

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS' FORUM 10th April 2013

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A Review of Wirral City Learning Centres

Executive Summary

Wirral Secondary Headteachers request a review of the current usage and funding of the three City Learning Centres.

Key Issues / Background

Wirral's 3 City Learning Centres are funded through a Combined Budget in 2013-14 - Schools Budget £814,700 and Children and Young People's Budget £116,900. The schools budget makes provision for the running costs of the CLC's, whilst the Council's budget contribution meets the additional PFI contract costs. This budget remains in place for the Financial Year 2013/14.

Although as part of the consultation on schools funding last year there was support for the continued provision of CLC's going forward, particularly in the Primary Sector, Mainstream Secondary School Headteachers have expressed concern that they do not get value for money from the facilities. Recently they have indicated that they would prefer to have the Mainstream Secondary School portion of the Combined Budget delegated from 1 April 2014.

A consultation email has been sent to each Secondary School via the Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers (WASH) asking for an opinion on this preference. Of the 9 Mainstream Secondary Schools that have currently responded, 8 have expressed a preference for the Schools Forum to consider delegation of the funds.

Secondary Schools, therefore, request that a review of the current use of Wirral City Learning Centres is undertaken in order to evaluate whether they receive value for money from the service.

Secondary Schools also request that if it shown that value for money is not being received then a review of the Combined Budget be undertaken in order for the Schools Forum to consider the disaggregation of the Budget and delegation to Secondary Schools from 1 April 2014.

Financial Implications

Potential reduction in the overall funding for the running costs of the City Learning Centres and increased delegation to secondary schools.

Recommendations

A review of the current use of Wirral City Learning Centres is undertaken.

Julia Hassall
Director of Children's Services

Appendix 1

Consultation email sent to Mainstream Secondary Schools

At the January WASH meeting (Tuesday 15 January 2013), the Secondary School contribution to the funding from the 3 Wirral City Learning Centres was discussed.

It was suggested that a letter be written to the Schools Forum indicating the intention that, from 1 April 2014, Wirral Secondary Schools would wish to:

Stop the Combined Budget nature of the City Learning Centre funding
Withdraw the Secondary funding from this budget
Put the Secondary funding for City Learning Centres back in the Secondary section of the budget
Delegate the Secondary funding for City Learning Centres directly to Secondary Schools.

Overleaf is an extract from the report written and circulated to schools in the Academic year 2011-12.

Please consider your school's response, consult Governors and complete and return your current decision regarding the writing of the letter to Schools Forum.

Name of School:	
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This school agrees/does not agree (delete as appropriate) that a letter should be sent to the Schools Forum indicating that the Secondary school element of the funding for City Learning Centres be withdrawn and delegated directly to schools from April 2014.

Signed:.....Headteacher Date:

Signed:..... Chair of Governors Date:

Please send your response to Phil Sheridan at the address below.

PEC
Acre Lane
Wirral
CH62 7BZ

Please reply as soon as possible and preferably by Wednesday 20 March 2013. If this date does not give you enough opportunity to consult Governors, please let Phil Sheridan know.

Appendix 2

Additional information sent to Secondary schools

Wirral City Learning Centres

WASH question – January 2013

WHAT IS A CITY LEARNING CENTRE

The three CLCs were established ten years ago to provide enhanced ICT based learning across the whole curriculum for pupils and teachers and to provide access to education for the wider community.

WIRRAL CITY LEARNING CENTRES

There are 3 CLCs:

- **Discovery** based at Ridgeway High School
- **The Learning Lighthouse** based at Wallasey School
- **West Wirral Works** based at Hilbre High School

Some of the key services CLCs provide:

- Wirral CLCs support the latest pedagogical thinking
- The services provide learning opportunities and equipment that are outside most schools budgets
- The services provide centrally available expertise
- Provision is made for teachers and students to try technology prior to purchase for their schools
- Wirral schools benefit from a wide range of imaginative, cross curricular workshops & specialist project support
- Users of Wirral CLCs benefit from extended schools support
- Centres for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) - learning from experience
- Enable innovation and research & development

Types of use provided to schools

- Supported session
- Unsupervised session
- Outreach for pupils (excluding training and advice)
- Outreach for staff (excluding training and advice)
- Training and advice on site at CLC
- Training and advice at school site
- Remote manufacture
- Equipment loan
- Equipment loan - "try before you buy" facility

Questions to consider when discussing the future of Wirral City Learning Centres (CLCs)

General questions to consider:

- Is the development of skills in using a wide range of cutting edge technologies important to the young people of Wirral?
- Is the development of skills in using a wide range of cutting edge technologies important to the young people of your school?
- As a resource for all Wirral Schools and Young People, do you have a corporate responsibility to keep the CLCs open and further develop and improve their use for the benefit of Wirral pupils?
- Do you know what a CLC is?
- Do you know where the CLCs are sited?
- Do you know the investment that has gone into the CLCs since they were established 10 years ago?
- Do you know how many people work at the CLCs?
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School Development/Improvement planning

- Do you know the full range of services that CLCs provide for all Wirral schools?
- Do you know the full range of specialist equipment that is available in the CLCs?
- Do you know the full range of specialist expertise that is available in the CLCs?
- Do you know how your school has made use of the services of the CLCs?
- Are the services provided by CLCs taken into consideration when school development/improvement plans are written?
- Are the services provided by CLCs taken into consideration when subject or curriculum area development/improvement plans are written?
- Secondary schools – do you know what experience your pupils have from using the CLCs at their primary schools?

If the CLCs remain open:

- If you feel you currently do not make effective use of the services, how do you plan to do so in the future?

If the CLCs close:

- Do you have the expertise and infrastructure to collaborate with other schools to provide opportunities for the pupils in your community to use and develop skills in using equipment of the same quality?
- How will the schools in your local community or area work together to provide the same level of expertise and opportunity for all the pupils your community serves?