

APPENDIX 2



CONSULTATION REPORT

John Summers High School

JULY 2015

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1. Introduction

1.1 Following the end of a school organisation consultation period, the Welsh Government's School Organisational Code requires the proposer (the Council) to publish a consultation report. In this document the proposer is required to:

- Summarise each of the issues raised by consultees.
- Respond to these by means of clarification.
- Set out Estyn's view (as provided in its consultation response) of the overall merits of the proposal.

1.2 This report should be considered by decision-makers prior to determining any recommendation relating to the proposal.

2.0 The Proposal and Consultation

2.1 On the 17th February 2015, Cabinet resolved to:

Open a period of formal consultation with key stakeholders for the area on how best to secure resilient sustainable high quality education in the area for future report to Cabinet.

2.2 Consultation was carried out in accordance with the School Organisation Code. The Consultation period commenced on 5th June 2015 and ended on 17th July 2015.

2.3 In accordance with the code, consultation documents including a children and young people's version were published on Flintshire County Council's website on 5th June 2015.

2.5 Hard copies of the consultation document were delivered to local schools and Flintshire Connects Centres for people unable to access the website.

2.6 The Council produced a response document to assist and encourage people to give their views. This formed part of the Consultation Document and was also published on the Council's website. The children and young people's version of the Consultation Document contained a simpler response form. The Consultation Response form was converted into an online survey. Links to the survey were also published on the website.

2.7 All consultees received an e-mail with the link directing them to the formal consultation document and supplementary documents on the first day of the consultation (5th June 2015).

2.8 Documents were produced in both Welsh and English.

3.0 Consultation Period

Consultation commenced 5th June 2015 and ended 17th July 2015. It was conducted in accordance with the School Organisational Code (Code).

3.1 Consultation Events

Whilst not a requirement under the Code, the Council had arranged the following meetings & events:

A young person's consultation event was conducted on 23rd June 2015 by engagement officers from the Youth Service.

Separate meetings were held on 25th June 2015 with:

- Teachers and Support Staff of John Summers High School
- Governors of John Summers High School
- Parents and Carers of John Summers High School and nearby primary schools

A meeting was held with Head teachers of nearby primary schools on the 29th June 2015.

An additional meeting was held with the Governing Body on 6th July 2015.

3.2 Consultation Response

In total 593 responses were received during the consultation stage. These included a response from Estyn in the form of a report. A number of responses were received on electronic response forms and letters.

The table below show the methods people used to respond to the consultation:

Method of contact	Number of Contacts Received
Consultation Response Forms	363
Children & Young People's Response Form	208
Letters and E-mails	14
Letters and E-mails – Children and Young People	8
Total number of contacts	593

The breakdown of the response types are set out below:-

No	Response Type	Indicated links to John Summers High School		Other		Total
		Actual	%	Actual	%	
1	Consultation Response Form	273	47.81%	298	52.19%	571
2	Letters and E-mails	22	100%	0	0%	22
Totals		295		298		

Breakdown of Responses from Assembly Members & Members of Parliament

No	Response Type	Response from Assembly Members & Members of Parliament	
		AMs	MPs
1	Consultation Response Form	0	0
2	Letters and Emails	1	1
Totals		1	1

Breakdown of Petition Information

No	Response Type	No of signatures
1	Online Petition	1116
2	Handwritten Petition	2024
Totals		3140

Response Forms and correspondence

The Consultation Response Form was designed to establish:

- Whether people agreed or disagreed with a change of age range for John Summers High School;
- Whether people agreed or disagreed with the proposal to close John Summers High School;
- The capacity in which they were responding;
- Whether or not they were linked to the school;
- Whether they wanted to make any other comments

A copy of all of the correspondence received during the consultation period is available in the Correspondence Report on the Flintshire County Council website.

4.0 Key Issues Raised by Respondents from the Consultation

An analysis of the frequency of issues raised during the consultation has been completed. Respondents issues have been grouped into themes.

Key Issue 1: Transport and Travel

A number of respondents raised the following concerns:

- Increase in travel time for pupils
- Increase costs for travel to potential new high school
- Increase in congestion in the area
- Perception that walking routes to other high schools are dangerous

Response to Key Issue 1: Transport and Travel

The consultation document is clear in its assessment of the impact on learners in respect of home to school transport. The proposal will lead to increased journey times for the majority of pupils, however these fall well under the guidelines for journey times under the Transport Measure.

Whilst some pupils will be eligible for free home to school transport under the statutory three mile distance from home to school, the majority of pupils would not.

The current cost of transport to John Summers High School is £59,470.

The Authority through Cabinet could consider offering discretionary transitional transport arrangements for the current school cohort at an estimated annual cost of £135,125, a rise of £75,655 in 2017/18, reducing in following years. This would positively support transition plans and address a key area of concern of current students, parents and carers.

The cost of transport to support GCSE continuity would be an estimated £20,000 for 2016/17.

Issues around transport will be presented to Cabinet at an appropriate time.

Key Issue 2: Transition Support

A number of respondents raised the following concerns:

- Transition from the current sixth form at John Summers High School to the new post 16 learning hub
- Transition from John Summers High School to other high schools should John Summers High School close
- Change in curriculum for post 16 learners
- Change in curriculum for all year groups 7-11 should John Summers High School close
- Impact on friendship groups
- Changes in teaching staff

Response to Key Issue 2: Transition Support

It is acknowledged that school organisational change can cause anxiety for parents and carers, pupils, staff and the wider community across a number of issues, including continuity of Education.

Transition support is already in place for the proposals for post 16 learning provision. The transition plan focuses on the requirements of the learners and endeavours to mitigate risk on continuity of education should the Minister determine to close John Summers High School.

The statutory process around potential school closure has been planned to coincide with the timing of GCSE option choices for local high schools. The anticipated timeline for the Minister's decision is by the end of January 2016.

Detailed transition arrangements will continue to be developed for implementation between John Summers High School and partner schools through to December 2015. This allows students, parents and carers to make informed choices prior to considering options for GCSEs in Spring 2016.

There is an agreement with the partner high schools that they work with the Council and John Summers High School regarding the timing of their option choices for students to coincide with the timeline for Ministerial decision making.

The Council and the other partner high schools are also working on contingency transition plans should the minister not determine by the anticipated date.

Transition planning extends to the admissions process and will also involve the primary school consortium associated with John Summers High School.

Youth officers will also work with children and young people and the local schools network as part of the transition process.

The general principles of the plan will be as follows:

- Continue to work with staff at the school and at neighbouring schools to minimise disruption for students.
- Build on current joint curriculum delivery work at Key Stage 4 with local schools (particularly at Connah's Quay High school), aligning the curriculum to provide resilience and the potential for an improved range of curriculum options.
- Individual transition plans and support for vulnerable learners and dedicated plans for vulnerable cohorts (including pastoral support across transition)
- Provide options to the Cabinet for transport to address student, parent and carer concerns.

The draft transition plan is included in appendix 1.

Key Issue 3: Impact on the Community

A number of respondents raised the following concerns:

- School is part of the community
- Closing the school would impact negatively on the community and local shops and businesses

Response to Key Issue 3: Impact on Community

Concerns are noted and the Council will work with John Summers High School and community to mitigate this where possible.

Key Issue 4: Consultation Document

A number of respondents raised the following concerns:

- Information on the consultation document is misleading
- Not taken into consideration the potential housing development at the Northern Gateway

Response to Key Issue 4: Consultation Document

Paragraph 1.3 of the Code, provides guidance on Quality and Standards of Education. It stipulates that:-

“In assessing the impact of proposals on quality and standards of education and how the curriculum is being delivered, relevant bodies should consider any relevant evidence from Estyn, refer to the most recent Estyn Reports or other evidence derived from performance monitoring and take into account any other generally available information on school’s effectiveness.”

The code also stipulates that the proposer has to consider these issues at the school which is subject to the proposal or any other educational institutions which are likely to be affected. Particular attention should also be paid to vulnerable groups including children with SEN.

In this context the Authority has appropriately used relevant sources of information, namely:-

- The latest Estyn inspection for John Summers High School and for other secondary schools in the area likely to be affected by the proposal.
- The latest regional improvement Service (GwE) information for John Summers High School and for other secondary schools in the area likely to be affected by the proposal.
- The latest information from the Welsh Government’s National Categorisation system for John Summers High School and for other secondary schools in the area likely to be affected by the proposal.

