

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **THURSDAY, 14 MARCH 2013**

REPORT BY: **THE DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

SUBJECT: **SCHOOL MODERNISATION UPDATE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To update Members on the progress made in relation to the School Modernisation Strategy.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 The Flintshire School Modernisation Strategy sets out the need to make schools 'fit for purpose' for the 21st Century. This strategy complements the Welsh Government 21st Century Schools programme, which aims to provide upgraded school learning environments to reduce surplus places and to ensure efficient use of resources.
- 2.02 Various National initiatives have been produced by the Welsh Government relating to the provision of school places. These include the reduction in overall surplus places in both Primary and Secondary schools and the rationalisation of post-16 provision.
- 2.03 The only source of capital funding from central Government is via the 21st Century Schools Programme. This grant funding is available only if an Authority is able to demonstrate that its modernisation proposals meet those requirements.
- 2.04 Cabinet has also commissioned local consultation on the principles and actions needed to address sustainability of post-16 provision in Saltney and Flint. The two high schools located in Flint have recently announced plans to extend their local collaborative working arrangements.
- 2.05 The Minister has approved in principle the £32.1m grant for renewal and remodelling of schools in the Holywell, Connah's Quay and Queensferry areas. This funding amounts to 50% of the overall cost, and Flintshire County Council has agreed to fund the balance by accessing funds through Prudential Borrowings.

Consultations on area reviews have been completed in the following areas: -

Buckley, Mynydd Isa & Mold

Preferred Option – To retain 11-16 provision at Elfed High School. Rationalise to 600 places, to include Additional Learning Needs and other education, leisure and cultural uses.

Involving Buckley Elfed High School to change the age range of the school from 11-18 to 11-16. This was initiated by concerns of the Governing Body about the financial and curricular viability of its sixth-form provision.

Queensferry, Shotton & Connah's Quay

Preferred Option – Develop 3-16 facility at John Summers High School with a Post-16 hub at Connah's Quay High School.

John Summers High School – this consultation relates to the establishment of a remodelled 3-16 age range school, with nursery provision currently provided by the Croft Nursery to be incorporated into the existing Queensferry Primary School and St Ethelwold's Primary School. The Croft nursery accommodation would be used to accommodate an expanded Flying Start provision which supports families and family children in the area. This provision already occupies part of the Croft site.

The proposals for Connah's Quay include the establishment of a post-16 hub on land between the existing Connah's Quay High School and Deeside College. This hub would provide for all post-16 provision principally for North Flintshire Schools. Connah's Quay High School would also have a change in age range from 11-18 to 11-16.

Holywell High School, Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron

Preferred Option – Build a new High School for pupils aged 11-16, together with a new primary school to replace Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron.

A new learning campus would be established on the site of the existing Holywell High School. The major investment here would provide a new High School, which would be smaller and better serve the needs of the area, and the amalgamation and subsequent new Primary school on the same site would mean an efficient and modern provision of both primary and secondary accommodation.

The outcome of the consultations and consideration of the responses will be made by the Cabinet on the 19th March 2013.

- 2.06 Other initiatives being progressed relate to amalgamations of Infant and Junior Schools into through Primary Schools. The current proposed amalgamations at Shotton and Hawarden are subject to Statutory Notice, whilst consultations at Penyffordd have been completed. If approved, the amalgamations in the three communities are expected to be in place for September 2013.
- 2.07 The Minister for Education has confirmed the closure of Ysgol Rhes y Cae as of 31st August 2013. Appropriate transitional arrangements are being made with members of the school community.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The outcomes of consultations on the proposed Area Reviews of provision are to be reported to Cabinet on the 19th March 2013. If approved, Statutory Notices will be prepared in relation to a change in age range from 11-18 to 11-16 from 2016 at Holywell High School, Connah's Quay High School, John Summers High School and from 2014 at Buckley Elfed High School. Statutory Notices would also be published in relation to the proposed closure of the Croft Nursery. Additional Statutory Notices would be required for the proposed amalgamations at Holywell (Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron) and Penyffordd Infant and Junior Schools.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That Members note the contents of the report and that future updates on the progress of the strategy are submitted when appropriate.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 If options are approved for progression to the Statutory stage, the commitment to fund the overall £64.2m 21st Century Schools Programme will be called upon
- 5.02 The liability for Flintshire County Council under these arrangements would be £32.1m in accordance with the agreement of County Council on 1 March 2012, and the subsequent inclusion of the Prudential Borrowing in the Medium Term Financial plan.

- 5.03 The indicative capital development costs which have been included in the Strategic Outline Business Case for the preferred options are as follows:

Holywell High School, Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron	£31.25m
Queensferry, Shotton and Connah's Quay and Post-16 Hub	£18.25m
3-16 Facility at John Summers	£14.70m

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 The progress of the School Modernisation Strategy will improve educational opportunities.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 None from this update report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 None from this update report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 None from this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 Consultations on post-16 provision in Saltney and Flint to be undertaken following approval.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 11.01 Extensive consultations in each of the areas relating to post-16 provision. Individual school consultations undertaken about proposals for Infant and Junior School amalgamations.

12.00 APPENDICES

None.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

Contact Officer:	Tom Davies
Telephone:	01352 704011
Email:	tom.davies@flintshire.gov.uk