

Special Educational Needs Joint Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2017

- PRESENT:** Councillor R. Meirion Jones (**Anglesey Council**) (Chair)
Gwynedd Council
Councillors Elin Walker Jones, E. Caerwyn Roberts
Anglesey Council
Councillors Trefor Lloyd Hughes, MBE, Gwilym O. Jones
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Educational Psychologist (Mr Gareth Payne)
Head of Learning (Mrs Delyth Molyneux) (IOACC)
Education Officer ALN (Dr Einir Thomas) (IOACC)
Project Manager (Eleri Llewelyn) (Gwynedd Council)
Senior Education Accountant (Mrs Kathy Bell) (Gwynedd Council)
Committee Officer (Ann Holmes) (IOACC)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors Llinos Medi Huws (Chair), Ieuan Williams (IOACC) Beth Lawton (Vice-chair), Eirwyn Williams (Gwynedd Council)
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Kenneth Hughes (Education Portfolio Holder, IOACC)
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1 CHAIR

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-chair, Councillor R.Meirion Jones was elected Chair for this meeting of the Joint- Committee.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3 MINUTES OF THE 18TH NOVEMBER, 2016 MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Special Educational Needs Joint-Committee held on 18 November, 2016 were presented and were noted.

4 PRESENTATION ON THE NEW JOINT ALN AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

The Joint-Committee was given a presentation on the latest situation with regard to the timetable for restructuring in the context of the implementation of the Joint ALN and Inclusion Strategy.

IOACC's ALN Education Officer referred to the following milestones –

- Appointment of the Leadership Team by spring 2017.
- One to one meetings with every member of staff
- Posts within the service's structure to be filled by 31 May, 2017.
- The new collaborative service to become operational by 1 September, 2017.
- The employer to be Gwynedd Council.

The Officer proceeded to outline current progress and referred to the following activities –

- The two senior managers have been appointed
- That the four ALN and Inclusion Quality Officers have been appointed
- Advert for Education Leader has been published
- Steps are being taken to appoint a Senior Counsellor and Senior Communications and Interactions Teacher
- Attention is being given to staffing matters including the transfer of key staff to posts within the strategy.

The Officer stated that the next steps would include addressing the aspects noted below -

- The two senior managers to undertake ALN and Inclusion duties for Anglesey and Gwynedd at the beginning of the summer term.
- Ensuring that key staff are in place by 31 March, 2017
- That the governance arrangements have been agreed upon
- That the cross authority service is being planned and procedures are in place by the end of the summer term.

As regards the administrative matters, the following elements need to be considered -

- The Information management role of the service; the role of the Data Unit and the ALN and Inclusion Data Officer Role.
- Discussion regarding Gwynedd area offices and the Anglesey administrative team.
- Administrative support to ensure effective monitoring
- Review meetings arrangements; forum minutes management; information sharing; updating information websites; supporting staff and specific managers.

The Joint-Committee was shown a diagram of how the new Integrated Team and the elements within it, including the ALN and Inclusion Services, will look.

The Committee noted the information.

5 GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR THE JOINT ALN AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

A flow chart was circulated for the attention of the Joint-Committee which showed the governance arrangements of the ALN and Inclusion service to be provided by Gwynedd Council on behalf of Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils. A table was also presented showing the governance forums under the new Strategy, their responsibilities and terms of reference.

It was noted that the following are new forums in the governance arrangements and that they will be additional to the Education Management Teams of both Counties and the Cabinet in Gwynedd and Executive in Anglesey that exist already –

ALN and Inclusion Senior Management Team
Gwynedd and Anglesey ALN and Inclusion Monitoring and Scrutiny Board
Meetings between the Head of Education in Gwynedd and Head of Learning in Anglesey

The Isle of Anglesey County Council's ALN Education Officer explained how the case for additional assistance will be made in line with the Strategy; she said that the process of providing assistance will be more rapid under the new arrangement. For children with acute needs, the path towards a statement or a specific number of hours of assistance with a carer will still be available to them; however, the intention is to target the child earlier so that there will be less need for intense intervention.

