

LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee held in the Conference Room, Ty Nant, Prestatyn on Tuesday 11th December 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillors N. Hugh-Jones (Chair), D. Cooper, S.A. Davies, S. Frobisher, M.M. Jones, G.J. Pickering and N.P. Roberts together with Co-opted Member R. Beattie

Observers: Councillors R.E. Barton, M. Ll. Davies and G.M. Kensler (Lead Cabinet Member for Promoting Denbighshire)

ALSO PRESENT

Head of Countryside and Leisure, Head of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, County Archivist and Heritage Officer (K. Matthais), County Archaeologist (F. Gale), Scrutiny Support Officer (S. Price) and Administration Officer (K.E. Jones).

APOLOGIES

Co-opted Members D. Edwards, Rev'd Canon M. Stallard, C. Thomas and D. Wilson

Apologies had also been submitted from the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning and Acting Corporate Director Lifelong Learning. The Chair conveyed the committee's best wishes for a speedy recovery to the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning.

1 URGENT MATTERS

In accordance with Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair declared that he intended to include for discussion the following matter which required urgent attention :-

Acting Corporate Director Lifelong Learning – role and responsibilities

Councillor M.M. Jones sought clarification regarding the remit of responsibilities of the Acting Corporate Director Lifelong Learning. The Head of Countryside and Leisure confirmed that the Acting Director had responsibility for the whole Lifelong Learning Directorate and not just for education. However, it was accepted that in light of the current circumstances priority would be given to education matters and the Estyn Action Plan. Councillor M.M. Jones felt that the position should be reviewed in a few months' time. Councillor G.J. Pickering agreed and felt that matters relating to culture and leisure should not be adversely affected by the time spent on education and he asked that the Heads of Service inform the committee if any problems arose within those units as a result.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

2 CLWYDIAN RANGE AONB TOURISM STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Head of Countryside and Leisure submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking the committee's views on the Clwydian Range AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan prior to approval by the Lead Cabinet Member. A summary of the final draft Strategy and Action Plan had been attached to the report.

The Head of Countryside and Leisure drew members' attention to the strategic approach for the sustainable tourism strategy for the Clwydian Range together with the main objectives and he listed the proposed actions over the following five years which had been detailed in the final draft report. Members were asked to note that, whilst there appeared to be much funding attached to the cost of the initiative, some projects could take a number of years to develop. Implementation of the action plan would be met largely through EU funding and the Rural Development Plans for Denbighshire and Flintshire would be also be crucial in securing such funds. In addition, securing European Sustainable Tourism Charter status would open up more funding opportunities to develop the five year plan.

During the ensuing discussion members took the opportunity to raise questions with the Head of Countryside and Leisure regarding various aspects of the report.

Members comments on the Strategy and Action Plan included:-

- the need to consider additional tourist routes into the area, particularly encouraging the use of scenic routes, and to use signage along key routes to raise awareness of the AONB
- that promotional material on the AONB should be made available throughout the county, particularly in busy towns such as Denbigh and Rhyl and in Tourist Information Centres
- encouraging links with bus service providers and other businesses throughout the county to facilitate the visitor experience
- concerns that medium/long term funding had not been identified
- the need for further work to be undertaken on the principle indicators to ensure effective monitoring could be carried out
- a suggestion that arrangements be made for a site visit to the area following next May's election
- the promotion of the Clwydian Range and other tourist attractions to the local community and utilising the free bus pass scheme to promote such information
- the opportunity to create links and promote tourism throughout Denbighshire to benefit all local businesses with the involvement of coach tour operators
- the suggestion that an annual booklet be produced detailing local events in rural areas such as flower shows and sheep dog trials planned throughout the year.

In responding to members' questions and comments the Head of Countryside and Leisure and the Head of Tourism, Heritage and Culture:-

- confirmed that threshold signs on entering the Clwydian AONB were displayed and work would be carried out into the possibility of securing additional signage on other key routes into the area

- indicated that some data on principle indicators were available but further work needed to be carried out in securing the necessary baseline data
- in terms of disseminating information regarding the AONB, key towns in the surrounding area could provide appropriate outlets
- the intention was to maintain the Clwydian Ranger Bus Service to allow visitors easy access to the Clwydian Range; however that service was heavily subsidised by both Denbighshire and Flintshire County Council and difficult to maintain
- the Rural Development Plan limited bidding to a three year programme but there would also be the possibility of future funding from that source; other funding opportunities would also arise during that period and both Countryside and Tourism Units were adept at securing grant funding
- in view of the authority's current financial situation and the need to prioritise educational matters no funding was being sought from the authority at the present time to progress the action plan
- Convergence funding was a possibility and proposals were being developed for tourism in North Wales
- the Countryside Council for Wales provided a significant amount of funding for delivering the strategy and much work was ongoing to ensure future sustainability
- the preference that the officer post linked to the AONB team to be located within Denbighshire Tourism.

Prior to the close of debate, Councillor G.M. Kensler, Lead Cabinet Member for Promoting Denbighshire updated members on the latest position with regard to the authority's Tourism Strategy. She explained that, in view of the present financial constraints on the authority, the need to spend £30k to develop a Tourism Strategy had been questioned. The Tourism Partnership North Wales, based in St. Asaph intended to develop a Tourism Strategy for North East and North West Wales and it had been decided that Denbighshire would be included within that Strategy instead. Councillor G.J. Pickering expressed his concern regarding the change in arrangements which he felt required further consultation. The Head of Countryside and Leisure confirmed that the Tourism Strategy would not affect the Clwydian Range AONB document.

RESOLVED that, subject to members' comments above, the Clwydian Range AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan be endorsed and supported.

3 THE PRESERVATION ASSESSMENT SURVEY REPORT ON DENBIGHSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

The County Archivist and Heritage Officer submitted a report (previously circulated) updating members regarding conservation and preservation issues at the Denbighshire Records Office following the County Archivist and Heritage Officer's report of 9th November 2006.

Since the committee's meeting in November 2006 £7k had been secured for the financial year 2007/08 to fund the active conservation strategy together with match funding of £9k from CyMAL. This enabled work to be done on the case books of the North Wales Hospital Denbigh and would also enable a day school on the records to be held in Denbigh during March 2008 for academics and prominent figures in psychiatry. However, in February 2007 an outbreak of fungal growth was detected

on archival collections at the Record Office in Ruthin Gaol (photographs of affected materials were circulated at the meeting). Investigations were ongoing regarding the cause of the outbreak, a method of clean up, and a programme of improvements to ensure the problem was not repeated. It was hoped that there would be no permanent damage to materials as a result of the fungal outbreak. Work had commenced on the clean up and ducting of the air conditioning system. In view of the urgency and inability of the Archives Service to bear those costs the Chief Executive had authorised an overspend.

Members raised concerns regarding the lack of an adequate preservation and conservation budget, particularly in view of the resulting inability to attract external match funding, and noted the cross boundary collaborations for funding applications. It was confirmed that grant aid was sought from all possible sources, including historical societies. As the authority had a statutory duty to carry out this service Councillor S.A. Davies queried the funding allocation from the Welsh Assembly in this regard. He felt that if the budget allocation was insufficient the matter would need to be taken up with Assembly Members. The committee also noted the authorised overspend arising from the fungal outbreak and the County Archivist advised that, following a tendering process, a specialist firm had been engaged for the clean up operation at a cost of £77k. The Head of Tourism, Heritage and Culture confirmed that a risk assessment on the suitability of the present building was being carried out and it may be in the authority's interest for a regional archive, possibly at Hawarden. The County Archivist added that Flintshire County Council was the only authority in North East Wales with a conservator. In response to a question from the Chair regarding the potential for a North Wales Centre, the Head of Tourism, Heritage and Culture reported upon ongoing discussions regarding collaborations and the potential for one or two regional archives.

Councillor G.J. Pickering felt that the committee should be highlighting the need for adequate funding for the service and the subsequent benefits of match funding. Councillor Pickering also felt that transferring the authority's archive materials outside the county would be a loss.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the level of funding for the conservation and preservation service receive particular attention during the forthcoming budget rounds and the benefits of match funding be highlighted at that time, and*
- (b) *further updates from the County Archivist and Heritage Officer be submitted to the committee at an appropriate time regarding progress of the 'active' phase of the remedial process together with an indication of the consequences of this for the service's preservation strategy.*

4 SEASONAL OPENING ARRANGEMENTS: TOURISM, CULTURE AND LEISURE FACILITIES

The Head of Countryside and Leisure and the Head of Tourism, Heritage and Culture submitted a joint report (previously circulated) informing the committee of the seasonal opening and staffing arrangements for council operated tourism, culture

and leisure facilities in Denbighshire. Details of all the facilities, opening times and any applicable staffing arrangements had been listed in an appendix to the report.

The cost of operating the council facilities was largely covered by existing budgets. However, the first year budget monitoring had shown that the additional costs of operating and maintaining the new Drift Park facilities would be approximately £37k per annum. Members were also asked to note that any increase in opening hours for staffed facilities would inevitably increase costs and put budgets under further pressure unless additional resources could be made available.

Councillor G.J. Pickering queried whether complaints/comments books were available at the council's facilities and if the committee could be provided with a summary of that feedback. The Head of Countryside and Leisure confirmed that some staffed facilities provided mechanisms for feedback and complaints were reviewed by the Customer Services Officer and responded to. He agreed to arrange for a summary of customer feedback to be circulated to members for information.

Councillor D. Cooper referred to the number of unmanned sites and problems with vandalism in particular areas, specifically the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) in Dawson Drive, Prestatyn. The Head of Countryside and Leisure indicated that sites with open access could not be staffed on a permanent basis and acknowledged there were problems in particular areas. The problems experienced at Dawson Drive would be reported directly to the Community Beat Manager. The facility would be closed only if issues arose over health and safety. Councillor N.P. Roberts suggested the use of mobile CCTV units to target problem areas. Members discussed the future viability of Tourist Information Centres (TIC) and Councillor R.E. Barton referred to the loss of the TIC in Ruthin and queried the feasibility of relocating that facility to the Old Gaol. The Head of Tourism, Heritage and Culture advised that funding was not currently available to staff that facility. In response to a question from Councillor S. Frobisher, the Head of Countryside and Leisure reported upon progress to date with two proposed MUGA's in Prestatyn.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

At this juncture (11.35 a.m.) the meeting was adjourned for ten minutes for a refreshment break.

5 PONTCYCYLLTE AQUEDUCT AND LLANGOLLEN CANAL WORLD HERITAGE SITE NOMINATION

The Head of Countryside and Leisure submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking the committee's support for the submission of Nomination documents to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for consideration of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Llangollen Canal as a World Heritage Site. The Draft Nomination and Management Proposals had been attached as an appendix to the report.

The report referenced the origins of the Llangollen Canal and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the proposed area to be included within the bid for World Heritage Status following an extensive consultation process. Such status would benefit both conservation and local tourism. However the economic benefits needed to be

balanced by appropriate management to mitigate against damage to the heritage value of the site. The deadline for nominations was 1st February 2008 and UNESCO would be making a final decision during summer 2009.

The Head of Countryside and Leisure introduced Fiona Gale, the County Archaeologist and elaborated upon her extensive involvement in the project. The County Archaeologist reported that she represented Denbighshire on a multi authority and agency Steering Group to develop the Nomination.

Members paid tribute to the hard work undertaken in preparing the Nomination documents and fully supported the Nomination for World Heritage Status. Councillor R.E. Barton personally commended the County Archaeologist on the excellent work she had carried out in that regard. Members noted that only one Nomination per year was submitted from Great Britain which was Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Llangollen Canal for 2008. The committee felt this was a huge achievement in itself which should be highlighted. The Head of Countryside and Leisure agreed to emphasis that achievement plus the tourism benefits in the report to be submitted to the Cabinet. In response to questions and comments from members the officers clarified the impact on planning matters relating to premises situated within the buffer zone and the links with Froncysyllte Choir in publicising the Nomination.

RESOLVED that the submission of the Nomination Document and Management Plan for the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Llangollen Canal to be considered by UNESCO as an application for World Heritage Status be supported.

6 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members' review of the committee's forward work programme for culture and leisure matters and providing an update on relevant issues. A copy of the work programme had been attached to the report.

Whilst acknowledging the links between all sectors of the Lifelong Learning Directorate, members discussed the merits in attending separate meetings for education and culture and leisure matters and advocated continuing with those arrangements. The Head of Tourism, Heritage and Culture reiterated his concerns regarding the separation of education from the rest of the Lifelong Learning Directorate in view of the contribution of culture and leisure services to education. He further advised of a report prepared for the Chief Executive on his services' contributions to the Estyn Action Plan and agreed to make that report available to the committee. Members discussed future workload management and noted the next meeting for culture and leisure matters had been scheduled for early March 2008. The Scrutiny Support Officer confirmed that an earlier meeting could be convened if deemed necessary and any culture and leisure matters having significant associations with education could still be considered by the committee during education orientated meetings. It was agreed that such matters be left to the discretion of the Chair.

With regard to Leisure Centre visits a provisional date had been agreed for 19th December 2007 and further details would be circulated shortly. The Head of

Tourism, Culture and Leisure also agreed to circulate an update on the latest position with regard to the Tourism Strategy.

Finally, Councillor G.J. Pickering asked that future reports be circulated to members as soon as possible in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *subject to the amendments agreed during today's meeting the Work Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 be approved, and*
- (b) *the Head of Tourism, Heritage and Culture circulate information reports to members on (1) culture and leisure services contributions to the Estyn Action Plan, and (2) an update on the latest position in relation to the Tourism Strategy.*

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

7 CLWYD LEISURE JOINT STUDY

The Head of Countryside and Leisure submitted a confidential report (previously circulated) seeking the committee's views on the Clwyd Leisure Joint Study carried out by Lawrence Graham LLP on behalf of the Council and Clwyd Leisure Limited (CLL).

The aim of the study was to produce a realistic and achievable strategy and action plan to secure a sustainable long term future for CLL and the Council's assets. A summary of the preliminary draft findings and recommendations had been appended to the report for members' consideration.

