

**Cheshire East  
Advisory Panel  
23 September, 2008**

**TRANSFORMING LEARNING  
COMMUNITIES**

**A CASE FOR CHANGE: SUMMARY**



1. By 2010, integrated extended services will increasingly be led by the needs of children, working with a whole - child centred approach involving families and their local community. Cheshire is already well down the road to achieving such an approach.
2. The Government recognises that local authorities are best placed to have the full picture of what local services are needed and how these might be delivered most effectively, efficiently and economically. The Local Authority (LA) therefore has a responsibility to provide a strategic overview and direction for children's services and to commission them accordingly.
3. This coincides with the LA having to manage the effect of significant demographic decline in its pupil populations which will lead to sharply falling school rolls. In 2005 there were approximately 5000 or 5% fewer 0-15 year olds than in 2001 and by 2021 some 25% fewer 0-15 year olds.
4. TLC must be seen in the wider context of other major changes which are being implemented across the local authority and not as a separate, self-standing initiative. The elements of TLC which are to do with school rationalisation, the pattern and nature of provision and the effective deployment of resources are necessary pre-requisites which provide the platform for continuing development in respect of children's centres, extended services, 14 to 19 provision, SEN Review etc
5. Overall, the TLC process consists of two inter-related elements:
  - The rationalisation of the pattern of school provision in order to match the supply of places with demand
  - The provision of a framework for the planning of the development of integrated extended services which will involve a range of Cheshire services and other providers in and around schools over the course of the next five years or so.
6. At the start of the Initiative, in September 2004, a County-wide Conference of all stakeholders drew up seven key principles to underpin the reviews. The seven principles are still relevant and therefore should form the basis for all locality reviews.
7. Because the outcomes of a review will affect all schools in a locality, it is important that all schools must be fully involved throughout the review, even those which are unlikely to be the subject of proposals for organisational change.
8. Within the overall TLC framework there will be a set of option assessment criteria developed between the LA and schools in a locality which can be used to identify those schools which are to be the (possible) subjects of proposals for organisational change.

9. In order to support the development of an agreed set of criteria and a shared vision, it is necessary that key data contributing to decision making is shared by the local authority and schools.
10. Within the TLC framework there should be a vision and understanding between LA and schools of the overall provision of extended services which are needed and can be sustained in order to meet the “Every Child Matters” Agenda.
11. The size and organisation of schools is a key consideration. For example, the LA’s preferred model is for all through primary schools and the expectation is that separate infant and junior schools will be amalgamated as a consequence of the review.
12. The issue of falling pupil rolls, particularly in the primary sector, is urgent and important because of the significant inefficiencies and diseconomies that surplus places cause. Increasingly secondary schools are being affected by the smaller pupil cohorts feeding through.
13. Accommodation which is surplus has to be found an alternative use which is a genuine priority for the school or the local authority, otherwise such accommodation needs to be put up for disposal.
14. Falling rolls affect schools unevenly and unequally. Because of the serious impact that falling rolls can have on the range and quality of opportunities for children, particularly those remaining on the rolls of less popular schools, the active management of the supply of school places is absolutely necessary and must go hand in hand with the school improvement and pupil support functions provided by the local authority.
15. Account has to be taken of the needs of particular areas and particular communities. For example, the needs of rural communities or where there is particular disadvantage and deprivation may require arrangements which may be difficult to justify elsewhere. It is important to recognise and to manage the tensions this can sometimes cause.
16. Current developments and proposals in respect of the establishment of children’s centres, SEN provision, extended schools, 14 to 19 provision etc are taken into account in developing a local shared vision of integrated services for children and their families over the course of the next five years or so.
17. Much of the development of integrated extended services in and around schools is likely, in practice, to be complex and appear, at times, to be confusing. This is because of different criteria, different timescales and different decision makers being involved in the various elements, to say nothing of the scale of the changes involved. The LA’s function is to plan, co-ordinate, enable, support...

18. Innovative and collaborative arrangements will need to be developed and established across all schools in Cheshire. This could include consortia, federations and trusts which are primarily to do with raising school standards and developing new ways of working and, as such, are to do with the second general element of the overall TLC processes.
19. Many schools in Cheshire have developed or are in the process of developing federations. Federation does not in itself address the issues raised by surplus places and wasteful deployment of resources.
20. The scale and complexity of the changes and people's reactions need to be recognised and taken into account in the TLC processes. This requires the development of effective consultation processes and the need to inform and communicate effectively between interested and involved parties.