The school was last inspected in January 2011, therefore it was appropriate to use the latest data from the regional improvement service (GwE) and from Welsh Government’s National Categorisation system. This data is independent of the Council. The same data has been used in another consultation on school reorganisational change running concurrently without any negative comment. Additionally, positive comments have been received regarding the clarity of the document and the data contained within. Estyn have also reported positively in their response on the use of data.

In terms of the use of National Categorisation data, the Authority has not selected information to show ‘deliberately bias or mislead’. It has used the data available on the summary page of the Welsh Government website. This information has been designed to provide information to parents when choosing a local school. It would not be appropriate to compare John Summers High

School with other schools in the same cohort on the National Categorisation System when applying the code as they could be in other geographical areas and are not directly affected by the proposal. It is appropriate when applying the school organisation code to compare John Summers High School directly with other local schools that may receive John Summer High School pupils in the event of school closure.

Over the period since inspection the school moved from Band 2 on performance in 2012 to Band 3 in 2013 to the current situation being in Category 4. It is the Authority's view that this "current" data is appropriate to utilise as it provides consultees with a snap-shot of how the school is performing. It is appropriate to compare to other local schools as they are directly affected by the proposal.

The outcomes of Free School Meals (FSM) learners were considered in more detail as John Summers High School has a higher percentage of FSM learners than other schools within Flintshire. Careful comparisons were therefore made against other schools affected by the proposal.

The evidence presented was in the context of the code and to give consultees reassurance that should John Summers High School close the standards of education and opportunities for learners in other local high schools is at least equal or better than that of John Summers High School. Estyn's report on the proposal is also relevant in this context.

There is a myriad of data that could be presented which would and could present the school performance outcomes both in a positive and negative light. Both the Local Authority and governors and the school would acknowledge that there is both good practice and performance within the school. However there are aspects of systems and performance which the governors and the school should and will be actively looking to improve.

It is acknowledged that the school did have a good Estyn Inspection, however the inspection was in 2011. Since the inspection there is independent evidence both through the National Categorisation System and the regional improvement schools service (GwE) which causes concern for the Authority, and should cause the Governors and the school concern.

The national categorisation system provides a clear and simple way of understanding how well a school is performing for all its pupils, how effectively it is led and managed, the quality of teaching and learning and the level of support and challenge it needs to do better. The system is based on a three step process:

1. Standards Group: a range of information is used to make a judgement about the standards, resulting in a standards group.
2. Improvement Capacity: an evaluation of the schools capacity to improve further, taking into account the evidence about the standards and the

quality of leadership, teaching and learning, resulting in an improvement capacity.

3. Support Category: bringing the judgement on standards group and improvement capacity together to decide on the schools support category, colour coded either green, yellow, amber or red.

The Council utilised the following formula to form potential figures for housing yield: The formula had been derived from researching the work of several authorities.

Applying the housing yield formula, if the housing development sites within the Northern Gateway were to be developed to the maximum capacity of 1325 homes (source: outline planning permission) and, in applying the new housing yield formula (0.17 per home for secondary without post 16) the total 'yield' of secondary school age child numbers eligible for admission to John Summers would be 231. If this full cohort of children were assumed to be admitted to John Summers the school population would still only be in the region of 535 pupils (using 2016/17 projected number 305 + 231 max housing yield) when all of these projections are combined.

Key Issue 5: Impact on Teaching Staff

A number of respondents raised the following concerns:

- Concern about what will happen to existing teaching staff

Response Key Issue 5: to Impact on Teaching Staff

Should the current proposals be implemented, the Council will work with the current members of staff at John Summers High School, including teaching and support staff, should they seek redeployment opportunities.

The governing body of the school will apply its own organisational change and redundancy policy when it is required and appropriate support to teaching and support staff will be provided during this time through the Schools' Leadership team and the Council.

Staff displaced by the proposal may have the opportunity to be employed in the local Secondary network given the movement of pupils to other secondary schools.

Key Issue 6: Classroom Structure

A number of respondents raised the following concerns:

- Concern about if there is enough space to accommodate pupils in other nearby schools
- Classes will be larger

Response Key Issue 6: Classroom Structure

Ensuring that the Authority have the correct number of schools in the right places and the reduction unfilled places, will mitigate against higher pupil teacher ratios resulting from annual diminishing budgets due to austerity. Doing nothing will result in reducing financial allocations to schools and increasing pupil teacher ratios in all Flintshire schools.

Capacity issues in local schools are addressed in the Response to Governors regarding the oversubscription of Hawarden High School and Response to Governors regarding Suitability Issues.

Key Issue 7: Uniforms

A number of respondents raised the following concerns:

- Additional costs of purchasing new uniforms

Response Key Issue 7: Uniforms

School Uniform Grants are available for Year 7. If a child attends a secondary school, special school, special needs resource base or pupil referral unit in Flintshire, pupils may be entitled to a grant towards the cost of their school uniform. It applies to schools/units where school uniform is compulsory.

Parents and carers can claim a school uniform grant if their child is eligible for free school meals and lives in Flintshire.

It can be applied for at the start of the school year. The grant is currently £105 per eligible child and is normally paid direct into a bank or building society account.

A school uniform exchange is available for Flintshire pupils. The School Uniform Exchange aims to encourage the people of Flintshire to recycle and donate unwanted or unused school uniform items rather than putting them in the bin. All donated school uniform is available for sale in Nightingale House Hospice shops throughout Flintshire at a significantly reduced cost compared to high street prices.

The Authority has observed that the John Summers High School and nearest high school Connah's Quay High School has the same colour uniform.

It is fairly typical that most pupils will require new uniforms as they enter into a new academic year, therefore there may be a requirement to purchase a new uniform regardless of what school the pupil attended.

Responses Supporting the Proposals

An analysis of the correspondence received highlighted a small number of responses supporting the proposals, a summary of the key themes are listed below.

Comments on the Proposal to change the age range at John Summers High School from 11-18 to 11-16 by 31 August 2016 included that change would:

- transform and improve learning opportunities for pupils in Flintshire;
- broaden the range of A level subjects and vocational courses;
- reduce transport between a number of high schools
- be similar to other high schools that have already changed their age range; and

- change would provide access to improved facilities.

Comments on the proposal to close John Summers High School by 31 August 2017 included that change would:

- reduce surplus places
- Improve educational outcomes for learners; and
- Recognise that the status quo remains untenable.

5.0 Responses from Assembly Members and Members of Parliament

In total two responses were received during the consultation stage from Assembly Members and Members of the Parliament.

The table below show the methods Assembly Members and Members of the Parliament used to respond to the consultation:

Breakdown of responses from Assembly Members & Members of Parliament

No	Response Type	Response from Assembly Members & Members of Parliament	
		AMs	MPs
1	Consultation Response Form	0	0
2	Letters and Emails	1	1
Totals		1	1

The letters from Assembly Members & Members of Parliament and responses from the authority can be found in the Consultation Report documentation available on the Flintshire County Council website.

6.0 Response from Estyn

Estyn's response to the proposal by Flintshire County Council to: Change the age range of John Summers High School from 11-18 to 11-16 (from 31st August 2016) and to close John Summers High School 11-16 (from 21st August 2017).

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn.

However, Estyn is not a body that is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

Introduction

The consultation proposal is from Flintshire County Council. The proposal is to:

- Cease 16-18 provision at John Summers High School by 31st August 2016
- Recommend the closure of John Summers High School by 31st August 2017.

Summary/Conclusion

The County Council has a legal duty to look at the number and type of schools it has in Flintshire and is required to make sure that they meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009.

It is Estyn's opinion that the impact of the proposal will at least maintain the current standards of education in the area. The development of a post-16 learning hub will offer a wider range of both academic and vocational courses for learners and the closure of John Summers High School will not disadvantage unnecessarily any current pupils.

Description and benefits

The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal, which is in line with the Council's strategic programme to develop a post-16 hub at Coleg Cambria and to cover concerns regarding projected future pupil numbers to support and sustain sufficient curriculum opportunities for secondary provision at John Summers High School.