The Head of Countryside and Leisure detailed the current position in relation to each of the Council's assets managed by CLL, financial implications and future options for consideration. Members took the opportunity to raise questions regarding various aspects of the report and implications arising from particular options. It was noted that a report on this matter had been scheduled for consideration by the Cabinet at their next meeting on 18th December 2007. Members expressed serious concerns that the full report was not yet available for scrutiny and it was proposed that this item be withdrawn from the Cabinet agenda for December to enable this committee to scrutinise the full finalised report and future options prior to a decision being made. Councillor N.P. Roberts felt it was imperative that the committee had the opportunity to scrutinise the report before any decision was made and asked for his serious concerns to be recorded should Cabinet go against the wishes of the scrutiny committee and not withdraw the report from their agenda. Members also felt that the report should be considered in the context of broader strategic needs and initiatives such as Rhyl Going Forward before any decisions were taken on the future of the Council's assets. It was suggested there may be merit in inviting the Chief

Executive and Treasurer of CLL to attend the meeting when this matter was considered.

The Chair read out an e-mail on behalf of Unison regarding possible implications on Denbighshire staff of any changes arising from the report and the Head of Countryside and Leisure advised that any changes impacting on staff would involve full consultation.

Councillor G.J. Pickering felt that other Council's assets managed externally should also be considered by the committee such as Bodelwyddan Castle and The Ectarc Centre, Llangollen.

RESOLVED that a request be made for the report on the Clwyd Leisure Joint Study to be withdrawn from the Cabinet agenda for 18th December to enable the scrutiny committee to fully scrutinise the report and proposals in the broader strategic context and submit their views thereon to the Cabinet prior to any decision being made.

The meeting concluded at 1.15 p.m.

LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday 13th December 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillors N. Hugh-Jones (Chair), S. Frobisher, M.M. Jones, G.J. Pickering, N.P. Roberts and M.A. Webster together with Co-opted Members R. Beattie, D. Hesketh, D. Smith, M. Stallard and D. Wilson

Observers: Councillors J.R. Bartley, R.E. Barton, M. Ll. Davies and C.L. Hughes.

ALSO PRESENT

Acting Corporate Director Lifelong Learning, Head of Environmental Services, Head of Partnership and Inclusion, Interim Head of School Improvement, Acting Head of Behaviour Support Service, Client Officer (G. Owen), Business and Performance Manager (G. Yates), Scrutiny Support Officer (S. Price) and Administration Officer (K.E. Jones).

APOLOGIES

Councillor D. Cooper together with Co-opted Members G. Hughes and C. Thomas

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Councillor M.A. Webster as a new member of the committee replacing Councillor S.A. Davies. A warm welcome was also extended to Tim Buckle and Stuart Evans from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) who were attending today's meeting as observers.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair announced that Catherine Simpson had been appointed as Interim Head of School Improvement with effect from January 2008 and he detailed her background and experience. Ms. Simpson would take over from Tony Byrne who had filled the post since the beginning of September. A recruitment process was underway to fill the post on a permanent basis.

POSITION OF CHAIR OF THE LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor M.M. Jones read out a statement in which she asked that the Chair of the Committee, Councillor N. Hugh-Jones, stand down in light of the recent report from Estyn relating to the state of education in Denbighshire. She referred to extracts from Estyn's report regarding criticisms of the scrutiny function and the need to improve leadership and management at all levels. Councillor Jones referred to the changes to the Council's Leadership and Cabinet responsibility for Lifelong Learning and felt that a change of Chair for this committee was also important. In closing Councillor Jones asked that, if the Chair did not stand

down, the committee support her proposal for a vote of no confidence in the Chair. The proposition was seconded by Councillor G.J. Pickering.

Co-opted Member Reverend M. Stallard felt that supporting a vote of no confidence would send out the wrong message. She advised that, although she had only attended one previous meeting she had witnessed a positive way forward with the allocation of separate meetings for education matters and she urged the committee to reflect before going ahead with such a divisive action.

The Scrutiny Support Officer clarified the legal position regarding such a vote explaining that there was no method outlined for a scrutiny committee to remove its chair in the Council's standing orders. He confirmed that a vote of no confidence would not automatically unseat the Chair but would rather serve as an expression of the views of the committee. The Chair indicated that he had intended to continue as Chair but would stand down if the majority of the voting members of the committee wished him to do so.

Upon being put to the vote it was:-

RESOLVED that the motion of no confidence in the Chair be not supported.

1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair sought nominations for the appointment of Vice Chair of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee. Councillor G.J. Pickering proposed, seconded by Co-opted Member D. Smith that Councillor M.M. Jones be appointed Vice Chair. In the absence of any further nominations it was:-

RESOLVED that Councillor M.M. Jones be appointed Vice Chair of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee.

2 URGENT MATTERS

In accordance with Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair declared that he intended to include for discussion the following matter which required urgent attention :-

Clwyd Leisure Joint Study

Councillor G.J. Pickering referred to the confidential report considered by the committee earlier in the week regarding a study carried out on behalf of the Council and Clwyd Leisure Limited (CLL). The committee had asked that the report be withdrawn from the Cabinet agenda on 18th December to enable them to scrutinise the consultant's full report and proposals prior to a decision being made. Despite this committee's request the report had not been withdrawn from the Cabinet agenda. Members expressed serious concerns that the report was to be considered by the Cabinet before the committee had been given the opportunity to fully scrutinise the matter. The committee stated their intention that, should the Cabinet not accede to the committee's request and withdraw the report from their agenda, they would subsequently review the issue and any decisions taken by Cabinet at the committee's next meeting. It was subsequently:-

RESOLVED accordingly.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2007 were submitted:-

Matters Arising –

Page 8 – Item No. 6 – Joint Risk Assessment – Co-opted Member D. Wilson referred to the comment made regarding the handling charge for Property Services being 20% in respect of the use of the Council's approved contractors in schools. He advised that this charge had been incorrectly stated at the meeting and was in fact 12.5%.

Page 7 – Item No. 5 – Estyn Action Planning Update – Councillor R.E. Barton referred to the committee's request for an extension to the consultation timetable in respect of Cambridge Education's report on Modernising Education and was disappointed to note that no formal response to the request had been forthcoming. The Acting Corporate Director Lifelong Learning advised that the consultation period ended on 30th November and he was currently awaiting the final report. The Scrutiny Support Officer agreed to look into the matter further.

Page 10 – Item No. 7 – Scrutiny Work Programme – Councillor G.J. Pickering referred to various responses arising from the minutes of the last meeting which were still being awaited. He asked that those responses be made available prior to the committee's next meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2007 be approved.

4 SECURING THE VIABILITY OF THE SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report (previously circulated) regarding the financial viability of the School Meals Service and seeking the committee's recommendations thereon to Cabinet, Lead Member(s) and Council as appropriate.

Members were reminded that the current level of service was not sustainable without an appropriate, permanent financial subsidy. The level of subsidy was recommended to be approximately £150k per annum with an annual review. The Catering Service was committed to raising the number of meals served each year to reduce the level of subsidy needed and initiatives had been implemented or were being developed to reduce the need for a subsidy and promote healthy school meals. Reference was made to the work undertaken by the School Meals Working Group as detailed within the report together with their subsequent recommendations to support the viability of the unified School Meals Service as follows:-

- Support for the county-wide unified service based on healthy eating principles

- Recommend that an appropriate subsidy of approximately £150k per annum be given for a period of 5 years with the subsidy administered corporately for budget setting purposes
- Seek approval from the Lead Cabinet Member for Education for the draft policy for retaining year 7 to 11 pupils on school sites during lunch times (Appendix D to the report refers)
- Endorse the Welfare Rights Unit's Health Benefits and Revenue Project to improve health and increase free school meals' registrations

Co-opted Member D. Hesketh fully supported the move to healthier school meals and reported that reference to this had been strengthened in Denbighshire's draft Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy and was an emerging priority in the Children and Young People's Plan. She also supported investment into health at an early stage and referred to the long term savings when considering the future implications for unhealthy eating habits such as obesity and associated health problems.

Members considered the report in detail and in response to questions the officers advised that:-

- whilst take up of school meals increased for the Friday 'popular' menu, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) was seeking a move away from such provision to a healthier menu; the factors for non take up were similar for both paid and free school meals
- Appendix C to the report showed some of the Council's choices when deciding what the service objectives should be and the options available – currently the balance between the healthy eating agenda and the need to operate a financially viable service
- it had originally been anticipated that the current subsidy for 2007/2008 would be phased out. However, whilst the positive influence of healthy eating may be passed onto future cohorts from primary schools the subsidy was still likely to be required for future years
- many of the schools kitchens were in dire need of significant investment and capital bids had been submitted to the Capital Strategy Group in the current bidding round
- the Council did not possess robust evidence of the affects of eating junk food on behaviour but feedback from headteachers was that pupils who ate healthier meals were better behaved with greater levels of concentration
- the cashless system had been installed in a number of schools where it made economic sense to do so and had been very successful; the system was not viable in the smaller schools
- following restructuring the Client Officer would be working for the Environment Directorate which would result in greater contact with the schools
- currently the Catering service was subsidized by budgets intended for other services within Environmental Services
- in support of their limitations on unhealthy school meals WAG had identified additional funding for training and ancillary matters rather than the actual provision of healthy meal

The Interim Head of School Improvement advised that the authority was compared on education matters with other councils where registration for entitlement to school meals was higher and may need to look at the processes to ensure more eligible pupils were registered for school meals which would have a subsequent impact on comparative examination results. The Client Officer advised that the Council facilitated easy registration and the Welfare Rights Unit were currently working to increase registrations.

Members reiterated their previous commitment to healthy eating and to a unified school meals service. During consideration of the Working Group's recommendations and the proposed funding arrangements the committee felt that, as health and well being was such an important issue, the proposed subsidy should be increased each year at least in line with inflation. With regard to the draft policy for retaining year 7 to 11 pupils on the school sites during lunch times some concerns were expressed regarding resources to cover enforcement and supervision, particularly in the larger high schools. The Scrutiny Support Officer referred to similar feedback from Rhyl High School in that regard who had suggested convening a good practice workshop for schools on the matter. Members were advised that the draft policy would present a statement of best practice and guidance and it would be possible for individual governing bodies to tailor the policy they adopted to suit their schools.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the county-wide unified school meal service based on healthy eating principles be supported;*
- (b) *it be recommended to Cabinet and Council that (noting the Catering Service's commitment to increasing meal numbers served each year) an appropriate subsidy of approximately £150k per annum, to be increased each year in line with inflation, be given for a period of 5 years with the subsidy administered corporately for budget setting purposes, and*
- (c) *approval be sought from the Lead Cabinet Member for Education for the draft policy for retaining year 7 to 11 pupils on the school sites during lunch times (as detailed in Appendix D to the report).*

At this juncture (11.35 a.m.) the meeting was adjourned for ten minutes for a refreshment break.

5 REVIEW OF QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORTS – QUARTER 2

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report (previously circulated) on the performance of individual service units within the remit of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee against agreed targets and objectives. The service units included School Improvement Services; Strategy and Resources and Culture and Leisure. Performance data to the end of the second quarter (April 2007 to the end of September 2007) had been included in the report.

As Culture and Leisure had generally performed well the report had concentrated on Educational performance. The results of performance compared with the previous twelve months showed that:-

- Core Subject Indicators for Key Stages 1 & 2 showed some improvement on 2006
- Key Stage 3 results had declined slightly with Denbighshire ranked 12th out of 22 Welsh authorities
- Core Subject Indicators for Key Stage 4 remained similar to 2006
- Performance at GCSE level was disappointing with Denbighshire slipping to 20th place out of 22 Welsh authorities when measuring achievements of 5 A* to C grades and 5 A* to G grades

A supplementary paper detailing further measures to improve performance in attendance at secondary schools; Key Stage 2 & 3 Assessments; External qualifications Point Score and SEN Statements had been circulated at the meeting. The main report also drew members' attention to the role of the School Standards Monitoring Group; the significance of benchmarking data based on free school meals, and the inclusion of key performance indicators for Youth Support Services to monitor progress and drive improvements. Members were reminded that officers had been requested by the committee to identify key performance indicators for youth support services to monitor progress and drive improvements through the quarterly performance reporting process.

Finally reference was made to the Estyn Inspection of Education Services in July 2007 and their recommendation to use the scrutiny function to establish clear accountability and robustly challenge officers, members and services who were accountable for raising standards and improving the quality of provision. A copy of the Work Plan relating to this action was circulated at the meeting. The Acting Corporate Director Lifelong Learning suggested that the committee may wish to concentrate on two or three high level priorities and manage how change was implemented. He also reported that the updated Action Plan would be considered by Cabinet the following week and the final Plan would be submitted to Estyn by the 27th December deadline. The committee requested that the latest Action Plan be circulated to all co-opted members. Mr. S. Evans from the Welsh Local Government Association advised that the committee's role was crucial in making the action plan work and ensuring its credibility. He also advised of the need for a change in attitude and culture and the need for members to be challenging officers more.

During consideration of the report members raised serious concerns regarding performance at Key Stage 3 & 4 and queried the actions to be taken to raise standards in those areas. The Interim Head of School Improvement indicated that the Action Plan detailed how that poor performance would be addressed. In response to questions regarding responsibilities, members were advised that the ultimate responsibility for improving standards within individual schools lay with the Governing Bodies and links had now been established through the Schools Standards Monitoring Group. Whilst it would not be appropriate for this committee to call in the schools directly the Acting Corporate Director advised that the committee should hold Directors and Heads of Service accountable. Members decided that the Key Stage 3 & 4 performance be priority areas for the committee to address.

Co-opted Member D. Smith referred to the recently published Report of the Independent Review of the Mission and Purpose of Further Education in Wales (Webb Review). He asked whether the key recommendations arising from that Report would be incorporated into the Action Plan and highlighted the need for this report to be included within the committee's work programme. It was agreed that a copy of the Report be circulated to all members of the committee. Mr. S. Evans confirmed that the Action Plan was a dynamic document and that continual improvements would be made to it. The Acting Corporate Director added that the high level achievements and commitments detailed within the Action Plan would not change.

With regard to performance indicator EDU/007 Attendance in Primary Schools, Councillor G.J. Pickering appreciated that the data was not yet verifiable by WAG but felt that it would be useful if it was included within the document. The Interim Head of School Improvement confirmed that such data was available. Finally Councillor Pickering referred to the Culture and Leisure Indicators, specifically the number of people using Library Services and Leisure Centres per 1000 population. He felt that there was no distinction between regular or new users and felt that the data should be more reflective of that difference.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *the report be received and the performance of individual service units within the directorate be noted;*
- (b) *the performance at Key Stages 3 and 4 be identified as the committee's priority areas requiring further consideration, and*
- (c) *the Report of the Independent Review of the Mission and Purpose of Further Education in Wales (Webb Review) be circulated to all members and included as a future agenda item in the committee's work programme for further consideration together with its affect within Denbighshire.*

6 ESTYN ACTION PLAN UPDATE AND THE ROLE OF SCRUTINY

The Interim Head of School Improvement verbally updated members on progress with the Estyn Action Plan advising that the number of Work Plans had been reduced from approximately 88 to 20 to produce more focused documents. Elements of the Work Plans had been carefully costed and had been through the challenge process to ensure that they were reasonable. The latest version of the Action Plan would be considered by Cabinet the following week and any final adjustments made before despatch to Estyn by 27th December.

