

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 17 JULY 2012**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

SUBJECT: **SCHOOL MODERNISATION - AREA REVIEWS**

1.00 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To select preferred options for further consultations in each of the three designated areas of Holywell, Connah's Quay/ Queensferry and Buckley/Mynydd Isa/Mold.

2.00 **BACKGROUND**

2.01 In response to the need to address the issues of surplus places in Secondary Schools, officers and elected members of the Council attended a series of meetings in the three designated areas between February and March 2012, in accordance with the agreement of the Council made on 14th December 2011.

2.02 A total of twenty meetings were held with Staff, Governors and Parents of children and young people in schools identified in the options agreed at Council. Additional consultations with young people at the affected schools were conducted by officers of the Children and Young People Partnership.

2.03 The report to the Cabinet on School Modernisation Consultations on 12th June 2012 includes information relating to the responses for each of the consultations in the attached reports accompanying the report.

2.04 Members agreed to take into account the responses made as a result of the consultation process together with any further submission of options by consultees in deciding the most appropriate option (preferred option) to progress to a further and final stage of consultations.

2.05 The timetable for the process is for a decision on preferred options for further work to be reached at this meeting. This will enable arrangements for a series of consultation meetings to be made and for the consultations themselves to be conducted early in the new academic year. This would allow for sufficient time for decision making processes to be complete by the Summer of 2013.

2.06 The options for the three areas were listed in the consultation documents and comprised:

2.07 **Holywell area**

Option 1 - A reduction in the size of Holywell High School.

This would mean that part of the building will be demolished and/or parts used for other purposes, such as office accommodation for private tenants.

This option would mean that there would be no change for Ysgol Perth y Terfyn or Ysgol y Fron. They would continue to be separate schools and would stay in their existing buildings.

Option 2 - Building a new High School for pupils aged 11-18, together with a new primary school to replace Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron.

This would involve the replacement of Holywell High School with a new smaller building on the existing site. The School would keep its sixth form provision.

This option would also involve closing both Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron. It would join both schools together as a new primary school in a new primary school building on the existing Holywell High School site.

Option 3 - Building a new High School for pupils aged 11-16, together with a new Primary School to replace Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron.

This would involve the replacement of Holywell High School with a new smaller building. Sixth form courses would be held at a new purpose built Post-16 facility at Connah's Quay.

This option would also involve closing both Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron. It would join both schools together as a new primary school in a new primary school building on the existing Holywell High School site.

The design of the new schools would include accommodation and facilities that could be used by the whole community. This option would involve working with other partners such as Deeside College, Glyndwr University, Adult Education, etc., to provide strong links with all sections of the community.

It is the final option that has been approved in principle for funding by the Welsh Government, as it meets the criteria for not only providing schools for the 21st Century, but also in rationalising the Post-16 provision, which are priorities for the Council and the Welsh

Government.

Consultations at Holywell Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron involved the same options.

2.08 **Queensferry, Shotton and Connah's Quay area**

Option 1 - Replace John Summers High School with a new school building (11-16 school and Post-16 hub at Connah's Quay High School).

This would involve the replacement of John Summers High School with new building on the existing site.

The existing sixth forms at both Connah's Quay High School and John Summers High School would be closed and sixth form courses would be held at a new purpose built Post-16 facility at Connah's Quay.

Option 2 - Remodel John Summers High School (11-16 school and Post-16 hub at Connah's Quay High School).

This would involve the refurbishment of the existing John Summers High School building.

The existing sixth forms at both Connah's Quay High School and John Summers High School would be closed and sixth form courses would be held at a new purpose built Post-16 facility at Connah's Quay.

Option 3 - Develop a 3-16 facility at John Summers High School with a Post-16 hub at Connah's Quay High School.

There would be no change to the existing John Summers High School building.

The existing sixth forms at both Connah's Quay High School and John Summers High School would be closed and sixth form courses would be held at a new purpose built Post-16 facility at Connah's Quay.

Queensferry Primary School, which is located on the same campus as John Summers High School, would be developed to take nursery age children within its existing building.

This would mean that the Queensferry campus would cater for pupils aged 3 to 16. There would be no amalgamation of schools; they would continue to operate as they do now, with two headteachers and two governing bodies.

