

AGENDA ITEM.5**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL****CABINET****12th FEBRUARY 2015****REALIGNMENT OF LEARNING SUPPORT CLASSES FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING****Author: Ceri Jones, Acting Head of Access and Inclusion Service Tel: 01443 744356.****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To advise Members of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposal to realign mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:-

- 2.1 Note responses received during the consultation, which are detailed and summarised in Appendices 1 to 4.
- 2.2 Agree to progress with all the proposals detailed in section 3.3 and to issue statutory notices in accordance with the School Organisation Code.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On the 18th November 2013 Cabinet was presented with a three year plan proposing the realignment of LSC provision within RCT. The Authority has an excellent range of SEN provision attached to mainstream schools. However, it had become apparent that there was an imbalance between primary and secondary provisions and proposals were considered to improve specialist provision in RCT. On the 18th November 2013 Cabinet approval was given to begin a process of consultation in relation to the proposed changes. Since this date, a number of significant actions have been implemented and year 3 proposals are currently under consideration. To date, the following has been undertaken:

- Formal consultation was undertaken on year 1 and year 2 of the proposals with the findings reported back to Cabinet on 19th February 2014;
- Statutory notices were issued on the 3rd March 2014 in order to close the following LSCs:
 - i. Capcoch Primary (Primary Provision - Hearing Impairment);
 - ii. Tonypandy Primary (Key Stage 2 – Autistic Spectrum Disorder)*;
 - iii. Tonypandy Primary (Primary Provision – Hearing Impairment)*;
 - iv. Alaw Primary (Foundation Phase – Complex) x 2 classes*;
 - v. Llantrisant Primary (Foundation Phase – Complex);
 - vi. Parclewis Primary (Foundation Phase – Complex);
 - vii. Tonysguboriau Primary (Key Stage 2 – Complex);
 - viii. Tonypandy Community College (Key Stage 3/4 – Hearing Impairment)*;

* Please note that these provisions had no children attending (but with the exception of 1 class in Alaw Primary).

- Statutory notices were issued on the 3rd March 2014 for the following LSCs in order to open new provisions:
 - ix. Ferndale Comprehensive (Key Stage 3/4-Complex Learning Difficulties);
 - x. Tonyrefail Comprehensive (Key Stage 3/4-Complex Learning Difficulties);
 - xi. Aberdare Community School (Key Stage 3/4 – Communication Disorder);
- Statutory notices were issued on the 3rd March 2014 for the following LSCs in order to re-designate the provisions: (change in the nature of existing provisions):
 - xii. Oaklands Primary (Foundation Phase Complex Learning Difficulties to become Foundation Phase Communication Disorder);
 - xiii. Llantrisant Primary (Foundation Phase Complex Learning Difficulties to become Observation Class);
 - xiv. Maesybryn Primary (Key Stage 2 Complex to become Key Stage 2 Communication Disorder);
 - xv. Gwaunmeisgyn Primary (Key Stage 2 Complex Learning Difficulties to become Foundation Phase Complex Learning Difficulties Class);
 - xvi. Penrhiwceiber Primary School (Foundation Phase Complex Learning Difficulties LSC to Foundation Phase Observation and Assessment Class)
- Statutory notices were issued on the 3rd March 2014 for the relocation of the Foundation Phase Complex Learning Difficulties

Class currently at Parclewis Primary School to Heol Y Celyn Primary School.

- No objections were received following the issuing of the statutory notices. Cabinet was subsequently advised and Cabinet approval was provided on the 8th April 2014.

3.2 These statutory notices have been implemented with effect from either 31st August 2014, 1st September 2014 or will be implemented on 1st September 2015. This concludes years 1 and 2 of the realignment plans.

3.3 As outlined above the realignment plans were incorporated into a three year plan. On the 30th October 2014 Cabinet approval was given to begin a process of formal consultation on year 3 proposals. These take effect from 31st August 2015. Current proposals include the following:

Learning Support Class Closures:

Aberdare Park Primary	Foundation Phase LSC for Complex Learning Difficulties
Capcoch Primary	Primary Provision LSC for Speech & Language Difficulties
Perthcelyn Primary	Key Stage 2 LSC for Complex Learning Difficulties

New Learning Support Class to be established:

Pontypridd High	Key Stage 3 / 4 LSC for Social Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties
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3.4 A series of meetings were held in affected schools which included staff and parents/carers. A summary of the views and concerns gathered are attached as Appendix 2.

3.5 These meetings were held between 24th November – 1st December 2014 to give parents of LSC pupils and the staff concerned the opportunity to make their views known and to raise any questions. Officers from the Education Directorate, including the Acting Head of Access & Inclusion Service and the Data Manager for Access & Inclusion Service were in attendance to answer questions and provide further information. A total of 9 parent/carers and 9 staff attended the meetings.

3.6 As part of the consultation process, the Council is required to bring to the attention of Elected Members all correspondence received, together with the responses provided, in order that due consideration can be given to all the issues raised during the consultation period. This has to be undertaken before Cabinet decides whether to proceed to the statutory notice stage. To assist all parties, a consultation questionnaire was attached to the consultation documents outlining the proposal, and a summary of the responses received to this questionnaire is attached in

Appendix 3. In addition to the questionnaire responses, letters and e-mails were received, and copies of this correspondence, together with responses where appropriate, are also appended in Appendix 3A.

4. **FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS**

- 4.1 From the 2154 consultation papers issued to the relevant stakeholders, a total of 34 completed questionnaires were received from governors, school employees, parent/carers, partner agency and member of the community: These responses are summarised as follows:

School	Number of responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Aberdare Park	19		19	
Capcoch	9		9	
Perthcelyn	0			
Pontypridd High	6	5	1	
Totals	34	5	29	0

As can be seen from the table above, the majority of returns related to Aberdare Park Primary School. It should be noted that of the 19 responses 13 were submitted by members of staff working at the school.

Of the responses received, 29 were opposed the proposals and 5 were in agreement. A summary of the returns together with LA response as appropriate is attached as Appendix 3.

- 4.2 A total of 9 emails or letters were received of which 4 related to Aberdare Park Primary and 4 related to Capcoch Primary. A further email relating to all four settings was also received and provided general comments regarding the proposals. It is important to highlight that of the 9 responses received, 3 of the respondents submitted 2 responses.
- 4.3 The main issues raised were as follows:
- Quality of the LSC provision
 - Disruption to pupils
 - Meeting pupils' needs
 - impact on job security
 - Transportation of pupils to alternative provisions
 - Effect of increased integration on the school environment
 - Extending existing provision to accommodate primary phase LSCs within the same school
 - Saving money
 - Embedding new working practices and projects

It should be noted that a number of parents were in support of the proposals and also recognised that there was an urgent need to address the lack of LSC provision in secondary schools. Parents were also reassured of the LA's plan to provide continuity in placements where

possible and alternative provision where required.

4.4 Local Authority officers have considered the issues raised and are of the view that proposals for change remain appropriate for the following reasons:

- **Quality of LSC provision** - Rhondda Cynon Taf has an excellent range of SEN provisions attached to mainstream schools. However, it has become increasingly apparent that there is an imbalance between primary and secondary provisions and that this can result in inappropriate special school placements. Certain LSCs are oversubscribed and other underutilised. There is clearly a need to address this issue to ensure efficient use of resources. In addition, the range of LSC provisions currently available does not match the level of increasing need in some areas (e.g. Autistic Spectrum/Social Communication Difficulties and Complex Needs at Key Stage 3/4). The final phase of proposals for change are essential for the successful completion of the 3 year plan and to ensure that there is sufficient local provision to address need so as to minimise the risk of costly out of county placements.

The priority for the Directorate is to continue to focus on driving up standards in schools and early years settings, and to improve outcomes for all children and young people. If the cycle of deprivation and underachievement is to be broken, a top quality education that meets the needs of all children and young people is essential. There are considerable benefits to be gained from the realignment of mainstream LSCs in ensuring the SEN of all children and young people are met and outcomes for pupils are improved.

- **Disruption to pupils** - Disruption will be kept to a minimum and ensuring that pupils' needs are effectively met will be paramount. To achieve this, the following options have been outlined to parents and most were reassured by the options available. These include their children:
 - Remaining at the LSC until closure or until the natural transition date if this is in the pupil's best interests
 - Remaining in the mainstream setting which houses the current LSC with access to a comparable level of specialist teacher and Learning Support Assistant support until the natural transition date is reached
 - Transferring to the nearest and most appropriate LSC
 - Transferring to a mainstream setting with Additional Needs Funding support.

Any changes to pupil placement will be made in consultation with parents, school staff and the school Educational Psychologist in line with established review practice within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

- **Meeting pupils needs** - The purpose of these changes is to further enhance the quality of Local Authority (LA) provision and to ensure that pupil needs are met more effectively. This will be achieved through: the enhancement of 2 Key Stage 3/4 LSCs; re-designation of classes to ensure continuity between Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 provision within schools; establishment of observation and assessment provisions thus ensuring the effective early identification and assessment of need. These changes will also address growing need for Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Communication Disorder provisions within the LA. All placements are made on the basis of pupil need and the evidence submitted to LA panel for consideration. If placement criteria are met then these are agreed and pupils placed in the nearest most appropriate provision.
- **Concerns over impact on job security** - An initial audit of staffing requirements indicates that there is likelihood that there will be more vacancies than there are permanent staff currently employed. Staff will be redeployed where possible in accordance with LA policy and procedures. There have been no redundancies to date.
- **Transportation of pupils to alternative provisions** - Home to school transport will be provided in line with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy in relation to pupil placement within specialist provision.
- **Effect of increased integration on the school environment** - The LSCs established will receive LA funding which will support appropriate staffing. Relevant training will be provided to affected schools to enhance staff expertise and skills, thus ensuring access to specialist support. Pupil numbers requiring specialist placement are not increased overall and it is therefore anticipated that there will be negligible impact on schools.
- **Extending existing provision to accommodate primary phase LSCs** - Consideration has been given to the accommodation available within each affected school. Classes identified as requiring re-designation, closure or to be established were based on pupil numbers, alternative LSC provisions within the locality/community, projected pupil need and school effectiveness.
- **Saving money** - The realignment of LSC provision within RCT has not been undertaken as a cost saving exercise. The allocation of funding for LSCs remains unaltered. The LA aim is to modernise and improve the range of SEN provision to further enhance opportunities for pupils with SEN, ensuring funding is used effectively and efficiently.
- **Embedding of new working practices and projects** - The Access

& Inclusion Service have introduced an improved procedure for accessing LSC provision and for considering placements. Schools are required to submit Specialist Placement Request documentation to the LA to request specialist placements. This supporting evidence highlights the graduated response undertaken by schools prior to seeking alternative specialist placement and is examined in order to establish if a specialist placement is required. The procedure has been introduced to ensure pupils meet the agreed entry criteria to access specialist support thus ensuring that pupil needs are well matched to specialist provisions. It is not anticipated that this new procedure will increase the need for LSC placements, but ensures that pupils requiring placements are placed appropriately. Projects relating to speech and language developments are proving to be very effective. Demand for key placements are consequently diminishing and more inclusive approaches are being developed.

- 4.5 A total of 4 responses were received from ESTYN and a summary of responses is attached in Appendix 4.
- 4.6 Overall the responses from Estyn regarding the four proposed changes were positive, in summary:
- The LA had given clear outline of expected benefits, clear rationale, considered suitable alternatives and had considered impact on learner travel
 - The LA had given assurances that views of parents and relevant professionals would be obtained
 - The realignment allows better targeting of resources for areas of greatest need

Estyn did raise concerns to which the LA has responded as follows:

- **A criticism of the LA submission was that not enough information was detailed regarding the impact to individual pupils.** The LA has reassured parents/carers during meetings and in the consultation documentation that, should the proposal be approved, then they would be fully involved in decision making relating to future placement needs. Changes to any provision for their son/daughter would be made in full consultation and partnership with parents/carers. The focus will be on ensuring that pupil needs are met and that changes implemented would be well supported and undertaken in an informed and considered manner. Pupils requiring a specialist placement will continue to access a similar provision in the local community. However, the LA will work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that a range of options can be explored and provided in accordance with their wishes and their child's needs.
- **Impact of increased numbers of pupils transferring to alternative LSC setting was not explored.** Each LSC has a maximum capacity figure. This figure will not be exceeded by the movement of affected pupils.

- **Community impact and equality impact have been undertaken but the assessments were not documented in the proposals.** The LA is required under the School Organisation Code to provide Community Impact, Equality Impact and Welsh Language Impact assessment. All documents have been readily available upon request and have been published on the RCT website together with all proposals. Refer to Appendices 6, 7 and 8 for copies of the assessments.
- **Increase of 17 mile journey on pupil wellbeing.** At the time of writing the consultation document it was quoted that 2 pupils would be affected by the closure of LSC in Capcoch Primary School. Due to the re-integration of a pupil this is now incorrect. Only one pupil will be affected by the proposed closure. The parents of the affected pupil have advised the LA, during the parental meeting, that they would wish for their child to attend mainstream provision with support. In order to support their decision the LA will put in place comparable access to a specialist teacher and LSA input to support mainstream inclusion in a setting of parental choice. Therefore no pupil currently attending the LSC will be required to undertake additional travel at the point of closure.

4.6 It was not practicable to consult with the individual pupils affected by the proposal due to their significant learning needs although full discussions were conducted at meetings with parents/carers. Individual discussions were offered to parents/carers in relation to each child.

4.7 The table below highlights the proposed arrangements that have been put in place for the affected pupils should the proposals be actioned. Any changes to pupil placement will be made in consultation with parents, school staff and the Educational Psychologist.

Name of school	Number of pupils at proposed time of closure	Proposed placement
Capcoch Primary School	1	Parents have expressed an interest to send their son to mainstream provision with support
Aberdare Park Primary School	2	Placements available at LSC Caradog Primary School (approx 1.1 miles)
Perthcelyn Primary School	4	Placements available at LSC Caradog Primary School (5.7 miles from current setting) and Cwmbach Primary School (4.6 miles from current setting)

5. THE STATUTORY PROCESS / NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The statutory notice for these proposals will indicate the proposed realignment of LSC provision as detailed in 3.3 of this report with effect from 31st August 2015.
- 5.2 If agreed by Elected Members, statutory notices outlining these prescribed alterations will be published in March 2014, and will run for a period of one month. During this period, any person or body may lodge objections to the proposals.
- 5.3 Next steps:

Process	Deadline Date
Consultation comments are collated and summarised by the Access and Inclusion Service. The summary, together with the Access and Inclusion Service's responses to the comments, should be published in a consultation report within three months of the end of the consultation period. The consultation report should then be published and reported back to Cabinet.	19 th February 2014
If agreement is granted by Cabinet to proceed with the proposals (this should be within 6 months of the end of the consultation period), the publication of a statutory notice for a one month consultation period should follow. This notice must be published on a school day and within 15 school days (not including the day of the publication) of the notice period.	2 nd March 2015
At the end of a one month statutory notice period, if no objections are received, a Cabinet decision will be needed to ratify the proposal.	2 nd March 2015 – 28 th March 2015
If objections are received, an objection report should be drafted outlining the objections and the responses to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period.	16 th April 2015
If proposals receive approval or the proposer determines to implement them, they should be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date	If approval is secured in the April Cabinet meeting and referral to Welsh Government is not required, the

	3 year plan will be implemented in a phased manner from September 2015.
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SUMMARY

- 6.
- 6.1 Members will note that of the 4 schools affected by the proposals the majority of returns related to Aberdare Park Primary School. However 13 of the 19 submissions were from staff members and not parents of pupils attending the school. A further 9 questionnaires were returned in relation to Capcoch Primary School.

A total of 9 emails or letters were also received of which 4 related to Aberdare Park Primary and 4 related to Capcoch Primary. A further 1 email related to all 4 proposals. 3 out of the 9 respondents submitted 2 responses.

- 6.2 It is considered that the representations made were relatively small in number then considering the extent of stakeholder consultation. The representations made do not warrant any further changes to the proposals.

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 It is recommended that approval is given to progress the planned re-alignment of the LSCs with effect from 31st August 2015 and that statutory notices are issued in March 2015. Please refer to Appendix 5 for a schedule of changes. These changes, if agreed, will ensure that the LA is better equipped to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and will ensure a high quality education for all learners within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Undertaking phase 3 proposals is key to the sustainability of the 3 year re-alignment plan and it is hoped that these proposals will be implemented to ensure the development of high quality LSC provision for all categories of SEN throughout the LA. Better use of existing resources to target areas of high need is needed to minimise the risks of costly out of county placements.

APPENDIX 1



**Rhondda Cynon Taf
Access & Inclusion Service**

**Re-Alignment of Learning Support
Classes**

**Consultation Feedback Report
Phase 3**

Introduction

The Local Authority (LA) consulted on proposals to re-align the Learning Support Classes within Rhondda Cynon Taf between 10th November 2014 and 5th January 2015. This report provides stakeholders with a summary of the consultation responses received with the LA responses where appropriate.

Summary of Consultation

From the 2154 consultation papers issued to relevant stakeholders, a total of 34 completed questionnaires were received from governors, school employees, parent/carers, partner agencies and people in the community.

These responses are summarised as follows:

School	Number of responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Aberdare Park	19		19	
Capcoch	9		9	
Perthcelyn	0			
Pontypridd High	6	5	1	
Totals	34	5	29	0

As can be seen from the table above the majority of returns related to Aberdare Park Primary School. It should be noted that of the 19 responses received 13 were submitted by members of staff working at the school.

Of the responses received, 29 opposed the proposals and 5 were in agreement.

A total of 9 emails or letters were received of which 4 related to Aberdare Park Primary and 4 related to Capcoch Primary. A further email was directed at all four settings and provided general comments regarding the proposals. It is noted that of the 9 responses received, 3 respondents submitted 2 responses.

4 responses were received from ESTYN, a summary of which is attached as information.

