were placed in areas where this practice was prevalent.

The Senior Manager reported that not all children left their placements at 18 or when they finished their education. The "When I'm Ready" initiative allowed a young person placed in foster placement to remain there and move when they were ready. This was provided the foster carers were willing and able to continue as they would also receive reduced payments for this. A lot of children also moved back to their original home and families at 18 which was sometimes positive. A pathway plan

was developed for children when they reached 16 years which included re-introductions with family members to ensure that they remained safe. Referring to those care leavers who did require accommodation they were placed in priority band one and work was undertaken with Housing colleagues when they reached 16 to develop their pathway plan. The PA responsible for that young person worked to support them through their education and ensured they were job ready for employment.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) referred to the fourth priority, producing proposals for the further expansion of inhouse residential care and fostering to support children locally, and referred to the Out of County Workshop held during the pandemic. He reported on the first CSIWR Registration two weeks ago with another four expected, which provided five Flintshire run care homes, with the aim to move forward with more developments which was needed. However, resources were required for this which was difficult given the challenging circumstances the Authority faced

The Chair referred to the proposed amendment to the recommendations around compulsory Corporate Parenting training and sought Members views on how to progress.

Councillor McGuill asked that the training be arranged as soon as possible for all Members. The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) agreed to ask for this training to be arranged as quickly as possible and the Facilitator agreed to take this back as an action from the meeting and for an update to be provided to both Committees following the meeting.

The Chair referred to comments made by Councillor Carol Ellis that planning Committee members had to complete the training before being able to sit on the Planning Committee. He was sure that similar rules could be brought in where appropriate that Members who sat on particular Committees that require particular skills must undertake the relevant training to do so. The Leader of the Council thought that compulsory training may require a change to the Constitution as it was mandated only on Governance and Audit and Planning Committee.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing explained that this was not mandatory training but that all Members of this joint Committee wished for it to be provided as soon as possible. She felt the Safeguarding Training was a priority and urged all members to undertake this training also.

Councillor McGuill referred to 1.18 in the report which referred to the new App "Mind of my Own" and asked that there were levels of security in place to stop anyone who should not be accessing it from being able to do so. In response the Senior Manager confirmed its security was guaranteed as it had been through rigorous checks with Governance, Data Protection and all the layers of security.

The amended recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillor Hilary McGuill and Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the range of services that were provided to support looked after children and the priorities for service development which centred on:-

- i. Implementing an App to support engagement and the voice of looked after children;
- ii. Refreshing the Corporate Parenting Strategy with an action plan for service support and delivery across portfolios;
- iii. Developing a Charter for parents in and leaving care; and
- iv. Producing proposals for the further expansion of inhouse residential care and fostering to support children locally.

5. SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION INCLUDING INTERNET SAFETY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Senior Manager for School Improvement explained the Education & Youth Portfolio Safeguarding Panel was established 2 years ago and fed into the Authority's Corporate Safeguarding Panel. The Panel was embedded across the portfolio with regards to procedures and progressed the ongoing improvement work regarding safeguarding and enabled Senior Managers to be kept up to date with regard to local, regional and national themes and information around safeguarding. Last year detailed work was undertaken in schools on Annual Auditing and Evaluation of Safeguarding, particularly following on from the Covid pandemic. This enabled a better understanding of where schools were with regards to safeguarding which had positively supported them by keeping safeguarding at the heart of their work. The Annual Report was something schools were requested to provide every year with the Audit Tool update provided every two years, but this remained a live document in the school. Information on the response rate for the Annual Report was provided and these would be reviewed during the summer with an update provided by the Chief Officer in the new academic year.

Section 1.05 of the report highlighted the strong commitment in Flintshire schools for professional development around Safeguarding which was supported by the high participation rates, the feedback received from schools and the impact which was seen in schools. The Senior Manager paid tribute to the work undertaken by the Learning Adviser for Health, Well-being and Safeguarding in this area. An Overview of the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), a statutory requirement in the new Curriculum for Wales Framework, was provided at section 1.06 in the report. She commended the work undertaken by the Healthy Schools Officers in readiness for the new Curriculum, RSE and the professional development programme working closely with colleagues across North Wales. Section 1.08 in the report provided an overview of the training provided and ongoing work through the cluster model delivering collaborative professional development across Flintshire schools, with section 1.10 providing a summary of the Consent Project and she provided an update on the Theatr Clwyd and Youth Service partnership which had increased the programme delivery to schools.

The Senior Manager paid tribute to the commitment of all school staff around the safeguarding work conducted every day, especially Head Teachers, the

Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs) and Lead Governors. They worked tirelessly to safeguard all children and young people in Flintshire.

Councillor Hilary McGuill referred to the list of accessible background documents and asked if there was any recordings or information available to parents on for example “the dark web” and watching what their children were accessing via their mobile phones. She understood information on this was available for teachers, but she wondered if there was a forum that parents could be directed to from the Council’s website.

The Senior Manager reported that Welsh Government (WG) had been working to address this and that Members would be aware of Hwb (the National Learning Platform for Wales). On this site there was a public facing section, the online safety zone which included guidance which everyone could access and included Parental Guides, Animations and leaflets. Information from this site was shared via the National Safeguarding in Education Group and the Learning Adviser for Health, Well-being and Safeguarding was the Authority’s representative on that Group. Information requests from schools and parents was fed back to this Group. She agreed to check the Flintshire website to ensure that this was clearly signposted to parents and also agreed to share the link to the Hwb website to Members following the meeting.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the content of the Safeguarding in Education report and supported the officers on the strategies used by the Portfolio to effectively discharge its duties.

