

# Public Document Pack

Gareth Owens LL.B Barrister/Bargyfreithiwr  
Chief Officer (Governance)  
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



**To: Cllr Ian Roberts (Chair)**

CS/NG

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Adele Davies-Cooke, Ian Dunbar, Ron Hampson, Stella Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Vicky Perfect, Paul Shotton, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Carolyn Thomas

9 January 2015

Maureen Potter 01352 702322  
maureen.potter@flintshire.gov.uk

**Janine Beggan, David Hytch, Rita Price,  
Rebecca Stark and Reverend John Thelwell**

Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in the **DELYN COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, MOLD CH7 6NA** on **THURSDAY, 15TH JANUARY, 2015** at **2.00 PM** to consider the following items.

Yours faithfully

Democracy & Governance Manager

## **AGENDA**

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**
- 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 10)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting.

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The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English  
Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawau gohebiaeth yn y Cymraeg neu'r Saesneg

- 4 **SCHOOL MODERNISATION STRATEGY** (Pages 11 - 40)  
Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
- 5 **PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS** (Pages 41 - 50)  
Report of Chief Officer (Organisational Change)
- 6 **STATEMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS – PROGRESS REPORT ON PERFORMANCE** (Pages 51 - 54)  
Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
- 7 **LIFELONG LEARNING FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 55 - 60)  
Report of Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator

## **LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** **4 DECEMBER 2014**

Minutes of the meeting of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council, held at St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, Flint, on Thursday, 4 December 2014.

### **PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chairman)**

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Adele Davies-Cooke, Ian Dunbar, Ron Hampson, Colin Legg, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Vicky Perfect, Paul Shotton, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Carolyn Thomas.

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:** Janine Beggan, David Hytch, Rita Price, Rebecca Stark and Rev. John Thelwell

**APOLOGIES:** Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure. Councillors Stella Jones and Phil Lightfoot

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Cabinet Member for Education, Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Organisational Change). (For minute no. 35) Pupil Support Services Manager. (For minute no.37) Principal Leisure Services Officer, Play Development Officer, and Families First Lead/Youth Service Manager. (For minute no. 39) Finance Manager, Lifelong Learning

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

The Chairman expressed thanks on behalf of the Committee to Mr Ron Keating, Headteacher, St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, for his hospitality and to the pupils for escorting Members on their tour of the School.

### **33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (including Whipping Declarations)**

The Chairman advised Members of the need to declare a personal interest in school related items on the agenda if they were school or college governors. All Members present declared an interest as school governors.

### **34. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 October 2014 were submitted.

#### **Accuracy**

Councillor Chris Bithell said he had been present at the meeting and asked that the minutes be amended to reflect this.

Councillor Mike Lowe and Reverend John Thelwell said they had submitted their apologies to the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to the above amendments the minutes be received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**35. SCHOOL TRANSPORT UPDATE**

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced a report on the progress made on the implementation of the revised school transport policy. He expressed his appreciation to Mr. Ron Keating, Headteacher, St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, and his team for their professionalism and positive approach towards the revised policy and working practices.

The Chief Officer provided background information and advised that the change in the school transport policy had affected new pupils starting at St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School from September 2014. He referred to the main considerations in the report which outlined the support and information made available to parents and pupils to enable them to be prepared for the revised policy. The Chief Officer emphasised that free transport was being maintained for pupils who were eligible under the previous policy as they progress through the school. He advised that in the future it was the wish of the School to provide a service for all pupils regardless of faith and within the framework of the amended school transport policy.

During discussion Members raised concerns around the issue of parental choice. The Cabinet Member for Education and Chief Officer responded to the questions and comments raised and stated that the Authority had never paid for school transport for pupils who were attending a school that was determined by parental choice. The Cabinet Member referred to the anomaly which had arisen in the past in relation to St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Keating and invited him to put forward his views on the revised school transport policy.

Mr. Keating expressed his thanks to the Authority and Chief Officer for preserving free school transport for those pupils who were eligible under the previous policy. He commented that the School was a “resource” not just for Catholics but for anyone who wished to participate in the faith dimension of the School and emphasised that it was the only faith school in Flintshire at secondary level.

Mr. Keating referred to the revised transport policy and explained that as a consequence of the planning, consultation, and passing of the new policy on concessionary funding for non-Catholics there had been a loss of 93 pupils on roll which had impacted significantly on finance, curriculum planning and teaching jobs. He reiterated the concerns he had expressed previously that

the change to the policy would destabilise the School's strong admission and stressed the need to safeguard transport to the School.

Members raised further concerns around the financial savings to be achieved. Members also expressed the view that the school was less inclusive and only accessible to children whose parents could provide private transport where public transport was not available. Members referred to the issue concerning the duplication of bus routes.

Councillor Nancy Matthews asked if consideration had been given to establishing more centralised collection points for children to access school buses as an efficiency saving. The Chief Officer agreed that this could be considered in the future.

Mrs. Janine Beggan asked that primary schools also be included in the consultation process on changes to the school transport policy. The Chief Officer that there were no immediate proposals to change the policy but this would be undertaken if there were any changes to the school transport policy in the future.

The Cabinet Member and Chief Officer responded to the matters raised. The Chief Officer reminded Members that they had been fully briefed on the estimated financial savings which would be achieved through network management and the procurement process.

Mrs. Rita Price commented on the equality impact assessment of the change in legislation and referred to the school transport provision for Welsh Medium education schools. During discussion it was proposed by Mrs. Price that the Equality Impact Assessment be considered by the Committee at a future meeting. The proposal was seconded and when put to the vote was lost. The Chairman suggested that a copy of the equality impact assessment be circulated to the Committee for information.

Members agreed to note the report on the implementation of the school transport policy.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report on the implementation of the school transport policy be noted.

**36. UPDATE ON SCHOOL MODERNISATION STRATEGY**

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) provided a verbal update on progress made with the school modernisation strategy. He reported that a full business case had been submitted in relation to Holywell Community Campus and the post-16 Hub in Connah's Quay. This was currently being considered by the Welsh Government (WG) and the outcome would be communicated shortly.

The Chief Officer provided an update on the position regarding John Summers High School. He advised that following information on the Northern Gateway development and admission numbers at the School for Year 7 2014, the project team felt that it could not issue a resilient full business case to the WG. The Leadership Team, School and Governing Body were currently reflecting on that decision and would report back in the New Year.

The Chief Officer advised that statutory notices to commence formal consultation in Saltney would commence in the New Year.

In response to a question from Councillor Ron Hampson concerning the post-16 Hub at Connah's Quay, the Chief Officer advised that Coleg Cambria was placing a high priority on young people from Flintshire being educated in Flintshire. He confirmed that there was currently a transport network provided for youngsters to attend Yale College and emphasised the importance of providing high quality learning provision for youngsters in Flintshire.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas suggested that Councillor Richard Jones be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee to be held in January 2015 when school repairs and maintenance would be considered as part of the School Modernisation Strategy item. This was agreed by the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update be noted.

**37. PLAY DEVELOPMENT: SUMMER PLAY SCHEMES**

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) introduced a report on the summer play scheme programme 2014 and on the financial implications for the delivery of Summer playschemes in 2015. He gave background information and invited the Principal Leisure Services Officer to give an overview of the main considerations.

The Principal Leisure Services Officer reported that the availability of grant funding for Summer play schemes 2015/16 and beyond had not been confirmed by Families First, however, planning was based on continuation of the funding to the same level. Subject to confirmation of the Families First funding the Council would need to confirm the future allocation of grant funding for the provision of summer play schemes as detailed in the report. Following confirmation the Council would begin consultation with local Town and Community Councils regarding partnership funding for Summer playschemes 2015.

The Principal Leisure Services Officer advised that early consideration needed to be given to developing an 'exit strategy' for Summer playscheme 2016 if the Council was not awarded the grant from Families First for delivery of the playschemes in 2016/17. The Play Development Team would consult with all local Town and Community Councils, children, young people, and

volunteer organisations regarding Summer playscheme 2016 and the possibility of the loss of the Families First grant. The Play Development Team would explore a number of options as listed in the report to assist local communities to continue to deliver Summer playschemes for 2016 and beyond.

The Principal Leisure Services Officer introduced Janet Roberts, Play Development Officer, and Ann Roberts, Families First Lead/Youth Service Manager, and invited them to give a presentation on Flintshire Summer playschemes. The main points of the presentation were:

- Play in Flintshire
- Flintshire Summer playschemes 2014
- Evaluation – what children say?
- What do parents and carers think?
- Summer playscheme 2015
- Summer playscheme 2016

The Chairman thanked Officers for the detailed and informative presentation and invited members to raise questions.

Councillor Ian Dunbar referred to the risk of loss of the Families First grant and asked if any other funding streams were available. The Chief Officer commented that the Council wished to provide as much provision as possible and said a range of localised funding support would be explored if the Grant was not awarded.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas referred to a grant which had been received from Welsh Government towards play and asked how this had been spent. Mike Welsh said that he would provide a full breakdown to all members of the Committee.

