

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 19 April 2012 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Gwilym Evans, Gwyneth Kensler, Dewi Owens (Chair) and Jane Yorke.
Co-optees for Education – Mrs Gill Greenland; Ms. D. Houghton; Dr Dawn Marjoram and Mr John Saxon.

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Meirick Lloyd Davies, Sally Ellis, Corporate Director, Demographics, Wellbeing and Planning; Wayne Wheatley, Education Social Worker and Safeguarding Officer; Karen Evans, Head of School Improvement and Inclusion; Alan Smith, Head of Business Planning and Performance; Carol Evans, Assistant Planning and Performance Officer.

PART I

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Raymond Bartley, Joan Butterfield, Ann Davies, Carl Davies, Christine Evans and Neville Hughes

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of personal or prejudicial interest were made.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been raised.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on 8th March 2012 were submitted.

Matters Arising –

Page 2 – Matters Arising (Page 6 – Item No 7 The Big Plan) – The Scrutiny Co-ordinator, on behalf of Councillor Christine Evans, confirmed she had responded to the Minister for Health and Social Services. This was following a response received regarding the provision of HPV vaccinations to boys. An acknowledgement letter was received from the Minister for Health and Social Services confirming a full reply would be sent out within 17 working days.

Page 3 – Item No. 5 Tourism – Dr Dawn Marjoram, Co-opted Member, brought to the Committee's attention the fact that the World Heritage Site in the Dee Valley was not mentioned within the Destination Management Plan submitted by the Regional Strategy Director for Tourism Partnership North Wales. Dr Marjoram was

a major contributor for obtaining World Heritage Site status for the aqueduct and canal in Llangollen and offered her expertise on this issue if required.

Page 4 – Item No 5 Tourism – The Chair referred to Councillor Meirick Davies requesting he be kept informed regarding the progress with the planned initiatives to encourage Tweedmill outlet shoppers to visit other parts of the county. The Chair requested that all councillors be kept informed also.

Page 6 – Item No 6 Regional and National Supporting People Programme Changes – The Corporate Director: Demographics, Wellbeing and Planning (CD: DWP) provided an update. The report not available for this meeting as the matter had not been concluded and the proposed changes were still under negotiation. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator confirmed the National Supporting People Programme Changes report was scheduled into the work programme for May 2012.

Page 9 – Item No 9 NHS Strategic Service Reviews – Dr Dawn Marjoram, Co-opted Member, raised the issue of Hyfrydle. She requested an update on this matter as no information had been forthcoming. Dr Marjoram also stated that Hyfrydle would require planning permission. The Chair agreed and recommended an update on Hyfrydle was required.

Pages 10/11 – Item No 10 Members Questions – Following Councillor Raymond Bartley's request for further information on the annual health checks for people with learning disabilities, the Scrutiny Co-ordinator read out a response received by email from the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's Assistant Director Strategy and Engagement, Sally Baxter. A copy of the email would be sent out to Committee members for their information.

RESOLVED that subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2012 be received and approved as a correct record. Also, due to the previous meeting being inquorate, the following minutes were ratified as a correct record:-

- (a) Minutes of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26th January, 2012.
- (b) Minutes of a Special Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9th February, 2012.

5 ANNUAL AUDIT OF SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN EDUCATION - QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

The Education Social Worker Team Leader (ESWTL) submitted a report (previously circulated) updating the Committee on safeguarding activity within education and on the safeguarding action plan undertaken in response to the September 2011 Pembrokeshire County Council report. The Committee was asked to endorse and support the future actions to address the areas of weakness identified in the annual audit of schools and to address cross service safeguarding issues.

ESWTL explained to the Committee that significant changes had taken place during the previous 12 months in Wales. Following the Pembrokeshire County Council report (Sept 2011), which was used as a template of areas of concern, issues were

raised at Ministerial level. The Minister wrote to each Local Authority requesting audits be carried out.

All referrals are automatically copied to ESWTL for audit. If a referral is not considered serious enough to be dealt with by the Safeguarding Unit, or the reason for the referral is unclear, the ESWTL contacts the school to ascertain the reasons why the referral was made. A rolling programme of yearly training was now provided to all schools. Details of staff unable to attend training are sent back to the Headteacher to ensure training is undertaken within the school year.

Projects delivered through Cymorth funding on the Local Authority's behalf had also been made aware of the importance of safeguarding matters and the need to develop safeguarding policies. This had resulted in an audit being undertaken of the agencies' child protection and safeguarding policies. As Cymorth funding was coming to an end, the Corporate Director, Demographics, Wellbeing and Planning (CD: DWP) clarified that new contracts awarded under the Families First initiative would specify the need for HR processes to deal with child protection matters and that safeguarding would form part of the contract monitoring process.

Dr Dawn Marjoram, Co-opted Member declared her specialist interest was children with special needs and disabled children were particularly vulnerable to be abused. Dr Marjoram asked if both staff working within special needs schools and staff in main stream schools, who dealt with special needs children, were given specific training, particularly those staff that looked after children with communication problems. The ESWTL confirmed that there were staff with specialist knowledge working in schools and they would be able to identify any circumstances which were a cause of concern. It was conveyed within the training sessions that it was not only the responsibility of the staff to safeguard the children but also the responsibility of the Local Authority, which included school governors. Key services within Denbighshire County Council had the relevant knowledge to deal with issues.

