

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	22 December 2009
Report of:	Task and Finish Group of Children and Families Scrutiny Committee
Subject/Title:	Managing the Provision of School Places: Report on "Transforming Learning Communities" (TLC) and its implications for Cheshire East Council
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor J P Findlow

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 A Task & Finish Group was established by the Cheshire East Council's Children and Families Scrutiny Committee. Its remit was to review the TLC inheritance from the former County Council, and consider the needs of Cheshire East in relation to future changes to the schools system. The Group's work has been informed by the thorough review of TLC by a former County Council Scrutiny Panel, first-hand information from Education Improvement Partnership (EIP) members and Headteachers, and their own considerations of the evidence available with regard to supply and demand for school places.
- 1.2 This document provides an executive summary of the Report produced by the Group. That Executive Summary is included in Appendix One.

2.0 Decision Requested

The Cabinet of Cheshire East Council is recommended to decide to:-

- 2.1 Agree the development of a comprehensive commissioning strategy for children's learning in Cheshire East, in the context of the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 2.2 Agree that any programme of work to address the issue of school places should sit squarely within that strategic commissioning context.
- 2.3 Note the report of the Task and Finish Group set up by the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.4 Request the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services to consider how the advice of the Task and Finish Group about the desirable attributes of such a programme (Section 7 of

the Task and Finish Group report) should be taken on board in designing that programme.

- 2.5 Request the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services to consider how the advice of the Task and Finish Group about the management of such a programme should be taken on board in managing it, particularly in relation to:-

- engagement and consultation.
- managing relationships with the Church of England Diocese of Chester and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury.
- ensuring that the programme is flexible enough to be able to respond to projected "waves" in demand.
- managing the issues on a locality basis, which is sensitive to local differences and demographics.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Cheshire East Council urgently requires an appropriate future investment strategy. This is needed before we can re-submit our Strategy for Change to the Primary Capital Programme (PCP), and submit our statement of 'Readiness to Deliver' to the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. Both are potential major sources of investment for the next ten years and provide an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All Wards

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All Members

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 N/A

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 7.1 N/A

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 8.1 N/A

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 9.1 Most school reorganisation proposals have to comply with a statutory process which is laid down in regulations and guidance. Any new policies and procedures set up by Cheshire East Council will need to be compatible with these statutory requirements.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 N/A

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 The Cheshire East Children & Families Scrutiny Committee noted that the new Council would need to consider how to manage the gap between supply and demand of school places. The Committee therefore commissioned a Transforming Learning Communities Task & Finish Group to take this matter forward and consider how the processes should be managed across East Cheshire.
- 11.2 Appendix One summarises the Task and Finish Group's Report. A full copy of the document is available from Peter Davies contact details below.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

- 12.1 N/A

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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