Option 4 - Amalgamate John Summers High School with Connah's Quay High School, utilising the present sites. (One headteacher and one governing body involving the technical closure of two schools and opening of one new school).

This option would involve closing both Connah's Quay High School and John Summers High School. They would then be joined together to make one new High School with one headteacher and one governing body. The new High School would continue to operate in the same way on both the existing high school sites.

The sixth forms at both John Summers High School and Connah's Quay High School would be closed and sixth form courses would be held at a new purpose built Post-16 facility at Connah's Quay.

2.09 Buckley, Mynydd Isa and Mold area

Option 1 - Retain 11-16 provision at Elfed High School. Rationalise to 600 places, to include Additional Learning Needs and other education, leisure and cultural uses: -

This option involves condensing the space used by the High School within the existing building. This means moving all the pupils, teachers and staff into one area of the building that is big enough for their needs. This would then free up space which could be used for other things not connected to the school like office space.

There will be no change to the Additional Learning Needs provision.

The existing sixth form would be closed and sixth form courses would be provided at Mold Alun High School or other schools/facilities that provide sixth form education.

Option 2 - Retain 11-18 provision at Elfed High School. Rationalise to 750 places, to include Additional Learning Needs and other education, leisure and cultural uses.

This option is the same as Option 1 above but the school would keep its sixth form.

Option 3 - Co-locate Westwood Primary School and Elfed High School on the Elfed site establishing a 3-16 provision.

This option involves condensing the space used by the high school within the existing building. This means moving all pupils, teachers and staff into one area of the building that is big enough for their needs.

This would then free up enough space to move Westwood Primary School from its existing premises into the Elfed High School building.

This option is not suggesting an amalgamation of the two schools. The two schools would continue to be completely separate with two headteachers and two governing bodies.

Option 4 - As previous, but 3-18 provision.

This option is the same as Option 3 above but the High School would keep its sixth form.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The consultation process provided a range of stakeholders with different methodologies which best suited their needs. Informal public consultation events for parents/carers, individual meetings with Teachers other school staff, Governors and series of workshops for Children & Young People.

Following the consultation meetings people could, if they wished, complete a consultation response form either on-line, paper copy or alternatively forward their views and opinions in other formats such as letter, email, social media etc.

3.02 The informal public consultation was 'live' discussion where it became clear as the meetings and discussions went on that: -

- certain options are more supportable for local communities, schools communities and local members than others;
- certain options are more likely to be beneficial in achieving educational and community objectives than others;
- certain options are more likely to meet Council and Welsh Government policy than others;
- certain options are more likely to be affordable than others;
- certain options are more likely to be achievable than others.

3.03 The number of responses submitted via consultation response forms are as follows: -

(a) Consultation with relevant groups: -

- Buckley Mynydd Isa and Mold – 178
- Queensferry, Shotton & Connah's Quay – 199
- Holywell High School – 19
- Ysgol Perth y Terfyn & Ysgol y Fron – 3

(b) Children and young people's consultation: -

- Buckley, Mynydd Isa and Mold – 22
- Queensferry, Shotton & Connah's Quay – 743
- Holywell High School (whole school statement)
- Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron – 10

Additional responses were received from Schools and Governing Bodies and other consultees. These have been included in the information available to Members and for public information at

Entrance 3 Reception, County Hall, Mold.

3.04 The following section provides a summary of responses from the consultations. These should be read in conjunction with the full information made available to Members. Please note that the percentages are expressed as a proportion of the total number of respondents, some of whom did not complete all sections of the consultation response form.

3.05 **Holywell High School**

Option 1 – Reduce the size of Holywell High School.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	8.0%	0.0%
Tend to Agree	=	0.0%	0.0%
Not Sure	=	0.0%	15.8%
Tend to Disagree	=	0.0%	15.8%
Strongly Disagree	=	0.0%	57.9%

Option 2 – Build a new High School for pupils aged 11-18, together with a new primary school to replace Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	79.0%	73.7%
Tend to Agree	=	0.0%	15.8%
Not Sure	=	0.0%	5.3%
Tend to Disagree	=	0.0%	5.3%
Strongly Disagree	=	0.0%	0.0%

