

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

**DATE:** **THURSDAY, 19 DECEMBER, 2013**

**REPORT BY:** **DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

**SUBJECT:** **FLINTSHIRE MUSIC SERVICE REVIEW**

**1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To update Members on the progress in developing the Flintshire Music School operating model approved by Cabinet in April 2013.

**2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 In April 2013 Cabinet agreed a new Optimum Service Model for the School Music Service.

2.02 The Business model agreed allowed schools to select and control the range of services they wish to purchase on an annual basis. Schools would be required to notify the Music Service about their detailed requests in the preceding summer term in 2013 (and during the Spring term in future years), to enable appropriate staffing levels to be in place for September. It was recognised that the Service requires the flexibility to respond to fluctuations in demand early in the Autumn Term.

2.03 Cabinet agreed that the service needs to maintain strong and focused artistic and educational leadership and additionally needs stronger and more resilient business management processes.

**3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 In the first year of operation of the new model, requests for schools to identify their service needs were made in the summer term. In future years this process will be undertaken earlier in order to enable timely service staffing decisions. All schools have identified their service needs for 2013-4. Five Primary schools have not participated in this service (Ysgol Pen Coch, Ysgol Maes Edwin, Flint, Saltney Ferry, Queensferry, and St. Ethelwold's, Shotton). Participating schools have "ordered" 390 hours of tuition (in 2012-3 the total tuition hours were 336). Schools have chosen from the wider range of opportunities offered, including Piano tuition and an increase in Guitar and Percussion. There have also been some requests for Music Service staff to conduct school ensembles and choirs. There are also new parts of the service offer in 2013-14 being undertaken by current staff.

- 3.02 The appointment of the Part Time Business Manager post is currently progressing through the County Council job evaluation and recruitment management process. Internal advertising did not result in an appointment being possible, so this has now progressed to external advert.
- 3.03 The operational changes in the report of 23<sup>rd</sup> April have been successfully implemented and are having the planned positive impact in relation to service commissioning, planning and financial performance. However, a range of questions were raised at the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2013. These largely relate to aspects of the service model discussed and agreed with school representatives and considered by Scrutiny prior to approval of the model in April 2013. The questions and service responses are set out at Appendix 1.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 Members note the progress made on implementation of the revised operating model for the School Music Service.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 The Service has taken action to reduce the number of contracted teaching staff employed, by the equivalent of two full time posts since the start of the financial year.
- 5.02 The Service needs schools to purchase a high enough number of hours of tuition to match the capacity of current staffing levels and areas of musical expertise. Where additional hours in an instrumental/vocal area are required these have been filled by current staff as identified as appropriate following a skills audit which has been conducted by Service Managers. If the service cannot meet demand in an instrumental area in this way, demand is being covered through commissioning on a more flexible and cost effective self employed basis. This has been required in three instrumental areas. Increased demand from schools and the increased flexibility demonstrated within the service has resulted in a position where no redundancies from the service are needed in the current financial year. This will need to be reviewed annually upon receipt of requests from schools.
- 5.03 As in all budget planning there are a number of assumptions which have to be made. Current assumptions include the amount needed for sickness supply cover (£20k), Staff Travel costs (£19K) and provision for doubtful debt (£10k). The cost of additional hours to cover staff absences and additional demand from schools for self employed workers is £25 per hour.

5.04 Taking all the above into account and assumptions being correct, the current projection for the budget year 2013-14 is that a minor underspend of £1.5k will result.

5.05 In the year 2014-15 the Service will have a reduction of £75k subsidy from the Local Authority. However with the full year effect of changes to staffing and assuming schools take up of the service remains at current levels; we anticipate that the Service will still be able to cover its costs. The assumption remains that any exit costs incurred in this year will be paid corporately.

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

6.01 None from this paper.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None from this paper.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 No additional impact since the previous report. Future reports will include analysis of gender balance of learners receiving tuition.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 School requests for tuition have resulted in three instrumental areas being oversubscribed resulting in additional teaching time being required. This is covered by current staff as identified as appropriate following a skills audit which has been conducted by Service Managers. Where the service cannot meet demand in an instrumental area, in this way, this demand is being covered through commissioning on a more flexible and cost effective self employed basis. A small excess of staffing remains within the service in one instrumental area but this is being productively used to give opportunities to learners to experience instrumental tuition in a bid to increase uptake in future years.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 Extensive consultation with unions is ongoing, although not required in the current financial year.

#### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Consultation has taken place with primary and secondary schools at the Headteachers' Federation meetings, with Heads of Music at their music forum meetings which are held each term. Additionally there has been ongoing consultation with Music Service staff throughout the process.

11.02 Service Managers recognise that parental views and learner voice can provide additional benefits in assuring the quality of the service.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 – Service responses to questions and comments raised during the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 5 September, 2013.

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

Report to Cabinet – 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013: School Music Service – Review of Business Model

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