



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

CONSULTATION REPORT

Reorganisation of ALN & Inclusion Services

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Distribution of the Consultation Report	4
3. Background to our review of ALN and Inclusion Services	5
4. A reminder of our proposal	8
5. Consultation Arrangements.....	8
Methodology	8
Consultation Meetings.....	9
Consultation with children and young people	9
6. Results and Comments	10
7. ESTYN Response.....	21
8. General overview and consensus.....	23
Appendix 1 - List of Consultees with whom we consulted	27
Appendix 2 - Consultation with Children and Young People.....	28

1. Introduction

Monmouthshire County Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient and suitable school places for children within its County, and in doing so ensure that resources and facilities are efficiently utilised to deliver the education opportunities that our children deserve.

The Council has a responsibility under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to consult with appropriate stakeholders when giving consideration to any significant school reorganisation proposals.

The Council recently engaged in a statutory consultation process relating to the delivery of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Inclusion Services across the County.

The purpose of the consultation was:

To seek the views of our community and key stakeholders on proposals to implement a new delivery model to meet the needs of children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) and those presenting with challenging behaviour.

This consultation report now represents the council's responsibilities in line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to produce a report seeking to inform interested parties of the outcome to the consultation by means of:

- Summarising each of the issues raised by consultees
- Responding to these by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal, or rejection to the concerns with supporting reasons
- Setting out Estyn's view (as provided in its consultation response) of the overall merits of the proposal

2. Distribution of the Consultation Report

This consultation report has been published on the Monmouthshire County Council Website www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/schoolreorganisation. The following consultees and interested parties will be contacted directly to inform them of the publication of this document.

- Parents, Guardians and carers of all pupils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Parents of children who are in receipt of a statement of ALN
- Parents of children who are in receipt of a School action plus resource assist (SAPRA)
- Consultees who have formally responded to the consultation and requested notification
- Headteacher, staff and governors of schools directly affected by the proposal.
- Out of county Schools affected by the proposal.
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Headteachers of all schools in MCC area
- All MCC Members
- Welsh Ministers
- All MCC Town and Community Councils
- All MCC Assembly Members representing the area served by the school
- All Members of Parliament representing MCC area
- All MCC Libraries
- Directors of Education of all bordering LAs – Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Powys, Torfaen, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire
- Directors of Education of affected LA's – Caerphilly, South Gloucestershire, Merthyr, Bristol, Rhodda Cynon Taff, North Somerset, Somerset, Swindon, Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff
- Principals of Coleg Gwent
- MCC Youth Service
- GAVO
- Monmouthshire Governors Association
- Teaching Associations
- Support Staff Associations
- Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)
- Welsh Government
- ESTYN
- Church in Wales Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- South East Wales Education Achievement Service
- Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
- SNAP Cymru Parent Partnership Service
- Local Health Board

3. Background to our review of ALN and Inclusion Services

Monmouthshire is committed to improving the educational achievement and attainment for all children and young people in in the county through the provision of an inclusive education system that places the child or young person at the centre.

Through our work with schools, parents and key partners, we seek to:

- Secure equality of access to education for all children and young people
- Deliver a high quality and inclusive curriculum for all learners
- Educate our children and young people in their local communities whenever possible
- Support children and young people and their families to enable them to live a happy and fulfilling life
- Provide meaningful opportunities for learners to access support when they need it and return to their community school as soon as they are able
- Meet the needs of children and young people now and be suitably adaptable to meet changing needs in the future

The aims above link directly to our Directorate core values, which aspire to ensure that all of our children and young people will:

- **Be ready for school** - through engagement with our Early Years and Flying Start programmes.
- **Be in school** - supported by our Access and Education Welfare teams.
- **Be well behaved** - through support from our Behaviour and Inclusion teams.
- **Be well taught** - by the teachers and teaching assistants in our schools.

Over the last five years, we have made progress towards fulfilling this commitment for the majority of our children and young people. However, there is still more to do to ensure that this is the case for children and young people and particularly for learners with ALN and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD).

In November 2012, Estyn reported that the quality of Local Authority (LA) education for children and young people with ALN in Monmouthshire was unsatisfactory. In its follow-up visit in November 2016, Estyn reported that the authority had made good progress in addressing almost all areas. However, Estyn recognised the ‘lack of specialist facilities for learners with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), social emotional and behavioural difficulties and severe learning difficulties’ which meant that “learners had to travel long distances to attend specialist out of county placements” and this remained an area to be addressed.

Since this time and through its 21st Century Schools programme, the Council has extended its secondary provision by including a Special Needs Resource Base (SNRB) in the new schools in Caldicot and Monmouth. Whilst this will increase the capacity of secondary SNRB ALN provision across the county, it does not address the needs of all learners with SEBD, especially girls and younger learners.

Consequently, in January 2017, the LA established an ALN Steering group with representation from LA Officers, Headteachers, ALN Coordinators, Governors, Children Services Officers and SNAP Cymru to review and improve the provision

and the capacity to meet a wider range of needs within the county for children and young people with ALN and SEBD.

The review included an analysis of current and projected pupil needs, an evaluation of the skills and capacity within schools, the impact of high cost out of county placements and our readiness to meet the expected requirements of the Additional Learning Needs (Wales) Bill at the point of implementation. Our analysis indicated that:

- Our local ALN and SEBD provision did not meet the needs of many of our children and young people and as a result, they were accessing education in an out of county placements. Further scrutiny identified a significant shortfall in provision for ASD, Speech Language and Communication Disorder (SLCD) and SEBD within the county and an excess of provision for Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD).

It also became clear that the proportion of primary fixed term exclusions shows an increasing trend over the past 5 years and mainstream secondary fixed term exclusions have increased and are now at a level in excess of 2012/13 levels eradicating all the falls in 2013/14.

- There is a need to develop skills and capacity within our school system to ensure that more pupils are educated in their local area and where possible in mainstream schools
- The increasing financial pressures associated with the significant numbers of children and young people being educated outside Monmouthshire were not only having a significant impact on the overall provision for children and young people in schools, but also on other service areas such as the Passenger Transport Unit
- Our current model would not enable us to meet fully the requirements of the new ALN Act when implemented because we cannot ensure equality of education opportunity and access.

The aim of our ALN reform programme is to secure equality of access to education for children and young people, including those with ALN and SEBD, which meets needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from and enjoy learning by:

- **Securing excellent teaching and learning** to deliver a high quality and inclusive curriculum for all learners and in doing so this will underpin all our systems and processes
- **Building the capacity of schools** to educate their children and young people in their local community and within the Council wherever possible
- **Implementing systems and processes to facilitate early assessment, intervention and support** using a range of multi-agency providers including third sector organisations
- **Securing effective Cluster partnership arrangements** to become the key driver for the implementation of our strategy
- **Maintaining a consistent approach to nurture and well-being** to support learners and their families across the county
- **Securing effective and transparent multi-agency working** to ensure the best possible outcomes for learner's well-being and achievement

- **Maintaining home / host school registration and establishing revolving door arrangements** to provide opportunities for children and young people to access the support they need and return to their community school ensuring that resources follow the learner and appropriate provision is maintained to meet identified need
- **Securing good access to local, high quality, flexible provision** that is appropriate and is able to meet current and changing needs
- **Adopting an “invest to save”** approach in order to achieve best practice and build sustainability

The Council’s ALN and Inclusion Strategy sets out the guiding principles applied to ensure our delivery model addresses the local needs of our children as follows:

- All of our children and young people are valued, whatever their needs, so that they can experience success in their learning, reach their potential, enjoy high levels of well-being and maximise their life chances
- Meeting the needs of children and young people with ALN and SEBD is a priority and is everyone’s responsibility
- The overwhelming majority of children and young people are educated with their peers and in their local community
- Appropriate, specialist provision to meet the needs of our children and young people is available within the local authority
- All parties, including schools, parents and wider agencies work together and in the best interests of the child.

4. A reminder of our proposal

The Local Authority consulted on proposals to establish a new special school that would deliver the full range of provision required to meet the needs of children and young people aged 3-19 with ASD, SEBD, PMLD and severe learning difficulties within the County. The consultation proposed that the existing Mounton House Special School would close as a result of the proposal and form the site of the new special school.

It was proposed that the new special school would offer provision for a wide range of Additional Learning and behavioural needs delivered through multiple satellite settings placed across the County. The proposal would ensure provision is provided locally to children whose needs cannot be met within mainstream settings and require more specialist support. The existing Pupil Referral Service (PRS) would also be enhanced to provide a greater range of outreach support and provision for children and young people at risk of exclusion.

