

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

On the establishment of:

A Foundation Phase Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Learning Resource Base (LRB) at Dowlais Primary School, and

A Key Stage 3 / 4 Complex ASD LRB at Cyfarthfa High School.

Contents

Introduction.....	3-4
Explanation of terms used in this document.....	5-6
Involving children in the consultation	6
Involving parents, governors and staff - how you can find out more and give your views.....	6-7
Your views matter.....	8
Background.....	8-9
Catchment Area and Map.....	10-11
School Context.....	12-14
Standards.....	14-15
The Proposal.....	15-17
What are the advantages & disadvantages of this proposal?	18
Benefits and risks of this proposal	19
Impact on ALN provision	20
Admissions and catchment area arrangements.....	21
Human resource matters.....	21
Finance.....	21
Capital project.....	22
Learner travel arrangements & School Transport	22
Integrated Impact Assessment.....	23
Key dates & Statutory Process.....	24-25
Consultation Response Form.....	26-30
Equality Monitoring Form.....	31-34

Introduction

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient and suitable school places in its area and to determine whether it is making best use of resources and facilities to deliver opportunities that all children deserve.

This consultation is an opportunity for you to learn about the school re-organisation proposal being put forward for Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School and to tell you how to let us know your views. It is your chance to ask questions and provide comments that will be considered when the Council decides how to proceed.

This document explains the Council's proposal to formally establish Learning Resource Bases (LRB) at Dowlais Primary School (Foundation Phase) and Cyfarthfa High School (Key Stage 3 /4) to cater for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), following the piloting of these provisions from September 2023.

To achieve this the Council will undertake a statutory consultation on

- Establishing a Foundation Phase ASD LRB for up to ten pupils at Dowlais Primary School.
- Establishing a Key Stage 3/4 LRB for pupils with ASD and associated complex behavioural needs for up to eight pupils at Cyfarthfa High School.

This proposal will benefit pupils living across the county borough who require specialist ALN provision within mainstream settings to meet their addition learning needs.

The LRB in Dowlais Primary School will increase the overall LRB capacity within the county borough meeting the needs of pupils with ASD. It will also ensure a flow through provision if needed within a single primary setting for those pupils placed in the Foundation Phase LRB.

The LRB in Cyfarthfa High School will establish a new type of provision, responding to growing need, for an LRB which meets the needs of pupils with ASD but who also have associated behavioural difficulties that require a smaller class size than our existing secondary LRB for pupils with ASD.

The consultation process follows Welsh Government guidelines outlined in the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and therefore, a range of individuals and groups are being asked for their views about these proposals.

Before any decisions are made the Council needs to ensure that it offers a number of opportunities for individuals and interested groups to make their views and opinions known on the proposal.

The Council is consulting with the following groups:

Headteacher and Governors at Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School	The Headteachers and Governing Bodies of those schools in Merthyr Tydfil that currently host Learning Resource Base provision:
Staff (teaching and non-teaching) at Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School	Assembly Members (AM's) / members of Parliament (MP's) / Regional Assembly Members
Parent/Carers of children attending Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School	Local Councillors
Pupils attending Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School	Diocesan Directors of Education
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)	National Autistic Society

Neighbouring Primary and Secondary Schools in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough	Trade Unions
Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES)	Directors of Education in Neighbouring LA's
Estyn	Local Police and Crime Commissioner
Welsh Government Ministers	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's Transport Department

Explanation of terms used in this document

Admissions Number – All maintained schools must admit pupils up to at least their published admission number. The admission number is the number of pupil places available in each year group.

ALN – Additional Learning Needs

ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Character of a School – The overall profile of the school. For example; Dowlais Primary School is a community school admitting children between the ages of 3 to 11 years, whilst Cyfarthfa High School is a community school admitting children between the ages 11-16.

Compulsory School Age – The start of the term following a child's fifth birthday.

CSC – Central South Consortium Joint Education Service. The regional School Improvement Service for the five local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan

The Council – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

IIA – An Integrated Impact Assessment. [IIA] is an impact assessment designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people and that the potential impacts are considered understood and mitigated where required.

eFSM – Pupils eligible for Free School Meals

IDP – Individual Development Plans – For children and young people with an identified need that require an additional learning provision

LA – Local Authority means Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

LRB – Learning Resource Base for children with special educational needs

LSA – Learning Support Assistant

Number on roll – the number of pupils attending a school

PLASC – Pupil Level Annual School Census. In January of every year, verified information is collected by schools for submission to the Welsh Government. This includes the number of pupils enrolled in each school, their age groups, home addresses, ethnicity and data on Welsh language, free school meals eligibility, special education needs and first language.

