

Determination Statement

Proposal to establish a Secondary Education Nurture Centre (SENC) at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School.

Determination of this proposal complies with statutory requirements under the Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and Welsh Government's Code on School Organisation.

At its meeting on 22nd February 2017, the Council's Cabinet received a report that no objections had been received in respect of this proposal. This meeting followed the end of the period for the submission of objections.

Cabinet Members determined to implement the proposal effective from the 27th February 2017.

Having carefully considered the proposal, the fact that no objections had been received and the supporting evidence from Council officers, Cabinet Members approved implementation of the proposal. The decision will enable the Council to comply with the legislative requirements necessary to facilitate the implementation of the proposal which will assist the Council in meeting its duty to secure efficient education in its area.

In reaching their decision, Cabinet Members gave consideration to the following:

Education

- The Council already provides for the pupils of Neath Port Talbot who require specialist support for their educational needs at two community special schools and at learning support/ inclusion centres attached to a number of community primary and secondary schools. The need for a Secondary Education Nurture Centre (SENC) had been identified.
- Cefn Saeson Comprehensive school, Cimla, Neath, offers a suitable environment in which to place the SENC. The school is a maintained community school for boys and girls age 11-16. As at January 2017 the school had 658 pupils on roll. With a capacity to accommodate 924 pupils the school has significant surplus places. In addition, the school currently hosts a small learning support provision for pupils with visual impairment.
- Officers recommended the establishment of a Secondary Education Nurture Centre (SENC) for the assessment of pupils externalising their needs and whose mainstream school placements are proving problematic.
- The SENC will provide a period of assessment for up to 16 secondary age pupils. Specialist staff will identify barriers to learning, create bespoke packages of support and plan for successful reintegration into mainstream school settings.
- It will be managed by the school and be under the school's governance. However, it will be a provision recognised by the Council as reserved for pupils with ALN/SEN and although it is in a mainstream school the pupils who are

admitted to the SENC are in addition to the admission number of the school. Admission to the SENC will be via a special admission panel of the Council and all placement decisions will be predicated on the expectation of pupils securing a successful return to their base school.

Finance

- The school will receive additional funding to manage the SENC for up to 16 pupils.
- Meeting the special needs education of pupils in local settings, i.e. within the County Borough, avoids having to secure expensive out-of-county provision. The cost of providing education outside the County Borough for pupils with specialist needs is high, and can amount to circa. £80k per pupil per year. This annually presents a significant demand on the Council's education budget.
- The SENC will be resourced by two specialist teachers and two teaching assistants with the appropriate skill set to support the assessment process. The staffing costs amount to circa. £180k.
- Self-contained accommodation will be developed in surplus accommodation at the school. There will be a one-off capital cost for the refurbishment/conversion work.
- The proposal does not anticipate significant additional cost burden resulting from increased transport costs as this will be readily offset against potential home education/out-of-county placement expenses consequent upon the status quo position.
- There are no capital receipts or recurrent costs savings directly related to this proposal other than savings from potential home education/out-of-county placement costs.

Impact of the SENC

- The equality impact assessment found that there is no adverse effect on any particular group.
- The establishment of the SENC will have a positive effect on the staffing complement of the school as an increase in pupil numbers by the establishment of a Secondary Education Nurture Centre will require additional members of staff with specialist skills to support pupils at the SENC.
- The SENC will provide for secondary age pupils from across the County Borough and will increase the opportunity for pupils to access specialist staff in order to have their needs assessed and to acquire the skills and understanding to manage their individual needs.

Strategic School Improvement Programme