It was noted that the committee's role in raising standards and improving the quality of service provision had been largely addressed during the previous agenda item.

Councillor M.M. Jones sought assurances that Headteachers had been given the opportunity to view the Action Plan as previously requested and emphasised the importance of communication with schools to ensure they were kept informed of

developments. The Acting Corporate Director Lifelong Learning confirmed that the Headteachers had had sight of the original draft Action Plan. Whilst improvements had been made since then to the way the Action Plan had been structured and presented with more focused priorities, the content remained largely the same. The Acting Director added that how the authority would work with Headteachers on a more systematic basis was being addressed in the Action Plan and given top priority.

In response to a question from Councillor G.J. Pickering, the Acting Director advised that detailed costing had not been included within the Action Plan as it was an ongoing issue until the Council set its budget. The Action Plan did refer to the £700k which had already been committed by the authority and how that amount would be spent together with a commitment to allocate additional resources to education.

Councillor G.J. Pickering suggested that, when adjustments were made to the Action Plan, the pages relating to those changes be circulated rather than the full document.

RESOLVED that the latest position regarding the Estyn inspection on the Quality of Denbighshire Local Authority Action Plan be noted.

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members' review of the committee's forward work programme for education matters and providing an update on relevant issues. A copy of the work programme had been attached to the report.

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported upon the revised work programme for members' approval including matters relating to the monthly monitoring of the Estyn Action Plan and Young People's Partnership Action Plan; Blessed Edward Jones Roman Catholic High School; Community Learning Centres; Speech and Language Project and the Directorate Business Plan. Members were also asked to nominate a representative of the committee onto the School Standards Monitoring Group to replace Councillor H.H. Evans who currently chaired the Group in his capacity as Lead Cabinet Member for Education.

Councillor G.J. Pickering referred to the proposal to hold the committee's next ordinary meeting in January at Blessed Edward Jones Roman Catholic High School, Rhyl in order to combine that meeting with a tour of the school. The Scrutiny Support Officer confirmed that he was awaiting confirmation regarding those arrangements. Councillor S. Frobisher suggested that the committee hold future meetings at other schools within Denbighshire.

Co-opted Member D. Smith also reminded members of the need to incorporate the Webb Review into the future work programme as agreed previously.

Finally, Councillor M.M. Jones reported that Tony Byrne, Interim Head of School Improvement was attending his last meeting of the committee and she thanked him for his time with the authority and wished him well for the future. The Chair echoed those sentiments. Mr. Byrne thanked members for their kind words and paid tribute

to his colleagues from whom he had received kindness and support during his time with Denbighshire.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *subject to the amendments agreed during today's meeting the Work Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 be approved, and*
- (b) *Councillor S. Frobisher be nominated as the committee's representative on the School Standards Monitoring Group.*

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

8 BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT SERVICE REVIEW

The Acting Head of Behaviour Support submitted a confidential report (previously circulated) outlining the developments in the review of the Behaviour Support Service. The report detailed proposed projects for a Pupil Referral Unit and on-site inclusion centres in secondary schools.

Members were advised that pupils excluded from mainstream schools generally achieved less formal qualifications than those in mainstream education. Improving the facilities of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and consolidating specialist staff closer together would improve the provision offered to pupils, their academic outcomes and make them into more skilled contributors to the workforce. Two premises currently occupied by the PRU needed to be vacated by July 2008 and it was proposed that existing offices in Rhyl be converted to a PRU. In addition, on-site Inclusion Centres in secondary schools would allow schools to manage pupils with challenging behaviour far more effectively by supporting them to access those areas of the curriculum where they were successful.

In response to members' questions and concerns, the Acting Head of Behaviour Support and the Head of Partnership and Inclusion advised that:-

- approximately two thirds of pupils referred to the PRU were from the North of the county and a new facility in Rhyl would reduce current transport costs
- consultation had been undertaken with Headteachers regarding the new site and the schools had been very supportive
- there may be some cost savings by having staff on one site but there would be considerable conversion costs involved in adapting a new facility
- the Council would be providing capital costs for on-site inclusion centres but staffing of those facilities would be undertaken by the schools
- the need to build up the capacity of the Behaviour Support Service had been identified and supported in the Estyn Action Plan
- a managed transfer policy for excluded pupils was in force which all Headteachers had signed up to

- very few bilingual pupils were referred to the PRU and there were no current facilities to provide the service through the medium of Welsh. However, the authority was in the process of recruiting two new teachers and it was hoped that at least one would be Welsh speaking.
- initial proposals were for three on-site inclusion centres in Rhyl, Prestatyn plus one other school yet to be decided.

RESOLVED that the proposed projects for a Pupil Referral Unit and three on-site inclusion centres in secondary schools be endorsed.

Prior to the close of the meeting, Councillor G.J. Pickering queried the consultation process on the review of post 16 education in Rhyl. The Acting Corporate Director Lifelong Learning advised that permission had been granted that week from the Welsh Assembly to delegate to the Council the Minister's powers to make a proposal in respect of the sixth form at Blessed Edward Jones High School which would enable consultation to commence. The Acting Director agreed to look into the consultation timetable and processes and report back to members thereon in more detail.

The meeting concluded at 1.30 p.m.

Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee

24th January 2008

Report by the Head of Policy and Performance

Modernising Education in Denbighshire

1. Purpose of the Report

To ensure that the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee are informed of the progress of the Action Plan in response to the Estyn inspection and of the work of the Modernising Education Board.

2. Executive Summary

The report seeks to outline the work which has been progressed to ensure that the recommendations of the Estyn Inspection are fully addressed by the Council. The report provides the opportunity for the Committee to review the initial progress, including highlighting initial work areas where slippage in progress has occurred. The report also seeks to highlight the future role of this Committee in monitoring the Estyn review of Youth Support Services and the Cambridge Modernising Education report.

3. Scrutiny Outcomes

Consideration of this report will ensure that the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee are able to fulfil their role intended within the Action Plan by ensuring that all parties are fully accountable for the performance of education within Denbighshire.

The Committee will be expected to challenge the findings in relation to current progress to ensure that the work undertaken leads to effective change.

4. Recommendations

That the Committee note the work progressed to date to ensure that the recommendations contained within the Estyn Education Services report are addressed.

That the Committee identifies areas of work where they would wish further clarification within the next monthly monitoring report.

5. Background

5.1 The Council submitted the Action Plan and associated work plans to Estyn on the 20th December 2007. The Action Plan clearly demonstrated the commitment of the Authority to ensure the plan will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed in due course. In particular the Action Plan places the work of Scrutiny at the centre of accountability arrangements.

6.0 Monitoring Arrangements

6.1 The Modernising Education Board is responsible for overseeing the effective implementation of the Action Plan and accordingly has approved a robust performance management approach to ensure that the Board receives an overview of the progress against agreed actions and is able to review the level of risk associated with all recommendations within the report. In the initial phase of monitoring the Board has agreed to meet weekly to ensure progress can be reviewed. As previously agreed by this Committee, Councillor Sharon Frobisher represents Lifelong Learning Scrutiny whilst the Education Champion, Councillor Morfudd Jones is also a member of the Board.

6.2 Appendix 1 to the report provides a summary of the 19 work plans developed to respond to the main recommendations within the Estyn Inspection report. Work Plans have been developed to respond to each of the 18 bullet points within Estyn's three overall recommendations plus two additional work plans developed to address key areas not formally considered within the recommendations but considered important to the overall successful implementation of the improvement agenda. The appendix via the colour coding allows a clear understanding from a single sheet of the status of progress.

	Progress	Risk Status
Red	Slippage against over 15% of the agreed dates within the work plan	Considered high risk in terms of impact of likely time delays, insufficient money to deliver the task or receiving negative media coverage
Amber	Slippage reported against less than 15% of the agreed dates within the work plan	Considered medium risk in terms of impact of likely time delays, insufficient money to deliver the task or receiving negative media coverage
Green	All tasks are either ongoing or have been completed against agreed dates	Considered low risk in terms of impact of likely time delays, insufficient money to deliver the task or receiving negative media coverage

6.3 In total there are 405 individual actions within the work plans as submitted to Estyn to be progressed by the Authority. Clearly there is a need to ensure that any reporting mechanism ensures that Members attention is drawn to

areas causing or likely to lead to concerns to ensure that corrective action can be instigated.

- 6.4 To compliment the performance management arrangements the Business Change Manager has commenced her role to support the embedding of new processes and practices into mainstream working.

7.0 Current Progress

- 7.1 Appendix 1 to the report provides a summary of current overall progress including an assessment of tasks completed as of the 7th January 2008. There were 56 actions scheduled to be completed and progress is summarised as follows:-

Actions completed	46
Actions not completed	10

- 7.2 The Modernising Education Board considered a progress report at its meeting on the 14th January. The Board agreed to amend a number of dates of actions in view of changing circumstances and to delete two actions from the plan which were no longer considered necessary.

- 7.3 Appendix 2 provides further information on an exception basis. The Modernising Education Board at its meeting on the 23rd January will review progress against those activities for Recommendation 1.1 where revised completion dates are suggested. This delay occurred as a consequence of changes in staffing at a senior level and the information was therefore not available for the 14th January meeting. As a consequence of this the overall progress against this recommendation is recorded as “Red” on the summary sheet although work is progressing on target against the remaining recommendations within that work plan.

8.0 Estyn Review of Youth Support Services / Modernising Education Report

- 8.1 There is a need to ensure that the monitoring requirements arising from the Estyn review of Youth Support Services from 2006 and the recommendations from the Cambridge report “Modernising Education” can be incorporated within the performance management system developed to address the main Estyn Action Plan.
- 8.2 Members may recall that this Committee at its November 2007 meeting considered the evaluation report titled “Moving Forward” which detailed progress made since the ESTYN inspection on the quality of Denbighshire Youth Support Services in May 2006. The Committee identified the need to ensure that outstanding performance measurement and management matters for key issues outlined in the Moving Forward evaluation report were addressed and regular progress reports (including leadership and strategic management performance) to be submitted to future meetings of the committee.

- 8.3 Discussions are ongoing with the Children & Young People's Partnership Manager to ensure that the achievements to date against the thirteen recommendations from the Youth Support Services Inspection can be evaluated and to ensure that future monitoring requirements can be incorporated into future reports on Modernising Education. This work will assist the authority in preparation for the re-inspection of this work area.
- 8.4 Similarly there is a need to ensure that the recommendations from the Cambridge titled "Modernising Education" report can be incorporated into any monitoring system to ensure that progress can be measured in due course. Work is to be progressed in ensuring that the recommendations within the Cambridge are cross referenced to the work progressed via the Estyn Action Plan and to ensure that work is commenced to address any other recommendations identified.

9. **Consultation Carried Out**

The Modernising Education Board reviewed the level of progress achieved to date at its meeting on the 14th January. The Board requested clarification over individual actions for its meeting on the 23rd January.

10. **Background Papers**

Estyn Action Plan :-
<http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en-gb/DNAP-78CFQQ>

Work Plans are available on the Denbighshire Information Centre under the heading of Lifelong Learning

Contact Officer:

Jackie Walley, Head of Policy and Performance
(Tel Number : 01824 712620, e.mail: jackie.walley@denbighshire.gov.uk)

Exception Reporting - As at 17th January 2008

Issues to note

Suggested revised dates for Recommendations 1.1 to be considered by Modernising Education Board at the 23rd January meeting

Recc. Ref	Key Activity	Activity Leader	Workplan completion date	Revised completion date	Achieved completion date	Reason for delay	RAG Status
1.1	Revise Job Descriptions for School Improvement Officers.	Head of School Improvement	01/01/08	13/02/08		Governed by the outcomes of discussions of heads re: Partnership Agreements which occurred w/c 7/1/08	AMBER
1.1	Develop an on line School Visits system for all Officers in School Improvement and Partnerships and Inclusion	ICT Advisor	01/01/08	01/02/08		Implementation of paper version of visit notes until on line database is established. Need to coordinate with P&I team	AMBER
1.1	School plans identify why achievement is low and develop agreed actions to raise standards, in particular for the targeted identified primary and secondary schools (via School Improvement Action Plans)	Senior Primary and Secondary SIO's	31/01/08	01/02/08		need to establish achievement/attainment profile across the authority, identify reasons for underperformance and implemet improvement processes. This is reliant on agreed system for data analysis and Partnership Agreement. The 15 identified schools have been visited by SIOs and 'targets' established	AMBER
1.1	As a result of Dec/Jan target setting visits, schools additional to those already identified are prioritised for high level support	Head of School Improvement	31/01/08	22/01/08		need for new Head of SI to work with SIOs to establish mechanisms for this activity	AMBER
1.1	Deploy school improvement officers, curriculum support advisers and external expertise to support improvement of teaching and learning in targeted schools	Head of School Improvement	31/01/08	26/02/08		this activity is linked to Partnership Agreement -2 half days established with heads to begin the process, which will lead to policy and procedure on 'Support, Challeng and Intervention' in inverse proportion to need	AMBER
1.1	Organise new area based School Improvement support system	Senior Primary SIO	31/01/08	end Feb 2008		Unreasonable timescale in view of need to work with P&I and Policy and Performance Teams and write Partnership Agreement which will underpin this new way of working	AMBER
1.1	Review working practices within the School Improvement Service Unit to effectively use the existing Administration staff to their full potential.	Senior Admin Officer	31/01/08	end Feb 2008		Time for new Head of SI to re-align service area and rationalise responsibilities of SI officers, appoint new staff	AMBER
1.6	Share data with all school improvement officers, officers from the Partnership and Inclusion Service, curriculum specialists and advisory teachers	Senior MIS Officer	31/12/2007	31/01/08		Undergoing review of how we use data	AMBER

2.1	Second officer and give them appropriate authority to lead on Performance Management	Corporate Director of Resources	26/10/2007			An Officer from the SPU has carried out some work but this has been limited due to the appointment of the Business Change Manager from the same unit. A Job Description has been written and will be submitted for approval to advertise.	RED
2.1	Second officer to assist with systems review	Head of Strategic Policy	01/12/2007			Same as first key activity	RED
2.1	Set challenging targets for core KPI's in consultation with schools ensuring the methodology used is robust. These will have to be reviewed as the relevant data is not available at present to set meaningful targets.	Policy and Performance Manager	Ongoing			Activity leader to be reviewed as targets are set by School Improvement Officers	AMBER
2.5	Agreement on how range of mapping processes are to be brought together and made available on-line (and linked with other information resources for children, young people, families and staff eg Youthden, CIS, prospectuses)	14-19 Coordinator	30/11/2007			Options put forward - details remains to be finalised.	RED
2.5	Play Strategy to CYPSP	Head of Culture & Leisure	09/01/2008		Achieved	Draft only Play Strategy presented.	AMBER

LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24th JANUARY 2008

**Report by the CORPORATE DIRECTOR LIFELONG
LEARNING AND FINANCIAL CONTROLLER**

BUDGET 2008/9 UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise members of progress with the budget setting exercise for 2008/9 with particular reference to the Lifelong Learning Directorate.
- 1.2 To seek members views on the proposals for cost saving and the directorate's prioritisation of the bids for additional resources for service pressures next financial year. The Committee's views will be made known to Cabinet at the next appropriate meeting.

