TRI SENSORY TEAM –
SUB REGIONAL COLLABORATION

FULL BUSINESS CASE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   This Full Business Case (FBC) recommends the creation of one sensory service for three counties Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham to ensure equal opportunities and common criteria for education support across the sub-region which meets the National Quality Standards in Educational Services – for Children and Young People with sensory impairment (Dc 2005 WG34/2005.)

1.2   The initial scope of the services that the single team will provide is limited to high cost, low volume visual and hearing impairment from 0-19 and also includes Multiple Sensory Impairment (MSI):

1.3   The main driver is to develop greater flexibility and expertise within the specialist teaching team including the potential to further develop specialist skills.

1.4   Benefits to partners will also include improved utilisation of resources some of which can be very expensive to purchase, maintain and the opportunity to keep up to date with support developments and shared expertise.

1.5   It is proposed that the service is hosted by one partner and managed by a Management Board reporting to a Joint Committee Board. The Joint Board will be expected to account for performance to their sponsoring organisations, including local authority Scrutiny Committees.

1.6   The team proposed for the Tri Sensory Team comprises 13 staff, while there are HR and other practical issues to be negotiated, these are small in scale and do not present a barrier to implementation.

1.7   It is anticipated that implementation of this Full Business Case will begin immediately. The outline Business Case has been approved by all 3 Local Authority political processes and the ADEW Board of Directors.

2   INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

2.1   Background and context

All three authorities have centrally based sensory advice teams.

Currently there is a degree of variety in the provision provided by the three authorities with Wrexham and Flintshire providing resource provisions. It is evident that numbers attending the provisions, in particular the vision impaired provisions are reducing significantly. There is only one Vision Impaired provision within the three counties and the numbers requiring the service are low.

Wrexham and Flintshire provide hearing resourced provision in primary and secondary settings. The staff are highly trained and skilled and there is a very high staff to pupil ratio.

In Denbighshire school staff are trained to a high level to support children with visual/hearing impairment.

2.2   Purpose of the full business case (FBC)

The purpose of this FBC is to lay out the strategic and qualitative benefits which can be gained through a collaborative tri sensory service provision approach. It builds upon the outline business case and details the preferred model developed by the Inclusion Lead Officers.

2.3   Format of the FBC

The FBC details the selected and preferred options in relation to the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management cases and includes detailed descriptions about how the tri sensory provision will work, what the governance arrangements will be, performance management and HR implications of establishing the shared tri sensory service.

3 STRATEGIC CASE

3.1 The Strategic Case sets out the case for change, how a combined tri sensory service could meet the needs of local authorities and how it would benefit the local authorities.

3.2 Drivers for change

3.2.1 National drivers

There are a number of national policy drivers which make a case for changing the way services are currently delivered and these point to the adoption of (sub) regional, collaborative arrangements which deliver efficiency savings and reduce service costs, whilst at the same time improving the quality of service provided.

The key policy documents which recommend greater collaborative working across Wales are summarised below, along with how they are relevant to the development of the sub regional tri sensory team.

3.2.2 A Picture of Public Services 2011: The key financial challenges facing Welsh public services

This report was presented by the Auditor General in October 2011 with the aim of supporting public services to respond to the financial challenges facing them. It recognises that pubic services should be ambitious in finding new ways to deliver services and that long term sustainable solutions can only be achieved through innovation, sharing and acting on good practice and improvement efficiency. In the past Councils have been able to partially bridge funding gaps by increasing council tax or drawing on their reserves however this is not sustainable in the longer term.

3.2.3 Draft SEN Regional Provision: Support Document for Authorities in the development of SEN provision collaboratively

A WG working party is currently developing guidance in preparation for 2014 when the centrally held education budget will be devolved to local authorities. This guidance is being developed to give support to local education authorities in the development of regional provision of education and services in Wales. This development would dovetail neatly with development of a regionally based team.

