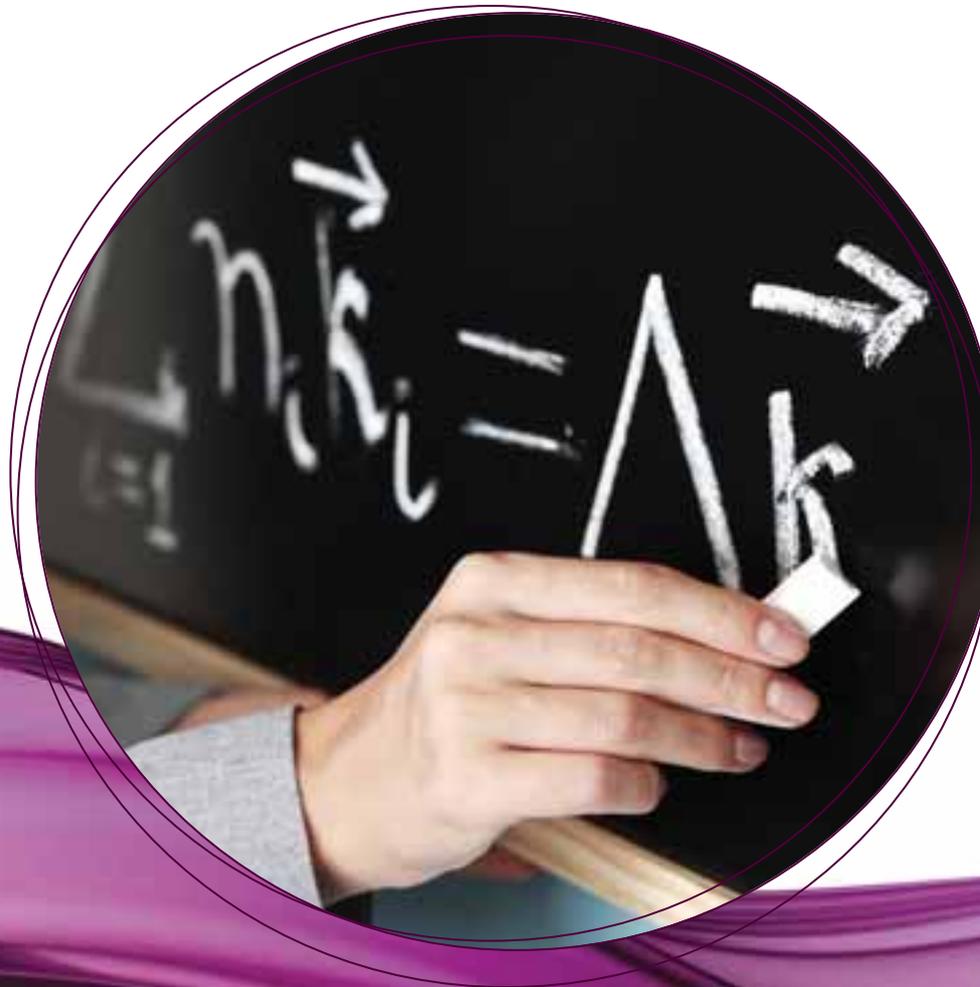




Area Schools Review

Buckley, Mynydd Isa & Mold Area

Elfed High School and Westwood Primary School



Introduction

The Welsh Government and Flintshire County Council want to make efficiencies and reduce surplus places to enable more available funding to be spent directly on children and young people's education in schools.

The review of schools in the Holywell, Queensferry/Shotton/Connah's Quay and Buckley/Mynydd Isa/Mold areas is the next stage in Flintshire's School Modernisation Strategy and aims to address significant numbers of surplus places.

The area reviews will consist of three stages:

- the informal consultation process (which is where we are now),
- a period of reflection when councillors will decide on preferred options for each of the three areas
- the formal statutory stage

The Next Steps section of this booklet, which can be found on page 9, explains the process in a little more detail.

During the Summer of 2011 informal consultations began around future arrangements for Secondary Schools in these areas. Whilst it was understood by all that there was a need to review the future of schools in Flintshire, County Councillors halted the process so that they could do further work on the options for consideration before re-opening the consultation process.