Appendices 2, 3 and 4 provide a summary of the:

- Outcomes from consultation meetings held with parents and affected staff
- Responses to the consultation questionnaire
- Correspondence received
- LA responses to issues raised where applicable
- Responses to the proposals from ESTYN

Conclusion

Feedback received during the consultation suggests that there isn't significant opposition to the proposals. Only 1.6% of distributed consultation papers were returned for Local Authority consideration. A further 6 stakeholders opted to inform the Local Authority of their views using alternative forms of communication.

Favourable responses were received relating to the proposal to open a Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties LSC at Pontypridd High School and no questionnaires were received from stakeholders regarding the proposal to close the LSC at Perthcelyn Primary School. Estyn submitted a report in relation to all 4 proposals. All feedback received has been utilised to inform the final proposals presented to Cabinet.

APPENDIX 2**SUMMARY OF SCHOOL CONSULTATION MEETINGS****MEETINGS 24th November – 1st December 2014**

Meetings were held at the schools with the Headteacher (in some cases) and staff and with the parents at the following settings:

School	Date of meeting	Attendees
Aberdare Park	01/12/14	Headteacher, 5 x staff, 4 x parents
Capcoch	24/11/14	2 x staff, 4 x parents
Perthcelyn	26/11/14	2 x staff, 1 x parent
Pontypridd High		An initial meeting was held between the Acting Service Director for Access Engagement and Inclusion and the Senior Management Team. Discussions were positive with no area of concerns raised. Further follow up meetings were offered to meet with parents, staff and governors but these were not deemed necessary due to lack of concern.

Prior to discussions with parent and staff, LA officers provided an overview of the background to the proposals, the rationale for change and the likely impact of proposals. The same issues were discussed in the majority of meetings and common themes emerged. These are summarised as follows:

	Issues raised	Responses
1.	Parents/carers felt more re-assured following the meeting and provided very positive feedback regarding the quality of provision and teaching at LSC.	Overall meetings have all been positive and informative. It is clear LA SEN provision is held in high regard and valued by the community.
2.	Discussions about individual pupils and how needs would be addressed in future.	These issues were addressed on an individual basis to the satisfaction of the majority of parents/carers. Clear options were outlined to parents/carers.
3.	Re-deployment of staff and changes to terms and conditions of employment.	Guidance from HR and agreement with Trade Unions was outlined to staff. The process for expressing interest in posts in specialist provisions was clarified. Staff were advised that in the event of the proposals

	Issues raised	Responses
		being agreed and the completion of Statutory Notice process further discussions will be held with all staff, HR and Trade Union representatives. Staff appeared satisfied with the arrangements proposed.
4.	Allocation of placements within LSCs	Processes for securing a LSC placement were clarified. In order to access a specialist placement schools are required to submit specialist placement request (SPR) documentation to the LA. This information provides evidence and information regarding pupil need and this informs future placements. The LA has agreed entry criteria for all specialist provisions and all pupils requiring placements are considered in LA panels. Due consideration is given to the criteria to ensure that placements are appropriate to pupil needs and informed by robust evidence. Where possible every effort will be made to facilitate effective transition where appropriate.
5.	Training of staff	A skills audit will be undertaken with all affected staff and relevant training provided where identified. This will be provided by Access & Inclusion Service staff.
6.	Continuity within schools Foundation Phase (FP) /Key Stage (KS) 2 provisions	<p>It was explained that some schools did not have sufficient appropriate accommodation to develop primary phase provision across FP/KS2. This is the preferred option of the re-alignment plans.</p> <p>One setting raised concerns that they had surplus capacity within the school and could host another LSC to enable the school to support a through phase provision.</p> <p>It was explained that classes were identified for closure, realignment or opening based upon pupil numbers, alternative LSC provision within the locality/community and projected pupil need.</p>
7.	CLIC project	Clarification was sought on the CLIC project and its impact on pupils. There was a misunderstanding that it was a resource used by specialist teachers. CLIC is a 3 year project (now in yr 2) which provides all mainstream reception classes with a resource to help identify pupils with language

	Issues raised	Responses
		and communication difficulties and provides appropriate early intervention, thus building the capacity of mainstream schools to address the speech and language needs of pupils. Outcomes have been very positive to date.
8.	Inclusion of SEN pupils within mainstream settings	All LSCs are expected to integrate LSC pupils with mainstream pupils where appropriate. This practice will continue.

APPENDIX 3**CONSULTATION REPORT FOR PROPOSAL TO RE-ALIGN LSC PROVISION ACROSS RCT***Where appropriate comments have been written verbatim*

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
Disagree	█ Assembly member for Cynon Valley	2 x letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerned that the Cynon Valley would be left without adequate provision for pupils with speech & language difficulties 		Letter sent 07/01/15 acknowledging response to consultation. The purpose of the plan is to further enhance the excellent SEN provision within RCT to better meet the needs of SEN pupils.
Disagree	Councillor █	2 x emails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email of 11/01/14 and 29/11/14 raised concerns that a member of staff had been omitted from the consultation process Concerned that staff would need to be treated appropriately 		<p>14/11/14 telephone call held between Acting Head of Access & Inclusion Service to reassure the member of staff concerned that she would be included in the consultation process and to apologise for the omission. Member of staff concerned had transferred to LSC following the closure of Robertstown Nursery many years ago and was not recorded as a member of LSC staff but that of the school.</p> <p>Letter sent 07/01/15 acknowledging response to consultation.</p>

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
Disagree	[REDACTED]	Email	<p>“As a resident of the Cynon Valley for most of my working life I have witnessed the systematic slide of education, administration and other pupil resources shift towards the Pontypridd region.....I would argue the area really needs the service of such a unit. To deprive this area of this service by moving the facility to a school close to Pontypridd would be another message to Cynon Valley and its people that the needs of this are once again very easy to ignore”</p> <p>“ The Speech and Language Difficulties Unit at Capcoch Primary School has been highly commended by ESTYN.....This is a complete contrast to the school that is proposed to take over from this Unit one that following its last ESTYN inspection was placed under special measures. I fail to see how a successful Unit can thus be acceptably replaced by a failing unit”</p>		<p>LSCs are distributed fairly throughout RCT based on need. There are currently 8 LSCs in the Cynon Valley for a range of needs which include: Observation and Assessment; Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties; Complex Learning Difficulties; Communication Disorder and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).</p> <p>Realignment of the LSCs is based upon projected pupil need, number of existing pupils, and existing LSC provision in the locality.</p> <p>The identified classes' for proposed realignment are based on a range of factors, not only Estyn outcomes. The school referred to as being in special measures is not in special measures and this information is not accurate.</p>

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
Agree	Parent of pupil in Pontypridd High	Questionnaire	"There should always be options and chances to better yourself and have support at all stages of your education"		It is pleasing to note that a parent of a pupil attending an affected school views the proposals as positive.
Agree	■■■■ Parent of pupil in Pontypridd High	Questionnaire	"My son is dyslexic and will be attending Sept 2015, could you clarify if this unit will be of benefit to him with his spelling/reading etc"	"Any additional support to my children's schooling would be beneficial and I am sure other parents would agree"	LSC at Pontypridd High will be for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. It is pleasing to note that a parent of a pupil attending an affected school views the proposals as positive.
Agree	■■■■ foster carer of 2 pupils attending Pontypridd High School	Questionnaire	"I am a foster carer and have two children placed with me long term, they have a few learning issues and I think the proposal will benefit both children"		It is pleasing to note that a parent of a pupil attending an affected school views the proposals as positive.
Agree	Parent of pupil attending Pontypridd High School	Questionnaire	"Improved facilities for children in question"		It is pleasing to note that a parent of a pupil attending an affected school views the proposals as positive.
Agree	Parent of pupil attending catchment school of Pontypridd High	Questionnaire	"My son suffer with ADHD and also has Learning Difficulties. He has half hour a day for his emotional needs without this he would suffer from more outbursts in school. This is essential to my son's well being"	"My son took part in an after school activity, and without the adult in charge knowing anything about my son, he asked to leave because he got upset over rules changing and was left to leave. My son has no safety with being able to cross roads and left school premises"	The proposal will enhance the available provision at Pontypridd High to address the social, emotional and behavioural difficulties of pupils. Whilst all children with needs will not be able to access the provision, this LSC will enhance the continuum of provision within the school.

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
Disagree	Parent of pupil attending Pontypridd High School	Questionnaire	"Disruption to existing pupils and the raised potential of bullying and increasing of difficult social and behavioural problems. Current pupils feeling ill at ease and threatened by students who are coping with social, emotional and behavioural issues"	"If this provision is sited at Pontypridd High School it potentially faces the problem of future recruitment of mainstream students as parents will choose not to send their child to the school as they may have the concerns that I have"	Pontypridd High School has been selected as a host school due to its recognised good practice and positive approaches to meeting learner wellbeing.
Disagree	Parent of pupil attending LSC at Capcoch Primary Sch	Questionnaire	"Because it is good for the kids my son enjoys it"		The purpose of the plan is to further enhance the excellent SEN provision within RCT to better meet the needs of SEN pupils.
Disagree	█ parent of pupil attending Aberdare Park Primary School	Email and returned questionnaire	Email: "...object to a proposal that the council is doing the shutting down of LSC in primary schools...when these classes will be shut there is only one class (KS1) for all the Taff valley a class with maximum of 8 pupils...think it is enough..but can anybody predict future.." Questionnaire: "It's a huge risk to take that could effect the children in the long term or maybe lifelong term"	"Lees than £28,000 is thought to be saved each year for this proposal. That is not a huge amount. It can be saved in other ways. And if things do not work out that amount is easily spent again thus making this proposal a huge risk"	Realignment of LSC provision is not a cost saving exercise. The LA is redirecting existing funds to ensure LSC provision matches the needs of all SEN pupils across the LA. LSC provision will continue to be monitored to ensure it meets the needs of pupils with SEN appropriately.
Disagree	█ parent of pupil attending LSC at Capcoch Primary School	2 x Questionnaires	"Because my son goes to the class and his speech and language has come on really great the class was the best thing that has come to him. His confidence has been came great as well since this class"	"I really hope you keep this class open because the class is really helping the children really great, the children won't have come along with their speech and language without this class"	The purpose of the plan is to further enhance the excellent SEN provision within RCT to better meet the needs of SEN pupils. Numbers in the LSC have diminished and the pupils no longer have good access to a significant.

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
Disagree	█ parent of pupil attending Capcoch Primary School	Questionnaire	"I have witnessed the importance of children being integrated into mainstream school and the benefits to all. The individual themselves and those around them educating and extending existing knowledge of other's needs"	"This 'unit' has been at Capcoch throughout my childhood (23yrs) I have friends who have attended and have reached full potential as a result. Why change something that doesn't needs changing??"	The purpose of the plan is to further enhance the excellent SEN provision within RCT to better meet the needs of SEN pupils. Provision will continue to be available for learners who need specialist placement.
Disagree	Parent of pupil attending Capcoch Primary School	Questionnaire	"No these pupils need support and I don't think it fair on them to miss out (they need confidence, skills, communication"	"Children should not be taken by this affect the government should concentrate on the good for nothing people druggies, alcoholics, on the sick when they are perfectly fine	The purpose of the plan is to further enhance the excellent SEN provision within RCT to better meet the needs of SEN pupils. Provision will continue to be available for learners who need specialist placement
Disagree	█ parent of pupil attending Capcoch Primary Sch	Questionnaire	"Children with speech and language difficulties have just as much right as other pupils to learn and be helped. Closing this class will delay the children in the learning process"	"Capcoch is a fantastic school with dedicated teachers who go above & beyond for their pupils. Closing this class would be detrimental to all children needing this help!!!	The purpose of the plan is to further enhance the excellent SEN provision within RCT to better meet the needs of SEN pupils.
Disagree	█ Governor of Capcoch Primary School	Questionnaire	"The children in the LSC are settled at Capcoch they receive excellent care teaching and learning in this small setting"	"By closing this unit and making the children travel possibly 40 mins each way to school will impact on their daily life not to mention taking them away from friends that they have made not only in the LSC but in mainstream too"	Transport will continue to be in line with the LA Home to School Transport Policy. Pleasing to hear the positive comments regarding the LSC provision
Disagree	█ parent of pupil attending Capcoch Primary Sch	Questionnaire	"Capcoch has had an LSC for many years. This unit may be small but the standard of care, teaching and learning is excellent"	"Moving the children to a new school away from friendships they have formed will have a negative effect on their school learning"	Realignment of LSCs is based upon projected pupil need, number of existing pupils, and a review of existing LSCs

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
					<p>provision in the locality.</p> <p>The proposed realignment of identified classes is not a reflection of the quality of teaching and standards achieved. It is based upon better meeting the needs of pupils within RCT and making effective use of existing resources.</p> <p>Several options have been outlined to the parents affected by the proposals regarding their child's educational needs. Alternative support and placements will be provided where needed.</p>
Disagree	<p>█ Cwm Taf Speech and Language Therapy Service relating to Capcoch Primary School</p>	Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondent raised concerns over the lack of speech and language provision within RCT • LSC provide pupils with speech and language difficulties teaching and Speech and Language Therapy to pupils diagnosed with specific language impairment • SALT has a clear caseload in Cynon Valley • RCT has changed admission process to panel. Respondent feels this needs to embed before decision on class closure can be made • Concerned that the loss of LSC could 	<p>“The children’s charity I CAN states: Studies have shown that in 5 year olds SLI affects about 2 children in every classroom (about 7%). In light of these statistics, are 18 specialist educational placements for pupils with SLI across all of RCT sufficient?”</p>	<p>Two years ago the LA in partnership with Cwm Taf University Health Board launched the CLIC (Communication Literacy Inclusive Classrooms) project. This initiative’s primary aim is to support schools to identify reception aged pupils with potential speech and language difficulties. Identified pupils are then supported to work on identified areas of</p>

			result in an increase on demand for Speech and Language Therapy Service within Cwm Taf University Health Board This potential impact has not been discussed		weakness. Following interventions pupils are then re-assessed. The project has been extremely successful with 60.75% of pupils improving their skills since intervention. Demand for specialist speech and language placements has reduced over the last 2/3 years. Furthermore the LA delegates £2.6 million to RCT schools to support mainstream inclusion. This includes learner with speech, language and communication needs. Furthermore we have specialist teachers centrally who provide support, advice and guidance to schools and direct support for learners with high end needs.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Children and Young People's Plan for RCT states children in RCT should have access to comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities, document highlights RCT needs to be consistent in responding to family's needs. This would not occur in the Cynon Valley if LSC for Speech and Language Difficulties at Capcoch was Closed 		
Disagree	<p>■ Teacher at Aberdare Park Primary School</p>	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns over the loss of a valued provision Loss of investment in staff and facilities Insufficient ANF could result in schools applying for more specialised provision which could mean oversubscription for specialist placements 		It is pleasing to note the positive comments on the quality of provision. There will be opportunities for the LA to retain LSC specialist staff in order to implement the LSC plan to better meet needs of pupils. The investment made in facilities will remain available to mainstream pupils at the

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
					<p>school.</p> <p>£2.7 million has been delegated to schools in order to support pupils with SEN more appropriately. The proposed realignment plan will enhance capacity within LSCs appropriate to pupil needs</p>
Disagree	<p>■■■ Teacher at Aberdare Park Primary School</p>	Questionnaire	<p>“Because I have personally seen the excellent work that is being done there and the countless benefits to the children involved”</p>	<p>“I think the needs of the children should be put first – closing the learning support class is not in their best interest”</p>	<p>It is pleasing to note the positive comments on the quality of provision school.</p> <p>Pupils currently accessing this LSC will be given the option to access LSC provision within the same locality (1.1miles).</p>
No Disagree	<p>■■■ Teacher at Aberdare Park Primary School</p>	Questionnaire	<p>“The children are happy and settled. A small unit provides quality time which helps develops the children’s confidence and provides enhanced learning opportunities”</p>		<p>It is pleasing to note the positive comments on the quality of provision school.</p> <p>Pupils currently accessing this LSC will be given the option to access LSC provision within the same locality (1.1miles).</p>


Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
Disagree	■■ Teaching Assistant at Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	“The learning support class helps the children as it is only a small group and they get more one to one help from their teacher this helps settle the children and is best for their well being”	“This unit supports the children for their needs and they get the right help and support for each individual child”	It is pleasing to note the positive comments on the quality of provision school. Pupils currently accessing this LSC will be given the option to access LSC provision within the same locality (1.1 miles).
Disagree	■■ member of staff at Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	“The upheaval of changing schools will have a detrimental effect on the children. The children are happy, socially accepted and settled within their current class”	“The well being of staff at the school needs to be considered as there is insufficient time for them to find new roles”	The proposed closure would enable future pupils to access a through phase provision, thus minimising the need for transition. The management of change process will be followed in line with School Organisation Code timescales. Access & Inclusion will work closely with HR, trade Unions and staff should the proposals be agreed.
Disagree	■■ student teacher at Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	“Since my time at the school I have seen the benefits the LSC has for the children who need it”	“There are many children who are very reliant on this facility and removal of it would result in adverse effects on the whole development of these children”	The LSCs for Complex Learning Difficulties in Cynon Valley currently have surplus places available. Pupils currently accessing this APP LSC will be given the option to access LSC provision within the same locality (less than 1.5 miles).

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
Disagree	Teaching Assistant at Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	“Since my time have been at APP School. I have seen the benefits the LSC has for the children who need it. There is also enough room in the LSC to house more children including KS2”	“To solve many transition issues the LSC would benefit from a KS2 class”	Consideration has been given to the accommodation available within each affected school. Classes identified to de re-designated, closed or opened were based upon pupil numbers, alternative LSC provisions within the locality and projected pupil need. Through phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 is available within the Cynon Valley.
Disagree	■ Teaching Assistant at Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	“From personal experience I understand how important it is for these children to learn in a quiet appropriate setting. Many of these children are unable to cope in larger and consequently noisier environment because of their complex needs. How will they cope?”	“My son would not be the person he is today if he had not had the appropriate education in a small scale setting with fewer children. Surely the well being of these children are more important. These children also need voices.”	LA recognises the importance of LSC provision hence the proposed re-alignment of classes to ensure that pupil needs are more effectively met.
Disagree	■ Teaching Assistant within LSC at Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	“It will be such a shame to close this class for the children of the class the staff and the rest of the children within the school”	“Small classes like this, help children reach their full potential in life and secure better outcomes for them and their families”	LA recognises the importance of LSC provision hence the proposed re-alignment of classes to ensure we meet pupil needs more effectively.