The proposer clearly defines the expected benefits of the closure of the post-16 provision at John Summers High School and transfer to the post-16 hub at Coleg Cambria. These appear to be reasonable, and include more flexibility around curriculum choice and enabling access to an additional range of courses offered at the college. However, although the proposer asserts that this will assist in providing improved educational outcomes, it is not clear how this will happen.

The proposal is thorough in its use of data with regard to past, present and future pupil numbers. It clearly demonstrates that the proposal to close John Summers High School from August 2017 is due to the school's falling numbers and its inability to sustain the curriculum breadth required under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009. The proposer has considered well the effect on school numbers of potential housing developments in the area, and judges that projected pupil numbers indicate that sustainability of John Summers High School does not meet the requirements of the council's school modernisation policy and is not in line with ministerial and council targets for Flintshire.

The proposer has compared the benefits of the proposal with the status quo and has considered all other reasonable options fairly. They have demonstrated clearly the advantages and disadvantages of each option and the reasons for their preferred option.

The proposal identifies the implications for members of staff who currently deliver post-16 provision at John Summers High School. Initially these staff will be eligible to apply for positions at the post-16 hub at Coleg Cambria and staff may if successful benefit from greater opportunity for specialism and career development. However, this ring-fencing opportunity will be open to all staff from the Deeside Consortium in the first instance, followed by open recruitment.

In the event of staff displacement because of the proposal, the proposer does state reasonably that the council would manage changes to staffing levels within agreed policies and procedures. The proposer asserts that due to the movement of pupils to other secondary schools, staff displaced by the proposal may also have the opportunity to obtain employment in the local secondary network.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer has considered well all available data for schools in the area, including the judgements made in the most recent Estyn inspection reports. This data indicates that John Summers High School, whilst having the highest cost per pupil and the lowest pupil-teacher ratio, has the lowest attendance rate and the lowest achievement rates when compared to neighbouring schools. The regional school improvement service has identified the school as amber, with school performance not improving quickly enough and requiring time-limited intervention and support.

The proposer reasonably asserts that alternative provision will at least maintain the standard of education for the pupils of John Summers High School. The proposer states that impact assessments in respect of learners and the community are yet to be completed. However, it is the Council's view that the proposal will not negatively affect learners, Communities First provision or community use of school facilities. An Equalities and Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on learner travel arrangements. It intends to support home to school travel in line with the Council's home to school transport policy. The proposer asserts that should large numbers of pupils be unable to access home to school transport from certain areas to their nearest appropriate school, then the Council will work with local transport providers to try to establish additional service provision. The proposer does acknowledge that for a large proportion of pupils, their journey time to school will increase. However, all journey times fall under the Council's transport measure guidelines.

The proposer has outlined well the transitional arrangements to ensure minimal disruption to learners. The post-16 hub will provide specialist learning facilities as well as general teaching classrooms for 700 learners in a centralised location. Initial admissions will be ring-fenced for pupils transferring from Year 12 in partnership schools, which includes pupils from John Summers High School. The closure of the whole school will be one year after the transfer to the new post-16 hub at Coleg Cambria and this will offer learners in mid-exam cycle protection from change.

The proposal contains appropriate information with regard to ensuring provision for pupils with additional learning needs and those with statements for special additional needs. It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on provision for these pupils.

The Council Response to John Summers Governors' letter 14th July 2015

In the governors' letter dated 14th July 2015, there is a claim that the process has been inappropriately conducted. The letter provides no rationale or evidence to support this allegation. The Authority has followed the process as set out in the Code as this is a legal requirement. There was subsequently a complaint that the letter hadn't been shared in draft with the full Governing Body as had been agreed at their meeting.

A further claim is made that questions have been reluctantly, inadequately, or have been answered in a way to cause concern. This is again not evidenced and is unfounded. The Authority has responded to all correspondence in line with requirements under the school organisational code and the customer charter.

Whilst disappointment at the outcome is understandable, the claims about "deviation from the capital build" are surprising at this stage, given that the Council has conducted a robust Pause and Review process involving extensive earlier engagement with the Governing Body.

The evolution of the Queensferry Campus business case started with the original Strategic Outline Programme (SOP). The original concept was the proposed closure of John Summers High School due to low demand. This was rerieved at Strategic Outline Case (SOC) Stage and Outline Business Case (OBC) stage, through the decision to meet perceived imminent new demand from housing developments at the Northern Gateway. At Full Business Case (FBC) Stage, the Authority must have "worked up" designs, confirmed costs, approved Statutory Proposals and resilient data to support the project.

The pause and review of the Queensferry Campus project was held due to concern around resilience of the critical data required to support submission of the capital business case to Welsh Government (WG) for funding through the 21st Century Schools programme. The Council made a policy commitment to develop a business case for a 3-16 school and replacement campus for John Summers High School. The business

case has to meet a number of tests if it is to proceed, and the latest data brought into question the viability of the project.

The basis for the original case for capital investment was that by 2019 there would be three forms of entry and, with the proposed Northern Gateway development, this would increase the school population to an eventual four form entry school of around 600 places.

A series of meetings were held between officers and the Governors of Queensferry Primary School and John Summers High School. A representative group of governors was also formed to test the resilience of data and to consider whether other information was available that may support a capital business case submission.

Governors were fully aware that Cabinet was advised that it would not be justifiable for the County Council to submit a capital case based on inaccurate or less than resilient information in the knowledge that it will fail to meet the 21st Century Schools Programme criteria.

The review led to the following recommendation to Cabinet:

“That on the basis that the data analysis does not support the continuation through to a Full Business Case for capital funding, Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) not proceed with the Full Business Case;
- (ii) open a period of formal consultation with key stakeholders for the area on how best to secure resilient sustainable high quality education in the area for future report to Cabinet.”

The process around the 21st Century schools funding and the Business Case process has been fully explained to the governors and is as follows:

Welsh Government (WG) have adopted the HM Treasury 5 Case Business Model as their template for Local Authorities to bid for capital funding for school modernisation via their 21st Century Schools Programme. The process is an evolutionary process formed in the three stages:

- Strategic Outline Case (SOC) - scoping stage
- Outline Business case (OBC) - detailed planning stage
- Full Business case (FBC) - detailed final stage

The concept around the process is that each stage is viewed as a gateway and data and information relevant to the stage of the process is tested by Local Authority and WG in order to test the viability of the project. At any stage either WG or the Local Authority can pause or stop the project as being unviable or unable to justify funding.

As the Project was at FBC development stage (at Pause and review), statutory proposals and actual costs must be presented to WG as part of the framework.

It is alleged in the governors' correspondence all that around £75,000 in teaching costs would be incurred. This is unclear and incorrect. The Council are unaware of £75,000 in teaching costs associated with the proposed capital project.

In terms of the proposed capital project a contract was not awarded. As Governors were advised, Flintshire County Council appointed a contractor to develop proposals via the North Wales Procurement Framework. Within the contract there was a mechanism which enabled each party to end at a specific stage before being fully commissioned. There will be fee recovery costs associated with stopping the development. However, these are still under review and therefore this is information not held currently by the Authority, however the commercial figure will be less than the £75,000 quoted by the governors.

In terms of Officer costs, as Governors were advised, there are no additional Education and Youth officer costs associated with either the John Summers High School proposed capital project or school organisational change as these form part of officers' contracted work. Management of school places and school organisation change form part of a Local Authority's statutory function and this has been the case since the early 1900s.

The rationale for the proposal to closure John Summers High School was due to diminishing resources, unfilled places and unsuitable buildings. This was underpinned by the outcomes of the capital project pause and review.

7.0 The Council response to Version 11 of the Governing Body response was received by e-mail on 6th July 2015.

Introduction

The Authority is reviewing the future of John Summers High School following the Cabinet resolution in February 2015 in line with its school Modernisation Policy first introduced in 2010 and refreshed in 2015.

The context is that post 16 student numbers make it impossible for governors at John Summers High School to meet the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009. In order to safeguard the right of learners to access a broad and high quality range of learning opportunities the current School Modernisation Strategy states that post-16 provision will be reviewed in any secondary school where the number of pupils within the 6th form falls below 150 pupils for three years in succession.

The School Modernisation policy states that admissions to secondary schools should be a minimum of four form entry (120 students per admission year group) or 600 places in total for the 11-16 age range. Such numbers are required for a school to be able to sustain the curriculum breadth required under the Learning and Skills Measure.