SEBD – Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

SEN – Special Educational Needs

Statemented – A child has a Statement of Educational Need if he or she has learning difficulties which require special educational provision to be made. A learning difficulty means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of the same age or that the child has a disability that needs different educational facilities from those that the school generally provides for children. Statements have been replaced for the majority of pupils with Individual Development Plans. If a Statement remains in place the child will have learning difficulties which require additional learning provision to be made to him or her.

Statutory Notice – A statutory notice is the formal publication of a finalised proposal, if approved by the Council's Cabinet and will only be considered once they have received all the responses from the consultation process. This is a legal requirement as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2013.

Full time school provision – The Council's policy allows all children who have reached their fourth birthday on or before 31 August to attend full time school that September. This is not a legal requirement. Some parents / carers choose to send their child to school at the **Compulsory School Age**.

It is LA's policy that every child has access to free part-time nursery education from the term following the child's third birthday, and to a full-time nursery education place the September following their third birthday.

Involving children in the consultation

The Council firmly believes that the pupils should be given the opportunity to make their views known about this proposal.

Consultation workshops will be held with the school councils of Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School to gather the children's views about the proposal. The information gathered at these sessions will be included in the final consultation report. The full report will be submitted to the Council's Cabinet for consideration following the consultation period.

Involving parents, governors and staff how you can find out more and give your views

The local authority intends to hold open drop-in sessions for parents/carers and other stakeholders where council officers will be on hand to explain the proposals in more details and answer any questions:

The date and venue for the drop-in session(s) will also be displayed via the schools' notice board, schools' and the LA's websites.

Details of the drop-in sessions are given below:

Venue	Date/Time	Drop in session
Dowlais Primary School	20 th November 2024 at 15:30pm	Parent/Carer
Cyfarthfa High School	TBC	

Please note that we will always ask that you complete a consultation response form, as we can only accept views in writing.

This document and further supporting information can also be found on the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council website.

Links to this document can be found on social media through the Merthyr Tydfil Council X feed and via the Merthyr Tydfil Council Facebook page.

Your views matter

The consultation period will run from **Monday 11th November – Sunday 22nd December 2024**. You can respond to our proposals at any time during this period.

Your views are important to us, and there are a number of ways that you can let us know.

You can:

- Complete the online response form at: MTCBC Consultation pages.
- Attend a drop-in session and speak to us in person. This is a good way to be able to get answers to any questions you may have about the proposals. We will still ask that you complete a consultation response form, as we can only accept views in writing.
- Complete the consultation response form and put it into the consultation response boxes found in the reception areas of both Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School.
- Complete and return the consultation response form to the address given at the bottom of the form at the end of this document and return to:

Sue Walker
Director of Education
Civic Centre
Castle Street
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8AN

Alternatively, you can respond to the following email address:

schoolorganisation@merthyr.gov.uk

All responses given to us in writing, using the consultation response form, will be considered by the Council's Cabinet before it decides whether or not to publish a statutory notice about the proposals.

Responses received from consultees who are opposed to these proposals, although considered as part of the consultation report, will not be treated as statutory objections. A statutory objection would form part of the statutory notice period, if it is approved at the next stage, by the Council's Cabinet.

If you wish to object to the notice at the next stage of the process, should it proceed, you will need to do so in writing during the statutory objection period. These key dates are outlined on page 20.

Please note that all comments sent in writing must contain the full name and full postal address of the person making the comments.

The closing date for responses to this consultation is midnight on Sunday 22nd December 2024. Unfortunately, responses received after this date will not be considered by the Council.

Background

Dowlais Primary School – LRB Provision

At the start of the 2023/24 academic year, an additional LRB provision was piloted in Dowlais Primary School. This was for two reasons:

1. It provided Foundation Phase provision for pupils with ASD in a school which had an existing KS2 ASD LRB. This supports the ethos of pupils not moving school unless they absolutely need to.
2. There were pupils requiring such provision.

