

CABINET
17 JULY 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held at Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 17 July 2012

PRESENT: Councillor Aaron Shotton (Chairman)

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Peter Macfarlane and Billy Mullin

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors: Carol Ellis, David Evans, Richard Jones, Richard Lloyd, Hilary McGuill, Neville Phillips and David Wisinger

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Finance, Democracy & Governance Manager and Committee Officer

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors J.B. Attridge, H. Brown, C.M. Jones, R.K. Jones, R.P. Macfarlane, W. Mullin and A.P. Shotton declared a personal interest in minute number 49 as they were School Governors.

50. SCHOOL MODERNISATION - AREA REVIEWS

The Cabinet Member for Education introduced the report on the preferred options for further consultations in each of the three designated areas of Holywell, Connah's Quay/Queensferry and Buckley/Mynydd Isa/Mold.

He reminded Members that following the decision of the Council in August 2011 to suspend the consultation process, workshops were held for Members and a series of options put forward. Options for each area review were accepted by the Council to go out for further consultation in February and March 2012. A report had been submitted to Cabinet on 12 June 2012 with details of the responses (these were also available in the Members' Library, and for the public to view on the Council's website and at County Hall reception). Members agreed to take into account the responses made as a result of the consultation process together with any further options proposed by consultees in deciding the most appropriate option (preferred option) to progress to a further and final stage of consultations.

The number of responses submitted via consultation response forms were detailed in the report. Additional responses had been received from Schools and Governing Bodies and other consultees and these had been included. A summary of the responses received from the consultations was included with analysis to support preferred options. Each of the preferred options had to be affordable with funding either from grants available from Welsh Government (WG) or from resources from within the Council, achievable in being realistic in terms of progression and must have prospects of improving outcomes for learners in establishing school provision for the 21st Century.

The preferred options were as follows:-

- Holywell – option 3 - to build a new high school for pupils aged 11 to 16, together with a new primary school to replace Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron
- Queensferry, Shotton & Connah's Quay – option 3 - Develop 3-16 facility at John Summers High School with a Post-16 hub at Connah's Quay High School
- Buckley, Mynydd Isa & Mold – option 1 - To retain 11-16 provision at Elfed High School and to rationalise to 600 places, to include additional learning needs and other education, leisure and cultural uses.

The Cabinet Member for Education proposed that the preferred options be approved by Cabinet and that the next phase of specific and local consultation take place in the early part of the new school term.

The Director of Lifelong Learning commented on the extensive consultation process and explained that as the meetings and discussions had progressed, it had been identified that some options were likely to be more affordable and achievable than others and that some were more likely to be beneficial in achieving educational and community objectives and meet Council and WG policy than others. The Director explained that if the preferred options were approved at this meeting, consultation would not be undertaken during the summer holidays but work would commence with schools in the autumn term on how to progress the consultation, with a report coming back to Cabinet before the end of the calendar year. It was suggested that a decision could be made by the summer of 2013 with the proposals being fully implemented by September 2015 at the earliest. A significant amount of work needed to be undertaken to prepare the business case and prepare funding for the implementation.

The Director commented on the proposals for each area adding that it was important to involve all partners in the further development of the exciting preferred options. In relation to primary education, he said that the proposal for Holywell would bring together the infant and junior school provision for the area and that the Buckley/Mynydd Isa/Mold proposed option would mean that there would not be a requirement to relocate the Westwood Primary School. The proposal for Queensferry/Shotton/Connah's Quay for a 3-16 years facility at John Summers High School would mean that children attending the playgroup at Queensferry would not then need to move to the Croft Nursery and then back to Queensferry Primary School for the foundation phase promoting continuity in their educational provision.

The Chief Executive said that it was important to build on the consultation which had been undertaken. He added that the project would require long-term planning so as not to adversely affect the transition of pupils and the completion of existing examination streams.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services raised concern about why the school in Sealand had not been included as part of the consultation process as it would be affected by the proposal being put forward. In response, the Director of Lifelong Learning said that it had not been looked at in the public consultation

because the Sealand School was secure and did not feature directly in the proposals.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the proposals for preferred options which he felt would give certainty to the children and young people in the areas concerned.

The Leader spoke of the concerns which had been raised in the previous consultation exercise and the decision to stop it following a Notice of Motion to Council. He said that lessons had been learned and that this consultation had been more inclusive. He spoke of the openness of the consultation and commented on the decision to remove Argoed school from the proposals. He felt that there would still be localised concerns as a result of the proposals but that there would also be exciting opportunities.

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Waste & Recycling welcomed the report and spoke of the significant amount of work which had been undertaken in the consultation exercise.

RESOLVED:

That the three preferred options be approved and that the next phase of specific and local consultation take place in the early part of the new school term.

The Chief Executive said that he would now inform Deeside College and Yale College of the intent of the Council due to the implications for joint working at Connah's Quay.

51. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 4.35 p.m. and ended at 5.18 p.m.

52. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were 2 members of the press in attendance.

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Chairman