Option 3 – Build a new High School for pupils aged 11-16, together with a new primary school to replace Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	13.0%	5.3%
Tend to Agree	=	0.0%	31.6%
Not Sure	=	0.0%	5.3%
Tend to Disagree	=	0.0%	26.3%
Strongly Disagree	=	0.0%	15.8%

3.06 **Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron**

Option 1 – Reduce the size of Holywell High School.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	0.0%	33.3%
Tend to Agree	=	0.0%	0.0%
Not Sure	=	10.0%	33.3%
Tend to Disagree	=	40.0%	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	=	50.0%	0.0%

Option 2 – Build a new High School for pupils aged 11-18, together with a new primary school to replace Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	60.0%	0.0%
Tend to Agree	=	30.0%	0.0%
Not Sure	=	0.0%	0.0%
Tend to Disagree	=	0.0%	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	=	10.0%	0.0%

Option 3 – Build a new High School for pupils aged 11-16, together with a new primary school to replace Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	0.0%	100.0%
Tend to Agree	=	0.0%	0.0%
Not Sure	=	0.0%	0.0%
Tend to Disagree	=	40.0%	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	=	60.0%	0.0%

3.07 **Queensferry, Shotton & Connah's Quay**

Option 1 – Replace John Summers High School with a new school building (11-16 school and Post-16 hub at Connah's Quay High School).

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	5.4%	12.7%
Tend to Agree	=	9.5%	13.7%
Not Sure	=	20.8%	11.2%
Tend to Disagree	=	26.5%	7.6%
Strongly Disagree	=	37.6%	45.7%

Option 2 – Remodel John Summers High School (11-16 school and Post-16 hub at Connah's Quay High School).

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	10.0%	7.6%
Tend to Agree	=	22.9%	18.8%
Not Sure	=	24.2%	16.8%
Tend to Disagree	=	18.8%	11.7%
Strongly Disagree	=	23.5%	36.5%

Option 3 – Develop 3-16 facility at John Summers High School with a Post-16 hub at Connah’s Quay High School.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	5.5%	40.6%
Tend to Agree	=	15.6%	11.2%
Not Sure	=	27.2%	9.6%
Tend to Disagree	=	17.7%	6.6%
Strongly Disagree	=	32.2%	28.4%

Option 4 – Amalgamate John Summers High School with Connah’s Quay High School (one Headteacher and one Governing Body), involving the closure of two schools and the creation of one new school on the existing sites.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	2.7%	2.0%
Tend to Agree	=	4.1%	1.5%
Not Sure	=	12.0%	2.0%
Tend to Disagree	=	8.5%	4.6%
Strongly Disagree	=	70.8%	81.7%

3.08 **Buckley, Mynydd Isa and Mold**

Option 1 – Retain 11-16 provision at Elfed High School. Rationalise to 600 places, to include Additional Learning Needs and other education, leisure and cultural uses.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	90.9%	24.9%
Tend to Agree	=	4.5%	11.3%
Not Sure	=	0.0%	7.3%
Tend to Disagree	=	0.0%	11.3%
Strongly Disagree	=	4.5%	35.6%

Option 2 – Retain 11-18 provision at Elfed High School. Rationalise to 750 places, to include Additional Learning Needs and other education, leisure and cultural uses.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	4.5%	59.9%
Tend to Agree	=	4.5%	13.0%
Not Sure	=	4.5%	7.3%
Tend to Disagree	=	4.5%	5.1%
Strongly Disagree	=	40.9%	9.0%

Option 3 – Co-locate Westwood Primary School and Elfed High School on Elfed site establishing a 3-16 provision on the campus.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	0.0%	6.8%
Tend to Agree	=	4.5%	2.3%
Not Sure	=	0.0%	3.4%
Tend to Disagree	=	13.6%	5.6%
Strongly Disagree	=	36.4%	68.9%

Option 4 – Co-locate Westwood Primary School and Elfed High School on Elfed site establishing 3-18 provision on the campus.

