

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 SEPTEMBER 2024

Minutes of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Monday 9 September 2024

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillor Teresa Carberry (Chair)

Bill Crease, Ian Hodge, Fran Lister, Dave Mackie, Gina Maddison, Ryan McKeown, Debbie Owen, Andrew Parkhurst, Carolyn Preece and Jason Shallcross

CO-OPTEES:

Lynn Bartlett

ALSO PRESENT AS OBSERVERS:

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Helen Brown, David Coggins-Cogan, Carol Ellis, Alasdair Ibbotson and Paul Johnson

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Mared Eastwood (Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure); Chief Executive; Chief Officer (Education and Youth); Senior Manager, Flintshire Youth Justice Service (for minute no. 24); Senior Manager (School Improvement); Learning Advisor (Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding) (for minute no. 26); Corporate Manager (People and Organisational Development); Strategic Executive Officer; HR Business Partner, Strategic Finance Manager (Schools) and Strategic Finance Manager (for minute no. 28)

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ([Link to Recording](#))

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst declared a personal interest as his wife worked in a school.

22. MINUTES ([Link to Recording](#))

The Minutes of the meetings held on the [23 May](#); [28 May](#); and [18 July 2024](#) were presented for approval.

The minutes of the joint meeting with the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the [27 June 2024](#) were also presented for approval.

Councillor Fran Lister advised that she had been present at the Committee meeting held on 18 July. The Facilitator said that the minutes would be amended to reflect this.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the amendment listed above, the minutes of the meetings held on 23 May, 28 May, 18 July, and the joint meeting held on 27 June be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23. 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.

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst referred to the action relating to the log from the EMRT meeting, the comments made by Audit Wales around the need for lessons to be learnt and to the response from the Council that a lessons learnt document had been created. He asked whether this template had been used for lessons learnt following the snow alert. The Facilitator agreed to speak to the relevant officers on this following the meeting.

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.

24. FLINTSHIRE YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE HMIP INSPECTION ([Link to Recording](#))

The Senior Manager, Flintshire Youth Justice Service and Flintshire Sorted presented the [report \(agenda item number 5\)](#) and provided background to its establishment in 2000, the chief aims and the statutory obligation under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) had undertaken an inspection of the service and their findings and recommendations were included within the report.

It was suggested that a letter be written to the Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Service to outline the Committee's concern around the challenge for the service due to the delay in the notification of the Youth Justice Grant. This was moved and seconded as an additional recommendation to those listed in the report.

It was also suggested that a letter be written to James Warr, Senior Manager for Flintshire Youth Justice Service and his team to thank them for the positive findings of the HMIP Inspection, as outlined within the report. This was moved and seconded as an additional recommendation to those listed in the report.

The recommendations within the report were supported.

RESOLVED

- (a) That members note the recommendations from the HMIP Inspection Report and are assured of the quality of provision of the Flintshire Youth Justice Service;
- (b) That members endorse a robust approach to seeking the identified support that is currently identified as lacking from external partners;
- (c) That a letter be written to Welsh Government (WG) outlining the Committee's concern around the challenge for the service due to the delay in the notification of the Youth Justice Grant; and
- (d) That a letter be written to the Senior Manager for Flintshire Youth Justice Service and his team to thank them for the positive findings of the HMIP Inspection, as outlined within the report.

25. SCHOOL RESERVES YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2024 AND DEMOGRAPHICS ([Link to Recording](#))

In presenting the [report \(agenda item number 6\)](#) the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) explained that the level of school reserves had decreased considerably across all sectors over the past year and she outlined the key factors for this reduction. The Strategic Finance Manager (Schools) provided detailed information on the school reserves, which included a summary for all sectors together with information on demographics and risk management.

The recommendation within the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the level of reserves as at the 31 March 2024 and overview of schools' current financial position, as outlined within the report.

26. YOUNG FLINTSHIRE PARTICIPATION MODEL ([Link to Recording](#))

The Learning Advisor – Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding introduced the [report \(agenda item number 7\)](#) which provided an overview of the proposed Young Flintshire Participation Model for children and young people to have their voice heard around matters which affected them and speak to key decision makers in the local authority.

The recommendation within the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee understands and supports the Young Flintshire Participation Model to engage children and young people in Flintshire in matters that impact on them and provide a mechanism for decision makers to hear their views.

27. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24 (COMBINED WITH THE COUNCIL PLAN END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/4) ([Link to Recording](#))

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) introduced the [report \(agenda item number 8\)](#) which provided an overview of how well the Council had performed against its Well-being Objectives, Priorities and Sub-priorities at the end of the financial year 2023/24 of the Council Plan (2023-28). Specific sections of the report were highlighted to Members.

The recommendation within the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the 2023/24 Annual Performance Report, combined with the Council Plan End of Year 2023/24 Performance Report, noting the performance achieved.

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).

28. LEISURE, LIBRARIES, PLAY AND MUSEUM SERVICES

The Strategic Executive Officer introduced the report which outlined the progress made in exploring a new grant arrangement with Aura and an associated compliant subsidy control assessment.

Councillor Carolyn Preece moved the following amended recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Bill Crease:-

- That a special meeting of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held as soon as possible and prior to the next Cabinet meeting;
- That the Committee require that a copy of the contract offered to Aura be produced at that meeting or made available to Committee Members prior to the meeting and all other necessary documents; and
- That pending this meeting the Education, Youth & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee strongly recommends a new agreement on reasonable terms is signed with Aura.

The Facilitator reported that advice had been provided to Councillor Preece, prior to the meeting, that it was not appropriate for a copy of the contract to be provided to Members. Councillor Preece provided the Committee with a response that she had given to the Democratic Services Manager ahead of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a special meeting of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee is held as soon as possible and prior to the next Cabinet meeting;
- (b) That the Committee requires that a copy of the contract offered to Aura be produced at that meeting or made available to Committee Members prior to the meeting and all other necessary documents; and
- (c) That pending this meeting, the Education, Youth & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee strongly recommends a new agreement on reasonable terms is signed with Aura.

29. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

None.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.30 pm)

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Chair

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