

**Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council**  
**Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd**

**Democratic Services**  
**Gwasanaethau Democrataidd**

## **Decision Notice**

**EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CULTURE - URGENCY ACTION , THURSDAY,  
19TH MARCH, 2020**

Please see below approval of decision as follows:

1. **Strategic School Improvement Programme Proposal To  
Establish Specialist Provision For Secondary Age Pupils With  
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - Urgency Action 1JWR  
(Pages 3 - 34)**

Approval was sought to implement a proposal to establish specialist provision for secondary age pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School.

In line with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, It was approved that the proposal to establish specialist provision for secondary age pupils with ASD at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School be implemented as of 20th April 2020 and that authority be delegated to the Head of Transformation to implement the proposal.

**For Immediate Implementation**

Yours sincerely

p.p Chief Executive



## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board**

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

### **REPORT OF HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION ANDREW THOMAS**

#### **MATTER FOR DECISION**

**WARDS AFFECTED: All**

#### **STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH SPECIALIST PROVISION FOR SECONDARY AGE PUPILS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To obtain approval to implement a proposal to establish specialist provision for secondary age pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School.

#### **Executive summary**

2. The Council is responsible for ensuring suitable provision is made for pupils with special educational needs
3. Recent work on reviewing the number and type of planned places and assessment provision across Neath Port Talbot has indicated that there is a need for extra places in the areas of ASD and Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD), and for those early years pupils with identified additional learning needs which require further assessment.
4. The Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board at its meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019 approved consultation on a proposal to

establish a specialist provision for secondary age pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School.

5. The proposal seeks to complement the specialist provision and support already available within the County Borough.
6. This proposal has been the subject of external consultation and no objections were received during the statutory publication period.
7. It is recommended that Members approve implementation of this proposal, effective from 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

## **Background**

8. The Council is responsible for promoting high educational standards and for delivering efficient primary and secondary education. Having the right schools in the right place and ensuring that they are fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner is the challenge facing the Council. Achieving this will involve reviewing the number and type of schools the Council has in its area and assessing whether or not best use is being made of resources and facilities. This will include ensuring suitable provision and support for those pupils with additional learning needs.
9. Implementing the Council's Strategic School Improvement Programme (SSIP) involves reviewing existing provision and determining the number and type of schools needed to deliver education effectively and efficiently across the County Borough. It will most likely lead to substantial change involving opening new schools, closing existing schools, merging or amalgamating schools, federating schools and promoting new initiatives that support collaborative working between schools. It will also involve re-organising education provision to ensure pupils gain access to and benefit from the specialist support, skills and expertise available within the County Borough.
10. The Council has decided to review its provision on the basis of:
  - educational standards
  - the need for places and the accessibility of schools
  - the quality and suitability of school accommodation
  - effective financial management

11. The Council provides for the pupils of Neath Port Talbot who require specialist support for their educational needs at two community special schools and at learning support/inclusion centres attached to community primary/secondary schools.
12. Currently there are 8 specialist provisions available in Neath Port Talbot mainstream secondary schools for supporting secondary age pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) including those for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Visual Impairment (VI), Hearing Impairment (HI), Specific Learning Difficulties (SPLD), Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Speech Language and Communication Difficulties (SLCD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD).
13. Recent work on reviewing the number and type of planned places and assessment provision across Neath Port Talbot has indicated that there is a need for extra places in the areas of ASD and SEBD, and for those early years pupils with identified additional learning needs which require further assessment.
14. This proposal seeks to address identified need for further provision for pupils with ASD, specifically for secondary aged pupils, with the aim of ensuring best possible outcomes for pupils.
15. Currently for primary age pupils with ASD who need specialist support or assessment, provision is made at Gnoll Primary (18 places), Maesmarchog Primary (18 places) and Waunceirch Primary (17 places). Secondary provision is available at Cwmtawe Community School (13 places), Ysgol Bae Baglan (29 places) and Ysgol Hendrefelin (16 places). The high demand at both primary and secondary level is placing pressure on current provisions which are consistently full.

## **The Proposal**

16. It is proposed to establish a specialist provision for secondary age pupils with ASD at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School. The facility will provide learning support for pupils with ASD for up to 16 pupils who are in receipt of a Statement of SEN.
17. The provision will be managed by the school and be under the school's governance. However, it will be a provision recognised by

the Council as reserved for pupils with ALN and pupils admitted to the provision would be in addition to the admission number of the school. Admission to the provision would be via a special admission panel of the Council and specific entry and exit criteria would apply.

18. Pupils at the proposed provision will benefit from being taught by specialist staff, experienced in working with pupils with ASD needs. There is also the possibility that mainstream pupils with ASD could also benefit from the expertise available.
19. The provision will alleviate the current pressure to address demand for places for pupils with more complex needs, avoiding potential costly out of county placements and allowing opportunities for children to access learning within their local community.
20. The proposal seeks to complement the specialist provision and support already available within the County Borough.