		Children & Young People	Others
Strongly Agree	=	0.0%	6.8%
Tend to Agree	=	4.5%	3.4%
Not Sure	=	0.0%	4.0%
Tend to Disagree	=	4.5%	9.0%
Strongly Disagree	=	45.5%	66.1%

- 3.09 Responses were reported to the County Council's Cabinet on 12th June, 2012 and to the County Council on the 19th June, 2012. The responses have been analysed and used to assist in identifying preferred options and will be used for detailed business planning for any approved options.
- 3.10 Each option has to meet the fundamental requirements of being affordable in terms of funding, either through grants available from Welsh Government, or from resources from within the Council. It also has to be achievable in terms of being realistic in terms of progression, and not having over-riding issues which could prevent the successful completion of the option. It must also have prospects of improving outcomes for learners in establishing school provision for the 21st Century.
- 3.11 After analysis of the responses, the following preferred options are recommended for further consultation alongside business case planning for capital projects.

It is recognised that rationalisation of post-16 provision may initially increase surplus places in some schools, but this is counterbalanced

by the programme of reduction in capacity by alternative use and other strategies. These approaches also enable accommodation to be utilised again when increasing pupil numbers in the Primary sector work through to the Secondary sector over time.

3.12 Holywell High School, Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron Preferred Option – Build a new High School for pupils aged 11-16, together with a new primary school to replace Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron.

This is an option which would bring together the local infant and junior schools as a new purpose built primary school, at the same site as the High School. This would provide better continuity for learners throughout the full Primary School age range. Key consultation responses identify that Holywell also has a “once in a generation” opportunity to develop a new secondary school to serve local communities.

The present Infant and Junior schools are on limited sites and provide little scope for improvement or development for the future. The amalgamation of these two schools is in accordance with the policy of the Council to bring together schools whenever appropriate. The efficiencies that can be provided for both the new Primary and Secondary schools are a significant element in the initial approval for this proposed scheme by the Welsh Government. Establishing the schools on the same site would be a model for future development at other sites, when resources are available. Any savings that can be made by this model increases the affordability and resourcing of the schools. This approach has attracted the support of the local community.

The challenge remains over how to meet the expectations of Welsh Government to transform sixth form education for learners from the area. A significant number of responses have expressed a view that post-16 education should be retained at the High School. However, the present number on-roll in the Sixth Form is below the level which would provide financial viability and efficiently sustain the required breadth of curriculum under the Learning and Skills Measure. Evidence shows that student numbers and outcomes continue to present viability challenges. The provision of grant-funding for this option is allied to the transformation agenda of the Welsh Government which requires Local Authorities to review the sustainability of post-16 provision, particularly where there are small sixth forms.

An important element in the sustainability of the post-16 provision is the level of funding which is drawn down directly from the Welsh Government, and does not form part of the schools 11-16 budget delegated by the Authority. Post-16 funding is primarily related to the number of students registered post-16 and the subjects studied and is distributed to schools by the Authority in a way agreed by the High

Schools.

In the case of Holywell High School, and some other High Schools in similar positions, the funding for post-16 provision has to be topped-up from the delegated budget for 11-16 education.

It is right that any new school should reflect the hopes and aspirations of a genuine community school. This must involve working with other further and higher education partners, other public sector bodies and the voluntary sector to secure community and vocational learning, together with leisure opportunities which will enhance the opportunities available to the people of Holywell and surrounding areas.

This option is linked with the provision of a Post-16 facility at Connah's Quay. This option has been approved in principle for 50% funding by Welsh Government.

**3.13 Queensferry, Shotton & Connah's Quay
Preferred Option – Develop 3-16 facility at John Summers High School with a Post-16 hub at Connah's Quay High School.**

There is a high level of public opposition to amalgamation of John Summers High School with Connah's Quay High School. Consultees have presented a range of practical challenges and difficulties that make such an option difficult to support. There is strong interest in the creation of a new Sixth Form centre at Connah's Quay to benefit learners from Deeside, for which there is funding available from the Welsh Government. There is also a creative option put forward by John Summers' High School Governors to work more closely with local primary school provision in a new community 3-16 arrangement. These options are the emerging preference for this area.

A small secondary department within a 3 to 16 'all through' school would not meet resilience criteria within Flintshire's School Modernisation Strategy. However, it is in line with emerging models in Ceredigion and Shropshire. As one school, it would present a larger critical mass which would better justify the continuing secondary provision in an area of social need. We will also need to continue to further assess implications arising from the growing Northern Gateway programme. It therefore deserves further consultation and business case planning.

