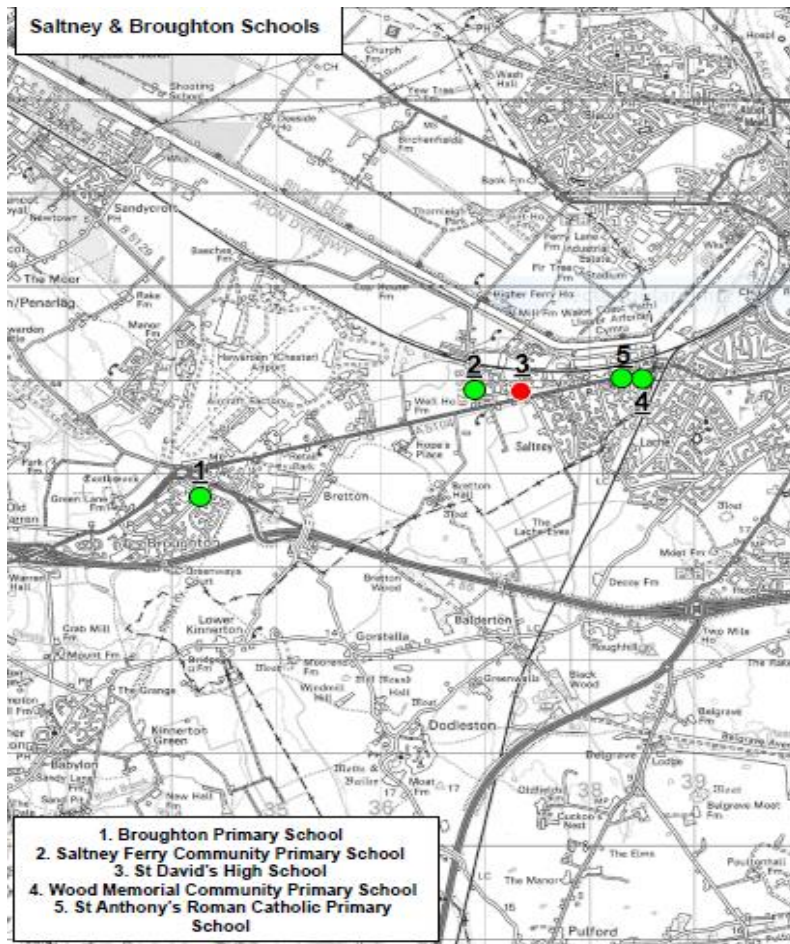


# Early Engagement Document

## Seeking views on Education Provision in the Saltney and Broughton Area



## **Why are we seeking your views?**

Flintshire County Council regularly reviews its provision for education across the county and has a firm commitment to constantly developing and enhancing its schools for the benefit of Flintshire learners.

The Council aims to do this by:

- Bidding for significant financial investment from Welsh Government alongside its capital investment programme to build new, 'state of the art' schools for local communities.
- Supporting schools to help them provide opportunities for learners to achieve their potential through high-quality teaching and learning.

However, the Council must work within its financial resources, and in the current economic climate there are significant challenges in delivering programmes of change, particularly where rising inflation is impacting budgets and building project costs are significantly higher.

It is vital that we, as the Council, work closely with you as the communities in Saltney and Broughton to develop a plan that delivers a new strategy for education in the area that is sustainable, and delivers on its overall objective to deliver the highest quality primary and secondary education for learners in the area, and is affordable. We also want to ensure that the local education offer is underpinned by other important services which support children, young people, and their families e.g. childcare, early years education, youth services, and sports and leisure provision.

The first step is for us to engage with you early in a process to seek your views. The purpose of this early engagement exercise is to:-

- Share the Council's current thinking about the possible future shape of educational provision in the area with key stakeholders.
- Have an open conversation about the various challenges in delivering a new model of provision.
- Understand the views of the local communities and seek their commitment to work in constructive partnership with the Council, to achieve a new delivery model that results in the best facilities to support positive outcomes for learners within the financial resources available.

## **What is the Council's position?**

Pupil numbers in the Saltney/Broughton area have declined over the last few years. This means, as it currently stands, that pupil numbers particularly in the secondary sector, would not justify significant investment. Unless there are changes and pupil numbers improve, the long-term future of some schools in the area may be in doubt as they will be financially unsustainable, and this will have a negative impact on the quality of the education being offered.

The Council is committed to maintaining a range of school provisions in the Saltney/Broughton area but recognises that it may not be able to remain in its current

form. We need to put plans in place to invest in modern buildings, to provide a high-quality education offer for all ages, and make sure there are appropriate pathways for learners to progress from early years, through primary and secondary and then onto post-16 provision, to give our children and young people the best life chances.

It is hoped that delivering a new plan for education in the area will stimulate future growth in pupil numbers. However, the Council cannot deliver this change on its own. It will need the support of the Welsh Government and to increase its chances of securing this funding, it will need to demonstrate there is a coherent plan which enhances the educational provision in the area and has the support of the local communities.

