

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

15 MARCH 2016

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) - CHANGES TO PIL PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to consult formally with parents, staff, the governing body of Pil Primary School and any other interested parties, to close the moderate learning difficulties (MLD) learning resource centre at the school.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 These proposals are related to the Corporate Plan (2013-2017) and the Education Inclusion Programme and, in particular, in the Corporate Plan Improvement priority two;

- working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement

- 2.2 In order to achieve improvement priority two, to work together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement, we must work with our partners to support pupils with additional learning needs to drive up educational attainment for all learners in the County Borough. 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. We will know that we are collectively succeeding when pupils with additional learning needs are receiving the support they need.

3. Background

These proposals also relate to the Educational Inclusion Strategy which was agreed by Cabinet in March 2009. Within that policy it states the desire for all our schools and education providers to be inclusive – learning communities that value diversity and that can accommodate as wide a range of needs as possible. It also states the belief that the needs of the overwhelming majority of school-age learners can and should be accommodated in local schools that are properly equipped and fit for purpose, and that reflect the diverse strengths of the communities they serve.

There has been a successful approach by the Inclusion Service in training staff in schools to support pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Staff are far better equipped to identify needs at an earlier stage and support pupils with moderate learning difficulties through a differentiated curriculum in mainstream classes, rather than placing children with these difficulties in a separate unit. However, there is also sufficient alternative provision within the County Borough for those pupils with

moderate learning difficulties who are unable to access mainstream classes and need to make use of a separate learning resource facility.

The Council supports the principles that, when possible, children should be educated within a mainstream school environment as near to their home as possible.

4. Current situation / proposal

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

- The MLD (Moderate Learning Difficulty) learning resource centre provision at Pil Primary School comprising of 1 classroom that can accommodate 15 pupils would close. There is currently only one pupil placed in the learning resource centre, and this pupil is transitioning to secondary school in September and this pupil is transitioning to secondary school in September.
- There will remain two learning resource centres for MLD pupils in the West locality, one in Cefn Cribwr Primary School and the other in Corneli Primary school. Current demand indicates that there will be 10 places available in the west from September 2016.
- It is proposed to close the learning resource centre from 1st September 2016.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework and 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 There are projected full year savings of £45,000 per year from the closure of the MLD Learning Resource Centre at Pil Primary School.

7.2 Savings will be re-allocated within the Primary Schools ISB (Individual Schools Budget) to fund continuing Learning Resource Centre provision within other primary schools in Bridgend.

8. Recommendations

(i) Cabinet is requested to agree to consult formally on the proposal to close the moderate learning difficulties (MLD) learning resource centre at Pil Primary School

with effect from 1st September 2016 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.

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Appendix 1.

Consultation Document. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) - Changes to Pil Primary School.

Background documents

Learning Communities: Including all our learners – Educational Inclusion Strategy (report to Cabinet; March 2009)

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