CD:DWP confirmed that the Joint Risk Assessment Panel met on a twice weekly basis, and these meetings were attended by Education, Social Services, Police and Health representatives. Information was collated regarding the nature of assistance a child or family may require, so that a team could be built around the family to support them.

Dr Marjoram enquired if a child from outside the county was educated at a Denbighshire school how would this affect the process? ESWTL explained there was a clear system to deal with a child from outside Denbighshire. There was an expectation from the management team that the Local Authority was contacted, this ensured Denbighshire was being proactive and not reactive. The management team had recently attended Level 2 training in order to heighten awareness including when appointing representatives to governing bodies.

ESWTL clarified that the audit was presented to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). Following the Board meeting, any issues were then incorporated within the training programme.

Councillor Gwilym Evans questioned whether the IT system currently in place was sufficient to deal with the issues as and when they arose. The ESWTL clarified that if a problem arose regarding the IT system, an alternative interface would be contact by telephone. All schools had contact numbers for Children's Services to enable a verbal referral. Therefore, problems with the IT system would not cause any referral delay.

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 and 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

PART II

Training was also provided to School Crossing Patrol staff, which had been especially tailored to meet their needs, and William Mathias School Music Service staff in Conwy and Denbighshire. Leisure Centre managers and staff had undergone training. Youth Service staff were scheduled to undergo training within the next month. John Saxon, Co-opted Member enquired if Headteachers received extra training. The ESWTL confirmed that Headteachers received both level 1 and level 2 training. Level 1 and 2 training gave wider awareness of safeguarding around schools, e.g. staffing, recruitment, HR and wellbeing of children.

Discussion took place regarding school transport and escorts. The ESWTL confirmed that his staff worked closely with the Licensing Department. Dr Marjoram asked if there was a structure in place for escorts and if so, it should also be in place for taxi/school bus drivers. The ESWTL confirmed that taxi drivers, licensed with Denbighshire, had an enhanced CRB check. CRB checks were also carried out on all bus drivers by the Passenger Transport Section. Also if there was a suspended taxi driver from another county, this information would be passed on ensuring the suspended driver was unable to work in another county. Such processes were to be made more rigorous and robust following the publication of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures.

The Chair, Councillor Dewi Owens, enquired about taxi drivers who worked without a school escort. The ESWTL clarified that it was not compulsory for school escorts to accompany all school children travelling in a taxi.

John Saxon, Co-opted Member asked if all school buses/coaches were fitted with CCTV cameras. The ESWTL was not completely sure on this point and suggested that clarification be sought from the Section Manager Passenger Transport to ascertain whether this was the case. Dr Marjoram also suggested there was a need for child on child safeguarding to be looked into on school transport.

The ESWTL confirmed to the Committee that every school was required to undertake an annual audit within which 127 questions required responses. This information was sent to ESWTL who then audited the information. The Committee:

RESOLVED: - that subject to the above observations:

- (a) *to note the actions undertaken to date to address cross service safeguarding issues, and endorse future actions to address the areas of weakness identified in the annual audit of schools to address cross service safeguarding issues; and*
- (b) *that school governors are requested to monitor on a regular basis that all their school staff and volunteers have current relevant safeguarding checks in place and have undertaken the safeguarding training relevant to their role*

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6 PROVISION OF MUSIC WITHIN SCHOOLS

The Head of School Improvement and Inclusion (HSII) submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members and to gain continuing support for the progress of the collaborative Task and Finish Group to develop proposals in respect of the provision of music education within schools, or alternatively Denbighshire's proposals for the provision of music education.

HSII outlined the report and explained the context and history of provision of funding for music in schools.

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

PART II

In terms of opportunity for music for all students, historically, a budget was available to schools to access provision from the William Mathias Music Centre (WMMC). There had been concern raised by some schools as to how that funding had been distributed. Funding was delegated from a formula i.e. population within the school and percentage of students receiving free school meals. If larger numbers of children requested access to music education, either schools or parents would be required to make a contribution. There had been a problem due to inconsistencies regarding parents' payments. Also it was felt some schools should not be subsidising from their budget when other schools were not making use of this facility. Because of these inconsistencies a sustainable long term solution was required.

There were extremely talented students in Denbighshire but students needed to be acknowledged and encouraged whatever their musical ability. The take up of music was monitored and musical instruments provided. An example of large investment was Christchurch School in Rhyl. The school was in an area of deprivation but it was important to encourage younger children into music. It was imperative the budget was used in the best possible way.

Dr Dawn Marjoram, Co-optee Member informed the Committee that with regards to special schools, music was treated as a therapy. However, there were some notable achievements in the field of musical education at special schools. The HSII

explained in terms of encouragement of schools to participate, there was no differentiation between main stream and special schools, equality was ensured. In terms of actual curricular activity regarding music as therapy, this was a different matter altogether.

