

EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
17 OCTOBER 2024

Minutes of the Education, Youth and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday, 17 October 2024

PRESENT: **Councillor Teresa Carberry (Chair)**
Councillors: Bill Crease, Gladys Healey, Ian Hodge,
Fran Lister, Gina Maddison, Debbie Owen, Andrew Parkhurst,
Carolyn Preece, Jason Shallcross and Dave Healey (substitute
for Ryan McKeown)

Co-optees: Lisa Allen and Lynn Barlett

OBSERVERS: Councillor David Mackie

APOLOGIES: None

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Mared Eastwood (Cabinet Member for Education,
Welsh Language and Culture), Councillor Paul Johnson
(Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value), Chief Officer
(Education and Youth), Senior Manager (School Improvement),
Senior Manager (Planning and Provision), Senior Manager
(Inclusion and Progression), Senior Manager (Business
Change & Support) and Learning Advisor (Health, Wellbeing &
Safeguarding)

Corporate Finance Manager and Strategic Finance Manager
(Schools) - for minute number 33

Senior Manager, Integrated Youth Provision and Lead Officer
for Play Development - for minute number 36

IN ATTENDANCE: Democratic Services Manager, Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
and Democratic Services Officer

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)
([Link to recording](#))

On agenda item 5 (Budget 2024/25 - Stage 2), the Chair and Carolyn Preece both declared a personal interest as school governors. A personal interest was also declared by Councillor Fran Lister as her children attended a Flintshire school.

The Facilitator advised that Members of the Committee who were school governors did not have to declare a personal interest at the meeting if their role as governor had been include on their register of interests form.

31. MINUTES ([Link to recording](#))

Councillor Gladys Healey asked that her name be included on the minutes as she had been in attendance. On that basis, the minutes were approved.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2024 be approved as a correct record.

32. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING ([Link to recording](#))

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented a [report \(agenda item number 4\)](#) to consider the current Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking progress.

In addition to the suggestion that the Healthy Schools Scheme be moved to July 2025, it was also agreed to schedule future items on home schooling and discretionary school transport.

On that basis, the recommendations 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.

33. BUDGET 2024/25 - STAGE 2 ([Link to recording](#))

The Corporate Finance Manager and Chief Officer (Education and Youth) presented a [report \(agenda item number 5\)](#) to review cost pressures and associated risks for the Education & Youth portfolio and Schools' budget, under the remit of this Committee.

During the debate, the following points were raised:

- To communicate to Welsh Government (WG) the impact of cuts to funding to schools and to seek consideration of changing some grant funding streams to statutory funding;
- For decisions by Welsh Government (WG) to be fully funded.
- To maximise opportunities to progress literacy skills for pupils with additional learning needs.
- The importance of maintaining grant funding for specialist provision to support pupils with medical needs.
- Support for retaining the cost pressure for holiday provision of eligible free school meals and to suggest that alternative models/opportunities be explored with external organisations and voluntary groups on solutions to tackle child poverty during school holidays.

In response to a question, the Facilitator agreed to ascertain which Committee would receive details of additional cost pressures for leisure and libraries once the

transfer had been concluded. She also confirmed that the comments made by the Committee would be fed back to Cabinet.

The recommendations, which were amended to reflect the debate, were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee acknowledge the Education and Youth portfolio's cost pressures, as outlined within the report, and confirm that the cost pressures should be taken forward as part of the 2025/26 budget;
- (b) That the Committee acknowledge the Schools' cost pressures, as outlined within the report, and confirm that the cost pressures should be taken forward as part of the 2025/26 budget;
- (c) That a letter be written to Welsh Government to outline the Committee's concern around the challenge for the Education & Youth Services around the uncertainty on Grant funding streams and request that consideration be given to changing those Grant Funding streams in future to Statutory Funding; and
- (d) That a letter be written to Welsh Government to request that additional funding be provided for children who are educated at home due to additional learning needs due to a medical condition.

34. SELF-EVALUATION REPORT EDUCATION SERVICES 2023-24 ([Link to recording](#))

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) presented a [report \(agenda item number 6\)](#) on the outcome of the annual self-evaluation of performance and services within the Education & Youth portfolio, to provide assurance on the quality of education services in Flintshire.

The Chief Officer took the opportunity to thank her senior management team for their valuable contributions to the report. Councillor Mared Eastwood also recorded her thanks to the Chief Officer and her team. Her sentiments were echoed by Members of the Committee.

The recommendations, which were amended to reflect the debate, were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee notes the outcome of the Education Portfolio's annual self-evaluation report on the quality of education services for the period 2023-2024; and
- (b) That a letter be written to the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) to be shared with her team to thank them for the positive findings of the Self-Evaluation Report for the Education Services 2023-24.

There was a brief adjournment at this stage of the meeting.

35. ANTI-RACIST WALES ACTION PLAN ([Link to recording](#))

The Learning Advisor (Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding) presented a [report \(agenda item number 7\)](#) on progress in meeting the requirements of the Welsh Government Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, in line with the development of the new Curriculum for Wales.

The recommendation was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee confirms that it has received an appropriate level of assurance regarding the progress made towards the Anti-racist Action Plan for Wales goals for Education and Welsh language.

36. FLINTSHIRE COUNTY SUMMER PLAYScheme 2024 ([Link to recording](#))

The Lead Officer for Play Development presented a [report \(agenda item number 8\)](#) on the Flintshire County Summer Playscheme 2024 which highlighted significant achievements, ongoing initiatives and potential risks, to ensure that stakeholders understood the value of these programmes and the importance of continued support for their success. He also suggested a Members' briefing session on the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

The recommendations in the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee supports Year-Round Community-Based Play Provisions: to continue to provide safe, supervised play opportunities for children in their communities, particularly in areas affected by austerity;
- (b) That the Committee endorses the PlayPals Programme: to promote the School delivery of the PlayPals initiative, a 6-week programme designed to empower children with knowledge of their rights to play and encourage them to become play ambassadors within their schools and communities; and
- (c) That the Committee supports the Play Sufficiency Assessment: to actively champion play opportunities for children in Flintshire by supporting the Play Sufficiency Action Plan. This includes participating in advocacy efforts, attending relevant meetings, and engaging in local events. Through this involvement, contribute to the development of a robust Play Sufficiency Plan for 2025–2028, ensuring play remains a priority in the community.

37. FOOD AND FUN PROGRAMME 2024 ([Link to recording](#))

The Learning Advisor (Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding) presented a [report \(agenda item number 9\)](#) on the delivery of the Food and Fun Programme to ten schools in Summer 2024.

The Chair thanked the officers and all those involved in the programme for their achievements.

The recommendation was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee acknowledges the positive impact of the Food and Fun Programme in Flintshire schools on learners and their families.

38. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

None.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 5.08pm)

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Chair

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