During discussion members referred to the recruitment of volunteers for playschemes. Councillor Carolyn Thomas suggested that Town and Community Council's be contacted to ask if they were aware of any volunteer groups which would be willing to assist in delivering the summer Playschemes. Councillor Thomas asked for further details on the summer Playscheme delivered in Higher Kinnerton through Dragon Sport.

Councillor Marion Bateman referred to the issue of safeguarding and asked if CRB checks were undertaken on volunteers. The Chief Officer confirmed that all volunteers would be CRB checked and explained that details on this would be included in the different delivery models to be presented to the Committee later in the year.

In response to a question from Councillor Nancy Mathews concerning insurance premiums the Chief Officer agreed to circulate a briefing note to the Committee on what elements the Council continued to support and how insurance was currently provided.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas suggested that Officers look at the models used by other Local Authorities for Summer playscheme provision.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the proposed way forward as outlined in the report be noted; and
- (b) That the comments made by members of the Committee be collated and sent to the Chief Officer (Organisational Change)

**38. SELF EVALUATION OF EDUCATION SERVICES**

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced a report on the draft 2014 self-evaluation of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People. He advised that the prime purpose of self-evaluation was to lead to improvements across services, including the improvement of standards achieved by learners. The process of self-evaluation was continuous as part of the cycle of planning for improvement, undertaking improvement work, and monitoring and evaluating improvement. Self evaluation was based on a range of information about strengths and areas for improvement which was collected throughout the year.

The Chief Officer explained that a draft document on self-evaluation was appended to the report for members' consideration.

Referring to page 28 of the document, Mr. David Hytch expressed concern that not all schools were being represented in County events and said that the opportunity should be offered to all youngsters.

The Chairman asked that information on where Flintshire schools were positioned within the new GwE and Welsh Government school categories be provided to the Committee. The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) said that the information would be made available early in the New Year.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**39. SCHOOL BALANCES**

The Finance Manager Lifelong Learning introduced a report on Flintshire school balances for year ending March 2014. She provided background information and advised that the overall position for Flintshire schools was a decrease in net surplus balances from March 2013 to March 2014 and a decrease in overall balances. The balances for each school in Flintshire as at the end of March 2014 were detailed in an appendix to the report.



The Finance Manager advised that there had been a robust challenge of schools with balances over the recommended limits and those schools had submitted spending plans. As a result there were no plans to claw back any balances from schools.

During discussion a number of concerns were raised by members concerning schools which held excess balances and those which had a deficit budget. The Finance Manager explained that school balances needed to be considered in the context of the likely pressures on school budgets in the coming financial years. The Authority had targeted high balances but was mindful of the risk of financial pressures and the resilience of schools which may require some flexibility in the future. She advised that schools now received 3 year budgets which would assist them in their planning strategy. Regarding the concerns raised around the setting of a deficit budget the Finance Manager explained how the issue of a deficit budget would be addressed.

Councillor Marion Bateman suggested that the work carried out by Sychdyn Primary School be used as an example to other primary schools in assisting them to reach a balanced budget.

**RESOLVED:**

That the action taken and continued decrease in Flintshire schools' balances be endorsed and noted.

**40. MID YEAR OFFICER PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced a report on the 2014/15 Mid Year Service Performance Reports produced at Chief Officer level for their respective portfolios. The reports cover the period April to September 2014.

The Chief Officer advised that detailed Mid Year Chief Officer Performance Reports were appended to the report for Education and Youth, and Organisational Change. He advised that there were currently no high level risk indicators shown in either performance report.

Mrs. Rebecca Stark thanked the Chief Officers for their detailed and comprehensive reports.

**RESOLVED:**

That the reports be noted.

**41. QUARTER 2 IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT**

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) introduced a report on the 2014/15 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Committee. The report covered the period July – September 2014.

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) advised that the following Improvement Plan sub-priority reports were attached to the report for the Committee's consideration:

- Modernised and High Performance Education
- Apprenticeships and Training

The Chairman invited members to raise questions.

Mr. David Hytch queried the Red, Amber and Green (RAG) risk status for raising standards through effective use of new technologies on page 107 and asked why this was Green as work was in progress with the last school not being provisioned until a forecasted date of March 2015. He also queried the RAG outcome for ensuring best quality educational support during implementation of the national model for Regional working on page 108. He asked why the outcome was Green when only 20 schools had responded.

Referring to page 118, Mr. Hytch commented on the 10% reduction in the repair and maintenance budget for school buildings and drew attention to the outcome identified in the risk trend column which he said conflicted with the information provided on page 76 of the mid-year Chief Officer report.

The Chief Officer responded to the comments and concerns raised and referred to the positive evaluation which had been made by the Welsh Government Programme LIDW team on the progress achieved in Flintshire.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the reports be noted; and
- (b) That the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee, who are responsible for the overview and monitoring of performance.

**42. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the Forward Work Programme of the Committee. She informed members that it had been agreed that a meeting of the Committee would be held on 26 January 2015 to consider the budget proposals for 2015/16. She also reminded members that a joint meeting of the Community Profile & Partnerships and Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committees would be held on 2 February 2015 to facilitate the attendance of the Principal of Coleg Cambria.

Councillor Nancy Matthews referred to her request to hold a future meeting of the Committee at the Alun High School, Mold. It was agreed that the Facilitator would liaise with the Headteacher, Alun High School, to make

arrangements for the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 26 February 2015 to be held at the Alun High School.

Members reviewed the current programme and agreed that the following items be considered at the next meeting:

- National Model for School Improvement
- School Modernisation Strategy
- Statement of special needs – progress report on performance
- Public Library Standards

Councillor Carolyn Thomas referred to her previous request for an update report on the Music Service and asked that this be brought forward for consideration. It was agreed that this would be considered at the meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 26 January 2015 as part of the budget proposals. Councillor Nancy Mathews asked if Officers could explore the arrangements made by neighbouring local authorities to provide a music service and that feedback be provided to the Committee during the meeting to be held in January 2015.

The Committee agreed that the Facilitator would write to all members asking for their suggestions on which areas they would like Mr. David Jones, Principal Coleg Cambria, to cover during his presentation at the joint meeting of the Community Profile & Partnerships and Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committees to be held on 2 February, 2015.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be agreed subject to the above; and
- (b) That the Facilitator makes arrangements for the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 26 February 2015, to be held at the Alun School, Mold.

**43. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were two members of the press and no members of the public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.35pm)

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**Chairman**

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## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

**DATE:** **THURSDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER (EDUCATION AND YOUTH)**

**SUBJECT:** **SCHOOL MODERNISATION STRATEGY**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To provide the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee with information on the draft updated 'Strategy for the Modernisation of Flintshire Schools'.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The refreshed Strategy updates the original School Modernisation Strategy document of January 2010 to reflect progress with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme and local system developments. It also updates the formal report to Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny in September 2014.

2.02 Since the original Strategy was introduced, Flintshire County Council has undertaken the following school organisation projects to increase efficiency and effectiveness within the school system:

- new primary school in Connah's Quay (Caer Nant) – September 2012 - £7.5M;
- closure of Ysgol Rhos y Cae school - September 2013;
- closure of the Croft Nursery and transfer of provision to the neighbouring Queensferry and St. Ethelwolds Primary Schools – July 2014;
- amalgamations to promote educational continuity, reducing the number of schools and governing bodies from 14 separate infant and junior schools to 7 primary schools;
- new Welsh medium outreach provision in Shotton - September 2014; and
- construction of new Shotton Primary School (Ty Ffynnon) September 2014 - £6.5m.

2.03 Work also progresses well on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools Band A projects at Holywell and Connah's Quay. The John Summers project is subject to current pause and review.

2.04 It is a core education responsibility of Education Authorities to manage the supply of school places. Whilst the level of surplus places in Flintshire is similar to the Welsh Average, it is significantly higher than WAO advice and the Welsh Government target, which are both 10%. This means that resources that could be focused on teaching and learning are instead used to pay for the upkeep of buildings, leadership and administrative costs that are inefficient. Key drivers for school modernisation and reorganisation include the need to address:

- educational improvement;
- resilient school leadership;
- securing suitable learning and working environments;
- addressing unfilled places; and
- addressing diminishing revenue resources.

2.05 Flintshire County Council will continue to develop its strategies to ensure that we are providing school places that are fit for purpose in the 21st century. The Council continues to work in partnership with the Welsh Government to maximise the investment opportunities that are available to local communities.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 There are serious shortcomings in the current suitability of a number of buildings, including pressing health and safety issues that question the long term viability of some of our existing school buildings. The current backlog of repairs and maintenance remains high at £25.6m. School organisational change remains the key tool available to Councils to address such deficits.

3.02 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.

3.03 There are serious shortcomings in the current suitability of a number of buildings, including pressing health and safety issues that question the long term viability of some of our existing school buildings. The current backlog of repairs and maintenance remains high at £25.6m. School organisational change remains the key tool available to Councils to address such deficits.

