

**JOINT EDUCATION & YOUTH AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 MAY 2018**

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Education & Youth and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 24 May 2018

PRESENT:

Councillors: Janet Axworthy, Marion Bateman, Sian Braun, Geoff Collett, Paul Cunningham, Carol Ellis, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Dave Hughes, Kevin Hughes, Tudor Jones, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Martin White, David Williams and David Wisinger

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Lynn Bartlett, David Hytch, and Rebecca Stark

APOLOGIES: Interim Chief Officer (Education and Youth)

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillor Mike Reeve (for Andy Dunbobbin)

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Christine Jones, Cabinet Member for Social Services; Councillor Ian Roberts, Cabinet Member for Education and Youth, Chief Officer (Social Services); Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning; Senior Manager Children and Workforce; Senior Manager Inclusion and Progression; Senior Manager Integrated Youth Provision; Early Years and Family Support Manager; Safeguarding Unit Service Manager, Family Support Manager and Planning and Development Officer

ATTENDANCE:

Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

The Education & Youth Facilitator sought nominations for a Chair for the meeting.

RESOLVED

That Councillor David Healey be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sian Braun declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 – Childcare Offer for Wales, Flintshire due to her accessing this service.

3. CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced a report to endorse a refreshed Corporate Parenting Strategy for Flintshire. He advised that the report outlined the ongoing work being undertaken to form a new Corporate Parenting Strategy within the context of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and national developments relating to Corporate Parenting.

The Planning and Development Officer provided background information and reported on the main considerations, as detailed in the report, concerning progress in developing Flintshire's Corporate Parenting Strategy. He explained that the Strategy would be in place for at least 5 years to ensure consistency and make a positive difference for looked after children and care leavers. He referred to the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-2023 which had been provided to the Committee for endorsement.

Councillor Hilary McGuill asked if the text in the Strategy could be amended to read as if it were addressing a child. The Planning and Development Officer agreed to amend the text accordingly.

Councillor Kevin Hughes asked if the Strategy could be amended to reflect, where a looked after child was placed in foster care, consideration would be given to placing them with foster parents who had the same religious beliefs or ethnicity. The Senior Manager Children and Workforce explained that this was already taken into consideration and agreed to include it within the Strategy.

Following a suggestion by Councillor Carol Ellis, the Committee recommended that a short presentation on Corporate Parenting be given at a future meeting of the County Council and also to the Chief Officer Team. The Senior Manager Children and Workforce suggested that young people be invited to shape the presentation to provide Members with real life examples.

Mrs. Rebecca Stark suggested that personal examples from young people showing how the Strategy had worked for them be added to the final Strategy.

Councillor Janet Axworthy suggested that the title of the Strategy be changed to 'Looking After You: Corporate Parenting Strategy'.

In response to a suggestion from Councillor Cindy Hinds and the further comments made by the Committee around the Pride of Flintshire event, the Senior Manager Children and Workforce suggested that he e-mail all Members with a brief overview of the Pride of Flintshire event and also to invite contributions from Members.

Mr. David Hytch asked if co-opted Members of the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee could be included in the e-mail and also be invited to attend the Pride of Flintshire event in September.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed actions to publish a new Corporate Parenting Strategy, taking into account the proposed amendments suggested by Members, be endorsed;
- (b) That the proposed action for all Flintshire County Council staff to be responsible for delivering the Strategy be endorse;
- (c) That the proposed action to develop and implement a cross-portfolio action plan to deliver on the statements outline in the Strategy, be endorsed; and
- (d) That Corporate Parenting be raised at a future County Council meeting and Chief Officer Team, with the involvement of young people.

4. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN FLINTSHIRE

The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression introduced a report on the Annual Education Attainment of Looked After Children. She advised that the report outlined the academic attainment of Flintshire’s Looked After Children for the academic year 2016-2017. The data related to the Looked After Children cohort identified in line with the definition ‘A child of statutory school age, i.e. between 5 and 16 years, who was looked after during the academic year 2016-17, for at least one year prior to 31 August 2017’. The Senior Manager explained that for the purpose of the report, children looked after under Short/Breaks/Respite Care were not included in the statistical analysis. The data had been grouped into four age groups corresponding to the National Curriculum Key Stages. The Senior Manager reported on the main points as detailed in the report.

Mrs. Lynne Bartlett asked if the educational attainment of children who had previously been looked after was monitored. The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression said that once this data had been defined it could be collated.

Councillor Hilary McGuill raised concerns around the number of Looked After Children in Education who were leaving school without qualifications and asked how this was being addressed. The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression reported on the various initiatives being used to engage with young people to encourage them to continue with their education. She commented on the challenges and emotional difficulties experienced by some young people in their early years which could also impact on their performance throughout their education. Councillor Hilary McGuill suggested that looked after children who had gained success through educational settings, be invited to speak to looked after children who were feeling disaffected by education for one reason or another.

In response to a question around mental health and the possible shortage of psychologists in North Wales, the Chair advised that Marilyn Wells, CAMHS Service Manager, and Andrew Gralton, Assistant Director of Children's Services would be attending the meeting of the Social & Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 14 June 2018, to discuss the CAMHS.

Councillor Gladys Healey expressed concerns around the schools admission policy and said that some parents experienced difficulty in enrolling their child into a local school. She also commented on the increasing number of parents who elected to have their child educated at home. In response to the concerns Councillor Ian Roberts explained that there were various reasons why some children were not able to attend their parent's choice of school. He also advised that there were no boundaries for school admissions. Councillor Roberts reported that there was a national increase in the number of parents who chose to have their child educated at home. The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression reported that the Welsh Government was undertaking work to look at the increasing trend for home tuition and the reasons why parents opted for this service.

