



EDUCATION FOR LIFESCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 14TH MARCH 2017

SUBJECT: NEWBRIDGE SCHOOL SPECIALIST RESOURCE BASE

REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following notification from the Governing Body of Newbridge School that they no longer wished to host the behaviour specialist resource base (SRB) at the school the local authority, in line with statutory guidance included in the School Organisation Code 2013, sought approval from Cabinet to proceed with the consultation to close the SRB (Appendix 1). An amended consultation timeline was agreed by Cabinet in order to accommodate a request by Scrutiny Committee to discuss the proposal. The report is seeking the views of Members as part of the consultation process.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report refers to the statutory process the local authority must follow in relation to the closure of the SRB in Newbridge School. It should be noted that the SRB is known in the schools as the 'Inclusion Centre' and referred to as such in the consultation paper.

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.
- 3.4 The report contributes towards the Well-being Goals within the Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, specifically:
- A prosperous Wales as this is about developing a skilled and well educated population;
 - A healthier Wales as this is about maximising peoples physical and well-being;
 - A more equal Wales, as this is about enabling people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances are.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Following Cabinet approval to proceed with the consultation to close the SRB at Newbridge School, a consultation paper (Appendix 2) was circulated to a number of consultees on 23rd January 2017. The list of consultees is included in the consultation paper. The consultation paper includes sections on the background to the proposal, the basis for the proposal and the educational case for closing the SRB in Newbridge School. The consultation is due to close at 5pm on 7th March 2017 but will be extended to 15th March 2017 to ensure the views of Scrutiny Committee Members are included. Following the end of the consultation period a consultation report will be written which will include responses from consultees. Cabinet are scheduled to consider the results of the consultation on 12th April 2017. If Cabinet agree to proceed a statutory notice will be published providing a twenty eight day notice period for objections. If objections are received the local authority must publish an objection report, which would be presented to Cabinet for their consideration. Following this Cabinet would be required to make a final decision on the proposal.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 The proposal in the Cabinet report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act and more specifically for the principles noted below:
- Long Term – The report recognises the importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard meeting long-term needs
 - Prevention – We are acting to prevent problems occurring by running a consultation with a view to alternative provision
 - Involvement – The consultation recognises the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the outcome and those people reflect the diversity of the area which the report addresses.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Rationalisation of base provisions could impact on personnel currently employed in the SRB. Any staff affected will be fully consulted along with trade union representatives and supported through HR processes. The consultation paper (Appendix 2, p10) includes a section on the likely impact of the proposal on the staff of the SRB at Newbridge School.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1. All responses from consultations were incorporated in the report.

A Consultation paper on the proposal to close the SRB at Newbridge School is currently in circulation. The closing date for this consultation is 7th March 2017. This will be extended to 15th March 2017.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That Members note the content of the report and contribute to the formal consultation process.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 Newbridge School's Governing Body has indicated that it no longer wishes to host the SRB. In order to progress these proposals the Local Authority must follow procedures set out in the School Organisation Code 2013.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 The School Organisation Code (section1.13).

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Mrs Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Mrs Lesley Perry, Head Teacher, Newbridge School.
Mr Michael Gray, Chair of Governors, Newbridge School
Ros Roberts, Performance Manager
Anwen Rees, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Cabinet Report 18th January 2017
Appendix 2 Consultation on the proposal to close the SRB at Newbridge School.