5. Consultation Arrangements

Methodology

On 7th March 2018, the Councils' Cabinet approved the proposals to commence statutory consultation allowing the Council to engage with key stakeholders on a new model for the delivery of Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion services.

In line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the Council produced a consultation document, published on 16th April 2018, which also represented the commencement of the statutory consultation period. The formal consultation period lasted for a period of 6 weeks (including 20 school days) concluding on 27th May 2018.

The consultation document was distributed / links sent to all statutory consultees as listed under appendix 1 of this document. The consultation document also published on the Council's website at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/schoolreorganisation.

The Council raised awareness of the consultation through a marketing campaign, which included publications via the Councils' social media networks.

Consultees were advised of the following opportunities to respond to the consultation proposals:

- Writing to School and Student Access Unit, Monmouthshire County Council, PO Box 106, Caldicot, NP26 9AN.
- Emailing strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk.

- Completing the response pro-forma which can be found under appendix 1 and returning it to School and Student Access Unit, Monmouthshire County Council, PO Box 106, Caldicot, NP26 9AN.

Consultation Meetings

As part of the consultation process, the Council held consultation sessions with staff, governors / management committee, parents and members of the community to ensure engagement with all interested parties who may wish to learn about the proposal. These sessions were hosted at the following schools identified as being directly affected by the proposals:

School	Date of consultation meeting
Mounton House Special School	30 th April 2018
Caldicot School	1 st May 2018
Pupil Referral Service	2 nd May 2018
Deri View Primary	10 th May 2018
Pembroke Primary	14 th May 2018
Monmouth Comprehensive School	16 th May 2018
Overmonnow Primary School	17 th May 2018
King Henry VIII Comprehensive	22 nd May 2018
Chepstow School	24 th May 2018

All of the consultation meetings were attended by senior officers of the councils' directorate for children and young people, and provided interested parties with an opportunity to learn more about the proposals and ask any questions / raise any concerns.

Officers in attendance at the consultation meetings provided reassurance that any comments / concerns raised would be recorded and feed into the consultation outcomes. However, consultees were also encouraged to submit their formal responses through one of the preferred available methods.

Copies of the full consultation document and feedback proformas were made available at each of the consultation sessions.

The comments raised and key themes of concerns raised during the consultation meetings have been summarised and included as part of the overall responses received on page 10 of this document.

Consultation with children and young people

The Council developed a "child friendly" version of the consultation document to ensure that children and young people could be fully engaged in the consultation process.

A series of consultation events were held with students from the affected schools, Deri View Primary, Overmonnow Primary, Pembroke Primary, Caldicot School, King Henry VIII School, Monmouth Comprehensive School and Mounton House Special School.

The events took place at the schools and involved 102 pupils in total, ranging from year 1 to year 13. Of those pupils involved, 54 have additional learning needs, some of whom are attending mainstream education, attending a SNRB, receiving support from a SNRB in mainstream or are attending Mounton House Special School.

A summary of the feedback received from children and young people can be found under appendix 2 of this document. A “child friendly” version of this document has also been produced to provide appropriate feedback to children and young people.

6. Results and Comments

The Council has received a number of responses to the consultation exercise. A broad profile of the respondents can be found in the table below

	Total
Parents	13
Staff	7
Governors / Governing body	6
Other organisations	12
Not declared	2
Total	40

The below table shows a summary of the comments / concerns raised during the consultation period together with the Council’s responses. The comments / concerns have been drawn and summarised from the written responses received together with the feedback given during the consultation meetings.

Question/Comment	LA Response
The Proposal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The document states that children should be educated in their local community; however, children in catchment for King Henry will have to go to Monmouth. There is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal seeks to establish a north south model of delivery. Children and young people from the King Henry VIII catchment area will need to travel to Monmouth if they

<p>therefore no equality or consistency in approach across the county.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a distinct lack of equity across the county with this proposal. The establishment of SNRB's at specific schools means that certain schools will have little investment or provision. • Why will there be no residential facilities in the new school at Mounton House? • Could the residential unit at Mounton House be used for something else? • The out of county provision is better than what is on offer in Monmouthshire. There will have to be a continued commitment to investing a significant resource to equip the SNRBs in Monmouthshire to meet individual needs. 	<p>need to access SNRB provision. All of our schools receive delegated funding which they can use to support ALN pupils. The LA provide King Henry VIII with interim additional funding to enable the school to provide additional provision to meet the needs of more complex young people. The LA accept the comment and plan to consider the development of more specialist provision in this area as part of the Band B proposal for the new school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only current residential provision that we have is for children attending our special school who present with social emotional and behavioural difficulties. Currently we have no Monmouthshire children and young people accessing this provision. There are some young people accessing residential provision outside the Local Authority as this provision meets their complexity of level of identified need. • The numbers of pupils currently attending on a residential basis are extremely low with only one young person attending the school on a residential basis. The Local Authority will explore all options to maximise the use of its estate. • The proposal recognises the need to invest in Monmouthshire schools to develop good quality provision. The proposal does not expect to be able to meet the needs of all children and young people and where this is the case, appropriate provision would be identified in special schools who have the facilities, skills and experiences to meet this level of identified need. • During the ALN and Inclusion review, the multi-agency steering
--	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel the mix of PMLD and behavioural problems are not a natural mix and you will have some very vulnerable PMLD pupils attending a school with pupils known to have volatile behaviour • Generally I feel this proposal has been produced to cut exclusion rates in Monmouthshire along with cost savings and I do not believe the wider ALN community has been considered enough , in fact I feel it was an afterthought once SEBD has been dealt with. • I am keen to understand where you are proposing to educate children with hearing and visual impairment, and the plans for ensuring that staff are trained appropriately in order to ensure equity of access. • We need to incorporate health professionals into the school setting. 	<p>group considered a multi-purpose special school but felt that it would be inappropriate to have a school for the full range of ALN as this would mean placing some vulnerable pupils in the same setting as those who display challenging behaviour. Our proposal has been amended to ensure that pupils with PMLD continue to attend appropriate specialist provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ALN and Inclusion issues were considered alongside each other and proposals were developed and the model written to address both areas. Whilst we expect exclusion rates to reduce via the implementation of these proposals a key factor in our decision making process was for more pupils to be educated locally. • There are no plans to change our provision for pupils with VI/HI. We will still maintain our existing offer, which is based upon a continuum of provision, maintaining young people in local provision with support from the regional Sensory Support Service and where appropriate securing specialist placements for a very small number of children. Staff from Sensory Support Service undertake and will continue to undertake a vital role in ensuring that staff have access to appropriate training. • The proposal identifies two new assessment centres, one in the north and one in the south. It is envisaged that health professionals will be able to work with both staff and children and young people in the assessment centres to provide support to children and young people and also support and advice to schools.
---	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in travel times is important. • Pen-Maes in Brecon has a respite facility attached to the school which I imagine would work very well for children with autism especially, having that continuum and familiarity of environment and staff. • The consultation document states that MCC is currently unable to support pupils with a hearing impairment locally. The following page explicitly states that the reorganisation seeks to ensure these learners can “access services as required, as locally as possible and at the very least within Monmouthshire.” We are concerned that the proposals outlined within the consultation document do not deliver in this regard. • It must be acknowledged that deaf pupils require support from deaf specialists. While some may be appropriately supported peripatetically, others will need to attend a school with onsite provision to reach their potential. • What provision of assistance will there be for children who are highly intelligent, have autism but who do not disrupt classes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal aims to reduce the travel time for the majority of pupils. • We acknowledge this point but unfortunately, our proposals do not include any respite facilities. • Whilst we aim to meet the needs of as many pupils as possible, we accept that there will be pupils because of the specialist support they require that will need to access specialist provision outside of the county. We work closely with deaf specialists from the Sensory and Communication Support Service to ensure we appropriately support hearing impaired pupils within our mainstream schools and this would continue. However, we fully accept that for a small number of pupils with significant VI and HI needs will need to access provision in specialist schools/colleges • We acknowledge that communication difficulties covers a broad spectrum and that peripatetic support will not be appropriate for all pupils. Where this is the case, we will work with key partners to secure provision in a suitable school, which may be specialist, and out of the county as in above response. In summation, our continuum of intervention for pupils who are identified as being hearing impaired will not change because of these proposals. • We recognise the need to build the skills and experience of our education workforce to meet a wider range of additional learning needs. This will include ensuring that there is appropriate advice and guidance given to schools for pupils with autism who are educated in mainstream schools.
---	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will children who attend the new special school need to have a statement? • What hours would be offered through the PRS provision i.e. will there be an opportunity for full time provision? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes or an IDP written and maintained by the LA. • The review aims to provide a greater range of inclusion provision across the LA.
---	---