Councillor Carol Ellis commented on the emotional and physical difficulties experienced by some young people during their upbringing and said that their achievements were commendable as a result of the problems they had overcome. In response to a question from Councillor Ellis on the support available to Looked After Children in school, the Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression, explained that there were substantial support systems in place in schools and referred to the post of a designated Looked After Children teacher in schools and the wider counselling services which were available.

Councillor David Williams referred to the range of vocational courses available to young people as an alternative pathway to higher education and career opportunities.

Councillor Cindy Hinds commented on the issue of bullying of young people via social media and asked how this was being addressed in schools. The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression, said this problem was taken seriously by schools and spoke of the work undertaken to provide guidance and support to schools on how to deal with it.

The Committee recommended that a report on School Admissions be submitted to a future meeting of the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Members actively engage as Corporate Parents for Looked After Children, promoting awareness and challenging provision within Flintshire educational settings;

- (b) That Members actively encourage all educational staff to promote the educational welfare of Looked After Children within Flintshire establishments at a 'whole school level'; and
- (c) That a report on School Admissions be submitted to a future meeting of the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

5. SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION

The Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning introduced a report to provide information on the Children's Safeguarding provision and Child Protection process within the County boundaries. She explained that the report provided key statistical and performance related information about children at risk for whom the Authority had significant safeguarding responsibilities.

The Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning referred to the main considerations, as detailed in the report, around Children's safeguarding, Education and Youth, and Social Services priorities for the safeguarding of children, and corporate safeguarding.

In response to a question by Councillor Tudor Jones concerning whether the targets for review of children on the Child Protection Register were met, the Safeguarding Unit Service Manager explained that the Authority had robustly achieved all its targets for review of children on the register in line with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures.

Councillor Kevin Hughes asked if information was available on the ages of children on the child protection list and also whether there was any correlation between the ages and the categories of risk. The Safeguarding Unit Service Manager said that the data on ages of children was available and could be shared. She also said that the data could be broken down to see if there was any correlation between the ages and the categories of risk.

Councillor Hilary McGuill raised concerns regarding the safeguarding of children in the vicinity of school premises at the end of the school day. In response the Safeguarding Unit Service Manager referred to the work of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel and advised that representatives from both Education Services and the Police attended the Panel and commented on the partnership work which took place around areas of shared concern. Councillor McGuill suggested that the Police be asked to monitor 'hot spots' in areas of concern to prevent children and young people from harm and to deter anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Patrick Heesom commented on the lack of provision of youth services for young people in Flintshire which he said had created a 'dire' social need.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the information in relation to the Safeguarding of Children and Child Protections for the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018, be noted; and
- (b) That due regard be taken to the partnership working taking place across portfolio areas to protect children and young people from harm.

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

The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression introduced a report to update on implementation plans arising from the Additional Learning Needs Bill Legislation. She provided background information and reported on the main considerations, as detailed in the report.

During discussion Officers responded to the questions raised by Councillor Tudor Jones regarding the care and support provided to young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) from the age of 18.

The Senior Manager – Inclusion and Progression reported that it would be reasonable to anticipate that the increase in age range from 19 to 25 and the broadening of the legislative cover, would result in a larger number of Individual Development Plans. The revised legislation also provided for the responsibility for the commissioning and funding of Post 16 specialist provision to transfer from Welsh Government (WG) to Local Authorities; the mechanism for this was yet to be defined.

It was suggested that a further report on what Flintshire was doing for care leavers could be provided to a future meeting of both the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committees.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That an update report on local and regional implementation plans arising from the legislation be submitted to a future meeting of both Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committees

7. FLINTSHIRE EARLY HELP HUB

The Senior Manager Integrated Youth Provision, introduced a report to provide an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Early Help Hub. She provided background information and invited the Senior Manager Children and Workforce to present the report.

The Senior Manager Children and Workforce explained that the Hub offered families advice and assistance when previously referrals would not have been actioned and there was a high risk of a repeat referral back to Children's Services with more complex need being defined. He reported on the development of the Early Help Hub which could be summarised into the following phases:

- Design
- Soft launch
- Implementation

Members spoke in support of the excellent work which had been undertaken on the Early Help Hub and congratulated officers on their achievements. Members also spoke in support of the collaborative work which had been undertaken to design and develop the Hub with multi-partner agencies, citing the North Wales Police and Public Service Board as an example.

Mrs. Rebecca Stark commented on the need for funding to be continued in the future and asked how the profile of the Early Help Hub could be raised to ensure the Welsh Government, other authorities and organisations/bodies, were aware of the work and the positive outcomes being achieved in Flintshire.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Committee congratulate officers on the work which had been undertaken on the Early Help Hub;
- (b) That the ongoing work and commitment to the Early Help Hub as part of a wider programme to support families experiencing trauma aligned to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) be supported; and
- (c) That the Committee support the collection of data and evidence to demonstrate the need for continued Families First funding from Welsh Government.

8. CHILDCARE OFFER FOR WALES, FLINTSHIRE

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced a report on the rollout of free childcare provision and advised that the report provided an update on the funded Childcare Offer for Wales in Flintshire. He invited the Early Years and Family Support Manager to present the report.

The Early Years and Family Support Manager reported on progress in developing and delivering the Childcare Offer for Wales in Flintshire and referred to the main considerations as detailed in the report.

Councillor Martin White congratulated officers on the excellent work which had been undertaken to roll out the Childcare Offer in Flintshire.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made to full roll out of the Childcare Offer in Flintshire be endorsed; and
- (b) That the proposed cross-country delivery plan be endorsed.

9. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public in attendance

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 5.05 pm)

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Chairman