Area Schools Review

Flint High School

CYNGOR
Sir y Fflint
Flintshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

What are we trying to achieve?

Welsh Government's strategy for educational transformation aims to modernise and streamline education. Through the Transformation Programme, the Welsh Government is committed to developing and implementing an education and training system that offers a wide range of quality learning opportunities; is responsive to all learners and employers; ensures effective use of resources for learner benefit and tackles disadvantage.

In tackling these issues we must be innovative in our response to changing local needs. This necessitates much closer links between the different branches of learning so the best resources available – teachers, buildings and equipment - are accessible to all learners.

We are aiming to achieve post-16 education and training provision that meets the needs of learners and employers and meets the requirements of Welsh Government as set out in the Learning and Skills Measure. We are trying to develop a provision that secures a wide range of high quality options for learners and is sustainable and efficient in its operation. We are aiming to secure high quality pastoral arrangements for all. This requires good planning, co-ordination and support for those transferring to further education, higher education and the world of work.

An example of this is the investment in a new Sixth Form Hub for Deeside and North Flintshire announced in December 2012 with funding from the Welsh Government, Flintshire County Council and Coleg Cambria.

All Flintshire Headteachers and college leaders contributed to the development of a Strategic Outline Case on the future organisation of education for 14 to 19 year olds in Flintshire. This strategy was subsequently supported by the County Council and by the Welsh Government.

It is important, however, that you should be able to contribute to ensuring that education in the Flint area secures the best possible opportunities and outcomes for learners.

CONSULTATION

A consultation process was commissioned by Councillors in the following areas: Holywell, Connah's Quay/Queensferry and Buckley, which included a change in age-range of the High Schools from 11-18 to 11-16.

The purpose of the events was to allow people to consider the options which included the changing of the age-range of the schools in those areas from 11-18 to become 11-16 age range schools.

Councillors committed to undertake further consultations with schools in Flint and Saltney. Although scheduled for the Summer term 2013, consultations were delayed at the request of the Flint schools.

Responses to the consultations can be made until the end of January 2014. These responses will be reported to members of the Council's Cabinet for their consideration prior to any decision being made.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS

It should be noted that responses to consultation are not counted as objections. These can only be lodged following the publication of a statutory notice.

Currently there are two providers of post–16 education physically located within the town of Flint:

Flint High School and
St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School.

Flint High School has met the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure by participation in the Post-16 consortium with other local schools. In this arrangement, pupils travel to different providers to access the chosen curriculum.

Arrangements for an informal collaboration with St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School to provide a Post-16 education have been made much more recently. The year 13 students are still accessing the offer through the consortium arrangements which will cease at the end of the academic year.

The school meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills measure through this collaborative approach. Students walk between the schools to access the courses of their choice, a distance of just over 0.5 mile.

THE PROPOSALS

The proposal to change the provision is set out in the first option, which is to retain the 11-16 provision in Flint High School, but to close and transfer the sixth form (11-16 provision) to the Connah's Quay Post-16 Hub. This provision will be a new centre serving schools in the North of the County. Proposals to transfer the post-16 provision at Holywell High School, Connah's Quay High School and John Summer's High School in Queensferry have already been consulted on, and formally submitted to the Education Minister for determination. The new Hub will be built on land adjacent to the Connah's Quay High School, Golftyn Lane and Coleg Cambria, Deeside site and will open in September 2016.

The transformation of post-16 is intended to make provision more resilient in terms of student numbers and funding which is linked to the number of students and the number of different courses delivered by the school.

The Flintshire School Modernisation Strategy states that a sixth form will only be viable in financial and curriculum terms if there are more than 120 students registered. Welsh Government officials have suggested that this should be increased to 150 in order to ensure that sufficient funds are drawn down to fully support the post-16 provision. Flint High School has put forward its own case to demonstrate its belief that the sixth form is financially viable. However the funding mechanism and the available budget are to change from September 2014.

The Welsh Government has announced a reduction in the amount of funding available to schools to provide post-16 education. Clearly, this will put more pressure on the smaller providers.

The present and projected numbers of students in the sixth form prepared by the Authority and appearing in table 1 do not suggest that the agreed Flintshire School modernisation strategy minimum of 120 sixth form students will be achieved.

The concentration of sixth form provision at a Hub in Connah's Quay will result in a full curriculum available at one centre, providing students with a wide choice of subject areas all at one site, with the benefit of new state of the art facilities for academic and vocational subjects. Extensive vocational facilities are already established at the Coleg Cambria Deeside campus.

Travel arrangements to the new post-16 Hub at Connah's Quay would be in accordance with the Flintshire post-16 transport policy, which provides free transport for any students travelling over 3 miles to the provision.