Management of the sites/SNRB's

<p>There were a number of concerns raised with regards to the management arrangements between the new special school, the mainstream schools and the SNRB's a summary of which is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility within schools and keeping pupils safe within the environments and managing pupils when they try to leave school. • The responsibility for overseeing maintenance of equipment and shared areas? Whose budget do repairs to equipment come from? • How will split governance work on a day-to-day basis? There will be Health & Safety concerns and staff management issues. • The relationship between the management board of the PRS and the governing body of the new school. In addition, how will conflicts of interest be resolved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are fortunate that our all of our schools with SNRBs in the primary and secondary sector are DDA compliant to ensure that all pupils can access the facilities and to keep pupils safe. All staff working with pupils in our SNRBs would be aware of police, procedure if young people attempted to leave premises. If this with the case individual children and young people would have individual risk assessments, and risk reduction plans. Staff would also have had access to appropriate training. This is common in all schools/provision across the county. • The responsibility for maintaining equipment is the responsibility of the school. • The LA have reflected on responses from the consultation and we have decided to reconsider the management aspect of this proposal.
---	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff, pupils and parents will find it confusing. How will the new HT ensure there is high quality provision across the many satellite sites? • Will pupils being taught in the SNRB's have access to the facilities in the school? • Concerns were raised over mixing pupils with ASD and SEBD as they are two very different groups • Concerns were raised over mixing pupils with ASD and SEBD as they are two very different groups • Concerns were raised over mixing pupils with ASD and SEBD as they are two very different groups • When will the Governing Body for the new school be established? If left too late autumn 2018, it will be difficult to complete all the practical tasks to enable the school to open successfully in September 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently all pupils taught in SNRBs have access to mainstream facilities if it is appropriate and of benefit to the pupil. This will not change. • We take on board concerns about mixing ASD and SEBD pupils. We are not proposing that all pupils with ASD attend specialist behaviour provision. Where appropriate we seek to maintain pupils with ASD in their local school. • There are many examples of successful 3 to 19 'through' schools in Wales and England. Staff in these schools have expertise across the age ranges. These schools have identified areas where children and young people of different key stages can be taught. • A Governing Body cannot be formed until a local authority has decided if it is going to open a new school. If a decision is taken to open a new school, a Governing Body will be formed as soon as practicable after this date.
--	--

Inclusion

<p>Concerns were raised with regards to the LA moving away from inclusion within mainstream schools a summary of which is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils already being taught in mainstream classes will be segregated by being moved into SNRB's. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils with ALN who currently attend mainstream classes will continue to do so. Where appropriate children and young people who attend SNRB provision can continue to access mainstream
--	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will no longer be integrated into mainstream and be taught with their peers. • Pupils educated in units will not be equipped with the skills to live an independent life. • There is no definition of inclusion across the Authority and different schools have very different approaches to it. • Caldicot SNRB will be for children with profound needs and children with moderate needs will be in mainstream? Will the children with statements in mainstream still be in small classes? 	<p>provision as part of their curriculum offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist SNRB provision on the school site provides children and young people with the opportunity to access an individual and bespoke package of support alongside the opportunity to access to the school community as and when appropriate. In doing so, supporting the development of independence in young people with ALN. • The proposal, through the special school, initially aims to align the best practice in of all SNRBs, and to share and develop collective expertise so that more children and young people can access appropriate provision within their local community. Once this has been established, the Special School would coordinate a comprehensive package of outreach support to all schools to build expertise across mainstream schools and settings. • We will build a capacity to work with these children. They would still have TA support and funding will continue to exist.
--	--

Projected Figures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The figures provided do not appear to include all pupils requiring support in Monmouthshire's schools. • I am worried that there will not be enough capacity in the new SNRB's. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local authority has included all current pupils who have a SAPRA or a Statement of Special Educational Needs. We have also projected our needs going forward using a range of data from other sources such as Health. • The local authority are proposing to increase the number of SNRB places in secondary schools through the two new schools in Caldicot and Monmouth. This will mean that
--	---

	<p>learners needing to access a place in this provision will be able to do so.</p>
Finance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With an ALN budget of £7.4M there did not seem to be any indication as to where the proposed revenue savings would be made other than staff redundancies? There is no reference to the capital costs required in upgrading the Mounton House site? • If pupils will still be required to attend out of county schools, I cannot see where the savings will come. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed savings were to come from children that would no longer be placed in OOC provision as their needs could be met in Monmouthshire. We anticipate that further savings could be made by maintaining pupils in Monmouthshire to afford the proposals. • It is true that some pupils with very specialist need would still need to travel to out of county but many others would be able to access provision within the county if the proposal is implemented. The savings identified would be found through maintaining young people within the Local Authority as opposed to them accessing specialist provision outside of the Local Authority. The savings would increase as those pupils who are currently in out county complete their educational careers. We accept that for a small number of pupils, out of county provision will still be required and this has been included in our projected savings. Ultimately, our priority is driven by meeting pupil need and not cost.
Land and Buildings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new schools at both Caldicot and Monmouth do not have the equipment or space necessary to cater for pupils with profound needs. Why was this not thought of when the schools were built? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SNRB's have been planned in both of the new secondary school builds from the outset. Specialist equipment will be provided to support these children in line with their identified needs. We accept that the range of specialist equipment currently available would not meet the needs of the full range of pupils with PMLD. Consequently, we have amended the proposal for secondary pupils to reflect this. Consequently, we have amended the proposal for secondary pupils to reflect this.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not enough time to carry out the building work required to bring the Mounton House site up to standard and make it fit for purpose? • Overmonnow SNRB has very limited space at present and cannot accommodate an additional four pupils and four members of staff. • I believe the preferred option 4, is the right direction to go in. The only concern I have is whether key facilities such as a Sensory Room and a Hydro Pool which are specialist resources for pupils with ASD and PMLD, which pupils currently get schooling out of county will be provided? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We accept that the timescales in the documentation are ambitious. They are intended to indicate the start date for the opening of the ALN and Inclusion provision although it will take a period of up to three years to complete the roll out across the authority. Following a review of the site we accept that this timescale will need to be reviewed. • We have identified the need for significant investment to ensure that our provision is suitable to meet the needs and numbers of pupils. Any adaptations to buildings would be part of a wider programme of works. Not all of this work would be completed by April 2019. • Where children and young people require a facility such as a hydro pool then it is likely that these children and young people will attend a Special School such as Crownbridge or Pen-y-Cwm.
---	---

Staffing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will happen to staff currently employed by the Schools, will they have to re-apply for jobs or be made redundant? • What if staff do not want a job that is offered, will there be opportunities for voluntary redundancy? • What will the staffing structure look like for the new school? What if the headteacher is not contactable and there is an issue in school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals are about re-purposing our provision to meet a wider range of need within Monmouthshire. Therefore, we plan to implement a process whereby staff are slotted into the jobs that are available based on their skills. • If staff do not feel suited to any of the roles then HR officers will work with them to establish the best way forward. • The staffing structure will be determined should the proposal be accepted. However we have reviewed the proposals in the light of
--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the staff working within the SNRB are to become part of the new special school, will they be required to work across different sites as and when required. • What is the impact for staff that are currently employed on annual rolling contracts? • Will staffing levels be reduced? 	<p>consultation responses and determined that we will not proceed with a new special school based on a hub and spoke mode</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staffing levels in the SNRB's will be the same. There may be opportunities for new roles in new school based provision. Should there be any identified reduction in staffing levels then the Local Authority will follow the appropriate protection of employment policy.
--	---

