UPDATE ON THE BRIDGE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

1. Purpose of Report

This report informs Cabinet Members of the outcomes of the national categorisation for The Bridge Alternative Provision (“the Bridge”). The Welsh government’s National School Categorisation System ensures that, in partnership with local authorities and consortia, support and resources are directed to improve the school system and raise standards and performance. The National School Categorisation System addresses three areas namely standards, improvement and support received from The Central South Consortium.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 The information in this report relates to strategic priority 2 in the Corporate Plan

- ‘Working Together to Raise Ambitions and Drive up Educational Achievement’.

3. Background

3.1 Following a Challenge and Review meeting for the academic year 2014-2015, within the national categorisation the standards at the Bridge were judged as 4, improvement capacity at C and support category was Red.

3.2 As a result of this categorisation a full re-structure of the provision was undertaken.

3.3 The first restructure began in March 2015 and concluded in May 2015. The focus of the restructure was upon leadership, teaching and learning. As a result, there are now clearer lines of accountability, in particular regarding the leadership roles. There is a Teacher in Charge; Deputy Teacher in Charge and Leaders of provision of Positive Pathways; Building to Progress, achieving for Life and Ty Llidiard/ Elective Home Education. There is an emphasis upon improving pupil outcomes. For example, a Therapeutic Art teacher has been employed, affording pupils the opportunity to study for GCSE Art. Staff are now deployed across the Bridge, as they are in mainstream schools. Previously, staff were limited to working only within one type of provision (for example, only within Positive Pathway Provision) supply cover was high and the teams did not work holistically. Pupils now benefit from staff being able to teach across the provision as members of staff have different expertise and skill sets.

3.4 A further restructure of the Behaviour and Wellbeing Teams was required because it became apparent, following the first restructure that whilst workloads were relatively equal across behaviour and wellbeing teams, there was no parity regarding the number of staff in the teams. During this second restructure which began in September 2015 the “behaviour team” and the “wellbeing team” were merged into one team known as The Behaviour and Wellbeing Team. The restructure concluded in November 2015, this team is now line-managed by the Leader of Positive Pathways at the Bridge. As a result of the team being
line-managed by somebody within the Bridge and on the ground as opposed to a manager from the Inclusion Service, the vision of a revolving door is supported, namely early intervention and reintegration. Pupils are targeted and supported at an early stage within a mainstream school and after a period of six weeks the arrangement is reviewed. If there is a requirement for a pupil to attend Positive Pathways within the Bridge, the behaviour and wellbeing teacher will support the pupil both at school and within the provision as the team are involved with teaching within the provision and at school.

3.5 In November 2015, the Bridge relocated from Aberkenfig to Bryncethin. The Bryncethin campus has afforded new opportunities for curriculum development and extending qualifications for children and young people because there are improved facilities for Science, PE and Food Technology. The pupils have access to a Science laboratory; sports and dance hall; outdoor play areas and a Food Technology room all of which were not at the Aberkenfig site.

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 Following the Challenge and Review meeting for 2015-2016, standards at the Bridge were judged at 3 with a recognition that the standards are improving. The improvement capacity was judged as a C and support category Amber.

4.2 The Teacher in Charge took up post in January 2016 and is providing strong leadership and pace in order to ensure future improvements.

4.3 The Central South Consortium noted the following areas for improvement:-

- The provision needs to continue to develop as a self-evaluative system.
- The Behaviour and Wellbeing team needs to have an accountability trail based on pupil outcomes.
- The Bridge must continue to focus on improving standards of teaching and learning.

4.4 The Bridge has prioritised the above areas for improvement. This year all pupils left the Bridge with a recognised qualification and there were no young people not in education, employment or training (NEETS). The management of the Bridge have introduced whole school strategies, by which all staff track the performance of pupils against the targets identified within their Individual Education Plans. This approach by management is also supported through a programme of lesson observations, work and book scrutiny whereby the work of the pupils is monitored by the Leadership team.

4.5 There are now clear aims and values guiding the Bridge which are agreed with all staff. The staff restructure is impacting positively on outcomes because it has provided consistency of approach. There are now robust structures and processes in place.

4.6 The Management Board continues to support and challenge the Bridge. The staff are aware of the self-evaluation activities which are built into all meetings. Self-evaluation is now seen as a continuous process.

4.7 The Local Authority with the Central South Consortium will support the school to improve outcomes and address the areas for improvement identified at 4.3 above. Regular meetings are held between Bridgend’s Group Manager Inclusion, Challenge Adviser from the Central South Consortium and The Teacher in Charge from the Bridge.

4.8 The Local Authority will work closely with the Teacher in Charge and the Management Committee of the Bridge to ensure that improvements continue to take place and that
children and young people are afforded a positive experience and in order to fulfil their potential.

5. **Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.**

5.1 There is no impact on the Council’s policy framework or procedure rules.

6. **Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 There are no direct equality impact issues arising from this report.

7. **Financial Implications**

7.1 Both restructures have been met from existing budgets.

8. **Recommendation**

8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet note the content of this report and that the support category for the Bridge has improved and moved from Red to Amber.

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**Appendices**


**Background documents**