The options would also affect the neighbouring St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, with which recent arrangements have been made for an informal collaboration for the provision of elements of the post-16 provision unaffordable at Flint High School. The second option is for a continued development of this arrangement in order to meet curriculum requirements. Currently, significantly more students from Flint High School access courses at St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School than those from St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School accessing provision at Flint High School.

Details of the affected schools: -

- Flint Community High School, Flint
- St Richard Gwyn Voluntary Aided Catholic High School
- Ysgol Maes Hyfryd Specialist School, Flint

Table 1: school populations:-

School	**Capacity**	**Condition Grade**	**Student Numbers**										
(All English medium)				**Previous 4 years**				**Current**	**Forecast**				
				09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School	1000	A	TOTAL	939	939	950	946	944	929	931	940	946	981
			6th Form	127	130	122	102	131	124	125	129	124	119
Flint High School LA data	797	B	TOTAL	701	694	661	677	727	699	652	647	626	627
			6th Form	79	89	78	80	92	75	79	74	82	79
			If transferred to Hub Total:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	573	544	548
6th Form forecasts produced by Flint High School								*92*	*109*	*118*	*122*	*125*	
Ysgol Maes Hyfryd Specialist School		A	Post-16*	41	41	44	44	53	-	-	-	-	

* Based on post-16 who have a Statement. Forecasts not carried out due to school population dependent on the Statementing process.

Forecasts based on PLASC 2013 data and school populations since 2009

OUTCOMES AND POSSIBLE BENEFITS

In the most recent Estyn Inspection (January 2012) outcomes achieved, and the wellbeing of students are both judged to be good at Flint High School. The provision in terms of teaching, care and support was also judged to be of a good standard. The leadership and management were categorised as excellent.

The Estyn inspection report refers to the Consortium arrangements with the other local sixth forms. The current sixth form arrangements for Year 12 are now different with the establishment of the informal collaborative arrangements with St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School. Current year 13 students are still subject to the consortium arrangements.

Outcomes for post-16 students Flint High School are listed below, provided by the school: -

	% grades A*-C
Flint High School	61.2
Flintshire Local Authority Average	74.3

Source Flint High School data 8/2013.

The outcomes in the new informal collaboration with St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School are obviously not known at the present time.

The authority believes that the transfer of the sixth form provision to the post-16 Hub would have a positive effect on the experience for students, in providing a wider curriculum co-located at a specialist facility. The ethos, development and delivery of the Hub are being established through a partnership with schools to include experience of outstanding/excellent provision.

If Councillors decide to progress with the preferred option, a statutory notice will be published when any person can lodge an objection during a period of a month following publication.

All objections at this stage are submitted with the proposal to the Welsh Ministers for their determination.

How long will this process take?

Consultation on initial options begins – December 2013

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Consultation closes – 31st January 2014

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Report to Council Cabinet – March 2014

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Publication of Statutory Notice on a single proposal if agreed – June 2014

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End of the period for lodging objections – July 2014

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Decision process by Welsh Ministers– September 2014

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Possible implementation from – September 2016

The Consultation Options – Flint High School

PREFERRED OPTION:

1. **Retain 11-16 provision at Flint High School. Use any surplus accommodation to accommodate other education, leisure or cultural uses. Post-16 provision would be accessed at the new Hub at Connah's Quay from September 2016.**

2. **Retain 11-19 provision at Flint High School and formalise collaboration with St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School in seeking to maintain the post-16 provision between the two schools**

In option 1, the existing 16-19 provision would be phased out and closed to new students for September 2016.

Arrangements would be made to provide continuity of teaching to those who had already embarked on a post-16 course at the school.

Transport to the designated post-16 provision would be in accordance with the Flintshire School Transport policy, which is free for students living more than 3 miles away from the provision. (Flint High School to Deeside Hub site is 3.2 miles).

The new Hub based in Connah's Quay is part of the 21st Century Schools Programme. This is a £14.5m centre which is being built in collaboration with Coleg Cambria. The Hub will be purpose built for post-16 provision and will have state of the art resources and the best available learning environment. Flintshire County Council will contribute £3.6m to the project, the remainder being funded by Coleg Cambria and Welsh Government in terms of its 21st Century Schools Programme to bring small sixth forms together in modern, sustainable and high quality centres.

Future post-16 provision would be centred at the Post-16 Hub at Connah's Quay. Students integrated into post-16 provision at Flint High School from Ysgol Maes Hyfryd would be similarly integrated into provision at the proposed new Hub at Connah's Quay.

The medium to long-term sustainability of Option 2 is dependant on the equality of access at the two schools, i.e. the proportion of students from Flint High School accessing courses at St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School and the proportion from St Richard Gwyn accessing courses at Flint High School.

It is also dependent on the destination choices of young people when the Hub opens in September 2016. Failure to plan ahead for the changes in provision may leave Flint High School in a vulnerable position at that time.

