

## **CONSULTATION REPORT**

### **Responses from consultation on the proposal to establish a Secondary Education Nurture Centre (SENC) at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School**

#### **Introduction**

The Council has consulted with interested parties on its proposal to establish a Secondary Education Nurture Centre (SENC) at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School. The consultation period ran initially from 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 until 11<sup>th</sup> December 2016 and was extended to 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017 for receipt of parental responses. A list of consultees is included below. The consultation document was made available electronically to consultees and was also available on the Council's website.

If implemented, this proposal will take effect on 27th February 2017.

#### **Legislative Process**

The consultation document invited views and opinions to be submitted in respect of the proposal. Under the Welsh Government Statutory Code for School Organisation the Council is required to publish a consultation report summarising any issues raised by consultees, the Council's response to those issues and Estyn's view of the overall merit of the proposal.

If approved, the next stage of the process is to publish a statutory notice outlining the proposal. This would need to be published for a period of 28 days and formal written objections would be invited during this time.

If objections are received, an objection report will be published summarising the objections and the Council's response to those objections. The Council's Cabinet will need to consider the proposal in light of objections received when making its decision on whether the proposal is to be implemented.

#### **Consultation Responses**

- Consultation meetings

Consultation meetings were held with Governors and pupils of Cefn Saeson. Notes from these meetings, including officer responses are shown below.

- Written responses

Two written responses were received. The responses were submitted by Estyn and an individual respondent. Issues raised and officer responses are shown below.

## **The view of Estyn, her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales**

### **Summary/ Conclusion**

The proposer has clearly outlined the benefits of establishing a secondary education nurture centre at Cefn Saeson comprehensive school.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.

### **Description and benefits**

The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal. It intends that the SENC will provide a period of assessment for pupils at the secondary phase of education to identify barriers to learning, create bespoke packages of support and plan for successful reintegration into mainstream school.

The proposer clearly outlines the expected benefits of the proposal. These include pupils benefitting from being taught by specialist staff, easing the current pressure to address demand for places for pupils with more complex needs, avoiding costly out of county placements and allowing opportunities for young people to access learning within their local community.

The proposer has carried out a valid risk assessment which has identified three risks associated with the proposal. However, the planned action to mitigate against these risks are not detailed enough.

The proposer has considered suitable alternative options and provided seemingly valid reasons as to why these have been discounted and the preferred option chosen. These include maintaining the status quo and providing a nurture centre at a different location within the county borough.

The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on learner travel arrangements. It intends to assess pupil travel needs in line with the council's home to school travel policy. This means that secondary age pupils living three miles or more from the SENC will be considered for assistance with travel costs. The proposer has appropriately considered how surplus places will be affected. The SENC will be housed in surplus accommodation at the school and projected numbers are unlikely to impact significantly on the surplus accommodation. In addition, pupils attending the SENC will remain on roll at their base school. This means that there is likely to be very limited impact on surplus places at the school.

The proposer has taken sufficient account of the impact of the proposal on Welsh medium provision. In its equality impact assessment report, the proposer asserts that the SENC will be able to accommodate those pupils who speak Welsh as their first language as there will be available Welsh speaking members of staff.

### **Educational aspects of the proposal**

The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposals on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management. However, the data used does not include 2016 results. At key stage 3, for the core subject indicator, the school performed below the local authority and Wales averages in 2016. Its performance was in the bottom 25% of similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals. At key stage 4, for the core subject indicator and the level 2 inclusive indicator for 2016, the school performed better than the local authority and Wales averages. Its performance in both these indicators was in the top 25% of similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals. The school has been placed in the yellow colour coded support category.

The proposer has also appropriately considered the most recent Estyn inspection outcomes for the school, however, the proposer has not provided the local consortium's view on leadership and management at the school.

The proposer reasonably asserts that a nurture unit based at the school will facilitate pupils being placed back into their own school or an appropriate educational setting.

The proposer has undertaken an equality impact assessment which appropriately considers each of the protected characteristics including disability. It has also considered the financial impact and asserts that the school will receive additional funding for up to 16 pupils in order to manage the SENC.