- 3.04 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.
- 3.05 We review and modernise the way education is delivered through a rolling programme of area reviews. We review schools on an area by area basis, to make sure that when we make changes to school organisation, we take into account any potential impact on other schools nearby.
- 3.06 When we carry out an area review, we always consult with children, young people, parents and carers connected with schools in that area. This is so that they can have their say and be involved in decisions made about our local schools.
- 3.07 The outcomes of an area review can include merging of existing schools through a combination of school federations, merging on one preferred site or the building of new area schools and the closure of schools that are no longer fit for purpose. Achieving this can require substantial capital investment, in conjunction with the Welsh Government, to improve school infrastructure, to ensure that school buildings are suitable and provide an effective legacy for future generations.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 That Members consider and note the updated School Modernisation report.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 The Welsh Government have indicated that £500million is available for the roll out of Band B of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme from 2019, following completion of the national initial phase of the programme. It is expected that WG will provide further information in the next few months on planning for Band B.
- 5.02 However, it should be noted that WG funding criteria for 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools will only potentially be available for modernisation projects and that refurbishment or maintenance projects are not eligible for grant via this programme.

## **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 The establishing of new learning environments, particularly in Communities First areas, can have a positive effect on the outcomes for children and young people in those areas. It is recognised that improved learning environments have a positive effect on community expectations, opportunities and outcomes for learners.

## **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 New Schools are designed to meet with the requirements of the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), which ensures the highest standards in terms of environmental impact, and the incorporation of the latest technologies in the efficient use of energy, which will reduce future revenue costs for the schools.

7.02 A positive impact would occur in the Authority's Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) from new and refurbished sustainable schools.

## **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 There are no equalities implications from this report.

## **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 Reorganisations of schools impacts in various ways on the personnel employed. Whenever there is an impact on the workforce of school modernisation proposals, Flintshire County Council policies related to personnel matters together with the National Teachers Pay and Conditions documents and adhered to in order to minimise any negative effect. No change takes place without workforce consultation and engagement.

## **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 Individual local area reviews are individually commissioned by the Council's Cabinet. Their format meets the requirements of national statutory guidance underpinning school organisational change processes. Local area reviews involve consultation and engagement with children and young people, staff, governors and wider community.

## **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Consultation and engagement on the refreshed strategy is being undertaken with:

- Primary & Secondary Head Teachers' Federations
- Diocesan Directors; and
- Neighbouring Authorities.



## **12.00 APPENDICES**

- 12.01 Appendix A – ADEW POSP – Benchmarking date 2014  
Appendix B – Strategy for School Modernisation

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

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**ADEW - Planning of School Places (POSP)  
National Benchmarking Data 2014**

**Flintshire**

	Primary	Secondary	Total
Total number of schools	68	12	80
Total capacity of schools	14126	11750	25,876
Total number on roll	11977	9787	21,764
Surplus capacity	2,182	2,113	4,295
Percentage of total capacity which is unfilled	15.4	18.0	16.6
Number of schools with significant surplus	19	5	24
Percentage of schools which have significant surplus	27.9	41.7	30.0
Number of oversubscribed schools	4	3	7
Number of overfilled places	33	150	183
Percentage of total capacity which is overfilled	0.2	1.28	0.7
Net unfilled places	2149	1963	4,112
Net unfilled as percentage of total capacity	15.2	16.7	15.9
Number of small schools	18	6	24
Number of small schools with significant surplus capacity	8	5	13
Percentage of small schools with significant surplus capacity	44.4	83.3	54.2
Number of small schools oversubscribed	2	1	3

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**School Modernisation- Update to Strategy 2014**

**Introduction**

Flintshire County Council has a responsibility to review and modernise all school provision, to make sure that we are providing the best possible opportunities for learners, so that they can achieve their full potential.

The Council needs to ensure there are a sufficient number of school places, of the right type, in the right locations. This is not straightforward in that there are a large number of surplus school places in some areas of the County, whilst other areas don't have enough places to meet the local demand. In other areas, school populations are sustained by children and young people from outside the local area through parental preference. The need to maintain a large number of ageing school buildings and the supporting infrastructure is unsustainable. Therefore, we need to review our school provision to:

- ensure our education provision is both high quality and sustainable;
- improve the quality of school buildings and facilities; and
- provide the right number of school places, of the right type, in the right locations.

The task involves:

- forecasting pupil numbers;
- managing the supply of school places;
- managing demand through admissions and appeals procedures;
- ensuring that a framework is in place to secure improvement through school organisational change;
- being prepared to take difficult decisions; and
- monitoring and evaluating the impact of decisions.

We review and modernise the way education is delivered through a rolling programme of area reviews. We review schools on an area by area basis, to make sure that when we make changes to school organisation, we take into account any potential impact on other schools nearby.

When we carry out an area review, we always consult with children, young people, parents and carers connected with schools in that area. This is so that they can have their say and be involved in decisions made about our local schools.

The outcomes of an area review can include merging of existing schools through a combination of school federations, merging on one preferred site or the building of new area schools and the closure of schools that are no longer fit for purpose. Achieving this can require substantial capital investment, in conjunction with the

Welsh Government, to improve our school infrastructure and ensure that school buildings are suitable and provide an effective legacy for future generations.

### **Section 1: Change and Modernisation**

Overall, the outcomes being achieved by Flintshire learners compare well to other Authorities in Wales and continue to improve. There have also been some impressive examples of modernising education in Flintshire in recent years, which have proven to deliver improved opportunities and outcomes for learners. Examples include:

- all through primary provision across Flintshire (including nursery class provision); and
- new primary schools in Connah's Quay and Shotton;
- new primary and secondary specialist schools in Flint.

There are further exciting major capital investments in children and young people's education planned for implementation by 2016.

However, there is also a pressing case for renewing the programme of School Modernisation. Key issues for the Council include:

- continuing to raise educational standards;
- creating the conditions for school leaders to succeed;
- ensuring that school buildings are attractive learning and working environments;
- reducing the number of surplus places and the inequity of variation in cost per pupil; and
- providing resilience against falling revenue funding.

### **Key Drivers for Schools Modernisation**

- **Educational improvement**
- **Resilient School Leadership**
- **Suitable Buildings**
- **Unfilled places**
- **Diminishing Resources**

### **Educational Improvement**

Our aim is that children and young people in Flintshire will develop essential life skills, a strong desire for lifelong learning and be very well prepared for the world of work. All children and young people will be supported to progress through the different stages of their education. Every child and young person will be entitled to a learning programme that will be personalised to make the most of his or her abilities. Children and young people will learn in an exciting and innovative range of styles

and settings. These will include vocational, enterprise, voluntary, spiritual, cultural and sporting learning experiences. School organisation will provide opportunities for Welsh and English medium provision, and also faith provision.

Flintshire County Council is committed to continuing to raise standards, with key tasks including securing:

- high expectations and a clear focus on improving teaching, learning and attainment in all school communities;
- all resources available to schools being focused on improving outcomes for children and young people in a context of annual budget pressures;
- a consistent approach to the collection, analysis and use of assessment information, including tracking systems, to target support and interventions; and
- continued commitment to the development of school staff.

### **Resilient Leadership**

Successful schools have strong leadership at all levels. The challenges associated with leading and managing a school have increased substantially during recent years and the expectations are continuing to increase. The leadership expectations on headteachers in ensuring teaching and learning is of the highest quality, evaluating and raising standards, developing robust self-evaluation procedures and ensuring the continuous professional development of staff, are substantial. At the same time, the number of applicants for headship posts is declining, particularly in our smallest schools.

Schools should be structured so that they are large enough for schools to have a headteacher without substantial regular teaching commitments. This would give the headteacher the necessary time to undertake the key leadership role within the school or federation. Schools also need to be sufficiently resilient in size to ensure suitable leadership development opportunities in individual schools to enable effective succession planning.

### **Suitable Buildings**

Estyn (the education inspectorate in Wales) note that “improvements in the quality of buildings have a very beneficial effect on the quality of teaching and morale of staff which has a positive effect on pupil performance.”

The challenge for the Council is to provide the right number of places in the right locations. In responding to this challenge, the Council needs to make the best educational provision for its area, taking into account current provision, community issues, demographic factors, the conditions of schools buildings, surplus places and the quality of the teaching and learning environment.

When reviewing school buildings and premises, the Council will take into account statutory requirements and relevant building bulletin guidance. When reorganisation is linked to capital investment through Welsh Government's (WG) 21 Century Schools programme, relevant WG criteria will be applied.

The Council is committed to ensuring that school buildings will meet 21st century expectations, are fit for purpose and are a community resource.

There are serious shortcomings in the current suitability of a number of buildings, including pressing health and safety issues that question the long term viability of some of our existing schools.

The current backlog of repairs and maintenance remains high at £25.6m. School organisational change remains the key tool available to Councils to address such deficits.