Following a number of workshops held over the autumn, Councillors now have renewed confidence in inviting your views and opinions on the options contained in this booklet.

Consultation

Councillors have agreed a number of options for consideration relating to Elfed High School and Westwood Primary School. These options have been agreed for consideration as a way of reducing the surplus places in Elfed High School, improving the viability of its sixth form, and improving the learning environment of Westwood Primary School.

A number of meetings will be held at both Elfed High School and Westwood Primary School to discuss these options. On page 12 you will find more details about the dates and times and how the meetings will be run. Consultations with children and young people will be arranged separately.

No decisions have yet been made and any final decisions Councillors make will be dependent on the outcome of consultations with parents, teachers, staff, pupils and governors of affected schools.

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

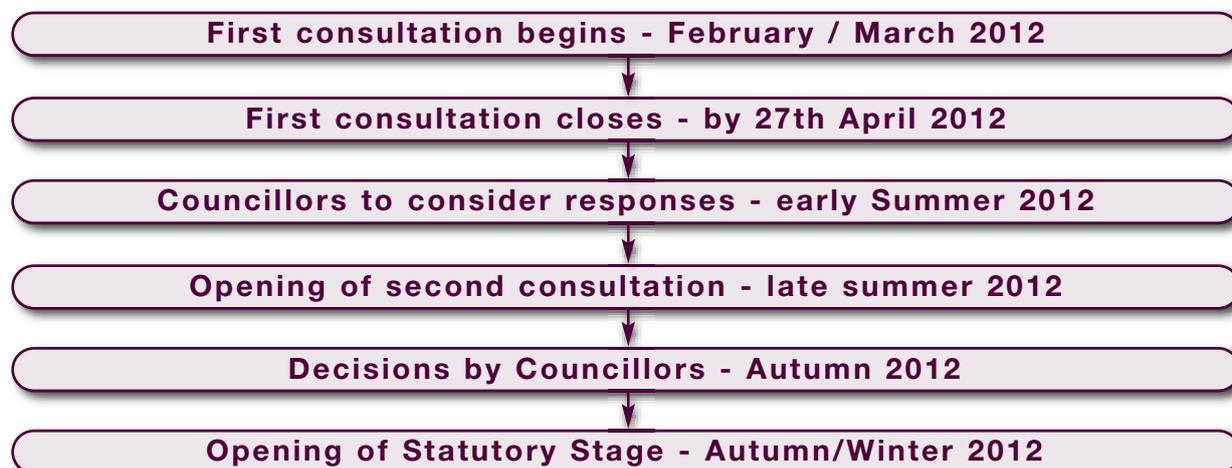
- ask questions and let us know your views at these meetings
- put your responses in writing to the Director of Lifelong Learning, Area Schools Review, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire. CH7 6DN
- complete a questionnaire and return it to the Director of Lifelong Learning, Area Schools Review, County Hall,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



The consultation will close on Friday 27 April 2012. Your views are important to us and they will help to inform any future decisions we make. The decisions made by Councillors will be based on well thought out views and opinions that meet the future needs of the area.

After reading this document, as a parent or carer, you may already have questions you will want to ask at the event. You can, if you wish, put your questions forward before the event. We will then pull all these questions together and provide answers during the presentations. You can email your questions to 21stCenturySchools@flintshire.gov.uk. You can ask your questions on the FCC Area Schools Review 2012 Facebook page, or you can put your question in writing to the address shown above. Please be sure to make clear which area or school your question is about.

How long will this take?



See page 9 for more detailed information

Background leading to the consultation

Welsh Government says schools should not have more than 10% surplus places overall. It also says that sixth form education across Wales needs to be efficient and effective providing a wide range of subjects that students can choose to study.

To make sure schools in Flintshire meet the requirements set by Welsh Government, Councillors approved the Flintshire School Modernisation Strategy.

The Strategy states that for a secondary school to be viable it should have no less than 600 (11-16) pupils registered to attend. It also states that a sixth form should have no less than 120 students. This is to make sure that schools receive enough funding from Welsh Government and that students are able to choose from a wide range of subjects.