2. Reason for Submission of Report

- 2.1 It is part of the normal budget setting process for Cabinet to seek the views of Scrutiny Committees on the detailed budget proposals for directorates for the following financial year.

3. Position to date

- 3.1 Cabinet has received reports on the provisional WAG funding settlement for 2008/9 to 2010/11, together with the likely impact of inflation in 2008/9 and the proposals from directorates on savings and bids for additional resources. Members are requested to refer to the relevant papers from the last two Cabinet meetings for the detail.
- 3.2 This Committee considered the Directorate's initial proposals at its meeting on the 8th January. It was noted that the directorate would be carrying out further work in regard to the proposals and that details of the final settlement from WAG would be announced on 22nd January. Accordingly it was proposed that the latest budget proposals be submitted to the committee's next meeting on 24th January together with detailed background information relating to the individual proposals for further consideration.
- 3.3 It is clear that the poor level of additional financial support from the Assembly will make it difficult for the Council to provide additional resources for services and keep Council Tax increases low, without identifying further spending savings. This work is continuing with CET looking to identify further savings in spending for the next 3 years.

- 3.4 The directorate's current proposals are detailed in the attached appendix to this report and Members comments on the deliverability and reasonableness of these proposals will be passed on to Cabinet.

4. Directorate Commentary

- 4.1 It is recognised the proposed efficiency savings are low and it is a Directorate priority to carry out further work in this area. The Directorate has a target of £400k to meet and initial work undertaken as detailed in the Appendix at present delivers proposed savings to the potential value of £292k. It is clear that further work is required to increase the level of efficiency savings which can be delivered.
- 4.2 The proposals include a significant increase in the funding for schools and the Education service, however, all workplans developed as a result of the Estyn report will be subject to rigorous scrutiny to ensure resources are being utilised in the most efficient and effective manner and outcomes are linked to attainment wherever possible.
- 4.3 The Business Change Manager post has created capacity to review and challenge functions, processes and procedures throughout the Directorate to ensure resources are used in the most efficient and effective manner.

5. Consultation Carried Out

Two rounds of Directorate meetings with Lead Members have been held to review savings proposals and bids for additional resources. Cabinet have debated the position at two meetings to date. CET has considered the position on several occasions. A seminar for all members on the budget took place on the 4th January 2008.

6. Implications on Other Policy Areas

The level of resources available and the cost effectiveness of service delivery, impacts upon all the services of the Council.

7. Background Papers

Cabinet budget setting reports to meetings on 27 November and 18 December 2007.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That members review the directorate savings proposals and bids for additional resources in 2008/9 and comment accordingly to Cabinet.

Contact Officers:

Mohammed Mehmet, Interim Corporate Director, Lifelong Learning

Roger Parry, Financial Controller

Jackie Walley, Head of Policy and Performance

Shaer Halewood, Senior Management Accountant

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DENBIGHSIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
BUDGET SETTING 2008/09 – 2010/11

1. Savings Proposals for Lifelong Learning Directorate

Details of proposals	08/09 £000	09/10 £000	10/11 £000	Potential impact on service
1. Partnership & Inclusion and School Improvement				
i) Joint working re Mobility Officer	3			Efficiency, joint working with another Authority – shared information service
ii) Review of use of Temporary Admin staff & other office efficiencies	10			Re-look at sharing existing admin support
iv) Freezing of Partnership Managers post (LL)	10			
Efficiency Targets Partnership & Inclusion 65k School Improvement 67k				
Partnerships & Inclusion and School Improvement Total	23	0	0	

Details of proposals	08/09 £000	09/10 £000	10/11 £000	Potential impact on service
2. Countryside and Leisure				
i) Leisure Centre Water Efficiency Measures	5			A range of water saving initiatives including installation of water inverters / controllers to pool pumps to reduce flow during pre-determined times such as overnight.
ii) Reduced Staff Travel	3			Enhanced efficiency
iii) Leisure Vehicles Reduction	6			
iv) Alternative Service Delivery (Countryside)	7	10	5	Non replacement of a member of staff taking EVR; service to be delivered in different way.
v) Alternative Service Delivery (Barkby Beach Pitch and Putt)	5			
vi) Alternative Service Delivery (East Parade Bowls Centre)	5			
vii) Reduce Beach Lifeguard Service	25			Provide main service for peak 8 week season (July – Sept.) in place of current week (May – Sept.) provision; skeleton service from May
viii) Cut Active Lifestyles Officer post	17			Delete full time post. Reduce health and physical activity initiatives for the community and staff.
ix) Close Events Arena water feature/fountains	2			Loss of amenity feature on Rhyl Promenade
x) Close Llantysilio Green Public toilets	3			Loss of seasonal tourist facility in the Dee Valley
Efficiency Target 78k				
Countryside & Leisure Total	78			

Details of proposals	08/09 £000	09/10 £000	10/11 £000	Potential impact on service
3. Policy and Performance				
Corporate communications	2			Reduction of staff costs
Efficiency Target 10k This target may change once the disaggregation of the Strategy and Resources budget is completed.				
Policy and Performance Total	2			
4. Tourism, Heritage & Culture				
<i>i) Impact of 'Historic Houses of Denbighshire' Invest to save proposals from increased revenue</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Reduced on-going DCC subsidy (dependant on successful bid into the efficiency fund – E1)</i>
ii) 1% passporting of efficiency saving need to Bodelwyddan Castle, Ectarc, N E Wales Dance and Llangollen Eisteddfod.	2			
iii) A restructure of the Tourism, Heritage and Culture service over 3 years.	14	48	0	A redefined set of service priorities.

Details of proposals	08/09 £000	09/10 £000	10/11 £000	Potential impact on service
<i>iv) Impact of 'invest to save' library debtors initiative.</i>	20	-	-	<i>Potential £20k increase in fines income, with further income from invoicing for unreturned books (dependant on successful bid into efficiency fund – E4)</i>
v) Deletion of Senior Library Assistant post at Rhyl Library	30	-	-	
vi) Pavilion Theatre, Rhyl to change programming policy during 2009/10 in order to develop a more rounded offer of commercial, community and educational benefit. Sunday, Monday and Tuesday usage to be focussed on community, school and voluntary service usage. Programme and funding to be developed as part of the local PACT partnership and the Rhyl Going Forward campaign. By 09/10 efficiency savings of £20k to be achieved with an additional £10k being employed to match fund new community external funding bids.	-	20	-	Provision of a more rounded community and regeneration focussed arts offer.
vii) CADW to take over direct management of Denbigh Castle	2	-	-	
viii) Alternative delivery of Mobile Library Service	18	15	0	Loss of service to 10,500 users across the county. Withdrawal of service would result in redeployment. Having reviewed this after budget round 1, it was concluded that any impact on particularly vulnerable groups could be mitigated by referral to the Housebound Service which has capacity to add additional users.
ix) Reduction in staff hours at Denbigh library/OSS	9			

Details of proposals	08/09 £000	09/10 £000	10/11 £000	Potential impact on service
x) Passporting of 1.5% cuts to grant aided bodies	4	0	0	
xi) Reduction in funding to Royal International Pavilion	3	0	0	Would need to generate more income.
xii) Reduction in funding to Pavilion Theatre	4	0	0	
xiii) Restructure of Tourism, Heritage and Culture Service	13	19	0	
xiv) Reduced grant subsidy for internal and external Heritage and Culture assets				Business Plan to be developed to demonstrate impact
Bodelwyddan Castle	20	40	40	
Pavilion Theatre	50	100	100	
Royal International Pavilion	20	40	40	
Efficiency target	70k			
Other cuts	110k			
Tourism, Heritage & Culture Total	189	180	180	
Directorate target	400			
Total of proposed efficiencies already identified	292			

**Note these figures are dependant on successful bids into the efficiency fund and would result in an additional 25k savings*

DENBIGHSIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
BUDGET SETTING 2008/09

Proposals for Lifelong Learning Directorate

2. Committed cost increases, (unavoidable, contractual or agreed as part of 2007/08 budget process)

Details of proposals	£000 2008/09	£000 2009/10	Impact on service if not agreed
A. Estyn Related			
Additional SEN & Behaviour Support	70		Work plans will not be implemented
Increase School Improvement Team	120		Work plans will not be implemented
LSA's and Behaviour Support Teachers	100		Work plans will not be implemented
Schools PWC Funding	290		Work plans will not be implemented
Policy & Performance posts	120		Work plans will not be implemented
	700		
B. Education Transport.			
Increase of 12 Operating days	302		Statutory service. Cannot cease transport leading to budget overspend
	302		
C. Scala revenue budget (as agreed during 07/08 budget round)			
	40		No matched funding for arms length trust
	40		
Total	1,042		

3. All other bids

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
P1	<p>Schools</p> <p>i) Reducing cover by secondary teachers</p> <p>By September 2009 all schools must ensure that teaching staff are required to cover for absent colleagues only under exceptional circumstances. At present such cover is widespread in secondary schools. To comply with the law schools will need to employ additional supply staff.</p> <p>Some funding to support workforce remodelling has already been allocated to schools but this was not sufficient, particularly in the context of school funding in Denbighshire, to implement the statutory obligations outlined above.</p> <p>The 2008/09 bid is the first phase of the funding needed to ensure compliance with statute and more efficient use of staff time. It will improve the situation but the phasing of the bids means that all schools may not achieve full compliance by September 2009.</p>	261	261	261	<p>A majority of the authority's secondary schools continue to rely on teachers to provide cover. Teachers may (and in some schools at least are likely to) refuse to cover for absent colleagues, resulting in some classes being left without suitable cover. Quite apart from the further legislative breaches and parental reaction this will induce, it will compromise performance improvements required by Estyn.</p> <p>Attempts to comply with statutory targets without adequate funding will continue to oblige schools to skew resource use in ways which compromise leadership and management functions designed to maintain and improve attainment.</p>

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
	<p>ii) Providing time for lesson planning, preparation and pupil assessment Schools are required to provide at least 10% non teaching (PPA) time for teaching staff (in addition to time required for any leadership and management duties). Many primary schools do not comply or do so only by re-deploying staff inappropriately and inefficiently.</p> <p>Again, some funding to support workforce remodelling has already been allocated to schools to establish PPA time. It has helped but was not nearly sufficient to implement the 10% requirement.</p> <p>This 2008/09 bid is also the first phase of the funding needed to ensure compliance with statute and more efficient use of staff time. It will not be sufficient to ensure full compliance and eliminate all cases of inappropriate use of staff time.</p> <p>iii) Changes to the primary curriculum</p> <p>The entire 3 to 19 curriculum is undergoing change. Training to support whole-school and cross curricula aspects of that change is being funded through targeted grants available from</p>	199	199	199	<p>A considerable number of primary schools will continue to fail to comply with the 10% PPA requirement or achieve it only at the expense of other key tasks. Headteachers, for example, perform inappropriate roles such as cover and lunch time supervision.</p> <p>Attempts to comply with statutory targets without adequate funding will again oblige schools to skew resource use in ways which compromise leadership and management functions at primary level to the detriment of school performance.</p> <p>Schools must introduce the required curriculum changes. If new funding is not forthcoming they will be required to fund the changes from within existing resources. Since the scope to redeploy resources is limited, the most likely outcome is that schools will fail to provide adequate training and/or sufficient new course materials. The consequences will become evident</p>

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
	<p>the Better Schools Fund. BSF managers within the authority have emphasised that those grants are not intended or sufficient to support the further comprehensive change at KS 2 in 2008/09.</p> <p>This bid is designed to ensure that</p> <p>a) all KS 2 staff are competent to teach the new curriculum; and</p> <p>b) schools are able to purchase the new course materials associated with that revised curriculum.</p> <p><i>This would be a one-off allocation.</i></p> <p>iv) Changes to the secondary curriculum</p> <p>The Key Stage 4 curriculum is also undergoing significant change, again requiring substantial retraining of staff and the provision of new materials. BSF grants will impinge on and contribute to changes in the general approach to teaching and learning at KS4 and all other key stages but will not support the substantive training needed to ensure the class teachers are familiar with the new content of KS4 or have access to the new course materials schools will be obliged to use.</p> <p><i>This would also be a one-off allocation.</i></p>	133			<p>in end of key stage attainment scores.</p> <p>As with the change at KS2, schools have no option but to introduce the required curriculum changes. If new funding is not forthcoming, secondary schools will also be forced to fund the changes from within existing resources. Since the scope to redeploy resources is similarly limited at secondary level, the most likely outcome again is that schools will fail to provide adequate training and/or sufficient new course materials, with the same risk to end of key stage attainment scores.</p>

