

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 16 JUNE 2015**

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

SUBJECT: **SCHOOL MODERNISATION**

1.00 PURPOSE

1.01 To update on progress of the School Modernisation Programme to date and to propose the next phase of review and consultation for June 2015 to June 2016.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Cabinet approved the revised School Modernisation Strategy in January 2015.

2.02 The School Modernisation Programme is required because we need to:

- Ensure education provision is both high quality and sustainable
- Improve the quality of school buildings and facilities
- Provide the right number of school places, of the right type, in the right locations
- Address unsustainable school buildings and supporting infrastructure
- Recognise that doing nothing means higher pupil teacher ratios as funding reduces
- Ensure that we can maximise external funding through the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme

2.03 The key 'drivers' or criteria for modernisation which underpin the above are:

- Educational improvement
- Resilient school leadership
- Suitable buildings
- Unfilled places
- Diminishing resources

2.04 The primary school portfolio has 2182 unfilled places and the secondary school portfolio has 2113 unfilled places (source ADEW national benchmarking data 2014). There are 17% surplus places (January 2015) in primary schools, whilst the national and local target is to reduce this level to under 10%.

- 2.05 Flintshire has benefited from external capital funding in pre-21st Century school tranche funding over recent years. This has delivered improved opportunities and outcomes for learners. Examples include:
- all-through primary provision across Flintshire (including nursery class provision)
 - new primary schools in Connah's Quay and Shotton
 - new primary and secondary specialist schools in Flint
- 2.06 The 21st Century Schools programme Band A has an approved funding envelope of £64,200,000 between 2013-2017/18. Currently two projects within this programme are underway: the Holywell Learning Campus and the post 16 Hub at Connah's Quay. Both obtained Welsh Government Full Business Case approval in January 2015. Construction projects started on site in January and March 2015 respectively. Both projects are due to be complete by September 2016.
- 2.07 In February 2015, Cabinet resolved to discontinue the Queensferry Campus project as the "pause and review" analysis did not support the continuation through to a Full Business Case to Welsh Government for capital funding.
- 2.08 The Council is still able to work with the original Band A funding allocation. Welsh Government have confirmed that they will work with the Authority in respect of the balance of £18,564,000. However, this will require submission of a revised Strategic Outline Programme to the Welsh Government. Thereafter the projects would be required to follow the appropriate cost dependant business case approval processes.
- 2.09 Flintshire has one other school capital project approved utilising its own capital resources. The Hawarden Village school project which links two school buildings is due to commence on site shortly before the forthcoming summer holiday recess.
- 2.10 The statutory process for amalgamation has been undertaken at all infants and junior schools within Flintshire. New primary schools bring the advantages of fewer transitions for children and families. However, physical amalgamation of separate buildings still requires capital investment. Consideration could be given to these projects in Band B (2019-2021) of the 21st Century school funding programme, subject to other council priorities.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 Welsh Government funding criteria for 21st Century schools programme will only fund modernisation projects. Refurbishment or maintenance projects are not eligible for grant under this programme.

- 3.02 It is important to note that new schools will not be possible in all areas. For those areas which are not included in the 21st Century Schools Programme a pragmatic and 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. Closing a school or schools in surrounding area combined with moving pupils to a school (*which is fit for purpose and has unfilled places*)
 - being 100% self-financed by the Local Authority
 - obtaining 21st Century Schools Programme capital funding and providing the (currently) 50% match funding
- 3.03 The federation of schools can now be considered by a Local Authority under the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014. School governors already have powers to federate under provisions introduced in 2010 subsequently consolidated into the 2014 Act. The Council believes that Federation, whilst providing some leadership and operational opportunities, does little to address the national and local issues around unsuitable buildings, unfilled places and diminishing resources. However, federal arrangements may be proposed in certain circumstances such as where a school is left with no permanent headteacher and it would not be possible to implement school organisation proposals within an acceptable timescale.
- 3.04 Timelines for reorganisation are sequential and typically are as follows:
- Area review – (up to) 6 months (Impact Assessment work)
 - Cabinet approvals
 - Statutory proposals - 9-12 months (if considered by the Council's Cabinet)
 - Cabinet approvals
 - Construction Procurement/Construction Work (where applicable)
- 3.05 The Council's programme will be designed to link and to complement the 21st Century funding programme streams and bands, in order to maximise investment potential.
- 3.06 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.
- 3.07 Schools that do not require organisational change and which are not eligible for external funding via Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools programme, and which require capital investment, will need to be prioritised through the Council's capital planning process.

- 3.08 Schools/Areas which are in receipt of S.106 contributions as a result of development work in the area, will be monitored by officers. Investment will be made at an appropriate time and in line with criteria associated with the contribution.
- 3.09 Where schools are placed in serious categories of concern by Estyn, Flintshire has a policy of providing targeted support to enable removal within 18 months. Currently only one school in Flintshire is placed in a category of serious concern and it is responding very well to support and is on track to be removed from the category within the accepted timeframe.
- 3.10 Schools currently in statutory consultation are:
- John Summers High School – Change of age range from 11-18 to 11-16 by September 2016 and closure of 11-16 School by September 2017.
 - St David's, Saltney - Change of age range from 11-18 to 11-16 by September 2016.