Our modernisation programme needs to deliver high quality environments that inspire users to learn. In new school buildings and refurbishments we will endeavour to deliver:

- buildings and grounds that are welcoming to both the school and the community whilst providing adequate security;
- internal learning spaces (classrooms and other areas) that are well proportioned, fit for purpose and meet the needs of the curriculum;
- flexible design to allow for short-term changes of layout and use, and for long-term expansion or contraction;
- good environmental conditions throughout, including optimum levels of natural light and ventilation for different activities;
- well-designed external spaces offering a variety of different settings for leisure, learning and sport;
- a sustainable approach to design, construction and environmental servicing;
- good use of the site, balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and facilitating community access to facilities; and
- Maximising the use of new technologies to support effective learning and efficient administration and management.

### **National Asset Management Guidance**

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:

- Operating from too many buildings
- Under-spending on planned maintenance
- Operating from inefficient property
- Under-investment in appropriate buildings/facilities

The review process should therefore identify:

- Surplus property
- Maintenance backlog and level of severity
- Suitability and variation in blueprint requirements from actual need
- Investment requirements/available capital receipts.”

### **Flintshire Schools - Asset Management Statistics**

School’s condition is graded using the following national asset management guidance criteria:-

Grade A - Good. Performing as intended and operating efficiently

Grade B - Satisfactory. Performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration

Grade C - Poor. Exhibiting major defects and/ or not operating as intended

Grade D - Bad. Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure.

### **Flintshire Schools - Condition Category (Sept 2014)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
A	28
B	60
C	9
D	3

A school's suitability is graded using the following national asset management guidance criteria:

- A Good. Facilities suitable for teaching, learning and well-being in schools.
- B Satisfactory. Performing as intended but does not support the Curriculum in some areas.
- C Poor. Teaching methods inhibited/adverse impact on school organisation.
- D Bad. Buildings seriously inhibit the staff's ability to deliver the curriculum

#### **Flintshire Schools - Suitability Category (Sept 2014)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
A	36
B	49
C	11
D	4

#### **Unfilled Places in Schools**

Estyn carried out research on how surplus places affect the resources available for expenditure on improving outcomes for pupils; their report was published in May 2012. Estyn reported that the removal of surplus places in some schools may cost far more than the revenue savings achieved by their removal. In other cases, they found that removal of a 'surplus' school generated far more savings than the removal of the surplus places within it. Estyn noted that school closures and amalgamations secured the largest savings for re-investment to raise standards but noted that such schemes often need financial investment and political commitment. Estyn also emphasised that it was important for local authorities to use data effectively so as to maximise efficient deployment of their assets.

The review into the costs of administering education in Wales recommended that Local Authorities should aim to retain no more than 10% surplus places overall and the Welsh Government accepted this recommendation. However, to date no local authority has achieved and sustained this recommended level of surplus places across primary and secondary schools.

This led to the Welsh Minister for Education and Skills, in Autumn 2012, writing to all Local Authorities asking them to provide him with a strategy to reduce unfilled places to 15% by January 2015. In January 2013, there were some 4,000 surplus places in Flintshire schools (15.4 per cent of the total) distributed across primary and secondary schools.

Using Welsh Audit Office (WAO) Criteria our schools are categorised as follows:-

- A – less than 10% unfilled places or 3% over capacity
- B – 10-25% unfilled places or 5 -10% over capacity
- C – more than 10% over capacity
- D – more than 25% unfilled places or
- D – small schools with fewer than 90 places and more than 25% and 30 surplus places

### **Flintshire Schools - Unfilled Places Category - (Sept 2014)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
A	36
B	37
C	3
D	24

### **Diminishing Resources**

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.

### **Section 2: School Organisational Models and Policies**

One model of schools across the County would not be appropriate due to varying population density, patterns of parental preference and transport implications. Primary provision needs to be relatively close to family homes, whilst greater size and scale is needed to deliver the funding to support the breadth of curriculum young people need in secondary schools.

All Flintshire schools are part of cross-phase clusters involving at least one secondary school and partner primary schools. The cluster schools work together to secure high quality and consistent learning opportunities across all schools within the area. They share expertise in school leadership, inclusion, teaching and learning, including supporting Professional Learning Communities. They share resources, training and business support services. Whether primary and secondary provision is

located on a single site or in a range of locations schools are committed to effective learning opportunities and pathways for all in their local area.

Flintshire schools should be developing operating models in line with the Hill review and the national model for school Improvement. National strategy envisages clusters increasingly working in arrangements similar to formal federal school arrangements with individual school governing bodies agreeing to establish a joint committee with agreed delegated powers and options for a limited pooled budget. Schools working in this way are increasingly aligned on governance, management, leadership development, curriculum delivery, staffing and inclusion issues.

### **Federation**

The federation of schools is a legal process which enables schools to work together through a formal structured process by sharing a governing body that will make decisions in the best interest of all the schools, staff and pupils in that federation.

The term federation is often used to describe many forms of collaboration between schools. The Statutory process of federation is often referred to as “hard federation.” An informal, non-statutory arrangement between schools is often called “soft federation” or collaboration, where schools have made a commitment to work together through some form of joint governance.

The Welsh Government have brought in new regulations around federation of maintained schools in Wales. The Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 which came into force on 22 May 2014 gives effect to Council’s powers to federate schools. (School governors already have powers to federate by choice under provisions introduced in 2010). These powers have now been consolidated into the 2014 Regulations:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/140522-guidance-on-federation-of-schools-en.pdf>

In the context of Schools modernisation, the Council has not progressed federal arrangements in schools, as under the old regulations the Local Authority did not have the powers to do so.

### **Advantages of Federal Arrangements**

#### **Educational Standards**

A survey undertaken by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills) in September 2011 on the impact of federated schools in England found improvements were evident in the three key areas of teaching and learning, behaviour and pupil achievement.

A copy of the report can be accessed at:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/leadership-of-more-one-school>

Three main reasons were given for federating. Some schools had been approached by a Council to help a struggling school; others were small schools in danger of closure or unable to recruit high quality staff; and others were seeking to strengthen the overall education of pupils in their communities.

Federations set up to improve the capacity of small schools were successful in broadening and enriching the curriculum and care, guidance and support for pupils. These also resulted in better achievement for groups of pupils such as the vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

In good federations, leaders made the most of increased resources and opportunities for professional development and used these to achieve their priorities. Crucially, training and development were carefully tailored to meet the needs of the school.

Sharing these strengths, through a federation, can bring benefits to learners across a number of schools. A school's strengths can come in many forms, including leadership, staff, resources, expertise and facilities. By working together, through federation and other partnership arrangements, schools can:

- raise their standards, for example, by shared training and working practices, encouraging their staff to support each other and developing integrated curriculum and pastoral policies;
- offer pupils a wider range of opportunities, for example, by holding joint activities or sharing facilities or teachers that might be difficult to sustain individually;
- develop a range of extended services and activities for pupils and the wider community;
- improve their leadership and management, for example, through shared headship; and
- maximise the sharing of resources, taking advantage of economies of scale.

## **Recruitment**

The National Association of Head teachers (NAHT) Annual Report 2011 stated that some 36% of primary, 19% of secondary and 39% of special school head teacher posts were reported unfilled after an advertisement this year, Last year the percentages were 34% of primary, 19% of secondary and 43% of special schools. This suggests that all sectors are still experiencing considerable difficulty in filling their posts.

As in recent years, a significant proportion of head teacher vacancies are the result of a retirement (65% of primary, 61% of secondary and 82% of secondary school vacancies). More head teachers are still retiring before the age of 60.

Small schools are another group who appear to face above average challenges when seeking a new head teacher.

Federal arrangements may assist in areas where Head teacher appointments are difficult or challenging.

### **Disadvantages of Federal Arrangements**

Federal arrangements in schools often fail to meet a number of the key drivers of school modernisation. Key issues include:

- **Suitable Buildings** – The 21<sup>st</sup> Century programme funding arrangements from WG rely on rationalisation of school estate to generate revenue saving to enable access prudential borrowing. Additionally in some cases sale of surplus estate, will also generate capital receipts both are used to find the Local Authority's 50% contribution to the programme. Federal arrangements will not rationalise the estate, therefore the revenue saving will be either nil or limited to small potential savings in the school allocations and only if formula allocations and/ or structures can be changed.
- **Unfilled Places** - As Federal arrangements do not rationalise school estate, reducing unfilled places is limited to mothballing areas of schools, this may or may not be achievable in individual schools for operational, practicable or building related reasons
- **Diminishing Resources** – Federal arrangements do not support large revenue savings, instead small potential savings in the school allocations could potentially be achievable through the formula allocations if staffing structures were changed. The building related costs would remain as they are currently.

### **Modernisation Models**

Modernisation of schools may involve:

- continuing existing schools;
- merging of existing schools through a combination of school federations or merging onto one preferred site, or multiple sites;
- developing new area schools;
- co-locating primary and secondary schools on the same campus as the first stage in the move to 3-16/18 area provision;
- developing all through schools; and
- closure of schools that are no longer fit for purpose or needed as part of the network of provision.