3.3 Regional drivers

3.3.1 Regional Leadership Partnership Board: Vision for Collaboration

In January 2010 the Leaders and Chief Executives of the six North Wales Local Authorities agreed a regional vision for collaboration. Each Local Authority in North Wales has a strong regional identity and good working relationships and have, to date, successfully worked together and collaborated. The regional vision states that these relationships must be built

upon to enable the promotion of radically different models for delivering public services to communities. This vision of collaboration and partnerships sits alongside each Local Authority's individual visions which aim to make the six Local Authorities more efficient, effective and responsive through internal change programmes.

3.3.2 The Regional Leadership Board, augmented by leaders of each of the major public sector organisations, oversees a programme of collaboration led by Programme Boards, each driving a programme of collaboration in specific service areas e.g. School Improvement, Waste, Transport.

3.4   Sub Regional context for the provision of sensory support.

3.4.1 In terms of the provision of tri sensory support, the Regional School Improvement Service is progressing with full implementation expected to take place in April 2013. Whilst inclusion is not in scope for this regional project, to develop collaboration further, albeit on a sub regional basis, further demonstrates the commitment to collaborate in areas where benefits can be realised.

3.4.2 Learning disabilities services are predicted to have a 44% increase in service users over the next 13 years and effective commissioning of alternative services, especially for those with complex and challenging needs, is imperative to ensure that services are sustainable in the future.

3.5   Existing Arrangements

3.5.1 Recruitment to the service in recent years has proved challenging for the authorities, this has been recognised by the WG and support has been provided for the training of new members of the tri sensory teams.

3.5.2 Currently Denbighshire can offer a bilingual service. Both Flintshire and Wrexham can provide only a minimal bilingual service.

3.5.3 Currently the teams are very small within each authority; this can result in isolation and create challenges to balancing the need for continuous professional development alongside workload.

3.6   Risks

The risks associated with delivering the three county sensory team are varied, the following list identifies the main risks;-

The organisational structure is not fit for purpose
Staff not buying into the proposed Model
Financial assessment is not viable
Unable to fill the key positions
Buy in from cabinet leads
Buy in from ADEW members
Buy in from trade unions
Cultural difference between partners and the host

3.7   Summary

There are strong drivers at national, regional and local levels to support the development of a three county sensory team.

Gwent County Council developed a regional service in 1996 which has recently been recognised as one of the best examples in Wales.

ECONOMIC CASE

4.1 Currently each of the three Authorities employ small teams to deliver a Tri Sensory service locally. The proposed outcome of a Tri Sensory service will result in the three teams continuing to deliver a service locally however the joint team will be managed centrally. The addition of a team leader post will be funded jointly.

The joint service will be funded by each Authority contributing an amount equivalent to existing staffing costs. Current staffing costs per Authority are shown in the table below.

Authority	Total Costs
Flintshire County Council	£162,520
Wrexham County Council	£190,000
Denbighshire County Council	£178,245

Potential savings will be generated from maximising/sharing existing equipment and removing the need for each individual Authority to maintain a separate stock of equipment and reduce under utilisation.

In addition the creation of a larger team will improve the efficiency of staffing resources, ensuring service is maintained and where practical improved.

4.2 High Cost, Low Incidence

The development of a sub regional service will provide the opportunity to rationalise expensive equipment resources and improve equipment utilisation.

Whilst the overall value of specialised equipment is not huge (£9,000 as at 2012) there is an opportunity for the partners to share equipment and increase the utilisation of items.

4.3 Vision for the future

4.3.1 The vision is to create one sensory service for the three counties, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham to ensure equal opportunities and common criteria for support across the region which meets the National Quality Standards in Educational Support.

4.3.2 All partners want to work towards developing alternative, more cost effective services.

4.4   Design principles

4.4.1 To complete the FBC the following work streams were established to develop the following areas.

Finance and Data – data cleansing, financial profiling, cost sharing principles, protocols between partners have been determined by the respective Finance Officers for each Authority.

Governance – options are to be considered and recommendation to be made to the working group consisting of the three lead officers. Scoping of the options are to be completed by Legal Advisers based on existing best practice.

HR – working through issues including job descriptions, person specifications, implementation plans

IT- identifying short and medium-term IT requirements for the sub regional team with associated costs and implementation requirements. Data Sharing Documentation to be completed to facilitate access to shared data.