### **Impact on pupils**

21. The proposed new provision will increase the opportunity for secondary pupils to access support in a specialist setting, based within the environment of a mainstream secondary school. The provision will enable pupils to acquire the skills and understanding to manage their individual behaviours and learning requirements.
22. The proposed specialist provision will be accessible to secondary age pupils from across the County Borough.

### **Impact on travel arrangements**

23. Pupils' travel needs will be assessed in line with the Council's Home to School Transport policy. Secondary age pupils living 3 miles or more from the provision will be considered for assistance with travel costs.
24. Under the School Travel Plan requirements, all schools, together with the Council's Road Safety Team, are committed to:
  - improving road safety within the local community
  - raising awareness about travel issues
  - encouraging walking, cycling and public transport for the school journey where applicable

- encouraging independent travel where applicable
25. Dwr y Felin Comprehensive is a well-established school with established walking routes for children.
  26. It is relatively centrally located within the County Borough and is readily accessible by vehicle.

### **Impact on governors**

27. The governing body and the school leadership team at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School will be responsible for the day to day management of the provision, including the specialist staff who will become part of the school's staffing complement. The school budget will be funded accordingly.

### **Impact on special needs education provision**

28. As a self-contained provision, the facility will not have a direct impact on the SEN provision of Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School where pupils with additional learning needs, including children with statements of special educational needs, are supported in a mainstream setting with appropriate funding for this purpose.
29. However, the specialist knowledge and skills-set of the staff employed to work at the provision will be available to share with mainstream staff and, as such, will indirectly benefit SEN provision at the school.
30. It is also envisaged that the provision will be able to provide support and training for other mainstream primary schools across Neath Port Talbot, building skills, competencies, expertise and capacity of all staff working with children with ASD.

### **Financial Impacts**

31. Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School will receive additional funding to manage the provision for up to 16 pupils.
32. Meeting the special needs education of pupils in local settings, i.e. within the County Borough, avoids having to secure expensive out-of-county provision. The cost of providing education outside the County Borough for pupils with specialist needs is high, and can

amount to circa. £80k per pupil per year. This annually presents a significant demand on the Council's education budget.

33. Provision has been made within the Department of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning (DELLLs) revenue budget in 2019-2020 to fund the establishment of the provision.
34. The provision will be resourced by specialist teachers and teaching assistants or key workers with the appropriate skills set.
35. Self-contained accommodation will be developed in surplus accommodation at the school. There will be a one-off capital cost for the refurbishment/conversion work.
36. Secondary age pupils living 3 miles or more from the provision will be considered for assistance with travel costs and as such there is likely to be an increase on transport costs as a result of this proposal. Annual transport costs are difficult to predict as this will depend on the number of children needing to be transported and on the distance they will need to travel to the provision from their home. Again provision has been made within DELLLs revenue budget in 2019-2020 to help fund any additional transport costs.
37. There are no capital receipts or recurrent costs savings directly related to this proposal other than savings from potential home education/out-of-county placement costs.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

38. An integrated impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
39. The establishment of an ASD provision for secondary aged pupils in Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School will provide vital support and specialist teaching for pupils with ASD. It will support ALN reform and ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its legal obligations to meet the needs of pupils with ALN.
40. It will have positive impacts on age, disability, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation and will assist the Council's ability to



meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. Additionally it will have a positive impact on social exclusion and poverty, and a positive impact on opportunities to use the Welsh language and in treating Welsh and English equally.

41. The Wellbeing of Future Generations has been considered and the establishment of an ASD provision directly impacts on the Council's wellbeing objective –'to improve the wellbeing of children and young people'.
42. The integrated impact assessment is included as Appendix A.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

43. There are no implications on the Valley Communities as a result of this report. Potential impacts will be assessed should this proposal succeed.

### **Workforce impacts**

44. The position of staff currently employed at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School will not be adversely affected by this proposal. In fact, the increased number of pupils secures staff employment by creating additional employment opportunities by way of an increased staffing complement.
45. Additional staff posts have been identified and these will comprise of specialist teachers and teaching assistants or key workers. The skills and expertise that these additional staff members will possess will be available to be utilised for the benefit of the wider, mainstream school communities.

### **Legal impacts**

46. The proposal will establish SEN provision in a mainstream school where the pupils admitted are in addition to the admission number for the school and where the provision is recognised by the Council as reserved for pupils with SEN. As such, this constitutes a regulated alteration requiring the statutory publication of the proposal. The School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (the Act) provides the legislative framework by which the Council may implement a proposal. The Welsh Government's School

Organisation Code, November 2018, made under Sections 38 and 39 of the Act, imposes on the Council requirements and guidelines on matters relating to school organisation. The Council's procedures are in line with legislative requirements.