## **Primary Provision**

The 2010 school organisation policy in Flintshire would trigger a review of individual schools:

- where they have 25% or more surplus places; or
- if the school entered special measures.

Whilst the Council would still commission a review of local provision where there were quality concerns as a school entered special measures or where there are more than 25% surplus places, the situation in terms of other school organisation criteria has changed since 2010.

The drivers for change identified in the introduction are real. The level of resources available to support small or undersubscribed schools is diminishing rapidly. There is a need to ensure that all schools and school sites are able to provide children with the widest possible opportunities.

The Welsh Government has recently defined a small school as being one with 91 pupils or fewer. Estyn has identified the educational challenges faced by small schools or sites (Estyn – Small Primary Schools in Wales, 2003) as:

- teaching mixed age classes containing more than 2 or 3 age groups;
- the restricted size of peer groups and sufficiency of challenge;
- limited opportunities for social interaction;
- difficulties with recruitment and retention of staff;
- excessive burdens on staff; and
- increased expertise required to support pupils with special educational needs.

More positively, schools across Flintshire and across Wales are working more collaboratively in school to school collaborative arrangements. Locally, Flintshire County Council considers that resilient primary school reorganisation is that which can directly address the challenges faced in school organisation.

Resilient and sustainable primary school organisation would enable:

- a headteacher with a minimum 40% time commitment to leadership and management. This commitment will increase in relation to the size of the school. All schools need sufficient leadership capacity and there are inefficiencies from using headteachers as highly paid classroom teachers;
- increased benefit to pupils from peer interaction;
- increased social opportunities for pupils through the pursuit of a wider range of activities; enhancing children's ability to forge relationships and celebrate diversity;
- a maximum class size of 30 in Foundation Phase;

- reduced mixed Key Stage classes;
- increased options for class organisation within schools;
- staff expertise as teachers are allowed to lead a single subject across the school, thereby gaining more focus on and depth in the delivery of a subject;
- increased opportunities for professional development among staff, providing opportunity to develop strengths and expertise in wider areas, including numerous non-core subjects.
- improved recruitment and retention of staff;
- opportunity for excellent learning and working facilities;
- a range of community focused services;
- better learning and working environments and no mobile classrooms;
- economies of scale for full time administrative and business support services; and
- fair and sufficient funding per pupil to enable pupils to reach their full potential, while making the best use of resources.

Future primary school provision will endeavour to follow one of the County Council's recommended models described below. The models are:

a) 1 form entry or more – primary school providing a minimum of 210 full-time places or more (approximately 30 pupils per year group) and with no more than 25% surplus places. Other models of at least one form of entry, for example, 1.5, 2, 2.5 or 3 forms of entry are also efficient and effective.

b) Schools with less than 1 form of entry, but with more than 0.5 forms of entry providing at least 105 full-time places (approximately 15 pupils per year group) where needed, may be considered for the formation of a federated school or an area school. Area schools would be formed in accordance with the Council's preferred operating model at (a) above.

Where the school is incapable of sustaining sufficient pupil numbers or an area review determines that a school is to be closed, statutory proposals need to be published in order to close any primary school, including those within a federation. Statutory notices would not be required when closing a specific site within a primary school.



## **Secondary Provision**

The Council wants all mainstream secondary provision to provide the best possible learning environments for children and young people, whilst providing the widest possible range of curriculum opportunities. The 2010 policy established the principle that there should be a review of provision:

- where there are more than 25% surplus places or less than four forms of entry (600 pupils) at 11-16 and less than 120 students at post 16;
- the Council would still commission a review of local provision where there were quality concerns if, for example, a school entered special measures.

It also remains the case that it is not feasible for a school of less than around four forms of entry to sustain sufficient curriculum breadth and quality to meet learners' entitlements. Nor is it feasible for a secondary school with fewer than around 600 pupils to sustain the facilities described in the Welsh Government's vision for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools.

The Council therefore accepts that the minimum size for any new secondary school will be a four form entry school providing 600 11-16 places. This is unchanged from the policy set out in 2010.

Funding for provision of post-16 education is provided through Welsh Government grant, which is diminishing each year creating significant increasing pressure on small sixth forms. Small sixth forms can lead to limited student interaction which diminishes the effectiveness of learning (Transforming Education & Training in Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, 2008).

In order to safeguard the right of learners to access a broad and high quality range of learning opportunities (and in line with the Welsh Government's 'Transformation Policy') the Council will review post 16 provision in any secondary school where the number of pupils within the 6th form falls below 150 for three years in succession. Any review will consider whether the school should become an 11-16 or 3-16 (where the site allows) school.

The Council has already published plans to create a new Sixth Form Centre in North Flintshire in partnership with Coleg Cambria and local schools. This policy is consistent with this development and other local developments.

## **Trigger Points**

As stated previously in the document, the key drivers for change contained within this strategy which trigger review are as follows:-

- **Educational improvement**
- **Resilient School Leadership**
- **Suitable Buildings**
- **Unfilled places**
- **Diminishing Resources**

It is prudent to further identify the characteristics of any change in school circumstance that would 'trigger' an immediate review of a school's position, regardless of its allotted place in the Implementation Plan.

The 'trigger' points are identified within the key drivers as:

### **Educational Improvement**

- Where school standards fall below expected levels and there is significant concern raised by GwE or the Local Authority.
- Where a school enters a formal category of concern within the Estyn Inspection cycle

### **Resilient School Leadership**

- Where there is significant concern raised by GwE or the Local Authority.
- Where there are Headteacher recruitment issues.

### **Suitable Buildings**

- Where there is a significant Health and Safety concern.
- Where the building is categorised as category D in condition and/or suitability as recorded on the Council's asset management system.
- Where a school has multiple sites and or multiple mobile classrooms

### **Unfilled places**

- Where school unfilled places rise significantly [fail LA and WG drivers]
- Where a school has not reached 25% unfilled places but unfilled places have exceeded 10% for three successive years.

### **Diminishing Resources**

- Where the local school doesn't serve the local population.

## **Section 3: Underpinning Policies**

### **Admissions**

Flintshire County Council's Admissions Policy enables parents, carers and students to express their preference for admission to a school of their choice. If places are available admission can be secured. If there are more applications than places at an individual school prioritisation criteria are applied, with scope for an independent appeal if the decision is not accepted by a family. Admission arrangements for schools are either the responsibility of the County Council (Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools) or the Governing Body (Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools).

<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Lifelong-Learning/Schools/School-Admissions/Guide-to-Education-Services-2015.pdf>

### **Transport**

Flintshire County Council's Transport Policy offers free transport in accordance with statutory provision to pupils who live over two miles (primary) or 3 miles (secondary) from their nearest appropriate school, and to pupils who cannot walk to school because of special educational or medical needs, a disability or where the route is considered to be "hazardous". Free transport is also currently provided under current policy to the nearest Welsh medium school, for post 16 learners to specific sites only, to denominational schools where admission to the school is on denominational grounds and subject to providing evidence of adherence to the faith of the school and to learners whose parents receive Income Support or Working Tax Credit and reside more than 2.5 miles from their nearest appropriate school.

<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Lifelong-Learning/Schools/School-Transport/Transport-Eligibility-Criteria-.pdf>

### **Maintaining and Sustaining the Welsh Language**

Flintshire County Council's Welsh Education Strategic Plan 2014-2017 states that Flintshire County Council will:-

- endeavour to **increase** the number of fluent Welsh speakers within its boundaries, with the aim of creating an increasingly bilingual county and country; and
- support, expand and promote Welsh-medium education within the whole community, increasing the number and percentage of pupils receiving Welsh-medium education in compliance with the Welsh Government's Welsh-Medium Education Strategy of developing learners who are fully bilingual (i.e. fluent in both English and Welsh).

<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Schools/Welsh-in-Education-Strategic-Plan-2014-2017.aspx>

## **Inclusion & Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

Flintshire County Council's Inclusion Strategy recognises that all schools are likely to have some children on roll who have Additional Learning Needs (ALN). Every school or area review therefore has an implication for ALN provision, whether in terms of access to the curriculum or physical access to school premises.

School modernisation provides the opportunity to consider the most effective ways of ensuring that appropriate ALN support is provided for pupils. This may be in mainstream schools, in specialist resource bases attached to mainstream schools, or where appropriate, in Flintshire's recently modernised special schools. The modernisation of Flintshire's special schools, in itself, provides opportunities for new ways of configuring outreach provision to sustain young people in local educational provision.

Individual school and local area reviews should consider strategies to deliver:

- appropriate provision and smooth transitions for children with ALN;
- appropriate access for people with disabilities and also to enable inclusion of children with ALN;
- improving attendance and behaviour, together with reducing bullying; and
- delivering improved achievement for those who are at risk or vulnerable to exclusion.

