

.Date/Dyddiad 10 March 2021
Ask for/Gofynwch am M Curtis
Telephone/Rhif ffôn 01446 709828
Fax/Ffacs
e-mail/e-bost 21stcenturyschools@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
Your Ref/Eich Cyf
My Ref/Cyf 21C/WHS

The Vale of Glamorgan Council
Learning and Skills
Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry CF63 4RU
Telephone: (01446) 700111
www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Cyngor Bro Morgannwg
Dysgu a Sgiliau
Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Heol Holton, Y Barri CF63 4RU
Rhif ffôn: (01446) 700111
www.bromorgannwg.gov.uk



To: Parents, Carers and Guardians of children attending Whitmore High School; Headteacher, Staff and Governing Body of Whitmore High School; Prescribed Consultees

Dear Consultee,

Proposal to transform specialist education by establishing a specialist resource base at Whitmore High School from September 2021.

The Council consulted with prescribed consultees in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 on the proposal.

In line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018, a consultation exercise with prescribed consultees was undertaken between 5 October 2020 and 20 November 2020. The aim of the consultation was to inform prescribed consultees about the proposal. During the consultation exercise, 19 individual responses were received by the consultation closing date of 18 October 2020. Consultees were asked for their opinion on the proposal. All 19 of the respondents (100%) were in favour of the proposal.

On 21 December 2020, following consideration of the consultation report, Cabinet determined to progress the proposal through the publication of a statutory notice. The statutory notice was published on the Council's website on 13 January 2021 and was issued to prescribed consultees and posted at the main entrances of Whitmore High School. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 provides that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections must be made in writing or by email, and sent to the proposer before the end of 28 days beginning with the day on which the notice was published ("the objection period"). As the statutory notice was published on 13 January 2021, statutory objections had to be received by 9 February 2021. No statutory objections were received during the statutory notice period.

On 8 March 2021, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Cabinet considered all relevant documentation and determined to approve the proposal.

Hard copies of the reports are available on request by contacting a member of the 21st Century Schools Team on: 21stcenturyschools@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

The proposal will mean specialist educational provision would be established at Whitmore High School for Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) pupils.

A new build is currently being constructed for Whitmore High School on its existing site. An area of the building has been allocated for a specialist resource base. It is proposed that this would focus on pupils with ASC. The base would be managed by the headteacher and governing body of

Whitmore High School. The area has been designed to accommodate up to 20 learners. It is proposed that the base is established from September 2021.

In determining the proposal, Cabinet were satisfied that the proposal will:

- Provide targeted support for ASC pupils within a mainstream secondary school environment to ensure pupils reach their full potential;
- Provide innovative and creative learning environments which are adaptable to change and will challenge and support children to reach their full potential;
- Increase the level of community access and interaction through the use of the school's educational facilities whilst meeting the needs of the school;
- Makes provision within the Vale for larger numbers of our pupils with ASC;
- Provide opportunities for professional development throughout Whitmore High School; and
- Reduced reliance on costly out of county provision.

The reasons for the decision in respect of the factors outlined in the School Organisation Code are as follows:

Quality and Standards of Education

This proposal would likely have a positive impact on the quality and standards in education. As noted by respondents, the proposed new specialist resource base at Whitmore High School for ASC pupils would enable more pupils to access mainstream education who might otherwise be excluded.

The new building and site at Whitmore High School has been designed to meet the needs of a wide range of pupils and would provide greater access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The specialist resource base would be managed by the headteacher and governing body of Whitmore High School. The area has been designed to accommodate up to 20 learners. It is proposed that the base is established with the opening of the new school building from September 2021.

Estyn's consultation response noted that "this proposal is unlikely to have a detrimental impact upon learners, and that educational standards within the area are likely to be at least maintained."

Need for places and the impact upon accessibility of schools

This proposal forms part of the Council's strategy to transform special education in the Vale of Glamorgan to meet projected future demand and best meet the needs of our most vulnerable learners.

Placing the specialist resource base within a mainstream secondary school, Whitmore High School, would provide additional support for pupils with ASC whilst ensuring they can access mainstream secondary education. This would reduce demand for places at Ysgol Y Deri, whilst also ensuring there is provision for pupils who would not normally meet the criteria for placements at Ysgol Y Deri.

All admission to the specialist resource base will be via the Local Authority Panel, in consultation with the Engagement Service and Whitmore High School.

Resourcing of education and other financial implications

Financial resources

The capital works for the establishment of the specialist resource base at Whitmore High School is included as part of the new build currently under construction.

Additional revenue funding would be required to fund the provision. A phased approach would be adopted with provision for 10 pupils from September 2021 which would increase to 20 pupils from September 2022.

The Council would provide additional transition funding as part of the 2021/22 budget to appoint the leader of the provision ahead of opening.

It would be necessary to employ a lead teacher for the base from April 2021 in order to ensure that effective planning is undertaken prior to opening. From September 2021 additional funding would be allocated to fund learning support assistants (LSAs) which would be required to provide direct support to learners. From September 2022 additional funding would be allocated to fund an additional teacher and LSAs in line with the increase in pupils.

The school would also receive pupil-led funding as part of the schools funding formula which would be based on the number of pupils on roll.

A cost pressure has been submitted for £176k in 2021/22 and an additional £108k in 2022/23. Implementation of the proposal would be dependent on the required revenue funding being available.

Human resources and learner needs

The Council would fully support the staff and governing body to ensure the successful implementation of the proposal.

The base would be managed by the headteacher and governing body of Whitmore High School. The area has been designed to accommodate up to 20 learners. It is proposed that the base is established with the opening of the new school building from September 2021.

In their consultation sessions, pupils noted that “There needs to be a conversation with mainstream classes about the unit and to create an ‘ethos’ of acceptance/tolerance”. A key role of the specialist resource base would be to support the implementation of school-wide policies and procedures to strengthen support available to all pupils at Whitmore High School. During the transition the Council would work with the staff and governing body to ensure appropriate measures are put in place to establish a culture of understanding and collaboration between mainstream pupils and those with an ASC diagnosis attending the base. School-wide training needs would be identified during the transition phase and would be included as part of the school’s training and development programme.

Additional staff would be recruited by the school to support learners within the base, which would include the appointment of a lead teacher to manage the provision. Any proposed changes to staffing would be subject to full consultation with staff and the relevant trade unions where necessary.

Other general factors

Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Impact Assessment identifies that there will be a positive impact on persons with the protected characteristics of age, disability and gender reassignment/ identity. The proposal will support the school to ensure that it has the improved facilities to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those with different protected characteristics.

There has been no perceived negative impact on the protected characteristics identified.

Successful implementation of the proposal will enable compliance with the Equality Act (2010), for example by providing a fully accessible building with gender neutral facilities.

Community Impact Assessment

The impact assessment identifies that the proposal would likely have a neutral impact on the local community across 4 of the 8 measures assessed. The proposal would likely have a positive impact on the local community across 4 of the 8 measures assessed. Overall, the proposal would likely have a neutral / positive impact on the local community.

The proposal would enable Whitmore High School to provide innovative and creative learning environments which are adaptable to change and would challenge and support children to reach their full potential.

It is concluded from the Community Impact Assessment that the proposal would better meet the needs of the community to ensure the sustainable balance between supply and demand for school places.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PA Ham'.

Paula Ham, Director of Learning and Skills