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
Disagree	Teacher at Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	"Children with CLD will be able to reach their full potential. I taught a child in reception who was lucky enough to be granted a place in our LSC. I have watched him grow in confidence and ability – this would not have happened had he remained in MS"	"From a personal viewpoint I have a family member who has CLD. For her school was a nightmare until her parents fought for her to have the education she needed in a unit. She is now a capable young woman who has the necessary life skills to lead an independent life"	LA recognises the importance of LSC provision hence the proposed re-alignment of classes to ensure we meet pupil needs more effectively.
Disagree	Teaching Assistant at Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	"I strongly disagree with the proposal as children with complex learning difficulties often find it difficult to cope with the noise level from mainstream classrooms, and need a safe environment where they can go to calm down and relax"	"This unit is so important for these children as without this they would not be able to reach their full potential"	LA recognises the importance of LSC provision hence the proposed re-alignment of classes to ensure we meet pupil needs more effectively.
Disagree	Teaching Assistant at Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	"I have only been working here for a short time and I can already see the benefit that the learning support class offers to children. The children are confident and have the exact 1 to 1 focus attention that they may not achieve with larger classrooms"	"Along with the focused teaching support they receive as part of the learning support class, the class also solves many transition situation that arise further along the children's education time"	LA recognises the importance of LSC provision, hence the proposed realignment of classes to ensure we meet pupil needs more effectively.
Disagree	Member of staff Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	"The Learning Support Class is vital for the children who use the unit, it is essential in providing structure and stability throughout their school life. To close the unit would have a massively detrimental effect on those children."		LA recognises the importance of LSC provision hence the proposed re-alignment of classes to ensure we meet pupil needs more effectively.
Disagree	Member of staff Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	"To closure of the unit would have a detrimental effect on the children the unit is fully functional with sensory room, where the children are comfortable, thriving and happy, socially accepted and	"Transitions in life are "huge" in the lives of these pupils, one that isn't necessary if the unit is to stay here in the heart of the school. They have bonded with the staff who are	Through phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 is available within the Cynon Valley.

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
			settled”	kind caring and considerate to all their needs”	
Disagree	█ parent of pupil attending Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	“I don’t agree with closing the LSC for good reason as not all children work at the same level some children need more support with reading /writing/math. It’s vital that children get help with these tasks for when they grow up!”	“Only one point I have to express and that is school should provide a good level of learning to all its students whether they need standard learning or extra help it should be provided I needed I as a child and probably wouldn’t be where I am today without it!”	LA recognises the importance of LSC provision hence the proposed re-alignment of classes to ensure we meet pupil needs more effectively.
Disagree	█ parent of pupil attending Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	“This would have a massive effect on all children involved and also staff. There is more than enough room in the LSC to house more children including KS2 with minimum impact on facilities and all involved”	“The LSC would benefit from a KS” class also as this would solve many transition issues”	Consideration has been given to the accommodation available within each affected school. Classes identified to be re-designated, closed or opened were based upon pupil numbers, alternative LSC provisions within the locality and projected pupil need. Through phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 is available within the Cynon Valley. There will be opportunities for the LA to retain LSC specialist staff in order to implement the LSC plan to better meet needs of pupils.
Disagree	█ parent of pupil attending Aberdare Park Primary	Questionnaire	“This would have a massive effect on all children involved and also staff who are currently part of the LSC. Those children will not benefit in anyway by being moved to another There is more than	“Every child’s needs are educated for by the wonderful staff in the LSC which ensures that each and every child reaches their full potential”	Consideration has been given to the accommodation available within each affected school. Classes identified

	School		enough room in the LSC elsewhere, they are comfortable and thriving where they are at Aberdare Park Primary”		to be re-designated, closed or opened were based upon pupil numbers, alternative LSC provisions within the locality and projected pupil need. Through phase provision from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 is available within the Cynon Valley. There will be opportunities for the LA to retain LSC specialist staff in order to implement the LSC plan to better meet needs of pupils.
Disagree	█ parent of pupil attending Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire	“The proposal is not in the best interests of the children currently in the Learning Support Class. I’m sure this will have a huge impact on their well being”	“There will also a be huge loss to the school to lose amazing nurturing staff”	LA recognises the importance of LSC provision hence the proposed re-alignment of classes to ensure we meet pupil needs effectively. There will be opportunities for the LA to retain LSC specialist staff in order to implement the LSC plan to better meet needs of pupils. Pupils currently in the LSC will be given the option to access LSC provision within the locality.

Agree/ Disagree/ Unsure	Respondent	Type of Consultation response	Comment/Points Raised	Additional Information from respondent	LA Response
Disagree	Governor and member of staff at Aberdare Park Primary School	Questionnaire and attachment	<p>Summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondent feels that impact of benefits of LSC are already being provided at Aberdare Park • Refers to the financial climate and using resources efficiently and effectively. Finding it difficult to comprehend why dedicated staff and resources are currently not being utilised to full capacity • Feels report is contradictory refers to LA report addressing demand for LSC yet is closing Aberdare Park and reducing places available • Feels impact on pupils will be “huge” 		<p>LA recognises the importance of LSC provision hence the proposed re-alignment of classes to ensure we meet pupil needs more effectively There will be opportunities for the LA to retain LSC specialist staff in order to implement the LSC plan to better meet needs of pupils. There is an agreed entry criteria for specialist placement provision. Pupils are discussed at panel using the criteria and placements awarded as appropriate to the pupils' needs.</p>
Disagree	 Chair of Governors Capcoch Primary school	Letter	<p>Summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for a smaller provision in the north of the county • School has invested in both staff training and building to support LSC • The proposal disregards the recent findings of ESTYN • The downward trend of pupil numbers is not a trend, respondent feels pupils are not being placed in LSC proposed to close • Concerned with the travel time and distance pupils would be required to undertake to access specialist 		<p>Realignment of LSCs based upon projected pupil need, number of existing pupils and the existing LSC provision in the locality.</p> <p>There have been surplus places at the LSC for the last 3 years. At the time of the proposed closure there will only be 2 pupils attending the provision.</p> <p>The investment made in</p>

			<p>provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New working practices and projects have not had time to embed, results could increase demand for placements not reduce • ANF funding is inadequate • Questions the allocation of LSC placements • In conjunction with the proposed nursery places potential loss of staff will have serious impact on the effective operation of the school • Cost saving exercise • Questions the establishment of CD LSC at Oaklands Primary School • The LSC for Speech and Language could have been re-designated rather than closed • Impact of proposal to amend nursery provision • Closure of the LSC questions social agenda of Community First and Objective 1 areas 		<p>facilities will remain available to mainstream pupils at the school.</p> <p>There will be opportunities for the LA to retain LSC specialist staff in order to implement the LSC plan to better meet needs of pupils.</p> <p>The proposed realignment of identified classes is not a reflection of the quality of teaching and standards achieved. It is based upon better meeting the needs of pupils within RCT.</p> <p>Transport will continue to be provided in line with Learner Travel policy.</p> <p>Two years ago the LA in partnership with Cwm Taf University Health Board launched the CLIC (Communication Literacy Inclusive Classrooms) project. This initiative's primary aim is to support schools to identify reception aged pupils with potential speech and language difficulties. Identified pupils are then supported to work on</p>
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				<p>identified areas of weakness. Following interventions pupils are then re-assessed. The project has been extremely successful with 60.75% of pupils improving their skills since intervention. Demand for specialist speech and language placements has reduced over the last 2/3 years.</p> <p>£2.6 million has been allocated to schools on a cluster basis. It is recommended that ANF is allocated to pupils following the ANF Guidance Criteria provided by the LA. Local Cluster Group Panels allocate the resources.</p> <p>Minutes of the last Speech and Language Panel, held in Nov 2014, record that of the 14 pupils discussed none were referred back to schools for additional information. There is an agreed entry criteria for specialist placement provision. Pupils are discussed at panel using criteria and placements awarded as appropriate to</p>
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					<p>the pupils' needs.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that the introduction of SPR will increase the need for LSC placements, but ensures that pupils requiring placements are placed appropriately.</p> <p>The proposal to change nursery provision is a separate proposal and must be considered independently of this proposal.</p> <p>Realignment of LSC provision is not a cost saving exercise. The LA is redirecting existing funds to ensure LSC provision matches the needs of all SEN pupils across the LA.</p> <p>The Communication Disorder LSC established at Oaklands has been done so to address the project need of pupils in the area.</p>
Disagree	<p>██████ parents of pupil attending Aberdare</p>	<p>Email via ██████ ██████</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned over the proposed closure of the LSC • No proposal to include a key stage 2 class at APPS even though there is capacity 		<p>Response provided to ██████ ██████</p>

	Park Primary School		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closure is based on predicted use questioned how can such predictions can be made		
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APPENDIX 3A

Questionnaire

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LEARNING SUPPORT

In order to help the Council reach a decision, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Access and Inclusion Service

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

Or by fax to 01443 744340, or e-mail to A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposal

The proposal is to close the Foundation Phase Learning Support Class for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Aberdare Park Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

The proposal is not in the best interests of the children currently in the Learning Support class. I'm sure this will have a huge impact on their well being.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

There will also be huge loss to the school to lose amazing outvring staff.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

parent of a pupil at the school

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted name]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

This would have a detrimental effect on the children and staff who are currently part of the LSC. Those children will not benefit in any way by being moved to another LSC elsewhere, they are comfortable and thriving where they are at Aberdare Park Primary.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Every child's needs are catered for by the wonderful staff in the LSC which ensures that each and every child reaches their full potential.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Parent of a pupil at the school.

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted name]

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Please let us know the reasons for your choice

This would have a massive effect on all children involved and also staff. There is more than enough room on the LSC to house more children including KS2, with minimum impact to facilities and all involved.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

The LSC class would benefit from a KS2 class also as this would solve many transition issues.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Parent of a pupil in the school

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted name]

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LEARNING SUPPORT

The Proposal

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

It's a huge risk to take that could affect the children in the long term or maybe lifelong term

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

less than £28,000 this is thought to be saved each year for this proposal. That is not a huge amount. It can be saved in other ways. And if things do not work out that amount is easily spent again thus making the proposal a huge risk

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

parent of a pupil at Aberdare Primary

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted name]

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

I don't agree with closing the LSC for good
reason as not all children work at the same
level some children need more support with
reading/writing/maths its vital that children
get help with these tasks for when they grow up!

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Only one point i have to express and that is
school should provide a good level of learning to
all its students' whether they need standard learning
or extra help it should be provided i needed it as
a child and probabley wouldn't be where i am today without
it!

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

parent of pupil at Aberdare Park Primary
school

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted] fellow pupil at Comin School

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

The closure of the unit would have a detrimental effect on the children. The unit is fully functional with sensory room, where the children are comfortable, thriving and happy, socially accepted and settled.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Transitions in life are 'huge' in the lives of these pupils, one that isn't necessary if the unit is to stay here in the heart of the school. They have bonded with the staff who are kind caring and considerate to all their needs.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Staff member of named school

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted name]

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

The Learning Support Class is vital for the children who use the unit, it is essential in providing structure and stability throughout their school life. To close the unit would have a massively detrimental effect on those children.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Staff member

4. Name (optional)

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

I have only been working here for a short time and I can already see the benefit that the learning support class offers to children. The children are confident and have the exact 1 to 1 focus attention that they may not achieve with larger classrooms.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Along with the focused teaching support they receive as part of the learning support class, the class also solves many transition situations that arise further along the children's education time.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[Redacted] at the Named School.

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

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22 DEC 2014

Questionnaire

LEARNING SUPPORT

In order to help the Council reach a decision, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Access and Inclusion Service

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

Or by fax to 01443 744340, or e-mail to A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposal

The proposal is to close the Foundation Phase Learning Support Class for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Aberdare Park Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Children with C.L.D. will be unable to reach their full potential. I taught a child in reception who was lucky enough to be granted a place in our L.S.C. I have watched him grow in confidence and ability - this would not have happened had he remained in M.S.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

From a personal viewpoint I have a family member who has C.L.D. For her school was a nightmare - until her parents fought for her to have the education she needed in a unit. She is now a capable young P.T.C.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[Redacted] at Aberdare Park Primary

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted]

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The proposal is to close the Foundation Phase Learning Support Class for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Aberdare Park Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

I STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH THE PROPOSAL AS CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OFTEN FIND IT DIFFICULT TO COPE WITH THE NOISE LEVEL FROM MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS, AND NEED A SAFE ENVIRONMENT WHERE THEY CAN GO TO CALM DOWN AND RELAX.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

THIS UNIT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR THESE CHILDREN AS WITHOUT THIS THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[REDACTED] AT ABERDARE PARK PRIMARY

4. Name (optional)

[REDACTED]

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Since my time at the school I have seen the benefits the LSC has for the children who need it.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

There are many children who are very reliant on this facility and removal of it would result in adverse effects on the whole development of these children.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[Redacted]

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted]

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Since my time I have been at APP School. I have seen the benefits the LSC has for the children who need it. There is also enough room in the LSC to house more children including KS2.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

To solve many transition issues the LSC would benefit from a KS2 class.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[Redacted] at APP School

4. Name (optional)

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

It will be such a shame to close this class for the children of the class, the staff and the rest of the children within the school

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Small classes like this, help children reach their full potential in life and secure better outcomes for them and their families.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[Redacted]

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted]

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The Proposal

The proposal is to close the Foundation Phase Learning Support Class for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Aberdare Park Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure STRONGLY DISAGREE

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE I UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR THESE CHILDREN TO LEARN IN A QUIET APPROPRIATE SETTING. MANY OF THESE CHILDREN ARE UNABLE TO COPE IN LARGER AND CONSEQUENTLY NOISIER ENVIRONMENTS BECAUSE OF THEIR COMPLEX NEEDS. HOW WILL THEY COPE?

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

MY SON WOULD NOT BE THE PERSON HE IS TODAY IF HE HAD NOT HAD THE APPROPRIATE EDUCATION IN A SMALL SCALE SETTING WITH FEWER CHILDREN. SURELY THE WELL BEING OF THESE CHILDREN ARE MORE IMPORTANT. THESE CHILDREN ALSO NEED A VOICE.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[Redacted] AT ABERDARE PARK PRIMARY

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted]

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

The upheaval of changing schools will have a detrimental effect on the children. The children are happy, socially accepted and settled within their current class.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

The well being of staff at the school needs to be considered as there is insufficient time for them to find new roles.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Staff member of named school

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted name]

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

The children are happy and settled. A small unit provides quality time which helps with develops the childrens confidence and provides enhanced learning opportunities

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Empty lines for additional views or points.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Foundation phase practitioner

4. Name (optional)

Redacted name area.

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The Proposal

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

The Learning support class helps the children as it is only a small group and they get more one to one help from their teacher this helps settle the children and is best for their well being.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

This unit supports the children for their needs, and they get the right help and support for each individual child.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Foundation phase Teaching Assistant.

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted name]

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The Proposal

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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Because I have personally seen the excellent work that is being done there and the countless benefits to the children involved.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

I think the needs of the children should be put first - closing the learning support class is not in their best interest.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[Redacted] at Aberdare Park Primary School

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted]

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is not addressing the issue but adding to it, by reducing the number of places available.

Although the report suggests that the closure of the LSC will have a minimal impact on the children, this is a statistical statement as the impact of each child's life will be enormous. The LSC at Aberdare Park Primary has a proven track record of having a positive, significant impact on the social, educational and emotional needs of the children in their care and could continue to do so if RCT decide to fund this vital resource.

The Proposal

The proposal is to close the Foundation Phase Support Class for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Aberdare Park Primary School

Objections to the proposal

I have had the privilege of experiencing first-hand the invaluable difference that the staff of the LSC class have made to the lives of the children in their care and feel bewildered and baffled about some of the statements made in the report.

In the report under the sub-heading '**What is the likely impact of the proposals on school pupils?**' the benefits listed for pupils with SEN are already being provided by the LSC at Aberdare Park Primary:

- Two pupils over the past two years have been integrated into mainstream schools; one of the pupils, who is now in a Year 3 class at the School, was assessed using a Standardised Reading Test and the child's Reading age was the same as the Chronological Age; therefore no additional Literacy Support was required. *(Improved educational outcomes and pupil engagement due to a better match between pupils' primary needs and provision, enhanced availability of specialist placements for pupils with specific SEN in their local communities thus enhancing inclusion and a sense of belonging to the local community.)*

In the proposal it states '*within the current financial climate there is a need to ensure that our resources are used as efficiently and effectively as possible*'. Therefore I find it hard to comprehend how it makes financial sense to close a LSC which already has expert and dedicated staff, houses: a sensory room, disabled toilet, shower and changing room. The proposal does mention the surplus placements as at closure is 75 per cent, however reliable sources suggest that this is not an accurate statistic as there are children who would have benefitted from the resources at Aberdare Park primary but RCT appeared not to fill the surplus places.

I also find the report contradictory as it mentions '*the LA would like to expand ASD/CD provisions to address the growth in demand across all phases.*'; however by closing the LSC at Aberdare Park Primary, RCT th

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The Proposal

The proposal is to close the Foundation Phase Learning Support Class for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Aberdare Park Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Please see attached

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Please see attached

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[Redacted] at Aberdare Park Primary

4. Name (optional)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire


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Further to your proposals, I have the following objections

The proposed closure of Aberdare Park Primary LSC

To close this valuable provision would be a travesty. The development and achievements of the children currently in placement and children that have previously been there are huge. This is due to the nature of the class and the amazing and nurturing staff we have. Every child's needs are catered from individually, socially, emotionally and educationally. Despite the drop in numbers the staff still work hard to ensure that every child in their care will reach their full potential in all ways. Closing this class would be a terrible blow to the staff, the children in the LSC and the mainstream children. The other children accept these children for who they are and don't see them as being different. The staff are invaluable and do over and above what is asked of them. We have invested a lot of money into the facilities in our LSC, such as disabled toilets with changing facilities, a shower and a brand new sensory room which is used every day by these children. We are very lucky that we have given money from our school friends fund and also from other donations specifically for the LSC.