This option, if approved for consultation, requires additional consultations with the Croft Nursery, Queensferry Primary School and St Ethelwold's Primary School in relation to the creation of additional child care and nursery class provision for the area.

Queensferry Primary School and St Ethelwold's School are the only schools in Flintshire without nursery provision. The transfer of

provision to these schools would facilitate better delivery of the foundation phase. This transfer would also offer opportunities for existing nursery staff.

The Flying Start provision which currently shares the Croft site is an important programme which targets support to families with children under four years of age in areas of high social need. As this programme is to double the numbers of children who are supported over the next four years, additional accommodation will be required, which would be available at the Croft site if the nursery provision was transferred to the two schools.

This option would provide a positive opportunity to enhance the overall provision for children and families in the area.

**3.14 Buckley, Mynydd Isa & Mold
Preferred Option – To retain 11-16 provision at Elfed High School. Rationalise to 600 places, to include Additional Learning Needs and other education, leisure and cultural uses.**

There is a positive vision to develop and enhance Westwood Primary School on its current site, together with a willingness to consider possible relocation of office accommodation from the Westwood Centre to the Elfed campus.

The increase in pupil numbers in the Buckley area has led to oversubscription in some of the town's Primary schools. There is potential for the capacity of Westwood Primary School to be reinstated in order to provide additional Primary places and to meet the increase in demand. This would be in accordance with the Welsh Government Guidance to Local Authorities to use existing school capacity and not to expand those popular schools, at the expense of others. Consultation provided a clear message that the movement of Primary provision to the Elfed High School site was not acceptable to this community at this point in time.

The accommodation at Elfed High School continues to remain too large for projected 11 to 16 pupil numbers. Further consideration needs to be given to developing options for secondary provision in the Buckley area and for alternative uses to safeguard school provision. There are a range of alternative uses available for surplus school accommodation which can be of benefit to education and community. They include alternative public service, leisure and cultural uses. As well as increasing efficiency within the campus, these may also safeguard infrastructure for any long term changes in patterns of demographic demand.

Meeting the expectations of the Welsh Government in relation to the organisation and rationalisation of sixth form provision is a challenge for schools and the Authority.

A significant body of opinion, including the Governing Body of Elfed High School have expressed the view that post-16 education should be retained at the school. However, it is acknowledged that the present number on-roll in the sixth form is below the level which can provide financial viability, and to efficiently sustain the required breadth of curriculum in accordance with the Learning and Skills measure. From the projections of student numbers currently available it is unlikely that the viability issues will be resolved and as a result, the option of establishing the 11-16 provision, with post-16 being accessed elsewhere provides the best way forward in terms of resilient provision for students in the community.

- 3.15 As part of any emerging arrangements related to the rationalisation of post-16 provision, is the role of partners in other sectors of education to consider opportunities for enhanced adult and community provision, for the benefit of the community as a whole. The future development of the post-16 provision has been subject to discussion during the preparation of the Strategic Outline Case for post-16 education which was submitted for consideration by the Welsh Assembly in July, 2010. The programme board made up of all post-16 providers which formulated the options at that time will be closely engaged in developing the out-workings of any agreed options as part of this review.

It is clear that the strategy for sustainable post-16 provision shows that developments in any area will have an interlinked effect on other provision. A holistic approach to the post-16 provision will provide a basis for further development in the area.

- 3.16 The purpose of preferred option consultation is to provide additional information and analysis to develop an affordable and achievable statutory proposal for school organisational change. A proposal should be capable of improving opportunities and outcomes for learners and also meet resilience criteria.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That members approve the consultations in relation to the preferred options, which would be scheduled to take place early in the new academic year in accordance with the agreed timetable for Area Reviews.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 No impact resulting from this phase of consultations.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 No impact resulting from this phase of consultations.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 No impact resulting from this phase of consultations.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 No impact resulting from this phase of consultations.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 No impact resulting from this phase of consultations.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 In accordance with Welsh Government requirement to provide adequate consultation and opportunity for consultees from relevant groups to respond.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 First phase of consultations already completed. Report to Cabinet in June provides the responses to the consultation exercise.

12.00 APPENDICES

None.

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

Report to Executive – School Modernisation Strategy October 2009
Report to Cabinet – School Modernisation Area Reviews – responses
to consultation June 2012.

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