You may also be aware that Welsh Government has, in principle, approved funding for a new Post-16 facility adjacent to Connah's Quay High School and Deeside College, but any final decisions are dependent on the outcome of consultations with parents, teachers, staff, pupils and governors of affected schools. Welsh Government has indicated its willingness in principle to contribute £6.6m towards the cost of this facility. This is half of the total cost.

Elfed High School has 321 surplus places (31%). The sixth form at the school is small, with 86 students in years 12 and 13; this is below the agreed number in the Flintshire School Modernisation Strategy. To make it viable, the school works closely with Mold Alun High School to make sure it can offer students a wider range of subjects.

There is a need to increase the number of primary school places in the Buckley area, and one option refers to the relocation of Westwood Primary School to fill surplus capacity at Elfed High School. If a move of this type was to take place, it would provide refurbished accommodation for the school. However, a number of issues relating to access to the Elfed site, the suitability of the existing building for any modifications, and the physical location of the site would need to be explored.



Options

To improve these schools, the following options have been put forward by Council members:

Option One

- 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.

There is no funding from Welsh Government for this option. The Council would have to pay approximately £15.6m. This is the approximate total cost for this work.

Option Two

- 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 Three

- 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 the 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.

There is no funding from Welsh Government for this option. The Council would have to pay approximately £11.5m. This is the approximate total cost for this work.

Option Four

- As previous, but 3 – 18 provision

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

Options (continued)

It is important that the Council improves its school buildings and makes them fit for the 21st century. Welsh Government is also committed to improving schools across Wales. Welsh Government will only help councils with funding where there are plans to replace schools with new buildings or where existing schools can be extended and improved to provide modern facilities.



If Councillors decide to go forward with one of the options that Welsh Government is unable to fund, the Council would then have to prioritise its own funding, alongside all its other financial commitments, and think about how it could raise the funds needed.

Any decisions to reduce the space that the Elfed High School uses within the existing building will take into account the number of pupils that statistics tell us may want to go to school in the Buckley area in the next 15 to 20 years. This will take account of things like new housing developments.

Any move to establish a primary school and a secondary school in the existing Elfed High School building would require significant changes to the internal structure of the building to keep the two schools separate and to make the building suitable for children of primary school age.

The Elfed site currently has issues regarding traffic management so there would be a need to work closely with the leisure centre to develop better access around the site. Additional parking places would be needed for the increased number of teachers and support staff. Facilities would be provided that would safely keep traffic and pedestrians apart.

Travel arrangements

If, as a result of any school reorganisation, pupils were required to travel to another location, the Council would make appropriate arrangements for those pupils who are already registered at the affected school.

Next Steps

This stage is the initial consultation. The views and opinions you put forward will be gathered together and will be considered by councillors in the early summer when they will decide whether to move on to the next stage of consultation.

A second stage of consultation will be held during late summer before councillors make any final decision. You will be told before this second stage begins.

After the second consultation, councillors will then decide if they want to continue with one single proposal. If they decide to do this then we will enter the statutory stage. During this statutory stage, the details of one single proposal will be clearly set out and you will be given one month to put forward any written objections you may have.

If the Council receives just one objection at this stage, then the matter will be handed over to Welsh Ministers in Welsh Government who will make the final decision.



Glossary

Amalgamation - This is where two or more schools are closed and are then joined together to make one new school with one headteacher and one governing body. The new school may be in one single building or it may be split between two sites using the existing school buildings.

Surplus Places - Some school buildings are too big for the number of pupils who attend them. Welsh Government says schools should not have more than 10% surplus places overall. This means if a school is big enough to take 500 pupils then it shouldn't have less than 450 pupils registered to attend it.



Rationalise Post - 16 provision - Welsh Government says that sixth forms must be able to provide at least 30 different subjects that students can choose to study. Welsh Government provides schools with funding for sixth forms. They do this by giving the school a set amount of money for each student who registers to study at its sixth form. The less pupils who register, the less money the school receives. The Council's School Modernisation Strategy says that for a sixth form to be viable it should have at least 120 students.