As inclusion is mentioned a lot within the proposal, it worries me that some children could possibly go into mainstream even if it isn't the best place for them. As stated, if the children go into mainstream they will get support. However, we already know from previous experience, that the children get 5 hours for the first half term and then it has to go to ANF panel to apply for more hours as these will stop. The ANF funding is already in deficit and this would make it even more so, which could mean that children would not benefit from the funding and schools will apply for more specialised provision which could mean an oversubscription for specialist places.



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LEARNING SUPPORT

The case to retain the Speech and language Unit at Cap Coch Primary school

1. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Authority's proposals for the rationalisation of LSC provision across the County.
- 2 The thrust of the Authority's proposal is that due to advancing technology and improved medical intervention there is surplus places in specialised Learning Support Classes and they should be rationalised in one centre - Llwynrwn Primary School at Beddau combined with support packages in mainstream classes in local schools. It would also enable resources to be used more effectively for Key Stage 3 children and address the difficulties that are increasing in other educational needs such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
3. While we would sympathise with the Authority's overall objective in our view the demand for specialist units in Speech and Language has been underestimated and there is a need for additional albeit smaller provision in the north of the county which should be based at Cap Coch Primary School.
- 4 Cap Coch Primary School has existed since 1881 and the original school was demolished and a new school built on the site which opened in 1981. It is not a 1950s brick built building! The Speech and Language and hearing impaired Support classes were included and became an integral part of the school until the Hearing Impaired Unit was closed as part of the Authority's rationalisation programme last year. Substantial investment has been made in recent years from the school budget in improving classroom facilities in terms of building and structural work to enhance the learning environment in the Speech and Language Unit. Staff in the unit have been well trained and received excellent CPD to enhance their skills which has been paid from the school budget.
- 5 The Authority's proposal acknowledges that the recent Estyn inspection reported that

' the provision for all pupils with additional learning needs is effective and they make good progress in school. Well trained support staff offer a high level of help to individuals and small groups of pupils.' and that 'the resource provision classes and mainstream classes benefit from good opportunities to work alongside each other.'
- 6 Despite these views the Authority proposes to close the Speech and Language unit and we have therefore to question the judgement on a proposal that flies in the face of Estyn's views so soon after they were made, particularly in the light of the weight of importance that is placed on Estyn Inspections by the Education Minister, the Welsh Government and other experts involved in education in Wales.

7 The number of children in Cap Coch's Speech and language and hearing Impaired Units since 2003 are:

Speech and Language - capacity 8 children:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
4	8	9	7	8	9	8	8	7	5	4

8 The Speech and Language Unit has been consistently close to capacity during the period and indeed has been oversubscribed on three occasions. It is only in 2013 was there a reduction to five children and in 2014 four children attended. This small reduction in recent years can hardly be described as a trend given the short period involved.

9 However Llwynycwn Primary has been close to capacity in recent years and if the children at Cap Coch were to be transferred there the school would be seriously oversubscribed.

10 There are also indications at Speech and Language Panel meetings that decisions are deferred on using units which the Authority proposes to close and that children who live in areas that previously attended Cap Coch such as Glyncoch and Ynysybwll are now being placed at Llwynycrwn Primary despite longer travelling distances.

11 The proposal indicates that children who need specialist education in a support unit would be transferred to Llwynycrwn Primary School and would be transported at the Authority's expense by taxi service. However the journey from the Aberdare area to Beddau at peak travel time would easily be in the region of 45 minutes each way. Although this is a little below the hour journey time that is recommended as a maximum these children are young and generally more vulnerable than children with lesser educational needs and this together with a full day at school would be very tiring, stressful and detrimental to their general health and well-being.

12 It is likely that children currently needing the level of support that is provided by the units will continue to do so and their learning needs would be such that intervention packages would be unlikely to be adequate. Current funding for AFL (Additional Funding for Learning) is inadequate due to recent squeeze on resources and money from ANF is constantly under threat.

13 There is no clear evidence that support packages are funded enough to work. Support packages in mainstream would not provide the specialist teaching, small

class size and specialist speech and language therapy that Cap Coch currently provides. These are essential for pupils with specific speech and language difficulties in order for them to achieve educational success.

14 Measures that were introduced in September 2014 to identify children who should be placed in units such as Specialist Placement Request Forms which are completed by head teachers have not yet had time to bed in. At the last Panel meeting only three of fourteen applications were accepted the remainder being returned due to lack of detail and will be reconsidered in the Summer Panel meeting. Hence the demand for placements to units is not currently being adequately assessed.

15 Packages such as Clic and Welcom which are even more likely to highlight speech and language difficulties have not yet had time to bed in. This coupled with the Authority's proposals to introduce part-time nurseries will all make it more difficult to assess children at an early stage who should be placed in units.

16 A Speech and Language Unit based at Cap Coch would serve the north of the area covering the north of the Cynon Valley and the Rhonda Valley. It would have effective trained staff (as noted by Estyn), excellent facilities and would be suitably located to cover this area allowing children to be educated closer to their local communities which would facilitate parental links with schools. This in turn would help to develop closer community links and help to build stronger communities which is a key aim of the Welsh Government.

17 The proposals and the Authority's planned changes in the provision of nursery education will have a significant impact on the school. There is the potential to lose a number of dedicated and highly skilled staff which will inevitably have a serious impact on the ability to operate the school effectively. It would have a serious impact on the allocation of subject responsibilities, organisation of the school staffing structure and fabric of the school community.

18 The proposals indicate a planned cost saving of some £27,000 however there is no indication of the cost of re-training and relocating current staff.

19 A Communication Disorder class has recently been introduced at Oaklands Primary school which is less than a mile from Cap Coch. There has been one pupil there this year and three are planned for next. Given the Authority's case being largely based on small numbers of children in classes there is no rationale for opening this unit when there is an excellent Unit at Cap Coch which could have easily adapted.

20 In summary:

- The Authority's case is largely focused on a falling role at Cap Coch pupil role and the increased availability of support packages for children, As indicated

children who live in areas that previously attended Cap Coch are now being sent to Llwyncrwn; there is evidence that children are not being allocated to schools who are earmarked for closure; new support packages have not yet been fully assessed and there is inadequate Additional Needs Funding for them; new pupil disorder identification packages have not had time to bed in, hence the demand for unit placements cannot be properly assessed

- **There is no clear evidence that numbers of children in the Speech and Language Unit have fallen considerably and next year apart they are parallel or have exceeded those at Llwyncrwn.**
- **Cap Coch Primary already has the facilities and a trained staff with experience and a recognisable skill set to maintain the Speech and Language and communication disorder unit.**
- **Cap Coch Primary who has an excellent Estyn report and lies in the top 44 per cent of schools in Wales will be decimated.**
- **The Cynon Valley will be left without adequate provision for Speech and Language and hearing impaired specialisms. The proposals would result in children having to be taxied considerable distances to the detriment of their well-being.**
- **The prospect of closing the units in an area of serious social deprivation once again leaves the community easy victims of reductions in services and questions the social agenda of community first and Objective 1 areas.**

Signed

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Signature]

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Abercynon

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The Proposal

The proposal is to close the primary range Learning Support Class for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at Capcoch Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

because [redacted] is doing so well, he has learned so much and he is reading and writing excellent. I'm so proud of him.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

I would really like if the class stays open because it is doing great for Cameron and the other pupils in his class. Plus more children with difficulties would be able to join the class if necessary in the future.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[redacted] Mother

4. Name (optional)

[redacted]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

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- An increase in requests for statutory assessments and SEN Tribunals due to parental/carers dissatisfaction with the LA
- Enhanced costs due to increased demands for more highly specialist placements than is required.

Clearly, there will be changes for some of the pupils attending the existing provision and the needs of these learners will be fully taken into account in planning appropriate provision to meet their needs. This may consist of supported mainstream placements or in some cases a possible alternative placement in other specialist settings. Transport will be provided where this is needed in line with LA Learner Travel policy.

What alternative options have been considered other than the closure of the LSC in Capcoch Primary School?

As the LSC in Capcoch School has not been full for a number of years this suggested course of action is the only logical solution which will enable the LA to make more effective use of scarce resources. Demand for specialist provisions for Speech and Language across RCT have reduced significantly due to the increasing emphasis on inclusive mainstream education for pupils with SEN. For pupils with speech and language difficulties, the LA has an excellent peripatetic service which provides support to enhance mainstream inclusion experiences. In addition, there continues to be an established LSC for Speech and Language Difficulties in Llwynrwn Primary School should the need for a specialist placement arise.

What is the statutory process to close the LSC?

The Code on School Organisation ("The Code") is made under Sections 38 and 39 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Code came into force on 1st October 2013 and applies in respect of all school proposals published by way of a statutory notice after that date. Proposals to close a school have to follow the following process:

1. The Council's Cabinet considers the Code and authorises a consultation on the changes to the schools;
2. At the start of the consultation period the Council must provide consultees with a consultation document and give them at least 42 days in which to respond, with at least 20 of these days being school days. If the Council considers it appropriate meetings are held with stakeholders during the consultation period;
3. Consultation comments are collated and summarised by the Council. This summary together with the Council's officers own responses is published in a consultation report within 13 weeks of the end of the consultation period and presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration;
4. The Council's Cabinet decide whether to proceed with the changes within 6 months of the end of the consultation period. If the decision is to proceed, Step 5 is taken. If a new option emerges during the consultation which the Council's Cabinet wish to consider, then Steps 1-3 are repeated;
5. Statutory notice is published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The notice must be published on a school day and with 15 school days (not including the day of publication) in the notice period;
6. If objections are received, the Council must publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their responses to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period;
7. The Council's Cabinet must decide to issue its decision on the proposal within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period;
8. If the proposals receive approval they should be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date.

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The Proposal

The proposal is to close the primary range Learning Support Class for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at Capcoch Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

No these pupils need support and I don't think it fere on them to miss out. (they need confidence, skills, communication)

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Children should not be taken by this affect the government should concentrate on the good for nothing people (Drugsies, Alcoholics, on the street) when they are perfectly fine.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

I am a mum of a little girl in cap coch school. (primary)

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted name]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 5 pm on the 5th January 2015

- An increase in requests for statutory assessments and SEN Tribunals due to parental/carer dissatisfaction with the LA
- Enhanced costs due to increased demands for more highly specialist placements than is required.

Clearly, there will be changes for some of the pupils attending the existing provision and the needs of these learners will be fully taken into account in planning appropriate provision to meet their needs. This may consist of supported mainstream placements or in some cases a possible alternative placement in other specialist settings. Transport will be provided where this is needed in line with LA Learner Travel policy.

What alternative options have been considered other than the closure of the LSC in Capcoch Primary School?

As the LSC in Capcoch School has not been full for a number of years this suggested course of action is the only logical solution which will enable the LA to make more effective use of scarce resources. Demand for specialist provisions for Speech and Language across RCT have reduced significantly due to the increasing emphasis on inclusive mainstream education for pupils with SEN. For pupils with speech and language difficulties, the LA has an excellent peripatetic service which provides support to enhance mainstream inclusion experiences. In addition, there continues to be an established LSC for Speech and Language Difficulties in Llwynrwn Primary School should the need for a specialist placement arise.

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8. If the proposals receive approval they should be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date.

This should never affect the children of society and this community.

The government should look at all the drugies, Drunks and also foully claming.

**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate**

This is not fere to the children



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**Proposed Realignment of Learning Support Classes
October 2014**

They need the support and should never be affected by this.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information as to why a realignment of Learning Support Classes is being proposed in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT). On the 18th November 2013 Cabinet considered a report on the Proposed Realignment of Learning Support Classes (LSCs) for Pupils with Special Educational Needs. Approval was given by Cabinet for the proposals to be consulted on, in accordance with the new School Organisation Code 2013. Following the consultation period and Cabinet approval, years 1 and 2 of the 3 year realignment plan were implemented from August 2014 with some minor adjustments.

This document provides an outline of progress achieved during years 1 and 2 of the plan, and year 3 proposals across a range of mainstream settings within RCT. This is the final phase of the realignment plan. Consultation reports for each individual school are attached, so that relevant information can be taken into consideration as part of the consultation process. Proposals include the opening of one LSC in Pontypridd High School and the closure of 3 LSCs in Aberdare Park Primary, Capcoch Primary and Perthcelyn Primary.

There will be an opportunity for all affected parties to contribute their views on the proposals outlined in the individual consultation reports. This will include governors, parents, carers, and staff of all relevant schools that may be losing or gaining a provision. Other interested parties will also be included in the consultation process.

The consultation will commence on the 10th of November 2014 and close on 5th January 2015. A report on the outcome of this consultation will be submitted to the Council's Cabinet for consideration and they will consider, based on the feedback, whether to proceed with the proposal, make changes to the proposal or not proceed with the proposal. Further details relating to the consultation process are provided in the each school's consultation proposal.

Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The Governing Bodies of all schools affected
- Pupils of affected schools
- Parents, carers, guardians, and staff members of affected schools
- Other governing bodies of neighbouring primary schools
- Members of Parliament for Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Estyn
- Teaching and staff trade unions
- Central South Education Consortium
- South East Wales Transport

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- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- Welsh Minister for Education & Skills
- Assembly Members for Rhondda Cynon Taf and regional Assembly Members for the area
- Association
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- The local Communities First Partnership
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board
- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership (Fframwaith)

Background to the Proposal

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice for Wales 2002 provides detailed guidance on the duties and responsibilities of Local Authorities in meeting the SEN of children and young people. Children and young people have SEN if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A learning difficulty is evident when children and young people have:

- significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children and young people of the same age; or
- a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children and young people of the same age in schools within the area of the locality.

The Code of Practice recommends that early years and school settings adopt a graduated response to meeting SEN. A graduated response means that progressively greater expertise and support can be brought in to address the difficulties a child or young person may be experiencing. This additional or different support can be provided through School/Early Years Action, School/Early Years Action Plus or a Statement of SEN depending on the severity of the child/young person's level of need.

For those children and young people with significant SEN in mainstream schools, a further application for funding can be made. Requests for Additional Needs Funding (ANF) to school clusters can be made so as to enhance the support already provided by schools at Early Years Action Plus or School Action Plus. For those pupils who have very significant needs, more specialist placements are required and this might result in a placement in one of our many Learning Support Classes (LSCs), Pupil Referral Units or Special Schools. These placements are agreed by Access and Inclusion Service panels.

Rhondda Cynon Taf has an excellent range of SEN provisions attached to mainstream schools which can be accessed without a Statement of SEN. Data analysis exercises undertaken in 2012/13 suggested that there were some gaps in existing provision and this informed the detailed Cabinet proposal and the 3 year realignment plan that was considered in November 2013. The plan included proposals to enable the Local Authority (LA) to:

- further develop Key Stage 3/4 provision. The level of primary phase provision was high and was not matched by appropriate provision at secondary level. Proposals included changes which would address this imbalance thus enabling pupils who had been successfully placed in mainstream LSC contexts at primary level to transition into mainstream secondary LSC settings as opposed to special school settings and/or mainstream classes with support
- expand Autistic Spectrum/Communication Disorder provisions to address the growth in demand across all phases/key stages

Questionnaire

In order to help the Council reach a decision, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Access and Inclusion Service

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

Or by fax to 01443 744340, or e-mail to A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposal

The proposal is to close the primary range Learning Support Class for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at Capcoch Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Because it is good for the kids, my son enjoys it.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

parent.

4. Name (optional)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

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- An increase in requests for statutory assessments and SEN Tribunals due to parental/carer dissatisfaction with the LA
- Enhanced costs due to increased demands for more highly specialist placements than is required.

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What alternative options have been considered other than the closure of the LSC in Capcoch Primary School?

As the LSC in Capcoch School has not been full for a number of years this suggested course of action is the only logical solution which will enable the LA to make more effective use of scarce resources. Demand for specialist provisions for Speech and Language across RCT have reduced significantly due to the increasing emphasis on inclusive mainstream education for pupils with SEN. For pupils with speech and language difficulties, the LA has an excellent peripatetic service which provides support to enhance mainstream inclusion experiences. In addition, there continues to be an established LSC for Speech and Language Difficulties in Llwynyrwn Primary School should the need for a specialist placement arise.

What is the statutory process to close the LSC?

The Code on School Organisation ("The Code") is made under Sections 38 and 39 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Code came into force on 1st October 2013 and applies in respect of all school proposals published by way of a statutory notice after that date. Proposals to close a school have to follow the following process:

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The Proposal

The proposal is to close the primary range Learning Support Class for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at Capcoch Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Children with speech & language difficulties have just as much right as other pupils to learn & be helped. Closing this class will delay the children in the learning process.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

Capcoch is a fantastic school with dedicated teachers who go above + beyond for their pupils. Closing this class would be detrimental to all children needing this help!!!

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

I am a parent of a child at capcoch primary school and feel sad that this class may be taken away from these children.

