

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY 2013**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

SUBJECT: **SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA REVIEW UPDATE**

1.00 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on the progress of the school funding formula review and to present the revised project timeline.

2.00 **BACKGROUND**

2.01 Members will be aware that a fundamental review of the Schools Funding Formula is underway and recall that the outcome of the detailed analysis undertaken to date was reported to the December meeting of Cabinet. The objective at the outset of the project was to have delivered a revised funding formula for application to 2013/14 school budgets.

2.02 The Specialist Schools Formula Review has been completed and a pressure bid of £250k put forward as part of the 2013/14 budget cycle to enable the revised formula to be implemented. This investment in the schools will support enhanced staffing levels to meet children and young people's complex needs.

2.03 Significant progress has been made in reviewing the formula for Primary and Secondary schools. The analysis at this time is incomplete but has highlighted some key issues relating to the funding levels in school budgets. In particular, the modeling on primary school budgets shows a significant funding gap between funding allocated and identified needs which will need to be more fully understood and considered within the context of the Authority's medium term financial strategy.

2.04 At the November Schools Budget Forum, members of the Forum confirmed that they were supportive of the review project but would prefer to delay implementation until 2014/15 which would allow for a full analysis and a meaningful consultation with schools.

2.05 Following the School Budget Forum discussions were held with the Chief Executive, Head of Finance and the Leader on the outcome of the analysis to date and the key issues arising. It was agreed that given the importance of the project to the Authority a proposal should be taken forward to the Project Board to work towards implementation of a new formula for primary and secondary schools in 2014/15 schools budgets. This will allow for a full and complete analysis on the impact of any changes to the formula on both schools and the Authority prior to implementation. The December meeting of the Project Board agreed and welcomed this proposal.

2.06 The revised project timetable is attached at Appendix 1. The intention is to complete the review by the end of June, with the proposals on the new formula to be issued to schools and other stakeholders for consultation during July to September. The consultation period was agreed at the Project Board.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The revision to the project timeline for the Funding Formula review will allow ample time to complete the analysis, model the impacts on the medium term financial strategy and consult on proposals with schools and other stakeholders.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Cabinet members are asked to endorse the change in project timeline for the Schools Funding Formula review.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The application of a new formula could result in a redistribution of funding across schools. Transition arrangements will need to be considered to minimise the impact on schools.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.02 The equitable distribution of funding across schools will help to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 There are no identified environmental impacts.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The formula will aim to ensure that all children have equal access to education.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 Redistribution of funding across schools could result in redundancies/redeployment of staff from individual schools.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Consultation with schools, unions, members, Schools Budget Forum.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Schools, unions, Schools Budget Forum

12.00 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Project Timeline

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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