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

The Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) introduced Paula Roberts, Senior Learning Advisor for Additional Learning Needs to the Committee who would be leading the Council through the changes ALNET brought for the portfolio.

The report provided an overview of the changes in the legislation, the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, which came into force in 2021 and included changes to Post 16 Education. Under the previous Special Educational Needs (SEN) system the Council had responsibility for children with a Statement for SEN who accessed continual education in a school-based provision up to the age of 19 years. Under the new legislation this now included responsibility from zero to the age of 25 years for any individual who required additional support for their learning needs in Education and now included further education establishments. If these post sixteen young people were identified as having Additional Learning Need then an Individual Development Plan would be completed which had legal protection under the Act.

An overview was given of the updated processes to support Post 16 young people with discussions held with local colleges commencing at year 11 this year for those young people with ALN and the process that would be implemented for any requiring Independent Specialist Provision (ISP). This was a person-centred approach which included a review meeting in Year 11 which would be attended by a range of officers, the Designated Post 16 ALN Officer who led on this together with the young person, parents and any other professionals involved to identify what was required to support that young person. Previously responsibility for this lay with Careers Wales and Welsh Government (WG) and an outline of how this worked was provided with WG securing funding for the more specialist provision. This year the responsibility for decision making around provision had passed to the Authority and a review of the needs of these young people Post 16 was being undertaken. Currently WG were retaining the funding for this Specialist Post 16 provision for the next 2 years and the Authority had to make returns to WG with the funding coming back to the Authority via the Local Authority Education Grant. A consultation was underway at present on what the model of the delegated funding to the local authorities would be once the 2-year period came to an end. The proposed model had raised a number of concerns from local authorities that the funding coming back to the authorities would not match the spending on these areas and this had been flagged as a potential resources risk. It was highlighted that there were a number of officers which include the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) who were working with WG to raise the challenge around the model and to input on where that funding would be delegated.

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee recognise the revised duties places on the Council by ALNET and the actions undertaken to implement the new system; and
- (b) That the Committee note the potential financial pressure due to the revised post-16 funding model and support officers in their engagement with Welsh Government.

7. SUPPORTING REFUGES IN SCHOOLS

In presenting the report, the Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) paid tribute to the work and passion of Lisa Davies (Learning Adviser for EAL, Gypsy Travellers and Children Looked After (CLA) and her team. The report outlined the three scenarios in which refugees came to Flintshire being the Ukrainian Sponsorship Scheme, Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme or Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. Through these three schemes several children and families had come to live in Flintshire.

The report highlighted the core values and principles that the Authority had utilised, with multi agency working integral to the approach and response to support those children and families coming into the County. Education within the local schools was a priority but was not easy to achieve especially for Ukrainian families

who were placed in hotels whilst alternative provision was secured for them with some families having to move a number of times before finding their final placement. Work was undertaken to ensure there were as few moves as possible to ensure the children were able to be integrated into their education as quickly as possible.

It was essential that knowledgeable, empathetic and trauma informed practitioners were in place with resources to inform schools and officers and these key documents, were instrumental in ensuring they were available to officers and families. These documents ensured parents had a better understanding of the Authority's education and support systems engaging with them.

The Senior Manager reported that the Council had established an Emergency Management Response Team led by the Chief Executive which brought together all of the key services across the portfolios to enable the families to relocate into Flintshire communities and have their needs met. Separate weekly meetings were held with the Education Response Team which ensured that the multi-agency response was in place looking at individual needs and interventions which could be offered across the portfolio. Referring to resources it was confirmed that the provision which had been offered was cost neutral because of the funding from the Home Office to support delivery but this funding was time limited, and work had been undertaken to ensure that the funding was allocated appropriately.

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) was very proud of the response to this and paid testament to the Learning Adviser and her team for the huge personal and professional investment that they had made supporting all the children and families coming to Flintshire. The response received from the schools had been excellent and showed the Council carrying out the commitments of the City of Sanctuary. Estyn had requested that the Council contributed some work on the thematic review that they were currently undertaking around the support for refugee and asylum seeker families which gave an opportunity for the Learning Adviser and a number of schools who participated in a visit from Estyn to share the excellent work that was undertaken. It was hoped that when the report was published later in the year that the work Flintshire had undertaken would be recognised through some positive case studies.

Councillor Hilary McGuill thanked the whole of the education system in Flintshire for the support provided to refugees. She reported in her own ward where a number of Ukrainian, Afghan and Syrian refugees had settled in marvellously which was down to the support from the Authority and schools. The people who lived around those families had gone above and beyond to ensure those families integrated into the local community. She felt the mothers of the Afghan children did not have a strong enough mechanism and they needed to speak more English and asked if this could be taken on board. She also personally thanked Dawn Spence who had worked so hard with the Afghan families.

Councillor Paul Cunningham said the refugees were pleased to see their national flag flying all around Flintshire and made them feel so welcome. He was glad that Flintshire took this stance welcoming refugees from countries who were suffering tremendously.

Councillor Bill Crease spoke in favour of everything Flintshire was doing to support these families and reported on his trip to a local primary school where he spent time speaking to a 7-year-old Ukrainian boy whose English language skills were astonishing. He proposed an amendment to the recommendation as follows :-

- That the Committee support the positive actions and outcomes achieved by officers and schools to support the refugee learners and families living in Flintshire.

The amendment to the recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved and seconded by Councillors Bill Crease and Hilary McGill

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the positive actions and outcomes achieved by officers and schools to support the refugee learners and families living in Flintshire.

8. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.10 pm)

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Chair