There is concern regarding insufficient current and projected future pupil numbers to support secondary provision at John Summers High School. This is exacerbated by a predicted drop in birth rates.

School budgetary issues are compounded by falling pupil numbers and this underpins the Authority's concern about the school being able to sustain sufficient curriculum opportunities for learners

The school infrastructure is ageing and unsustainable. The falling pupil numbers mean that John Summers High School has significant surplus places (more than 25%) which is itself a trigger for review of a school as stated in the Authority's School Modernisation Strategy.

There has been the perception from the governors that uncertainty has caused the drop in public numbers at the school. The Authority would concur that school re-organisational proposals can cause a level of uncertainty and concern within a school community. However, the evidence at John Summers does not support a simple causation. For example, in 2014 when the Authority was planning a new school on the campus, admissions to John Summers High School fell to 50 (less than 2 forms of entry). Transfer rates for John Summers from primary over the past 6 years confirm that the school has the lowest transfer rate when compared to other local high schools.

The Authority uses a series of data extracted directly from the school's own statistical returns, Estyn and Welsh Government in the formation of the Consultation Document.

Data specific to current, future projected pupil numbers and potential yield from new housing developments in the area were used as part of the pause and review regarding the capital business case. The governors were provided with the data set and methodology used by the Authority in order that they could challenge. A series of ten meetings were held with the full governing body and a representative group of governors during the pause and review period. At this time the governors were unable to provide appropriate data to support the continuation of the capital business case. There is no new evidence regarding the data on projected pupils and housing developments at the Northern Gateway since the Authority conducted the pause and review on the proposed capital building programme back in autumn 2014.

There is no new evidence which would trigger a further review of this information or further evidence to provide reassurance that the governors and school could face the challenges outlined as falling pupils rolls and reducing budgets. Given this context the Authority are concerned that the governors will be unable to sustain an appropriate breadth of curriculum as austerity tightens.

Response to Governors claim regarding deliberate bias

The Local Authority held a number of meetings with the Head, Chair of governors and the governors themselves in which to clarify that the consultation document and process would be formed using the statutory guidance as outlined in the School Organisation Code (Wales) 2013.

Paragraph 1.3 of the Code, provides guidance on Quality and Standards of Education. It stipulates that:-

“In assessing the impact of proposals on quality and standards of education and how the curriculum is being delivered, relevant bodies should consider any relevant evidence from Estyn, refer to the most recent Estyn Reports or other evidence derived from performance monitoring and take into account any other generally available information on school’s effectiveness.”

The code also stipulates that the proposer has to consider these issues at the school which is subject to the proposal or any other educational institutions which are likely to be affected. Particular attention should also be paid to vulnerable groups including children with SEN.

In this context the Authority has appropriately used relevant sources of information, namely:-

- The latest Estyn inspection for John Summers High School and for other secondary schools in the area likely to be affected by the proposal.
- The latest regional improvement Service (GwE) information for John Summers High School and for other secondary schools in the area likely to be affected by the proposal.
- The latest information from the Welsh Government’s National Categorisation system for John Summers High School and for other secondary schools in the area likely to be affected by the proposal.

The school was last inspected in January 2011, therefore it was appropriate to use the latest data from the regional improvement service (GwE) and from Welsh Government’s National Categorisation system. This data is independent of the Council. The same data has been used in another consultation on school reorganisational change running concurrently without any negative comment. Additionally, positive comments have been received regarding the clarity of the document and the data contained within. Estyn have also reported positively in their response on the use of data.

In terms of the use of National Categorisation data, the Authority has not ‘cherry picked’ data or selected information to show ‘deliberately bias’. It has used the data available on the summary page of the Welsh Government Website. This information has been designed to provide information to parents when choosing a local school. It would not be appropriate to compare John Summers High School with other schools in the same cohort on the National Categorisation System when applying the code as they could be in other geographical areas and are not directly affected by the proposal. It is appropriate when applying the school organisation code to compare John Summers High School directly with other local schools that may receive John Summer High School pupils in the event of school closure.

Over the period since inspection the school moved from Band 2 on performance in 2012 to Band 3 in 2013 to the current situation being in Category 4. It is the Authority’s view that this “current” data is appropriate to utilise as it provides

consultees with a snap-shot of how the school is performing. It is appropriate to compare to other local schools as they are directly affected by the proposal.

The outcomes of Free School Meals (FSM) learners were considered in more detail as the Governors themselves had raised the fact that they have a higher percentage of FSM learners than other schools within Flintshire. Careful comparisons were therefore made against other schools affected by the proposal.

The evidence presented was in the context of the code and to give consultees reassurance that should John Summers High School close the standards of education and opportunities for learners in other local high schools is at least equal or better than that of John Summers High School. Estyn's report on the proposal is also relevant in this context.

Response to Governors claim regarding Causation

The process and formation of consultation documents are defined using the statutory guidance as outlined in the School Organisation Code (Wales) 2013.

The Local Authority is satisfied that the guidance in the Code has been met. Estyn's report on the proposal is also relevant in this context.

Response to Governors claim regarding Data

There is a myriad of data that could be presented which would and could present the school performance outcomes both in a positive and negative light. Both the Local Authority and governors would acknowledge that there is both good practice and performance within the school. However there are aspects of systems and performance which the governors should and will be actively looking to improve.

It is acknowledged that the school did have a good Estyn Inspection, however the inspection was in 2011. Since the inspection there is independent evidence both through the National Categorisation System and the regional improvement schools service (GwE) which causes concern for the Authority, and should cause the Governors concern.

The national categorisation system provides a clear and simple way of understanding how well a school is performing for all its pupils, how effectively it is led and managed, the quality of teaching and learning and the level of support and challenge it needs to do better. The system is based on a three step process:

4. Standards Group: a range of information is used to make a judgement about the standards, resulting in a standards group.
5. Improvement Capacity: an evaluation of the schools capacity to improve further, taking into account the evidence about the standards and the quality of leadership, teaching and learning, resulting in an improvement capacity.

6. Support Category: bringing the judgement on standards group and improvement capacity together to decide on the schools support category, colour coded either green, yellow, amber or red.

Response to Governors claim regarding Additional Learning needs

The Special Education Needs Code (SEN) of Practice for Wales (2002) outlines the duties placed on all schools in Wales with regard to identification and intervention for learners with SEN. The Welsh Government Inclusion and Pupil Support Guidance document built on this in 2006, introduced the term Additional Learning Needs (ALN), of which SEN is a sub group. Practice against these documents is monitored through Estyn under the section Care Support and Guidance (previously Key Question 4, and now Key Question 2 under the new Estyn Framework). Wellbeing has also been included as a separate section under Key Question 1 of the new Framework.

The table below shows the outcomes for John Summers High School and the Local Secondary Schools likely to be affected by the proposal for Care, Support & Guidance, and Wellbeing where available, from the latest inspection report.

Table 1: Estyn Outcomes For Flintshire Secondary Schools in the local area			
Key Question 1: Wellbeing			
Key Question 2: Care Support & Guidance			
School	Year of Inspection	Outcome	
		KQ1	KQ2
Hawarden High School	2009	Good	Good
St David's High School	2011	Good	Good
John Summers High School	2011	Good	Good
Connah's Quay High School	2011	Good	Excellent

External verification through Estyn identifies practice to support learners that is at least Good and on occasions Excellent.

Local Authority monitoring visits are being reintroduced to all schools to support consistency of identification of needs across Flintshire. The Code of Practice provides a general definition of learners with SEN that is open to a level of interpretation, making it difficult to compare groups of learners across schools. The table below shows the current numbers of learners with SEN identified in Flintshire Secondary Schools. Where monitoring visits have already taken place, the number of learners coded to School Action Plus have reduced,

sometimes significantly, with schools accurately identifying learners as ALN with needs in areas such as medical, sensory, English as an Additional Language etc as opposed to SEN.

School	No SEN	School Action	School Action Plus	Statemented
Hawarden High School	997	103	33	16
St. David's High School, Saltney	420	57	28	3
John Summers High School, Deeside	228	75	51	9
Connah's Quay High School	625	209	55	12
Total	2270	444	167	40

Local Authority funding was delegated to secondary schools in 2011. This prompted schools to revisit their provision for ALN and there has been a positive response in terms of moving from teaching assistants attached to individual learners to a variety of interventions. These range from withdrawal groups for the development of a range of skills including literacy, numeracy, language and social skills, to reorganisation of teaching groups and curriculum delivery in Key Stage 3 to provide a more nurturing learning environment, purchasing additional counsellor input, individualised programmes, parental support groups etc.