The Isle of Anglesey County Council's Head of Learning said that the criteria and thresholds for access to additional assistance implemented by the Area Forums will be consistent across the two counties meaning that equal opportunities within the service as a whole will be stronger. The success or otherwise of the intervention will be assessed by collecting the outcomes for children and reporting them back to the two authorities. The quality of the service will also receive regular

attention through the Monitoring and Scrutiny Board. Also, reports will be presented to the relevant scrutiny committees of both counties so that they can assess the nature of the investment in the service and the outcome of that investment in terms of the performance of this group of children and be able to evaluate whether or not the service is providing value for money. Any specific decisions regarding this shall be made by the Gwynedd Council Cabinet and the Isle of Anglesey County Council's Executive.

Gwynedd Council's Project Officer said that the flow chart and table of responsibilities provide a summary only and that further details are available in the partnership document. Any comments the members of the Joint-Committee would like to make with regard to the level of accountability which the new process offers would be appreciated, either in this meeting or within the next two weeks.

The Joint-Committee considered the information presented and made the following comments -

- That the Joint-Committee would like to see the continuation of the opportunity which is currently available to question the services directly such as the Educational Psychology Services and the Specialist Teacher Service.

The Isle of Anglesey County Council's Head of Learning said that monitoring and tracking each individual service against indicators will be undertaken by the Gwynedd and Anglesey ALN and Inclusion Monitoring and Scrutiny Board on which a Member of Gwynedd's Cabinet and a Portfolio Member of the Anglesey's Executive will be representatives.

- That the Joint-Committee would like to see Back Bench Members also having an opportunity to scrutinise the service.

The Isle of Anglesey County Council's Head of Learning confirmed that this would happen through the Scrutiny process in the two counties. As the arrangements and capacity of scrutiny committees can vary from county to county, the Joint-Committee is asked for its views regarding the frequency of reporting to the scrutiny committees of Anglesey and Gwynedd.

The Joint-Committee proposed that reports on the new Joint ALN and Inclusion Service should be presented to the Scrutiny Committees of Gwynedd Council and the Isle of Anglesey Council twice a year initially.

It was agreed that the presentation materials should be distributed to those members of the Joint-Committee who were not present in order to afford them the opportunity to make comments on the contents.

6 FINANCIAL UPDATE

The report of Gwynedd Council's Head of Finance incorporating the Joint-Committee's budget for the period from April to August 2017 was presented. As the Joint-Committee would be coming to an end as an entity on 31 August, 2017, the budget represents 5 months of costs only.

The Chief Education Accountant of Gwynedd Council said that she had nothing new to report in the context of the current 2016/17 budget apart from noting that it is intended, subject to the views of the external auditors, to present the Joint-Committee's final accounts for 2016/17 to the Audit Committee of Gwynedd Council as the lead authority under the new arrangements after 31 August, 2017.

As regards the 2017/18 budget, the only new element included is the Apprenticeship Levy which is being introduced for the first time in 2017/18 and is 0.5% of the Joint-Committee's staff costs. The true staffing situation as at April, 2017 is as follows -

- 9.7 Psychologists (including two trainees)
- 7.0 Specialist Teachers
- 1.4 Senior Assistants
- 4.4 Administrative Staff

There has been a delay in relocating staff to Gwynedd Council's Headquarters but it is expected that this will happen soon. Gwynedd's contribution for the 5 months will be £313,100 and Anglesey's contribution will be £174,060 together with savings of £23,000 not identified which brings Anglesey's total contribution to £197,000. The authorities will pay whatever is the true cost of the Joint-Committee for the period from April to August, 2017.

It was resolved to approve the budget for 2017/18, namely for the period of 5 months from April to August, 2017.

7 NEXT MEETING OF THE JOINT-COMMITTEE

It was noted that the next meeting of the Joint-Committee will be held at 10:30am, on Friday, 23rd of June, 2017 in Caernarfon and is convened specifically to approve the Joint-Committee's draft accounts for 2016/17 prior to audit.

**Councillor R. Meirion Jones
Chair**