Upon consideration of the effectiveness of this approach and provision in the summer term of 2023/24, it was determined that Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council should propose that the LRB be formally established as a LRB, via consultation, to support children with ASD in Foundation Phase. Formally establishing this additional provision is in line with the requirements under the ALN Act and Code to meet the needs of pupils with ALN and ensure appropriate provision is available to address their needs.

Dowlais Primary School is maintained by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The school is located in the community of Dowlais and is within the Dowlais electoral ward. A catchment area map can be found on page 11.

Dowlais Primary School is currently a 1 form entry primary school with capacity for 158 pupils of statutory school age and Admission number of 22. There is also a nursery class able to accommodate 28 full-time equivalent pupils including a pre-nursery class each January and April on a part-time basis.

Cyfarthfa High School – LRB Provision

At the start of the 2023/24 academic year, an additional LRB provision was piloted in Cyfarthfa High School. This was for two reasons:

1. The existing secondary LRB for pupils with ASD included a number of pupils with needs that required a more bespoke approach than could be provided in the existing LRB. Therefore, alternative secondary provision was required in order to meet the needs of this group of pupils.
2. Establishing such a provision would provide the opportunity to pilot an approach that would keep pupils in an education setting within the LA and avoid the possibility of requiring specialist provision outside of the area.

Upon consideration of the effectiveness of this approach and provision in the summer term of 2023/24, it was determined that Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council should propose that the LRB be formally established as a LRB, via consultation, to support children with complex ASD in key stage 3 &4. Formally establishing this additional provision is in line with the requirements under the ALN Act and Code to meet the needs of pupils with ALN and ensure appropriate provision is available to address their needs.

Cyfarthfa High School is maintained by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The school is located in Cyfarthfa and is within the Town electoral ward. A catchment area map can be found on page 11.

Cyfarthfa High School is a capacity of 890 pupils of statutory school age and Admission number of 178.

Catchment Area and Map

the relevant catchment areas.

Dowlais Primary School

Nursery & Primary Education Provision

Welsh medium nursery & primary education is provided by Ysgol Santes Tudful

English medium nursery & primary education is provided by:-
Dowlais Primary School

Denominational English medium primary education is provided by Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic School, St Illtyd's Campus.

Secondary Education Provision

Welsh medium secondary education is provided by Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydywaun.

English medium secondary education is provided by Pen Y Dre High School

Denominational English medium secondary education is provided by Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic School, Bishop Hedley campus.

Cyfarthfa High School

Nursery & Primary Education Provision

Welsh medium nursery & primary education is provided by Ysgol Santes Tudful

English medium nursery & primary education is provided by:-
Caedraw Primary School, Cyfarthfa Park Primary, Heolgerrig Primary School, Twynirodyn Community Primary School, Ysgol Gynradd Coed y Dderwen.

Denominational English medium primary education is provided by Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic School, St Mary's Campus.

Secondary Education Provision

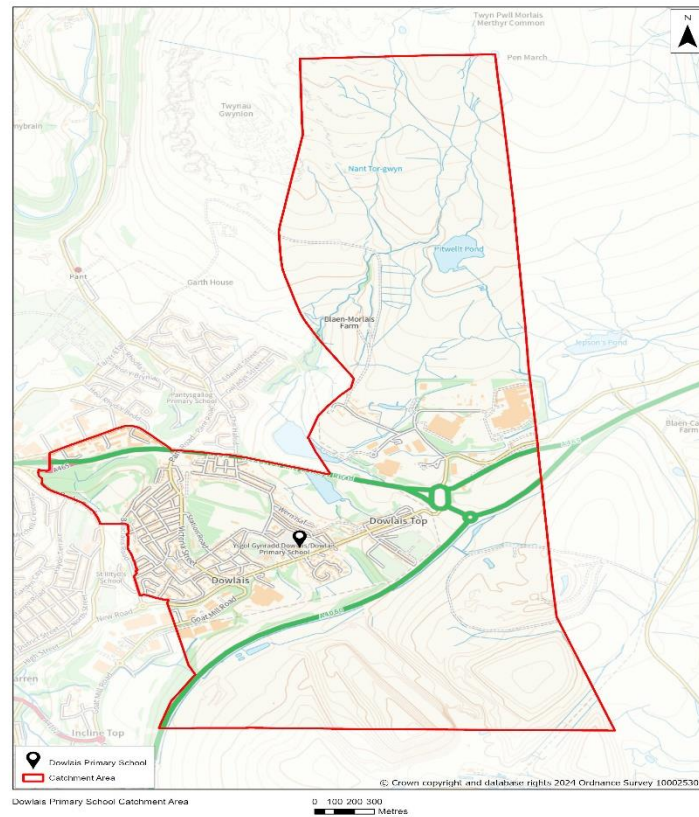
Welsh medium secondary education is provided by Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydywaun.