Communication and Learning – focussing on methods of disseminating information to partners and change management issues.

4.5   Options

Three options were detailed in the OBC for potential delivery of a sub regional tri sensory team. The current salary costs including on-costs are £480,836. The proposal is that each partner Authority will contribute an agreed figure based on each Authority's current salary costs.

The options were as follows:-

Option 1	Loose Collaboration
Option 2	Co-ordinated Regional Collaboration
Option 3	Fully integrated model

4.5.1   Option 1 – Loose Collaboration

Description

This option would be relatively informal and require the least change and active collaboration from partners. It would not require standard processes or definitions, although these would make it easier to share information and use it effectively.

Costs

Costs associated with this option would be low – virtually zero. It is anticipated that partners could accommodate the proposed collaboration within existing staffing levels and activities.

Risks

Data collection and management varies across organisations which might hinder capacity to benchmark. This option would provide little difference to the status quo and is unlikely to deliver substantial benefits.

4.5.2   Option 2 – Basic Sub-Regional Collaboration

Description

This option envisaged a step up from loose collaboration. What would distinguish this option from loose collaboration is that partners would commit to working together in a basic way to enhance their delivery of provision standards. A framework would be developed that sets out some agreed functions and activities that partners would undertake together. It might be agreed that certain partners would undertake particular activities on behalf of others. The required staffing levels would be provided within each partner's organisation. Partners would agree lead officers for particular activities, for example, one Authority responsible for VI, one for HI and one for MSI

Costs

Minimal staffing costs – should not increase but there may be a need for re-shaping the service provision within each Authority. There would be a potential for increase in travel costs, for example, VI staff based in Denbighshire and covering a greater sub-regional area. In addition, it is likely that a team manager would be required in each area which would significantly increase the cost of the service provision.
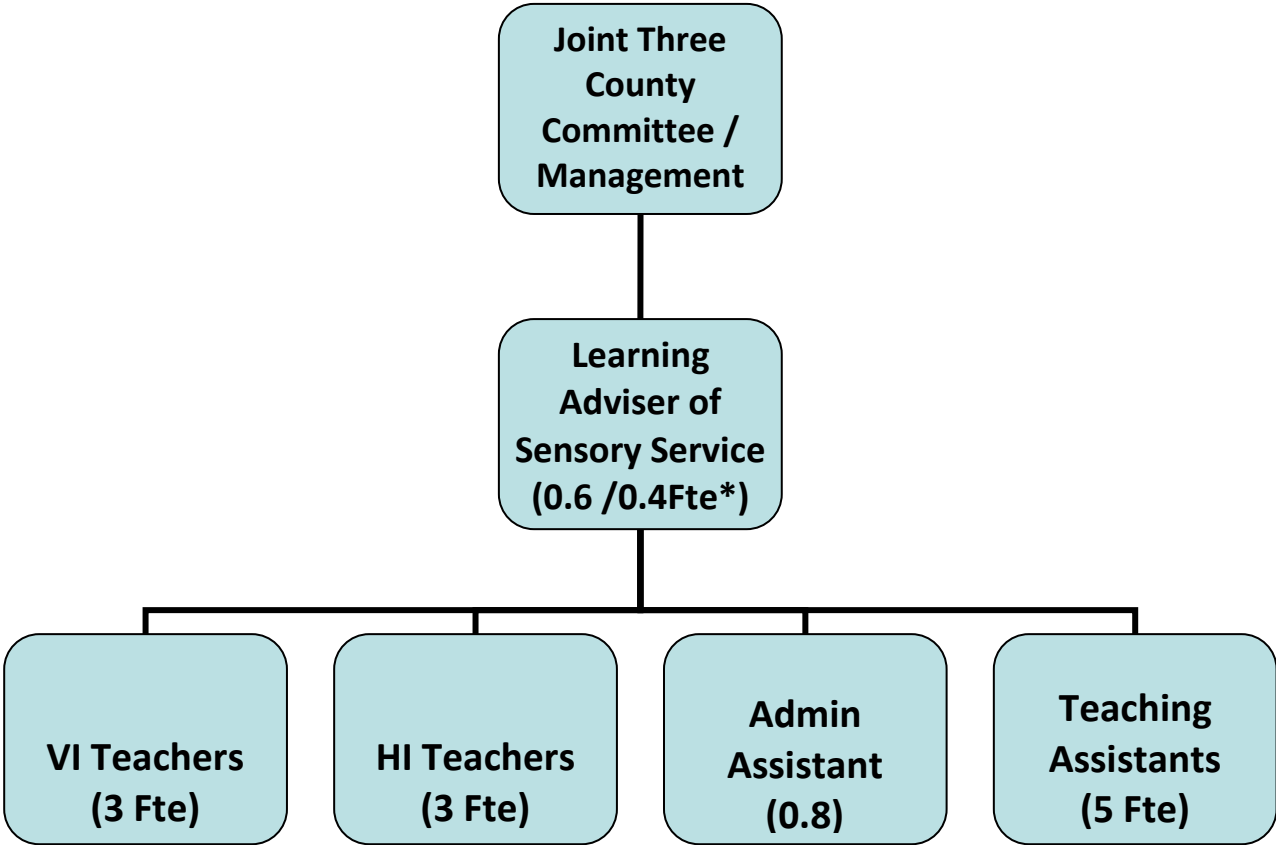
Risks