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted name]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 5 pm on the 5th January 2015

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14 NOV 2014
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1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

The children in the LSC are settled at Cap-coch. They receive excellent core teaching + learning in this small environment.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

By closing this unit and making the children travel possibly 40 mins each way to school will impact on their daily life. Not to mention taking them away from friends that they have made not only in the LSC class but in mainstream too.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Governor at Cap-coch school

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted Name]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

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The Proposal

The proposal is to close the primary range Learning Support Class for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at Capcoch Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

*Cap-coch has had an LSC for many years.
This unit may be small but the standard of
care, teaching and learning is excellent.*

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

*Moving the children to a new school away from
friendships they have formed will have a negative
effect on their school learning.*

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Parent at affected school

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted Name]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

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31 DEC 2015
LEARNING SUPPORT

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The Proposal

The proposal is to close the primary range Learning Support Class for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at Capcoch Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? No

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

- Cwm Taf University Health Board (CTUHB) Children's Speech and Language Therapy service does not agree with Rhondda Cynon Taf's(RCT) proposal to close the Learning Support Class (LSC) for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at CapCoch.
- The LSC for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at CapCoch provides specialist teaching and Speech and Language Therapy to pupils diagnosed with Specific language Impairment (SLI). Specific language impairment is diagnosed when a child's language does not develop normally and the difficulties cannot be accounted for by learning difficulties, physical abnormality of the speech apparatus, autism spectrum disorder, or hearing loss. The language impairment may include difficulties understanding and/or producing language as well as difficulty with speech production. These difficulties affect the pupils' communication skills, as well as their ability to access all areas of the National Curriculum. I CAN, a charity for children with speech and language difficulties state that 7% of 5 years olds will have a specific language impairment.
- CTUHB Children's Speech and Language Therapy service provides a specialist service for pupils with specific speech and language difficulties within its community service. This specialist service has a clear caseload within the Cynon valley of pupils with specific speech and language difficulties. The service has identified a difficulty with putting pupils forward for admissions panel for LSC for Speech and Language Difficulties. RCT has changed the process for putting pupils forward for panels, this school term. Individual schools will now be able to identify and request specialist placement for pupils they feel are having significant difficulty. It is likely that this new approach could result in more accurate identification of pupils for admissions panel for LSC for Speech and Language Difficulties. It would be premature to close the LSC for Speech and Language Difficulties at CapCoch before this new process has had the opportunity to identify the pupils which the previous process failed to identify.
- The closure of the Learning Support Class for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at Cap Coch will result in an increased demand on Specialist Speech and Language Therapy service within Cwm Taf University Health Board. This has not been discussed with Cwm Taf University Health Board Speech and Language Therapy service.

- **The Children and Young People's Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taff 2011-2014 states that children in RCT should have access to a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities. It highlights that in order to achieve this each local area in Rhondda Cynon Taf needs to be consistent in responding to families' needs. This would not occur in the Cynon valley if the LSC for Speech and Language Difficulties at CapCoch was closed**

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

- **The children's charity 'I CAN' states:**

"Studies have shown that in 5 year olds, SLI affects about 2 children in every classroom (about 7%).."

In light of these statistics, are 18 specialist educational places for pupils with SLI, across all of RCT, sufficient?

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Cwm Taf University Health Board Speech and Language Therapy Service

4. Name – 

Thank you

**Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Access and Inclusion Service
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon
CF45 4UQ**

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06 JAN 2015

Questionnaire

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The proposal is to close the primary range Learning Support Class for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at Capcoch Primary School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

because my son goes to the class and his speech and language has come on really great. the class was the best thing that has come to him. His confidence has been come great as well since this class

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

I really hope you keep this class open, because the class is really helping the children really great. the children won't have come along with their speech and language without this class.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[Redacted] Mother
year [Redacted] in Capcoch primary school

4. Name (optional)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 5 pm on the 5th January 2015

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 11 November 2014 19:54
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: LA SEN PROVISION

Hi [Redacted]
Sorry to trouble again, I bet you are fed up of me this week.

I received today the consultation on the proposal to close the LSC class at Aberdare Park Primary School, while reading the paper work I came across a problem on page 14 where it says What is the likely impact on staff, it says there is only one LSC teacher, and 2 Learning supports assistants (job share) based at the school, this is wrong, you have a dinner lady who works 1 hour a day, this person worked at the Roberstown school and when it closed she along with other staff were moved to Aberdare Park, where she has worked for the past few years.

I phoned [Redacted] this afternoon to ask her if this report was right, because I knew they had missed a member of staff out, she said she would have to find out if there was an extra person working there. Yes she did come back to me and confirm there was a dinner lady working there, she said the reason she was not in the report as dinner ladies do not normally work in the units.

My question [Redacted], why did HR and your staff, leave [Redacted] out, when she is being paid, she started work for the council in Roberstown when her youngest son was 3 he is now 22 years old, how can they miss the member of staff out, as you know [Redacted] spoke at Cabinet when this came before them a few weeks ago, and asked if all staff would be treated tidy when it came the consultation, not like was done a few weeks before when they were told they were going to close early and it had not even been before cabinet, I was told yes they would, but as you can see they missed a member of staff out.

The reason why I know so much about this person it is [Redacted] who works there.

[Redacted] has said that she will be spoken to, to put her mind at ease, I do hope so, that this will happen, [Redacted] has said they know the place is going to close, they have no problem because there are only 3 children there, as I said at Cabinet I hope staff will be treated fair, because they are valued as much as the children.

I do hope that this report will be will be changed to reflect that there are 4 members of staff and not 3.

I did tell [Redacted] that I was going to send you an email and that I would copy her in.
I have cc [Redacted] in as she is [Redacted]

Regards
[Redacted]

*Spoke to [Redacted] 14.11.14 [Redacted]
to reassure her that she would be treated as the
other staff at LSC.
I have explained that she will be included in a revised
document which will be issued next for the consultation
period. I trust this period is the closure of any objections as
above.
14/11/2014*

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 December 2014 21:28
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Closure of lsc in Aberdare park primary school

This is fine, Many thanks

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 December 2014 13:36
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Closure of lsc in Aberdare park primary school

Dear [REDACTED] I have drafted a response for you to forward to [REDACTED]. If you would like this in a letter format please let me know and I will ensure that this is done. If you need any further assistance, please let me know.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
 Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Many thanks for your recent enquiry in relation to the proposals to close the learning support class (LSC) in Aberdare Park Primary which are currently under consideration.

Rhondda Cynon Taf is fortunate in that it has an excellent range of specialist provisions for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) attached to mainstream schools. However, due to the imbalance between primary and secondary provisions and gaps in existing provision it has been necessary to consult on changes to further improve the capacity for: assessing pupil needs in the foundation phase; meeting complex needs at secondary level; learners with autism and communication disorders in all key stages. In order to achieve these improvements, a 3 year plan has been devised and proposals have included the closure of some existing provisions which are not well utilised; establishment of some new provisions; and the re-designation of other provisions.

The Local Authority is currently consulting on year 3 of a 3 year plan. The initial part of the consultation process ends in January, when Cabinet will decide, depending on the responses to this consultation, whether or not to give permission to proceed to a further consultation period before reaching a final decision. This decision may or may not uphold the proposals and we should know the outcome by April 2015. There is no confirmation at this point that things will go ahead as proposed, and the Local Authority will of course take on board the views of staff, parents and stakeholders to inform decision making. You are able to make your views known as part of the consultation process and I would urge you to do so.

As you know the LSC can accommodate up to 8 pupils and there are currently only 3 pupils placed in this setting and only 2 at the point of suggested closure. Your son Caden will of course be transitioning out of his current LSC at the end of year 2 and decisions relating to his key stage 2 placement will be made in collaboration with yourselves, the school Educational Psychologist and SENCo. The nearest LSC to Aberdare Park Primary School is in Caradog Primary School (which is only 1.1 miles away) and there is also another LSC in Cwmbach Community Primary School. Transportation will be provided in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy and placement will be made in the nearest and most appropriate specialist setting. Alternatively, an inclusive education with packages of support in the mainstream setting can also be provided if this was appropriate to Caden's needs.

All placements for LSC provisions are considered in a multi-disciplinary Local Authority panel. There are strict entry criteria for LSCs and placements are only agreed if children clearly meet the criteria for placement. Some children whose needs do not warrant a specialist placement in a LSC are not offered a placement and their needs are met in mainstream with support. There is delegated funding provided to clusters to meet these needs.

We recognise that you have very positive experiences of the LSC in Aberdare Park Primary. However, the Local Authority is required to make effective use of resources and there is a clear need to rationalise some provisions in order to ensure that we have sufficient provision across all age ranges for a wide range of SEN. The proposals have been informed by a range of data sources, including historical, current and predicted needs. Based on current data there is insufficient demand to open a key stage 2 complex needs LSC in Aberdare Park Primary as there are two other classes in very close proximity and pupil numbers do not warrant this.

The proposals will provide fair and equal access for all learners with SEN in RCT. However, should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to get in contact with Gaynor Davies, Acting Service Director for Access, Engagement and Inclusion on 01443 744000.

[REDACTED]
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ
[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 December 2014 08:08
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Closure of lsc in Aberdare park primary school

[REDACTED] please see the email below from [REDACTED] and the other email from a parent. Please could you draft a response and send to [REDACTED]
Thanks
[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 December 2014 19:44
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Closure of lsc in Aberdare park primary school

Hi [REDACTED]

Please could you provide me with some of the details from the meeting with parents re: closure of LSU's for me to reply to the parents below. I would not want to include any incorrect facts in my response

Many thanks
[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 December 2014 19:25
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Closure of lsc in Aberdare park primary school

Sent from my iPad

Dear [REDACTED]

We are sure you are already aware of the "proposed" closure of the lsc unit in Aberdare Park Primary School. May we mention, as parents of a current pupil in the unit, how dismayed we are that the phenomenal work that the teacher and assistants achieve with our children will soon end, is heart wrenching to say the least. Our son, [REDACTED], has no choice but to attend either Cwmbach, Caradog or try mainstream, which is not really a viable option, in September. There has been no proposal to include a key stage 2 lsc in AAPS, even though they have the capacity to accommodate a class, which is disappointing to say at least. Children with learning difficulties have been before panels, where AAPS were willing to place them only to be refused. This closure is on the basis of predicted rather than current use, as we were told in a meeting today. How can such a prediction be made? As you can imagine we love our children, and we love our lsc, any help you could give us, we would be enormously grateful.

Many thanks
[REDACTED]



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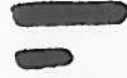
Tŷ Trevithick
Abercynon,
Mountain Ash/Aberpennar
CF45 4UQ

Tel/Ffôn: 01443 744000, Fax/Ffacs: 01443 744024

To:



Gofynnwch Am:
Please Ask For:
Rhif Est:
Telephone N°:
Ffacs:
Fax:
E-Bost:
E-Mail:
Cylchlythyr:
Circular:



Fy Nghyf: AS
My Ref:

Eich Cyf: Your Ref:

Dyddiad: 07/01/15
Date:

Dear [Redacted]

Re: Proposed Realignment of Learning Support Classes

Thank you for your response to the Local Authority's recent consultation on proposed changes to its Learning Support Class provision.

I note your comments and will incorporate the points you make into the report to be submitted to Cabinet following this consultation period.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Ceri Jones
Acting Head of Access & Inclusion
For the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Chris Bradshaw
Director of Education and Lifelong Learning | Cyfarwddwr Cwasarneth Addysg a Dysgu Cyddol Cws



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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 December 2014 11:29
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: SEN Aberdare Park Primary School . / Consultation on Proposal to Close Foundation Phase Learning at Aberdare Park Primary School

Importance: High

Dear [REDACTED]

Please will you allow this email from myself as an objection to the closure of the SEN Learning Support Class at Aberdare Park Primary School Trecynon Aberdare, the reason I am sending this email, because the form you sent me on your email, I can not fill in and return it back.

The Proposal

The proposal is to close the Foundation Phase Learning Support Class for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Aberdare Park Primary School

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes (No X) Not sure.

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

The reason I do not agree with the proposal, your report is WRONG on page 5, you say in the report that there are 3 staff, this is wrong you have 4 staff working there, for the life of me I do not now why you did not know this, as all 4 members of staff have pay numbers, pay tax, pay NI, and have holidays, plus sick pay. It was myself who brought this mistake to the Education Dept, and they had to check to see if I was right.

2. Please state any additional views or points you would like to be taken into account.

When this proposal was brought before a cabinet meeting this year the Leader of the Council allowed me to speak on this item, I had and still have a great concern that staff who work at this unit were told in Advance that their unit would close early, yet it had not been before Cabinet, formally, so I spoke to the Leader on this, when I addressed the cabinet on the proposals I asked a question that all staff who work at The unit at Aberdare Park would be treated the same and equal, I was told yes, but this was not the case, because you left a member of staff out of your report, yes she might be a dinner lady but she has Worked at this site for some time and before then at Roberts town infants, so she is on council records.

3. Please indicate who you are.

[REDACTED]

Name

[REDACTED]



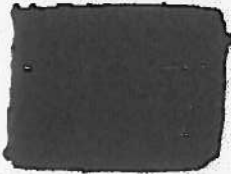
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Tŷ Trevithick

Abercynon

Mountain Ash/Aberpennar CF45 4UQ

Tel/Ffôn: 01443 744000, Fax/Ffacs: 01443 744024



Gofynnwch Am:

Please Ask For: Gaynor Cynan Jones

Rhif Est:

Ext No 4362

Fy Nghyf: GCJ/AS
 My Ref:

Eich Cyf: Your Ref:

Dyddiad: 04/12/14
 Date:

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Proposed Realignment of Learning Support Classes

Thank you for your response to the Local Authority's recent consultation on proposed changes to its Learning Support Class provision.

I note your comments and will incorporate the points you make into the report to be submitted to Cabinet following this consultation period.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Cynan Jones
Acting Head of Access & Inclusion
for the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Chris Bradshaw

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning | Cytarwyddwr Gwasanaeth Addysg a Dysgu Cydol Oes



Available in alternative formats and languages | Dewiswch iaith a diwyg eich dogfen

Submitted on 02 Dec 14

Customer Name:

[Redacted]

Customer Telephone No:

[Redacted]

Customer Email:

[Redacted]

Customer Address:

[Redacted]

Enquiry type

Comment

Comment:

Hello, I like to object to a proposal that the council is doing the shutting down of learning support classes in primary schools (aberdare primary, capcoh abercombol, prrthcelyn primery). When these classes will be shut there is only one class (key stage one) for all of the Taff valley, a class with a maximum of 8 pupils. At the moment council staff (not the teachers) think it is enough ,but can anybody predict the future? Then we got 2 classes (key stage 2) for all of the Taff valley with a maximum of 12 pupils, which is not so bad, but kids from stage 1 can go to stage 2, so these 2 classes are going to be less then half empty. I ve also heard from very good sources that there are kids who need to be in support classes but have been refused only because cost need to go down, and by keeping these classes empty it would look too bad idea to shut them down. Let's not forget about the kids how already attend these classes, they are going to go through a hard time of changing school, these are kids who need extra help not extra work, this decision is going to make children's hard life even harder, only a parent can understand.

[Redacted]

Estyn's response to the proposal to Close the Key Stage 2 Learning Support Class for Pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties at Perthcelyn Primary School

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council proposes to close the learning support class (LSC) for pupils with complex learning difficulties in Perthcelyn Primary School.

The school has a key stage 2 learning support class for pupils with complex learning difficulties. There are currently 7 pupils attending this provision which has a maximum capacity of 10 places. Pupil forecast information shows that the number of pupils will reduce from 7 to 4 by 2016.

The proposal is part of a strategic realignment of learning support classes for pupils with special educational needs. The strategy aims to modernise and improve the range of SEN provision and enhance opportunities for mainstream inclusion for vulnerable groups of learners.

Conclusion

The local authority has provided sufficient evidence to show that the plan is likely to at least maintain the standard of education in the area.

The local authority has given a clear rationale for the proposal as part of an on-going strategy to realign learning support classes for pupils with special educational needs. It sets out clearly the expected benefits of the strategy and of this proposal on learners with complex learning difficulties across the authority. It identifies reasonably that the 4 pupils remaining in the learning support class at the time of the proposed closure would be found a specialist placement at either Caradog or Cwmbach primary school. It gives assurances appropriately that the views of parents and relevant professionals will be obtained to ensure that there is minimum

impact on the 4 remaining pupils and their families. Transportation would be provided in line with the authority's policies, and the placements would be arranged in the nearest and most appropriate specialist setting.

However, the proposal sets out the disadvantages as being the risk to the authority of not closing the provision. The proposal does not address any potential disadvantages to the 4 pupils, their parents or carers. The proposal shows clearly the distance from Perthcelyn Primary to Caradog Primary as 5.9 miles and to Cwmbach Primary as 4.7 miles, but it does not explicitly identify what this could mean for the travel and accessibility of this specialist provision for the 4 pupils.

The proposal does not identify alternative options or indicate whether any were considered.

The proposal relates to an English medium school and does not address any impact on Welsh medium provision within the authority.

The proposal sets out clearly that the number of pupils attending learning support classes in Perthcelyn is declining over time, and identifies reasonably that the projected number of pupils (4) will not form a viable teaching or beneficial social environment for those 4 pupils.

The authority's realignment strategy allows appropriately for the better targeting of resources for areas of greatest need within the authority, and for improved learning provisions for vulnerable learners.

On an authority wide basis the proposal identifies a reduction in surplus places in some specialist provisions whilst enhancing capacity in key areas of SEN. The proposal does not make reference to any impact on surplus places at Perthcelyn Primary School.

There is no assessment of impact on the leadership and management of the school, or school performance information other than the outcome of the Estyn inspection of 2010 and the current school categorisation by the regional school improvement service. There is also no information on the schools the four pupils are likely to transfer to should the proposal go ahead.

Perthcelyn receives a delegated budget of £72,894.00 for the learning support class. This funding will be re-directed to pupils with complex and diverse needs across the authority. The proposal states that the removal of the delegated budget will not impact on the overall capacity of the school to deliver education, but does not explain if the removal of the delegated funding will have any implications for the school budget.

The impact on the removal of the temporary teacher for the learning support class, described as 'not having any measurable benefits' at Perthcelyn Primary is not clarified.

Estyn response to the proposal to close the Foundation Phase Learning Support Class at Aberdare Park Primary School

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

Introduction

This consultation proposal is from Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. The proposal is to close the Foundation Phase learning support class (LSC) at Aberdare Park Primary School on 31st August 2015. This is part of a wider proposal to realign learning support classes across the county and is the final phase of a three year plan. If implemented, the proposal will mean that pupils currently attending the LSC will either receive additional support in a mainstream setting or attend alternative specialist provision at another school.

Summary/ Conclusion

For Aberdare Park Primary School, losing its LSC provision will have an impact on the provision for the pupils taught there. This may mean a change of school for a very small number of pupils. Estyn cannot comment on the standard of education the pupils from Aberdare Park Primary School LSC may receive after the proposed closure. This is because the destination of the pupils still at the school has yet to be decided.