Other issues/questions raised

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be any considerations given to the transport arrangements associated with children attending Overmonnow SNRB, as the external facilities are already pressured at school start and finish times without increasing capacity? • Are we going to look at how children are supported within their mainstream environment as currently feel some children are let down through lack of support? • Will all children from Overmonnow with SLCD be required to attend Deri View SNRB? • Will the parents lose parental choice? • The full range of learning needs does not seem to be covered in the proposal? • Mental health is on the increase, it is about the environment the child is in and nurturing them. Will it be looked at as cannot see where it fits in? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people will need to be transported to school at the appropriate time and due consideration will be given to the logistics of this from the learners point of view • Schools have delegated and Band funding to support learners. The LA will review the funding model to support the implementation of the final model • We do not envisage any pupils in current provision will be required to move as a result of the proposal. • Parents and children/young people have the right to identify a school of choice and this will continue to be considered • The collection of sites would mean that we meet almost all learning needs. • Additional resources will be going into schools to support children and young people who may have difficulty engaging in education. We recognise that further training is
---	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals to increase our county inclusion provision is welcome, however, should we not be allocating resources on a need basis rather than mirroring the provision in each of the secondary schools • Where would the low functioning children go? • Will there be provision for MLD in mainstream to access SNRB when required? • Would TA support currently supporting MLD in SNRB setting transfer to mainstream with the child? • Disruption in the school is the issue, what will happen with disruptive children and how will that impact others? • Will the Local Authority be bringing children currently placed at out of county settings back into Monmouthshire? • Will we continue to offer SNRB placements to children resident outside of Monmouthshire? 	<p>needed to meet a wider range of need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have allocated a nominal resource to each secondary school, which will be managed by the PRU. If a resource is under pressure in a school then consideration will be given to prioritise resources if there is spare capacity in other schools. • Children and young people are placed according to need and the designation of the setting based on their admission guidance. • Where appropriate children and young people who attend SNRB provision can continue to access mainstream provision as part of their curriculum offer • Not necessarily however, the school in conjunction with the LA would ensure that support would be available for pupils where appropriate. • The number of fixed exclusions have increased due to a variety of factors of children with complex needs, children moving into the area etc. if a child displays challenging behaviour there is limited access to outreach. The idea is for more support to be placed into outreach and for there to be access with the North and the South. Specialist provision would be provided if needed. At secondary level, additional resource would be provided to each school for earlier intervention. • No we have no intention of doing this unless it is by parental preference • Yes, we would have to consider any request from another LA for a pupil
---	---

	with identified needs that matches the designation of the SNRB.
--	---

7. ESTYN Response

Estyn response to Monmouthshire County Council's proposal to review and re-organise the provision for children and young people with ALN and SEBD.

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

The proposal is by Monmouthshire County Council.

The proposal is to close Mounton House Special Residential School for boys and establish a new 3-19 special school for boys and girls on the Mounton House site that will deliver the full range of provision required to meet the needs of children and young people within the authority. The new school will also manage the provision of multiple satellite services for additional learning and behavioural needs located across the county.

Summary/ Conclusion

The proposal has been developed in line with the council's 21st Century Schools programme. The council is also committed to improving the educational achievement and attainment for all children and young people in the county through the provision of an inclusive education system that places the child or young person at the centre. Individual schools' performance data has been provided and accurately analysed within the consultation document. When considering this data and the outcome of the most recent Estyn inspection reports for these schools, it would appear to indicate that standards would at least be maintained should the proposal go ahead.

Description and benefits

The proposer has given a clear rationale for the proposal. The proposer states clearly that it believes that the proposal is the most cost effective option in order to meet the needs of the majority of children and young people in the authority. It also states reasonably that the proposal would benefit pupils by providing a cohesive a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the majority of learners irrespective to age,

need and gender. The proposer clearly defines the expected benefits of the proposal with regard to ensuring continuity of provision for almost all children and young people from 3 to 19 years within the county.

The proposer clearly sets out the expected advantages of the proposal. These include: the certainty of providing a continuum of education for children and young people; being able to respond to changing needs swiftly; enabling suitable provision locally thus reducing the need for significant travel; and reducing the inequality in accessing specialist provision in Monmouthshire, especially with regard to gender inequality.

The proposer has considered suitably a range of risks associated with the proposal. The proposer has suitably included details of counter measures for these risks. The proposer has provided clear evidence to show that it has considered other alternatives to this current proposal, such as maintaining the status quo. The proposal includes three alternatives which were considered and explains clearly why the current proposal was considered to be the best option.

The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on learner travel arrangements. It recognises appropriately that the proposal will lead to pupils travelling much lesser distances to their schools.

The proposer has provided information about the various current providers' capacities and tables of current and anticipated pupil numbers. It states that the proposal would eventually lead to a reduction in surplus places but with a sufficient capacity for growth. However, the proposer does not indicate clearly what will happen to the residential provision which is currently in place at Mounton House. As well as pupils from Monmouthshire, pupils from other authorities within the region access the residential provision. It is not evident that the proposer has consulted with other local authorities regarding this proposal.

The proposal is that all satellite services across the county will come under the management of the ALN service at Mounton House. The proposer clearly indicates the benefits of centralising the management of ALN and SEBD services. The proposer clearly explains that there may be a need for the employment of specialist staff and that there may be some currently employed staff who would not be re-employed if they are not suitably skilled. It is implied that the council would establish a Protection of Employment Policy and all staff would be consulted. There may be redeployment where possible to minimise the risk.

The proposer has not undertaken a Welsh language impact assessment. The proposer states clearly what the cost of the investment would be. The proposal includes suitable arrangements for consultation

8. General overview and consensus

The consultation process undertaken proved to be without doubt a useful exercise, and provided a full and open opportunity to test and critic the proposed new delivery model for ALN and Inclusion Services.

Through analysis of the feedback received during the consultation period, the Council is able to draw clear support for some aspects of the delivery model, whilst also identifying a need to reflect and review other aspects.

The consultation document proposed changes to various aspects of the current ALN and Inclusion service, which combined would form a new overarching delivery model for children and young people with Additional Learning Needs as well as those with challenging behaviour. These aspects can be summarised as:

- 1. The establishment of a new special school, which would replace the existing Mounton House Special School, but would be located predominately on the same site. The site itself would offer provision for boys and girls, full age range, with a diagnosis of ASD / SEBD.**

The consultation process highlighted a great deal of support behind the principles of the above proposal. It generally supported the Council's view that the provision currently offered at Mounton House Special School is not meeting the requirements of our in County demands.

Some consultees (including some children and young people) have shared concerns towards the appropriateness of having the full age range of pupils with ASD / SEBD on the same site. Some consultees also felt that the mixture of ASD/SEBD on the same site was inappropriate. Whilst acknowledging these concerns, the Council continues to feel that this proposal would be appropriate with robust management arrangements and appropriate provision on site.

However, during this consultation process the Council has identified the need for significant capital investment to ensure the site currently occupied by Mounton House Special School is fit to deliver the requirements of this proposal. This has highlighted a need to reflect on the viability of this proposal in moving forward.

The recommendation is to significantly recast the proposal and re-consult, this is due to the prohibitive capital costs.

- 2. The new Special School would also be responsible for the management of the existing Special Needs Resource Bases (SNRB) located at Pembroke Primary School, Overmonnow Primary School, Deri View Primary School, Caldicot School, Monmouth Comprehensive School, as well as a new Primary SNRB in the South of the County.**

The consultation process highlighted a significant level of concern from some consultees towards the proposals to place the management of the SNRB centres with the new special school. The concerns focussed around governance

arrangements, responsibilities and a risk of causing segregation of our children and young people on these sites.

Whilst the Council maintains that this proposal mirrors successful delivery models in neighbouring local authorities, we also acknowledge the need to reflect upon the concerns raised by consultees. In light of the area of concern surrounding the viability of a new special, the Council has been required to consider whether robust management and partnership arrangements with our schools can help achieve the required outcomes behind this proposal.

The recommendation is to abandon this proposal and maintain the status quo with the management of the SNRBs to be left with our local schools. The Local Authority will develop strong partnership arrangements with our schools to achieve the desired outcomes.

3. *The type of provision offered at Monmouth Comprehensive and Caldicot Schools would change to cater for Complex Needs including: Severe Learning Difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech Language and Communication Disorder, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Physical and Medical Difficulties.*

This proposal prompted some mixed views amongst consultees, however, in the main it recognised that the type of provision on offer at the SNRBs (located at Caldicot and Monmouth Comprehensive Schools) requires review in order to meet the in county needs moving forward.

A selection of consultees shared concerns towards the proposals for children and young people with moderate learning difficulties to be educated in mainstream. The Council recognises the need to comply with the requirements of the new ALN bill whilst supporting our schools to ensure that children and young people with these needs are appropriately supported.