47. Pupil travel arrangements will be in line with the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008; the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014; and the Council's Home to School Travel Policy, 2017.
48. Revenue funding will be in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010; and the Council's approved formula for funding schools.
49. The management of staff affected by the proposal will follow the relevant school policy and procedure requirements.

### **Risk management**

50. A risk assessment has been carried out under the Council's Risk Management Policy 2015.

51. Potential risk areas in implementing the proposal include:

- educational outcomes for pupils are not improved
- integration at a provision is unsuccessful
- negative response from parents of host school
- staff with appropriate skills and expertise not available
- increased governance and staff responsibilities
- increased home to school travel time for some pupils leading to poor attendance
- Welsh language development not supported

52. Failing to implement the proposal will result in a range of teaching/learning and financial benefits not being fully realised, particularly in relation to:

- opportunities for a pupils to access specialist staff and support
- host school indirectly benefit from specialist staff on site
- mainstream schools benefit from increased support and training in order to improve skills and build capacity

53. The risk assessment is attached to this report as Appendix B.

### **Impact on community usage**

54. The proposal should have no adverse impact on community usage at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School as there is no closure or reduction in community facilities involved with this proposal. The provision will occupy accommodation surplus to the school's requirements and will be a self-contained provision having no impact on the school's operation regarding community usage.

### **Consultation**

55. This school organisation proposal is being brought forward under the Council's Strategic School Improvement Programme. Formal consultation has been undertaken in line with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, November 2018.

56. A report on the outcome of consultation together with recommendations was presented to Members on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

### **Statutory Publication**

57. At the Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 Members noted responses to the consultation and as there were no issues raised during the consultation suggesting that the proposal should be reconsidered, Members determined to move to the statutory publication of the proposal.

58. To this effect a statutory notice was published on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 allowing the required 28 day period for submitting objections, which ran until 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

59. The statutory notice is attached to this report as Appendix C.

### **Objections**

60. No objections were received during the objection period.

61. With no objections to the proposal and with no separate requirement for referral to the Welsh Government for approval, the

decision to implement the proposal falls to the Council's Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board.

62. In reaching a decision there is an expectation that Members will have familiarised themselves with the relevant documents and Cabinet Board reports relating to this proposal. These are listed below in the appendices and background papers.

### **Recommendation**

63. Having given due regard to the integrated impact and risk assessments, it is recommended that, in line with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, Members determine that

- the proposal to establish specialist provision for secondary age pupils with ASD at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School be implemented as of 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020
- authority be delegated to the Head of Transformation to implement the proposal

### **Reasons for proposed decision**

52. This decision is necessary to comply with the formal publication requirements imposed on the Council by the School Organisation Code and associated legislation. Implementation of the proposal will enable the Council to promote high educational standards and the fulfilment of every child's potential. It will also enable the Council to meet its duty to secure efficient education in its area.

### **Implementation of the decision**

64. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: Integrated Impact Assessment  
Appendix B: Risk Assessment  
Appendix C: Statutory Notice

## List of background papers

- a) Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019  
<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/documents/s56731/Dwr%20y%20Felin.pdf>
- b) Consultation Document  
<https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/12419/dwr-y-felin-consultation-asd.pdf>
- c) Education Skills and Culture Cabinet Board 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019  
<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=315&MId=8720&Ver=4>
- d) Strategic School Improvement Programme Principles Paper: September 2008  
[https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/20080924/Agenda/\\$CAB-240908-REP-EL-KN.doc.pdf](https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/20080924/Agenda/$CAB-240908-REP-EL-KN.doc.pdf)
- e) Welsh Government - School Organisation Code: November 2018  
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>
- f) School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013  
[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/1/pdfs/anaw\\_20130001\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/1/pdfs/anaw_20130001_en.pdf)
- g) Learner Travel (Wales) Measure: 2008 & the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance: 2014.  
[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2008/2/pdfs/mwa\\_20080002\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2008/2/pdfs/mwa_20080002_en.pdf)  
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/learner-travel-statutory-provision-and-operational-guidance-june-2014.pdf>
- h) Home to School Travel Policy: 2017  
[https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/4231/npt\\_home\\_to\\_school\\_travel\\_policy\\_2017.pdf](https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/4231/npt_home_to_school_travel_policy_2017.pdf)
- i) Estyn  
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection/search>

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## Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

### Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
Final	RC	SSIP Programme Manager	10.3.20

### 1. Details of the initiative

	<b>Title of the Initiative:</b>
<b>1a</b>	<b>Service Area:</b> Strategic School Improvement Programme
<b>1b</b>	<b>Directorate: ELLLS</b>
<b>1c</b>	<b>Summary of the initiative:</b> Establishment of specialist provision for secondary age pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School
<b>1d</b>	<b>Who will be directly affected by this initiative?</b> Pupils, parents, staff, governors and community of Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive school; pupils with ASD, schools and parents across Neath Port Talbot
<b>1e</b>	<b>When and how were people consulted?</b> Formal consultation took place between September 23 <sup>rd</sup> and November 5 <sup>th</sup> 2019. A consultation document was published on Neath Port Talbot Council website, and sent directly to relevant consultees. Officers met with pupil representatives of Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School and information sharing meetings were held with the school community.