Description and benefits

The local authority has given a clear outline of the expected benefits of the proposal. These include:

- increased opportunities for inclusion;
- better targeting of resources for areas of greatest need within the local authority;
- a reduction in surplus places in some specialist provisions whilst enhancing capacity in key areas of SEN; and
- improved learning provisions which provide better value for money and improved life chances for the most vulnerable learners.

The disadvantage of the proposal is that it may involve a change in school for a very small number of pupils.

The local authority has considered suitable alternatives for the realignment of LSCs in the main report. The alternative of out of county placement was appropriately discounted due to the additional cost. The closing of current provision and further delegating funding to schools was discounted as local authority data suggests that pupils make good progress in specialist provisions. However, in the consultation for Aberdare Park Primary School no alternative to the closure of this particular provision was considered. This proposal has been written in response to the increase in surplus places for LSCs in the primary phase across Rhondda Cynon Taff. In Aberdare Park Primary School there are currently three pupils attending the provision, which as a capacity for eight places. This proposal will therefore help to reduce the surplus.

The local authority has considered the impact of the changes on learner travel. Alternative specialist provision for pupils at Aberdare Park Primary School is located 1.1 miles away and transportation will be provided in line with the Council's Learner Travel policy. This proposal would therefore appear to have minimal impact on the travel arrangements for the remaining pupils in the LSC.

The proposal states that there will be no significant impact on Aberdare. The local authority has undertaken a community impact assessment and equality impact assessment. However, there are no results of these assessments in the consultation paper and so Estyn is unable to comment on the outcomes.

The facility that may close offers English medium provision only. There would therefore be no impact on Welsh medium provision arising from this proposal.

It is Estyn's opinion that the closure of the LSC at Aberdare Park Primary School will lead to very little disruption to pupils' learning and will appropriately address the issue of surplus LSC places in the primary phase across Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Estyn response to the proposal to close the Primary learning support class for pupils with speech and language difficulties at Capcoch Primary School.

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

This consultation proposal is from Rhondda Cynon Taf Country Borough Council.

The proposal is to close the primary learning support class for pupils with speech and language difficulties at Capcoch Primary School on 31st August 2015 as part of the proposer's overall realignment of support for pupils with Special Educational Needs within the authority.

Summary/ Conclusion

Whilst the proposal appears to be coherent with the overall aims of the authority to achieve a fair allocation of resources and meet growing areas of special needs provision in the area, there are a number of unanswered questions with relation to the impact on the pupils who currently access the provision.

Consequently it is not possible to fully ascertain whether the proposal is likely to at least maintain or improve standards of education or wellbeing of the pupils directly affected by the closure.

Description and benefits

The local authority has provided suitable rationale for the proposal. It asserts credibly that the proposal would appear to support achievement of the following overall benefits:

- reduce the number of surplus places within the facility at Capcoch Primary School whilst enhancing capacity in key areas of SEN;

- realign additional learning needs' provision in the areas to address the mismatch between identified needs and current provision;
- promote greater equality of access to specialist provision for pupils with significant additional learning needs; and therefore
- reduce poor attendance, disaffection and disengagement and improve educational outcomes of vulnerable learners;
- reduce demand for inappropriate requests for special school placements;
- decrease requests for statutory assessments and SEN tribunal hearings as pupils needs are more effectively met; and therefore
- reduce costs.

The proposer credibly asserts that, in the current financial climate, a failure to make the proposed changes to the provision for pupils with additional learning needs would limit the authority's ability to achieve the benefits above for the area as a whole. Therefore the proposer clearly sets out the benefits and disadvantages when compared with maintaining the status quo.

However the proposer does not present or analyse in sufficient detail the benefits or disadvantages to current pupils attending the learning support class at Capcoch Primary School or the probable impact on their wellbeing as a result of the loss of the specialist facility, a transfer to mainstream education, or as a result of any transfer to another school.

The assertion that the closure of the learning support class at Capcoch Primary School would increase opportunities for mainstream inclusion in local community schools for pupils with speech and language difficulties is also not shown.

The proposer identifies a number of solutions to manage the risks of the closure. Whilst the solutions proposed would potentially adequately address the changes to learners' provision, it would appear that entitlement to any of the options, including transport, will be subject to a reassessment of pupils' needs. Therefore the proposer does not provide a firm enough commitment to maintaining the current standards of education or to facilitating free choice to sufficiently reassure the parents and pupils directly affected by the closure. The proposal does not assess sufficiently the impact of an additional 17 mile journey on young learners' wellbeing.

Equally, the authority assures that a community and equality impact assessment has been carried out, however this has not been included in the proposal. Therefore the impact on learners and suitability of either a transfer to a mainstream class with a package of support or to a specialist class at Llywycrwn Primary School, if eligible, cannot be fully assessed.

The proposer does not set out fully all considered alternatives and therefore it is not possible to assess the appropriateness of any reasons for discounting them.

At the time of the proposed closure, the primary learning class will be at 25% capacity and has not run at full capacity for some time. It reasonably asserts that this is due to the inclusion agenda: the success of school based support coupled with additional needs funding and packages of support has resulted in positive outcomes for a number of pupils in mainstream settings. It appears therefore that the authority has shown that the proposal is likely to effectively reduce places that are surplus to requirement.

However the authority does not specify the impact on places at the proposed alternative provision at Llwynocrwn Primary School, if pupils were to transfer there.

The proposals do not affect Welsh medium provision in the authority therefore the proposer has not commented on this aspect.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer has outlined appropriately the need and benefits of realigning its SEN provision to better meet the needs of learners in the authority.

This would appear to potentially raise standards and wellbeing, and reduce the costs and likelihood of appeals to SEN tribunal and the award of places in specialist schools.

The proposal sets out clearly and fairly the outcomes of the most recent inspection in 2013 of Capcoch Primary School. Inspectors judged its standard as good and as that it has excellent prospects for improvement. The proposer appropriately highlights that inspectors found that the provision for all pupils with additional learning needs is effective and they make good progress in school and that well-trained support staff offer a high level of help to individuals and small groups of pupils. In addition, it was also comments that 'the resource provision classes and mainstream classes benefit from good opportunities to work alongside each other.'

The authority currently places the school in category B of four categories with A being the best.

However it does not provide any detail or analysis of the school's most recent outcomes or those of the primary learning support class or a comparison to alternative provision. The proposer therefore does not provide sufficient information to assess whether the standards of education of those directly affected by the closure will at least be maintained.

The proposer identifies appropriately that the proposed closure will not affect the school's ability to deliver the school's curriculum as the staff within the learning support class are centrally employed. However additional funding of £60,685 for the learning support class will no longer be delegated to the school.

The authority appropriately identifies that children from the local community are likely to be able continue to attend Capcoch Primary with packages of support to facilitate their inclusion and progress and that local pupils with severe Speech and Language difficulties will likely to continue to be able to attend the specialist facility at Llwynocrwn Primary School, subject to need.

Ymateb Estyn i'r cynnig i gau'r dosbarth cymorth dysgu cynradd i ddisgyblion ag anawsterau iaith a llefaredd yn Ysgol Gynradd Capcoch.

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan Arolygwyr Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru.

O dan delerau Deddf Safonau a Threfniadaeth Ysgolion (Cymru) 2013 a'i Chod cysylltiedig, mae'n ofynnol i gynigwyr anfon dogfennau ymgynghori i Estyn. Fodd bynnag, nid yw Estyn yn gorff y mae'n ofynnol iddo weithredu yn unol â'r Cod ac nid yw'r Ddeddf yn gosod unrhyw ofynion statudol ar Estyn o ran materion trefniadaeth ysgolion. Felly, fel corff yr ymgynghorir ag ef, bydd Estyn yn rhoi eu barn ar rinweddau cyffredinol cynigion trefniadaeth ysgolion yn unig.

Mae Estyn wedi ystyried yr agweddau addysgol ar y cynnig ac mae wedi llunio'r ymateb canlynol i'r wybodaeth a ddarparwyd gan y cynigiwr.

Cyflwyniad

Dyma gynnis ymgynghorol gan Gyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Y cynnig yw cau'r dosbarth cymorth dysgu cynradd i ddisgyblion ag anawsterau iaith a lleferydd yn Ysgol Gynradd Capcoch ar 31 Awst 2015 fel rhan o waith y cynigiwr i ad-drefnu cymorth i ddisgyblion ag Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig ar draws yr awdurdod yn gyffredinol.

Crynodeb/Casgliad

Mae'n ymddangos bod y cynnig yn cyd-fynd â nodau cyffredinol yr awdurdod, sef dyrannu adnoddau'n deg a diwallu'r cynnydd mewn meysydd darpariaeth anghenion arbennig yn yr ardal, ond mae nifer o gwestiynau heb eu hateb o ran yr effaith ar y disgyblion sy'n defnyddio'r ddarpariaeth ar hyn o bryd.

O ganlyniad, nid yw'n bosibl canfod yn llawn a yw'r cynnig o leiaf yn debygol o gynnal neu wella safonau addysg neu les y disgyblion y bydd cau'r dosbarth yn effeithio'n uniongyrchol arnynt.

Disgrifiad a manteision

Mae'r awdurdod lleol wedi rhoi rhesymwaith addas ar gyfer y cynnig. Mae'n hawlio'n gredadwy ei bod hi'n ymddangos i'r cynnig gynorthwyo â chyflawni'r manteision cyffredinol canlynol:

- lleihau nifer y lleoedd dros ben yn y cyfleuster yn Ysgol Gynradd Capcoch tra'n gwella'r gallu mewn meysydd AAA allweddol;
- ad-drefnu'r ddarpariaeth anghenion dysgu ychwanegol yn y meysydd er mwyn mynd i'r afael â'r diffyg cyfatebiaeth rhwng yr anghenion a nodwyd a'r ddarpariaeth bresennol;

- hybu mynediad mwy cyfartal i ddarpariaeth arbenigol ar gyfer disgyblion ag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol sylweddol; ac felly
- lleihau presenoldeb gwael, dadrithio ac ymddieithrio a gwella deilliannau addysgol dysgwyr agored i niwed;
- lleihau'r galw am geisiadau amhriodol am leoliadau mewn ysgolion arbennig;
- gostwng ceisiadau am asesiadau statudol a gwrandawiadau tribiwnlysoedd AAA gan fod anghenion disgyblion yn cael eu bodloni'n fwy effeithiol; ac felly
- lleihau costau.

Mae'r cynigiwr yn hawlio'n gredadwy y byddai methu gwneud y newidiadau arfaethedig i'r ddarpariaeth ar gyfer disgyblion ag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol, yn yr hinsawdd ariannol presennol, yn cyfyngu ar allu'r awdurdod i gyflawni'r manteision uchod i'r maes cyfan. Felly, mae'r cynigiwr yn nodi'n glir y manteision a'r anffanteision disgwylledig o gymharu â'r sefyllfa bresennol.

Fodd bynnag, nid yw'r cynigiwr yn cyflwyno nac yn dadansoddi'n ddigon manwl y manteision neu'r anffanteision i ddisgyblion presennol sy'n mynychu'r dosbarth cymorth dysgu yn Ysgol Gynradd Capcoch na'r effaith debygol ar eu lles o ganlyniad i gollu'r cyfleuster arbenigol, trosglwyddo i addysg brif ffrwd, neu drosglwyddo i ysgol arall.

Hefyd, nid yw'r hawliad y byddai cau'r dosbarth cymorth dysgu yn Ysgol Gynradd Capcoch yn cynyddu'r cyfleoedd i gynnwys disgyblion ag anawsterau iaith a lleferydd yn y brif ffrwd, mewn ysgolion cymunedol lleol, yn cael ei ddangos ychwaith.

Mae'r cynigiwr yn nodi nifer o atebion i reoli risgiau cau'r dosbarth. Er y gallai'r atebion a gynigir fynd i'r afael yn ddigonol â newidiadau i'r ddarpariaeth i ddysgwyr, mae'n ymddangos y byddai hawl i unrhyw rai o'r opsiynau, gan gynnwys cludiant, yn destun ailasesiad o anghenion disgyblion. Felly, nid yw'r cynigiwr yn cynnig ymrwymiad digon cadarn i gynnal y safonau addysg presennol nac i hwyluso dewis rhydd er mwyn rhoi sicrwydd digonol i'r rhieni a'r disgyblion y mae'r cau yn effeithio'n uniongyrchol arnynt. Nid yw'r cynnig yn asesu effaith taith 17 milltir ychwanegol ar les dysgwyr ifanc yn ddigonol.

Yn yr un modd, mae'r awdurdod yn sicrhau bod asesiad o'r effaith ar gydraddoldeb ac ar y gymuned wedi'i gynnal, ond nid yw hwn wedi'i gynnwys yn y cynnig. Felly, ni ellir asesu'n llawn yr effaith ar ddysgwyr ac addaswydd trosglwyddo i ddosbarth prif ffrwd gyda phecyn cymorth neu drosglwyddo i ddosbarth arbenigol yn Ysgol Gynradd Llwynocrwn, os yw'r dysgwyr yn gymwys.

Nid yw'r cynigiwr yn rhoi disgrifiad llawn o'r holl ddewisiadau eraill a ystyriwyd ac, felly, nid yw'n bosibl asesu priodoldeb unrhyw resymau dros ddiystyru'r rhain.

Ar adeg y cau arfaethedig, 25% o'r lleoedd yn y dosbarth dysgu cynradd fydd yn llawn ac nid yw wedi bod yn llawn ers cryn amser. Mae'n hawlio'n rhesymol mai'r

agenda cynhwysiant sydd i gyfrif am hyn: mae llwyddiant cymorth yn yr ysgol ar y cyd â chyllid a phecynnau cymorth ar gyfer anghenion ychwanegol wedi arwain at ddeilliannau cadarnhaol i nifer o ddisgyblion mewn lleoliadau prif ffrwd. Mae'n ymddangos, felly, bod yr awdurdod wedi dangos bod y cynnig yn debygol o leihau yn effeithiol nifer y lleoedd dros ben nad oes eu hangen.

Fodd bynnag, nid yw'r awdurdod yn pennu'r effaith ar y lleoedd yn y ddarpariaeth amgen arfaethedig yn Ysgol Gynradd Llwynocrwn, pe bai disgyblion yn trosglwyddo yno.

Nid yw'r cynigion yn effeithio ar ddarpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg yn yr awdurdod felly nid yw'r cynigiwr wedi rhoi sylwadau ar yr agwedd hon.

Agweddau addysgol ar y cynnig

Mae'r cynigiwr wedi amlinellu'n briodol yr angen i ad-drefnu ei ddarpariaeth AAA i fodloni anghenion dysgwyr yn yr awdurdod yn well, a manteision yr ad-drefnu.

Mae'n ymddangos y gallai hyn godi safonau a gwella lles, a lleihau costau a'r tebygolrwydd y bydd apeliadau i dribiwnlys AAA a dyfarnu lleoedd mewn ysgolion arbenigol.

Mae'r cynnig yn cyflwyno'n glir ac yn deg ddeilliannau'r arolygiad mwyaf diweddar o Ysgol Gynradd Capcoch yn 2013. Barnodd arolygwyr fod ei safon yn dda a bod ganddi ragolygon gwella rhagorol. Mae'r cynigiwr yn amlygu'n briodol fod arolygwyr o'r farn bod y ddarpariaeth i bob disgybl ag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol yn effeithiol a'u bod yn gwneud cynnydd da yn yr ysgol, a bod staff cymorth hyfforddedig yn cynnig llawer o help i unigolion ac i grwpiau bychain o ddisgyblion. Yn ogystal, mae'n rhoi'r sylw hefyd 'bod dosbarthiadau'r ddarpariaeth adnoddau a dosbarthiadau prif ffrwd yn elwa ar gyfleoedd da i weithio ochr yn ochr â'i gilydd.'

Ar hyn o bryd, mae'r awdurdod yn gosod yr ysgol yng nghategori B o bedwar categori; A yw'r categori gorau.

Fodd bynnag, nid yw'n darparu unrhyw fanylion na dadansoddiad o ddeilliannau mwyaf diweddar yr ysgol na'r dosbarth cymorth dysgu cynradd na chymhariaeth â ddarpariaeth arall. Felly, nid yw'r cynigiwr yn darparu digon o wybodaeth i asesu a fydd safonau addysg y rhai y mae'r cau yn effeithio'n uniongyrchol arnynt yn cael eu cynnal o leiaf.

Mae'r cynigiwr yn nodi'n briodol na fydd y cau arfaethedig yn effeithio ar allu'r ysgol i gyflwyno cwricwlwm yr ysgol gan fod y staff yn y dosbarth cymorth dysgu'n cael eu cyflogi'n ganolog. Fodd bynnag, ni fydd cyllid ychwanegol o £60,685 ar gyfer y dosbarth cymorth dysgu'n cael ei ddirprwyo i'r ysgol mwyach.

Mae'r awdurdod yn nodi'n briodol bod plant o'r gymuned leol yn debygol o allu parhau i fynychu Ysgol Capcoch gyda phecynnau cymorth i hwyluso'u cynhwysiant

a'u cynnydd ac y bydd disgyblion lleol ag anawsterau iaith a lleferydd difrifol yn debygol o barhau i allu mynychu'r cyfleuster arbenigol yn Ysgol Gynradd Llwynocrwn, yn amodol ar angen.

Estyn response to the proposal to establish a new learning support class in key stages 3 and 4 at Pontypridd High School for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

This consultation proposal is from Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.

The proposal is to establish a new learning support class in key stages 3 and 4 at Pontypridd High School for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties from 1st September 2015. It forms part of the proposer's overall realignment of support for pupils with additional learning needs within the authority.

Summary/ Conclusion

It is Estyn's opinion that this proposal is likely to at least maintain current standards of education and also create capacity to improve outcomes for pupils with additional learning needs in the area.

The proposer coherently establishes the need for a learning support class at Pontypridd High School for pupils moving from key stage 2 into key stage 3 and subsequently to key stage 4.