The Council recognised concerns shared regarding the suitability of the SNRB settings in Monmouth and Caldicot Comprehensive Schools to meet the full range of need identified within our proposal. The particular concerns focussed on the schools abilities to meet the needs of children and young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties. This is an area on which the council has reflected.

The recommendation is to publish the proposals with a modification to remove Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties from the type of provision offered.

4. *The type of provision offered at the SNRB located Overmonnow Primary School would change to cater for Complex Needs including: Severe Learning Difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech Language and Communication Disorder, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Physical and Medical Difficulties. The capacity of these SNRBs would also increase from 20 to 24.*

The feedback received behind this proposal was overall positive and supportive. However, it recognised a need to invest in the SNRB to provide the necessary space and resources associated with an increase in capacity from 20 to 24.

The recommendation is to publish the proposal as consulted on.

- 5. The type of provision offered at the SNRB located at Pembroke Primary Schools would change to cater for Complex Needs including: Severe Learning Difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech Language and Communication Disorder, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Physical and Medical Difficulties. The capacity of these SNRBs would also increase from 20 to 24.**

The feedback received behind this proposal was overall positive and supportive. However, it recognised a need to invest in the SNRB to provide the necessary space and resources associated with an increase in capacity from 20 to 24.

The recommendation is to publish the proposal with a modification - not to increase the capacity from 20 to 24.

- 6. The type of provision offered at the SNRB located at Deri View Primary would change to cater for Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech Language and Communication Disorder, including an Assessment Centre.**

This proposal received a great deal of support throughout the consultation, recognising that the provision currently offered in the SNRB at Deri View Primary School is not meeting our in county needs.

The recommendation is to publish the proposal as consulted on.

- 7. A new Primary SNRB would be established at the Bungalow, Bulwalk Road, Chepstow to cater for Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech Language and Communication Disorder, including an Assessment Centre.**

This proposal received a great deal of support throughout the consultation, recognising that the provision is required to support children and young people in the south of the county.

However, the Council needs to reflect on the location of this provision as the Bungalow located at Bulwalk Road, Chepstow, would require significant capital investment. This is therefore a proposal that would require further consultation prior to implementation.

The recommendation is to significantly recast the proposal and re-consult

8. Inclusion centres offering support for children at risk of exclusion to be established in the four secondary schools supported by the Pupil Referral Service offering provision for 8 pupils FTE

The consultation evidenced a great deal of support behind the requirements for this provision and is one that should proceed in light of the required need.

The recommendation is to publish the proposal as consulted on.

9. Expansion of the Pupil Referral Service to offer increased support for the full age range of children and young people in Monmouthshire.

The consultation evidenced a great deal of support behind the requirements for this provision and is one that should proceed in light of the required need.

The recommendation is to publish the proposal as consulted on, with a need to review and consult on the locations of this provision in light of some of the recommendations above.

Appendix 1 - List of Consultees with whom we consulted

- Parents, Guardians and carers of all pupils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Parents of children who are in receipt of a statement of ALN
- Parents of children who are in receipt of a School action plus resource assist (SAPRA)
- Headteacher, staff and governors of schools directly affected by the proposal.
- Out of county Schools affected by the proposal.
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Headteachers of all schools in MCC area
- All MCC Members
- Welsh Ministers
- All MCC Town and Community Councils
- All MCC Assembly Members representing the area served by the school
- All Members of Parliament representing MCC area
- All MCC Libraries
- Directors of Education of all bordering LAs – Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Powys, Torfaen, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire
- Directors of Education of affected LA's – Caerphilly, South Gloucestershire, Merthyr, Bristol, Rhodda Cynon Taff, North Somerset, Somerset, Swindon, Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff
- Principals of Coleg Gwent
- MCC Youth Service
- GAVO
- Monmouthshire Governors Association
- Teaching Associations
- Support Staff Associations
- Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)
- Welsh Government
- ESTYN
- Church in Wales Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- South East Wales Education Achievement Service
- Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
- SNAP Cymru Parent Partnership Service
- Local Health Board

Appendix 2 - Consultation with Children and Young People

DIRECTORATE FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Formal Consultation Meetings with Children and Young People for the Review of ALN and Inclusion Services

Contents

Foreword: Chief Officer Children and Young People	Page 3
Summary	Page 4
Deri View Primary School	Page 6
Overmonnow Primary School	Page 7
Pembroke Primary School	Page 8
Caldicot School	Page 9
Chepstow School	Page 13
King Henry VIII School	Page 14
Monmouth Comprehensive School	Page 16
Mounton House Special School	Page 19
Consultation Timeline	Page 22

Foreword

The formal consultation process to implement a new delivery model to meet the needs of children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) and those presenting with challenging behaviour closed on the 27th May, 2018. During the consultation period officers met with pupils from all of the affected schools and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the pupils that took part. Your passionate and thoughtful views and questions will support our Cabinet Members in the next stage of the decision process, which will take place on 4th July 2018.

I would like to invite you to take part in future engagement activities to help us reach a final decision in November 2018. After this date, your views will continue to help us to shape education services for pupils with Additional Learning Needs.

Will McLean

Chief Officer Children and Young People

Summary

A series of consultation events were held with students from the affected schools, Deri View Primary, Overmonnow Primary, Pembroke Primary, Caldicot School, King Henry VIII School, Monmouth Comprehensive School and Mounton House Special School. The events took place at the schools and involved 102 pupils in total, ranging from year 1 to year 13. Of those pupils involved, 54 have additional learning needs, some of whom are attending mainstream education, attending a SNRB, receiving support from a SNRB in mainstream or are attending Mounton House Special School.

The events lasted between 30 – 60 minutes depending on the groups. The facilitator briefly explained the current provision in Monmouthshire and all pupils had the opportunity to talk about their own schools and the support they or their peers currently receive. A brief overview of the proposals were provided and pupils were asked:

Do you support the proposal to open a new Special School for girls and boys aged 3 – 19 years?

Pupils were then asked for their views on the proposals to place the management responsibility of the SNRBs to the new Special School, in the form of satellite provision. Pupils from the secondary schools were asked about the proposal to remove residential at Mounton House and the introduction of Inclusion Centres.

Nearly all of the events had a facilitator and a scribe. Some of the pupils from the secondary school groups also provided their own comments on post it notes and completed the formal consultation form. A summary from each school is included in this report. Below is an overall summary of the main themes.

- *Concerns were expressed over how the proposals will affect individual children with ALN, the support they receive and which secondary schools they will transition to.*
- *Most children were concerned that the proposals would have a negative impact on the current ethos of integration in their school for pupils with ALN, almost half were quite anxious about this highlighting concerns around friendship groups, access to mainstream lessons, break times, school trips etc.*
- *One group had strong views on maintaining a separate provision for pupils with ALN.*
- *Many of the children raised concerns about the lack of space in their school if more children were to attend with higher levels of need.*
- *With exception of pupils from Mounton House, nearly all pupils thought that one Head in overall charge of the new special school and satellite provision was not a good idea, it would be 'confusing' and 'too big a job'.*
- *A group from each of the secondary schools discussed the proposal to introduce an inclusion centre in their school. Two groups felt that this was not necessary, that their current provision worked well and should be better resourced. One group thought that pupils should stay in their school and a*

separate area could seem like a punishment. The remaining group thought that this would be a positive addition to their school.

- *Nearly all of the pupils from Mounton House who participated in the consultation events were **very anxious** about all aspects of change.*
- *Most pupils agreed with the proposal to open a Special School for girls and boys and this should include both primary and secondary children.*
- *All pupils highlighted the positive relationships between staff and pupils and that this is important in supporting pupils.*

Upon reflection, it would have been beneficial if children and young people had also been involved in the original development of the four options.

Nearly all pupils felt that it was important that children and young people were involved in every stage of the implementation, if it goes ahead, including the appointment of the Head of the new special school. Many of the pupils also requested further information to be shared with them when it becomes available. In particular:

- *Will current year 10 pupils at Mounton House have the choice to stay on to KS5?*
- *Will pupils with ALN continue to receive support in mainstream?*
- *What physical changes to the buildings will take place at the secondary schools and Mounton House (e.g. use of rooms and resources)?*
- *How will the new delivery model be funded?*

Deri View Primary School

10th May 2018

Officers met with a group of 12 pupils from years 1 to 6.

The children talked very positively about their school, their teachers and the resources available to them in the sensory room and 'Seren Fach'. Children also explained how sometimes their friends go to the 'take 5' room to have the time and space to calm down. The children talked a lot about how their teachers help them.