The future sustainability of the schools in the area is also dependent on the support of the local community e.g. parents/carers, school leaders, governors, county councillors, town and community councillors, local businesses and residents. We all need to work together to develop an offer for learners that keeps them local.

A proposal to build a new secondary school in the area was included within the Council's Strategic Outline Programme several years ago, but without positive community commitment and engagement where parents/carers are actively choosing to send their children to the local Flintshire secondary school, there is a risk that the Council will not be successful through the business case process to secure the funding from Welsh Government to build it. Welsh Government provides most of the money to build new schools and the Council must find the rest. As the Council cannot afford to build new schools wholly from its financial resources it is dependent on receiving this funding from Welsh Government.

The solution to this challenge of keeping learners local is:-

- Flintshire parents having confidence in the quality of the local education offer to choose their nearest school within the county.
- Quality school environments.
- Other services linked to the school to support families e.g. childcare, youth provision, sports, and leisure.

Without clear community support for their local schools, a major Welsh Government and Council investment project will be unlikely.

## **What we know about pupil numbers in the area**

### **Primary Sector**

In September 2022, there were 789 full-time primary pupils in the three council-maintained primary schools in the area; Saltney Wood Memorial CP with 150 full-time pupils, Saltney Ferry CP with 117 full-time pupils, and Broughton CP with 522 full-time pupils.

St Anthony's RC Primary School is a voluntary aided school maintained by the Catholic Diocese of Wrexham, therefore **will not** be considered under this early engagement process.

Sustaining small primary schools can be challenging financially due to lower pupil numbers and additionally current demographics indicate fewer primary-aged children across the Flintshire area. A larger primary school has greater resilience and options to deliver education in a more efficient way, which means more of the funding is spent on direct delivery to the learners rather than on building and management costs etc.

In the Saltney/Broughton area, primary pupil numbers are generally healthy and sustainable.

## **Secondary Sector**

In September 2022 there were 323 pupils in St David's High School, Saltney.

A secondary school ideally needs to be a minimum of 600 pupils to give it sufficient funding to operate. The population data we hold tells us there are sufficient numbers of secondary school-age pupils in the area to achieve that 600-pupil figure. However, local parents are making choices to access secondary education elsewhere, reducing the number of pupils at St David's High School and the funding to the school.

While the school transfer rates from Saltney Wood Memorial and Saltney Ferry to St David's High School are reasonable, transfer rates to St David's High School from Broughton CP (the largest primary school in the area) are not as favourable. This is impacting the secondary school numbers and ultimately the per-pupil funding allocated to St David's High School.

## **What are the options?**

Although the Council has been considering its options for the area, there are limitations due to funding, the availability of land on which to build, and flood risks on land that is available, which all must be taken into account. **No firm decisions have been made on the future shape of the primary and secondary provision in the Saltney area.** There is no intention to change the provision at Broughton CP which will remain as a separate school on its existing site. The school will continue to work in partnership with the other schools in the area as it does already.

The Council has identified some high-level options for primary and secondary education in the area. These would need more detailed work to be undertaken to explore their viability, but the Council is committed to being transparent about what those options are and allowing the local communities to share their views. This information would then be brought together to decide what the final preferred option would be. There would then be a process of statutory consultation with all stakeholders which has to be undertaken where there are proposals for any school organisational change. Options for consideration include:

- Do nothing – schools remain as they are and maintenance issues are tackled as they arise. Financial investment is provided to schools in their budgets to complete their repairs and maintenance as is undertaken now.
- Do the minimum to remove a backlog of maintenance issues. Individual schools remain as they are. Maintenance issues are addressed through the Council's Capital Investment Programme, funding permitting.
- Refurbish and extend existing school buildings. Individual schools remain as they are. Refurbishment costs are met through the Council's Capital Investment Programme and Welsh Government investment.
- Build a 3 -16 Campus to accommodate St David's High School and a merged Saltney Ferry CP and Saltney Wood Memorial School, resulting in one high school and one primary school on the same site. *The only land the Council has, which would possibly accommodate this, is in Bretton but this site has several challenges including flood risk, access issues, and is remote from both Broughton and Saltney. The existing St David's High School site cannot accommodate a 3 – 16 campus due to its size.*
- Build a 3 -16 All Through School. St David's High School merges with Saltney Ferry CP and Saltney Wood Memorial and a new school is created on the same site for all learners in this age range. The only land the Council has which would possibly accommodate this is in Bretton with the challenges indicated above. *The existing St David's High School site cannot accommodate a 3 – 16 campus due to its size.*
- Build a new 11-16 Secondary School St David's High School on the Bretton site and build a new 3-11 Primary School for a merged Saltney Ferry CP and Saltney Wood Memorial on the old site of St David's High School.
- Take the difficult decision to consult on the closure of St David's High School because its numbers are not sustainable and provide learners in the area with a secondary education offer elsewhere in Flintshire.

