

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

25 JULY 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) – ESTABLISHING A LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE FOR PUPILS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS AT YSGOL GYFUN GYMRAEG LLANGYNWYD

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to consult formally with the parents, staff and governing body of Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd and other interested parties on the proposal to establish a learning resource centre for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd. The statutory code states that consultation must take place in term time and therefore the consultation will not commence until 5 September 2017, if agreed by Cabinet.

2. Connection to the corporate improvement plan/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 These proposals are related both to the Corporate Plan 2016-2020 and the Education Inclusion Programme and, in particular, the following corporate improvement priority:
- Supporting a successful economy.
- 2.2 In order to achieve this improvement priority, it is important to work with our partners to support pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). The focus needs to be upon raising their skills, ambition and qualifications, and support them to take advantage of opportunities to succeed. This will improve the future prospects for our children and young people. We have already contributed to this priority by improving the provision in mainstream schools for pupils with additional learning needs.

3. Background

- 3.1 In December 2011, Cabinet received an update on the review of support and provision for the inclusion of children and young people with ALN.

- 3.2 Bridgend's Welsh Education Strategic Plan (2017-2020) (WESP) states that:

Bridgend County Borough Council's vision is that our provision of Welsh-medium education and support for the teaching of the Welsh language should:

- 3.2.1 deliver the key principles of equality, choice and opportunity for all;
- 3.2.2 respect, promote and embody the linguistic and cultural diversity of Bridgend and Wales;

- 3.2.3 recognise a common Welsh heritage;
- 3.2.4 reflect the social, economic and cultural needs of Wales in the 21st century;
- 3.2.5 provide opportunity to reflect on and develop personal identity and a sense of place and community;
- 3.2.6 be consistent with the national aspirations set out in the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy; and
- 3.2.7 take into account Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy (2016) to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

3.3 The focus in Outcome Six of the WESP, namely Welsh-medium provision for learners with ALN, is upon extending capacity to provide appropriate additional learning needs provision through the medium of Welsh during all stages of education.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 A copy of the consultation paper is annexed at Appendix 1. The proposal, if approved, would mean that:

- a learning resource centre at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd for a maximum of 12 pupils with ASD would be established from 8 January 2018;
- there would be a graduated intake from 8 January 2018 and the admissions for the learning resource centre would be decided upon through an admissions panel;
- the learning resource centre would be an integrated part of the mainstream school, providing an appropriate environment in which pupils can develop and thrive within their peer group and have normal access to mainstream curriculum, where appropriate;
- the learning resource centre would provide specialist learning facilities within the school. It would also provide specialist expertise in respect of ASD to mainstream classes; and
- the Council supports the principles that, as far as possible, children should be educated within a mainstream school environment and as near to their home as possible (the proposal of establishing a learning resource centre at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd would afford those children with ASD, who speak Welsh in the Bridgend County Borough, to be educated within a Welsh-medium school).

4.2 From the pupils' point of view, they would have access to individual, small-group and whole-class experiences, as appropriate. Their progress would be closely monitored and individual plans regularly reviewed.

4.3 Other mainstream pupils at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd with ASD would also benefit from this proposal as it seeks to widen the specialist learning facilities within the school and provide expertise and advice to all staff.

4.4 In conjunction with this proposal, there is also a proposal to establish a Welsh-medium ASD learning resource centre in one of the Welsh-medium feeder primary

schools. Once the feeder primary school has been identified a report will be submitted to Cabinet to undergo a consultation exercise.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy frameworks or procedure rules.

6. Equality impact assessment

6.1 The Council has a duty to consult and fully consider the implications of any proposal on all members of the local community who may be affected unfairly as a result of the proposal being carried out.

6.2 A full equality impact assessment will be undertaken in parallel with the consultation process. The outcomes and actions identified by this assessment will be included in a report to Cabinet on the consultation process.

7. Financial implications

7.1 The funding for the learning resource centre would be allocated through the mainstream school's delegated budget, via the school's formula allocation, and using a combination of the age-weighted pupil unit (AWPU) element, plus a per place factor.

7.2 Funding levels would be derived from notional current staffing needs. If pupil numbers remain constant, then the cost of the provision would be largely unchanged. The number of places would be reviewed annually and agreed with the headteacher to enable staffing stability and to assist in school planning.

7.3 These proposed funding arrangements are similar to those implemented for secondary schools in 2013-2014, that were part of the annual consultation with governing bodies and the School Budget Forum on changes to the schools' funding formulae. One-off funding for the set-up costs would be £10k.

7.4 As part of the medium-term financial strategy budget-setting process for 2017-2018, a total of £263k was allocated under budget pressures to establish additional learning resource centres for pupils with ASD in two Welsh-medium schools and two English-medium schools with effect from the Academic Year 2017-2018. This allocation will be used to fund the LRC at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd if the proposal goes ahead.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Cabinet is requested to agree to consult formally on the proposal to establish a learning resource centre for pupils with ASD at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd and for the outcome of the consultation to be reported back to Cabinet so that an informed decision can then be made on the proposal with effect from 8 January 2018.

Lindsay Harvey
Interim Corporate Director, Education and Family Support

Contact Officer: Michelle Hatcher
Telephone: (01656) 815253
E-mail: michelle.hatcher@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Appendix 1

Consultation document. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) – establishing a learning resource centre for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd.

Background documents

Education Inclusion Programme: Reviewing and developing support and provision for the inclusion of children and young people with ALN (report to Cabinet, December 2011)

BCBC's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020