

## **EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**23 MAY 2024**

Minutes of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday, 23 May 2024.

**PRESENT:** **Councillor Teresa Carberry (Chair)**  
Councillors: Bill Crease, Gladys Healey, Dave Mackie, Gina Maddison, Ryan McKeown, Debbie Owen, Andrew Parkhurst, Carolyn Preece, Jason Shallcross and Arnold Woolley

**CO-OPTEEs:** Lisa Allen, Lynne Bartlett and Wendy White

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** Councillor: Mel Buckley (for Paul Cunningham)

**ALSO PRESENT AS OBSERVERS:** Councillors: Marion Bateman, Helen Brown. David Coggins Cogan, Chrissy Gee, Dave Hughes, Alasdair Ibbotson, Christine Jones, Fran Lister, Richard Lloyd and Sam Swash

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Councillor Mared Eastwood (Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure); Leader of the Council, Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) and Senior Learning Adviser (Engagement)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

### **1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

The Facilitator advised that, at the Annual Meeting, Council had determined that the Labour Group would chair this Committee. The Committee was advised that Councillor Teresa Carberry was the Chair of the Committee for the municipal year.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the appointment of Councillor Teresa Carberry as Chair of the Committee be noted.

### **2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR ([Link to Recording](#))**

Councillor Ryan McKeown nominated Councillor Carolyn Preece which was seconded by Councillor Bill Crease. There were no other nominations.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Carolyn Preece be appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)** [\(Link to Recording\)](#)

Councillor Jason Shallcross declared a personal interest in agenda item 11 as he was a School Governor of St David's High School.

Councillor Ryan McKeown declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 as he was an LEA Governor at Broughton Primary School and Community Governor at St David's High School. He had also been given permission to speak by the Monitoring Officer before leaving the room.

Councillor Dave Mackie declared a personal interest in agenda item 11 as he was a school governor at Hawarden High School.

4. **MINUTES** [\(Link to Recording\)](#)

The [Minutes](#) of the meeting held on the 21 March 2024 were approved as moved and seconded.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** [\(Link to Recording\)](#)

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the [Forward Work Programme](#) and [Action Tracking Report](#) for consideration and welcomed any questions from Members.

In response to a request for items to be included on the Forward Work Programme on redundancy payments, head teacher resignations and flexibility of the budget setting process, the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) suggested that Councillor Mackie email her identifying what specific information he required. The School Balances report which would be presented in September would include information on the level of workforce restructuring in schools. A clear position statement on teacher redundancies could also be provided at the same time.

In response to a request concerning the mechanisms for supporting schools through the budget challenges, the Chief Officer agreed to provide a report outlining the support that the portfolio provided to schools around finances, human resources and head teacher wellbeing when negotiating these processes.

In response to a question on the potential risk to the Authority if VAT was applied to private school fees, The Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) commented that a review of capacity around specialist provision across the County was currently being carried out. Information was also being collated on the financial pressures faced in schools around supporting children

with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). It was suggested that a report covering these issues could be presented to the Committee in the Autumn term.

The Chief Officer confirmed that one of the methods used to meet that need was Out of County provision. A workshop would be arranged for Members in the Autumn term which would include information on how that provision was managed.

Councillor Parkhurst then referred to the Action Tracking report and asked for an update on when the Emergency Planning arrangements would be circulated to Members. The Facilitator agreed to chase this and circulate it to Members.

The recommendations within the report were supported.

**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.

**6. CHANGES TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT DELIVERY MODELS IN WALES**  
**[\(Link to Recording\)](#)**

In presenting the [report](#) the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) provided an update following the decision by Welsh Government (WG) to change the mechanism of funding for all regional consortia across Wales, which included information on the outcome of the WG commissioned Middle Tier Review. An explanation of the change from a regional approach to an individual local authority commissioned model was provided which included the transitional period of May 2024 to March 2025. Reference was also made to the new WG Local Authority Education Grant and the Inter Authority Agreement between the six local authorities in North Wales. Schools were also receiving more direct funding from WG to support professional learning plans. The Local Authority Commissioned Report was in the final stages before being signed off by the Chief Officer, the Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture and the Senior Team in GwE.

The recommendations with the report were supported.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee confirm that it had received sufficient information about the changes initiated by Welsh Government through the middle tier review, the changes to funding mechanisms to regional consortia and the

arrangements to local school improvement services in Flintshire for the financial year 2024-25; and

- (b) That the Committee acknowledge that there was a significant amount of change management to be undertaken to successfully achieve Welsh Government's proposals for a revised school improvement model in the longer term.

7. **ESTYN REVISED FRAMEWORKS FOR INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICE** ([Link to Recording](#))

In presenting the [report](#), the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) outlined the changes following the Estyn Review with regard to inspections of schools and local authority education services. The published report included a number of recommendations which had been considered with Estyn making adjustments to their inspection process as a result. The cycle of inspections of local government education services were due to commence in September with the Youth Service now included in the authority's inspection. The Directors of Education from local authorities were in discussion with Estyn to establish how the changes would be reflected in the new framework going forward.

The recommendation with the report was supported.

**RESOLVED:**

The Committee confirmed that they had received sufficient information about the new inspection arrangements for Estyn's inspections of schools, pupil referral units and local government education services.

8. **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSION** ([Link to Recording](#))

The Senior Manager for Inclusion and Progression introduced the [report](#) which was presented annually and included information on the levels of attendance and exclusion across Flintshire schools for the academic year 2022/23. Specific points within the report were highlighted.

The Chair suggested that a briefing session on the Trauma Informed Practices be arranged for Members at a future date.

The Chair also asked that information on the Belonging Initiative be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

The recommendation within the report was supported.

**RESOLVED:**

That the attendance and exclusion data for Flintshire schools and the actions undertaken by officers to support increased engagement and the safety and wellbeing of children and young people be noted.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following item by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

**9. SALTNEY & BROUGHTON SCHOOL NETWORK REVIEW**

In presenting the report the Senior Manager (Planning and Provision) provided an update of the school network options for the Saltney/Broughton area.

Following a request for information around future timescales, the Senior Manager agreed that this information be circulated to Committee Members following the meeting.

The recommendations within the report were support.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the options available for school modernisation in the Saltney and Broughton area be noted; and
- (b) That the observations of the Committee for the school modernisation approach for the Saltney and Broughton area be provided to Cabinet prior to Cabinet approval.

**10. WELSH GOVERNMENT'S (WG) SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING ROLLING CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME AND MUTUAL INVESTMENT MODEL (MIM)**

In presenting the report the Senior Manager (Planning and Provision) provided an update on the next wave of the Welsh Government (WG) Investment Programme. Information was provided for Band A and B which included reference to grant funding, Special Schools, Pupil Referral Units and the Mutual Investment Model (MIM). The committee was asked to consider the Council's Strategic Outline Plan (SOP) which identified the future investment needs for the school estate over the next seven years via the Welsh Government's Sustainable Learning Communities Fund.

Following a question from Councillor Andrew Parkhurst around cost pressures and revenue implications, the Senior Manager agreed to go through this matter with him outside of the meeting.

The recommendations within the report were support.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) That the Committee noted the report; and

(b) That the observations of the Committee be provided to Cabinet

**11. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

None.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 5.20 pm)

.....

**Chair**

Meetings of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee are webcast and can be viewed by visiting the webcast library at <http://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>