

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: TUESDAY 18 DECEMBER 2012

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING

SUBJECT: INCLUSION SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To inform members regarding the progress on implementation of the Inclusion Service Review Programme.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Flintshire County Council's Policy Framework for Children and Young people with Additional Learning Needs commits the Authority to a policy of inclusion for everyone. This is a principle that is positively pursued in practice by the Local Authority and its schools. A copy of the current Policy Framework has been placed in the Members' Room.

2.02 The service is underpinned by a structure (at Appendix 1), protocols and decision-making processes to assess and decide on support for pupils with Additional Learning Needs. These are matched by effective and co-ordinated advice and support for parents and carers and services supporting effective transition to help children and young people move between different stages of learning. Specialist provision is set out at Appendix 2.

2.03 In the October 2011 LAESCYP Inspection, Estyn concluded that the Local Authority's services to support Additional Learning Needs, social inclusion and wellbeing were all good. In relation to Additional Learning Needs, the assessment is set out below.

"Flintshire fulfils its statutory obligations for pupils with Additional Learning needs (ALN) well. Processes to support ALN are clear, efficiently managed, and effectively monitored. Well-understood procedures and rigorous multi-agency moderation of requests for additional support provide schools with responses that are consistent.

The authority monitors the progress of pupils with ALN effectively. This has recently led to a focus on improving achievements in reading and writing for pupils with ALN. As a result, pupils make good progress. The authority has recently improved its system for monitoring and evaluating a broad range of

data on the achievements of pupils with additional learning needs. It is piloting the system for the Welsh Government. There are positive early indicators of its effectiveness as a tool for school improvement.

The authority has undertaken a review to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. This is having a positive impact, such as supporting pupils with speech and language needs and those with hearing impairment in cluster-based mainstream schools.”

- 2.04 Developments have been overseen by the Inclusion Service Steering Group which includes Elected Members (including the Cabinet Member for Education & Culture and Councillor Stella Jones), Headteachers, Parent Partnership and Additional Needs Coordinators. The work programme is completed by a Project Team led by Inclusion Service Managers.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The service is not complacent about current performance and recognises the need to maximise the impact of available resources on improving the life chances of children and young people with Additional Learning Needs. This means that a new phase in the review programme also needs to address:

- national reforms to Additional Learning Needs (some of which are being piloted in Flintshire);
- sustainable networks of provision meeting current and future demographic needs; and
- sustainable resources aligned with responsibilities in schools and the local authority.

- 3.02 The following are considered to be within scope of the next phase of the review focused on provision:

- all centrally funded Inclusion Services, e.g. Educational Psychology Services, Learning Support Service, Inclusion Welfare Service etc.;
- all specialist LA provision, i.e. Resources and Portfolio Pupil Referral Units (PPRU); and
- all specialist non Flintshire provision, known as Out of County (OOC).

- 3.03 The following aspects of the review programme have been completed to date:

3.04 Finance

Significant work has been undertaken with colleagues in Finance to re-profile the Inclusion Service budget and address the budget anomalies identified. This has given managers a clear profile of their individual services and regular monitoring is underway. The work has also given senior managers a clear understanding of resource pressures and has been crucial to moving the service forwards.

In response to the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) commitment, the majority of the budget for secondary Teaching Assistants has been delegated to the schools. A working party is underway looking at how funding to support pupils with BESD can be delegated to both primary and secondary schools. A consortium has been identified for a pilot and discussions are underway relating to implementation of this.

3.05 **Service Delivery**

Changes have been made in relation to service delivery to support schools to build their own understanding and capacity to meet the needs of pupils with ALN. A number of services that were previously accessible only to primary schools, e.g. Learning Support and Communication, Language Advisory Support Service (CLASS) have now been extended to working with educational establishments across all phases.