[http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Lifelong-Learning/Schools/Children--Young-People-with-ALN/Policy-Framework-for-Children--Young-People-with-Additional-Learning-Needs-\(SEN\)-April-2007.pdf](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Lifelong-Learning/Schools/Children--Young-People-with-ALN/Policy-Framework-for-Children--Young-People-with-Additional-Learning-Needs-(SEN)-April-2007.pdf)

## **Voluntary Aided Schools**

Voluntary Aided schools are maintained jointly by the County Council and either the Church in Wales or the Roman Catholic Church. These school buildings belong to the Diocese and we are therefore unable to instigate structural change to these buildings. Aided schools also have access to separate capital funding streams directly through the Welsh Government. Flintshire County Council will continue to work in partnership with the Diocesan Authorities to ensure that Aided schools are appropriately located and fit for purpose.

## **ICT in Schools**

Flintshire County Council will encourage schools to continue to transform learning and teaching, by ensuring that:

- we embrace the way technology is evolving and recognise how children and young people use technology;
- we ensure that teachers and learners have safe, reliable and seamless access to ICT in the classroom, promoting inclusion;

- all teaching and learning spaces (where practicable) are digitally enabled;
- all schools should have regular and reliable broadband connectivity of an appropriate bandwidth, which is regularly monitored and reviewed in light of emerging uses;
- we have efficient administrative and information management systems which support teaching and learning; and
- learners should have access to learning inside and out of school supporting collaboration with one another, their teachers and the broader learning community.

### **Community Schools**

Schools are often the centre of a community but are sometimes under used in the evenings, on weekends and in the holidays. Flintshire County Council encourages schools to play an important and pivotal role in the community. Schools not only provide education for learners and create a community spirit amongst parents and carers, but they also have the opportunity and often the facilities to reach out to the whole community. In practice this means not only using schools for after school clubs for children and young people, but also as a possible base for additional services such as childcare, early years education, health, social services, libraries and community/ family education activities.

Work undertaken by the WLGA showed that a key factor in a successful school is a close relationship with the wider community. Involvement with the community improves the achievement and motivation of a school and benefits the pupils in that school.

### **Welsh Government 21st Century Schools Capital Investment Programme**

Flintshire's approach to school modernisation can only be delivered by working in partnership with communities and the Welsh Government to secure investment in change. School modernisation options will drive an investment strategy that will address the needs of the schools.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools Programme was introduced to replace the annual School Building Improvement Grant (SBIG) programme. Previously, Councils received an annual SBIG allocation to improve school stock. However, the amount of funding available limited strategic thinking and restricted them to smaller projects. The Welsh Government's 21st Century School Building Programme supports strategic planning by local authorities in order to provide new or improved school buildings, while reducing surplus places.

This is evident in Flintshire Band A, with a £64m school investment programme planned between 2014 and 2017.

The Welsh Government has indicated that they intend to roll out Band B of the programme from 2019. It is expected that WG will provide further information in the next twelve months on securing the next phase of the investment.

Flintshire County Council will develop its strategies to ensure that we are maximising the potential investment opportunities that may be available via Welsh Government funding.

Welsh Government funding criteria for 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools will only potentially fund modernisation projects; refurbishment or maintenance projects are not eligible for grant via this programme.

#### **Section 4: Process**

The Council consults with parents, school governors and staff and other relevant stakeholders prior to making proposals for any school modernisation change.

The consultation process will involve the completion and presentation of impact assessments around; community, transport, buildings, equalities and language and will of course involve the financial appraisal. During those meetings with Key stakeholders, they will be asked to express their views.

The responses from each formal consultation process will be presented to the County Council's Cabinet, along with the impact assessment, options appraisal and officer recommendations. Cabinet will then decide on how to progress and implement for an area/individual school.

Operationally, the implementation of the programme will be overseen by the Education Modernisation Board and will be managed in accordance with Flintshire's Project Management Framework (aligned with Prince2). Consequently project work will be structurally and technically consistent but tailored depending on the level of review.

Statutory proposals for changes to school provision will only be started following Cabinet agreement.

The new School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 makes Local Authorities responsible (rather than the Welsh Ministers prior to October 2013) for the determination of most statutory school organisation proposals that receive objections. Such provisions apply to any proposals published on or after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 that consider the establishment, discontinuance or otherwise significantly alter schools.

The Council does this in line with the Welsh Government's statutory School Organisation Code

[:http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130719-school-organisation-codes-en.pdf](http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130719-school-organisation-codes-en.pdf)

In making a decision the Council's Cabinet will consider the following principles and desired outcomes:

- ensuring high quality learning pathways for all our learners from 3 to 19;
- ensuring that the impact of any transition point is minimised;
- giving all learners the opportunity to attend their nearest appropriate school where they can access the full range of facilities;
- ensuring all children have access to facilities that allow the delivery of a full range of educational opportunities, including high quality teaching and learning environments, play areas, staff areas, security and ICT facilities;
- reducing the number of unfilled places in schools in accord with Welsh Government guidelines, with no more than 10% unfilled across the network of schools;
- supporting the development of leadership capacity across schools in order to have a self-improving and sustainable schools system where there is a shared commitment to excellence;
- removing the need for mixed key stage classes and reducing the number of classes with more than two age groups;
- co-locating (where practicable) primary and secondary school provision, with community learning, culture and leisure facilities on the same campus; and
- securing value for money and effective use of resources.

### **Governance arrangements**

Structural change often involves a legal change to governing body arrangements with temporary governing bodies needing to be set up and constituted. These would run alongside the existing governing bodies. Officers from the Authority will assist governing bodies in this process.

### **Support for teaching and support staff**

As part of the programme the HR team will be able to advise and support headteachers and school staff in relation to workforce issues arising from the implementation arrangements agreed by the Council.

## **Section 5: Implementation**

A separate implementation plan will be produced giving outline dates and areas to review.

In terms of framing timelines the anticipated sequential timelines typically are as follows:

- Area review - 6 months
- Cabinet approvals
- Statutory proposals - 9-12 months (If considered by the Council)
- Cabinet approvals
- Construction Work (if applicable)

Times will vary from school to school and area to area dependent on the complexity and circumstance. The minimum time to implement re-organisation would be 9-12 months with other areas taking between 12-18 months to implementation (not inclusive of construction periods where applicable).

The Council's programme will be designed to link and to complement the 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding programme streams and bands, in order to maximise investment potential.

Given the above process, this will inevitably lead to the Council consulting in areas before it is able to secure funding via the Welsh Government through its programme. Funding is only fully secured at Full Business case (FBC) stage.

### **Financing the Programme**

The speed of implementation of any School Modernisation Programme is subject to the availability of resources. While it may be a clear aim to implement the programme, it may not be possible to do this in the planned timescale if funding is unavailable.

It is important to note that new schools will not be possible in all areas. For those areas which are not included in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme a pragmatic, more creative approach needs to be taken to address uneconomic use of school accommodation. This can be achieved in a number of ways including:

- at minimal cost i.e. designation of one school as an area school and closure of schools in surrounding area (*children from closing schools move to a school which is fit for purpose and has unfilled places*)
- being wholly self-financed by the Local Authority
- obtaining 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme capital funding and providing the 50% match funding



Renewed cluster School Modernisation Options are being developed in order to identify revenue savings through the School Funding Formula alongside the Investment Strategy which will deliver organisational change.

Each individual school proposal and area review will need a full financial appraisal identifying revenue savings, cost pressures and any programme of capital investment.

### **Methods of funding the Authority's allocation**

(Subject to appropriate approvals)

- Enhanced capital allocations
- Generation of capital receipts (asset disposal)
- Development of self-funding or part funding opportunities (through prudential borrowing).

There is no immediate expectation that any significant additional funding source will be available, but opportunities to identify and secure such funding will be actively sought in line with asset management and rationalisation strategies.

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## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

**DATE:** **THURSDAY, 15 JANUARY 2015**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER (ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE)**

**SUBJECT:** **PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To provide members with an update on progress against delivery of Public Library Standards and outline the way forward for working with these standards and the current budgetary context in the future.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964<sup>1</sup> makes it a duty of the relevant Welsh Ministers (currently the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism) “to superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service provided by local authorities...and to secure the proper discharge by local authorities of the functions in relation to libraries conferred upon them as library authorities under this Act”. Under the same Act, library authorities are required to “provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”.

2.02 Since 2002, the Welsh Ministers have fulfilled this duty through the Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS, or, the Standards). The first framework ran from 2002 to 2005 with subsequent frameworks covering the periods 2005-08, 2008-11 and 2011-14. Each individual framework evolved to reflect the changing needs and expectations of public library users. In addition to the fulfilment of statutory duties, the WPLS framework plays a valuable role in supporting the development of public library services. There is general consensus among stakeholders concerned with the provision of public library services in Wales that these performance measurement frameworks, introduced and administered by the Welsh Government for the sector, have helped public library services to improve in a number of ways and in key areas. For example, as a result of the Standards, there have been significant improvements in service areas such as the delivery of requests and provision of ICT facilities and services, leading to enhanced outcomes for library customers.