From September 2015, additional resources will be available to all secondary schools through the TRAC programme which will extend the provision available to learners at risk of disengagement through enhanced support and transition packages and a range of curricular offers to support more individualised programmes with the aim of maintaining school placements and reducing the number of learners needing to access the provision offered through the Local Authority's Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) services.

Table 3 below shows the originating school for learners attending the local authority's pupil referral provision over the last three years (data is taken from the January PLASC). These figures cover the longer term provision at centres such as the Canolfan Dysgu, Bryn Tirion and YPEC. Data is provided for John Summers High School and neighbouring schools for the usage of Tymor Byr, the short term provision in the final column.

School	Jan-13	Jan-14	Jan-15	Tymor Byr (2010 – 2015)
John Summers High School	6	7	6	22
Connah's Quay High School	13	14	11	29
St David's High School	3	1	3	4
Hawarden High school	9	10	9	6

Whilst the local authority recognises the work undertaken by the staff at John Summers High School in supporting learners with ALN, there is no evidence that would suggest that learners would not access appropriate provision and intervention if attending other secondary schools.

Response to Governors claim regarding Estyn reports

Estyn reports for John Summers High School and other local High Schools which could be affected by the proposals were available as part of the consultation documentation.

Response to Governors claim regarding Pupil Numbers

All data in relation to pupil numbers were reviewed in detail with the governors over the period of the pause and review, in which a series of meetings were held between officers and the Governors of Queensferry Primary School and John Summers High School. A representative group of Governors was also formed to test the resilience of data and to consider whether other information was available that may support a capital business case submission.

See Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report dated 17th February 2015 and Data pack

The Council presented the representative group of Governors with the following data:-

- John Summers High School – Pupil Projections (September 2014)
- John Summers High School – Transfer Rates into year 7 (2012 & 2013)
- Flintshire Primary schools: LA statistics (September 2013)
- Northern Gateway housing yield forecasts
- Birth data – Queensferry, Shotton & Sealand 2007-2019

- Average Transfer into year 7 2013/12
- Birth Trends in SPPA areas using birth data (2005-2012)
- The methodology underpinning the information

As part of the review the Representative Group of Governors provided their own projections in response. The Group's projections were based largely on an assumption that the school will attract 80% of all pupils from their nearest primary schools. This would mean that a high proportion of families would choose places at John Summers High School in preference to the existing choices made within the local area.

Additionally, differing assumptions are made over the yield of pupils gained from the proposed Northern Gateway development.

Figures provided by the Group vary significantly from the Council's data. The Council's data on transfer rates is based on actual 'real time' movements from primary to secondary over a two year period and produced an average of 60% transfer rates.

No evidence could be found to support the case of the Group that 80% transfer rates are achievable given historical data. Up to date birth data has also been taken into account; this highlights a downward trend in birth rates both nationally and in Flintshire, a trend which will further reduce projected numbers.

Additionally no evidence at the time was presented by the governors to suggest that the method used by the Council to project pupil numbers was either inaccurate or flawed.

The Welsh Minister has also raised concern in relation to school numbers in his correspondence confirming statutory proposals dated 13th August 2014, which have since lapsed, at 31st March 2015, as the Council did not submit the Full Business case to Welsh Government as a direct result of the resilience of the data needed to support the capital business case.

Estyn's report on the proposal is also relevant in this context.

Response to Governors claim regarding Pupils Numbers

The Data used at pause and review stage has been re-used to ensure consistency of information. However, there is a single error in data used in Table 5. This was confirmed to the governors during a consultation meeting dated 6th July 2015.

The explanation is that figures from previous projections for John Summers High School had been used in error. The projections for John Summers High School were updated to inform the pause and review data pack; this information should have been used and therefore would be consistent with table 2 in the consultation document.

Table 2 – Numbers of Pupils - John Summers High School Projected

(Assuming post 16 closure Sept 2016)

Data source: Pause and Review data pack October 2014

	Actual Sept 14	Sept 15	Sept 16	Sept 17	Sept 18	Sept 19
Year 7 -11	311	310	305	306	301	327
Year 12 – 13	50	43				
Total NOR	361	353	305	306	301	327

Corrected Table 5 - Projected information - Post 16 transformation – (2016 data)

Name of School	Yr 7-11	Year 12-13	Total	Capacity	Admission Number	Unfilled Places	% of Unfilled Places
John Summers High School	*305	0	305	597	110	292	48.91
Connah's Quay High School	*857	0	857	1164	209	*307	26.37
St David's High School	*442	0	442	725	131	*283	39.03
Hawarden High School	999	218	1216	1145	195	-71	-6.20
TOTAL	2546	218	2821	3631		868	28.99

Corrections have been made to the fields marked *

The information now reflects the correct information included in the original supplementary consultation documentation. Note: The supplementary information St David's High School and Hawarden High School projections are based on January 2015 PLASC data rather than being based on September 2014 PLASC data.

Response to Governors claim regarding Transfer Rates from Primary

At Consultation stage, the governors have again produced their own projections. The Governor's new projections are now based on 70% projection rate with an additional 10 pupils coming from other areas, rather than 80% as they presented previously.

Historical actual data has established a long term downward trend in primary to secondary transfer rates to John Summers High School. Rather than a 10% rise, real time evidence confirms the actual historical average transfer rate from local primary schools over the past two years was 60% into John Summers High School.

Pupil Projections Comparison – John Summers High School

Statistics prepared by John Summers High School Governors:-

	Actual Sept 2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Year 7 -11	311	324	340	345	362	400

Using the governors' methodology, assuming the nearest schools (Queensferry CP, Sealand CP, Shotton Ty Ffynnon CP, Shotton, St Ethelwolds) and using actual numbers from the appropriate year groups and applying the governors 70% transfer rate methodology, the authority calculates the following figures:

	Actual Sept 2014	2015 (includes current admission number of 72)	2016	2017	2018	2019
Year 7 -11 (based on 70% transfer)	311	317	313	308	298	322
Year 7 – 11 (based on 70% transfer + 10 pupils from other areas)	311	327	323	318	308	332

It appears that the governors may have included schools like Sandycroft and St Ethelwolds VA Primary School in their assumptions which historically have consistently shown strong preferences for other schools. In the Council's view this is unrealistic and provides the governors with higher figures with regard to projections which have not historically been realised nor would be realised, in the future. Additionally, their projections only account for extra pupils in and do not reflect pupils that may be lost in a year.

Statistics prepared by the School Management Information Team for the John Summers High Projections pack October 2014 at Pause and Review produce similar statistics using differing methodology:

	Actual Sept 2014	2015 (includes current admission number of 72)	2016	2017	2018	2019
Year 7 - 11	311	310	305	306	301	327

Actual Historical Pupil Data

NCY (National Curriculum Year)

Flintshire Secondary Schools (Statutory range NCY 7 - 11) source: Jan Plasc

School Number	NAME OF SECONDARY SCHOOL	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
4019	John Summers High School	315	325	324	329	348	390	404	437	462	472
4000	Hawarden High School	960	952	957	963	949	930	907	906	920	972
4013	St. David's High School (Saltney)	422	424	460	501	545	563	551	552	538	517
4022	Connah's Quay High School	788	803	845	856	880	914	950	948	942	925

NCY 7 numbers compared to Admission Number (AN)								
		AN (current)	Jan 2015	Jan 2014	Jan 2013	Jan 2012	Jan 2011	Jan 2010
4000	Hawarden High School	195	193	193	187	195	198	195
4013	St. David's High School	117	88	75	89	72	87	103
4019	John Summers High School	104	49	70	51	58	56	67
4022	Connah's Quay High School	198	162	173	174	164	151	161

NCY as % of Admission Number (AN)

NCY as % of Admission Number (AN)	AN (current)	2014/2015	2013/2014	2012/2013	2011/2012	2010/2011	2009/2010
4000	Hawarden High School	99.0	99.0	95.9	100.0	101.5	100.0
4013	St. David's High School	75.2	64.1	76.1	61.5	74.4	88.0
4019	John Summers High School	47.1	67.3	49.0	55.8	53.8	64.4
4022	Connah's Quay High School	81.8	87.4	87.9	82.8	76.3	81.3

In the last 3 years Hawarden NCY 7 numbers have not exceeded their admission number. In the last 5 years John Summers High School NCY 7 have ranged between 49 and 70. i.e. between 47% and 67%, this is a lower transfer rate than for other schools in the area.