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
	<p>v) New assessment requirements</p> <p>End of Key Stage Assessments at KS2 and KS3 will take place using teacher assessment only (rather than a combination of testing and assessment). Greater reliance on assessment means that teachers will now have to devote more time to it (Previously, test results form an important element).</p> <p>The new assessment regime will also see a change in moderation arrangements. Previously, the assessment process was externally moderated, with moderation being funded by the government. Schools are now required to arrange and undertake moderation either individually or in clusters. BSF grants will be available to train staff to perform their new assessment responsibilities (although there are question-marks over the sufficiency of those grants), but schools must now fund supply cover to enable teachers to perform moderation duties. This bid is to enable schools to fund such cover.</p>	98			<p>Schools will be in breach of statutory obligations if they do not undertake the additional assessment and moderation duties required of them.</p> <p>Attempting to fund these new duties from within existing budgets will undermine current provision and may oblige at least some schools to 'cut corners', leading to inaccurate assessments and unsafe moderation.</p>
	<p>vi) Ysgol Clawdd Offa</p> <p>Demand for school places in the Prestatyn area has prompted the</p>	51			<p>The additional costs will be funded by top-slicing the budgets of other primary schools.</p>

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
	<p>opening of this new school. This opening is cost neutral in some respects (e.g. transfer of pupil-related funding) but generates additional expense in others (e.g. creation of a new Senior Management Team). This bid covers those additional costs. The additional costs may be cancelled out if and when savings materialise from any re-organisation of existing schools as part of the modernising agenda. Any such savings would not be generated next year.</p> <p>vii) Improving performance: providing adequate time for leadership and management Increased leadership time for senior staff in both primary and secondary schools is necessary to complement Estyn-related changes at authority level. As a consequence of the general shortfall in schools funding, schools cannot currently afford to allocate to senior managers the amount of dedicated non-teaching time commonly regarded as necessary to discharge leadership and management responsibilities. In addition to its direct impact on performance, this bid is also expected to produce a number of indirect benefits: improving staff morale, producing more efficient use of senior</p>	280	280	280	<p>Achieving significant improvements to performance will require concerted challenge to and development of current practice in schools. While the authority has a part to play in exerting such challenge and supporting such development, much of it must emanate from and be sustained by senior managers in schools.</p> <p>Current levels of leadership and management time severely constrain the ability of senior staff to focus on proactive developmental work. The focus will remain on 'fire-fighting' and attempting to simply sustain performance rather than moving forward and improving it.</p> <p>Sickness absence – resulting in part from de-motivated and over-worked staff – will continue to drain LA resources and hamper performance.</p> <p>The number and quality of applicants for senior posts in schools will remain cause for serious concern.</p>

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
	<p>staff time, encouraging career progression and promoting more and stronger candidates for senior management posts.</p> <p>An increasing amount of leadership time entails LEA-school liaison regarding strategic (County level) and other issues. At present, this is funded either rarely, on an ad hoc basis, or not at all. Development of the LEA-schools partnership will depend on school leaders devoting even more time to such LEA-school liaison. This bid is designed to ensure that such liaison occurs without prejudice to leadership and performance within schools.</p> <p>Enhanced funding for cover and PPA time (Bids Di and Dii) will release leadership time in some schools. In so far as that occurs, the 2009/10 and 2010/11 elements of Ei will be adjusted down.</p> <p>viii) Improving performance: ensuring competency in classroom teaching</p> <p>Providing adequate in-service training for classroom teachers is fundamental to sustaining and improving standards. Schools currently depend on external grants (chiefly, the Better Schools Fund) which are subject to change and tightly controlled with regard to the</p>	65	65	65	<p>Given the general level of funding available to schools in Denbighshire, schools tend to devote considerably less time and funding to staff training and development than is required to ensure that all staff remain familiar with developments in techniques, approaches and materials in their subject areas/phases.</p> <p>At present, schools rely on the goodwill of staff to ensure they sustain their competence or bend the rules governing training-related grants. This does not constitute a tenable, sustainable</p>

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
	<p>training they support. Those grants are orientated primarily towards supporting whole school training related to topics such as ICT and inclusion. They are not intended to ensure that classroom teachers receive essential subject-related training (in maths, science etc). This bid is intended to ensure that subject teachers remain up to speed with good practice in their subject areas. As such, it does not overlap with the 'School improvement fund and training' bid put forward elsewhere by the LL Directorate which is intended to support the development of middle and senior managers in schools.</p> <p>This bid would enable secondary schools to send 2 members of staff from each department on one day's subject-related training per year and primary schools to send an average of 5 teachers on one day subject-related courses each year.</p> <p>ix) Achieving equitable funding</p> <p>The review of the mainstream funding formula identified specific funding pressures associated with Social Deprivation, small secondary schools, Welsh medium education and transient pupils. The case for additional funds was set out in detail during the formula review.</p>	198	198	198	<p>long term strategy for maintaining adequate levels of Continuous Professional Development in Denbighshire schools. The consequences of relying thus far on such an approach are evident.</p> <p>(NB This bid does not include training required by class support or other support staff in schools. As higher level teaching assistants and other support staff come to play an increasing part in the delivery of the curriculum and management of schools, so it will become increasingly necessary to provide comparable training for them. This will be the subject of a bid in next year's budget round)</p> <p>The current inequitable distribution of funds will continue, adversely affecting the performance of many schools and the ability of some to set and sustain viable budgets.</p>

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
	The SEN delegation formula for mainstream schools is expected to change in 2009/10. Delegation and management of SEN funds at school level will result in a more efficient and effective use of funds, but will require additional funding if the new system is to work. Bids elsewhere from the LLL Directorate are intended to support this transition, although further funding may be necessary.				
	Schools Total	1435			
P2	Estyn Related – additional bids to meet the action plan				
1.1	Attainment of pupils	40			Appoint KS2 Numeracy Officer
1.2	School Improvement Strategy	25			Training programme for experienced heads
		18			Middle management training programme
		55			Support programme for schools
		20			SOS programme
		120			Increase capacity for School Improvement Team
1.3	Improve attendance	61			Core funding for 3 ESW posts
1.4	Reduce exclusions	100			Recruitment of 16 LSA's managed moves
1.5	Support for pupils with SEBD	80			Recruitment of 2 Behaviour Support Teachers
1.7	Determine school entitlement to support	15			Consultants fees to review ALN formula (One off)
2.1	Performance Management	120			Appoint Business Change Manager & Programme Manager
		124			Core Fund Tim Data
		30			Software costs
3.4	Funding formula	70			SEN funding to schools to offset SEN pressure
3.5	Understanding funding decisions	40			Recruitment of new member of staff to support schools (LMS)

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
	PWC funding in schools Total Less already committed	20 290 1228 700			team) Training costs for teachers/bursars/governors
	Additional bids required to meet action plan	528			
P3	Youth Service – previous Estyn inspection New contributions to voluntary sector Annual Grant contributions Personal Support Project – Team Leader School Youth Work – Raising Standards Youth Centre HUB Youth Council Support Workers Rhuddlan Information Shop Corwen Centre Increase Capacity from core Budget	0 38 46 67 0 0 32			Identified within Estyn YPP. PAGS funded WAG funding of £220k through 14-19 Network, dependent on future LA funding being secured WAG funding of £220k through 14-19 Network, dependent on future LA funding being secured 1 additional worker each year to build up capacity within the statutory Youth Service as identified within the Estyn YPP. Shop at risk of closure if not funded. Information identified within Estyn YPP. Match funding towards external funding for Healthy living centre. To support School holiday programmes, Welsh culture youth work, Accreditation of achievements, Work with young people with disabilities, Use of Basic Skills and Welsh in social

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
					settings, International Forum/Global Citizenship, Youth For a, identified within Estyn YPP
	Youth Service Total	183			
P4	Tourism, Heritage & Culture i) Bodelwyddan Castle Increase in grant aid to compensate for loss of rental revenue to BC due to possible purchase of freehold by Warner Hotels Group (£1m capital receipt to DCC)	60			Would threaten the viability of Bodelwyddan Castle Trust (additional 60k could come from interest accruing from capital receipt of £1m)
	Tourism, Heritage & Culture Total	60			
P5	Countryside & Leisure i) Loss of PAG Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP Exercise Referral Scheme (£31k) • Health Walking Schemes (£20k) • Biodiversity Officer/NERC Act Duties (£20k) <p>The loss of PAGES funding is the single biggest pressure facing Countryside and Leisure Services in 2008-09. Much has been achieved over the last 4 years which would be lost if funding did not continue</p>	71			<p>The three areas currently receiving PAG's grant will either stop or be substantially reduced. Potential redundancies are involved.</p> <p>The Council has been awarded WAG funding (£62k 07/08, £107k 08/09) to participate in a 3 year all Wales trial to evaluate the clinical value of GP Exercise Referral Schemes. However, withdrawal of the PAG funding will result in stopping our well established existing self referral schemes at Rhyl, Prestatyn, Corwen and Llangollen leisure centres, and a reduction in the number of fitness suite based staff delivering our current exercise programmes.</p> <p>Failure to compensate for the loss of walking scheme funding will effectively stop a number of successful programmes (Let's Walk Denbighshire, 'Footloose', Walkfit and Workfit). These</p>

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
					<p>are also part funded by other external grant (SCW) which would be lost by failure to match fund.</p> <p>The GP exercise referral and walking schemes impact directly on the Council's Vision – "people will ... be fully aware of the benefits of taking regular exercise, and more adults and young people will participate in sport and physical activity". Withdrawal of funding will particularly impact on workplace health (the schemes helped Denbighshire attain Silver Corporate Health Standard) and the most deprived areas of the County where most of this work is focussed to help reduce health inequalities. The Council's commitment to tackling issues as obesity and other public health problems arising from low physical activity rates (see HSCWB Strategy, Climbing Higher, etc) will also be reduced</p> <p>The NERC Act 2006 places a new statutory duty on local authorities in respect of conserving biodiversity. The duty impacts on all areas of the Council, not just Countryside Services. The need to enhance capacity in this area was recognised 4 years ago with a PAG allocation to support our Biodiversity Officer, but this need has increased significantly since the NERC Act. Failure to implement new statutory duty could possibly result in legal challenge. Post also part funded by external grant which would be lost by failure to match fund. Detrimental impact on the Council's Vision – "we will celebrate and respect the diversity of our county, and...make sure that any actions we take protect the environment", and a failure to commit to the Council's Sustainable Development Strategy.</p>
	<p>ii) Drift Park Pool, Play Area and Amphitheatre Operation of new facilities with no</p>	37			<p>To balance budgets it will be necessary to reduce the service provided at the Drift Park (pool opening hours, repairs and maintenance, events, etc) and/or reduce or cut other leisure</p>

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
	additional budget. The new Drift Park enjoyed a good first season, particularly the new pool, amphitheatre and play area, all of which are extensively used by both visitors and local people.				services to compensate. Detrimental impact on the Council's Vision to "attract more visitors throughout the year"
	iii) Park Attendants Improving the cleanliness and appearance of our public places has been a council priority for some years. Some of the most popular and visible public spaces are our parks in Rhyl, Prestatyn, Denbigh, Ruthin and Llangollen. This proposal involves the appointment of seasonal park attendants to supplement the basic service provided by Environmental Services at peak times (April – Sept). The attendants would patrol the parks, interact with visitors and users, carry out some enforcement duties (eg litter and dog fouling), help to develop local volunteer groups, and deliver events and other small improvement schemes. A number of Town Councils have expressed a real interest in partnership funding to help us deliver this scheme.	20			Continued complaints about the cleanliness and appearance of parks and anti social behaviour and vandalism. Failure to capitalise on funding which would be made available by Town Councils for this initiative.
	iv) Leisure Centre Booking System Introduction of an e-booking and management information system for all 7 leisure centres. A joint review is currently underway by ICT and Leisure	25			Failure to engage with the e-government agenda. Maintain inefficient management information systems.

Priority	Details of proposals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	Comments
	to identify the best option, which should be concluded early next year.				
	Countryside & Leisure Total	153			

Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee

24 January 2008

Report by Head of Countryside and Leisure

DENBIGHSHIRE PLAY STRATEGY

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Scrutiny's views on the draft Denbighshire Play Strategy and Implementation Plan.

2. Reason for Submission of Report

- 2.1 Play is a vital part of growing up. It is important for the social, emotional and educational development of children, and contributes to their health and well being. In short, play is a critical element of quality of life for children and young people.

- 2.2 For these reasons, equitable access to play for all children is enshrined within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and has been adopted as policy by the UK Government and Welsh Assembly. Such high level strategies and statements set the scene, but must be supplemented by work at the local level to give effect to this aspiration and to deliver action on the ground. The Denbighshire Play Strategy and Implementation Plan have a key role to play in delivering action locally.

- 2.3 Copies of the latest draft Play Strategy and Implementation Plan are attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

3. Cost and Staffing Implications

- 3.1 Implementation of the Strategy and Plan will be undertaken by a wide range of existing partners, including the County Council. There are no direct additional costs or staffing implications for the Council arising from this report at the present time; existing staff and budgets will be deployed to deliver the Strategy and Plan.

- 3.2 However, every opportunity will be taken to secure additional external funding to deliver the Strategy and Plan. For example, a successful bid has recently been made to the Big Lottery Fund to develop a N.E. Wales Play Forum, of which Denbighshire is part. Such opportunities may require additional resources from the Council as match funding, and these will be considered as part of the normal budget process. In

addition, it should be noted that such projects may involve the creation of new posts.

4. **Consultation Carried Out**

4.1 Development of the draft Play Strategy and Implementation Plan has been overseen by the Play, Leisure and Enrichment (PLE) Working Group of the Denbighshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. The PLE group has a wide ranging membership from both the statutory and voluntary sectors, for example it includes representation from external organisations such as the Rhyl Adventure Play Association, Play Wales, Barnado's and Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council. A number of Council departments are also represented on the group, including Youth, Leisure, Countryside, Community Agency, and Heritage Services.

4.2 The draft Strategy and associated Implementation Plan was recently presented to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership for their comments. The Partnership endorsed the approach set out in the documents and asked that the final document, taking account of Scrutiny's and others' views, be submitted to the next Strategic Partnership meeting. The Strategy and Implementation Plan will then be put to Council for formal approval.

5. **Implications on Other Policy Areas**

5.1 **The Vision** Part of the Council's Vision for 2025 is for Denbighshire to be "an ideal place to live and pursue a wide range of activities, to "work together to eliminate deprivation" and for "more young people to participate in physical activity" Play has an important contribution to make if these aspirations are to be achieved.

5.2 **Other Policies including Corporate** The emerging Children and Young People's Single Plan embraces the theme of play, leisure and enrichment, and the proposed Play Strategy is a central part of this agenda. The strategy also contributes to delivery of the Children and Young People, Lifelong Learning, Health and Well Being and Community Safety themes, objectives and targets of the Community Strategy.