<b>1f</b>	<p><b>What were the outcomes of the consultation?</b></p> <p>All responses received were wholly positive and supported the proposal to establish specialist provision for secondary age pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School</p>
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## 2. Evidence

<p><b>What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?</b></p>
<p><b>Information gathered during consultation and consultation responses</b></p> <p><b>Local and National data including PLASC, and Additional Learning Needs(ALN) data</b></p> <p><b>National Autistic Society research information, <i>Diverse Perspectives</i> (2014)</b></p>

## 3. Equalities

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a **protected characteristic**?

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age	x			<p>Data indicates that there are currently 434 pupils with ASD in Neath Port Talbot, an increase of almost 47% since 2012. (PLASC Jan 2019).</p> <p>197 pupils with ASD attend secondary or middle schools, a 40% increase since 2012 (PLASC Jan 2019)</p> <p>Increasing numbers of pupils with ASD has led to pressure on current provisions and this proposal will seek to address the needs of these pupils and future pupils identified as having ASD by providing an additional provision for secondary age pupils It will increase the number of specialist places available within the county borough for pupils with ASD, ensuring greater numbers of pupils are able to access specialist support.</p> <p>Admission to the provision would be via a special admission panel of the Council and specific entry and exit criteria would apply.</p>



			<p>Pupils at the proposed provision will benefit from being taught by specialist staff, experienced in working with pupils with ASD needs.</p> <p>Consultation responses have indicated that a provision of this kind is welcomed by pupils, parents, health and education professionals and schools.</p> <p>The provision will impact on secondary aged pupils of Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School as pupils admitted to the provision will become part of the school roll, taking a full part in the life and activities of the school as appropriate. Consultation responses indicate that pupils, staff and Governors welcome this provision and feel it will enhance an already inclusive school.</p> <p>It is also envisaged that the provision will be able to provide support and training for other mainstream primary schools across Neath Port Talbot, building skills, competencies, expertise and capacity of all staff working with children with ASD.</p> <p>The establishment of the ASD provision in Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school is therefore likely to have a positive impact on pupils aged 11-16.</p>
Disability	x		<p>The Council's arrangements for education across the county borough include those children and young people with a disability. The proposed provision will specifically provide education for pupils with an additional learning need, therefore the impact on these pupils is likely to be high.</p> <p>Data indicates that there are currently 434 pupils with ASD in Neath Port Talbot, an increase of almost 47% since 2012. (PLASC Jan 2019)</p> <p>This proposal will seek to address the needs of these pupils and future pupils identified as having ASD by providing a provision designed to meet their needs.</p> <p>As a self-contained provision, the facility will not have a direct impact on the ALN provision of Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School where pupils with additional learning needs, including children with statements of special educational needs, are supported in a mainstream setting with appropriate funding for this purpose.</p> <p>However, the specialist knowledge and skills-set of the staff employed to work at the provision will be available to share with mainstream staff and, as such, will indirectly benefit ALN provision at the school.</p> <p>It is also envisaged that the provision will be able to provide support and training for other mainstream primary schools across Neath Port Talbot, building skills, competencies, expertise and capacity of all staff working with children with ASD.</p>

			<p>This proposal therefore will have a positive impact on pupils with ASD not just within the provision but in Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive school mainstream classes and in other schools across Neath Port Talbot where support and training is accessed by staff.</p> <p>The new facility will be fully compliant in terms of requirements for disabled users. This will potentially have a positive impact on pupils as yet unknown who may have an additional disability.</p> <p>During consultation pupils at Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive raised concerns regarding noise for learners in the provision, due to the proposed location below the music classrooms. It was recognised that some ASD pupils will be more affected by noise than others and this may disadvantage them. This has been noted and extra care will be taken to ensure that this is considered when planning and developing the building works.</p> <p>The Council is required to have regard for the needs of disabled learners and learners with learning difficulties when assessing transport needs.</p> <p>Transport decisions made on Additional Learning Needs (ALN) grounds form part of the Children and Young People service's arrangements for children with additional learning needs. The Council will make suitable arrangements for learners with special needs to attend school including arrangements, as necessary, for home to school travel. An assessment of a learner's level of travel need will inform the type/level of transport that may need to be provided. The entitlement will be reviewed on an annual basis. (Home to School Travel Policy Neath Port Talbot Council 2017)</p> <p>The establishment of an ASD provision in Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school will have a positive impact on disability.</p>
Gender reassignment		<b>x</b>	This is not a criterion that will be impacted upon by this proposal
Marriage & civil partnership		<b>x</b>	This is not a criterion that will be impacted upon by this proposal
Pregnancy and maternity		<b>x</b>	This is not a criterion that will be impacted upon by this proposal
Race	<b>x</b>		PLASC 2019 data indicates that 96% of the pupil population with a statement of special educational need (SEN) identify as White British and just 6% of pupils with a statement for ASD are Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME).

