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Portfolio Education and Youth

Context

Whilst the Education and Youth Portfolio has the largest proportion of the Council's budget (39%), the majority of the budget (89%) is delegated directly to schools leaving only 11% within the control of the portfolio.

2017/18 Non-Schools Budget £10.960m. Cost reduction over five years has been £3.965m which equates to 36% of current budget.

Historical efficiencies:

Early Entitlement (£417k)
Maximisation of Foundation Phase grant and efficiencies made within the Early Entitlement training budget and reduction in payments to non-maintained settings.

Mobile Classrooms (£94k)
Reduction in utilisation of mobile classrooms.

Learning Support Service Team (£207k)

Discontinuation of this service which provides individual tuition to learners with specific learning difficulties (literacy / numeracy) by the Local Authority. The LA will has retained advisors to oversee the programmes put in place by schools and will deliver training to school-based staff to build capacity to deliver.

Rationalisation of accommodation (£31k)

Ceasing CAT testing (£30k)

Staff rationalisation (£557k)

Decommissioning of the Schools Library Service (£189k)

Other areas where savings were targeted include:

Remodelling of the music service to an alternative delivery model which would increase scope for income generation to provide sustainability.

Transfer of remissions responsibilities to schools and removal of the budget.

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External validation / Benchmarking of the service provision

Current Performance level / Value for Money considerations / Unit cost

Outcomes at all key stages have improved in recent years. There have been particularly positive improvements in primary school categorisation under the national model and in learner outcomes at Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. Results in 2017 confirm performance at the expected level for KS2 and KS3 and better than expected level for Foundation Phase. Performance at the higher than expected levels in these three key stages is also improving but the main area of focus remains on closing the gap in attainment for pupils who are entitled to free school meals compared to their peers who are not entitled.

The percentage of learners leaving school without a qualification and the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) is low at 1.7% in 2016.

School inspection outcomes throughout the current six year inspection cycle are in line with the ranked expectations for Flintshire in the primary phase but at secondary level are a greater cause for concern as three out of eleven secondary schools are in statutory follow up categories - two in Special Measures and one In Need of Significant Improvement. A further two are in Estyn Review.

Public confidence in local education is high. People in Flintshire gave the second highest rating for the state of education in the 2015 National Survey for Wales (7.1 Flintshire, 7.2 Conwy).

Support for additional learning needs and social inclusion is good within the reduced resources which remain within the portfolio. However, schools are reporting a higher demand for support as an increasing number of children and young people present with more complex challenges. This is reflected in the significant increase of referrals into the portfolio's inclusion moderation process and is putting significant pressure on the service to successfully meet the needs of these young people. There are some innovative prevention programmes in place to support schools to engage pupils to retain good attendance, e.g. work with traveller community by Youth Services and Inclusion Staff but there is growing evidence that more young people are becoming more difficult to engage in the alternative provision that is available. Proposed legislation reform of ALN will bring further cost pressures to the service if the age range for provision is extended to young people until the age of 25.

The number of permanent exclusions is also rising, not only in the secondary sector but in the primary phase too.

Post 16 funding levels are reducing with a significant reduction following post-16 reorganisation and the opening of the Deeside 6th at Coleg Cambria.

Flintshire schools have, in the main, demonstrated a trend of improvement in attendance with figures for the secondary sector being consistently above the national average for Wales. Unauthorised absence in primary schools stands at 0.3% and is the second lowest in Wales. In secondary schools it stands at 0.4% and is the lowest value in Wales. Whilst levels of unauthorised attendance in both primary and secondary schools are low, rates of authorised absence in Flintshire are some of the highest in Wales based on 2016 data and so this is an area for improvement.

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The Authority has made good progress in developing its School Modernisation programme, completing its amalgamation of infant and junior schools and delivering several new schools on time and within budget over the last five years. More small and rural schools are now considering federation as a means of ensuring sustainable educational provision in their communities. However, the current backlog in repairs and maintenance of school buildings is approximately £25m.