6. **Background Papers**

6.1 Draft Play Strategy, Draft Implementation Plan, Denbighshire Open Access Play Survey (Play People, 2007).

7. **Recommendation**

7.1 That Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the attached draft Play Strategy and Implementation Plan.

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DRAFT

Denbighshire Play Strategy

Foreword

e.g. lead member / Children's Commissioner / children and young people / lead AM / DVSC - include cross-sector of signatories

The adoption and implementation of a Play Strategy for Denbighshire makes clear the commitment of Denbighshire to ensure that the rights and needs of children and young people to play are central to policy making and that provision is made to meet those needs. It is an explicit demonstration of the importance that Denbighshire places on the value of play in childhood and the importance of children and young people in our society. We believe that the fundamental reason for providing play opportunities for children and young people in Denbighshire is because it is their right.

We thank everybody involved in the advocacy and development of play in Denbighshire over their years for their contribution. This strategy recognises that we have a long road to travel to fully uphold the right of children and young people to play. However, this provides us with a great opportunity for further development and we are committed to realising the need for play opportunities and have identified the approach that we wish to pursue to achieve this.

This strategy has been developed by a multi-agency cross-sector partnership and will be developed and applied with this same holistic approach.

Introduction

As adults, most of us can recall special moments of our childhood associated with happy memories. One of the primary activities associated with childhood is playing and it is often the memories of our free, unrestricted play that we remember most clearly and fondly. Whether our play was physical, creative or social, many of us treat it as something that just happened, rather than recognise the important part it played in our development. It is only recently that adults have felt the need to provide play opportunities for children. This need arose mainly from feelings of fear related to perceived risk. However, no matter how important these reasons are, they should not be allowed to distract from the important role that play holds in the development of happy, healthy children, families and communities.

Every child needs to play and has a right to play, but opportunities to do so are often limited by external factors, such as poverty, insufficient space, repressive environments, discrimination, the effects of disability and special needs, adult agendas and other social conditions. Children use play in the natural environment to learn of the world they inhabit with others. However, due to the impact of modern society the opportunities for children to play freely have been severely restricted, which has led to a poverty of play opportunities in the general environment. This is known as ‘Play Deprivation’, the notion that not playing may deprive children of experiences that are regarded as developmentally essential and result in those affected being both biologically and socially disabled.

Studies show that addressing the basic play needs of children contributes significantly to building communication and social skills, aesthetic appreciation, creativity and problem solving. It is not only vital in a child’s social development, but is also essential for brain development (Byres 1998). Play is “critically important to all children in the development of their physical, social, mental, emotional and creative skills” (WAG 2002). Therefore, the child’s opportunity, or lack of opportunity, to fully develop play behaviour, determines to a considerable extent, the sort of adult he or she will become.

A robust Play Strategy provides the mechanism to challenge these factors and to champion children’s play as a vital element in the development of healthy communities in Denbighshire. We seek to respond positively by extending the range of stimulating and challenging environments and opportunities available for children’s play by developing a range of ‘compensatory’ play experiences for children and young people in Denbighshire.

The strategy has drawn and built on existing research and consultation, including the Denbighshire Play Survey conducted by Play People (2007).

Denbighshire Play Policy Statement:

Denbighshire is committed to upholding the right of children and young people to play. Recognising this right, play provision and play spaces with high play value will be developed. We believe that:

"The right to play is a child's first claim on the community. Play is nature's training for life! No community can infringe that right without doing deep and enduring harm to the minds and bodies of its citizens."

David Lloyd George

"Play encompasses children's behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development – not only for individual children, but also for the society in which they live."

WAG Play Policy 2002

Denbighshire fully endorses and adopts the Welsh Assembly Government's Play Policy (2002) and accompanying Implementation Plan (2006).

In addition the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (articles 12, 15 and 31) supports the principal of play as a children's right and states that:

"Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."

Article 31

The UN Convention on the rights of the child and the Welsh Assembly Governments Play Policy (2002) and Play Policy Implementation Plan (2006) recognise play as a fundamental children's right. This Strategy establishes a rights-based approach to providing for the play needs of **ALL** children in Denbighshire.

This Play Policy Statement and accompanying Implementation Plan forms the Play Strategy for Denbighshire.

Play Implementation Plan Objectives:

Theme	No	Objective
1. Encouraging More Play Provision	1	Increase the number and quality of staffed open access play provision, playgrounds and playschemes across the County
	2	In line with recommended standards, ensure play spaces have a high play value, are appropriate and accessible
	3	Ensure <i>all</i> play provision is inclusive
2. The Role of Schools	4	Increase the quality and scope of play opportunities in and around all schools, with their local communities.
3. Play in the Community	5	Develop local play fora and support communities to take ownership of their play spaces and provision
	6	Develop outreach and RUMPUS (rural mobile playscheme) play provision to meet the diverse and express needs of communities, e.g. urban / rural
4. A Playwork Profession	7	Develop the play work force, enabling all playwork staff to access affordable, accredited and progressive playwork training and working towards parity of equity with other professions
	8	Develop a co-ordinated play unit within the local authority, with relevant cross-departmental links
5. Managing Risk and Parental Concern	9	Develop a healthy and pragmatic risk management approach to playwork within all settings (<i>see section 7 below</i>)
6. Play Across Denbighshire	10	Develop a multi-agency play forum, facilitating community involvement throughout Denbighshire and applying regional and national strategies that impact on children's play
	11	Promote the value and importance of play, upholding the rights of Denbighshire's children and young people
	12	Ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the effective implementation of the right of children and young people to play in Denbighshire

Encouraging More Play Provision

The County of Denbighshire stretches from the Coastal region of Prestatyn and Rhyl to the rural South and Llangollen. Diverse communities lead to a range of very specific needs especially relating to the provision of play opportunities.

The most densely populated areas of Denbighshire are in the North of the County. In Rhyl in particular, there are some areas which are high on the index of multiple deprivation. While there is already a range of play provision already in Rhyl any developments in provision need to be catered to best meet those needs. It is estimated there are people living in houses of multiple occupancy in Rhyl. For children living in these conditions the need for local accessible staffed play provision is paramount.

Similarly the rural areas of Denbighshire can lead to children and young people being isolated especially when staffed play provision is often only available in the larger villages. Models of mobile staffed play provision such as play rangers can help to facilitate children's play and encourage their use of the local natural environment.

In order to meet the needs of disabled children and young people in Denbighshire play provision needs to be developed that is inclusive. This means not only providing inclusive staffed play provision but that consideration is given when developing formal and informal play spaces to meeting a diverse range of needs.

Denbighshire has one permanent adventure playground, RAPA, based in Rhyl which provides year round play provision and employs part-time playworkers. There are strong links with RAPA and other groups working with children and young people in Rhyl including the youth inclusion project, communities first and West Rhyl Community Company who also provide open access play opportunities. The local authority Youth Service provides a programme of Cymorth Funded open access play schemes at various locations around the North of the County during school holidays. They are currently recruiting for a Play Development Officer employed within the Youth Service, who's main role will be to oversee the development of staffed play provision and working to the objectives of the play strategy.

Equipped play areas are currently managed by the Leisure Services Department. The recent survey of play areas in Denbighshire conducted by Playpeople to support this strategy identified the need to develop play areas that rely more on natural features and on blending with the natural environment in order to broaden the range of play experiences on offer.

The Role of Schools

In many areas, Schools are a hub for the local community and most have grounds and facilities that could be opened outside of the school day. Utilising school grounds for providing open access play provision would fit well with developments around community focussed schools. In addition there may be scope for work to

be undertaken with lunch time supervisors to better enable them to facilitate children's play.

The new foundation phase in Wales will be compulsory in all schools from 2008 for children from 3-7 years old. There is a strong emphasis on play and many schools in the County will be looking at developing their outside areas to best provide for outdoor play experiences.

Play in the Community

There is a need for an active independent play forum in Denbighshire that can act as a voice for the local community and support the development of community led play provision. If this play forum can have a strategic link in to the Play Leisure and Enrichment Group which is a sub-group of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, then it will support an approach that ensures the community voice is heard.

A key role of those involved in developing play provision within the local authority should be to ensure that communities are supported to take an active involvement and ownership in the development of staffed play provision and formal and informal play spaces.

A Playwork Profession

In terms of the existing staffed play provision from the local authority there has been a heavy reliance on seasonal workers to staff holiday playschemes. This can cause difficulties with developing a workforce as there is not enough year round provision for playworkers to develop their skills. By providing more year round provision there could be a real development in the quality of staffed provision in the County as playworkers not only develop in experience but are also able to gain qualifications in playwork. There is also a need to provide some consistency in the training available for holiday playscheme workers.

For the existing voluntary sector year round provision there is a need to identify further funding in order that playworkers can be employed full-time to allow them the necessary preparation, planning and debriefing time needed to facilitate play effectively.

There are a number of developments nationally including the establishment of a national training centre for playwork education and training which will develop on the existing qualifications framework and offer the opportunity for distance learning. This will benefit those individuals wishing to pursue a career in playwork in Denbighshire.

This strategy embraces the First Claim framework for playwork quality assessment and the Playwork Principles, which provide the professional and ethical framework for playwork.

Managing Risk and Parental Concern

“Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury.”

(Play Safety Forum Summary Statement 2002)

WAG’s Play Policy (2002) recognises that “children have an innate desire to seek out opportunities to take increasing risks” which is “an essential part of their play and learning”.

By exposing children to graduated risk taking that they can calculate and appreciate for themselves, they are then able to use these risk assessment skills in everyday life.

There is a need to develop an agreed approach to risk management in Denbighshire for both staffed provision and play spaces. In addition the play forum could play a key role in publicising the importance of risk in children’s play.

Play Across Denbighshire

The delivery of play services through the Local Authority is currently fragmented with responsibility for play development and play areas currently sitting in two different departments. There would be clear mutual benefit to be had by integrating these two services.

Denbighshire now has a well established Play, Leisure and Enrichment working group which takes on the strategic responsibility for play and feeds into the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership and consequently the single plan for children and young people.

The Play Strategy has been consulted upon with children and young people, play providers and all agencies and sectors that have a role and responsibility in upholding the right of children and young people throughout Denbighshire to play.

The accompanying document with this strategy, the Play Implementation Plan, will operate as a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) working document. The Play, Leisure and Enrichment Sub-Group of the Children and Young People’s Partnership Strategic Partnership, will assume responsibility for over-seeing the regular and periodic monitoring and evaluating of the plan. A fundamental review of the full Play Strategy (Policy and Implementation Plan) will be undertaken every three years. However, the Play Implementation Plan will be a live evolving document, developing following regular review.

Strategic Position

The Play Strategy recognises and attempts to reflect various local and national policies, including: the Disability Discrimination Act, Equal Opportunities, Denbighshire Participation Strategy, Denbighshire's Visioning 2025; Single Children and Young People's Plan; Integrated Children's Centres Strategy; Community Focused Schools Strategy; Community Safety Strategy; Community Strategy; Physical Activity Strategy; Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Strategy; Cymorth Plan; the UN Convention on the Right's of the Child; the Children Act (1989 and 2004); Better Wales; Children and Young People: Rights to Action; Early Entitlement; Extending Entitlement; Beecham Review; National Youth Service Strategy; National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services in Wales; Health Challenge Wales; Best Play; Dobson Report.

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11. Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

This glossary of terms clarifies how key terminology relating to play is interpreted within Denbighshire and aims to enhance the reader's full understanding of the Play Strategy and accompanying Play Implementation Plan. This has been compiled with the support of various Play Wales literature.

Open Access

This is any provision in which the process of play is facilitated by staff. Children, from the age of 5, are free to come and go as they please, free to decide for themselves what they want to do, why they are doing it and how they go about it.

Play Deprivation

This is the name given to the notion that not playing may deprive children of experiences that are regarded as developmentally essential and result in those affected being both biologically and socially disabled.

Playwork Principles

These principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork and as such must be regarded as a whole. They describe what is unique about play and playwork, and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people. They are based on the recognition that children and young

people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities.

Childcare

This differs from open access provision, as a contract exists between the providers and the parents/guardians, ensuring that children and young people attend for a defined period of time, during which the provider is in loco parentis. Therefore, although play opportunities can be offered within the childcare setting, provision is structured.

Play Provision

Play provision compensates children for the lack of natural play environments where they would have traditionally played. Quality play provision offers all children and young people the opportunity to freely interact with or experience: other children and young people; the natural world; loose parts; the natural elements; challenge and risk taking; playing with identity; movement; rough and tumble; the senses; and feelings.

Play Environment / Space

A rich play environment is one where children and young people are able to make a wide range of choices; where there are many possibilities so that they can invent and extend their own play. It is a varied inspirational and interesting physical environment that maximises the potential for socialising, creativity, resourcefulness and challenge. It is a place where children feel free to play in their own way, on their own terms.

Play Worker

Playworkers work in accordance with the Playwork Principles, facilitating the play process and supporting all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play. Playworkers use intervention styles that enable children and young people to extend their play, balancing risk with the developmental benefit and well being of children.

Adventure Playground

Adventure playgrounds are outdoor open access settings staffed by trained playworkers, where children can find materials and support to build and adapt their own play space to suit their own needs. It is a rich play environment that children should be able to call their own - where they can direct their own play, be spontaneous, loud, dirty, messy, silly, and where they can test themselves out against their environment and other people.

Community Build Play Areas

These are developed, built and maintained by local people — children, young people and adults — to meet the needs of a specific community. Local people learn new skills and have ownership of the play space.

Doorstep Play Projects

These are developed and run by local people for the benefit of younger children who are unable to range far from home. They can provide equipment, e.g. from a shed or container, and a safe space where children can play.

Self-build

This term is used to describe play places, usually adventure playgrounds, which are built by children and young people and the local community with the support of staff, as opposed to a contracted adult constructed environment.

Playscheme

This is temporary open access play provision staffed by playworkers, outside normal school hours, usually provided during school holidays. They can be located within a variety of settings, building-based or in an open space e.g. community or leisure centres, playing fields.

Play Ranger

“Qualified Playworkers who work with children and young people in a local park or public open space to facilitate children’s play.” (see also Peripatetic Playwork)

Equipped Play

Mike Hall to insert

Peripatetic Playwork Projects

These are the provision of a Playworker service in any area where children might be expected to play naturally, e.g. on a street, in woodland, in public open spaces, or in disused car parks. The Playworker protects and enhances the space for the children, providing them with a sense of security in their local environment.