Work has been underway with regard to specialist provision. A working group has reviewed the role and suitability of Resourced provision against the presenting needs of Flintshire pupils. Gaps in provision have been identified, particularly in relation to Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Behaviour Emotional Social Difficulties (BESD), Specific Language Impairment (SLI), Hearing Impairment (HI) for secondary aged pupils. Revised models of delivery are being trialled within existing Resources (SLI and HI) with the aim being to broaden the number of pupils impacted upon by the specialist staff through a more efficient use of staff and retaining the mainstream placement where possible. Savings realised by the changes in delivery and potential closure of some existing Resources should fund the required additions. Work has been undertaken to source potential centres for new provision.

Where possible, necessary changes have been made to specialist provision. The Welsh Government agreed to the closure of the Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) Resource at Westwood Primary School and this formally closed on 26th October 2012. The KS2 Social Communication Resource has been relocated from Westwood to Ysgol Y Fron in Holywell. Within the Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit, the KS3 centre within Mold Alun has closed due to the lack of available space to extend the provision to KS4. In response to this a KS3/4 provision has been opened at John Summers High School. The provision within Bryn Tirion has been extended and includes increased support for pupils to access their local mainstream school to ensure links are maintained with their community. Work is underway to develop an Alternative Centre for Education which will increase the range of vocational accredited courses for pupils with BESD.

3.06 **Out of County Provision**

Inclusion Officers have worked alongside colleagues in Social Services for Children to review and improve procedures relating to 'Out of County' placements. The focus on clear outcomes for pupils and increased levels of challenge both internally and externally with providers has resulted in savings and in some cases, a return to local provision. Officers are investigating potential Invest to Save opportunities to reduce the number of pupils having to access their education outside of Flintshire.

Regional options are being explored where opportunities arise. Flintshire now shares a Principal Education Psychologist with Wrexham. The additional funding realised through this arrangement has enabled a Senior role within the Flintshire team to be developed. The long term aim is to merge the two services into one and officers are working closely with support services to implement this. Flintshire is working alongside Wrexham and Denbighshire to develop a three County Sensory Service. Consultation has taken place with staff and confirming the financial and governance arrangements are the next key tasks.

Consideration is also being given to the development of a regional provision for ICT assessments for pupils with ALN, including augmentative communication aids. Denbighshire has developed a facility within their specialist school Tir Morfa and a six local authority service level agreement has been drafted. Further information is required from the Welsh Government to enable this to move further towards implementation.

3.07 **Agile Working**

In line with the corporate Asset Management Plan, the Inclusion Service is looking to reduce the number of satellite centres it occupies as part of the review. The Education Psychology Service has been identified as the first service to move and implement agile working principles. The supporting technology has been identified and where possible is being utilised by the team. A suitable office space has been identified within County Hall for 'hot desk' arrangements and the team is awaiting a date for this to be vacated so the move can be implemented.

3.08 **Evaluation of Practice**

All central services have been working on systems to monitor and evaluate impact. Managers have also investigated the implication of delegation in relation to their particular service area. Potential models have been developed and along with the research completed to date and information acquired relating to the national reforms and regionalisation of school improvement, the service has initiated the formal review of central service provision.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 To note progress in relation to the Inclusion Service review programme.
- 4.02 To commission development of a project initiation document for the next phase of the programme, to be considered in January 2013.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 The review has several financial implications. The redesign has to ensure that the Local Authority can deliver its statutory responsibilities within budget and does not result in additional financial pressures. Delegation has to be considered carefully and implemented where it can have a positive impact on pupils with Additional Learning Needs. Redundancy are a possible cost associated with the review along with site development costs for specialist provision.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 The impact of poverty is a core consideration of the review. It is important that the service redesign does not negatively impact on

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 It is anticipated that the review will reduce the corporate footprint associated with the Inclusion Service as a result of agile / collaborative working and a reduction in the number of satellites associated with the service.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 Equalities Impact Assessments are being undertaken where aspects of the review will lead to significant policy / provision change.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 Significant support from HR is required for the redesign of the service and the possible implications for employees. It is possible that changes will result in redundancies.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 Stakeholders have been identified and a consultation / communication plan is to be developed to ensure all required consultation takes place.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Consultation has taken place with regard to aspects of the regional work.

12.00 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Service Structure

Appendix 2 - Specialist Provision in Flintshire

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

Flintshire Local Authority Policy Framework for Children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

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