*If a decision is made to close St David's High School and pupils are offered secondary provision elsewhere, a new 3-11 Primary School could be built for Saltney Ferry CP and Saltney Wood Memorial on the existing St David's High School site.*

## **Overview of primary and secondary performance in the area**

Broughton CP was inspected by Estyn in July 2019. The school received judgements of Excellent for all five inspection areas and was invited by Estyn to publish a case study on its work concerning pupils' involvement in planning their learning.

Saltney Wood Memorial CP was inspected by Estyn in March 2020. The school received judgements of Good for all five inspection areas.

Saltney Ferry CP was inspected by Estyn in September 2022, under their revised inspection framework. Whilst Estyn no longer provides judgements for inspection areas, inspectors judged the school to need significant improvement. The Local Authority and the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) are supporting the school to address the recommendations made by Estyn. Estyn will monitor the school's progress about 12 months after the publication of its report.

St David's High School was last inspected by Estyn in December 2016 and judged at the time to require significant improvement'. Estyn revisited in June 2018 and found the school to have made sufficient progress to be removed from that category. Since that time the school has continued to receive targeted support from the local authority and the regional school improvement service, GwE, for its ongoing improvement journey. St David's High School's School Improvement Plan is ambitious for its pupils.

Key stage 4 attainment data and attendance data for secondary schools have not been published since 2019 due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. The Welsh Government has announced that Key Stage 4 qualifications data reporting arrangements will resume for the 2022 to 2023 academic year in the form of the interim measures that were introduced and last published in 2019. Key Stage 4 qualifications outcomes data at a school level will be made available at <https://www.gov.wales/my-local-school-guide>.

As part of the significant education reform programme underway in Wales, all school performance data, including examination results, is analysed on a local level to support schools in developing their individual improvement priorities.

School categorisation did not take place in the academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22, during the Covid-19 pandemic and has now been replaced by new evaluation, improvement, and accountability arrangements for schools, local authorities, regional consortia, and Estyn. This new school improvement guidance set out the Welsh Government's expectations for how school improvement should be delivered in the context of the Curriculum for Wales. Moving forward, School Development Plans summaries will include a summary of the school's self-evaluation, including strengths and areas for development. This will form part of the wider school development plan summary, published on the school's website, and be accessible to the wider community and continue to provide parents and learners with up-to-date information about their school. Welsh Government plan to update the guidance, building on learning in 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024, and issue it as statutory guidance to come into force in September 2024.

### **Positive factors to support change in the area**

- In the Saltney and Broughton area there are enough secondary school-age pupils to sustain a local secondary school if parents make that choice.
- It is shown both locally and nationally that large investment in new schools increases demand locally.

- There are other key services in the area that support the community e.g. local playgroup, FCC youth club provision, sports and leisure options that could benefit from new school facilities in the area.
- There is a strong local economy with the potential to strengthen links to nearby industries to inspire progression pathways for learners and support localised curriculum development.
- The new Curriculum for Wales (2022) provides a significant opportunity to develop a holistic but more localised curriculum that meets the needs of learners and industry in the area.
- The post-16 provision at Coleg Cambria and the Widening Participation agenda of Glyndwr University provides a unique opportunity to develop local programmes to encourage learners to further develop their skills and qualifications and routes into further education/higher education/apprenticeships etc.

## How can I have my say?

The early engagement document has been produced to explain why the Council is reviewing education provision in the area and there is a questionnaire for people to respond and provide their views. This information is available on the Council website via the following link: [www.flintshire.gov.uk/schoolmodernisation](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/schoolmodernisation).

Large print, Braille, alternative language and hard copy versions of these documents are available on request from the School Modernisation Team. The Team can be contacted by:

- Writing to School Modernisation Team, Ty Dewi Sant, St David's Park, Ewloe, Flintshire, CH5 3TX;
- Emailing [21stcenturyschools@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:21stcenturyschools@flintshire.gov.uk); or
- Telephoning 01352 704018 or 01352 702188.

Based on the information available please let us know what you think by:

- Completing an electronic copy of this questionnaire by following this link: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Z334AG/>



Follow this QR Code

- Completing a hard copy of the questionnaire and posting it in the collection box provided at St David's High School, Saltney Ferry CP, Saltney Wood Memorial CP and Broughton CP.
- Completing a hard copy of this response form and returning it to School Modernisation Team at the address above; or emailing it to us at [21stcenturyschools@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:21stcenturyschools@flintshire.gov.uk)

### **What will happen next?**

All responses from this early engagement process will be compiled into a report to the Council's Cabinet. The Cabinet will review the responses from the community and will shape what happens.

### **What are the indicative timelines?**

Action	Date
Early engagement process commences seeking community views	6 June 2023 to 3 July 2023
Early engagement report published & Cabinet consider what happens next	To be confirmed