			<p>In 2014 the National Autistic Society published a report entitled <i>Diverse Perspectives</i> which detailed research undertaken on the experiences of BAME families with children with ASD. It concluded that difficulties were primarily related to their child's autism, not their ethnicity, however many also faced additional challenges that appear to reflect shared experiences within BAME communities. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Challenges getting a diagnosis:</li> <li>-Barriers to accessing support services</li> <li>-Communication problems with professionals</li> <li>-Awareness and understanding of autism within communities</li> <li>-Denial and isolation, alongside feelings of blame and shame: many said that these issues could lead to parents, carers and siblings missing out on support and becoming socially isolated.</li> </ul> <p>Admission to the provision would be via a special admission panel of the Council and specific entry and exit criteria would apply. Pupils of any race would be eligible for admission to the provision, and once admitted pupils would have equal opportunities to access the support available. The proposal would therefore have a potentially positive impact on this group, by enabling families to have better access to support and services.</p>
Religion or belief	x		<p>Pupils and staff of any religion or belief would be eligible for admission to the provision and the Council's educational arrangements will meet the needs of pupils or staff members of different religions or with different beliefs.</p> <p>Research (<i>Diverse Perspectives</i>, 2014) has shown that some ASD pupils from BAME can be disadvantaged due to their culture with some participants emphasising that their faith gave them strength, while others reporting a lack of support from faith groups and at places of worship.</p> <p>This proposal would seek to improve opportunities for pupils with ASD as specialist staff appointed will be able to better understand and support pupils and families, who may be experiencing particular difficulties due to religion or belief.</p>
Sex	x		<p>Current data (Plasc Jan 2019) indicates 242 pupils with a statement for ASD, of which 198 are boys and 44 are girls. This would suggest that the proposed provision may have greater numbers of male than female pupils attending.</p>

			<p>Studies have shown that behavioural characteristics of ASD females can vary greatly compared to those of autistic males. In general, ASD girls are often isolated or have fewer friends than other girls in their peer group, particularly in their teenage years, and can struggle more than usual with adolescence. This can lead to depression and anxiety. Due to greater numbers of boys than girls in need of support this could mean that girls accessing the provision are in a minority, and so could increase feelings of isolation and anxiety.</p> <p>As the proposal aims to establish an ASD provision in a mainstream school it should provide greater opportunities for female ASD pupils to socialise and make friends with pupils attending mainstream classes, thus ensuring that friendship groups become larger than just the pupils attending the provision. Due to the support available from the experienced staff planned for the provision, and the fact that Dwr y Felin Comprehensive is recognised to be an inclusive and caring school community where children and young people with differing needs and abilities are all supported to thrive, this is likely to have a positive impact on female pupils attending the provision.</p> <p>The benefits of the provision being based in a mainstream, inclusive school is also likely to benefit male pupils, ensuring that their peer groups are also extended beyond those pupils attending the provision.</p>
Sexual orientation	x		<p>Research demonstrates an increased prevalence of autistic children and young people who are gender questioning. This proposal could have a positive impact by ensuring support can be accessed for those pupils who need it from the specialist staff employed in the provision, who will already know the pupils well and be better placed to advise and support them.</p>

#### What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

- Implementing the proposal and establishing an ASD provision for secondary aged pupils in Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school will ensure that the positive impacts on the protected characteristics identified are realised
- Recruitment of specialist and experienced staff will be essential with extra training provided as necessary

b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Public Sector Equality Duty**?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	x			Pupils with an additional learning need could be at risk of discrimination, harassment and victimisation by others. The establishment of an ASD provision at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school will not only support pupils attending but will also aim to raise awareness with mainstream pupils and staff about ASD, promoting greater acceptance and understanding and eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	x			<p>The establishment of the provision at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school would address the increased numbers of pupils aged 11-16 who have a statement of ASD needing specialist support. These pupils would therefore benefit most from this provision. Admission to the provision would be via a special admission panel of the Council and specific entry and exit criteria would apply. All pupils with a statement of ASD would be eligible for admission to the provision from any of the protected groups.</p> <p>As the provision is being established in a mainstream school it is expected that pupils who attend the provision will also have the opportunity to experience and take part in a wide range of activities open to all pupils, thus providing greater equality of opportunity.</p>
To foster good relations between different groups	X			Raising awareness and promoting greater understanding of ASD pupils will help to foster good relationships between pupils attending the mainstream school and those attending the provision. Work undertaken with other mainstream schools by staff employed at the provision will also help to promote understanding and awareness of ASD and foster good relationships.

