

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

27 FEBRUARY 2018

### REPORT OF THE INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

#### ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) REFORM

##### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with an opportunity to respond to the recommendations made by Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 in respect of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform.

##### 2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Supporting a successful economy
- Helping people to become more self-reliant
- Smarter use of resources

##### 3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 14 September 2017, Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 received a report on ALN and, specifically, the status and development of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill.
- 3.2 At this meeting, members received comprehensive information which included evidence from external, third sector representatives as well as local authority officers.
- 3.3 Following that event, on 19 December 2017, Cabinet received a report from Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 in relation to the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform. This report made several recommendations to Cabinet.

##### 4. Current situation/proposal

###### 4.1 The Committee recommends that:

Any new funding provided by Welsh Government be ring-fenced by the local authority and schools to ensure it is used to meet the needs of the Bill and the needs of young people with ALN.

###### Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:

At this present time, any funding to be provided by Welsh Government to support the implementation of the ALN Bill is unknown. If the local authority is made aware of any new funding, discussions will be held with a wide range of stakeholders to

ensure that the money available will support the implementation of the ALN Bill and be used appropriately to meet the needs of children and young people with ALN.

In 2016-2017, the ALN Grant for the regional consortium amounted to £250k. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council ran one of the projects in its entirety so were allocated £66k. The remaining authorities, including Bridgend County Borough Council, received £46k each. In 2017-2018, the ALN Grant has been increased to £300k. Similar arrangements are in place with Merthyr running the same special project for the whole region. Therefore, Merthyr has been allocated £76k with the remaining local authorities receiving £56k each. It is currently not known if the grant will be available in 2018-2019.

There is a regional inclusion group which meets regularly to plan for the implementation of the Bill, share good practice and develop work plans. There are several regional operational groups which also meet to develop specific aspects of activity which will be included in the Bill. Welsh Government has recently invested in regional leads for ALN to drive the implementation of the Bill and also in the development of practice in line with the Bill. These individuals will be based in each consortium area.

#### **4.2 The Committee recommends that:**

The local authority identifies and allocates additional specific funding for post-16 ALN provision as an invest-to-save measure.

#### **Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

There is a new requirement within the Bill which extends our responsibilities to those children/young people with ALN. There will be a single legislative system relating to the support given to children and young people aged between 0 to 25 years who have ALN. This will replace the two separate systems currently operating to support children and young people of compulsory school age who have special educational needs (SEN); and young people in further education who have learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). Welsh Government has also published guidance on post-16 funding for learners with learning difficulties at specialist colleges

#### **4.3 The Committee recommends that:**

Cabinet recognises and incorporates the significant role of the educational psychologist in the establishment and delivery of future support and services for those with ALN.

#### **Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

It is recognised that educational psychologists will continue to have an important role to play as a result of the ALN Reform Bill in supporting and delivering a service for the pupils with ALN. The Educational Psychology Service is fully engaged in the work to prepare for the implementation of the Bill and colleagues from that service lead on several aspects of operational planning.

#### **4.4 The Committee recommends that:**

Cabinet considers apprenticeships as a method for young people with ALN to progress into employment.

**Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

Young people with ALN need to be able to progress into employment in order to thrive in life. Apprenticeships are just one method of achieving this. Currently, local authority officers are working in partnership with Bridgend College to ensure that opportunities are afforded to young people with ALN with regards to Supported Internships (see Appendices A, B and C), but this is only one aspect of progression we are actively working to improve.

**4.5 The Committee recommends that:**

With reference to recommendations at paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2, suitable support and resources be allocated to support frontline staff such as additional learning needs coordinators (ALNCos) and teachers in order to ensure they are able to deal with the extra responsibilities under the Bill and manage with increased workloads.

**Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

Significant training has been delivered by local authority officers to ALNCos within primary and secondary schools in Bridgend. The Inclusion Service has worked collaboratively with other local authorities utilising the ALN Innovation Fund in order to prepare school staff in advance of the ALN Reform Bill being implemented. Continued support and advice will be provided by local authority to school staff including headteachers and governors and in conjunction with the new role of the ALN Transformation Lead for Central South Consortium (CSC).

