

SUBJECT: Inclusion Strategy and Additional Learning Needs Policy

MEETING: People Committee

DATE: 18th February 2025

DIVISION/ WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. The Inclusion Service, within the Learning, Skills and Economy (LSE) Directorate has developed a new Inclusion Strategy and an updated ALN Policy to shape our work with children and young people in schools and settings in Monmouthshire.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to provide People Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to consider the Inclusion Strategy and the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the local priorities as outlined in the Learning Place section of the Community and Corporate Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. That Scrutiny Committee provide their feedback for consideration by Cabinet.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1. Monmouthshire's last Estyn report published in April 2020, recognised that a number of appropriate actions have been taken by Monmouthshire's Children and Young People's Directorate, to improve the identification and provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and that there was a passion and commitment to further improve this. However, a main recommendation of the Estyn report, stated that Monmouthshire should 'articulate a clear strategy for Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision'.
- 3.2. The implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018 and the creation of a broader Inclusion Service, has meant that the articulation of an Inclusion (rather than SEN) strategy, supported by a broader suite of interconnected strategies and related policies, including an Additional Learning Needs Policy, will now provide a response to this recommendation.
- 3.3. The Inclusion Strategy aims to set out Monmouthshire's priorities to improve outcomes for children and young people in vulnerable groups and their families; this directly aligns with Monmouthshire's Community and Corporate Plan which outlines certain key deliverables to shape this Inclusion Strategy within the 'Learning Place', including:
 - Improved school attendance and reduced levels of exclusion which remove barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils.
 - A truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners' starting points, strengths and educational needs.
- 3.4. The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy outlines Monmouthshire's approach to supporting children and young people with barriers to learning and additional learning needs, ensuring they receive the necessary support, resources, and opportunities to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1. The Integrated Impact Assessment (attached) anticipates that the positive impact of the Inclusion Strategy and ALN Policy are;

- Inclusive and supportive educational settings, support keeping pupils close to their communities,
- High quality local specialist educational provision means there is less reliance on expensive, out of county specialist provision,
- An inclusive culture advances equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not,
- An inclusive and tolerant culture fosters good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
- High quality successful schools, support recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff and the development of best inclusive/ ALN practice across specialist settings,
- Educating vulnerable children, including those with ALN, close to their communities will result in a reduction in travel time and transport costs and associated pollution.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1. There are no options presented.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1. The Inclusion Service will continue to review and monitor the performance of the Inclusion Strategy and the ALN Policy and report regularly and as required to the LSE Directorate Management Team and appropriate committees.

7. REASONS:

7.1. Monmouthshire requires an Inclusion Strategy and associated ALN Policy in order to meet the recommendations included in the 2020 Estyn Inspection.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1. There are no resource implications

9. CONSULTEES:

9.1. The consultation period for the Inclusion Strategy and ALN Policy was from 18th October 2024 to 20th December 2024. The following is a list of consultees for both the Inclusion Strategy and ALN Policy. Consultees were provided with a link to both documents and asked to complete an online response form (MSForms). In addition, parents and carers and school staff were offered on-line feedback discussion sessions with the Head of Inclusion and Principal Officer for ALN.

- Head Teachers all MCC schools
- ALNCOs in all MCC schools
- Inclusion Service Officers
- Learning, Skills and Economy (LSE) Directorate Management Team
- Cabinet Member for Education
- Educational Achievement Service (EAS)
- SNAP Cymru
- Gwent Parent Network Group

9.2. All consultation responses were considered and where appropriate, amendments made to the relevant documents.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

10.1. Inclusion Strategy, with associated Appendices (*shared/ common documents are italicised*):

Appendix 1. *Monmouthshire's Participation Policy (in draft for consultation)*

Appendix 2. *Information about specialist provision in Monmouthshire (SRB Handbook)*

Appendix 3. Children Looked After Policy

Appendix 4. *Post 16 Strategy (in draft for consultation)*

10.2. ALN Policy, with associated Appendices (except Appendix 3 due to ongoing consultation this is not currently available):

Appendix 1. *Monmouthshire's Participation Policy (in draft for consultation)*

Appendix 2. ALN Identification Flowchart for Schools

Appendix 4. *Specialist Resource Base Policy and Handbook*

Appendix 5. Monmouthshire's Post 16 Strategy (in draft for consultation)

Appendix 6. Quality Assurance System and Review Cycle

Appendix 7. Information about Outreach and Education Support Team

Appendix 8. Dispute Resolution

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