The proposer has not referred to any potential disruption to learners in its proposal.

### **NPTCBC's response to Estyn's comment:**

A full risk assessment has been completed and was included as Appendix B in the Cabinet report of 26th October 2016 and as an electronic link in the consultation document. The identified overall risks have been classed as mainly low or medium and actions have been identified to mitigate them in every case. Most of these are shown in the list of disbenefits in not implementing the proposal. Detailed planning at this stage is difficult and may prove to be unnecessary, and it is expected that more specific actions will be planned and actioned as other risks associated with the proposal become clearer.

At the time of writing the consultation document, the 2016 core data had not been released and as such it was felt to be more accurate to use data up to 2015.

Also at this time ERW officers had not completed their 2016 Autumn Core Visit and so any information which could be provided on leadership and management would not have been current, and could have caused confusion. The outcome of categorisation is awaiting verification; however ERW officers have noted that the leadership at the school is effective and that leaders and staff work very successfully with schools and other partners to enhance significantly their own and others' capacity to bring about improvement. It is expected that the school will be in the Green category of support for this academic year.

It is not anticipated that any learners at the school will be disrupted as a result of this proposal. However should any disruption occur then action would be taken to address any identified concerns at that time.

### **The view of the individual respondent**

Issues raised by the respondent, who in part commented as a parent, were mainly concerned with

- understanding the nature and function of the SENC
- potential disruption to Cefn Saeson pupils caused by establishing the provision
- concerns that the decision to establish the SENC has already been made
- notification of the consultation period and details of meetings held with stakeholders

### **NPTCBC Response**

- The establishment of a SENC has been identified as an essential provision within a new delivery model of a continuum of support for pupils with Social and Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD).

The Council has identified, as a priority, the need to establish a consistent approach in all schools to improve provision for aspects of wellbeing and behaviour in order to reduce the number and length of exclusions and reliance on home tuition. The new wellbeing and behaviour continuum will ensure that schools and the Council work in partnership to focus on prevention and early intervention in order to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people and to ensure the best possible outcomes.

The SENC will provide a period of assessment for pupils at the secondary phase of education to identify barriers to learning, create bespoke packages of support

and plan for successful reintegration into mainstream school. Pupils will benefit from being taught by specialist staff, highly experienced in working with pupils with more complex needs, whilst mainstream schools will also gain further capacity to plan and provide for pupils presenting with these needs.

The provision will alleviate the current pressure to address demand for places for pupils with more complex needs, avoiding costly out of county placements and allowing opportunities for young people to access learning within their local community.

Protocols have been developed to ensure that pupils remain on roll and retain contact with their base school; a key principle of a pupil's placement. However, it is likely to be the case that a small number of children may require transition to another specialist provision within the LA. The assessment period will ensure appropriate placement where needs can be best met.

The proposal seeks to complement the type of specialist support already available at Ysgol Hendrefelin's assessment facility for secondary age pupils. Ysgol Hedrefelin is a special school located at Bryncoch, Neath.

- As previously noted spare accommodation has been identified within the school which can be used for the SENC with some refurbishment/conversion work needed to ensure that the centre can be self-contained. Pupils will have all necessary facilities available within the SENC, avoiding the need for pupils to access other areas of the school and ensuring any potential disruption to main stream classes is avoided. The building work will be completed with the minimum of disruption to the school and will be carefully managed to ensure that pupils and staff are not adversely affected while work is taking place.
- It is not the case that the decision to open the SENC has already been made. The Council has consulted with interested parties on the proposal and all responses to the consultation will be considered when making its decision. Information on issues raised and officer responses are included in this report.
- To ensure parents of pupils at the school had sufficient opportunity to respond the deadline for written comments from parents was extended to January 12th. Meetings were held with those stakeholders most affected by the proposal and notes of the meetings are included in this report.

## **Summary of issues raised during the consultation meetings:**

### **Notes of a Meeting with Governors of Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School**

Information regarding the proposal was presented to Governors and questions and comments were invited.

#### **Comments and Issues raised:**

Governors noted that Cefn Saeson is an inclusive, nurturing school and that it is pleasing that the local authority recognise this and are considering establishing the provision at this school.

