

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

14 DECEMBER 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) – ESTABLISHING A LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE (LRC) FOR PUPILS WITH MODERATE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (MLD) AT YSGOL CYNWYD SANT

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 Cynwyd Sant and other interested parties on the proposal to establish a Learning Resource Centre 'LRC' for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties ('MLD') at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:
- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
 - **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
 - **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 Local authorities across the United Kingdom are experiencing a rise in the demand for services for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) and the cost to support this is often exceeding budget. Anecdotal evidence from many local authorities suggests that not only are these needs becoming more numerous by volume, but also in their complexity.

- 3.2 This is putting pressure on all local authorities to meet and resource these needs, and this will only be exacerbated by the additional pressures that have been caused by COVID-19. In this context many local authorities are reviewing their current provision to respond to changes in demand and to make services fit for purpose in terms of addressing the current and future needs of children and young people with ALN.
- 3.3 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has taken a proactive approach to this by commissioning an additional learning needs strategic planning provision review in 2020.
- 3.4 An Additional Learning Needs Strategic Planning Provision Review Board has been established. One of the areas which has been identified for provision to open is at key stage 2 in a Welsh-medium primary school for children with MLD.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 A copy of the consultation paper is annexed at Appendix 1. The proposal, if approved, would mean that:
- an LRC at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant for a maximum of fifteen pupils with MLD would be established from 1 September 2022;
 - there would be a graduated intake from 1 September 2022 and the admissions for the LRC would be decided upon through an admissions panel;
 - the LRC 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; and
 - the LRC would provide specialist learning facilities within the school and provide expertise and advice to all staff.
- 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 Cynwyd Sant 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.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

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

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 Meeting the needs is designed to deliver the key principles of equality, choice and opportunity for all. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been undertaken on this proposal which indicates that 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. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The report contributes to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- a prosperous Wales;
- a resilient Wales;
- a Wales of cohesive communities; and
- a globally responsive Wales.

7.2 The five ways of working have been considered in the preparation of this report and are summarised below:

Long term Affords pupils with a diagnosis of MLD a place in a school as near to their home as possible. Provides additional places required to meet the needs of an increase in diagnosis of pupils with MLD.

Prevention Provision of locally based LRCs 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-county.

Integration The MLD LRC is key in ensuring that pupils with a diagnosis of MLD have access to mainstream education experiences with their peers and also have the opportunity to reintegrate into mainstream where appropriate. The opening of an LRC ensures sustainable education for a pupil with MLD through the medium of Welsh. There are also efficiencies related to this proposal as the cost of an out-of-authority place far outweighs the cost of opening an LRC locally.

Collaboration There is excellent collaboration between the local authority with schools that have LRC's. The Learner Support Service provides on-going support, advice and guidance to all schools.

Involvement A range of key stakeholders are involved with a pupil placed in an MLD LRC ensuring that the individual needs of the pupil are met.

8. Financial implications

8.1 The funding for the LRC would be allocated through the mainstream school's delegated budget, via the school's funding formula allocation, and using a combination of a class allocation and elements of the age-weighted pupil unit (AWPU).

8.2 Funding levels would be derived from notional current staffing needs and are based on the salary of a teacher. One-off funding for the set-up costs would be £10k.

8.3 As part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021-22, a budget pressure of £60k was approved for the provision of a MLD class to cater for key stage 2 children accessing education through the medium of Welsh. This budget will be used to fund the LRC, including the set-up costs, at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant should the proposal go ahead.

9. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to agree:

- to consult formally on the proposal to establish an LRC for pupils with MLD at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant; and
- for the outcome of the consultation to be reported back to Cabinet.

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Background documents:

Additional Learning Needs Strategic Planning Provision Review - autumn term 2020.