



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 3RD JUNE 2025

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALIST ADDITIONAL LEARNING PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS.

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to officially consult with Members in respect of the proposed development of Specialist Resource Base.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In line with the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) the Local Authority (LA) has a statutory responsibility to keep provision for additional learning needs (ALN) under review.
- 2.2 The LA has developed appropriate criteria to support the entry into specialist provision, but the current demand for specialist placements within SRBs outweighs the capacity, particularly for children with complex needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- 2.3 Without additional provision there is a risk that vulnerable children will not have their needs met locally and out of county provision would be required. There is also a risk that placements may be directed by the Education Tribunal for children within or outside the locality.
- 2.4 Whilst it is recognised that the majority of children will have their needs met in mainstream settings, the demand for specialist provision for a few children is increasing at a faster rate than predicted.
- 2.5 A consultation (in line with the Schools Organisation Code 2018) will focus on increasing capacity for specialist provision for children with ALN, thus

supporting the LA to meet the increased demand and best meet the needs of our most vulnerable learners.

- 2.6 The report identifies the Schools and Governing Bodies who wish to proceed to formal consultation in partnership with the Local Authority (LA).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:

- a) Note the information contained in the report and consultation pack which is found on the link in Appendix 1 from the 2nd June 2025.
- b) To provide views as part of the consultation process for the proposal which will be noted as part of the minutes of this meeting and included in the Consultation Report which will be presented to Cabinet as part of the decision-making process.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Members are consulted with regards to the outlined proposal and assist the Council in discharging its duty in consulting stakeholders in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 where applicable.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council recognises the need to continually review provision for children with ALN, whether this is within schools, support and intervention delivered by services, or the development of specialist provision.
- 5.2 The Council is committed to supporting inclusion however recognises the need for a few children to access provision through specialist settings in line with their needs identified in their individual development plan (IDP).
- 5.3 The current demand as identified through panel process, consultation with schools and LA staff, scrutiny of IDP's and scrutiny of data shows that there is a need for an increased number of specialist resource bases (SRB's) attached to mainstream schools across the County Borough, and therefore the number of places for children with ALN within specialist provision.
- 5.4 Proposal - establishing new specialist resources bases at:
- Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni (2 classes)
 - Idris Davies 3-18 (3 classes over 2 years with capacity for maximum 30 in total)
 - Rhiw Syr Dafydd Primary (1 class with capacity of 8 -10)

- St Helens RC Primary (1 class with capacity of 8 - 10)
- One other primary school to be determined (1 class with capacity of 8-10)

5.5 All the provisions would be managed by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the schools on behalf of the Local Authority (LA).

5.6 Admission for children whose needs require such additional learning provision (ALP) is the responsibility of the LA who is the decision maker. This will be facilitated through the LA ALN panel.

5.7 Provisions will focus on complex needs and autistic spectrum disorder.

5.8 Where appropriate to needs, pupils within the bases would be supported to access mainstream integration opportunities. Support would be targeted to meet the individual needs of pupils within the base.

5.9 The main benefits of this proposal are:

- Making provision within Caerphilly for larger numbers of our pupils with complex needs and ASD, thus ensuring needs are met closer to home and avoiding reliance on costly out of county provision.
- The provision of targeted support for pupils with complex needs and ASD with access to a mainstream primary / secondary school environment, ensuring pupils are supported to reach their full potential.
- Ensuring the development of provision through the Welsh Medium for pupils of secondary age.
- Supporting and influencing practice through the wider school, benefiting pupils and staff.
- Continuing the development of effective partnership across provisions and with the special school.

5.10 Following this period, a consultation report along with any responses received will be collated and reported back to Members, where a decision will be made as to whether to proceed with the proposal as outlined and publish a Statutory Notice.

5.11 If objections are received, an objection report must be published with a summary of the objections and the Council's response.

5.12 **Conclusion**

5.13 Members are asked to note the information contained in this report and the supporting consultation pack documentation with a view to providing views on the proposal in their capacity as a 'consultee' under the School Organisation Code 2018.

- 5.14 Members views will be included in the Consultation Report which will be taken to Cabinet who will then decide on how the proposal will progress as outlined in 5.1.9 and 5.1.10.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 That the development of provision is deliverable within the allocated budget.
- 6.2 That the developments will meet the additional learning needs of the children and young people in the County Borough.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 A full Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed in relation to the proposal to ensure compliance with the socio-economic duty, Sections 1 to 3 of Equality Act 2010 (see Appendix 2).

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Capital funding has been secured from within the core capital maintenance budget up to £777k.
- 8.2 The current estimated revenue cost for the additional SRB class in Primary Phase is circa £164k for a full year. On the basis that the consultation will include 4 classes at Primary Phase this would equate to £656k for a full financial year, should this capacity be required.
- 8.3 The estimated revenue cost of an additional SRB class in Secondary Phase is circa £178k. Should 2 additional classes be required at Idris Davies 3-18 that would equate to £356k for a full year.
- 8.4 Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni currently supports a level of provision for Welsh medium pupils. The financial support required going forwards to support 2 SRB classes would require additional funding of circa £232k for a full year.
- 8.5 In total this is an estimated additional cost of £1.244m (largely a pressure in financial year 2026/27). Discussion around how these costs could be funded will need to be considered as part of medium-term financial planning, alongside the cost implication of not being able to meet pupil needs within the County Borough.
- 8.6 There are also likely to be significant implications in relation to pupil transport costs linked to those children attending specialist provision.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This will be dependent on specific proposals and will be considered as part of the process.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 This report was distributed as detailed below with Appendices as part of the formal consultation process.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government)
School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
ALN and Tribunal Act (2018)

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Link to Consultation Document

www.conversation.caerphilly.gov.uk

Appendix 2 Integrated Impact Assessment