

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **THURSDAY, 6 AUGUST 2015**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER, EDUCATION AND YOUTH**

SUBJECT: **SCHOOL MODERNISATION - SCHOOL STANDARDS AND ORGANISATION ACT 2013 – SALTNEY ST DAVID’S POST 16 STATUTORY PROPOSALS**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To inform Cabinet of responses from the statutory consultation period for the proposal to change the age range at St David’s High School, Saltney and to seek approval to proceed to the next stage of the process as defined in the School Organisational Code.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Cabinet in February 2013 resolved that approval be given for 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.

2.02 The Council decided to re-run consultation on the proposals for St David’s High School, Saltney following recent judicial review of a contested school reorganisation decision in South Wales and supplementary advice from Welsh Government Legal Counsel.

2.03 The previous consultation drew a limited consultation response, with only one objection at statutory proposal stage. The re-run of the consultation at Saltney St David’s was held to ensure that the Council was beyond procedural challenge.

2.04 Under the current School Organisational Code only those proposals which receive an objection from a local authority or which are connected with the removal or establishment of sixth form provision will be referred to Welsh Ministers.

2.05 The new consultation to proposed change of age from 11-18 to 11-16 at St David’s High School, Saltney commenced on 5th June 2015 and ended on 17th July 2015.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 During the statutory consultation period as highlighted above, the

Council received only two responses to the proposal to change the age range at St David's, Saltney.

3.02 One response was from Coleg Cambria and stated the following:

"The creation of the new purpose-built sixth form centre in North Flintshire will transform post-16 A level provision. Coleg Cambria is proud to be working in partnership with St David's High School and with Connah's Quay, John Summers and Holywell High Schools along with Flintshire County Council to improve learning opportunities within the area. We are confident that by working together this transformation programme will improve learner choice and learner outcomes both pre and post 16".

3.03 The second response was from Estyn and their summary conclusion is as follows:

"The proposal demonstrates clearly the authority's intention to transform post 16 provision. The proposal is part of the Flintshire School Modernisation Strategy and forms part of the wider strategic plan for 14 – 19 provision in North Flintshire. The new sixth form centre at Connah's Quay is part of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

The proposal is likely to improve the standard of education provision for post 16 pupils who will benefit from having access to modern learning facilities and a wider range of courses than presently offered at St David's School and in the local consortium".

3.04 Full responses from Coleg Cambria and Estyn are contained within the Consultation report (Appendix 1).

3.05 Retaining the current post 16 provision through the current North Flintshire consortium arrangements is untenable. The Council has been progressing post 16 transformational change across this consortium and to this end has already successfully progressed statutory proposals in two areas, Connah's Quay and Holywell, and is currently progressing proposals for both St David's and John Summers High Schools. Additionally, two schools via their Governing bodies have formed their own consortium for post 16 provision within Flint. Effectively the previous consortium arrangements in this area are no longer in place.

3.06 As part of the planned transition to a new post 16 centre, governors and schools will be ensuring continuity of education for post 16 education students. As such they are continuing to implement organisational change plans given that transition is planned for September 2016.

3.07 It is not possible for St David's to offer post 16 education independently and meet the requirements of the Learning Measure.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That Cabinet resolve the continuation of the proposal and process, resulting in the proposal being submitted to the Welsh Minister for determination.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The proposal is to remove the post 16 provision. This will result in the school not being able to draw down grant from Welsh Government for this provision. However, as the school will not be providing post 16 provision either independently or through consortium arrangements, this will have a neutral financial impact.

5.02 As Coleg Cambria will govern the post 16 centre, funding will be made available directly by Welsh Government.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 School re-organisation change is part of our work to overcome the impact of poverty.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 School organisational change proposals are assessed for environmental impact.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 School modernisation:

- strives to provide **equality of opportunity** for all children to receive the best possible education in Flintshire schools; and
- is focused on providing **sustainable options** for education in Flintshire that meet the needs of children and young people now and in the future.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 A lead professional has been appointed to manage the new post 16 provision at Coleg Cambria and will take up their position in September 2015.

9.02 The first tranche of staffing appointments at the new Post 16 provision at Coleg Cambria will be to identified curriculum roles. Initially these roles will be ring-fenced to those staff across the consortia including St David's High School with post 16 experience in the current college and partnership schools.

- 9.03 Should identified vacancies not be filled by the first tranche procedure, recruitment for unfilled positions will be run in accordance with Coleg Cambria's recruitment and selection processes.
- 9.04 In the event that staff at St David's High School are displaced as a result of the proposal then the relevant organisational change and redundancy policy will apply and will be applied as appropriate by the governing body of St David's High School.
- 9.05 The transition may cause some uncertainty for staff based at St David's High School. Every attempt will be made by the Local Authority and School to support them through the change process.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 If the Cabinet decision is to proceed, the consultation report is issued to the Welsh Minister and the Council will publish a statutory notice providing a 28 day notice period for objections.
- 10.02 If objections are received, the Council must publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and the response to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period.
- 10.03 In the case of post 16 provision proposals are sent for Ministerial determination. This is usually within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period.
- 10.04 If the proposals receive approval they should be implemented in accordance with the published date.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 11.01 The 42 day period of consultation for the proposals at St David's High School, Saltney commenced 5th June 2015 and ended 17th July 2015.

12.00 APPENDICES

- 12.01 Appendix 1: Consultation Report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS INFORMATION ACT) 1985

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The following information will be placed in the members' library:

- Appendix A – Copy of consultation document
- Appendix B – Timeline for the Statutory Code

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