Senior leaders understand clearly the impact of wellbeing, safeguarding and regeneration on educational outcomes and work in a multi-agency approach with colleagues from other portfolios and external partners to meet the needs of an increasingly complex cohort of children and young people.

School Reserves

The level of reserves held by Flintshire schools at the end of March 2017 was £1.568m compared to £2.409m the previous year, a reduction of £841k. Primary school balances have decreased by £453k to £2.214m. Secondary school balances have moved from a deficit of £455k in March 2016 to a significantly worse deficit position of £876k in March 2017. Six out of eleven secondary schools currently have deficit budgets and this is a cause for concern.

Schools Per Pupil Allocations

	2016/17	% Change	2015/16	% Change	2014/15
Primary	3,482	6.5%	3,269	2.1%	3,202
Secondary	4,245	2.7%	4,133	1.8%	4,061
Specialist	16,431	11.6%	14,723	3.8%	14,178

Per Pupil Funding

Flintshire is one of the three lowest spenders per pupil in Wales. Per pupil funding is calculated based on funding allocated via the schools' funding formula and the number of pupils in the sector. Changes in the amount of per pupil funding is reflective of a range of factors:

- increased delegation to schools in line with ministerial requirements – since 2014/15 significant ALN funding has been delegated to schools from the Inclusion Service
- Increases/reduction in pupil numbers
- Inflationary uplifts in funding in line with Schools Protection.

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Service	Current Operating Model	Preferred Operating Model	Mandatory (M) or Discretionary (D)	Current VFM Assessment	2017/18 Resilience levels	2018/19 Resilience levels if Green and Amber options are taken OR/ No Change (NC)	WORKING NOTES Resilience level statement a) Service scale and quality b) Capability c) Service sustainability
School Improvement (direct to schools) Accountability for standards remains with LA. Limited functions for school improvement remain with LA e.g Welsh Advisory Service (grant funded)	Collaborative Model with Regional School Improvement Service (GwE)	Collaborative Model with Regional School Improvement Service (GwE)	M	[green]	[green]	[green]	• A risk to the ability to support Welsh Government priorities to improve literacy, numeracy, digital competence and reduce the impact of poverty on education attainment • Reduces the ability to respond effectively to national reforms to curriculum and assessment models • A risk to the sustained effective partnership working within the region • Increases the risk of more schools being placed in serious categories of concern by Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Wales) • A risk to the delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategy Plan
Early Entitlement/Early Education Places 10 hours of funded provision for 3 yr olds	Council. Collaborative with non-maintained sector	Council. Collaborative with non-maintained sector	M	[green]	[amber]	[amber]	• Number of settings closing due to being unsustainable is increasing – further funding reductions would add to this • Risk of insufficient places needed to deliver mandatory provision for Early Entitlement as the school network would not have capacity to pick up the full demand • Risk of insufficient places to deliver the pilot Childcare Officer (Flintshire is early implementer)

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Music Service to schools	Council	Alternative Delivery Model to enable removal of Council subsidy and make service sustainable	D					• Full cost recovery model requires increase cost to parents; • Risk that service becomes no longer financially viable • Service ceases
Universal Youth Clubs & Outreach Work Partnership working	Council Commission	Council Commission	M			NC		• Reduction in range and frequency of services offered to young people which could increase their risk of involvement of inappropriate activity eg drugs/alcohol/harmful sexual behaviour • Greater risk of anti-social behaviour • Reduction in provision of services through Welsh medium – equalities issue & impact on Welsh in Education Strategic Plan targets • Negative impact on initiatives to reduce poverty • Risk to effectiveness of Early Help Hub and potential impact on vulnerable families who then need higher levels of statutory intervention
Business Support	Council	Council	D					• No major risk to service
Nursery Education	Council	Council	M					• Potential redundancy costs outweigh efficiencies • Potential action by teacher professional associations • Unpopular with parents