Response to Governors regarding oversubscription of Hawarden High School

Governors should be acutely aware of issues pertaining to capacity, unfilled places and admissions policy procedures as all are administered by the Council with consistent policy and procedures. Their statement gives rise to concern that the Governors are unaware of the process of measuring capacity, admissions and appeals procedures. Flintshire along with other Local Authorities has schools which are oversubscribed. In Hawarden High School's case, oversubscription is due to a combination of their governors admitting pupils to their 6th form and independent admission appeals panels adjudicating in favour of individual applications.

Response to Governors regarding potential Housing Yield Data

All data pertaining to yield from housing developments was reviewed in detail with the governors over the period of the pause and review, in which a series of meetings were held between officers and the Governors of Queensferry Primary School and John Summers High School. A representative group of

Governors was also formed to test the resilience of data and to consider whether other information was available that may support a capital business case submission. No viable alternative was presented at the time of pause and review nor in the latest Consultation period.

See Appendix 3 – Planning Policy Context of the proposed Northern Gateway development

Since the pause and review little has changed at the Northern Gateway development. The river embankment works are progressing, however there are still no reserved matters schemes from which the Planning Authority would anticipate commencement of building.

Housing Yield Formula

During the pause and review on the capital project, the Council utilised the following formula to form potential figures for housing yield: The formula had been derived from researching the work of several authorities. This was shared with the governors during the pause and review process and they had adequate opportunity to challenge.

Applying the housing yield formula, if the housing development sites within the Northern Gateway were to be developed to the maximum capacity of 1325 homes (source: outline planning permission) and, in applying the new housing yield formula (0.17 per home for secondary without post 16) the total 'yield' of secondary school age child numbers eligible for admission to John Summers High School would be 231. If this full cohort of children were assumed to be admitted to John Summers High School the school population would still only be in the region of 535 pupils (using 2016/17 projected number 305 + 231 max housing yield) when all of these projections are combined.

Review of Housing Yield Formula - December 2014

However, since the pause and review the Council has reviewed its housing yield formula and will now apply new formula:

Number of Units

The Housing Yield sheets are maintained by the School Provision Team based on advice from Planning and Environment. Planners supply the estimated total number of units likely to be built, including the planning permission status and a number of other external factors. These units are added to the Housing Yield sheets to forecast pupil numbers likely to be generated as a result of new housing. The Housing Yield sheets were last updated March 2014.

Occupancy

The most recent occupancy rate in Flintshire is 2.38, which is based on data published within Conwy's 2011 Key Statistics Census Document¹ (Conwy Council supply this service for Flintshire.) The occupancy is generated by dividing the total population in private housing by the number of 'households with usual residents'.

The document makes a distinction between total households in Flintshire and occupied households, as shown below. The calculation for occupancy is therefore:

Flintshire Occupancy 2011	Totals
Population in private households ¹	151,679
Households (With Usual Residents) ¹	63,781
Occupancy	2.38

Life expectancy

Life expectancy data was obtained from Stats Wales² website and uses data collected between 2010-12. Those rates according to the publication were: Male 79.0, Female 82.4. These are divided by 2 to gain an average: 80.7.

Number of Cohorts

This figure is the number of cohorts within the type of school and is used to factor the projected yield from occupancy and life expectancy (i.e Primary 8 cohorts, Secondary (Age 11-18) 6.0 cohorts). (Note 6th form numbers have increased over recent years and the formula has been updated Dec 2014 to reflect this)

Flintshire's Housing Yield Formula

The current yields are created using the above formulae on the basis of one unit.

Primary Yield Factor	0.24
Secondary Yield Factor (for schools with 6 th form)	0.18
Secondary Yield Factor (for schools without 6 th form)	0.15

¹ 2011 Census – Key Statistics Flintshire, Office for National Statistics (Produced by Corporate Research & Information Unit, Conwy)

² Stats Wales - Life expectancy by local authority and gender (for Year 2010-12), Health Statistics and Analysis Unit, Welsh Government (Published November 2013)

Applying the new housing yield formula, if the housing development sites within the Northern Gateway were to be developed to the maximum capacity of 1325 homes (source: outline planning permission) and, in applying the new housing yield formula (0.15 per home for secondary without post 16) the total 'yield' of secondary school age child numbers eligible for admission to John Summers would be 199. If this full cohort of children were assumed to be admitted to John Summers High School the school population would still only be in the region of 504 pupils (using 2016/17 projected number 305 + 199 max housing yield) when all of these projections are combined.

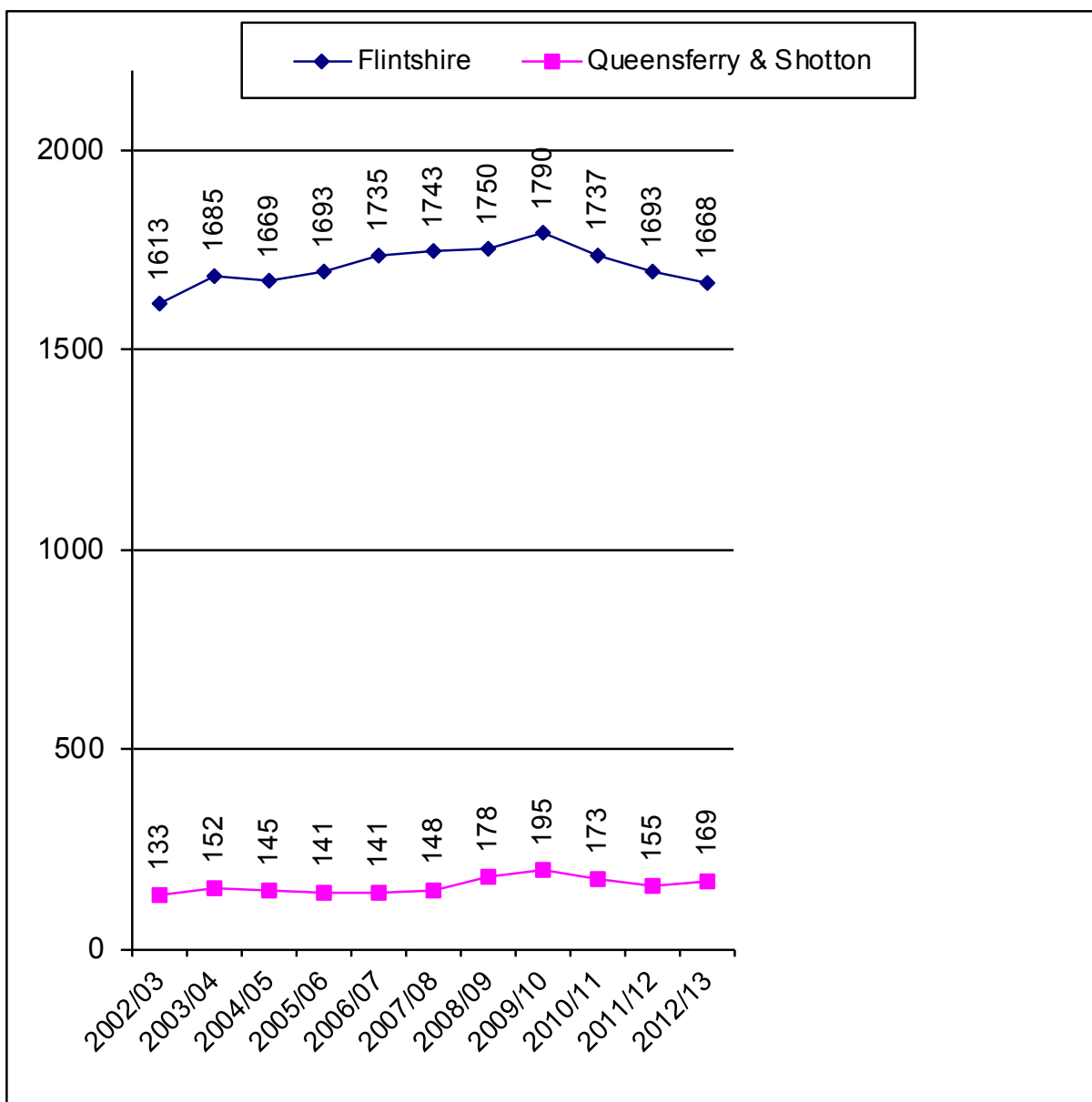
It was the case at pause and review and it remains the case now, the pace of the anticipated housing development will not protect the school from potential falling rolls and budgets as austerity impacts further over the coming years.