"We have lots of teachers to support us...they try their best."

The children talked enthusiastically about the trips and visits they attend, they explained that children with ALN also attend the school trips and felt strongly that this should continue:

*"Pupils with special needs come on trips with us and this is a good thing.
They should be able to continue to do this."*

There was some discussion about the use of space in the school for an SNRB, the children felt that this area was very well resourced but they were undecided if there was enough space for 20 children due to recent changes in the room designs and allocation. Children were very positive about the idea that new children might come to their school. One child thought that a new Special Headteacher for those children in the SNRB would be a good idea.

"We would make new friends if new children came to our school."

When asked if they thought the opening of a new special school for girls and boys, aged 3 – 19 years old was a good idea they all agreed that it was. Many of the children commented that having a special school for boys only was not a good idea.

"It's a good idea to have girls and boys together."

"It's good for primary children too...gives little kids the opportunities so they know what they are capable of."

"They should do some of the things we do in our school in the new school."

A lot of the children emphasised the importance of treating children with special needs the same as everyone else "because they are the same".

Overmonnow Primary School

10th May 2018

Officers met with a group of 10 children, 3 of whom have ALN and attend mainstream school. The children were from years 3, 5 and 6.

The children talked about their school and what it is like for them, their friends and relatives to attend 'class 9' (the SNRB). The children were very positive about their experiences and how they are able to access some of the activities like soft play and 'rebound sessions' in the SNRB. Children felt very strongly about including the children from the SNRB and that there should be more inclusion. Their biggest concern is that if the proposals are agreed then the children from the SNRB might not be included in the school as much.

Some of their concerns about the integration of the unit and the main school included:

"Will children from the unit be able to stay for after school clubs and trips?"

"Will children be able to come into our classes for example P.E.?"

"Will children in the unit follow the same topics as us?"

"Will they still have the same school rules?"

"Will children have the same uniform?"

"Will nursery children be able to go to class 9?"

There were some other questions raised regarding how will the SNRB be established:

"Will they employ more people if there are more children in the unit?"

"Will there be enough space?"

There were a few children who were very concerned about how the proposal will affect them and if they would still be able to access the resources in the SNRB, "will I still be able to use the soft play and the rebound sessions?"

There were a lot of questions about school transport and how will children get to Overmonnow Primary or the new Special School. Some children were very concerned about how this would affect their relatives and if they would still be able to attend Overmonnow and which secondary school they would go to.

One child felt very strongly against the proposal of the SNRB being a satellite of the new Special School stating that:

"I really think it's a bad idea, the Headteacher won't know what's happening."

Another child then added, *"It's a big job for one Headteacher, they would need a lot of staff".*

When asked if they thought the opening of a new special school for girls and boys, aged 3 – 19 years old was a good idea, 8 out of the 10 children agreed that it was a good idea. One child thought that it would be better to have more space and resources in their school and not have a special school. Some children also felt that it would be good if children from class 9

would be able to go to Monmouth Comprehensive School. They all felt very strongly that friendships with children in the SNRB and the main school were very important and that this should continue.

Pembroke Primary School

11th May 2018

Three children from the ALC from years 1, 2 and 3 met with officers.

The children talked very positively about their school, their teachers and the resources available to them in the ALC. They also talked very positively about being able to spend time in the ALC and in their mainstream year groups. The children talked about all of the trips that they go on and being able to play with their friends at playtime.

“At play time we all play together.”

“I want more children to come to the ALC.”

“I like to be in the ALC and with the rest of my year.”

Officers also met with 10 children from mainstream, from years 2 to 6, some of which have previously attended the ALC. Generally the children had more positive views on the proposal than negative. All of the children agreed with the proposal to reopen Mouton House as a special school for girls and boys from FP to KS5. Generally they felt that this was good because it would include girls and there would be more support because ‘there will be more teachers’.

“A new special school would mean children don’t have to travel so far.”

“It is good that it is for children up until they are 19.”

“The new school will make sure that people with the same problems or disabilities will make friends.”

“The new Head could have really good expertise which is good.”

Although the children all agreed that the new school was a good idea there were also some concerns:

“It’s a good idea but they will have to think about the money, it will cost a lot.”

“Even if the new Head is good they will still have a lot of work to do.”

The group discussed the proposal that the new Head of the special school could also be in charge of the ALC in Pembroke, although the children would still have the same uniform and school rules children still expressed some concerns.

“We need to be clear about the new school; two Heads is confusing.”

“That’s a big no.”

“We like our Headteacher, the new one might not pay attention to all of the children in the ALC.”

“How will the Headteacher manage being in each school equally?”

“There’s lots of things to do, lots to manage, the Headteacher could get stressed.”

“What if the new head doesn’t include ALC children in trips and visits?”

“It could overwhelm and confuse pupils.”

The children were very vocal about the positive practice in their school. They recognised that their Head was very busy and a new Head might be able to help and support but felt strongly that:

“I don’t want anything to change. I like our school as it is.”

“Our school is doing well. I like our Head.”

Caldicot School

11th May 2018

Officers met with 8 pupils from the SNRB, from years 7 to 10 in the first session and 9 pupils with ALN who attend mainstream school from years 7, 9, 10 and 11 in the second session. All of the pupils disagreed with the proposals. One pupil from the second group commented, ‘there are lots of good ideas but I don’t see it working well unless it is implemented properly’. Other than this one comment, everything else was very negative towards the proposals.

Group 1

Pupils expressed concerns regarding the proposal to reopen Mounton House and extend the support to include pupils with ASD:

“Mixing children with naughty children and those with ASD is not a good idea.”

“What will happen to the boys at Mounton House?”

“How will one Headteacher be in charge of all of those schools? How will it work?”

Pupils then discussed how the proposals will affect Caldicot School and in particular the SNRB. This included the current design of the new building:

“There’s not enough room in the SNRB now so if we have more children where will they fit?”

As well as the use of the outside space for pupils who currently attend the SNRB:

“There not enough room on the play yard.”

“We should keep the yards separate.”

“There no quiet space outside or space for children if they have a wheelchair.”

“We only have one lift. The corridors are not big enough for children in wheelchairs.”

Pupils also wanted to know how the proposals might affect the support that they currently receive:

“Will children still get support in mainstream?”

“What will happen to ‘A’ Class?”

Nearly of the pupils felt that it was important that children could stay in the SNRB:

“It’s important that everyone can reach their potential and not go into mainstream.”

Group 2

Some pupils in this group felt very strongly against having a special school.

“If they go to the special school they could never come back to a secondary school.”

“Will this cause a melting pot at the new school?”

“It might be seen as a punishment to go to the special school.”

A few pupils also said that including girls at the special school might not work, ‘It’s all about respect for girls. How will the boys in Mounton House cope with girls?’

These ideas came from a desire to integrate children into mainstream or to keep children at the SNRB in Caldicot. Pupils felt:

“Kids here are included and have friends.”

“They can feel normal if they come here in the Learning Centre.”

“We should keep the SNRB the same.”

One pupil also commented that ‘children should have the support they need in mainstream as well.’

Pupils also asked questions about the implementation of the proposals if they go ahead:

“How will this be implemented properly?”

“It’s important to have the time to make it work properly.”

“It’s definitely going to need a new name because ‘special’ school has a stigma.”

18th May 2018

Group 3

A consultation session was held with 11 Student Ambassadors from years 9 to 11.

All of the pupils agreed with the proposal to reopen Mounton House for girls and boys aged 3 – 19 years, although pupils did ask lots of questions and raise concerns regarding the use of the site in relation to the safety of younger children. One pupil also felt that older pupils attending the same school as primary children might have a negative impact on the self-esteem and confidence of the older pupils.

“Older pupils might feel stupid or looked down upon.”

Pupils discussed the positive elements of the proposal including less distance to travel, good to have the choice to stay on for KS5 to prepare pupils more and that it could raise the profile of Mounton House:

“There’s nothing here for girls, they have to travel further which makes the situation worse.”

“Increasing to 19 is a good thing as it allows them to stay longer and build stronger foundations. Gives pupils a structure so they don’t go back to their old ways.”

Pupils discussed the impact of introducing girls to the special school and extending the provision to include pupils with autism. Generally all pupils thought extending the provision to include girls was a good idea and would also help with interaction and developing social skills. Pupils did raise concerns about autistic children and SEBD children at the same school, pupils questioned how the different needs would be met and if this would cause problems:

“Autistic children might get wound up by behaviour children.”

“Autistic children need quiet.”

