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| Report to | Communities Scrutiny Committee |
| Date of meeting | 22nd October 2020 |
| Lead Member / Officer | Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Lead Member for Education, Children's Services and Public Engagement/Geraint Davies, Interim Head of Education |
| Report author | James Curran, Principal Manager – School Support |
| Title | Impact of Ruthin Primary Review |

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. The report seeks to assess the impact of the Ruthin Primary review against the seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. Members considered the main impact of the Ruthin Review at its meeting in October 2017. It was agreed to further assess the impact against the seven well-being goals in terms how it has impacted on the wider community.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

- 3.1 considers the findings arising and makes recommendations accordingly; and
- 3.2 confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix1) as part of its consideration.

4. Report details

- 4.1 Denbighshire's Cabinet agreed in November 2012 to commence informal consultation regarding a review of Primary Provision in the Ruthin area. It was agreed that the area review would focus on the following objectives; Ensuring

the sustainability of high quality education provision; Improving the quality of school buildings and facilities and Providing the right number of places, of the right type in the right location. Cabinet reviewed the findings of the informal consultation and made six recommendations which would impact on school provision in the area.

- 4.2 A report was submitted to this Committee three years ago which gave a summary of the findings and detailed a number of lessons learnt. This is expanded upon and updated in Appendix 2 to the report.
- 4.3 The Committee requested that the impact be assessed against the seven well-being goals from the Future Generations Act. To assist an assessment has been undertaken to assess the impact of the wider review on a prosperous Denbighshire; a resilient Denbighshire; a healthier Denbighshire; a more equal Denbighshire, a Denbighshire of cohesive communities; a Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and a globally responsible Denbighshire. (see Appendix 1)
- 4.4 Overall the assessment has concluded that the overall impact of the review has been positive.
- 4.5 A prosperous Denbighshire - the construction phase of each project provided opportunities to engage with local labour market and supply chains. It also created opportunities for the creation of apprenticeships. A direct consequence of the construction projects was an investment into the local infrastructure including highways, safe routes to schools and flood management features. The creation of onsite facilities for preschool children has improved wraparound childcare options for working parents and transition between pre-school and nursery.
- 4.6 A resilient Denbighshire - there has been extensive investment in biodiversity and energy efficient features in all schemes. The investment in flood risk management at Glasdir and the potential for redundant sites to become woodland areas support the view that the impact is positive.
- 4.7 A healthier Denbighshire - an increase in opportunities to promote healthy lifestyle as a result of investment in onsite and offsite facilities. The links to existing active travel routes from the new sites and an increase in numbers of

pupils accessing school meals support the view that the impact has been positive. In addition the use of part of a vacated site for the expansion of facilities on the adjacent hospital site strengthens this judgement.

- 4.8 A Denbighshire of Cohesive Communities - the decision to invest and retain local rural school provision will benefit local communities to retain young families and contributes towards strengthening the Welsh language across the area.
- 4.9 Other areas of the assessment highlight the competing views of a programme of change. For example for a more equal Denbighshire the investment and change has enhanced faith and Welsh Language provision in some schools. It has also allowed for improvement in facilities for pupils living in rural isolation. However these benefits may be offset by the loss of sites which may impact on accessibility, particularly for pre-school provision where transport is non-statutory.
- 4.10 The proposals overall have had a positive impact on a Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language. The proposals has seen investment and an increase in the overall capacity of Welsh Medium schools in the town and surrounding areas. Contractors have been strongly encouraged to promote the Welsh Language during the construction phase. The facilities allow for an overall improvement in facilities for promotional activities outside of school times and an improved ability to hold celebratory events on school sites, as many of the schools previously had no access to halls. These sites now have modern facilities, lighting and sound etc. to hold eisteddfodau and other events.
- 4.11 The construction element of the programme has had a positive impact on a globally responsible Denbighshire. There was a strong emphasis on health and safety and well-being during the construction phase and a strong application of community benefits with the targets for local labour, supply chains and training opportunities being met via North Wales Construction Framework and Welsh Government requirements.
- 4.12 This investment or change has impacted schools in different ways. 61% of primary school places in the area are now in new buildings and the findings of the review has meant that only one mobile classroom remains for teaching,

located at Ysgol Borthyn. However, there are a number of schools and areas where these findings will have had little or no impact.

- 4.13 For the schools where investment has taken place they have witnessed a transformation of the school environment. All former sites had similarities little or no direct access to outside areas, use of mobile accommodation, no off street parking for parents/guardians and in some instances an absence of dining facilities for pupils. The feedback from the wider school community has been largely overwhelmingly positive as the investment made by Denbighshire has transformed the learning experience for its children and young people.

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

- 5.1. The proposals had been developed to meet the success measures of the 2012-2017 Corporate Plan, namely the significant improvement in the quality of school buildings and facilities and a significant reduction in the number of mobile classrooms used. This work also reflects the current priorities of the Corporate Plan in respect of continuing to modernise schools via the 21st Schools Programme.

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

- 6.1. The overall investment in Schools in the Ruthin area across the 4 schools is forecast to be £20.3m. This was funded as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme which was match funded 50/50 for Band A by the Welsh Government. The proposals generated savings via school organisation proposals and the removal of mobile accommodation. These savings were utilised for prudential borrowing to support the Corporate Plan.
- 6.2. The delivery of Band A and the Ruthin area proposals saw a number of teams within the Council work together to deliver these projects/workstreams. Outside of education, staff in Design and Construction, ICT, Marketing and Communications, HR and Legal were all involved.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. This report focusses on the main conclusion of the Well-being Impact Assessment.

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

8.1. This report has been produced at the request of the Communities Scrutiny Committee.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. No decision sought in this report.

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

10.1. The risks with all projects/workstreams involved in the review were regularly monitored during the progression of the projects. Where risks became issues they were escalated to the Project Sponsor to be resolved.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000

11.2. Section 7.4.2 of the Council's Constitution sets out scrutiny's powers in relation to assessing the impact of policies and decisions.