



CABINET – 16TH MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: CLOSURE OF THE KEY STAGE 2 SPECIALIST RESOURCE BASE FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT AT HENDRE JUNIOR SCHOOL, & RE-DESIGNATION OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION CLASS AT CEFN FFOREST PRIMARY SCHOOL: OUTCOME OF THE FORMAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the formal consultation process and to determine whether to proceed to Statutory Notice in respect of the above proposal.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 The report links to the Additional Learning Needs Review of specialist provision across Caerphilly County Borough.

3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 Cabinet, at its meeting on 9th December 2015, agreed to proceed to a formal consultation process in relation to the above proposals.
- 3.2 A formal consultation process (accompanied by consultation documents) took place between 4th January 2016 and 14th February 2016.
- 3.3 In relation to the closure of the Key Stage 2 Specialist Resource Base (SRB) for children with hearing impairment (HI) at Hendre Junior School, six responses were received. Of the five responses received two were in favour of the proposal, two were against and one was unsure. The sixth response did not express an opinion but asked for clarification on a number of points. A summary of these responses are included in Appendix.1. Where the Local Authority has made a response to comments received, these are also included in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The main issues which have arisen during the formal consultation process in relation the closing the SRB at Hendre Junior School can be summarised as following:
- General acknowledgement that parents of children with a significant hearing impairment are choosing to educate their children in local, catchment, mainstream school rather than specialist provision;
 - Concerns were expressed regarding provision for families who wanted to send their children to a setting where there was a deaf peer group and a requirement for education via British Sign Language;
 - Possible pressure on the regional, peripatetic Hearing Impaired Service as support for mainstream HI pupils increases;

- Future provision for children with a HI and appropriate training for schools and teaching and non-teaching support staff;
- Lack of opportunities for mainstream pupils at Hendre Junior School to integrate with pupils with a HI and learn additional skills such as signing.

3.5 In relation to the re-designation of the key stage 2 Social Inclusion class at Cefn Fforest Primary School two responses were received. Both responses expressed the view that they were not sure about the proposal. Both respondents chose to use the online form and indicated they would like more information regarding the proposal. One respondent noted that Cefn Fforest offered a good service which didn't make children feel different or discriminated against for having special educational needs. A summary of the responses from members of the public are included in Appendix.2.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 A community and equality impact assessment has been completed in relation to both proposals in accordance with the School Organisation Code. These are included in Appendix 3.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications related to this report.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Alternative arrangements have been made with regard to all staff at Hendre Junior SRB. In relation to staff in Cefn Fforest any staff affected will be fully consulted along with trade union representatives and supported through HR processes.

7. CONSULTATIONS

7.1 Consultations have taken place as referred to in the report and comments have been reflected in the report. A full list of consultees is attached as Appendix 4.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Cabinet are asked to consider the outcome of the consultation process and to determine whether to proceed to Statutory Notice.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 To decide whether to proceed with the publication of a Statutory Notice.

10. STATUTORY POWER

10.1 The School Organisation Code (section1.13) 2013.

10.2 This is a Cabinet function.

Author: Jacquelyn Elias - E-Mail: eliasj@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees:

Mr C Burns, Chief Executive

Mrs Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer

Mr Bleddyn Hopkins, Assistant Director.

Councillor Rhianon Passmore, Cabinet Member for Education

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Responses in relation to the closure of the SRB at Hendre Junior School

Appendix 2: Responses in relation to the re-designation of the Social Inclusion class at Cefn Fforest Primary School

Appendix 3: Community and Equality Impact Assessment Reports for Cefn Fforest Primary School and Hendre Junior School

Appendix 4: List of consultees for proposals relating to Cefn Fforest Primary School and Hendre Junior School

Background Papers:

1. Consultation document on the proposal to re-designate the key stage 2 Social Inclusion Class at Cefn Fforest Primary School.

2. Consultation document on the proposal to close the Specialist Resource Base at Hendre Junior School