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

- Implementing the proposal and establishing an ASD provision for secondary aged pupils in Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school will ensure that the positive impacts identified are realised
- Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school staff will raise awareness of the purpose of the provision , and staff and pupils will support pupils in the provision with integration and further promote inclusion throughout the school
- Outreach work with other mainstream school will be undertaken following the establishment of the provision to further promote awareness of ASD

**4. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty**

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion			x	It is not expected that the establishment of the ASD provision will impact on community cohesion
Social Exclusion	x			The establishment of the provision will aim to support those pupils with ASD who may have difficulty participating fully in society, and will give them the opportunity to experience similar life experiences to mainstream pupils
Poverty	x			The provision will aim to ensure that pupils are not at risk of participation poverty by providing opportunities for them to be included in activities experienced by their mainstream peers.

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

- Implementing the proposal and establishing an ASD provision for secondary aged pupils in Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school will ensure that the positive impacts identified are realised
- Staff recruitment will ensure that experienced specialist staff are appointed who are able to provide the best opportunities for pupils
- Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school staff will raise awareness of the purpose of the provision , and staff and pupils will support pupils in the provision with integration and further promote inclusion throughout the school

**5. Welsh**

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on:				Although the provision is planned to be established in an English medium secondary school, staff who are able to speak Welsh will be available to support pupils who transition from a WM school or who speak Welsh as their first language. Pupils attending the provision from a WM school or who speak Welsh as their first language will benefit from the specialised support available to them.
- people's opportunities to use the Welsh language	x			
- treating the Welsh and English languages equally	x			

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

- Recruitment of staff who are able to speak Welsh would be deemed desirable for the provision
- Support for Learning and Inclusion available from Welsh speaking staff

## 6. Biodiversity

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity			x	The establishment of an ASD provision in disused rooms at Dwr y Felin will have no adverse impact on biodiversity or Ecosystem resilience.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.			x	

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

## 7. Well-being of Future Generations

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. <b>Long term</b> – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	Data indicates that the number of pupils with ASD who require support is increasing. This provision will support the Councils wellbeing objective 1 – ‘to improve the wellbeing of children and young people’ through establishing a specialist provision to support pupils currently identified as well as those who will be identified in the future.



	<p>The cost of providing education outside the County Borough for pupils with specialist needs is high, and can amount to circa. £80k per pupil per year. This annually presents a significant demand on the Council's education budget. Meeting the special needs education of pupils in local settings, i.e. within the County Borough, avoids having to secure expensive out-of-county provision, at the present time and in the future</p>
<p>ii. <b>Prevention</b> – preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>By establishing a specialist provision the Council will be providing support and specialist teaching for children and young people with ASD in Neath Port Talbot. This will avoid costly out of county placements thus reducing the demand on the Council's education budget. It will help to prevent absenteeism and possibly exclusion rates as pupils will be educated in a setting that meets their needs which should improve their wellbeing and desire to attend school. It will also ensure that pupils are able to access the support they need to make progress, ensuring that they are able to gain qualifications and life skills for the future.</p>
<p>iii. <b>Collaboration</b> – working with other services internal or external</p>	<p>A range of Council services are involved in establishing the provision should the proposal be approved, including Support for Learning, Education Development Service, Environment Department, Access Managed Services and Transport Services</p>
<p>iv. <b>Involvement</b> – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>The formal consultation process sought the views of the following groups  Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School: Pupils, Parents/carers, Staff, Governing Body, Wider School Community  All other NPT schools  NPT Elected Members  Neath Town Council  NAASH (Secondary Schools Forum)  LLAN (Primary Schools Forum)  Bordering authorities – Swansea/ Bridgend/ Carmarthenshire/ Powys/ RCT  WG Schools Management Division  Diocesan Directors of Education- Diocese of Menevia, Swansea, Diocese of Llandaff, Vale of Glamorgan  MP (for Aberafan)–Stephen Kinnock,  MP (for Neath) – Christina Rees  AM (for Aberafan) – David Rees  AM (for Neath) – Jeremy Miles  Trade Unions  Regional Assembly Members</p>

	Estyn Local Members Regional Education Consortium (ERW) Children and Young Person Partnership (inc. Early Years Development and Childcare) NPTCBC Integrated Transport Unit Police and Crime Commissioner Communities First Partnership NPTC Group NPTCBC Officers SEN Partners
<b>v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:</b>	The proposal to establish an ASD provision in Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school has a positive contribution to the Council's well-being objectives as it aims to ensure that pupils with ASD are supported and are able to make progress
<b>Council's well-being objectives</b>	To improve the wellbeing of children and young people
<b>Other public bodies objectives</b>	Promote wellbeing through and in the workplace

## 8. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

Having considered the views expressed by interested parties, the Council has determined to proceed with its plan and subsequently published a statutory proposal on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 for a period of 28 days, known as the 'objection period', allowing for further written responses. No objections were received during this time.