2.03 Local authorities also have a statutory duty (under section 7 of the Act) to provide a library service and encourage both adults and children to make full use of that library service. The performance indicators assist the Welsh Government in assessing whether or not local authorities in Wales are complying with their duties under the 1964 Act, and in assessing the comprehensiveness and efficiency, in terms of the manner of delivery, of library services in Wales.

2.04 Flintshire's performance against the WPLS Fourth Framework 2011-14

2.04.1 **2011-12** Flintshire achieved 5 of the 9 standards. These were:

- WPLS 1. Provision of service points and access to them.
- WPLS 2. Services to users with special requirements.
- WPLS 3. Opening hours and delivery of services.
- WPLS 5. Acquisitions to stock.
- WPLS 7. Delivery of user requests.

Flintshire partially achieved the requirements of the 4 remaining standards:

- WPLS 4. ICT facilities and services
- WPLS 6. Expenditure on books and materials (due to in year budget cuts)
- WPLS 8. Staffing
- WPLS 9. Buildings and space (due to lack of funds for property surveys).

This was slightly below the average level of achievement for Wales. (Highest in Wales was 8 standards achieved, lowest was 3, average was 6.)

2.04.2 **2012-13** Flintshire achieved 4 of the 9 standards:

- WPLS 1. Provision of service points and access to them.
- WPLS 2. Services to users with special requirements.
- WPLS 5. Acquisitions to stock
- WPLS 7. Delivery of user requests

Flintshire partially achieved the requirements of the remaining standards:

- WPLS 3. Opening hours and delivery of services (due to mechanical breakdowns of mobile library)
- WPLS 4. ICT facilities and services
- WPLS 6. Expenditure on books and materials (due to in year budget cut)
- WPLS 8. Staffing
- WPLS 9. Buildings and space (due to lack of funds for property surveys).

This was below the average level of achievement for Wales. (Highest in Wales was 8 Standards achieved, the lowest was 3, average was 6)

- 2.04.3 **2013-14** Flintshire achieved 6 of the 9 standards:
- WPLS 1. Provision of service points and access to them.
  - WPLS 2. Services to users with special requirements.
  - WPLS 3. Opening hours and delivery of services.
  - WPLS 5. Acquisitions to stock.
  - WPLS 7. Delivery of user requests.
  - WPLS 9. Buildings and space

Flintshire partly achieved the requirements of 2 Standards:

- WPLS 4. ICT provision
- WPLS 6. Annual expenditure on stock. For this Standard the authority reached all the targets in the final year of the Framework, but on average it failed to achieve the target set for the expenditure on materials for adult users over the three year period. This marginal overall failure to meet all the requirements showed clearly the adverse effect of expenditure reductions in this area during the first two years of the Framework.

Flintshire failed to meet the standard (WPLS8) for staffing.

## 2.05 Current Position

Flintshire is due to report on 2014-15 performance against the Fifth Framework of standards in June 2015.

The Fifth Framework consists of **Core Entitlements** and **Quality Indicators**. These are designed to ensure that library services:

- Engage with customers and potential users
- Provide opportunities for individual and community development  
(core entitlements 1,2 & 3)
- Are delivered from buildings and facilities which are welcoming, inclusive and fit for purpose  
(core entitlements 4,5,6 &7)
- Provide a range of resources and services to meet people's needs  
(core entitlements 8,9,10,11,12 & 13)
- Are professionally managed with adequate resources  
(core entitlements 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18)

There are 23 Quality Indicators. Not all are measured by a target, and authorities are required to report on data collected from user surveys, feedback, sampling and to use Performance Indicators such as visitor numbers, attendance at events and level of ICT use.

For those Quality Indicators where a target is set, forecasted performance indicates that Flintshire could meet the following:

- QI 5. Location of service points
- QI 8. Number of items acquired per 1000 resident population
- QI 9. a) Percentage of material budget spent on resources for children.  
b) Minimum of 4% of materials budget to be spent on Welsh language materials.
- QI 16. Opening hours (no less than 120 per week should be provided per 1,000 resident population)

The following Quality Indicators would be only partially met:

- QI 10. Online Access
  - a) Every static library and mobile library should provide a minimum of 1 device giving public access to the internet and networked digital content. Aggregate access of at least 9 devices per 10,000 resident population should be achieved.
  - b) All static service points should provide WiFi access.
- QI 13. Staffing levels and qualifications would not be met.

*For full document visit:*

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/140425wpls5en.pdf>

## 2.06 Future of Performance Indicators

The Welsh Public Library Standards are set every three years within a new framework following discussions and seminars with experts and practitioners. They reflect factors such as budgets, local government and ministerial advice and guidance, and user feedback. They have evolved to support the development of library services but in the current economic climate the new framework has been set to present some aspirational targets whilst recognizing that local authorities are making difficult decisions about what services they provide.

The latest framework includes impact and outcome measures for the first time. This should help to demonstrate the range of benefits that result from people using a library service, including literacy skills, digital skills and health and wellbeing.

## 2.07 Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales 2014

In October 2013 it became apparent that Local Authority funding in Wales would be under significant pressure from 2014-15 onwards. It was clear by November 2013 that this would result in far reaching changes and a reduction in public library provision in Wales.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013 in a written statement to National Assembly Wales, the Minister for Culture & Sport announced that he would commission an expert review of current and future plans by Local Authorities to deliver public library services in Wales.

A panel commenced work in February 2014 and reviewed a body of evidence supported by CyMAL, from a range of stakeholders. The panel reaffirmed the importance of the public library service, its positive impact on the lives of individuals and communities. Libraries will play vital role in the ongoing delivery of local and national priorities such as social inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy, digital inclusion, health and wellbeing and community cohesion.

***See appendix A for Findings and Recommendations.***

## 3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 In the current budgetary context the old framework for Public Library Standards while a good benchmark will become harder and harder to meet. Its rigid nature does not allow for different approaches to service delivery. However the revised framework and expert review build more flexibility in how they are delivered. Determining local priorities and ways of delivering an effective and sufficient service will become increasingly more important.

3.02 In light of this, the Library Service has commenced work on the following strands of a local Libraries framework. The framework addresses the findings and recommendations of the Expert Review and also the requirements of the Council to deliver services within the available budgets. These key strands are as follows:

- Flintshire Library Service will develop an evidence and outcomes approach to commence in 2015-16;
- The service will implement efficiencies during 2015-16 to meet budget targets whilst operating the full current network of libraries;
- Work will take place to develop the use of volunteers within the next two years, following the guidelines and good practice developed by CyMAL;
- Flintshire Library Service will continue to collaborate with the library authorities in North Wales to implement a shared Library Management System and a shared bibliographic services unit, funded by CyMAL.

- The Council will work with town and community councils and other community groups where appropriate to consider asset transfer of libraries to the community.
- We will work to explore all innovative and alternative ways that might sustain future service provision post 2016, including co-location of services.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That the committee note and comment on progress against Public Library Standards.

4.02 That the committee comment on the key strands identified as a future overarching framework for library provision moving forwards.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 There are no direct poverty implications arising from this report.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 There are no direct equalities arising from this report although the strands of the future framework aim to ensure the best possible level of provision is achieved in future within budgetary constraints.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None undertaken.

#### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None required although many of the detailed actions that follow from the way forward will result in reports coming back to Council and local organisations.



**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix A - Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales 2014:  
Recommendations.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

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## Appendix A - Expert Review of Public Libraries in Wales 2014:

### Recommendations

1. Managing Change
  - i) Continue to develop good practice guidance
  - ii) Continue to develop good practice to undertake Equality Impact Assessments.
  - iii) Local Authorities only to progress with costed options by taking account of timescales, impact assessments, and opportunities for collaboration
  - iv) CyMAL to take immediate steps to collect evidence and assess the impact of the proposed changes to libraries service provision in RCT, NPT and Blaenau Gwent.
  
2. Strategic Improvements.
  - v) Every public library authority should develop an evidence and outcomes based strategy to begin in 2015 – 16
  - vi) CyMAL should work with staff, employers, SCL Wales, CILIP Cymru and trade unions to develop a comprehensive five –year workforce development plan to start in 2015 – 16. Volunteers should be provided with tailored as a discrete group to meet their specific needs.
  - vii) Local Authorities should recognise and respond to the need for more urgent and greater emphasis on collaborative schemes. The deputy Minister needs to take into account what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient' service in collaborative service delivery.
  - viii) Community managed libraries (as outlined in par 83 of the report) should not be considered as part of statutory provision at the present time and data not included in returns for WPLS
  - ix) CyMAL should work with stakeholders to develop guidelines/ documents for partnership agreements setting out a minimum requirement. The requirement for a community supported library to be included as part of the statutory provision should be developed by CyMAL by January 2015.
  