As Option 1 plus:

Collaborative contract monitoring would depend on effective reciprocal arrangements to provide stakeholders with necessary assurances.

No defined structure to ensure benefits are achieved.

Limited likelihood for development of the service.

Fragmented management.

No overall common practice approach would be developed.

4.5.3 Option 3 – Fully integrated model

Establishment of a fully integrated tri sensory service that would undertake a range of activities ranging from analysis, planning and equity of provision for learners through to monitoring and review. It would see a number of staff working together across the region, although still operating from within local bases.

The proposal for staffing arrangements are detailed in the organisational chart below;-

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                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │   Joint Three    │
                    │     County       │
                    │   Committee /    │
                    │   Management     │
                    └────────┬─────────┘
                             │
                    ┌────────┴─────────┐
                    │    Learning      │
                    │   Adviser of     │
                    │ Sensory Service  │
                    │  (0.6 /0.4Fte*)  │
                    └────────┬─────────┘
         ┌──────────┬────────┴────────┬──────────┐
  ┌──────┴────┐ ┌───┴──────┐ ┌────────┴───┐ ┌────┴──────┐
  │VI Teachers│ │HI Teachers│ │   Admin    │ │ Teaching  │
  │  (3 Fte)  │ │  (3 Fte)  │ │ Assistant  │ │Assistants │
  │           │ │           │ │   (0.8)    │ │  (5 Fte)  │
  └───────────┘ └──────────┘ └────────────┘ └───────────┘
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* The Learning Adviser role will be split between 0.6 Management/Coordinating and 0.4 Teaching Adviser

Risks

Complexity of bringing staff together

Individual authorities may feel disempowered

Savings may not be realised

Robust performance indicators not developed

4.5.4   When the OBC was discussed partners expressed the following views:

Options 1 and 2 were felt to offer few advantages over current arrangements.

Option 3 was considered the preferred option as it provided greater opportunity to overcome the challenges faced by the services in all three authorities.

4.6   Preferred Option

4.6.1   The Outline Business Case was presented to the Directors in April 2012 and agreement confirmed for the progression of Option 3.

The proposal is that Flintshire County Council host the service. The structure as outlined above includes a new post, that of Team Leader, supported by advisory teachers, teaching assistants and administration staff.

4.6.2   Description

This option would see the structured coordination of a collaborative approach. It would include a formal partnership agreement and service level agreements or memoranda of understanding between partners.

4.6.3   Governance arrangements

The recommended approach is for a Host Partner to employ the staff underpinned by a management board and partnership agreement together with memoranda of understanding or service level agreements between the members of the service.

4.6.4   Staffing Arrangements

The outline business case included a proposed organisational model, this is shown above.