Nearly all pupils felt that many of their concerns could be mitigated through careful use of the site and separate areas for different ages. Pupils also felt strongly the most important factor would be meeting individual needs.

The group then discussed the idea of the satellite provision as part of the special school. There was a mixed response to this proposal, some pupils thought that a specialist head would be a good idea to support the needs of pupils whereas others felt that this would be too large a remit because of the age range but also because of the number of sites. All of the pupils said that communication between the schools and the special school was key to the success.

“The age range could be a problem, too much of a stretch.”

Pupils suggested that there should be different heads for the different age ranges.

“Too much work across the 7 schools.”

“Good idea but individual needs of pupils might be lost.”

Another pupil disagreed and said that the proposal would include smaller numbers of pupils compared to a large secondary school:

“Our Headteacher doesn’t know everyone.....with smaller numbers this might be easier for a new specialist Headteacher to manage.”

Pupils also emphasised the importance of staffing levels and how the relationships between students and staff are crucial:

“Would staff change because this could be a problem for those who have built up relationships with their existing TAs?”

One pupil queried ‘what will actually change other than the management?’

Pupils were asked their views on the proposal to establish an Inclusion Centre in their school. All of the pupils thought that an inclusion centre was a good idea, currently there isn’t similar

provision in the school. Pupils talked very positively about the pupil support currently available but felt strongly that more is required. Pupils explained that there is a need to support pupils with disruptive behaviour but the greater need is mental and emotional health.

“Some people get so stressed about school and exams they can’t come to school. So it would be good to give them time out and then move back to mainstream instead of staying at home.”

Pupils also said that it would be important to work closely with the current staff member that supports pupils but also some pupils might prefer to meet with a member of staff who is separate from the school.

There was some discussion around the language used to describe the support available, there was a debate around the use of the word special and pupils concluded that specialist’ might be more appropriate.

Chepstow School

22nd May 2018

9 pupils with ALN met with the facilitators. At the start of the discussion the pupils talked about how their school currently supports pupils with ALN. This included extra time for tests, laptops to support learning, time out of class and extra support staff. The group discussed the proposed changes for Mounton House and nearly all of the pupils thought it was a good idea to extend the provision to include girls, primary children and KS5. They thought it would be good for pupils to have the choice to stay onto KS5. There was some concern about having primary and secondary pupils on the same site:

“They might need to split the primary and secondary....the young children might pick up things off the older ones.”

Pupils were asked their views on extending the provision to include Autism. One pupil commented:

“Autistic children might get bullied by pupils with behaviour problems.”

Pupils were asked what they thought about one Headteacher as having overall responsibility for the special school and satellite bases. Generally pupils thought that this would be ‘a lot to do’.

“That’s a bad idea....they might care more about the children at the main school.”

The group discussed the proposal to introduce an Inclusion centre in their school. Generally pupils felt that the staff in the Learning Centre currently supported pupils well and to introduce new staff to that school could be challenging for pupils. One pupil commented that rather than isolating pupils ‘they need to stay in school so they can learn how to behave’.

A pupil also commented that it is important that staff and pupils have mutual respect and that this would help to improve behaviour. There was a discussion around the current staff in school and their expertise in supporting pupils in particular ASD.

There was some concern regarding the proposal to close residential, ‘they will be tired and won’t be able to learn’. There was a discussion about the use of the word ‘special’ in the title of the school and how this might be seen as negative by some people.

King Henry VIII School

15th May 2018

10 pupils took part on the consultation event, of which 4 pupils explained they had an additional learning need or required some additional help or support from their school. The facilitator explained the current provision and Mounton House and pupils were asked to describe how their school supports them and other pupils with ALN.

“Schools helps you to learn about your issues.”

“There needs to be more emotional support....the school does well with behaviour.”

“They don’t really mix children with ALN in the rest of the school.”

“We are taught in small groups.”

One pupil thought that it was good to be taught in small groups and another pupil disagreed, saying that:

“It helps with dyslexia in small groups but it doesn’t help with socialising, I don’t get to see my friends.”

Pupils were asked if they thought opening a new special school for girls and boys aged 3 – 19 years, including autism was a good idea. Opinion was split, only half thought that it was a good idea and even those half were not overly convinced that it was a good idea. All of the children felt strongly that the new school should not be called ‘special’:

“I think it’s a mockery of what they have calling it a special school, it could make them feel bad.”

“If ASD and behaviour children go together then this could cause problems or negative impact on behaviour for people with autism.”

There was a strong feeling among the group that it would be better if all pupils could stay in their mainstream school and not have the stigma of being sent to a special school. There was however, a lot of positive discussion around including girls and a few of the pupils couldn’t understand why there is currently a school just for boys.

“Girls and boys together is a good thing, it’s preparing them for life.”

A few pupils initially showed concern about having primary aged children on the same site as secondary children, expressing concern for their safety until it was explained that the site is quite large and will require some redevelopment to make it fit for purpose. Pupils then asked a number of questions relating to the cost of the proposal:

“Where will the money come from?”

“How long will it take?”

“When will they do the building work?”

The facilitator then explained that included in the proposal is the idea that the new Headteacher of the special school would be in charge of the SNRBs in the other schools as well. Pupils discussed this and one pupil suggested that there could be a Headteacher for the primary SNRBs and one for the secondary SNRBs. Pupils discussed this further and raised a few concerns, ‘when would they ever see the Headteacher?’ and one pupil suggested that a

change in the Head at Mounton House 'might not be a good thing for students.' All of the pupils felt very strongly that all of the staff would have an important role to play in the new school. One pupil suggested that it might be difficult to get experienced staff at the special school for the full age range:

"I feel that teaching staff are in demand and there might be a lack of expertise."

Another pupil highlighted communication over a large number of sites as a concern:

"I am worried that communication will get muffled. Some students might get lost. Who will manage all of the data?"

The proposal to introduce an Inclusion Centre was explained and discussed. Pupils talked about the positive benefits of the 'Hub' in their school. Nearly all pupils thought that the hub was working well to support pupils. One pupil said that 'having some new staff might help'. Nearly all pupils thought that their school did not need an Inclusion Centre and that it wouldn't work if it was managed by someone else:

"It won't work, it needs to be the teachers from the hub. They know us really well."

All of the pupils commented that the current hub is too small, they didn't know where an inclusion centre would go and they didn't see the need.

"We just need a bigger hub."

"I feel part of the school. I have friends."

"We go the hall for PE. It works for us."

There was a lot of discussion about improving the school's hub and many of the children felt that the school required more money in order to do this. One pupil said:

"Instead of spending the money on an inclusion centre just give it to us for the hub."

A pupil asked 'can more be done to help children when they are younger?' and related this question to a personal experience. The group then discussed the proposal to introduce an Assessment Centre at Deri View. One pupil responded very positively to this whilst another pupil thought that it would be too disruptive to move a child to another school for a short period of time.

Most of the pupils expressed very positive comments about the staff at their school and the important role those that work in the hub play in supporting pupils. One pupil said:

"It's important that you ask staff what they think, especially those from the hub."

Monmouth Comprehensive School

30th April 2018

During this consultation event we met with two groups of students. Group 1 included 10 students with ALN (2 from year 8 and 8 from year 10). Group 2 included 9 students from the School Council, from each of the following year groups: 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

Group 1

Students were asked to describe what it is like to attend their school with an additional learning need.

The students were very positive about their school, they felt that the school supported them well and prepared them for the future. The ethos of the school is very positive, “teachers are very respectful of students” and the school is “unique with our restorative system”. Nearly all of the students talked about ‘their responsibilities’ and that ‘Monmouth is a free school’. One student said:

“I was scared people would make fun of the way I talk so when I first started I didn’t talk as much as I do now.”

Another student then went on to say that...

“It has changed most of us, we aren’t people who have to be looked after all of the time. I feel part of the school.”

There was a very strong emphasis on the importance of students with ALN being integrated into mainstream and the benefits for all students:

“Mainstream pupils can learn from pupils with additional needs. This helps them to know how to support their friends.”

“By (ALN) children being in a form class they learnt that it wasn’t right to behave in that way.”

One student commented that because Monmouth is such a free school then being placed in a special school might ‘feel like a prison’. A few students also expressed concerns about children who are not used to the ethos of Monmouth Comprehensive School; ‘what will happen to children who don’t get the responsibility’.

Students also said that they liked being in a form class, going to sports clubs and being with their friends at break time. One student said that “Monmouth Comprehensive School is my family.”