The recommendation to Cabinet is that we enter formal consultation on closure and other school organisation options for the following schools by September 2016:

- Ysgol Maes Edwin
- Ysgol Llanfynydd
- Ysgol Mornant, Gwespyr Picton

- 3.11 Schools are reviewed against the extent of provision in the area. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient school places for local learners. The three schools meet the following criteria for review:

Small School Criteria for Review

School	NOR (Full time) January 2015
Ysgol Llanfynydd	42
Ysgol Gwespyr Picton	48
Ysgol Maes Edwin	66

- Diminishing Resource Criteria (schools supported by pupils not from their local community and/or small numbers within the community raise concern regarding sustainability within the schools portfolio, higher costs per pupil, unnecessary building and administration costs.

School	% of pupils not attending their nearest school	Cost per pupil (£) (Section 52 2014)	Unfilled Places (%) January 2015
Ysgol Maes Edwin	83%	£3,690	13%
Llanfynydd	47%	£5,111	48%
Gwespyr Picton	6%	£4,209	57%

- School Standards Criteria (scale 1 to 4 with 1 being highest)

School	School Standards Categorisation
Ysgol Maes Edwin	4
Llanfynydd	2
Gwespyr Picton	4

- Suitability & Condition Criteria (scale A to D with A best)

School	Suitability Scores	Condition
Ysgol Maes Edwin	B	B
Llanfynydd	C	B
Gwespyr Picton	C	B

(See Appendix A – proposed timetable for consultation)

3.12 Additionally, the proposal also seeks Cabinet approval to complete an area review of the following schools and would follow the process outlined in 3.04:

- Area 1 - Brynford CP School, Lixwm CP School and Ysgol Rhos Helyg, Rhosesmor
- Area 2 –Nercwys VA School (in relation to faith and community school capacity).

Small School Criteria

School	NOR (Full time) January 2015
Area 1 -Brynford CP School	63
Area 1 - Lixwm CP School	54
Area 1- Ysgol Rhos Helyg, Rhosesmor	140*
Area 2 – Nercwys VA school	49

* Whilst above the small school trigger, it makes sense to consider Ysgol Rhos Helyg as part of an area review and potential solutions to the management of school places.

- Diminishing Resource Criteria

School	% of pupils not attending their nearest school	Cost per pupil (£) (Section 52 2014)	Unfilled Places (%) January 2015
Area 1 - Brynford CP School*	55%	£3,846	-9%
Area 1 - Lixwm CP School	66%	£4,272	24%
Area 1 - Ysgol Rhos Helyg, Rhosesmor	23%	£3,177	17%
Area 2 – Nercwys VA School	10%	£4,278	-17%

* Additionally, Brynford CP School will be without a permanent Headteacher from September 2016 following appointment of the current one to the headship of Ysgol Ty Fynnon in Shotton.

- School Standards Criteria (scale 1 to 4, with 1 highest)

School	School Standards Categorisation
Area 1 - Brynford CP School	3
Area 1 - Lixwm CP School	3
Area 1 -Ysgol Rhos Helyg,	3

Rhosesmor	
Area 2 – Nercwys VA school	1

- Suitability & Conditions Issues (A to D, with A best)

School	Suitability Scores	Condition
Area 1 -Brynford CP School	C	B
Area 1 -Lixwm CP School	C	B
Area 1 - Ysgol Rhos Helyg, Rhosesmor	B	B
Area 2 – Nercwys VA school	D	B

In areas 1 and 2 it is proposed to start “soft” consultation following the Cabinet decision, forming more formal area review paperwork by December 2015 which will be shared with the communities asking for their views. Thereafter both sets of information with recommendations will be presented to Cabinet in January 2016.

The next stage of school modernisation implementation will be presented to Cabinet at a date to be set.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That Cabinet note the progress for Band A of the 21st Century schools programme
- 4.02 That Cabinet approve the implementation of reviews from June 2015 to June 2016.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 External funding - Capital

- 2013-2017/18 Band A - 21st Century Schools Programme - 50% intervention rate of £64.2m programme.
- 2018-2019 - External Funding Gap 2018-2019.

- 2019-2021 – Anticipated Band B Programme (circa £500m available nationally) Intervention rate TBC by Welsh Government.

5.02 Methods of funding the Authority’s Capital 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).

5.03 There is no expectation that any significant additional funding source will be available to the Authority given the financial situation, however opportunities to identify and secure such funding will be actively sought in line with asset management and rationalisation strategies.

5.04 Revenue consequences of the proposed changes are currently being fully assessed. However, this exercise is a key element of the process around re-organisation.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 School Modernisation is a key strategy in addressing the gap in achievement in some school communities due to poverty. Options will need to be informed by provision for and outcomes in overcoming the impact of poverty.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 The environmental impact of educational provision is consistently improved through school modernisation projects. Environmental impacts are analysed, reported and considered as part of school organisational decisions.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report. Equalities Impact Assessments will be conducted as part of a school or area school review/s.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 There are no direct personnel implications arising directly from this report.

9.02 In terms of any proposed future options for education provision in the area, personnel implications would be considered as part of the review work. Reorganisation 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 will be adhered to in order to minimise any negative effect. No change takes place without workforce consultation and engagement.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Formal Consultation will be required with key stakeholders, including dedicated approaches with children and young people, employees, governors and parents/carers, in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013. This will involve key stakeholders. Progress and authorisation to proceed will be sought from the County Council's Cabinet at key stages in the process.

10.02 Area reviews will be conducted in line with Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association guidance.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 This paper commissions consultation in identified school communities.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix A – statutory proposal timeline

BACKGROUND PAPERS	LOCATION	WEBSITE INFO.
School Organisation Code	WG website	http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130719-school-organisation-codes-en.pdf

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