Governors were unanimously supportive of the proposal, and were keen to understand the following points

- Where will pupils go after attending the SENC?
- What would happen if Ysgol Hendrefelin was full?
- What will the entry and exit criteria be? \*
- Will there be a cost to the school?
- Will management of the SENC create extra workload for the leadership team, particularly the head teacher?
- What integration would take place?

#### **NPTCBC's Response:**

- While attending the SENC it is expected that pupils will have their individual learning needs assessed, and support will be planned and provided for them with the intention of them returning to their mainstream school. It is important that pupils remain on roll and keep in contact with their base school; however some pupils may require a move to a different mainstream school when they are ready to leave the SENC, or to another specialist provision in Neath Port Talbot where appropriate  
When pupils are deemed ready to leave the SENC the move back to their school or to another provision will be carefully planned and managed. It is likely that there will be a period when pupils attend at both places making sure that the move out of the SENC is supported to ensure it is successful.
- If Ysgol Hendrefelin was full and unable to take any of these pupils additional placements will be put in place.
- The process to determine entry and exit criteria is underway, but is not yet finalised.
- There will be no cost to the school. The school will receive additional funding to manage the SENC for up to 16 pupils. Self-contained accommodation will be

developed in surplus accommodation at the school for which a one-off capital cost for the refurbishment/conversion work has been allocated.

- Additional staff posts have been identified for the SENC. The governing body and the school leadership at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School will have overall responsibility for the day to day management of the SENC, including the specialist staff who will become part of the school's staffing complement. Cefn Saeson is already a well-managed school with an experienced leadership team, who feel confident that appropriate appointments to the additional posts required for the SENC will ensure that any extra management responsibility will not adversely affect the overall running of the school as a whole or the work load of senior staff.
- As previously noted spare accommodation has been identified within the school which can be used for the SENC with some refurbishment/conversion work needed to ensure that the centre can be self-contained. Pupils will have all necessary facilities available within the SENC, avoiding the need for pupils to access other areas of the school and ensuring any potential disruption to main stream classes is avoided. However there may be some circumstances where it would be appropriate for individual SENC pupils to integrate with mainstream Cefn Saeson pupils, for example, to access certain areas of the curriculum or to use specialist resources, but this would be carefully assessed and managed on an individual and supervised basis.

### **Meeting with Cefn Saeson School Council representatives**

#### **Points raised:**

- How will pupils attending the SENC travel to school?
- Will start/end times be the same as the Cefn Saeson pupils?
- Will the position of the SENC in the building cause disturbance to pupils in nearby lessons?
- Where will SENC pupils have lunch?
- Will pupils be allowed to smoke?
- How do pupils get a place in the SENC?
- How will pupils be reintegrated back into school – will this be in our school or the school they used to be in? What happens when pupils are ready to go back?
- Will it be possible for pupils to 'run away' from the SENC?
- What arrangements will be made for pupils who 'bounce off' each other?
- Where will these pupils sit their exams/GCSEs? How will they be taught the full range of subjects? If pupils excel in certain subjects could they attend those lessons as a way of easing them back in? More able and talented children in this school have opportunities to develop their abilities

- Will they be allowed to integrate with pupils here – attend trips and take part in sports activities? This would be good for their self-esteem and help them make progress? Will they be rewarded for behaving well?
- Will they be monitored when they return to mainstream? Is there a chance they will fall back into old patterns of behaviour when they are back in their original school and continue to make poor choices?