Students were then asked if they agreed with the proposal to open a new special school for girls and boys aged 3 – 19 years. Generally students felt that this was a good idea:

“It will be good to have mixed classes.”

“Good for those with severe difficulties to be able to socialise and have the support and the facilities that they need.”

“Less distance for those who live near the school to travel.”

One student said they didn’t like the word ‘special’ on the name of the school because students might feel that they are not allowed to be in a normal school’ where as another student felt that the word special was important because everyone is special and ‘unique’. One student was also concerned about primary aged children mixing with secondary aged children.

Students also had lots of concerns about how the proposal would affect them in their school. They wanted to know:

“What would happen to pupils who get support from the ALN Hub in Monmouth when the new special school opens?”

“Will pupils be able to meet their friends?”

“What will happen at break and lunch times?”

Will children in the ALN Hub still be able to go to mainstream classes, go on school trips and attend extra-curricular clubs?”

“Where will the playground be? Will it be fenced off?”

“Can we still go to college in year 10?”

Students also discussed the affect that the proposal could have on other students such as having a negative impact on self-esteem if pupils in the SNRB are segregated from the school.

Group 2

At the start of the discussion students confirmed that prior to the consultation many of them were not aware of Mounton House Special School in Chepstow. All students felt that closing and then reopening the school to accommodate girls and boys from the age of 3 to 19 with ALN was a very good idea.

Most of the discussions focussed on the ethos of Monmouth Comprehensive School and how students with ALN currently at the school access mainstream curriculum, attend form class, access out of school activities and trips. Pupils felt very strongly that the school was an inclusive environment and that this helped ALN children to achieve and develop social skills that will support them when they leave school.

“I think that the school currently works well to support children with ALN...”

“It’s important to mix all children.”

“Inclusion is vital.”

“I think that at the moment the students that have some access to the normal curriculum tend to be the ones that build more relationships with other students that they can then learn from.”

Students were very clear about their relationships with staff and their role in supporting students effectively.

“Teachers tailor their approach and support really well at the moment”.

“Amazing teachers in the Wellbeing Centre”.

“Restorative approach is great”.

Some students expressed concerns that segregating students with ALN in a Special Needs Resource Base (SNRB) on the school site could have a negative impact in their self – esteem and social skills.

“I think that isolation would reverse the work done over the last 8 years.”

“Will segregation lead to loss of independence and life skills in the future?”

The students also talked about the school’s Wellbeing Centre and how well this is currently used to support students and also provide a quiet space when needed.

“Anyone can access the Wellbeing Centre”.

Students expressed some concern regarding the future of the Wellbeing Centre. They also talked about the new build and how students and staff have been involved in the design process. One student raised a concern regarding the new design.

“The new build is not ready for the new proposals... we don’t think there will be enough space”.

There were a number of questions about the process of implementing the proposals, if agreed, and what that would look like.

“Who will appoint the new Headteacher?” “Could we have a Young Persons panel for the interviews?”

“Will there be an opportunity to feedback on the details in the future, as the plans develop?”

“Could we have a trial period so that the change is not so scary?”

“Will the new school teachers have the same relationships?”

“What will the curriculum look like?”

At the ends of the discussion 8 students completed the formal consultation form, 3 agreed with the proposal, 4 disagreed and 1 did not decide. A summary of the contents is detailed below:

All 4 responses against argued that the proposal will isolate ALN students from the rest of their school community. There were some concerns that the values of the new Special School and Monmouth Comprehensive School ‘might clash’ and overall they felt that the current provision for students with ALN in their school was working well.

One student didn’t agree or disagree with the proposal. This student made the following comment:

“As students, I also feel it is vital that students are involved in the plans / some decisions for the special school.”

Three students agreed with the proposal, of which 1 suggested a Montessori approach whilst the other 2 focussed on the importance of inclusion and integration.

Mounton House Special School

11th May 2018

Officers met with 4 pupils from the School Council, from years 10 and 11. Although these pupils will not be directly affected by the proposals they had plenty of views on the proposals and the use of the building from their experiences of attending the school. There was a 50:50 split on the proposal to include girls in the new school, 'they should have done it years ago'. Pupils also thought it was a good idea to extend the new school for pupils up to the age of 19. Some of the pupils said they would stay on to 19 if they had the opportunity, 'it's good to have a choice'.

The pupils who attend the residential provision felt that this was important and that it should stay, 'we do lots of good things'.

There was a discussion about the proposal to extend the new special school to include children with ASD. One pupil felt very strongly against this idea, explaining that SEBD and ASD children do not mix well together and that the building is not designed to support children with ASD:

"The corridors are very narrow."

"It's very noisy here. The walls and floors need sound proofing."

"People with ASD need quiet spaces. If we mix with behaviour issues this could cause an issue."

"People with ASD can go to the sensory room but this can be overstimulating."

All of the pupils had ideas about how the building could be adapted if the proposal is agreed. Pupils agreed that there needs to be a lot of work on the building:

"Maybe outside cameras."

"Some areas that are not used need to be reinstated, like a bigger canteen, girls changing room in the sports hall."

"We need better play equipment for the younger children. Outside trampolines and a climbing wall."

"One pupil commented that a PRU onsite would be a good thing and there is space."

Pupils also showed concern about how the different ages would mix and how the buildings would be used. One pupil commented that it was important that younger children were placed in another building to 'keep safe and make sure they don't pick up bad habits' from the older children.

16th May 2018

We met with 7 pupils from years 7 to 10, over three sessions. Most of the pupils had very strong views on the proposal. One of the pupils thought that the consultation process was pointless because 'you've already decided' 'my voice doesn't count'. Another pupil thought that the proposal was all about making money:

"We need more children to come here so we get more money."

Some of the pupils thought that residential should remain because the pupils that stay in residential have too far to travel to come to school every day. About half of the pupils thought

it would be a good idea to extend the school to pupils aged 19 as this would give them the choice to stay on if they wanted to.

There was a mixed response to the proposal to extend the school to include girls. Some of the pupils thought that this would be ok and good for social skills.

"I'm not bothered about girls. It's the learning that makes me angry."

Those pupils who were against the ideas felt very strongly that girls would cause problems, 'they scream' or they were concerned for their safety, 'some of the boys might hurt them'.

Nearly all of the pupils were concerned about the safety of younger children attending the same site and this was their main reason for disagreeing with the proposal. When this was discussed further pupils then felt it would be ok if younger children were kept separate, including break times and lunch times. Although there was still a feeling amongst half of the pupils that it still wouldn't work, 'It's going to fail'. A few also suggested that extending the school to primary children would have a negative effect:

"They could get worse. They could pick up bad habits from the older ones."

There were views about extending the provision to include pupils with ASD. One pupil said:

"It won't make any difference, most of us here already have autism."

Although there was some concern that the school wouldn't be the right place for pupils with severe autism.

Pupils didn't have any strong views regarding a Pupil Referral Unit on site as they felt that this would be ok.

Most of the pupils thought that a new Head in charge of the new school and the satellite provision would be ok, that it wouldn't impact on them. They felt that this would work as long as the new Head 'stayed in the office'. The real concern that came through very strongly was their anxiety around change. They thought that they would need more staff but didn't want to have anyone new, who didn't know them. The thought of introducing new pupils to the school was also distressing for most.

Nearly all of the pupils thought that the school should have a new name and that the new name should not include the word 'special'.

"We could have a poll of 5 names and then choose."

There was some discussion about the possibility of a new school uniform; one pupil disagreed because 'we can't afford a new uniform'. Pupils felt it was important that they were involved in any decisions about school uniform as well as decisions on the name. Some pupils also thought that it was important that they were involved in the decision making process and others wanted officers to return to school to provide further information when it is available.

Pupils also had the opportunity to discuss their school as it is currently. Nearly all felt that their school needed more money. They all felt that any changes to the school would require a lot of money and as long as this didn't impact on their current resources e.g. schools trips then this would be ok.

"There might be less money for trips if girls come here."

Pupils also made really positive comments about staff at their school and emphasised the importance of relationships, 'we have good relationship' and 'they know us really well'.

All of the pupils were very vocal about the school meals and said that the food needed to be improved. Some of the pupils also thought that it would be beneficial to introduce a breakfast club, some of the pupils explained that they don't have breakfast before they come to school. The internet access at the school was also brought up as a concern.

The overall feeling from all of the consultation sessions at the school was one of real concern and anxiety around change.