The figures produced for anticipated housing yield do not take into account the pace of development, i.e. assuming developer meet their targets, the site will not be fully developed until 2028. Additionally, housing yield figures do not take into account parental choice and or pupil movement i.e. pupils moving into the new homes but who are already in the local education system.

You will note that the Council have used the previous yield formula utilised in the pause and review for consistency and to avoid confusion with consultees despite the old formula projecting a larger potential yield. The new Housing figures which are lower compound John Summers High School projections even further.

Response to Governors on Predicting the Future

Births in Flintshire and the Shotton/Queensferry peaked in 2009/2010 (academic year equivalent). These births will impact on NCY 7 admissions in 2021. For John Summers High School, admissions in Sep 2014 of 49 compared to births of 133 and represented 37%. The average for the last 4 years is 41%.



Births peaked in Flintshire and Shotton/Queensferry area in 2009/2010

195 maximum births in Shotton / Queensferry area.

These births will impact on NCY 7 in 2021.

Taking peak births of 195 and applying the average of 41% then the maximum NCY 7 entry numbers ever likely to be achieved are 80, some way below a 4 form entry figure of 120.

Response to Governors regarding Suitable Size of School

In the Governors' responses to consultation, there has been a claim that smaller is better in the case of John Summers High School. However, Estyn's report in December 2013 commissioned by Welsh Government looked at school size and educational effectiveness and had a contrary view.

Estyn's definition of school size is as follows. Small secondary schools are defined as those with 600 pupils or fewer, medium-sized secondary schools have between 601 and 1,100 pupils, and large secondary schools 1,101 or more pupils.

Estyn's report looked at the educational effectiveness of small, medium-sized and large schools based on inspection findings from the current cycle of inspections (2010-2013) and on examination and assessment results. It looks at the outcomes, provision and leadership of schools of different sizes and focuses on the inspection quality indicators relating to standards, wellbeing, learning experiences, teaching, leadership and quality improvement.

There are several factors that can influence school performance in addition to school size. Deprivation is one important factor that can affect school performance and Estyn considers its impact in their report.

Summary of Estyn Report for Secondary schools

Large secondary schools require less follow-up activity than small or medium-sized schools. Only one large secondary school has been placed in a statutory category (significant improvement or special measures) following an inspection since 2010. The figures for follow up indicate that small and medium-sized secondary schools are more likely to have areas for improvement than large secondary schools.

A large proportion of small secondary schools need local authority monitoring. This may be because, although performance is good overall, these small schools tend to have more relatively minor issues to address.

Generally, large secondary schools are judged better than small and medium-sized secondary schools on all inspection quality indicators. The biggest differences are in leadership and learning experiences, where large secondary schools are significantly stronger. Apart from one small secondary school, all the secondary schools judged excellent are medium-sized or large.

Inspection findings show that a higher proportion of large secondary schools are awarded good or better for all the quality indicators included in this study compared to small and medium-sized secondary schools. The gap is largest for standards, learning experiences, leadership and quality improvement.

A common characteristic of successful secondary schools is strong leadership. Where leadership is good or better, secondary schools of all sizes can succeed well. However, there are factors relating to economies of scale which make it more challenging for small secondary schools to perform well in some aspects of their work. However, where leaders in small secondary schools are innovative and focus on improving performance, they can overcome these hurdles and small secondary schools can and do also succeed.

Outcomes - Standards and Wellbeing

Standards

When judging standards, inspectors consider the schools' performance in terms of data, and how pupils are acquiring the skills and knowledge they need to move on to the next stage of learning. Inspection outcomes indicate that, in general, these are better in large secondary schools.

Performance is better in large secondary schools for nearly all examination and assessment indicators. Welsh Government data indicates that the percentage of pupils achieving the core subject indicator at key stage 3 is better in large secondary schools compared with small and medium-sized secondary schools (figure 8). The gap in performance between the small and medium-sized secondary schools and the large schools has reduced slightly over the last three years for English, mathematics and science, while there is no difference in the performance gap in Welsh.

The gap between the large secondary schools and the small and medium-sized secondary schools is greater for level 6 than the level 5 for English, mathematics and science. This means that the large secondary schools provide a more appropriate level of challenge and support to the more able pupils and enable them to achieve the higher than expected levels.

At key stage 4, the performance of pupils in the core subjects is better in large secondary schools compared to small and medium-sized secondary schools. The exception is in Welsh first language, where small and medium-sized secondary schools perform better than large secondary schools.

There is a similar picture with the percentage of pupils' achieving the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics. This indicator is around eight percentage points higher in large secondary schools compared to small and medium-sized secondary schools.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is good or better in most large secondary schools and in many small and medium-sized secondary schools.

In nearly all secondary schools where wellbeing is judged as only adequate, there are shortcomings in attendance. Where wellbeing is unsatisfactory there are also issues with pupils' behaviour and exclusion rates are high. In these schools, the poor standard of wellbeing has a detrimental effect on the outcomes for pupils.

Provision: learning experiences and teaching

Learning experiences

Curriculum provision tends to be broader and more balanced in large secondary schools. Nearly all large secondary schools are judged to provide good or better learning experiences for their pupils while learning experiences are good or better in the majority of small secondary schools and many medium-sized secondary schools.

Secondary schools with good or better curriculum provision offer a rich range of courses and have responded well to the requirements of Learning Pathways 14-19 through purposeful joint planning with other institutions. They offer comprehensive provision that enables pupils to gain a range of qualifications. Where numbers wishing to follow a particular course are not viable in one setting, schools can work together to offer the options.

Small and medium-sized secondary schools tend to be more dependent on the support of the 14-19 partnerships to provide a suitable range of courses for their pupils. Where these partnerships are weak, small and medium-sized secondary schools are less likely to have the range of options available. Large secondary schools are more autonomous and less dependent on partnerships to provide curriculum options. They are able to access a wider range of options due to their economies of scale.

Teaching

Teaching and assessment are good or better in 63% of large secondary schools, but in just under half of small and medium-sized secondary schools. Teaching is excellent in 25% of the large secondary schools, but only excellent in 10% of medium-sized secondary schools and 4% of small secondary schools.

In large secondary schools, subject departments usually have more than one teacher, which enables teachers to share good practice and develop their curriculum planning and delivery. Also, quality assurance tends to be stronger and school leaders have developed better systems to address poor teaching. In large secondary schools, teachers are more likely to be teaching in their own specialist area, whereas in small and medium-sized schools teachers occasionally teach in areas outside their specialist subject. In a few instances, small secondary school departments work effectively with departments within their school and similar departments in neighbouring schools to share good practice and to benefit from economies of scale.

Assessment procedures tend to be stronger in large secondary schools. This is mainly because school leaders in these schools are more effective at ensuring a consistent whole-school approach to assessment, which is monitored and evaluated systematically. Over time, these approaches become embedded, improved and developed across each subject area. In a minority of small and medium-sized secondary schools, assessment procedures are not effective

enough. There is often too much variation between departments. These schools lack a whole-school focus and approach to implementing assessment procedures and school policies are not understood, implemented, monitored or evaluated well enough.

Leadership and management: leadership and quality improvement

Leadership

Leadership is at least good in nearly all large secondary schools inspected. Headteachers in large secondary schools often have a good track record in previous leadership roles as deputy heads or headteachers of smaller schools. Large secondary schools tend to have well-embedded, highly-organised and consistent leadership structures and processes, and effective performance management arrangements.