If the proposal is implemented then Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school staff will monitor the progress and wellbeing of pupils in the provision to ensure that identified positive impacts are being implemented.

Monitoring will take place on a regular basis by Support for Learning and Inclusion officers, EDS officers and outside bodies including Estyn.

## 9. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	Conclusion
<b>Equalities</b>	The establishment of the provision will have a positive impact on age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. It will have a neutral impact on gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.
<b>Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty</b>	The establishment of the provision will have no effect on community cohesion, but should have a positive impact on social exclusion and poverty
<b>Welsh</b>	Staff who are able to speak Welsh will be available to support pupils who transition from a WM school or who speak Welsh as their first language. Pupils attending the provision from a WM school or who speak Welsh as their first language will benefit from the specialised support available to them.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The establishment of the provision has no impact on biodiversity
<b>Well-being of Future Generations</b>	This proposal directly contributes to the Council's wellbeing objective 'to improve the wellbeing of children and young people'

### Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised
- **Make adjustments** - as potential problems/missed opportunities/negative impacts have been identified along with mitigating actions
- **Justification** - for continuing with the initiative even though there is a potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities
- **STOP** - redraft the initiative as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified

Please provide details of the overall conclusion reached in relation to the initiative

The establishment of an ASD provision for secondary aged pupils in Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School will provide vital support and specialist teaching for pupils with ASD. It will support ALN reform and ensure that the Council is able to fulfil its legal obligations to meet the needs of pupils with ALN.

It will have positive impacts on age, disability, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation and will assist the Council's ability to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. Additionally it will have a positive impact on social exclusion and poverty, and a positive impact on opportunities to use the Welsh language and in treating Welsh and English equally.

The Wellbeing of Future generations has been considered and the establishment of an ASD provision directly impacts on the Council's wellbeing objective –'to improve the wellbeing of children and young people'.

## 10. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
Recruitment of staff	Inclusion services and Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School	By April 2020	Suitably qualified and experienced staff appointed
Building works undertaken	SSIP/Environment	By summer 2020	Work completed and ready for occupation

## 11. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Rhiannon Crowhurst	SSIP Programme Manager		10.3.20
Signed off by	Andrew Thomas	Head of Service/Director		10.3.20

## Risk Assessment

### PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH SPECIALIST PROVISION FOR SECONDARY AGE PUPILS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER

#### Context

1. This risk assessment has been carried out in line with the Council's Risk Management Policy 2018
2. Implementing the proposal will result in the establishment of a provision recognized by the council as reserved for pupils with ALN and pupils admitted to the provision would be in addition to the admission number of the school. Admission to the provision would be via a special admission panel of the council and all placement decisions will be predicated on the expectation that schools have exhausted their own resources in meeting the needs of these pupils.

#### The reasons for the proposal

3. It is proposed to establish a specialist provision for secondary age pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School.
4. The facility will provide learning support for pupils with ASD for up to 16 pupils who are in receipt of a Statement of SEN.
5. The provision will be managed by the school and be under the school's governance. However it will be a provision recognised by the Council as reserved for pupils with ALN and pupils admitted to the provision would be in addition to the admission number of the school. Admission to the provision would be via a special admission panel of the Council and specific entry and exit criteria would apply.
6. Pupils at the proposed provision will benefit from being taught by specialist staff, experienced in working with pupils with ASD needs. There is also the possibility that mainstream pupils with ASD could also benefit from the expertise available.
7. The provision will alleviate the current pressure to address demand for places for pupils with more complex needs, avoiding potential costly out of county placements and allowing opportunities for children to access learning within their local community.
8. The proposal seeks to complement the specialist provision and support already available within the County Borough.

#### Risks associated with the proposal

9. The potential risks associated with the proposal could threaten the Council's

ability to successfully achieve its strategic goals and objectives

10. Potential risk areas in implementing the proposal include:

- educational outcomes for pupils are not improved
- integration at a provision is unsuccessful
- negative response from parents of host schools
- staff with appropriate skills and expertise not available
- increased governance and staff responsibilities
- increased home to school travel time for some pupils leading to poor attendance
- Welsh language development not supported

11. Failing to implement the proposal will result in a range of teaching/learning and financial benefits not being fully realised, particularly in relation to:

- opportunities for a pupils to access specialist staff and support
- host schools indirectly benefit from specialist staff on site
- mainstream schools benefit from increased support and training in order to improve skills and build capacity

### **Risk assessment**

12. The proposal is supported by the inclusive approach to education at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School and the goodwill towards hosting an SEN facility. Combined with the specialist skills and expertise of the staff to be appointed to work at the provision and the targeted planned actions, identified risks can be suitably mitigated.