### **NPTCBC's Response:**

- Pupils attending the SENC will have their individual travel needs assessed in line with the Council's Home to School Travel policy, before a decision is made on how they will get to Cefn Saeson. It is very unlikely that pupils would be expected to travel on the same bus as mainstream pupils, as start and finish times may be different.
- Spare accommodation has been identified within the school which can be used for the SENC with some refurbishment/conversion work needed to ensure that the centre can be self-contained. Pupils will be able to eat within the SENC, and will also have all other necessary facilities. This should avoid any disruption to other pupils in the school. Pupils will not be allowed to smoke on school premises.
- Admission to the SENC will be via a special admission panel of the Council. While attending the SENC it is expected that pupils will have their individual learning needs assessed, and support will be planned and provided for them with the intention of them returning to their mainstream school. It is important that pupils remain on roll and keep in contact with their base school; however some pupils may require a move to a different mainstream school when they are ready to leave the SENC, or to another specialist provision in Neath Port Talbot. There may be some circumstances where SENC pupils could integrate with mainstream Cefn Saeson pupils, for example to access certain areas of the curriculum or to use specialist resources, however this would be carefully assessed and managed on an individual basis.
- When pupils are deemed ready to leave the SENC the move back to their school or to another provision will be carefully planned and managed. It is likely that there will be a period when pupils attend at both places making sure that the move out of the SENC is supported to ensure it is successful.
- It would not be acceptable for pupils to 'run away' from the SENC, and it is not expected that this would be something that pupils would necessarily want to do, as the facilities and the staff who would be working there should be providing help and support to pupils to prevent situations arising where this could happen. Pupils would not be allowed to leave the SENC without the permission of the staff working there, and then only for very specific reasons and under supervision.

- When a new pupil is admitted to the SENC it will be necessary to take into account the pupils who are already attending there and what likely impact a new pupil is going to have. The provision will be able to be flexible enough to ensure that pupils who are not a good influence on each other will not have to attend at the same time, avoiding situations where individual pupils react to each other in a negative way.
- Any SENC pupils who have been entered for GCSEs will sit these exams in their base school. If pupils enjoy and excel at a subject then there may be opportunities for them to continue their studies at their base school or to join certain lessons at Cefn Saeson if this is deemed to be appropriate. Every pupil will be assessed on an individual basis and their needs considered alongside those of the mainstream pupils, either at their base school or in Cefn Saeson, before a decision is made.
- Rewarding positive behaviour could be part of an overall pupil management plan for certain SENC pupils and it is good to know that Cefn Saeson pupils welcome SENC pupils into their school community in this way. Good role models are vital for all pupils and it is to be hoped that SENC pupils will be able to access activities where appropriate with careful management and support.
- Pupils will be closely monitored when they return to their mainstream school and support will be made available for them to ensure that they are able to settle back successfully and that they make good choices for their future.

## **List of Consultees:**

Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School	Pupils Parents/Carers/Guardians School Staff Governing Body Wider School Community
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All other NPT schools

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Bordering Authority - Swansea / Bridgend / Carmarthenshire / Powys / RCT

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Diocese -	Diocese of Menevia, Swansea
CIW -	Diocesan of Llandaff, Vale of Glamorgan

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Trade Unions -	Regional Organisers for:	3 x Non-teaching & 6 x Teaching
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NAASH (Secondary Schools Forum)  
LLAN (Primary Schools Forum)

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MP (for Aberafan) – Stephen Kinnock  
MP (for Neath) – Christina Rees

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AM (for Aberafan) – David Rees  
AM (for Neath) - Jeremy Miles

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Regional AMs (South Wales West) -  
Suzy Davies/Bethan Jenkins/Caroline Jones/Dai Lloyd

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NPT Elected Members

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Neath Town Council

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WG Schools Management Division

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Estyn

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Regional Education Consortium (ERW)

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NPTCBC Integrated Transport Unit

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Police & Crime Commissioner

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Children & Young Person Partnership  
(including Early Years Development and Childcare)

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Communities First Partnership

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NPTC Group

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SEN Partners –

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SNAP Cymru  
Action for Children  
Child & Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS)  
Consultant Community Paediatrician  
The Children's Centre NPT Hospital (Physiotherapy)  
Neath Port Talbot Support for Learning Team (Speech & Language)  
Neath Port Talbot 14-19 Network

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*NPTCBC as the maintaining authority -*  
NPT Senior Management (Education)  
NPT Admissions Officer  
NPT ERW Officer  
NPT Education Psychologists  
NPT ALNST  
NPT Governor Support  
NPT Human Resources  
NPT Legal Services  
NPT Planning  
NPT Property Management  
NPT Gypsy/Traveller Officer (Education)

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