Post 16 Centre - Welsh Government has agreed in principle to fund a new sixth form facility in Flintshire that would provide students with the choice of a full range of subjects to study, and access to a wide range of facilities, all at one location. There has been agreement between councillors, schools and Deeside College that Connah's Quay would be the best place to provide this facility, although no final decisions have yet been taken.

Learning Campus - The creation of new and modern school buildings on one site, that share some facilities, make the most of new technology and provide a place that can be used by the whole community.

21st Century Schools - Welsh Government, working with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), wants to raise the standards of education in Wales to a world class level. To do this Wales needs modern school buildings, with the very latest technology, that inspire children, young people and the wider community to learn.

Flintshire School Modernisation Strategy - this is a document that has been adopted by councillors that sets out the challenges that face the Council in developing its schools into places that are fit for the 21st Century.

Other documents & Information

Other Area Schools Review documents

Documents for each of the three Area Schools Reviews can be found on the Council's website www.flintshire.gov.uk/areaschoolsreview

Holywell area – Holywell High School

Holywell area – Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron

Buckley area – Elfed High School and Westwood Primary School

Queensferry, Shotton, Connah's Quay area – Connah's Quay High School and John Summers High School

Where to find other useful information

Flintshire 14-19 Learning Partnership – Strategic Outline Case

Guide to Education Services

School Modernisation Information Pack

School Modernisation Strategy

The documents above are all available on the Council's website www.flintshire.gov.uk/areaschoolsreview or by contacting the Lifelong Learning Directorate on 01352 704011.

Other useful websites

21st Century Schools – available via link from

Flintshire County Council's website

www.flintshire.gov.uk/areaschoolsreview or

directly at www.21stcenturyschools.org



Consultation Meetings

Venue	Invitees	Date	Time	Type of Meeting
Buckley Elfed High School	<i>Elfed High School Teaching and Support Staff</i>	27/2/2012	4.15pm	<i>Meeting with senior officers of the Council with time for questions</i>
	<i>Elfed High School Governors</i>	27/2/2012	5.30pm	<i>Meeting with senior officers of the Council with time for questions</i>
	<i>Parents/Carers of Buckley Elfed High School pupils</i>	27/2/2012	6.30pm	<i>See programme below</i>
Westwood Primary School	<i>Westwood Primary School Teaching and Support Staff</i>	28/2/2012	3.45pm	<i>Meeting with senior officers of the Council with time for questions</i>
	<i>Westwood Primary School Governors</i>	28/2/2012	5.30pm	<i>Meeting with senior officers of the Council with time for questions</i>
	<i>Parents/Carers of Westwood Primary School pupils</i>	28/2/2012	6.30pm	<i>See programme below</i>
Elfed High School	<i>Parents/Carers of primary school pupils in the Buckley area; and Parents/Carers of young people attending Argoed High School who may be considering future sixth form options</i>	29/2/2012	6.30pm	<i>See programme below</i>

Information for Parents/Carers

- As a parent or carer of pupil(s) at Elfed High School, Westwood Primary School or of pupils in primary schools in the Buckley area, you are invited to attend the events shown above.
- You should attend the event which is most suited to you and your child(ren).
- At your meeting you can choose to attend one of two presentations when you can ask questions.
- The timings of the presentations are shown below. **The two presentations will be exactly the same.** You don't have to book, just come along at the time that suits you best.
- An informal listening area will also be available. Council officers will be on hand to answer questions. This area may appeal to people who prefer a less formal meeting. It will also be available to people who have attended a presentation and may want to speak more informally with council officers afterwards.

PROGRAMME

18.30	<i>Presentation by senior council officers and councillors</i>
18.50	<i>Questions</i>
19.20	<i>Close of first presentation</i>
19.30	<i>Repeat of presentation by senior council officers and councillors</i>
20.20	<i>Close of second presentation</i>
21.00	<i>Close of event</i>

18.30 **Informal Listening Area**

Senior officers and councillors will be on hand to answer questions in a more informal setting.

21.00