



CABINET – 9TH DECEMBER 2015

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS REVIEW

REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 A report was presented to the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee on 3rd November 2015 which detailed the progress of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Review. Members noted the progress made and were advised of proposals to seek approval from Cabinet to go out to formal consultation to close the Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Hendre Junior School and realign the Social Inclusion Base at Cefn Fforest Primary School. This reports details the formal consultation process and procedures that are required to be followed

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The aim of the ALN review is to identify strengths and areas for development of the current services and to provide options for the delivery of services for children and young people with additional learning needs. The report provides an update on the status of the ALN review makes recommendations for a way forward with regard to two Specialist Resource Base (SRB) provisions.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 SEN Policy and Inclusion Strategy.
- 3.2 SEN Code of Practice for Wales (2002).
- 3.3 Draft Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Bill.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Learning Education and Inclusion (LEI) Service consists of a wide range of support and intervention services, which includes Educational Psychology, Behaviour Support Service, Education Welfare Service and Additional Learning Needs Service. The purpose of the ALN review was to review the functions of the individual services and identify good practice and areas for development. Head teachers have been fully involved in the review process through a series of stakeholder group meetings.

In order to progress the ALN review four task and finish groups have been tasked to lead development on the following areas.

- Specialist Resource Base (SRB) funding models and provision development (lead officer - Chief Education Officer)
- Additional Support (lead officer – Service Manager for Additional Learning Needs)

- Behaviour Provision (lead officer – Service Manager for EOTOS and Behaviour)
- Looked After Children (lead officer – Service Manager for Social Inclusion)

Membership of the Task and Finish groups includes officers from LEI, Human Resources, Finance and Head Teacher representatives. Recommendations from these groups will be reported to the Stakeholder meeting in November and to Scrutiny in the New Year.

4.2 Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs)

Whilst the majority of pupils in Caerphilly are educated in their local mainstream school, pupils who have very significant needs require more specialist placements. Placements are agreed through discussion at the Specialist Placement and Provision Panel. There are currently twenty-seven specialist classes in seventeen primary settings. At secondary level four secondary schools host SRB provision (Appendix A). An analysis of provision and future demand has revealed the need for further reorganisation and development of SRB provision to take into account

- provision required to meet current and future identified need;
- geographical distribution of SRBs;
- cross-phase continuity for children and young people.

A report to the Scrutiny Committee in September 2014 (Appendix B) indicated that addressing these issues could include re-designation and rationalisation of SRBs. A recommendation was made in June 2015 to the Head Teacher Stakeholder group that the SRB in Hendre Junior School should close and that Social Inclusion Class in Cefn Fforest Primary School should be re-designated as a Complex Needs class.

4.3 Hendre Junior SRB

Hendre Junior School is located on St Cenydd Road, Trecenydd, Caerphilly; it is an English medium school. The Specialist Resource Base (SRB) is designated to support a total of 8 Key Stage 2 aged pupils with severe hearing impairment.

For the academic year 2013-14, three pupils attended the SRB but this was reduced to one pupil when two siblings attending the base moved to another area. In April 2015 the one remaining pupil in the base transferred to Trinity Fields School. There are currently no pupils in the SRB

It is proposed that the SRB at Hendre Junior School is closed. The setting does not have any children attending and there have been surplus places for a number of years. The advancement of new-born hearing screening, medical intervention and technology has allowed the Local Authority (LA) to meet the needs of children and young people with significant hearing loss in mainstream settings more effectively. In addition parents of children and young people with Hearing Impairment (HI) and the children and young people themselves, are requesting mainstream rather than specialist settings. This has impacted on the demand for placements for pupils with HI across the LA and many pupils are now very successfully placed in their local community schools with packages of support. This is in accordance with the LA's Inclusion and SEN Policy. The fact that the SRB in Hendre Junior School has no pupils on roll at present does not make it viable to continue with this provision.

The Head Teacher and Governing Body have been consulted regarding this proposal and have indicated that would support the closure of the SRB.

4.4 Cefn Fforest Primary School SRB

Cefn Fforest Primary School serves the village of Cefn Fforest, although approximately a third of the pupils come from the Blackwood area of Caerphilly, it is an English medium school. The school currently hosts two specialist classes. One Social Inclusion class takes pupils in year 3 and 4 from other schools in the local authority and pupils are dual registered. The other class caters for Key Stage 2 pupils with complex needs from all over the local authority.

