

**Report To:** Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014

**Lead Officer:** Head of Customers and Education Support

**Report Author:** Head of Customers and Education Support

**Title:** School Places Data

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**1. What is the report about?**

The report seeks to provide the Committee with information regarding pupil places, future projections, condition and suitability of schools and the number of mobile accommodation units currently in use.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To provide the information requested by the Committee during consideration of the quarterly performance report in December 2013.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

That the Committee notes the position and comments on the actions being undertaken as part of the Corporate Plan to improve the overall condition of schools in Denbighshire.

**4. Report details.**

4.1 Background

4.2 In 2009 the Council adopted the Modernising Education Policy Framework as a key document to facilitate the process of school organisation and improving the overall condition of schools within Denbighshire. The application of the Policy Framework has led the Council to make a number of difficult decisions regarding the future of a number of schools.

4.3 The Council approved in October 2012 its Corporate Plan which included as one of its seven priorities the commitment to "Improving Performance in Education and the Quality of our School Buildings" This commitment included funding proposals to invest approximately £96million into the school estate to improve the quality of school buildings.

4.4 As of December 2012 to assist in this work a clear Modernising Education Programme was established utilising Programme Management methodology. This had the high level vision to develop, organise, direct and implement a co-ordinated range of projects and activities that enable the Council to achieve the outcomes listed in its corporate plan 2012-17.

4.5 It is expected the programme would deliver the outcomes of:-

- significant investment to improve school buildings and facilities and provide improved learning environments for pupils
- reviewed school provision across the county to ensure that we provide the right number of school places, of the right type, in the right location.

This would then deliver the following benefits:-

- Significant improvements in the quality of school buildings and facilities
- A significant reduction in the number of mobile classrooms used
- A reduction in the number of empty spaces in schools, and fewer oversubscribed

4.6 Large parts of the programme will be delivered through internally controlled projects and resources but there will also be a significant level of effective partnership work with other Denbighshire Services and the Welsh Government in view of the dependency upon 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Funding to deliver the programme.

#### 4.6 Current Position

4.7 Appendix 1 to the report provides an overview of the position in Denbighshire. This includes the changing position for surplus places and the gradual increase in birth rate in Denbighshire. The appendix also provides an analysis of the three area reviews of primary provision undertaken in Denbighshire to date. These proposals have all led to the removal of mobile places, reduction in surplus places whilst also meeting the increased demand for Welsh medium education. The appendix also notes that since 2007 there has been an 18% reduction in the number of mobiles used in Denbighshire schools. It is expected that the implementation of the findings of the Ruthin review and the completion of other current projects will reduce this further.

4.8 Appendices 2 and 3 to the report provides information per school on full time pupil numbers, surplus places, projections, school capacity, condition and suitability of buildings and the number of mobile units currently in use. At present condition surveys are undertaken on a periodical basis. To assist in the work of school reviews prioritisation is given to undertaking new condition surveys in advance of any proposals being submitted for consideration.

#### 4.9 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools

4.10 The five Band A projects for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools all clearly illustrate the need to improve the quality of school buildings and facilities, allow the removal of mobile units and achieve a reduction in the number of empty spaces in schools as follows.

- In Secondary provision only Ysgol Glan Clwyd and Rhyl High School buildings were ranked as poor in terms of condition and suitability.

- The proposals at Ysgol Glan Clwyd, Bodnant Community School, Ysgol Bro Dyfrdwy and the Joint Faith Secondary provision project will all contribute to the removal of mobile classrooms.
- The Rhyl New School, Bodnant Community School, Ysgol Bro Dyfrdwy and Joint Faith Secondary provision will all lead to the reduction in surplus places. The Ysgol Glan Clwyd proposals will prevent oversubscription for Welsh Medium secondary education.

#### 4.11 Other Priority Areas

- 4.12 The Corporate Plan allows potentially a further £23million to be invested towards implementing the findings of area reviews and other school building projects and improving works. At this stage no decisions have been made where this investment will be made.

### 5. **How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

This workstream contributes directly to the priority within the Corporate Plan to “Improving Performance in Education and the Quality of our School Buildings”. This commitment included funding proposals to invest approximately £96million into the school estate to improve the quality of school buildings.

### 6. **What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

The overall cost of delivering the Programme is expected to be approximately £96m. Of this £73.4 will be funded as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme which 50% of this will be provided directly by the Welsh Government.

### 7. **What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

Not required for this report.

### 8. **What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

The report has been produced at the request of the Scrutiny Committee and at this no stage further consultation has been undertaken.

### 9. **Chief Finance Officer Statement**

The schools budget is the largest revenue budget in the Council and also represents the biggest investment element of the Corporate Plan. It is therefore vital that the Council understands how many pupils it is likely to have going forward.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The risk that the availability of the Welsh Government's match- funding contribution towards Band A of the 21st Century Schools programme is not in line with the timescales for Denbighshire's work programme is currently being managed as part of the overall Corporate Risk Register. The service based risk register for Customers and Education Support also includes a number of risks and mitigating actions for the wider Modernising Education Programme. A risk register is also maintained at the Programme Board and individual projects also manage project level risk registers. These are both reviewed regularly.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

Articles 6.3.2(c) and 6.3.3(ch) of the Council's Constitution

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