English medium secondary education is provided by Cyfarthfa High School

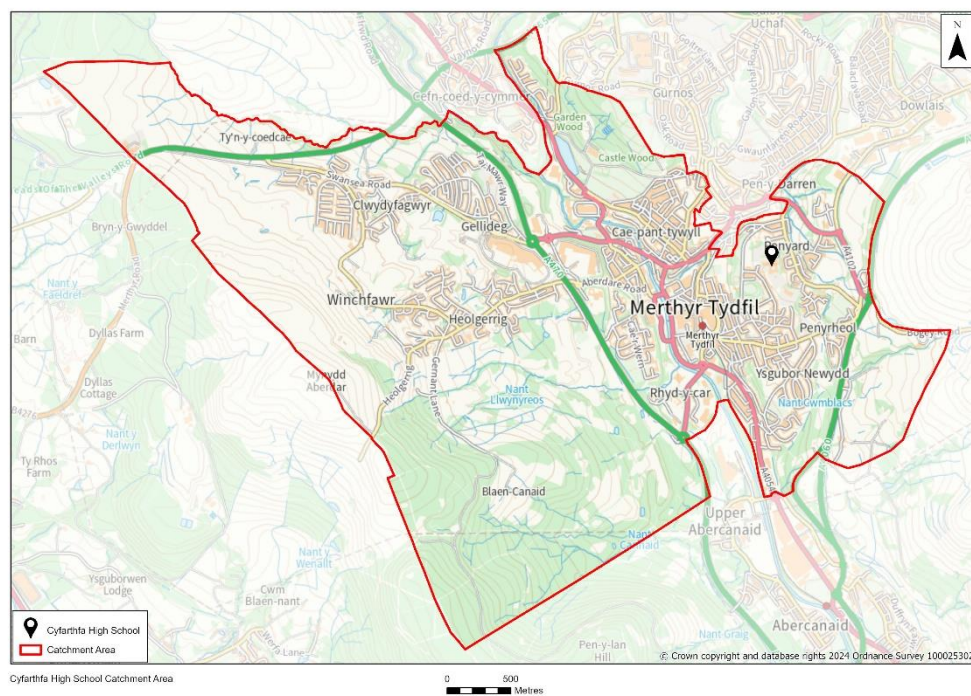
Denominational English medium secondary education is provided by Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic School, Bishop Hedley campus.

Catchment Map

Catchment Map of Dowlais Primary School



Catchment Map of Cyfarthfa High School



School Context

Current demand for places – Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School

School	Language category	Admission number	School capacity (FTE) exc Nurs	Number on roll Jan 24	Number in Nursery Jan 24	Age range
Dowlais Primary School	English Medium	22	158	144	26	3-11
Cyfarthfa High School	English medium	178	890	856	N/A	11-16

The school's capacity is measured in line with the WG guidance MCSW (Measuring Capacity of Schools in Wales) and is required to measure the capacity for mainstream pupils from Reception class through to Year 6 and in Secondary from Year 7 through to Year 11.

This capacity excludes the space that has been designated for the LRB classes as per WG guidance.

Current level of surplus places – Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School

School	School Capacity (FTE) exc Nurs	Number on roll	Surplus places	% of Surplus places
Dowlais Primary School	158	146	12	7.6%
Cyfarthfa High School	890	799	91	10.2%

Future demand for places

The following table provides information about the projected number of children expected to attend in the future.

School	Current Capacity	Jan 2025 Projections (Estimated Headcount)	Jan 2026 Projections (Estimated Headcount)	Jan 2027 Projections (Estimated Headcount)	Jan 2028 Projections (Estimated Headcount)	Jan 2029 Projections (Estimated Headcount)	Jan 2030 Projections (Estimated Headcount)
Dowlais Primary School	158	146	158	150	147	152	145
Cyfarthfa High School	890	799	798	867	856	822	843

eFSM pupils

The table below shows the number of pupils eligible for free school meals attending Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School over the last four years.