Description and benefits

It is proposed that the authority will establish a learning support class at Pontypridd High Community School that will have places for 10 pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties across key stages 3 and 4. Placements will be agreed by local authority panels. The learning support class will be staffed by a specialist teacher and two learning support assistants who will be centrally funded.

The proposer provides a well-reasoned rationale for the proposal.

Data analysis exercises undertaken in 2012/13 suggest that there were gaps in existing provision and this informed a three year SEN realignment plan that was considered in November 2013. This proposal would affect part of the realignment plan.

There are currently two learning support classes at key stage 3 and 4 for complex learning difficulties. Learners placed in these facilities have a range of needs including some with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The local authority currently has five key stage 2 learning support classes for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, one of which is based at a feeder school to Pontypridd High School. However it does not have a learning support class for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties who have coped well in these settings to transfer to at key stages 3 and 4. This represents a local and county-wide mismatch and gap in provision. The local authority has appropriately prioritised the establishment of a learning support class to fill this gap in provision at key stages 3 and 4 and to ensure a better distribution of available resources.

The authority sets out the expected benefits of the proposal clearly and coherently. Establishing a learning support class for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties at Pontypridd High School would appear to effectively enable the local authority to meet the needs of learners who would benefit from the intensive support of a learning support class alongside more inclusive approaches.

It would appear to increase opportunities for mainstream inclusion in local community schools for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and thus reduce transport and other costs of inappropriate placements in other settings.

The authority reasonably asserts that the provision would potentially reduce incidents of exclusion and therefore improve life chances for the most vulnerable learners.

The authority appropriately asserts that the new provision may reduce the demand for special school placements which can then be ring-fenced for pupils with greater complexity of need, and medical and physical barriers to learning. It correctly identifies that out of county placements may not always provide good value for money and transporting pupils and young people out of county for extensive periods is not good practice.

The authority does not appear to identify any disadvantages of the proposal other than possible over-subscription; this would be managed by the authority's Access and Inclusion Service. It does not explore fully the impact on all pupils of an increased number of students at Pontypridd High School with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

However, the authority identifies an appropriate range of risks associated with non-approval of the learning support class.

The proposer has considered approaching an alternative school to establish provision of this nature but has discounted this appropriately.

The authority does not provide current evidence of Pontypridd High School's inclusive practice and success in supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the mainstream in order to support its assertion that it is the best choice of school for this reason.

However it asserts reasonably that there is sufficient specialist primary provision in the locality to ensure that the secondary learning support class at Pontypridd High

School would be well utilised. It also effectively identifies that it is good practice for children to transfer from a specialist key stage 2 to a key stage 3 provision in the same locality. The proposal would therefore potentially ensure a seamless transition of support and continuity in friendship groups for pupils attending primary learning support classes at its feeder school. Therefore this would appear to confirm Pontypridd High School as the preferred choice.

In addition, the authority identifies effectively that the proposal would potentially allow Pontypridd High School to make effective use of any surplus space.

The proposer has not commented on the impact of the proposal on Welsh medium provision within the community as the proposal affects English medium provision only.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposal sets out clearly the outcomes of the most recent inspection report of Pontypridd High School which identified it in 2010 as an excellent school with an established, coherent pastoral structure and good provision for additional learning needs.

However the authority currently places the school in category C of four categories with A being the best. The authority provides no further explanation of the reason(s) for the school's downturn and categorisation. It also does not provide any detail or analysis of the school's most recent outcomes in order to establish its capacity to support the most vulnerable learners.

The authority does not consider that the proposal will have any negative impact on the delivery of the full curriculum at each key stage. It convincingly asserts that the establishment of a learning support class would improve the overall capacity of the school to deliver a curriculum appropriate to the needs of all learners, including those already enrolled at the school with a package of support for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Collaboration between the learning support class teacher and school staff could improve SEN provision within the school, who could also provide support and training to mainstream staff. This would appear to effectively enhance the school's capacity to improve outcomes for these learners.

Additional funding of £100, 00 will be delegated to the school for capitation and to cover staff costs. Improved learning provision will potentially provide better value for money.

The proposer provides an assurance that an equality and communities impact assessment has been carried out; however this is not included in the consultation paper. It is therefore not possible to comment on the impact of the proposals on vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs beyond that considered above.

[The following text is extremely faint and illegible due to low contrast and blurring. It appears to be a multi-paragraph document.]



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

Tŷ Trevithick
Abercynon,
Mountain Ash/Aberpennar
CF45 4UQ

Tel/Ffôn: 01443 744000, Fax/Ffacs: 01443 744024

To: [Redacted]

Gofynnwch Am:
Please Ask For:
Rhif Est:
Telephone N°:
Ffacs:
Fax:
E-Bost:
E-Mail:
Cylichlythyr:
Circular:

Fy Nghyf: AS
My Ref:

Eich Cyf:
Your Ref:

Dyddiad: 07/01/15
Date:

Dear [Redacted]

Re: Proposed Realignment of Learning Support Classes

Thank you for your response to the Local Authority's recent consultation on proposed changes to its Learning Support Class provision.

Your recent comments together with your correspondence dated February 2014 in relation to the proposed realignment of Learning Support Class provision have been noted and points you make will be incorporated into the report to be submitted to Cabinet following this consultation period.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Chris Bradshaw
Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Chris Bradshaw
Director of Education and Lifelong Learning | Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth Addysg a Dysgu Cytol Oes



RCT EDUCATION

22 DEC 2014

RECEIVED

TY TREVITHICK

22 DEC 2014

Ref: Capc/0712/r/

LEARNING SUPPORT

19th December 2014

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, RCT CBC
Access and Inclusion Service
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon, CF45 4UQ

Re: RCT Consultation to Close the Primary Learning Support Class for Pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties at Capcoch Primary School

I am writing in response to the Council's consultation on the future of the Learning Support Class (LSC) at Capcoch Primary School for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties.

I responded to the Council's consultation on the LSC in February 2014, stating that I supported the comments submitted by the school's governors to retain the LSC. I stated that I would be concerned at Cynon Valley being left without adequate provision for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties and at the resulting need for young children to be expected to travel considerable distances to receive appropriate schooling. I believe these comments still stand.

I note from the Council's own paper that this is something the Council is concerned about, proposing interim arrangements to protect the current LSC pupils from the additional stress caused by having to travel the best part of 20 miles to the next nearest LSC. If such measures are necessary in the short-term, I believe this argues strongly for retention of the LSC on a permanent basis.

I understand that the LSC is only intended to have 2 pupils from August 2015. However this may only be a temporary measure and pupil numbers could increase in future years – I note from the governors' submission in February that the LSC has been oversubscribed in past years. I understand any uncertainty over the future of the LSC could also have dissuaded parents from placing their children there.

I am told that the impact of this renewed closure proposal on the pupils, parents and staff who would be affected has been 'devastating'. I understand the Council's concern to provide the best for all learners, but strongly believe in this case that achieving this necessitates retaining Capcoch. I hope that the Council decides not to proceed with this closure.

Yours sincerely

Questionnaire

In order to help the Council reach a decision, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Access and Inclusion Service

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

Or by fax to 01443 744340, or e-mail to A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposal

The proposal is to open a Key Stage 3/4 Learning Support Class for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties pupils at Pontypridd High School

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

THERE SHOULD ALWAYS BE OPTIONS AND
CHANCES TO BETTER YOURSELF AND HAVE SUPPORT
AT ALL STAGES OF YOUR EDUCATION.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

FATHER
Pontypridd High School

4. Name (optional)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 5 pm on the 5th January 2015

What alternative options have been considered other than the opening of the LSC in Pontypridd High School?

An alternative secondary school could be approached to establish a provision of this nature. However, Pontypridd High School was selected because of its inclusive practice and success in supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the mainstream. There is sufficient specialist primary provision in the locality to ensure that the secondary provision would be well utilised and it is good practice for children to transition from specialist Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 provisions in the same locality. This ensures continuity in friendships for some of our most vulnerable learners.

Establishing this provision will reduce the demand for special school placements which can then be safeguarded for pupils with greater complexity of need, and medical and physical barriers to learning.

What is the statutory process to open the LSC?

The Code on School Organisation ("The Code") is made under Sections 38 and 39 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Code came into force on 1st October 2013 and applies in respect of all school proposals published by way of a statutory notice after that date. Proposals to close a school have to follow the following process:

1. The Council's Cabinet considers the Code and authorises a consultation on the changes to the schools;
2. At the start of the consultation period the Council must provide consultees with a consultation document and give them at least 42 days in which to respond, with at least 20 of these days being school days. If the Council considers it appropriate meetings are held with stakeholders during the consultation period;
3. Consultation comments are collated and summarised by the Council. This summary together with the Council's officers own responses is published in a consultation report within 13 weeks of the end of the consultation period and presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration;
4. The Council's Cabinet decide whether to proceed with the changes within 6 months of the end of the consultation period. If the decision is to proceed, Step 5 is taken. If a new option emerges during the consultation which the Council's Cabinet wish to consider, then Steps 1-3 are repeated;
5. Statutory notice is published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The notice must be published on a school day and with 15 school days (not including the day of publication) in the notice period;
6. If objections are received, the Council must publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their responses to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period;
7. The Council's Cabinet must decide to issue its decision on the proposal within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period;
8. If the proposals receive approval they should be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date.

06 JAN 2015

Questionnaire

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Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Access and Inclusion Service

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

Or by fax to 01443 744340, or e-mail to A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposal

The proposal is to open a Key Stage 3/4 Learning Support Class for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties pupils at Pontypridd High School

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

I am [redacted] and have two children placed with me long term, they have a few learning issues and I think the proposal will benefit both children.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

[redacted] OF TWO PUPILS

4. Name (optional)

[redacted]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 5 pm on the 5th January 2015

What alternative options have been considered other than the opening of the LSC in Pontypridd High School?

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RECEIVED

22 11 NOV 2014

COMMUNICATIONS

RECEIVED
24 NOV 2014

Questionnaire

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Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Access and Inclusion Service

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

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25 NOV 2014
LEARNING SUPPORT

Or by fax to 01443 744340, or e-mail to A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposal

The proposal is to open a Key Stage 3/4 Learning Support Class for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties pupils at Pontypridd High School

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

IMPROVED FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN
IN QUESTION.

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

PARENT

4. Name (optional)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 5 pm on the 5th January 2015

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An alternative secondary school could be approached to establish a provision of this nature. However, Pontypridd High School was selected because of its inclusive practice and success in supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the mainstream. There is sufficient specialist primary provision in the locality to ensure that the secondary provision would be well utilised and it is good practice for children to transition from specialist Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 provisions in the same locality. This ensures continuity in friendships for some of our most vulnerable learners.

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RECEIVED
04 DEC 2014
LEARNING SUPPORT

Questionnaire

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Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

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The Proposal

The proposal is to open a Key Stage 3/4 Learning Support Class for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties pupils at Pontypridd High School

- 1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

My Son Suffer with ADHD - And Also has learning difficulties. He has 1/2 hour a Day for his emotional needs with this ELU would suffer from more out bursts in school, this is essential to my sons well being -

- 2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

My son took part in a after school activity, And without the adult in charge knowing anything about my son, He asked to leave because he got upset over rules changing and was left to leave. My son has knew safety with being able to cross road and left school premises -

- 3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

I am the parent of [redacted] and at present he attends Coedpenmaen primary School.

- 4. Name (optional)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 5 pm on the 5th January 2015

What alternative options have been considered other than the opening of the LSC in Pontypridd High School?

An alternative secondary school could be approached to establish a provision of this nature. However, Pontypridd High School was selected because of its inclusive practice and success in supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the mainstream. There is sufficient specialist primary provision in the locality to ensure that the secondary provision would be well utilised and it is good practice for children to transition from specialist Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 provisions in the same locality. This ensures continuity in friendships for some of our most vulnerable learners.

Establishing this provision will reduce the demand for special school placements which can then be safeguarded for pupils with greater complexity of need, and medical and physical barriers to learning.

What is the statutory process to open the LSC?

The Code on School Organisation ("The Code") is made under Sections 38 and 39 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Code came into force on 1st October 2013 and applies in respect of all school proposals published by way of a statutory notice after that date. Proposals to close a school have to follow the following process:

1. The Council's Cabinet considers the Code and authorises a consultation on the changes to the schools;
2. At the start of the consultation period the Council must provide consultees with a consultation document and give them at least 42 days in which to respond, with at least 20 of these days being school days. If the Council considers it appropriate meetings are held with stakeholders during the consultation period;
3. Consultation comments are collated and summarised by the Council. This summary together with the Council's officers own responses is published in a consultation report within 13 weeks of the end of the consultation period and presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration;
4. The Council's Cabinet decide whether to proceed with the changes within 6 months of the end of the consultation period. If the decision is to proceed, Step 5 is taken. If a new option emerges during the consultation which the Council's Cabinet wish to consider, then Steps 1-3 are repeated;
5. Statutory notice is published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The notice must be published on a school day and with 15 school days (not including the day of publication) in the notice period;
6. If objections are received, the Council must publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their responses to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period;
7. The Council's Cabinet must decide to issue its decision on the proposal within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period;
8. If the proposals receive approval they should be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date.

RECEIVED
08 DEC 2014
LEARNING SUPPORT

Questionnaire

In order to help the Council reach a decision, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Access and Inclusion Service

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

Or by fax to 01443 744340, or e-mail to A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposal

The proposal is to open a Key Stage 3/4 Learning Support Class for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties pupils at Pontypridd High School

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Disruption to existing pupils and the raised potential of bullying and worsening of difficult social and behavioural problems. Current pupils feeling ill at ease and threatened by students who are coping with social, emotional & behavioural issues

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

If this provision is sited at Pontypridd High School it potentially faces the problem of future recruitment of mainstream students as parents will choose not to send their child to the school as they may have the concerns that I have.

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Parent of a pupil at Pontypridd High School.

4. Name (optional)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 5 pm on the 5th January 2015

What alternative options have been considered other than the opening of the LSC in Pontypridd High School?

An alternative secondary school could be approached to establish a provision of this nature. However, Pontypridd High School was selected because of its inclusive practice and success in supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the mainstream. There is sufficient specialist primary provision in the locality to ensure that the secondary provision would be well utilised and it is good practice for children to transition from specialist Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 provisions in the same locality. This ensures continuity in friendships for some of our most vulnerable learners.

Establishing this provision will reduce the demand for special school placements which can then be safeguarded for pupils with greater complexity of need, and medical and physical barriers to learning.

What is the statutory process to open the LSC?

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1. The Council's Cabinet considers the Code and authorises a consultation on the changes to the schools;
2. At the start of the consultation period the Council **must** provide consultees with a consultation document and give them at least 42 days in which to respond, with at least 20 of these days being school days. If the Council considers it appropriate meetings are held with stakeholders during the consultation period;
3. Consultation comments are collated and summarised by the Council. This summary together with the Council's officers own responses is published in a consultation report within 13 weeks of the end of the consultation period and presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration;
4. The Council's Cabinet decide whether to proceed with the changes within 6 months of the end of the consultation period. If the decision is to proceed, Step 5 is taken. If a new option emerges during the consultation which the Council's Cabinet wish to consider, then Steps 1-3 are repeated;
5. Statutory notice is published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The notice **must** be published on a school day and with 15 school days (not including the day of publication) in the notice period;
6. If objections are received, the Council **must** publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their responses to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period;
7. The Council's Cabinet **must** decide to issue its decision on the proposal within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period;
8. If the proposals receive approval they should be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date.

RECEIVED
23 NOV 2014
LEARNING SUPPORT

Via Fax

Questionnaire

In order to help the Council reach a decision, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Access and Inclusion Service

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

Or by fax to 01443 744340, or e-mail to A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposal

The proposal is to open a Key Stage 3/4 Learning Support Class for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties pupils at Pontypridd High School.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

my son is dyslexic and will be attending
Sept 2015 - Could you clarify if this Unit
will be of benefit to him with his spelling/reading etc.
2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account
(attach additional sheets if necessary)

Any additional support to my children's
schooling would be beneficial and I am sure
other parents would agree

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Parent

4. Name (optional)

[Redacted Name]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 5 pm on the 5th January 2015

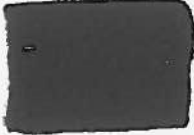


STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
 TREFADAETH CADARN | DYFODOL SICR

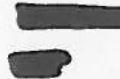
Tŷ Trevithick
 Abercynon,
 Mountain Ash/Aberpennar
 CF45 4UQ

Tel/Ffôn: 01443 744000, Fax/Ffacs: 01443 744024

To:



Gofynnwch Am:
Please Ask For:
Rhif Ffôn:
Telephone N°:
Ffôn:
Fax:
E-Bost:
E-Mail:
Cylichlythyr:
Circular:



Fy Nghyf: AS
 My Ref:

Elch Cyf:
 Your Ref:

Dyddiad: 07/01/15
 Date:

Dear 

Re: Proposed Realignment of Learning Support Classes

Thank you for your response to the Local Authority's recent consultation on proposed changes to its Learning Support Class provision.

Your comments have been noted and the points you make will be incorporated into the report to be submitted to Cabinet following this consultation period.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Chris Bradshaw
Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Chris Bradshaw
 Director of Education and Lifelong Learning | Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth Aukysg a Dysgu Cytol Oes



Available in alternative formats and languages | Dewiswch iaith a diwyg eich dogfen

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 January 2015 15:21
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Support class for pupils with speech and language difficulties at Capcoch Primary School.

Dear Director of Education

As a concerned citizen of the Cynon Valley I would like to submit the following concerns I have with regards to the proposal to close the primary range learning support class for pupils with speech and language difficulties at Capcoch Primary School.

