

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GUILDHALL ON
THURSDAY, 11 APRIL 2019**

MEMBERS

Councillor Carrie Harper, Chair
Councillor Michael Dixon, Vice-Chair

Councillor	Sonia Benbow-Jones	Councillor	John McCusker
"	Dana Davies	"	Beverley Parry-Jones
"	Frank Hemmings	"	* Rondo Roberts
"	R Alun Jenkins	"	Debbie Wallice
"	Paul Jones	"	Robert Walsh
"	Tina Mannering		

Mr Brendan McDonald - Church Representative
Mrs Rosalind Williams - Church Representative

Mrs Alison Fisher - Parent Governor Representative

Mr Brent Evans - Co-optee*

*Absent

Also Present – Councillor Phil Wynn

39 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mrs Rosalind Williams, new co-opted member representing the Diocese of St Asaph.

40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Rondo Roberts and Mr Brent Evans.

41 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

AGREED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 February 2019 be signed as a correct record.

42 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chief Officer Governance & Customer submitted a report (COGC/03/19s) to assist the Committee in considering and agreeing its work programme. Presenting the report the Scrutiny Facilitator highlighted the following:

- The changes agreed at the previous meeting.
- The Support for Pupil Well-being report would be deferred to the June meeting as a result of delays with the Minister releasing national data.

- The report on Education Standards at key stage 5 would be available for consideration at the June meeting.

AGREED –

- (i) That the report in respect of Support for Pupil Well-being be considered at the June meeting.**
- (ii) That the report in respect of Education Standards at Key Stage 5 be considered at the June meeting.**

43

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The Lead Member for People – Education submitted a report (COEEI/09/19s) for Members to be informed of the Educational Standards for Pupils with (SEN) Special Educational Needs, the robust quality assurance of SEN provision in the local authority which impacted on standards for pupils with SEN and the range of SEN provision and current plans to address future changes in legislation.

The Chair invited members of the Committee to ask questions of the Lead Member and officers in attendance. During debate the following matters were highlighted:

- Noted that the number of Wrexham pupils with SEN had increased in recent years.
- The level of SEN pupils in a school was recorded in PLASC data and the school budget amended accordingly.
- The impact on the service for SEN arising from the implementation of the forthcoming Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (ALNET) Act (2018) as outlined in the report. Noted that the local authority was leading on Person Centred Practice providing training to schools, targeting those schools who needed additional support in meeting the requirements of the legislation. In addition, there were several priorities in the Business Plan relating to developing a skilled workforce.
- Whilst the changes from the Act were welcomed, concern was expressed regarding the potential budget and resource implications should central funding from Welsh Government not be made available. The Lead Member and officers assured Members that this issue continued to be raised both regionally and nationally across various forums.
- Further information sought regarding the of the service for SEN Hearing Impaired. It was reported that this service was provided regionally, hosted by Flintshire Council, with both Wrexham Council and Denbighshire Council representatives on the management board to carefully monitor progress. The level of attainment for this cohort was requested.
- Further information was provided in respect of the age at which assessments for statements could be undertaken and the multi agency approach to determining if additional assistance was required.
- Requested that information regarding the budget for SEN provision be provided to Committee members.
- Further information requested regarding the work being done to address the

previously reported increased in the level of exclusions for SEN pupils. The officer reported that this was both a local and national trend and that a pilot had been developed to offer training to schools entitled “Thinking Differently” to support those pupils most at risk of exclusion.

- The on-going review of resource provision to ensure that it was fit for purpose, with a view to children to be educated in mainstream settings with adequate support, where appropriate. A review of specialist provision to take account of the increase in more complex needs would also be included. Assurance was provided that the level of planned places in resource provision were regularly reviewed and were need driven.
- Noted that the level of out of county placements was quite low. The education of pupils resident outside of the County Borough was the responsibility of that local authority.
- The importance of including modules in respect of SEN in initial teacher training was highlighted.
- Requested that a repeat session of the Governor training in respect of SEN be arranged.
- Requested that for consistency in measuring attainment levels future reports include capped point scoring at key stage 4. The Lead Member commented on the difficulty in making comparisons with these groups of learners arising from the varying complex needs. Assurance was given that the department was committed to working with this vulnerable group to ensure that they received the service required to meet their potential. A member suggested that pupil tracking data could enable the Committee to monitor the value added.
- Noted that the recent SEN Audit had resulted in a green/amber level of assurance, however the final report and recommendations had not yet been received.
- Requested that future reports include any GwE actions relating to SEN provision.

AGREED –

- (i) That a further report be submitted to the Committee in April 2020 updating them on this issue and that this update report contain details of SEN attainment actions.**
- (ii) That the Chair write to the Welsh Government expressing the Committee’s view in relation to the roll out of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act 2018 that the required service provision to meet the requirements of the Act will not be cost neutral and that there should be additional resources available for Local Authorities to ensure they can provide the level of support required by the Act.**

Councillor Carrie Harper
Chair