**4.6 The Committee recommends that:**

Allowance be made for the associated costs for frontline staff based on the expected need for job evaluation on any new appointments or additional duties.

**Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

The job evaluation process and criteria have been agreed and applied across the authority for several years. All new posts or changes to posts will be subject to job evaluation.

**4.7 The Committee recommends that:**

The local authority works towards ensuring that a minimum of 80% of the budget allocated to ALN pupils is delegated to individual schools and that mechanisms should be in place to ensure those schools are using the funding for its stated purpose of supporting ALN.

**Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

The local authority delegated schools budget rate is above 80% and we are committed to ensuring that as much of any budget allocated to ALN pupils is

delegated to individual schools. However, pupils with ALN need a wide range of services to support them and these services are not all provided by schools.

We can assure Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 that funding allocated for the support of children with ALN is all used to support those children in the best way we can.

#### **4.8 The Committee recommends that:**

The local authority considers how home-to-school transport arrangements will be affected as part of the new provisions contained in the Bill.

##### **Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

It is not currently known if the Bill will affect the (Learner) Travel Wales Measure 2008. Once any implications or changes are known, we will undertake a review of our policies in line with those changes.

#### **4.9 The Committee recommends that:**

The local authority learns from best practice from local authorities within Wales and beyond to improve the academic performance of those young people with ALN achieving level 2 threshold inclusive which currently stands at 26.3%.

##### **Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

The Inclusion Service is working closely with colleagues across the regional consortium area to develop and share good practice in relation to all areas of ALN education. In addition, we actively engage with the ADEW Inclusion Group and, on an all-Wales footprint, there is a keen appetite to ensure consistent, coherent excellent practice in this area nationally.

In addition, there is a wealth of expertise shared from other areas of the UK and internationally where applicable. Our special school headteachers are fully engaged in SWASSH (South Wales Association of Special School Headteachers) where new and innovative ideas are shared.

#### **4.10 The Committee recommends that:**

The local authority assesses the required resources, workforce planning and training arrangements to support implementation of the Bill.

##### **Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

The local authority, in collaboration with Central South Consortium (CSC), is currently considering workforce implications with regards to the Sensory Service. This work will be supported by a Welsh Government grant. This work will be extended to encompass the wider workforce involved in the implementation of the ALN Reform Bill.

The Welsh Government Training Expert Group will work with the ALN Transformation Leads and local authority officers to ensure that all stakeholders are fully prepared for the implementation of the ALN Reform Bill.

#### **4.11 The Committee recommends that:**

The local authority looks to strengthen its relationship with the further education (FE) sector in Bridgend to make the provisions of the Bill work effectively; especially in the challenging transition to further education and work-based learning.

#### **Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

The local authority has established a transition board to strengthen relationships, policies and procedures in relation to the FE sector and work-based learning. The ALN innovation Fund has supported the board in developing a 'map and gap' analysis and transition protocols.

#### **4.12 The Committee recommends that:**

The local authority explores whether any work has been carried out in the third sector on analysis of the resulting costs associated with support for adults who have not had sufficient educational provision as a young person. Furthermore, that if this has not already been undertaken by those in the third sector that the local authority looks to commission an independent analysis of these associated costs, both directly to the local authority as well as indirectly to other public services. Such an analysis would help put the costs of supporting children with ALN into perspective.

#### **Officers' response for Cabinet's consideration is as follows:**

We are not aware of any work which has been carried out in the third sector to analyse the costs associated with support for adults who have not had sufficient educational provision as a young person. As part of the regional work, the Inclusion Service will explore this to see if the work has been undertaken elsewhere and if so, what conclusion can be reached from that data.

### **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

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

### **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 There are no equality implications directly attached to this report. An initial screening Equality Impact Assessment will be completed, and a full screening will be undertaken in due course in relation to the implementation of the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill.

### **7. Financial implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report. However, any future developments and changes within the local authority in response to the Bill will have associated financial implications.

### **8. Recommendation**

8.1 Cabinet is asked to:

- consider and approve officers' responses to the recommendations at paragraph 4 from Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 in relation to the local authority's response to the ALN Reform Bill.

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### **Background documents**

Report to Cabinet (19 December 2017) - ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) REFORM – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Report to Scrutiny (18 September 2017) - ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) REFORM