Mobile Play Provision

This is staffed by trained playworkers and can address the play needs of children in rural communities and other areas where there are limited play opportunities. This includes playbuses that can provide both indoor and outdoor play and mobile play units where playworkers can transport equipment and materials from one place to another using a van or lorry.

Resource Centres, Scrapstores and Toy Libraries

These provide materials, information and equipment that support the work of all the above.

Play Centres

These operate in a similar way to adventure playgrounds. Building-based, they are open access and staffed by trained playworkers.

Stewardship Schemes

Working in partnership with local communities to encourage the community to take a role in the maintenance and daily inspection of parks and play spaces. This is not only financially viable but also promotes a feeling of community ownership of children’s play spaces.

Denbighshire Play Implementation Plan

Theme	No	Objective	Outcome	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1. Encouraging More Play Provision	1	Increase the number and quality of staffed open access play provision, playgrounds and playschemes across the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More play provision for all age groups. • Year round playwork provision by playwork team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop service delivery plan with targets and time line • Develop support mechanism with LA to support local communities wanting to take responsibility for their play area 	•	•
	2	In line with recommended standards, ensure play spaces have a high play value, are appropriate and accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local play spaces managed / determined by the local community. • Designed in partnership with children, young people and the community. • Increase in “play spaces” • Set of standards accepted and endorsed by the LA for play space, including child travelling distance, accessibility, play value and age appropriateness • Community use of appropriate vacant and underused property and areas. • Policy of selective demolition. • converted use of Brownfield sites to play spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure play spaces are appropriate to children and young people’s needs, close to their homes and central to the local community • Define good quality play spaces for different age groups, moving away from a policy of equipment-centred to play-centred provision • Define a process of play space development from design concept to tender design brief and which involves children and young people • Recruit and train a dedicated play space ranger team that has responsibility for routine checks, maintenance, basic repairs and the provision of face-to-face playwork • Coordinate the efforts of all 	•	•

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “play spaces” meet established standards • child friendly publicity and signs demonstrating dedicated “play spaces” 	<p>agencies with an involvement in creating new and redeveloping existing play spaces, including securing and prioritising funding and other resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support non-DCC providers to identify and secure on-going funding and resources • Ensure play is linked to appropriate transport strategies and groups 		
	3	Ensure <i>all</i> play provision is inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play opportunities for <i>all</i> children and young people throughout the County, appropriate to their needs • Consideration given to the needs of all children during all stages and aspects of planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver inclusive play training for all play provision staff, which is appropriate to the age and needs of the children and young people they work with • Ensure appropriate signs for all designated play spaces, using a range of appropriate media, which enable children to find their way 	•	•
2. The Role of Schools	4	Increase the quality and scope of play opportunities in and around all schools, with their local communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LINK WITH COMMUNITY FOCUSED SCHOOLS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the play sector is represented within the Community Focused Schools arena • Establish a mechanism for greater cooperation with schools in the provision of play opportunities • Provide schools with specialist advice and support on extending community access to free play use of 		

				<p>school grounds after teaching hours and during school holidays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specialist advice and support on the role of play and playwork in the school context • Coordinate the provision of equipped play spaces with school grounds, particularly in rural areas • Coordinate the provision of open access holiday play schemes with school grounds • Encourage and support the development of local school grounds stewardship schemes • Produce and promote a model play policy and protocol for schools • Provide playwork training for midday supervisory assistants 		
3. Play in the Community	5	Develop local play fora and support communities to take ownership of their play spaces and provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to supporting local people develop their playgrounds in partnership with the Local Authority and other agencies, including housing associations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop work with local communities to foster community ownership of local play areas • Make best use of existing resources through joined-up working • Identify funding for local fora • Develop & provide specialist support for local fora 	•	•

	6	Develop outreach and RUMPUS (rural mobile playscheme) play provision to meet the diverse and express needs of communities, e.g. urban / rural.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play provision and opportunities for <u>all</u> children and young people within their own communities. • Play provision that meets the individual needs of each community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support, resources and training for community organisations to provide open access playschemes in their own communities • Establish a policy of enabling new playschemes provision by 'pump priming' local community organisations • Establish a mobile play team that provides RUMPUS (rural mobile playschemes) in small communities not supported by local community organisations and acts as a core team for other playscheme provision as above 	•	•
4. A Playwork Profession	7	Develop the play work force, enabling all playwork staff to access affordable, accredited and progressive playwork training and working towards parity of equity with other professions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully trained and qualified Playworkers with broad range of appropriate skills. • Appropriate levels of training available and accessible to all community play projects • Playwork staff employed on JNC terms and conditions. • Playwork represented on all relevant statutory bodies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain playwork representation on the Training and Workforce Working Group • Establish greater coordination with playworkers in other settings • Complete an audit of playworkers and other staff and volunteers with a play role in Denbighshire • Playworkers to work in partnership with and influence other organisations and professionals, including community workers, youth workers etc. 	•	•

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and apply for funding for playwork training through C&YPSP Training Working Group • Ensure all playworkers undertake training on inclusivity 		
	8	Develop a co-ordinated play unit within the local authority, with relevant cross-departmental links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a play team, including Play Development Officer, Play Coordinator, Play Development Workers and Community Playworkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek funding from the LA specifically for the development of a play unit • Separate the roles of strategic play development and play coordination • Ensure that the Play Development Officer position is given sufficient weight to influence policy and development that affect play within Denbighshire • Secure future Cymorth funding for the continuation of play development and provision 		
5. Managing Risk and Parental Concern	9	Develop risk sensitive approach to playwork within all settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate monitoring and evaluation in order to provide evidence of delivery • Continuous promotion to parents, including importance of risk • Active challenging by LA and play sector on all litigation charges against play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going monitoring and research • Distribute forthcoming WAG parental information leaflets in conjunction with CIS. • Ensure reference to the Play Safety Group's literature within publicity and planning 	•	•
6. Play Across	10	Develop a multi-agency	• The multi-agency County	• Provide a coordinated,	•	•

the County

County play forum, with responsibility for overseeing the play strategy and regional and national strategies that impact on children's play.

- play forum will work in partnership with the Play, Leisure and Enrichment (PLE) group
- Co-ordinated regional play development in partnership with neighbouring Counties
 - All organisations managing or administering play provision to work in accordance with the playwork principles
 - Fair and equitable membership of multi-agency coordination group, with an equitable statutory to voluntary balance.
 - The strategy is adhered to and the action plan is comprehensively implemented.
 - Members of the multi-agency coordination group to attend relevant regional and national play fora
 - Continual development of the group in line with key regional and national initiatives
 - Comprehensive implementation of the play

- strategic overview of play and play space development, and the prioritisation of resources, particularly in the provision of play space, playschemes, and liaison with schools
- Redefine, in cooperation with the Welsh Assembly Government, a measure of play deprivation as the basis for funding play local opportunities and new developments
 - Monitor and evaluate the play strategy and implementation plan and the development of play opportunities in Denbighshire through a regular 'State of Denbighshire children's play' report and a centralised information point of play provision
 - Create terms of reference for multi-agency play forum
 - Assign partnership work duties to members
 - Promote and commit to the development of the North East Wales Play Forum
 - Develop work with Town and Community Councils and voluntary groups

		<p>strategy within the agreed timescale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of PS by PLE and Play Forum in partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish links with DCC impact team Establish system for continuous monitoring / evaluation / development of the implementation plan Children and young people to be involved in planning, monitoring and evaluation – both qualitative and quantitative Ensure monitoring and evaluation of strategy is a standing item on the PLE and Play Forum agendas 		
11	Promote the value and importance of play, upholding the rights of the County's children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater awareness of importance and value of play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with CIS and other appropriate organisations to ensure promotion of the importance of play and the value of provision through play publicity Encourage distribution of WAG play information in line with WAG PIP Distribution of other play information from other organisations 	•	•

Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee

24.01.2008

**Report by Gwion Jones, Quality & Evaluation Officer, Children
& Young People's Partnership Support Team**

Welsh Language and the Children & Young People's Partnership

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee of the steps taken towards developing Welsh language awareness, the use of the Welsh language within the Children and Young People's Partnership and the use of Welsh in service delivery.
- 1.2 It is understood that a report on this issue was requested by the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 15th of November.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Children & Young People's Partnership has adopted Denbighshire County Council's Welsh Language Scheme and complies with it. The Partnership is, however, keen to go beyond these requirements and has made progress to this end. A Workshop was held on the 15th of November to drive the agenda forward and an Improvement Plan will be developed and implemented through one of the Partnership's Working Groups.

3. Scrutiny Outcomes

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee may wish to make links with other improvement activities being taken forward within the Authority.
- 3.2 Individual members may wish to be involved in development and have a useful contribution to make, as Councillor Cefyn Williams did at the Workshop on the 15th of November 2007.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 **It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee considers this report.**

5. Background

5.1 The Welsh Language Board published a 'Youth Strategy' in June 2005 which provided an overview of the current situation with regards to Welsh Language issues and a number of recommendations for improvement.

5.2 In the Youth Strategy it is noted that:

"Unfortunately, the Board's research as well as recent Estyn reports show that the Young People's Partnerships have not yet paid due attention to matters regarding bilingualism and providing services to Welsh speakers and Welsh learners in the language of their choice."

5.3 This was clearly one of the issues to which Estyn were paying particular attention in their Inspection of Youth Support Services in Denbighshire, which took place in May 2006 and recommendation 5 from Estyn's report on this Inspection reads as follows:

Recommendation 5	Give young people better opportunities to improve their social use of the Welsh language and for more services to be delivered bilingually
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5.4 To address this recommendation the Children & Young People's Partnership set the following actions:

No	ACTIONS	LEAD	SUPPORT	SUCCESS CRITERIA	TIMESCALE
24	Ensure there are better opportunities for young people to improve their social use of the Welsh Language through developing a workshop to address this issue and producing relevant guidance	Frameworks Manager	Young People's Partnership Development Officer, Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych Chief Officer, Athrawon Bro	Evidence that young people have better opportunities to improve their social use of the Welsh Language.	Aug 2007
25	Ensure the Young People's Partnership's Annual Delivery Plan has actions within it that ensure more services are delivered through the medium of Welsh	Frameworks Manager	Young People's Partnership Development Officer, Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych Development Officer	Increase in bilingual services in formal and informal settings	Nov 2007

5.5 In their comments on the Action Plan Estyn suggested that the Children & Young People's Partnership

"....may wish to include an action which ensures that there are enough bilingual materials, activities and posters to help young people improve or develop their use of the Welsh language in informal settings."

- 5.6 In the spring of 2007 the Welsh Language Board produced a document titled "Development Guidelines Bilingual Youth Support Services". This document is in fact a template for self assessment with a number of statements accompanied by 'tick boxes' and space for comments and action points.
- 5.7 A self-assessment using the template provided by the Welsh Language Board was undertaken during the spring of 2007. The original intention had been to ask partners to complete the template and collate the results. However, the way the questions were structured and the fact that they called for a yes or no answer made that problematic. As a result, the self-assessment was completed by the Partnership Support Team with input and assistance from the Youth Service and Sylvia Jones from Lifelong Learning.
- 5.8 The self-assessment was completed by the end of May 2007, however, following requests for feedback from the Board regarding the self-assessment, it became clear that they had not received it and it was forwarded to them in October 2007. No feedback has been received from the Welsh Language Board regarding the self-assessment.
- 5.9 During 2007, a number of meetings were held between members of the Partnership Support Team and officers from Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych to drive this agenda forward.
- 5.10 As a result of these meetings, Menter Iaith now sits on the Partnership's Training & Workforce Development Group. Menter Iaith officers also played a key role with the Partnership Support Team in organising and delivering the Partnership's Welsh Language Seminar on the 15th of November 2007.

5.11 Current Position

- 5.12 The Children & Young People's Partnership has adopted the Denbighshire County Council Welsh Language Scheme and complies with it. The Welsh Language is specifically referred to in the Partnership's Governance Arrangements under paragraph 10.1.
- 5.13 All documents published publicly are produced in Welsh and English and the Partnerships logo is bilingual in Welsh and English.
- 5.14 At present, the Children & Young People's Partnership does not conduct any of its meetings mainly or exclusively through the medium of Welsh.
- 5.15 The only regular Partnership meetings at which there is a translator present are the quarterly meetings of the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Young People's Partnership. Even at these meetings, there have been occasions where no one has actually spoken in Welsh.

- 5.16 Agendas and minutes for the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Young People's Partnership are produced in Welsh and English, but most papers are in English only. For other meetings the agenda, notes and most papers are in English only.
- 5.17 Agendas, evaluation sheets and some papers are produced in Welsh and English for Partnership Workshops. There is always an introduction in Welsh at these Workshops and those attending are given the opportunity to contribute in Welsh.
- 5.18 A number of the organisations that belong to the Children & Young People's Partnership provide services through the medium of Welsh. However, there are also a number of member organisations that have insufficient fluent Welsh speakers to be able to do so.
- 5.19 Consultation Carried out - Workshop on the 15th of November 2007**
- 5.20 This workshop was attended by 19 people in all, representing a variety of different partner organisations, and this was the main venue for consultation on these issues.
- 5.21 Issues raised at the Partnership's Welsh Language Workshop on the 15th of November included:
- Long standing members of the Partnership felt that there has been significant progress by the Partnership over the past two years
 - A number of organisations that operate throughout the United Kingdom do not produce materials in Welsh and this causes difficulties for those wishing to deliver services locally
 - Lack of planning often means that translation holds back publication or is perceived as a problem
 - Member organisations of the Children & Young People's Partnership are at different levels of development in terms of language awareness and the capacity to deliver services through the medium of Welsh
 - It would be helpful for organisations that work with children and young people to have materials in Welsh and a reference guide to delivering services through the medium of Welsh
- 5.22 Those who attended the Workshop felt that it had been highly beneficial and that there was a need for an improvement plan to address Welsh language issues within the Partnership.

