

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

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

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

SUBJECT: **CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF
POST-16 PROVISION**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To seek the approval of the Cabinet to commence the process of consultation relating to post-16 provision in the Flint and Saltney areas.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Following development work involving Secondary Headteachers, College Leaders across Flintshire and consultation with learners, the Council approved a Strategic Outline Case in July 2010 which detailed options for the future development of post-16 provision in Flintshire. The Strategic Outline Case had previously been presented to Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Headteachers. It was subsequently supported by the Welsh Government.

2.02 The Welsh Government has set out its ambitions for transformation of provision and outcomes in post-16 education. The Welsh Government and Estyn have both set out their expectations that Flintshire should be more ambitious in addressing inefficient post-16 provision in order to improve resilience and outcomes for learners.

2.03 Secondary Schools in Flintshire vary significantly in the size of sixth form provision. Whilst the Alun School in Mold has the largest sixth form in Flintshire, and one of the largest in Wales, some others such as Holywell High School, Flint High School, St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, John Summers High School, Elfed High School Buckley and St. David's Saltney have relatively small sixth forms with varying degrees of viability and sustainability.

2.04 The Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 requires that learners registered with a provider are offered a minimum choice of 30 subjects, five of which must be vocational. This is a major challenge for schools and only the largest sixth forms can draw sufficient funding through the post-16 funding mechanism in order to pay for the range of staff and resources needed for the required offer on-site.

- 2.05 Schools have met the requirements of the measure through various methods of collaboration including the establishment of a consortium involving schools and Deeside College. However, most models of collaborative working do mean a significant element of transport for learners to access various parts of the curriculum at different sites. This process is disruptive to learners, unsustainable in terms of cost and does not provide the best in learning environments.
- 2.06 The Strategic Outline Case report was compiled with contributions from Headteacher representatives from all Flintshire High Schools, and also representation from Deeside College. The agreed preferred option was to concentrate most provision for North Flintshire in a sixth form centre at Connah's Quay and to establish other recognised 'hubs' for post 16 provision. These were envisaged at the existing Castell Alun High School/Hawarden High School and The Alun High School in Mold. Welsh Medium would be offered through Ysgol Maes Garmon working in partnership with other North East Wales schools and Deeside College.
- 2.07 Consultations have taken place regarding the reduction of surplus places and/or the reorganisation of post-16 provision at the following schools, Holywell High School, Connah's Quay High School, John Summers High School and Elfed High School. However, the remaining schools with relatively small sixth forms also require consultations regarding their post -16 provision.
- 2.08 It is proposed that in order to complete the process of consultations on post 16 provision in the North Flintshire area, that a series of consultation meetings are held at Flint High School, St. Richard Gwyn High School and St. David's High School.
- 2.09 It is important that the process of consultation is entered into in a spirit of partnership and openness. The Local Authority welcomes views from schools and communities on how the agreed principles from the Strategic Outline Case may best be secured.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The Welsh Government has approved in principle the granting of £32m towards the cost of a major renewal and refurbishment programme from the 21st Century Schools programme, with the proviso that the reorganisations will reduce substantially the percentage of surplus places and also achieve a rationalisation of the post-16 provision. The Council is charged with match funding the remaining 50%, with the exception of the proposed post-16 centre at Connah's Quay which will be 25% funded by Deeside College.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That the Cabinet approves the commencement of consultations with the relevant schools in relation to sustainability of post 16 provision and opportunities to reduce inefficiencies in accordance with the requirements of the 21st Century Schools Programme and the agreed Strategic Outline Case.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 There are no financial implications as a result of this report as the report commissions consultation with school communities.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 There is no impact as a result of this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 There is no impact as a result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 There will be no impact arising as a result of the decision to hold local consultations.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 There is no impact as a result of this report

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 Consultations will be undertaken in accordance with Welsh Government statutory guidance.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 11.01 Consultation has been undertaken in the areas surrounding all secondary schools with more than 25% surplus places in Flintshire.

12.00 APPENDICES

None.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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