PLASC Details – Dowlais Primary School	2021	2022	2023	2024
Pupil numbers	191	189	169	186
No. FSM	50	59	55	59
% eFSM	26.2%	31.2%	32.5%	31.7%

PLASC Details – Cyfarthfa High School	2021	2022	2023	2024
Pupil numbers	1011	906	858	856
No. FSM	207	159	164	152
% eFSM	20.5%	17.6%	19.1%	17.8%

ALN pupils

The table below shows ALN pupil numbers for both schools over the last four years.

Dowlais Primary School

PLASC Details	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. School Action	11	0	1	1
No. School Action Plus	17	11	10	7
% ALN	17.8%	8%	8.9%	16.7%
% ALN Pupils with IDP	0%	0%	20%	71%

Cyfarthfa High School

PLASC Details	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. School Action	109	98	66	69
No. School Action Plus	73	41	49	40
% ALN	19.8%	17%	14.7%	15.7%
% ALN Pupils with IDP	0%	0%	0%	11.9%

The condition of school buildings and facilities

The Council aims to provide the best possible facilities for children in Merthyr Tydfil to support their learning. The Council commissioned a survey of the condition of Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School buildings both in 2022 as part of a rolling programme of surveys across all schools.

The condition survey involved a visual assessment of all exposed parts of the buildings to identify significant defects and items of disrepair. The survey determined the schools scoring below as an overall satisfactory (B) and poor condition (C).

School	Type of school	Condition of school building	Cost of identified repairs
Dowlais Primary School	EM	B	£703,235.00
Cyfarthfa High School	EM	C	£1,031,941.92

Standards

The Council works closely with the governing bodies of the school to ensure that standards are high, that teaching and learning is of high quality and that leadership and governance is strong.

The Council works with two organisations in order to monitor the performance of schools and to support school improvement.

- Central South Consortium (CSC), Joint Education Service
- Estyn

Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. It is a Crown body, established under the Education Act 1992. Estyn is independent of the Welsh Government but receives its funding from the Welsh Government under section 104 of the Government Wales Act 1998. Estyn inspects quality and standards in education and training providers in Wales.

Central South Consortium (CSC) was established in September 2012. The Consortium supports and challenges all schools in Merthyr Tydfil on behalf of the Council.

Schools are inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of an inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils (Estyn).

Dowlais Primary School was most recently inspected by Estyn in October 2016 under the four-point scale detailed below.

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

Cyfarthfa High School was most recently inspected by Estyn in May 2024 under the new inspection framework which no longer uses the four-point scale.

A summary of the inspection results is included below:

School	Inspection Date	Outcomes	Provision	Leadership & management	Overall Summary	
					Performance	Prospects for improvement
Dowlais Primary	October 2016	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Cyfarthfa High School	May 2024	Statutory Category				

This latest full inspection report for both schools can be found at:
<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6752346>

The Proposal

Dowlais Primary School

Case for change

The LA currently has 11 English-medium LRB's in mainstream primary schools across the County Borough, providing places for up to 118 pupils. The LA is also currently going through the consultation process on the establishment of a Welsh medium primary LRB.

The capacity of our LRB provision has increased over the last three years due to an increase in the number of pupils with needs that require a more specialist provision than mainstream schools are able to provide. There has also been a specific increase in the number of younger pupils, in Foundation Phase, with ALN needs related to ASD and it is for that reason that the capacity of our ALN provision in this area needed to increase.

Pilot

In the summer term of the 2022/23 academic year, given the increase in need, it was decided to establish a pilot provision meeting the needs of Foundation Phase learners with ASD that could not be managed within a mainstream setting. Work to look at suitable locations was undertaken and Dowlais Primary School was considered a suitable option. As well as an inclusive ethos and available space, the school had an existing ASD provision at KS2.

Work with the school was carried out, staffing arrangements agreed and the pilot provision established. The pilot provision commenced in September 2023. The hard

work of staff in the provision and close liaison between the school and the ALN team has resulted in a successful pilot year, leading to the conclusion that the provision is effective, correctly sited and staffed.