3. Future Models of Service Delivery
  - x) The WG should work with the WLGA and Local Authorities to progress the following strategic actions:
    - a) Promote greater collaboration on a more extensive scale between authorities
    - b) Develop public library services in-line with any future model for local government in Wales,

- c) Develop a regional or national consortium approach in the medium-term (3 – 5 years) to be facilitated by a suitably funding organisation supported by the Welsh Govt.
  - d) create a nationally co-ordinated library service for Wales as the ultimate goal.
- xi) The WG should undertake the necessary legislative process which would make the WPLS statutory guidance in relation to the duties imposed by the Public Libraries and museums Act 1964. The WG should also consider introducing new legislation to reflect the changing requirements for the public library service to deliver services collaboratively in digital environments.

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

**DATE:** **THURSDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER (EDUCATION AND YOUTH)**

**SUBJECT:** **STATEMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS – PROGRESS REPORT ON PERFORMANCE**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To report on progress of the Statutory Assessment element within the Inclusion Service.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The special educational needs of the great majority of children should be met effectively within mainstream settings through Early Years Action and Early Years Action Plus or School Action and School Action Plus without the Authority needing to make a statutory assessment. Where this is required, the local authority and partner agencies have strict guideline to adhere to as dictated by the Special Education Needs Code of Practice for Wales (2002).

2.02 The local authority makes good use of ONE to support officers in their work. The system has been set up to support adherence to the identified timescales within the process and training has been provided to schools to ensure their understanding of the need to comply with these.

2.03 Work is ongoing to support understanding of special educational needs and the range of strategies and resources that should be implemented to support successful outcomes. Money has been delegated to the secondary sector to enable schools to make appropriate use of this within their setting and this will be replicated within the primary sector from 2015.

2.04 Officers work closely with all agencies and particularly with parents and young people to ensure they are supported through the statutory assessment process which can be lengthy and complex. The Code of Practice specifies that the process from initiation, to the issuing of the final Statement of SEN should be completed within 26 weeks. The process defines permissible exceptions for which the timescale may be extended such as:

- The authority have requested advice from a health authority or a social services authority respectively and the health authority

or the social services authority have not complied with that request within 6 weeks from the date on which it was made;

- The child fails to keep an appointment for an examination or a test during the 10 week period between the authority agreeing to undertake an assessment and the completion of the assessment; and
- The child's parent indicates that he or she wishes to make representations to the authority about the content of the statement after the expiry of the 15 day period for making such representations

2.05 Throughout the process, parents have specific rights of appeal to the Special Education Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW). From January 2015, this right is extended to children and young people. Officer work hard to reduce the need for appeals whilst adhering to the Code and the assessment criteria for Flintshire.

2.06 The Welsh Government is going through a period of reform in the area of additional learning needs and Flintshire officers have been involved through pilots and ongoing focus groups to support knowledge of the forthcoming changes. As yet, it is unclear what the changes will be, although Person Centred Thinking has been identified as a process that will form part of the reforms. As a consequence of this, a training programme is underway for officers to ensure they have the knowledge to support schools in the future.

2.07 The Inclusion Assessment Service is being restructured as part of the Inclusion Service Review and the council efficiencies work. Consideration to the reforms and future service requirements is feeding into this process to try and ensure that the service will be fit for purpose when the national reforms are implemented.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 Adherence to Statutory Assessment timescales is monitored internally within the Education Improvement and Modernisation Strategy as outlined below. Performance data is collected and published nationally against the two outcomes below:

Target/Outcome	2013 Outcome	2014 Outcome	Wales Average	2015 Target
The percentage of final statements of special educational need issued within 26 weeks, including exceptions	90.8%	92.3%	69.6%	90%+
The percentage of final statements of special educational need issued within 26 weeks, excluding exceptions	100%	100%	96.6%	100%

- 3.02 Officers are aware of the range of permissible exceptions but aim to adhere to the 26 week timeline to support parents, children and young people. The outcome of 92.3% for 2013-14 is the third highest value for Wales, placing Flintshire within the upper quartile nationally. This compares favourably with the Welsh average of 69.6%. The authority has maintained 100% success in terms of meeting the 26 week timeline where there were no permissible exceptions.
- 3.03 Appeals to SENTW remain low for the authority as the table below indicates:

	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013
Number of Appeals	2	0	2

This reflects officer commitment to work collaboratively with parents and carers to achieve an appropriate outcome for children and young people.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 That Members note progress on Statutory Assessment within the Inclusion Service.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 None.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 None.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 None.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.01 None.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.01 None.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

- 10.01 None.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 None.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

SEN Code of Practice for Wales  
Education Improvement and Modernisation Strategy

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## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

**DATE:** **THURSDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2015**

**REPORT BY:** **HOUSING AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FACILITATOR**

**SUBJECT:** **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Strategic Assessment of Risks & Challenges.

2.02 In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:

1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?
2. Are there issues of weak or poor performance?
3. How, where and why were the issues identified?
4. Do local communities think the issues are important and is there any evidence of this? Is there evidence of public dissatisfaction?
5. Is there new Government guidance or legislation?
6. Have inspections been carried out?
7. Is this area already the subject of an ongoing review?

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work Programme of the Committees of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

**4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 and approve/amend as necessary.

**5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 None as a result of this report.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None as a result of this report.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None as a result of this report.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None as a result of this report.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None as a result of this report.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 N/A.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

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**CURRENT FWP**

<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>	<b>Scrutiny Focus</b>	<b>Responsible / Contact Officer</b>	<b>Submission Deadline</b>
<b>23 January 2015</b>	<b>2015/16 Budget Consultation</b>	To consider budget proposals for 2015/16.	Consultation	Chief Officer Education & Youth  Chief Officer Organisational Change	<b>15 January 2015</b>
<b>2 February 2015</b>  (Joint meeting with CP&P OSC)	<b>Post 16 Commissioning Strategy 2015/16</b>	To receive an update on implementation of the Council's Post 16 Commissioning Strategy	Service delivery	Secondary Schools Officer	<b>23 January 2015</b>
<b>26 February 2015</b>  Meeting to be held at Mold Alun High School	<b>Learner Outcomes</b>  <b>Incidents of arson, vandalism and burglaries in Flintshire schools</b>  <b>Leisure Services Assets – scoping report</b>	To provide Members with a summary of learner outcomes, including information on attendance and exclusions  Annual update report to review progress  To consider the Council's approach to sustaining leisure assets	Performance Monitoring  Performance Monitoring  Service Planning & Delivery	Chief Officer Education & Youth  Chief Officer Education & Youth  Chief Officer Organisational Change	<b>18 February 2015</b>

<b>26 March 2015</b>	<b>Quarterly Performance Reporting</b>	To consider Q3 performance outturns for improvement targets.	Performance Monitoring	Chief Officer Education & Youth	<b>18 March 2015</b>
	<b>School Transport Update</b>	To receive an update on School Transport.	Service Delivery	Chief Officer Education & Youth	
	<b>National Model for School Improvement</b>	To consider the National Model for School Improvement	Service Planning	Secondary Schools Officer	
<b>24 April 2015</b>	<b>Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE)</b>	To receive an update on progress with the development of the regional school effectiveness and improvement service, to include a presentation from the Chief Officer of GwE.	Performance Monitoring	Chief Officer Education & Youth	<b>16 April 2015</b>
	<b>School Improvement Strategy</b>	To consider the School Improvement Strategy	Service Planning	Chief Officer Education & Youth	
<b>4 June 2015</b>	<b>Quarterly Performance Reporting</b>	To consider Q4/Year End performance outturns for improvement targets	Performance Monitoring	Chief Officer Education & Youth	<b>27 May 2015</b>
	<b>Improvement Plan 2015/16</b>	To consider the draft Improvement Plan 2015/16	Performance Monitoring	Chief Officer Education & Youth	

<b>16 July 2015</b>					<b>8 July 2015</b>
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Future joint meeting with the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider:-

- Children & Young People Partnership
- Educational Attainment of Looked After Children

**REGULAR ITEMS**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>	<b>Responsible / Contact Officer</b>
	<b>School Modernisation</b>	To update Members on the progress made with School Modernisation	Chief Officer Education and Youth
<b>January</b>	<b>Self-evaluation on education services</b>	To update Members on overall service performance	Chief Officer Education and Youth
<b>February</b>	<b>Learner Outcomes – include attendance and exclusions in annual learner outcomes report</b>	To provide Members with a summary of pupil attainment across primary and secondary school	Chief Officer Education and Youth
<b>February / March</b>	<b>Incidents of arson, vandalism and burglaries in Flintshire schools</b>	Annual update report to review progress	Chief Officer Education and Youth
<b>April</b>	<b>Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE)</b>	To receive an update on progress with the development of the regional school effectiveness and improvement service, to include a presentation from the Chief Officer of GwE.	Chief Officer Education and Youth
<b>November</b>	<b>School Balances</b>	To provide the Committee with details of the closing balances held by Flintshire schools at the end of the financial year	Chief Officer Education and Youth
<b>December</b>	<b>Health &amp; Safety in Schools</b>	To receive a summary report on accidents and incidents in schools during the academic year and the actions taken to support schools in achieving healthy and safe environments.	Chief Officer Education and Youth