It is proposed that the Social Inclusion Class at Cefn Fforest is re-designated to be a Key Stage 1 Complex Needs Specialist Resource Base. The setting currently has a Key Stage 2 Complex Needs SRB. The ALN Review has recognised that children in SRB settings benefit from cross-phase continuity so that transition for children between key phases can be managed more effectively. A recommendation from the review has been to review current complex needs provision and where possible ensure that both key stages of the provision are in the same setting.

The Head Teacher and Governing Body have been consulted regarding this proposal and have indicated that they would support the realignment of the Social Inclusion Class.

The ALN Review has also considered the effectiveness of social inclusion and nurture provision in the context of a more strategic approach to behaviour management across the authority. The ALN Review has identified that due to the way nurture and social inclusion provision is organised, vulnerable children attending these classes have a fractured educational experience, which does not lead to sustained progress over time in relation to the difficulties they are experiencing. A behaviour review will consider arrangements for specialist provision to meet the needs of children with behavioural, emotional and social needs (BESD). This will be subject to a separate consultation process

4.5 Consultation Timeline

If cabinet give approval for the consultation to progress, formal consultation processes as set out by Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2013 will need to be followed. The table below illustrates the procedures that need to be followed and possible timescales

Process	Proposed Deadline Dates
Cabinet considers proposals	9 th December 2015
If approval to the proposals is granted by Cabinet, the consultation process should commence by providing relevant consultees with a consultation document. Responses to the consultation document should be made within 42 days, with at least 20 of these being school days, If appropriate Learning Education and Inclusion (LEI) Service should consider convening a meeting with the stakeholders during the consultation period.	4 th January 2016-14 th February 2016 Consultation report to Scrutiny meeting scheduled for 12 th January
Consultation comments are collated and summarised by LEI Service. The summary together with the LEI Service response to the comments should be published in a consultation report within three months of the end of consultation period. The consultation report should then be published and reported back to Cabinet.	16 th March 2016
If agreement is granted by Cabinet to proceed with the proposals (this should be within 6 months of the end of the consultation period), the publication of a statutory notice for a 28 day consultation period should follow. This notice must be published on a school day and within 15 school days (not including the day of the publication) in the notice period.	11 th April 2016 – 9 th May 2016

<p>At the end of the 28 day statutory notice period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If objections are received, an objection report should be drafted outlining the objections and their responses to them and available to the objectors within 28 days of the end of the objection period. • If no objections are received, a Cabinet decision will be needed to ratify the proposal. 	<p>15th June 2016 In this event Cabinet will need to approve, or otherwise, the draft objection report at this meeting.</p> <p>15th June 2016</p>
<p>If proposals receive approval or the proposer determines to implement them, they should be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date</p>	<p>If approval is secured at Cabinet on 15th June 2016 and referral to Welsh Government is not required, the plan will be implemented from September 2016.</p>

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Council's full Equalities Impact Assessment process will be applied to the formal Consultation Document and subsequent report to Cabinet.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial consequences from this report but it is recognised that this will need to be reviewed following consultation. An update will be provided to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet following that.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Rationalisation of base provisions could impact on personnel currently employed in SRBs. Any staff affected will be fully consulted along with trade union representatives and supported through HR processes. Alternative arrangements have been made with regard to all staff at Hendre Junior SRB.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Heads of Services and a Head teacher focus group have been kept fully informed of the progress of the review. The Head Teacher and Governing Body of Hendre Junior School and the Head Teacher and Governing Body of Cefn Fforest Primary School have acknowledged the need for the changes in relation to the SRBs in their schools and accept them. Further, wider consultation will take place following Cabinet's approval to move to the next stage.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 In order to progress these proposals the Local Authority must follow procedures set out in the School Organisation Code 2013. It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and give approval for the consultation process to proceed.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Current provision is no longer fit for purpose and needs to be revised in order that children and young people's needs are fully met.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Schools Standards Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

11.2 The School Organisation Code (section 1.13).

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Consultees: Mr C Burns, Chief Executive
Mrs Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Mr Bleddyn Hopkins, Assistant Director.
Angharad Price, Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer
Mrs Lynne Donovan, Personnel Manager
Mrs Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services
Mrs Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Mr John Farmer, Head Teacher, Hendre Junior School
Chair of Governors, Hendre Junior School
Mrs Julie Farmer, Head Teacher Cefn Fforest Primary School
Chair of Governors, Cefn Fforest Primary School

Background Papers:

CCBC SEN Policy

CCBC Inclusion Strategy

SEN Code of Practice for Wales

Draft Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Bill

Appendices:

Appendix A Specialist Resource Base (SRB) Provision List

Appendix B Report to Scrutiny September 2014