Rationale

It has been identified that a Learning Adviser post will be created to provide a management /coordination role (0.6fte) the remaining capacity (0.4) will provide advisory teaching

support. The team will consist of Sensory Service Advisory Teachers and Sensory Outreach Workers supported by an administration assistant.

The new team will continue to deliver the service on a sub regional basis. Given the small size of the team there would be an expectation of flexibility across post holders to enable cover for each other to match work flows and specific work load demands.

NOTE

Current capacity levels have been analysed. Within Denbighshire County Council there is currently an over capacity within the Advisory Teaching function. The actual extent of this will be determined in the near future however, should this require addressing it will be dealt in accordance with Denbighshire County Council policies and procedures.

4.6.5 Accessing Other Skills

A range of support services would be available from the Host partner (e.g. legal services, audit, HR, ICT etc).

4.6.6 Outcomes/ Outputs

- Development of a common approach to analysing local needs and service usage, built on best practice across the sub-region and beyond.
- Benchmarking of data regionally and sub-regionally
- Exploring the development and management of databases for the new service
- Networking with other regions in Wales to ensure that practice and initiatives are in line with best practice and well co-ordinated
- Use of data intelligence to enable the service to be shaped to deliver best use of local provision/capacity
- Monitoring of service sustainability
- Monitoring of trends to anticipate future needs

4.6.7 Assumptions

The staffing levels will need to be reviewed and altered if the scope of the project extends E.G if there is an increase in learners with sensory impairment.

4.6.8 Implementation overview

Implementation of this option is defined as: **Medium.**

Key tasks relating to governance arrangements and financial modelling and savings are currently in progress these will need to be finalised at the implementation phase.

The implementation phase is expected to commence 1st April 2013 and for the new service to commence from 1st September 2013. Costs will include officer time to recruit and to develop governance arrangements in addition to staff and running costs.

Initiate	Plan	Implement	Benefits realisation
January 2013	January to March 2013	March to September 2013	2013 onwards (6 months from go-live)

4.6.9 Contractual relationships

The roles and relationships of each of the partner organisations within the tri sensory team are described below;-

Organisation	Role/s	Responsibilities
Host partner	Establishment of Team Employment of staff	Accountancy support/ financial monitoring Legal, HR, audit support Performance reporting
Local authority partners	Management Board representatives	Ensuring the sub regional team delivers the benefits planned Reporting to governance structures Ensuring partner organisations comply with agreed systems/procedures to enable the sub regional team to operate effectively Providing expertise/leadership in agreed areas

4.6.10 Risk allocation

All three local authorities share the risks associated with implementation and start-up

All partners face reputational risks around any failure in delivery.

5   FINANCIAL CASE

5.1   Detailed financial data

Wrexham

Teachers x 3 / Teaching Assistants x 3	£180,000 (including on-costs)
Travel Budget	£5,000
Supplies and Services	£5,000
Total	**£190,000**

Flintshire

Teachers x 2 / Teaching Assistants x 2 / Administration x 1	£143,720 (including on-costs)
Travel Budget	£9,500
Supplies and Services	£9,300
Total	**£162,520**

Denbighshire

Teachers x 2 / Teaching Assistants x 1	£160,443 (including on-costs)
Travel Budget	£10,500
Supplies and Services	£7,302
Total	**£178,245**

6.   Management Case

6.1   The Management Case sets out the proposed delivery arrangements for the tri sensory team including governance arrangements, HR implications, benefits realisation, implementation and change management requirements.

6.2   Governance Options

A range of governance options were considered for the tri sensory team. However, using agreed evaluation criteria, it was concluded that the preferred option for this project is to have a host partner underpinned by a partnership agreement and management board.

6.2.1   The governance options considered were:

Option 1
Collaborative Option

Option 2
Host Authority single employer/delegation model
Agreeing a host partner to employ the staffing underpinned by a management board and partnership agreement.

6.2.2 Evaluation of Options
Evaluation of the governance options was carried out by the three lead officers and their respective teams culminating in a SWOT analysis. This was completed in May 2011.

The outline proposals were presented to ADEW in September 2011 and agreement to proceed on a three county basis was approved by ADEW in April 2012.