In small secondary schools, a large proportion of staff have a subject responsibility and a whole-school responsibility. In many of these small secondary schools, there are good professional development opportunities focusing on developing generic leadership skills. This professional development can have a strong influence on many aspects of school life. For example, middle leaders often lead working groups focusing on specific areas of the curriculum within their schools thus developing their skills in analysing and evaluating standards and provision. They develop effective processes for tracking pupils' progress and analysing data, which they use to inform teaching and learning and to motivate pupils to succeed. However, when these roles are not supported by good professional development, there are nearly always shortcomings in the effectiveness of middle leadership in these small secondary schools.

A significant issue relevant to small secondary schools and to a lesser extent to medium-sized secondary schools is that succession planning is often weak. When key members of staff leave the school, there is usually too long a delay before their skills are replaced. Large secondary schools can usually make interim short-term arrangements to address this issue but, because subject departments in small and medium-sized schools consist of a few teachers, one or two teachers leaving can have a detrimental effect on the outcomes for pupils in the subject areas taught by these staff. This is compounded for shortage subject areas, such as science, and is a particular issue in rural and Welsh-medium schools.

Improving quality

Improving quality and securing improvement are good or better in many large secondary schools, in around a half of small secondary schools and in a minority of medium-sized secondary schools.

In small and medium-sized secondary schools where improving quality is adequate or worse, senior leaders do not focus sufficiently on standards and provision. The schools' self-evaluation processes have only a partial influence

on strategic planning and there is limited evidence of the impact of these processes on improving pupil outcomes. Often data analysis does not focus on how well the school is performing in comparison to similar schools and staff do not analyse the core data sets thoroughly enough to evaluate the performance of all groups of pupils, particularly pupils eligible for free school meals. As a result, the school leaders do not take specific action to improve standards for this group of learners.

Where there are shortcomings in quality assurance in small and medium-sized schools, it is often because there is a lack of evidence to identify what needs to improve. This is because middle leaders' skills in self-evaluation are underdeveloped, especially their skills in observing and analysing the effectiveness of teaching. There is often a lack of consistency and too much variation in the quality of lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Evaluations of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning are often too brief and too positive and areas for improvement in teaching and learning are not prioritised well enough in department plans. As a result, there are important shortcomings in the overall quality of teaching in half of these schools. Also there is too much variation in the quality of improvement planning at middle leadership level.

Even in large secondary schools, the impact of quality assurance on teaching is not as strong as it is in other areas. Where quality assurance is excellent, school leaders focus clearly on tackling poor teaching through rigorous lesson observations and clear targets for improvement. In nearly all schools judged to have excellent teaching, there are also excellent quality assurance processes in place.

School size and deprivation

The evidence in previous chapters suggests that large schools tend to perform better than small and medium-sized schools. However, there are several factors that can influence school performance in addition to school size. Deprivation is another factor that can affect school performance. In fact, there is strong evidence that secondary schools in advantaged areas tend to perform better than schools in disadvantaged areas.

The commonly used measure of deprivation is the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM).

The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals for the secondary schools inspected in this cycle is shown in the table below for different sized schools:

Pupils eligible for FSM	
Small secondary schools	20.2 %
Medium-sized secondary schools	20.3%
Large secondary schools	16.4 %

Response to Governors regarding Finance

The savings figure quoted in the document of £383,000 annual revenue savings is based on school allocations through the school funding formula.

The saving excludes pupil-led funding, which is assumed to follow the students to alternative schools.

The figure also excludes elements of cyclical revenue costs for statutory servicing costs for gas, electrical legionella testing which the Council have to undertake at the school.

The above figure does not include maintenance costs; there is currently a requirement to spend in the region of £623,065 (1/4/2015) on repair and maintenance of the school in the next five years as part of backlog maintenance at John Summers High School.

Additionally, through working through the capital business case process, the Council concluded that the best building solution for the site was to rebuild the secondary provision. Whilst a refurbishment is of course possible, the Council opted for a rebuild option for three primary reasons:

- 1) it would provide a better end product;
- 2) it would be less disruptive for school operations; and
- 3) there are significant health and safety concerns regarding removal of asbestos in a refurbishment project in a live school environment.

The school still requires major investment, the estimated figures worked through for the overall campus were in excess of £18m. Should the school remain in the system the numbers of current are projected pupils are not sufficient to support a business case to Welsh Government, the Council would therefore need to consider how it could fund a significant capital investment on the site whilst managing an estimated £52m revenue budget gap over the next few three years.

Should John Summers High School remain open austerity, pupils numbers and reducing school budgets would result in the school being unable to retain its current cohort of staff. It would be unable to sustain the breadth of curriculum required by the Learning and Skills measure. Failure to take action will also have a negative budgetary effect on secondary schools across Flintshire.

Response to Governors regarding Home to school Transport

In terms of transport, whilst some pupils will be eligible for free home to school transport under the statutory three mile distance from home to school, the majority of pupils would not. The current cost of transport to John Summers

High school is £59,470. The Cabinet could consider offering discretionary transitional transport arrangements for the current school cohort at an estimated annual cost of £135,125 a rise of £75,655 in 2017/18, reducing in following years. This would positively support transition plans and address a key area of concern of current students. Cost of transport to support GCSE continuity would be an estimated £20,000 for 2016/17.

Response to Governors regarding Suitability of provision

Suitability of buildings

Management of school places has been a core responsibility for Local Authority since the 1902 Education Act.

The Welsh Government set a target that all public bodies in Wales should have Asset Management Plans (AMPs) in place. The aim was to achieve better value for money from capital assets. Local authorities in Wales hold four main types of assets valued at over £8.8 billion (2001 estimates) namely:

- land and buildings, of which schools form a high percentage of the portfolio;
- administrative offices and vehicle depots;
- non-operational property, i.e. surplus property awaiting sale, assets under construction, commercial and industrial property; and
- infrastructure assets, principally roads.

Considerable investment is needed to maintain these assets and a significant (and growing) maintenance backlog has been identified. Asset Management guidance from CLAW (Consortium of Local Authorities in Wales) makes the following Statements: “At best operational property can facilitate effective service delivery. At worst it can consume staff and financial resources and actively hinder service delivery. The main practical ways in which the operational estate can adversely affect service delivery are as follows:

- a) Operating from too many buildings
- b) Under-spending on planned maintenance
- c) Operating from inefficient property
- d) Under-investment in appropriate buildings/facilities

The review process should therefore identify:

- a) Surplus property
- b) Maintenance backlog and level of severity
- c) Suitability and variation in blueprint requirements from actual need
- d) Investment requirements/available capital receipts.

The first consideration when assessing whether a building is suitable is whether it is required in the context of the Local Authority's state.

John Summers High School has serious shortcomings in the current suitability of the building, including health and safety issues which question the long term viability of the school. The Council has an estimated £25m backlog of repairs and maintenance across the schools portfolio and in excess of over 2000 unfilled places in the secondary sector, with 860 unfilled places in area local High Schools including (including John Summers High School) by September 2016.

The percentage of surplus places in Flintshire schools continues to remain above the Welsh Government target of 10%.

Since funding for schools is largely driven by pupil numbers, surplus capacity means a disproportionate amount of funding is spent on infrastructure (such as buildings) and the "fixed costs" of running a school (such as leadership and administration).

This funding could be better used to ensure that pupil teacher ratios are minimised to make a direct difference to learners. As public service funding reduces over forthcoming years the case for reprioritisation and change becomes even more compelling.

School organisational change remains the key tool available to the Council to address such deficits.

The feasibility work on the Queensferry campus concluded that the total cost to bring the campus up to standard was in the region of £18m, the majority of spend on the campus was associated with the demolition and rebuild of the secondary school.

Whilst a refurbishment of the school is technically possible, the Council in its feasibility studies opted for a rebuild option for three primary reasons 1) it would provide a better end product 2) Less disruptive for school operation 3) H&S concerns regarding removal of asbestos in a refurbishment project in a "live" school environment.

Therefore, the school still requires major investment, the estimated figures worked through for the overall campus were in excess of £18m. Given the insufficient numbers and future demand, capital investment would be better served elsewhere within the school estate.

Should John Summers High School close and proposed Northern gateway development derive so many pupils that an over capacity issue occurred, the Council would appropriately seek capital funding through S106 agreements. This would enable the Council to consider increasing capacity at that point. However, projected numbers and housing yield figures are unlikely to lead to an increase in secondary provision, but may have some impact on local primary provision, such as at Sealand CP.

