

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

21 MAY 2019

REPORT BY THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) – CHANGES TO BETWS PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcome of the public notice on the proposal to cease the local authority nurture provision at Betws Primary School.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/other corporate priorities

1.2 The report links to the following improvement priorities in the Corporate Plan:

- **Supporting a successful economy** - we will take steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
- **Helping people to be more self-reliant** - we will take early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
- **Smarter use of resources** - ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

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 additional learning needs (ALN). All learning resource centres (LRCs) were reviewed. At this stage, the particular focus was upon the LRCs with pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

3.2 In April 2017, an Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) review was initiated, involving a range of stakeholders including headteacher representation from both primary and secondary schools. One recommendation within the EOTAS review was that there would be a review of nurture provision. The local authority nurture LRC, serving the whole of Bridgend County Borough, is at Betws Primary School. The outcome was to recommend that the nurture provision at Betws Primary School would close, foundation phase provision at The Bridge Alternative Provision (The Bridge) would be developed and that nurturing principles would continue to be developed within every primary school.

3.3 Welsh Government subsequently approved the introduction of foundation phase provision at The Bridge.

3.4 Bridgend County Borough Council supports the principles that, when possible, children should be educated in a mainstream school environment and as near to their home as possible.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 The statutory public notice was issued on 15 March 2019 and the closing date for objections was 11 April 2019. The public notice sets out the details of a proposal to allow the public to provide any comments or objections they may have. The statutory notice is open for a period of 28 days. Any objections made within this period must be submitted in writing to the Council. The Council must then publish an objections report summarising the statutory objections together with the Council's response to those objections.

4.2 There were no objections received during the statutory notice period. Cabinet is, therefore, now able to determine the implementation of the proposal.

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 (EIA)

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The assessment has concluded that there is no negative impact on the duties of the Council towards protected groups.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment

7.1 A Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment has been completed. A summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is as follows:

Long-term This affords pupils an opportunity to attend foundation phase provision and an opportunity to reintegrate into their mainstream school as near to their home as possible.

Prevention This enables pupils to be educated as part of the graduated response as stipulated in the ALN Code of Practice and ultimately preventing being placed out-of-authority.

Integration The introduction of foundation phase at The Bridge is key in ensuring that pupils are able to access alternative provision at an early stage in order to reintegrate successfully back into their mainstream school where appropriate. There are also efficiencies related to this proposal as the cost of an out-of-authority place far outweighs the cost of establishing foundation phase provision locally in an alternative setting.

Collaboration There is excellent collaboration between The Bridge and mainstream schools. The Bridge and the pupils' mainstream schools work closely to ensure that the individual needs of the pupils are met and progress is monitored.

Involvement A range of key stakeholders are involved in a pupil's placement at The Bridge in order to ensure that individual progress is made.

8. Financial implications

8.1 From the schools' delegated budget, full-year savings of £51,378 have been identified from the closure of the local authority nurture provision at Betws Primary School. The pro rata element for the 2019-20 financial year has been re-allocated within the schools' Individual Schools Budget (ISB).

8.2 From the Education and Family Support Directorate budget, and as a further consequence of the proposed closure, the funding for the senior support officer at Betws Primary School Nurture Provision can be utilised to support the introduction of foundation phase at The Bridge. There are no redundancy costs associated with this proposal.

9. Recommendation

9.1. Cabinet is recommended to:

- note that no objections were received during the public notice period; and, as a consequence,
- approve the implementation of the proposal.

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