6.2.3 Scrutiny
Each partner will still need to monitor and scrutinise the joint service through regular monitoring involving their scrutiny and other relevant political processes. It is proposed that responsible persons from each partner are identified to be responsible for taking reports through the scrutiny process of their own organisation on an annual basis.

Responsible persons will be members of the Management Board for the service. To enable this to happen the host authority will be responsible for compiling a 'common script' report to be used by each of the three authorities. The strength of this model is that:

- the workload is shared;
- accountability is maintained at a local authority level;

- it fits in with current constitutional arrangements;
- it requires representatives on the Management Board to 'own' the performance of the tri sensory service;
- it aligns individual and collective accountability.

6.2.4 Management Board

The composition of the Management Board has been considered. To avoid making the Management Board complex, a Management Board consisting of the following representation is recommended:

1 Chair – Nominated

3 Local Authority representatives

1 Voluntary Sector member

Each member of the Management Board will nominate a named deputy. Members of the Management Board will have voting rights and this voting right will be transferred to the deputy if the named representative cannot attend. It is only envisaged that voting will occur when consensus has not been reached. The Management Board will report to ADEW.

Terms of Reference for the Management Board are being compiled in preparation for implementation.

6.3 Performance Management Framework

To manage the success and productivity of the tri sensory a performance management framework will be drafted. (accountability model (RBA). This is likely to be divided into four quadrants to include reporting on:

- Activity
- Performance
- Feedback
- Finance

The Management Board are required to agree the performance management framework and the Host authority will be responsible for reporting on the performance of the tri sensory service to the Management Board on a regular basis.

6.4 Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact assessment has been completed and a copy is available upon request.

6.5   Service Level Agreements with partners and what they will cover

Representatives from the three authority's legal departments are currently developing a proposal and drafting a service level agreement. Once completed the three authority lead members will agree and confirm the service level agreement.

6.6   HR Issues

6.6.1   Job Descriptions and person specifications

Job descriptions and person specifications for each role within the sub regional tri sensory team have been developed drawing on those for similar posts in existence in North Wales.

The team will require a mix of professional background and experience in teaching in a tri sensory environment, providing teaching support in a tri sensory environment and supported provided by an administrator. The job descriptions are available on request.

6.6.2   Welsh Language Policy for posts in the sub regional Tri Sensory team

The service will need to be able to demonstrate that it can deliver a bilingual service.

6.6.3   Consultation process

Staff groups affected by the creation of a sub regional tri sensory team have been briefed during the development of the OBC. It is anticipated that formal staff and Trade Union consultation will take place once the FBC has been agreed via partners' governance processes.

6.6.4   Current post holders potentially impacted by the tri sensory sub regional service

It is anticipated that there will be a direct match between the existing staff members skills and attributes with those required for the sub regional team.

There may be a requirement to reduce the amount of total teaching hours as a result of the demand reducing. However as the service will require a team leader post there is potential that this reduction will be off-set should the team leader be recruited from within the service as is anticipated.

TUPE could also arise for some staff if the tri sensory service is hosted by a partner who is not their current employer. The extent of this needs to be identified and suitable processes need to be put in place. Again, work developed for RESIS will be used as a template. It is anticipated that existing bases for staff working in Wrexham County Council and Denbighshire County Council will remain albeit with the potential to cover additional areas.

6.6.5 HR policies and procedures

The HR policies and procedures of the host partner would be applied apart from where TUPE regulations are applicable.

6.6.6 Implementation of HR strategy

An indicative HR implementation plan has been compiled identifying actions to be taken, by whom, lead time and HR time.

6.7 IT Arrangements

During the initial implementation, existing databases will be used. However, for the longer term, IT requirements will need to be further explored with IT colleagues and will require detailed consideration of systems currently available. The extent of this work will be determined by the Management Board.

7. Next Steps

- Recruitment of staff to the Tri Sensory Team
- Induction of staff
- Developing and finalising policies and procedures for the tri-sensory team
- Service User communication
- Finalising and signing of Partnership Agreement
- Development of MoU and SLA's with partners,
- Setting up management board
- Agreement of benefits realisation plan ,work programme and targets for year 1