I disagree with the proposal for the following reasons:

1. As a resident of the Cynon Valley for most of my working life I have witnessed the systemic slide of education, administration and other public resources shift towards the Pontypridd region. This proposed closure is another example of education resources being moved out of a geographical area. Given The Cynon Valley's objective 1 (Communities First) status I would argue the area really needs the service of such a unit. To deprive this area of this service by moving the facility to a school close to Pontypridd would be another message to the Cynon Valley and its people that the needs of this are once again very easy to ignore.
2. The Speech and language Difficulties Unit at Capcoch Primary School has been highly commended by ESTYN for its professionalism, class delivery, relevance, commitment to pupils and successful transition of pupils who have been through the unit. This is in complete contrast to the school that is proposed to take over from this Unit one that following its last ESTYN inspection was placed under special measures. I fail to see how a successful Unit can thus be acceptably replaced by a failing unit. In addition The Speech and language Difficulties Unit at Capcoch Primary School has the support of a school that was highly commended in its last ESTYN report for its management and learning environment.

I trust these issues will be considered and I have requested a surgery meeting with both my Assembly Member and Member of Parliament to discuss the above and the management decision making processes that have resulted from this proposal in much more depth.

Many thanks for your consideration

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX 4

CONSULTATION REPORT FOR PROPOSAL TO RE-ALIGN LSC PROVISION ACROSS RCT REPONSES FROM ESTYN

School Name	ESTYN submitted reports in response to the consultation on the proposals to realign LSC within RCT Comments raised in the reports have been copied verbatim
Aberdare Park Primary School	The local authority has given clear outline of the expected benefits of the proposal.
	The disadvantages of the proposal is that it may involve a change in school for a very small number of pupils.
	The local authority has considered suitable alternatives for the realignment of LSC in the main report.
	The local authority has considered the impact of the changes on learner travel.
	It is Estyn's opinion that the closure of the LSC in Aberdare Park Primary School will lead to very little disruption to pupils' learning and will appropriately address the issue of surplus LSC places in the primary phase across Rhondda Cynon Taff.
Perthcelyn Primary School	The local authority has provided sufficient evidence to show the plan is likely to at least maintain the standard of education in the area.
	The local authority has given clear rationale for the proposal as part of an on-going strategy to realign learning support classes for pupils the special educational needs.
	It sets out clearly the expected benefits of the strategy and of this proposal on learners with complex learning difficulties across the authority.
	It gives assurances that the views of parents and relevant professionals will be obtained to ensure that there is minimum impact on the 4 remaining pupils and their families.
	However, the proposal sets out the disadvantages as being the risk to the authority of not closing the provision. The proposal does not address any potential disadvantages to the 4 pupils.
	The proposal does not identity alternative options, or indicate whether any were considered.
	The authority realignment strategy allows appropriately for the better targeting of resources for areas of greatest need within the authority, and for improved learning provisions for vulnerable learners.
	The impact on the removal of the temporary teacher for the learning support class, described as "not having any measurable benefits" at Perthcelyn Primary is not clarified.

School Name	ESTYN submitted reports in response to the consultation on the proposals to realign LSC within RCT Comments raised in the reports have been copied verbatim
Capcoch Primary School	Whilst the proposal appears to be coherent with the overall aims of the authority to achieve a fair allocation of resources and met growing areas of special needs provision in the area, there are a number of unanswered questions with relation to the impact on the pupils who currently access the provision.
	The local authority has provided suitable rationale for the proposal.
	The proposer credibly asserts that, in the current financial climate, a failure to make the proposed changes to the provision for pupils with additional learning needs would limit the authority's ability to achieve the benefits above for the area as a whole. Therefore the proposer clearly sets out the benefits and disadvantages when compared with maintaining the status quo.
	However the proposer does not present or analyse in sufficient detail benefit for disadvantages to current pupils attending the learning support class at Capcoch Primary School or the probable impact on their wellbeing as a result of the loss of the specialist facility, a transfer to mainstream education, or as a result of any transfer to another school.
	The proposer identifies a number of solutions to manage the risks of the closure.
	The proposal does not assess sufficiently the impact of an additional 17 mile journey on young learners' wellbeing.
	The proposer does not set out fully all considered alternatives and therefore it is not possible to assess the appropriateness of any reasons for discounting them.
	It appears therefore that the authority has shown that the proposal is likely to effectively reduce places that are surplus to requirement. However the authority does not specify the impact on places at the proposed alternative at Llwynocrwn Primary School, if pupils were to transfer there.
	It does not provide any detail or analysis of the school's most recent outcomes or those of the primary learning support class or a comparison to alternative provisions.
	The proposer identifies appropriately that the proposed closure will not affect the school's ability to deliver the school's curriculum as the staff within the learning support ass are centrally employed.
Pontypridd High School	It is Estyn's opinion that this proposal is likely to at least maintain current standards of education and also create capacity to improve outcomes for pupils with additional learning needs in the area.
	The proposer coherently establishes the need for a learning support class at Pontypridd High School for pupil moving from key stage 2 into key stage 3 and subsequently key stage 4.
	The proposer provides a well reasoned rationale for the proposal.
	The authority sets out the expected benefits of the proposal clearly and coherently.
	It would appear to increase opportunities for mainstream inclusion in local community schools for pupils with

	social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and thus reduce transport and other costs of inappropriate placements in other settings. The authority reasonably asserts that the provision would potentially reduce incidents of exclusion and therefore improve life chances for the most vulnerable learners.
	The authority does not appear to identify any disadvantages of the proposal other than possible over subscription; this would be managed by the authority's Access & Inclusion Service. It does not explore fully the impact on all pupils of an increased number of students at Pontypridd High School with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. However the authority identified an appropriate range of risks associated with non-approval of the learning support class.
	The authority does not provide current evidence of Pontypridd High School's inclusive practice and success in supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the mainstream in order to support its assertion that it is the best choice for this reason. However it asserts reasonably that there is sufficient specialist primary provision in the locality to ensure that the secondary learning support class at Pontypridd High School would be well utilised.
	In addition, the authority identifies effectively that the proposal would potentially allow Pontypridd High School to make effective use of surplus space.
	However, the authority currently places the school in category C of four categories with A being the best. The authority provides no further explanation for the reason(s) for the school's downturn and categorisation.
	Collaboration between the learning support class teacher and school staff could improve SEN provision within the school, who could also provide support and training to mainstream staff. This would appear to effectively enhance the school's capacity to improve outcomes for these learners.

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APPENDIX 5

LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Academic Year	Open	Close	Move	Re-designate
2014/15 31 st August		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aberdare Park (FP Complex) Capcoch (S&L) 		
2015/16 1 st September	Pontypridd High KS3/4 SEBD			
2015/16 31 st August		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perthcelyn (KS2 Complex) 		

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APPENDIX 6**Learning Support Class Proposed Realignment****Community Impact Assessment**

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within 006/2013 School Organisation Code.

When this proposal was consulted on in December 2013 and December 2014, a detailed consultation document was circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have already been forwarded to the Welsh Government in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. This document clearly focuses on the education argument and case for change, which is why this particular assessment was not included at that time. We were mindful that the document needed to be as concise and informative as possible, whilst at the same time being readable and 'user-friendly'.

The Learning Support Class realignment (phase 2) affects 4 schools (1 secondary, 3 primary). Whilst the proposals suggest opening and closing of LSCs the proposals do not affect the operation of the mainstream schools. All current clubs, facilities and services will remain unaltered and equal access will be available to all LSC pupils.

Pupils who attend LSC provision are not allocated a place via the LA admission process. All pupils requesting a placement are considered in SEN panel. Placements are made in line with LA SEN criteria. Therefore pupils may travel from outside the normal school catchment area. This does not affect the mainstream capacity of the school. As stated in each individual LSC proposal transport of all LSC pupils will be in line with the LA Learner Transport Policy.

All schools hosting LSCs are English medium mainstream schools. The proposed additional LSC for pupils with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties will be situated within the English medium provision of the school.

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APPENDIX 7



Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Equality Impact Assessment

Learning Support Class Proposals

Equality Impact Assessment Questionnaire

Directorate: Education & Lifelong Learning

Service Area: Access & Inclusion Service

Responsible Officer: Ceri Jones

Date: February 2015

- 1. Name of policy/procedure/practice/project:** Re-alignment of Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

The project is to: Re-align the SEN mainstream LSC provision within RCT in order to better support SEN pupils ensuring provision meets current and projected pupil needs.

- 2. Policy Aims:** you need to consider why is the policy needed? What does the Council hope to achieve by it? How will the Council ensure it works as intended?

Rhondda Cynon Taf has an excellent range of SEN provisions attached to mainstream schools. However, it has become increasingly apparent that there is an imbalance between primary and secondary provisions. In addition, the range of LSC provisions currently available does not match the level of increasing need in some areas (e.g. Autistic Spectrum/Social Communication Difficulties and Complex Needs at KS 3/4). In view of this, an in-depth data analysis exercise was undertaken to inform proposals for change in relation to LSC provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The data we have used to realign provision includes:

- Current capacity within each LSC
- Requested placements over a 5 month period
- Pre-school data to predict anticipated referrals
- Transitional data
- Primary needs of pupils
- Outcome of requests for placements

Educational Considerations

Considerable resource is allocated to the provision of mainstream LSCs but it would appear that:

- the level of primary LSC provision is high but not matched by Key Stage 3/4 provision. This imbalance needs redressing as pupils who have been successfully placed in mainstream LSC contexts are inappropriately transitioning into special school settings when they could remain in mainstream settings. This also increases the demand for statutory assessments which has been significant in recent years.
- there is significant growth in the number of children and young people with Autistic Spectrum/Communication Disorders and the current level

of provision needs to be expanded urgently to address this within all phases

- there is a need to improve provision for children in the early years who require more ongoing observation and assessment to identify accurately primary needs and specialist placement, or to inform more individualised packages of support in mainstream settings. This could potentially minimise the risk of inappropriate placements
- the low incidence of pupils with hearing impairment and the success of more inclusive approaches is such that the need for specialist provisions for hearing impaired pupils is now diminished
- the diminished demand for speech and language placements at primary level and the success of more inclusive support packages is such that there is a need to rationalise the Councils more specialist provisions for this area of SEN.

There is a clear risk that should Rhondda Cynon Taf not re-model its range of SEN provision, some pupils with significant SEN would not have their needs met. This would result in significant disadvantages for certain groups of learners and could result in:

- an increase in demand for inappropriate requests in for special school placements
- potential over crowding in special school settings
- an increase in requests for statutory assessments and SEN Tribunals due to parental/carers dissatisfaction with the LA
- reduction in mainstream inclusion opportunities due to insufficient LSC provision in key phases/stages
- poor educational outcomes due to a mis-match between primary needs and available provision.
- increase in exclusion and poor attendance due to pupils' SEN not being met, disaffection and disengagement
- enhanced costs due to increased demands for more highly specialist placements than is required
- increase in more costly heavily supported mainstream placements due to the lack of appropriate learning support class placements.

The advantages of implementing the proposed changes include:

- appropriate placements which are well matched to pupil's primary needs
- improved educational outcomes and pupil engagement due to the effective meeting of pupil needs
- greater opportunities for mainstream inclusion in local community schools
- a decrease in requests for statutory assessment due to a reduction in parental/carers and professional concern about not accessing the most appropriate placement
- reduced demand for costly packages of support in mainstream setting when what is required is a more specialist learning support class placement

- decrease in inappropriate requests for more costly special school placements when what is required in the correct learning support class placement
- improved learning provisions which provide better value for money and improved life chances for our most vulnerable learners
- reduction in surplus places in some specialist provisions whilst enhancing capacity in key areas of SEN
- providing effective local solutions and provisions for pupils with significant SEN thus reducing transport costs and the LAs carbon footprint.

Demand for placements

Table one highlights the current provision available within RCT and the proposed LSC provision

Table One: Current and Proposed Mainstream Learning Support Classes			
SEN Learning Support Classes	Foundation Phase (FP) or Key Stage (KS)	Number of existing classes	Proposed Number of classes
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	FP	2	2
	KS2	2	1
Communication Disorder	FP	2	3
	KS 2	3	4
ASD/ Communication Disorder	KS 3 / 4	5	6
Complex Learning Difficulties	FP	13	5
	KS 2	12	8
	KS 3 / 4	0	2
Hearing Impairment	FP/KS 2	3	1
	KS 3 / 4	1	0
Nurture	FP	2	2
Social, Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties	KS 2	5	5
	KS 3	0	1
Speech and Language Difficulties	FP/KS 2	3	2
	KS 3 / 4	1	1
Observation & Assessment	FP	0	3
Total		54*	46

In summary, the following changes are proposed:

- 32 SEN mainstream LSCs remain 'as-is'
- 12 SEN mainstream LSCs close (4 of which already have no pupils)
- 4 new SEN mainstream LSCs are established
- 6 SEN mainstream LSCs are converted
- 3 move due to school closures (detailed under re-location)
- 1 relocation

The number of placements available for pupils to access currently is 428. Following the proposed changes there will be 410 placements available which

equates to a decrease of 18 placements. The Service currently (September 2013) has a surplus of 40 places.

3. Who does it apply to? Please indicate by highlighting or deleting as appropriate

Members of the public Staff **Both** **Other**

Please state: _ SEN children aged 3-16 living in RCT, parents and carers of the children

4. Indicate whether this is a new proposal, a review or a proposed cessation:

New Review Cessation

The proposal covers all 3 areas. There are 14 schools affected by years 1&2 of the 3 yr plan

5. Identifying Impacts

Please choose whether the policy/practice will have a positive, negative or neutral effect on **each** issue below: Think about the key questions included in the managers guidelines.

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
Age (young and old)	Young – Yes			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate placements which are well matched to pupil's primary needs • improved educational outcomes and pupil engagement due to the effective meeting of pupil needs • greater opportunities for mainstream inclusion in local community schools • improved learning provisions which provide better value for money and improved life chances for our most vulnerable learners
Disability (remember to consider the different types of disability)	Yes			The review of LSC provision will allow the LA to better meet the needs of its SEN pupils, addressing areas of shortage, including lack of KS 3 / 4 provision. The

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				proposals allow the LA to better use its scarce resources in order to address the needs of its learners in line with the Equality Act 2010.
Gender			Yes	
Gender Reassignment			Yes	
Race			Yes	
Religion or Belief			Yes	
Sexual Orientation			Yes	
Welsh Language			Yes	
Carer			Yes	

Evidence

6. What evidence is there to support your conclusions? Please indicate below

Reports of the Director of Education to Cabinet - October 2013, February 2014, April 2014 and October 2014. Public Consultation Document on the Proposals held December 2013 and December 2014.

The realignment of LSC provision within RCT was a three year plan. Statutory notices have been implemented with effect from either 31st August 2014, 1st September 2014 or will be implemented on 1st September 2015, concluding years 1 and 2 of the realignment plans.

On the 30th October 2014 Cabinet approval was given to begin a process of formal consultation on year 3 proposals.

7. In areas where a negative impact has been identified are there any ways that the negative effect could be reduced or removed? Please indicate below and include the evidence on which you have based your conclusion.

There were no negative impacts identified in Section 5, however the LA is aware that the proposal to close the Speech and Language Class in Capcoch Primary School and the Complex Learning Difficulties Class in Aberdare Park Primary School have raised concerns. These concerns have been addressed in the Consultation Feedback Report.

Involvement & Consultation

9. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this (or similar) policy and what are the results?

The following consultation meetings were held.

Meetings were held at the schools with the Headteacher (in some cases) and staff and with the parents at the following settings:

School	Date of meeting	Attendees
Aberdare Park	01/12/14	Headteacher, 5 x staff, 4 x parents
Capcoch	24/11/14	2 x staff, 4 x parents
Perthcelyn	26/11/14	2 x staff, 1 x parent
Pontypridd High		An initial meeting was held between the Acting Service Director for Access Engagement and Inclusion and the Senior Management Team. Discussions were positive with no area of concerns raised. Further follow up meetings were offered to meet with parents, staff and governors but these were not deemed necessary due to lack of concern.

Schools were also offered opportunities for consultation with pupils.

Details of the proposal were displayed at www.rctcbc.gov.uk and hard copies sent to all relevant stakeholders.

Interested parties were also welcome to put their views in writing to:

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon

Please refer to a copy of the Consultation Feedback report for further information on the responses to the consultation.

Monitoring & Review

10. What arrangements have you put in place to review the actual impact of the policy once it has been implemented?

The Council's Access & Inclusion Service will be fully engaged in supporting the head teachers and governing bodies during the first year or so.

Addressing the Impact

11. What option have you chosen as a result of your impact assessment?

- Continue the proposal

Please indicate and provide reasons for your decision.

The evidence and the public consultation clearly recommends that this is the right approach.

12. Action Plan

You now need to complete the EIA action plan to outline how you will act on any impacts identified. You may need to prioritise in terms of what actions you choose to take and the timescales to complete them in. In general terms, you should try to act on all negative impacts unless there is a clear reason as to why this is not possible. You could also identify actions for positive or neutral impacts where appropriate i.e. to outline and further promote a positive impact or to outline how to make something have a positive impact instead of a neutral one.

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for Actions	Timescale and actions for Review	Measures to be taken to evaluate effects of actions
Seek permission to complete the re-alignments proposals	Ceri Jones	Seek Cabinet approval February 2015	Summer Term 2015	

13. Please outline below any negative impacts that have been identified in the EIA questionnaire but not addressed in the action plan. You will need to explain your reasons for not addressing them.

None.

Please keep a copy of the questionnaire and action plan and send copies to:
 Equality, Diversity & Social Justice Team
 The Pavilions
 Cambrian Park
 Clydach
 CF40 2XX
 Email: equality@rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk
 Tel: 01443 424075

Signed: Chris Bradshaw Date:
 Job Title: Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

APPENDIX 8**Proposed Realignment of Learning Support Class Provision within RCT
Welsh Language Impact Assessment**

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained with 006/2013 School Organisation Code.

The proposals to realign LSC provision (phase 2) affects 3 primary schools and 1 secondary school, all of which are English medium schools. The proposals, which involve establishing new and alternative LSC provision and the closure of LSC provisions will continue to see the proposed LSCs hosted at English medium schools. These schools provide English medium primary/secondary education where the statutory requirement for teaching the Welsh language is met. The proposals would see this provision maintained. Furthermore the proposals are intended to meet the needs of learners with SEN more effectively in all areas of learning.

The conclusion is that the proposals would have a neutral impact on the Welsh language.

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