John Saxon, Co-opted Member, enquired as to whether there was any assistance for parents who wished to purchase instruments. HSII confirmed there was a hire scheme with an option to purchase. There were people who had successfully participated in the scheme.

The contract with William Mathias was reviewed annually and enabled the Council to monitor the quality of the service provided. It also enabled the Council to provide musical education through the medium of Welsh. Currently Denbighshire, Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy had contracts with Williams Mathias, whilst Flintshire and Wrexham had their own solutions. Currently a North Wales wide solution was being sought and this was the focus of the Task and Finish Group chaired by Conwy's Statutory Head of Education Services. The Committee:

RESOLVED: -

- (a) *to continue to support the ongoing work with respect to the development of music within the County;*
- (b) *to support the proposals for the wider review of funding of music provision in Denbighshire; and*
- (c) *that the findings of the North Wales Music Task and Finish Group be reported to the Committee in due course*

At this juncture (10.55am) the meeting adjourned for a refreshment break.

PART I

11.05am At this juncture, the Co-opted Members left the meeting.

The Chair reported from this point the meeting was inquorate due to insufficient members of the Committee being in attendance. It was agreed to proceed with the meeting on the basis that any recommendations be ratified at the next Committee meeting.

7 PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT

The Head of Business Planning and Performance (HBPP) and the Assistant Planning and Performance Officer (APPO) jointly introduced a report (previously circulated) regarding the Council's Partnership Governance Toolkit. The toolkit had been requested by the Corporate Governance Committee in response to the County Council Internal Audit Services review on Partnership Governance in November 2011. The Toolkit had been brought to the Committee as part of the consultation process. The Toolkit detailed how improvements could be made to the framework and the rigour around it. An extensive period of consultation was

under way for comments and suggestions for the draft framework. The consultation period to cease at the end of April 2012.

Councillor Gwilym Evans commented that some content of the Toolkit already existed within the Constitution. Councillor Evans also stated the Toolkit required to be more concise. Newly elected Members would be in receipt of a large amount of reading material, therefore a shorter document would be easier to absorb.

It was agreed the Toolkit was a lengthy document and perhaps it could be more concise which would make it more user friendly.

HBPP confirmed a Partnership Register would be updated annually. Each of the Partnerships would be contacted annually, whereupon the register would then be updated.

It was brought to the attention of HBPP by CD:DWP that Collaboration, the Compact and safeguarding were all major risks but the significance matrix did not seem to reflect the appropriate level of risk for them and this should therefore be addressed. Councillor Gwyneth Kensler suggested a definition of what is Partnerships and what is Collaboration be drawn up. HBPP pointed out that occasionally Partnerships and Collaboration overlap. The Committee:

RESOLVED that, subject to the above recommendations being addressed, the draft Partnership Governance Toolkit and accompanying Implementation Schedule be endorsed.

8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking Members' view on the Committee's future work programme and providing an update on relevant issues. A draft Forward Work Programme (Appendix 1); Cabinet Forward Work Programme (Appendix 2); and Progress with Committee Resolutions (Appendix 3) had been attached to the report.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator raised the issue of an item provisionally scheduled into the work programme for the meeting on 31st May on the Collaborative Domiciliary Care Project with Conwy County Borough Council. Exploratory work into this particular area had revealed that no opportunities currently existed for collaboration, as each county's pressure areas were different and therefore did not lend themselves to any form of block contracting. It was agreed this item would not be included on the Agenda for 31st May meeting. The Corporate Director of Demographics, Wellbeing and Planning (CD:DWP) suggested that the provision of domiciliary care in rural areas and possible opportunities for collaborating with other local authorities in this area be considered at a future meeting. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator confirmed she would raise the matter with the Head of Adult and Business Services.

Councillor Gwyneth Kensler requested Hyfrydle be placed on the future work programme for consideration. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator suggested that it may be

more beneficial initially for an “information” report to be provided ahead of the May meeting.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator referred to the Rhyl Going Forward Programme. It had been agreed that all three major workstreams (Retail and Town Centre workstream; Tourism and Coastal Strip workstream and the Strategy for West Rhyl) be referred to the Communities Scrutiny Committee for discussion.

Councillor Gwilym Evans raised the matter of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group. The Group had been holding meetings for the previous 12 months, but no minutes were available. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator confirmed she would look into this.

CD:DWP referred to future Communities Scrutiny Work Programme there was an item for October meeting “Public Transport within the County (including TAIH and rural transport)”. The Director was of the view that this item should actually be considered by Partnerships Scrutiny Committee. The Scrutiny Coordinator undertook to raise the matter at the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group the following week. She also undertook to check when the proposals for the North Wales Safer Communities Board were likely to be available for consideration and when the Community Safety Partnership would be in a position to attend a meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that subject to the above amendments and requests, the Work Programme be approved.

9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

No reports from Committee representatives had been received.

The Chair, Councillor Dewi Owens, extended his thanks to Councillor Gwilym Evans for all his input and work during his time as a county councillor.

Councillor Jane Yorke, on behalf of Members, extended her thanks the Scrutiny Co-ordinator for her hard work and support over the last 4 years.

The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm