



CABINET – 5TH JULY 2017

SUBJECT: CLOSURE OF THE KEY STAGE 3 SPECIALIST RESOURCE BASE FOR CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOURAL, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES (BESD) AT NEWBRIDGE SCHOOL: OUTCOME OF THE FORMAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the response to the Statutory Notice period in relation to the proposal to close the key stage 3 specialist resource base (SRB) at Newbridge School and to seek a decision on the proposal.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Local Authority has followed procedures outlined in the School Organisation Code (2013) to close the key stage 3 SRB in Newbridge School. As no objections were received during the statutory notice period, the final stage in the process is for Cabinet to make a decision on the proposal.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 SEN Policy and Inclusion Strategy.
- 3.2 SEN Code of Practice for Wales (2002).
- 3.3 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 Cabinet, at its meeting on 18th January 2017, agreed to proceed to a formal consultation process in relation to the proposal to close the SRB at Newbridge School.
- 4.2 A formal consultation process took place between 23rd January 2017 and 15th March 2017. A report on the proposal was discussed at Scrutiny Committee on 14th March 2017.

- 4.3 On 12th April 2017 Cabinet agreed to proceed to Statutory Notice. A Statutory Notice was issued on 8th May 2017. As indicated in the School Organisation Code (2013), all consultees were notified and given an opportunity to object to the proposals. The 'objection period' finished on 12th June 2017. No objections to the proposals have been received by the Local Authority.
- 4.4 Cabinet are now required to make a decision on the proposal to close the SRB.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 The proposal in this 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.

Closure of the SRB will provide pupils with the opportunity to access provision more suited to their needs. These provisions will offer academic and vocational courses that will provide pupils with skills, which will enhance their chances for employment and promote their broader participation in public life.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A Community and Equality Impact Assessment was completed in relation to the proposal. This was included in the report to Cabinet on 12th April 2017. This indicated that that the proposal would not have a negative impact on groups of children with protected characteristics.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Where the LA maintains a SRB additional funding is allocated to the school. In the case of Newbridge School £255,237 is allocated for the Inclusion Centre provision. The current cost per pupil attending the Inclusion Centre is approximately £16,000 per annum. This is based on full capacity of 16 pupils. Alternative provision identified for the current cohort of pupils would range from approximately £13,000 - £18,000 per annum, depending on the individual needs of the pupils. Therefore there are no savings associated with this proposal.

Closure of the Inclusion Centre will mean that the funding will be retained and redirected to enhance alternative BESD provisions within the local authority or where necessary utilised to fund placements with external providers. The proposal does not involve any transfer or disposal of land and capital funding is not required to implement the proposal.

The proposed closure of the class will not impact on overall capacity of Newbridge School to deliver an appropriate curriculum.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In Caerphilly Local Authority schools hosting specialist resource bases are allocated a sum of money to run and manage the provision. Staff for the SRBs are appointed and employed by

the school and paid for via this funding allocation. If the SRB provision is closed this results in the allocated SRB funding being withdrawn. Staff employed by the school within the SRB would then move onto the main school staffing structure. Should the proposal to close the SRB progress this would be the case for the permanent members of staff currently working there. This includes one full time teacher and three teaching assistants.

If the school's budgetary position requires the governing body to consider ways of reducing costs at a future date that may impact on employees; these staff would be considered alongside all other staff at Newbridge School in line with the Workforce Flexibilities Policy adopted by the school.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 All responses from consultations have been incorporated in the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Cabinet are asked to make a decision to formally approve the proposal to close the Key Stage 3 Specialist Resource Base for children with BESD at Newbridge School.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The provision at Newbridge School is no longer fit for purpose and needs to be revised in order to ensure that the additional learning needs of young people with BESD are fully met.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, The School Organisation Code (section1.13) 2013.

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Mr M. Gray, Chair of Governors, Newbridge School

Mrs K. Peters, Corporate Policy Manager

Cllr A. Hussey Newbridge Ward Member

Cllr L. Jeremiah Newbridge Ward Member

Cllr G. Johnston, Newbridge Ward Member

Background Papers:

Report to Cabinet 12th April 2017

Report to Scrutiny Committee 14th March 2017