## Risk Assessment

No	Risk description	L'hood score	Impact score	Overall Risk	Prox'ty*	Planned action to mitigate	Target Date	Owner	Update	Trend Up Down No change
1	Outcomes for pupils are not improved	1	5	Low risk	4	Implementation of proposal combined with appropriate support and challenge to ensure entitlements are met and provision delivered	July 2021	SSIP team Support for Inclusion EDS School leadership	10.12.19 12.03.20	No change No change
2	Integration at provision is unsuccessful	2	5	Medium risk	2	Provision staffed with experienced and skilful staff able to provide for individual pupil needs, combined with appropriate support from inclusion team	July 2021	SSIP team School leadership Support for Inclusion	10.12.19 12.03.20	No change No change
3	Negative response from parents of host schools	1	4	Low risk	1	Consultation meetings. Effective communication with parents	Sept 2020	School leadership SSIP Support for Inclusion	10.12.19 12.03.20	No change No change
	Staff with appropriate skills and expertise not available	2	5	Medium risk	1	Identification, appointment and training of staff	April 2020	School leadership Support for inclusion ELLLS	10.12.19 12.03.20	No change No change
5	Increased home to school travel time for some pupil leading to poor attendance.	2	4	Medium risk	4	Inclusive ethos and practices. Safe travel routes to school supported by school travel plans and the Council's school transport policy. School is relatively centrally located within NPT CBC	Dec 2020	School leadership Support for inclusion ELLLS PIAC/LSC staff	10.12.19 12.03.20	No change No change

6	Welsh language development not supported	1	3	Low risk	4	Welsh will be taught in line with the national curriculum guidelines for an English-medium school. Suitable support to be made available for Welsh first language pupils.	Sept 2020	School leadership Support for inclusion ELLLS staff School staff	10.12.19 12.03.20	No change No change
7	Increased governance and staff responsibilities	1	3	Low risk	4	Although a specialist provision at the school will mean additional responsibilities, the availability of a wider pool of staff expertise will benefit the school (pupils and staff) as a whole with specialist skills and knowledge more readily accessible.	Sept 2020	School leadership Support for inclusion ELLLS LSC staff	10.12.19 12.03.20	No change No change





**This Statutory Notice is published by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ**

**NOTICE** is given in accordance with Section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council having consulted such persons as required, propose to:

- make an alteration to Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School, Dwr y Felin Road, Neath, SA10 7RE to provide specialist provision for secondary age pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

The facility will provide learning support for pupils with ASD for up to 16 pupils who require support in a specialist setting. Admission will be via a special admission panel of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. Pupils admitted to the ASD provision will be in addition to the admission number of the school. Dwr y Felin Comprehensive is an 11-16 English medium community comprehensive school for boys and girls, situated on the outskirts of Neath. The school has the capacity to accommodate 1,100 full-time mainstream pupils, and the proposed capacity will remain at 1,100. The admission number for pupils in the first year in which the proposal has been implemented will be 220.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the Council's response to these queries and the views of Estyn are available at: <https://www.npt.gov.uk/1891>

It is proposed to implement the proposal on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Transport arrangements will be in line with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Home to School Travel Policy.

Within a period of 28 days after the date of publication of this proposal, that is to say by the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020, any person may object to the proposal. Objections should be sent to the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning (for attention of SSIP) at Civic Centre Port Talbot. SA13 1PJ or e-mailed to [ssip@npt.gov.uk](mailto:ssip@npt.gov.uk)

Signed:

Aled Evans, Director of Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning

**Dated: 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

### **Explanatory Notes:**

(This note does not form part of the Notice but is intended to explain its general meaning)

- (i) It is intended to establish a provision for secondary aged pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Dwr y Felin Comprehensive school.
- (ii) The facility will provide learning support for up to 16 pupils of secondary school age pupils with ASD. Pupils at the proposed provision will benefit from being taught by specialist staff, experienced in working with pupils with ASD needs. This facility will be for pupils in receipt of a statement of SEN and who require longer-term provision.
- (iii) The provision will be managed by the school and be under the school's governance. However it will be a provision recognised by the Council as reserved for pupils with ALN and pupils admitted to the provision would be in addition to the admission number of the school.
- (iv) Admission to the provision would be via a special admission panel of the Council and specific entry and exit criteria would apply.
- (v) The facility will occupy accommodation currently unused by the school. The capacity of the school will remain unchanged at 1100 full-time, mainstream places with an admission number of 220.
- (vi) It is intended that the ASD provision will open on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020.
- (vii) The reasons for the proposal are set out in the consultation document which is available on the SSIP webpage on the Council's website:  
<https://www.npt.gov.uk/1891>
- (viii) The Authority's School Transport policy is available from the Council's website:  
[https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/4231/npt\\_home\\_to\\_school\\_travel\\_policy\\_2017.pdf](https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/4231/npt_home_to_school_travel_policy_2017.pdf)
- (ix) Hard copies or alternative versions of all documentation may be obtained upon request from the Strategic School Improvement Team, Education Department, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Port Talbot Civic Centre, Port Talbot.