5.23 Response to Estyn in October 2007

5.24 The extracts that follow are taken from an evaluation report detailing progress made since the ESTYN Inspection on the quality of Denbighshire Youth Support Services May 2006:

Actions since May 2006

- *Funds were allocated from Cymorth under-spend 2006-2007 to proposals where Welsh speakers were being specifically targeted.*
- *The availability and breadth of services available through the medium of Welsh is one of the specific target areas for the Needs Assessment being undertaken as part of the development of the Children & Young People's Single Plan.*
- *Youth Service Foundation Training is available in Welsh in partnership with Gwynedd and Ynys Môn.*
- *Welsh curriculum materials have been designed for Youth Work sessions and are in the process of being printed. Training for Youth Workers to use these materials is to take place in February 2008 to be implemented from April 2008.*
- *Children and Young People's University includes bilingual sessions.*
- *Clwb Cymru Corwen continue to use bilingual resources (such as Think Before You Drink)*
- *Countryside information is a curriculum resource for the D of E award is being purchased in Welsh for use by the Youth Service from January 2008.*
- *Youth Service Training Plan includes developing Youth Workers to use Welsh in Youth Work settings.*

5.25 Moving Forward

5.26 The Partnership Support Team is in the process of developing packs of Welsh Language materials for Member organisations and reference files to go with those packs. Some of the relevant materials were brought by different agencies to the Workshop on the 15th of November, but significant work remains to be done.

5.27 Establishing a baseline for Welsh language issues within Partnership organisations would be beneficial. It is intended to take this forward through either the Quality & Evaluation Working Group or the Training & Workshop Development Group.

5.28 There is a need to extend the use of Welsh within the Partnership, and specifically within regular meetings. One aim might be to ensure that Welsh is seen and heard at all regular Partnership meetings.

5.29 The setting of aims, and the plans to meet them, should be encompassed within the Partnership's Welsh Language Improvement Plan. This could be the focus of a further Partnership Workshop.

5.30 There are several strands of work ongoing to improve the use and awareness of Welsh within the Children & Young People's Partnership.

These will be drawn together in due course in a Welsh Language Improvement Plan, which should feed into the Children & Young People's Single Plan.

- 5.31 Most of the current work is being taken forward by the Partnership Support Team and relevant Partnership Working Groups. The current commitments of the Team and the Groups entail that this work will be taken forward in the medium term rather than the short term.

5.32 Implications for other Policy Areas

- 5.33 There are no obvious implications for other policy areas.

5.34 Background Papers

- 5.35 Agenda and papers for Welsh language Workshop 15.11.2007; self - Assessment of Youth Support Services for the Welsh Language Board, Estyn Reports. All are available on request from the Partnership Support Team.

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Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee

24th January 2008

Report by the Scrutiny Support Officer

Scrutiny Work Programme – Education Issues

1 Purpose of Report

To review the proposed work programme for the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee (Education issues) and to update Members on any relevant issues arising.

2 Reason for Submission of Report

To enable the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee to plan and prioritise its future work programme.

3 Development of a Work Programme

3.1 The Constitution of Denbighshire County Council requires Scrutiny Committees to prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work. The Committee has previously highlighted a range of topics which it would wish to review over the coming months. To assist the Committee in undertaking its functions these issues have been timetabled within the appended work programme for members' comments.

3.2 In addition, a number of issues have also been identified by Heads of Services as potential areas for Scrutiny to examine over the coming months. These issues have also been included in the appendix for members' comments.

4 The January Meeting Agenda

4.1 The Committee has previously concluded that it would receive 4 items per meeting (not including the monthly work programme).

4.2 The consideration of the Committee's work programme each month is essential as it allows members to regulate and monitor the Committee's business.

5 Forward Work Programme Update

Performance at Key Stages 3 and 4

- 5.1 On the 13th December, 2007, the Committee conducted its quarterly review of performance and identified key stages 3 and 4 as priority areas requiring specific scrutiny. The Interim Head of School Improvement, Catherine Simpson, has suggested that information also be brought to the Committee on key stages 1 and 2. This has been scheduled for the March meeting, subject to the Committee's approval.

The 'Webb' Review

- 5.2 In December, the Committee also agreed to review the implications of the Webb review into the mission and purpose of Further Education in Wales. Details of the review team's report have been circulated to members and formal consideration of the issue has been scheduled for the March meeting.

Progress report on Blessed Edward Jones High School

- 5.3 The Chair has agreed to defer consideration of the School's progress until the February meeting to coincide with the Committee's visit to the School (see paragraph 7.1 below).

Single Plan Needs Assessment

- 5.4 The Single Plan for Children and Young People will play a key role in the delivery of services. The Committee is invited to review the Needs Assessment for the Single Plan at the February meeting.

National Service Framework

- 5.5 Officers had highlighted a potential issue for further scrutiny in respect of reviewing the Self Assessment Audit Tool for Children, Young People & Maternity Services. This was outlined in February 2006. Although the issues remain relevant they will now be covered within the Single Plan (see above) and are therefore recommended to be considered within the context of the Single Plan.

6 Corporate Governance Committee

Blessed Edward Jones Roman Catholic High School

- 6.1 In December 2007, the Corporate Governance Committee reviewed the progress of the High School against an audit in 2006 and the financial aspects of the Estyn post inspection action plan.
- 6.2 The Committee felt that further clarification regarding the School's role in education provision in the area was required. However, the Committee also considered that it would be premature for any decision to be made regarding

the future viability of the school before the outcome of the consultation on Cambridge Education's report. As a result of the discussion, the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee was requested to keep matters at the School under review, including a review of pupil numbers currently on the role, and for future years.

School Uniform Grants

- 6.3 In December, the Corporate Governance Committee also considered the results of an audit into school uniform grants and asked the Scrutiny Committee to look into whether the potential demand from parents was being met and vouchers fully utilised, as the scheme had surplus funds available.
- 6.4 Members instructions on both these issues are requested.

7 February Meeting - Blessed Edward Jones School

- 7.1 The Committee's meeting in February will be held in Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School, following confirmation from the acting Headteacher, Catherine Britton, of these arrangements. The meeting will be preceded by a short tour of the school and members who wish to take this opportunity to see the facilities are requested to gather at the school for 9 a.m. Members are also asked to note that they should find suitable parking spaces in the vicinity of the school rather than on the school premises.

8 School Standards Monitoring Group

- 8.1 Details of the Group's recent work have been attached as appendix 2 for members' consideration. The Committee's views on the method and frequency for reporting issues from the Group to the Scrutiny Committee are invited. For example, in addition to regular updates via the Scrutiny Work Programme reports, performance monitoring and management issues can be included in the quarterly performance reports.
- 8.2 Catherine Simpson, Interim Head of School Improvement, will also provide further details on the issues covered by the SSMG and on future reporting arrangements. These will include the updated terms of reference of the group, a rationale for reporting arrangements and a pro-forma for completion by schools before they attend SSMG meetings.

9 Implications on Other Policy Areas

The development of a coordinated work programme will assist the Council in monitoring and reviewing policy issues.

10 **Recommendation - that**

Members consider the Work Programme for the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee (education issues) as contained in Appendix 1 and approve or amend as necessary.

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Issues for Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee – Education Appendix 1

	Date	Subject	Purpose of Report	Reason for Consideration	Author	Date Entered
1.	21 Feb	Single Plan Needs Assessment	To consider the Needs Assessment for the Children & Young People's Single Plan	<i>Scrutiny of Policy</i> The Single Plan is a key policy.	Sally Ellis / Eva Walters	Jan 08
2.	21 Feb	Update on Progress: Blessed Edward Jones High School	To review progress following Estyn's monitoring visit in the Autumn term. Report received on 13/1 – to be updated?	<i>Scrutiny of Performance</i> Requested by the Committee on 17 October 07.	Julian Molloy	Oct 07
3.	21 Feb	Community Learning Centres	To review progress on the development of the centres.	Agreed by Committee in Jan 07 at request of Cllr Hugh Evans.	Julian Molloy / Siân Price	Jan 07
4.	21 Feb	Estyn LEA Action Plan & Young People's Partnership Action Plan & MEP	To monitor on a monthly basis the progress of the Action Plans and the Modernising Education Programme (Cambridge Education)	<i>Scrutiny of Performance</i> Monthly monitoring is a requirement of the Estyn Action Plan.	James Curran	Dec 07
5.	20 Mar	Performance at all Key Stages	To identify the reasons behind low achievement levels at all key stages, and what need to be done to improve them.	<i>Scrutiny of Performance</i> Identified as key issues (KS 3 & 4) by the committee on 13 Dec 07.	Catherine Simpson	Dec 07
6.	20 Mar	Directorate Quarterly Performance Report: Quarter 3	To monitor and challenge performance within the Directorate against agreed targets and objectives.	<i>Scrutiny of Performance</i> To enable the Committee to review and challenge current performance.	Steve Price	July 07
7.	20 Mar	Directorate Business Plan	To facilitate members' input into the draft business plan.	<i>Scrutiny of Policy & Performance</i>	Jackie Walley	Dec 07
8.	20 Mar	Estyn LEA Action Plan & Young People's Partnership Action Plan & MEP	To monitor on a monthly basis the progress of the Action Plans and the Modernising Education Programme (Cambridge Education)	<i>Scrutiny of Performance</i> Monthly monitoring is a requirement of the Estyn Action Plan.	James Curran	Dec 07
9.	20 Mar	Mission & Purpose of Further Education in Wales	To review the implication so the 'Webb' review into further Education in Wales	<i>Scrutiny of Policy</i> Requested by Co-opted Member D. Smith on 13 December 07.	Julian Molloy	Dec 07

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	Date	Subject	Purpose of Report	Reason for Consideration	Author	Date Entered
10	June	Directorate Quarterly Performance Report: Quarter 4	To monitor and challenge performance within the Directorate against agreed targets and objectives.	<i>Scrutiny of Performance</i> To enable the Committee to review and challenge current performance.	Steve Price	July 07
11.	June	Estyn LEA Action Plan & Young People's Partnership Action Plan & MEP	To monitor on a monthly basis the progress of the Action Plans and the Modernising Education Programme (Cambridge Education)	<i>Scrutiny of Performance</i> Monthly monitoring is a requirement of the Estyn Action Plan.	James Curran	Dec 07
12	June	Annual membership review	To agree the committee's non-statutory co-opted membership for 2008/09.	The co-opted members' term of office is reviewed annually.	Steve Price	Oct 07
13	Sep / Oct	Joint Risk Assessment	An annual review of the directorate's high level risks.	Agreed by LLSC in November 2007.	Ivan Butler	Nov 07

FUTURE ITEMS

	Subject	Purpose of Report	Reason for Consideration	Author	Date Entered
14.	School Admissions Criteria	To review the over subscription Admissions criteria in light of the previous year's intake & Cambridge Education's MEP findings.	<i>Scrutiny of Policy</i> Identified for review in April 07. Confirmed in July 07.	Tbc	July 07
15.	Anti-Bullying in Schools policies & procedures.	To examine the Council's mechanisms for tackling bullying in schools.	<i>Scrutiny of Policy & Performance</i> Agreed by the committee on 19.4.07	Michael Duke / Sylvia Jones	Apr 07
16.	Condition & Suitability Surveys	To review the results of condition surveys and the progress of suitability surveys for the Directorate's property portfolio.	<i>Investigative Scrutiny</i> Agreed by Committee in Sep 07 from a proposal by Cllr Pickering	John Williams / Gareth Evans	Oct 07

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Revised 16/1/2008

Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
		<i>February</i>	<i>7 February</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>6 March</i>

Work Programme List.doc

School Standards Monitoring Group – 13 December 2007

1. Actions from last meeting
 - 15 schools contacted.
 - Targets 2008 revisited with all secondary schools.
 - External consultant working with Blessed Edward Jones High School and Prestatyn High School.
 - (1) School Improvement and Partnership & Inclusion now have joint meetings underway to coordinate support for target schools.
 - (2) Benchmarking information now presented very clearly to schools for target setting discussions, highlighting the number of pupils required to achieve quartile improvements.
 - (3) Estyn matrix not yet completed by secondary schools. JM to action if supported at next secondary Heads' meeting
 - (4) Cluster models to be presented for consideration at Heads' meetings in January.
2. Terms of reference amended to include requirement to provide termly summary of SSMG to Scrutiny. Terms of reference to be circulated to schools.
3. Draft shared evaluation framework. Based on Estyn framework of seven questions about school improvement. Descriptions provided for five levels of performance/quality within each key question. From this it would be possible to agree with schools a judgement for each question and an overall effectiveness grade.

On this basis it would be possible to categorise schools and provide support in proportion to need, as outlined in the Action Plan.

Framework to be consulted on at January Heads' meetings. Draft already in circulation.
4. Visits to targeted primary schools are resulting in a 'quartile movement improvement plan'. Important to note these schools are not necessarily schools causing concern, or our lowest performing schools. In those schools support arrangements will be triggered by the 'high priority' system in place and by action arising from initial grading of schools in question 1a of the evaluation framework.
5. Hedd Vaughan Evans provided the Group with very clear and useful analyses of secondary schools' performance, track record in matching target setting with results and secondary performance in relation to all Welsh authorities and to 'family' LAs.
6. Two invited schools made very convincing presentations about the challenges they face and the extensive action being taken to meet and overcome these challenges.

The primary school focused on the impact of special needs and particularly speech and language difficulties on achievement and on tracking underachievement. Training and qualification by internal staff now provides continuous support for speech and language difficulties. This has not had impact yet on results at end of KS2 which are lower in terms of benchmarking than KS1 results. However impact in 2008 is anticipated. This is further supported by the intensive focus on tracking individual pupils, particularly those on Grade 3/ Grade 4 borderline, which was demonstrated to SSMG. Further discussion ensued about the extensive turnover of pupils with high inward mobility in both key stages. Inward movement is carefully recorded by the school and correlation with achievement should be checked.

The school has been effectively supported by the LA in developing its tracking systems.

The secondary school focused on improvement priorities identified following a monitoring inspection by Estyn soon after the appointment of the Headteacher. The Head rightly chose to focus on a narrow range of highly influential factors. Self-esteem (including a new uniform), attendance, behaviour and learning are priorities. The positive impact on attitudes to the school and learning was outlined very vividly. The Head can now be confident that learning is taking place in an orderly and respected environment. This judgement was confirmed by a further, more positive monitoring inspection. At the next inspection the aim will be to present evidence of improvement in standards arising from improved attitudes.

The school has been well supported by the LA in managing a budget deficit and in providing Curriculum Support to observe and develop learning. An external consultant has been recruited by the LA to support improvement plans.

Actions Arising.

JW to work with the primary school on a data system that will enable FSM entitlement to be derived from a social benefits database.

TJ to support the school in identifying the impact of mobility on attainment.

For future meetings with schools, SSMG requested that suitable introductory material be supplied in advance.

Schools who attended to be invited to give their views on how the process should be developed.