Some learners from the Flint area already access post-16 education in Chester, Deeside or other sixth forms in the area. There is already a partnership approach with other providers including the new arrangement with St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School to ensure that the minimum of 30 subjects can be offered to students in years 12 and 13.

Option 1 would allow Flint High School to concentrate resources on the 11-16 age group. Although the school has received and continues to receive investment, the school would need further re-modelling to provide an 11-16 school area and any unused space listed for other education, leisure and cultural uses. Flintshire County Council capital funding and future bids for 21st Century School funding to Welsh Government would be used to ensure an upgrading of accommodation and facilities to provide a school for the 21st Century in line with the aspirations of Flintshire County Council and Welsh Government.

The rationalisation of post-16 provision is in line with the agenda set by the Welsh Government for local authorities, to provide post-16 education in larger and more resilient settings.

The flexible use of accommodation in Flint High School will mean that if in the future, there is an increase in pupil numbers they may be accommodated at Flint High School. There is evidence of this becoming an emerging situation in the surrounding area.

If the 11-16 option was adopted Flint High School would also be a full partner in the governance and organisation of post-16 education at the new North Flintshire Sixth Form Centre/Hub ensuring smooth transitions for students.

If option 1 was to be approved, Flint High School would continue to provide a vibrant and successful 11-16 provision and would still retain its important role as a focus for the local community.

Flint High School has 70 (September 2013) surplus places (8.78%). The school's capacity is 797 pupils, with a total on roll of 727. Projections show a decline in numbers to 2017/18 when the number of pupils is projected to be 626, a figure based on the numbers admitted to the school over a five year period. An increase in the year 12 numbers has been recorded in September 2013, however a single year increase may not indicate a sustained growth in numbers. A slow recovery in numbers admitted to year seven in the school is forecast following 2017/18.

The numbers in the sixth form (years 12 and 13) is currently 92. (September 2013). Projections (based on PLASC January 2013 data) and the pattern of year 11 destinations over the past five years shows that this will not increase significantly over the next 10 years. Figures produced by the school, which are based on a single year data show a higher figure than the local authority projection of 82 in 2017/18.

School data shows that on average 36% (2010-2013) of students in year 11 stay on for the sixth form offer. This has shown an increase in September 2013 to 49%. On average about 50% of young people currently leaving year 11 in Flint High School attend Further Education College or other institutions for their post-16 education or training. It is important that we recognise this pattern of progression in planning for learner transitions, pastoral arrangements and building an ongoing sense of community.

The collaboration with St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School may provide some efficiencies, this will not have a bearing on the medium and long term level of funding available to the school. The current expenditure on post-16 provision per pupil in Flint High School is £3,111 p.a. Reductions in post-16 funding are projected to continue.

The preferred option put forward for Consultation is intended to address the issues related to the sixth form numbers, outcomes for students, access to a wide curriculum and long-term financial resilience.

There are a number of ways you can let us know what you think. You can:

- ask questions and let us know your views at these meetings
- complete a questionnaire on-line at www.flintshire.gov.uk/areaschoolsreview
- complete a questionnaire and return it to the School Modernisation Team, Lifelong Learning, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire CH7 6DN; or
- alternatively put your responses in writing to the School Modernisation Team, Lifelong Learning, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire CH7 6ND

The consultation will close on 31st January 2014.

Consultation Meetings

Venue	Invitees	Date	Time	Type of Meeting
Flint High School	*Teachers, Staff and Governors of Flint High School*	**Monday, 16th December 2013**	*4.30 pm*	*Presentation followed by questions and answers*
Flint High School	*Parents/Carers of Flint High School*	**Monday, 16th December 2013**	*6.00 pm*	*Presentation followed by questions and answers*

Consultation Response Form
(please note that a consultation response will not be counted as a formal objection)

Area Schools Review

Before you begin – if you would like to fill this form in on-line please go to: www.flintshire.gov.uk/areaschoolsreview

Based on the information you have been given in this booklet, at the consultation event and from other documents available on the Council's website, please tell us your views on the Council's preferred option in your area.

How strongly do you agree with the consultation Option 1. for Flint High School?

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Tend to Agree ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree

☐ Tend to Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

How strongly do you agree with the consultation Option 2. for Flint High School?

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Tend to Agree ☐ Neither Agree or Disagree

☐ Tend to Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Please tell us why you feel this way. Please give a description of any alternative option you wish to put forward.

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About you:
To help us understand what different groups of people think, please tell us a little about yourself:

Please provide your contact details below *(unfortunately we are unable to consider responses unless contact details, including full postcode are provided)*

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Are you:

☐ Parent/Carer ☐ Teacher ☐ Support Staff
☐ Governor ☐ Other

Name of School:

_____

☐ I would like to be informed of any future statutory notice relating to this consultation.