Proposal

The Council proposes to establish a ten place Foundation Phase Learning Resource Base for pupils with ASD at Dowlais Primary School.

The LRB will accommodate pupils with ALN requiring a specialist class placement and cater for pupils with a primary need of ASD. The class will offer short-term and long-term placement options in accordance with the pupil needs.

There will be no detrimental impact on the mainstream provision of the school, or any other school within the County Borough.

The LRB will be located within the mainstream school. The class will have fewer pupils than a mainstream class and will have a higher ratio of adults for each pupil. The ethos of the LRB is to provide specialist support to the individual pupil based on their level of need, with the intention, in some instances, of reintegrating the individual back into a mainstream class where appropriate.

Entry and exit to the LRB will be determined by the LAs ALN Panel, who meet frequently to discuss individual pupils referred for specialist provision.

Cyfarthfa High School

Case for change

The LA currently has one English-medium LRB in a mainstream secondary school, providing places for up to 25 pupils with ASD needs that require more specialist provision than can be provided in mainstream.

The capacity of our primary LRB provision has increased over the last three years due to an increase in the number of pupils with needs that require a more specialist provision. Whilst provision at primary has increased we have not seen a similar increase in provision at secondary. However, there has been a specific increase in the number of pupils with complex ASD needs requiring more bespoke specialist provision, within a smaller setting than our existing provision can provide or accommodate.

The increase in this need for more bespoke ASD provision has resulted in the LA determining that further, different provision should be established, smaller in size, with a higher staffing ratio, to meet the specific needs of this group of pupils.

Pilot

In the summer term of the 2022/23 academic year, given the increase of secondary age pupils with complex ASD needs, a pilot provision was agreed. Work to look at suitable locations was undertaken and Cyfarthfa High School was identified as a suitable location.

With the support of the Headteacher and senior team, consideration was given to determining a suitable location within the school. With the recruitment of appropriate staff, equipped with the skills to work with the small cohort of pupils, the pilot provision commenced in September 2023.

The hard work of staff in the provision, with close liaison between the school and the ALN team has resulted in a successful pilot year. There have been learning opportunities throughout the year but the LA has concluded that the provision is effective, correctly sited and staffed. Estyn also commented that 'pupils receive bespoke provision that caters effectively for their additional learning needs and well-being.'

Proposal

The Council proposes to establish an eight place Secondary Learning Resource Base for pupils with complex ASD at Cyfarthfa High School.

The LRB will accommodate pupils with ALN requiring a specialist class placement and cater for pupils with complex ASD. The class will offer placements in accordance with the pupil needs.

There will be no detrimental impact on the mainstream provision of the school, or any other school within the County Borough.

The LRB will be located within the mainstream school. The class will have fewer pupils than a mainstream class and will have a higher ratio of adults for each pupil. The ethos of the LRB is to provide specialist support to the individual pupil based on their level of need.

Entry and exit to the LRB will be determined by the LAs ALN Panel, who meet frequently to discuss individual pupils referred for specialist provision.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the proposal

What

Advantages and Disadvantages of the proposal to establish a Foundation Phase ASD LRB at Dowlais Primary School

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Increase the number of LRB places for Foundation Phase aged learners with ASD.</p> <p>Establish provision collocated with a KS2 ASD provision to reduce the need for pupils to move schools.</p> <p>Enhance the ALN provision across the County Borough.</p> <p>Effective use of space within the school without impacting on school capacity</p> <p>The level of provision in the LRB and the proportionate ability and skill of staff are likely to be of benefit to the wider school.</p> <p>Increased opportunities for staff development.</p>	<p>The introduction of this provision requires compliance with the statutory school organisation process; this can be lengthy and requires Cabinet approval before it can be implemented.</p> <p>Some pupils with ALN can find change difficult. They may find moving to a new school unsettling.</p>

Advantages and Disadvantages of the proposal to establish a Complex ASD LRB at Cyfarthfa High School

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Establishes provision for pupils for whom mainstream or ASD LRB provision is not suitable.</p> <p>Enhance the ALN provision across the County Borough.</p> <p>Effective use of space within the school without impacting on school capacity.</p> <p>The level of provision in the LRB and the proportionate ability and skill of staff are likely to be of benefit to the wider school.</p> <p>Increased opportunities for staff development.</p>	<p>The introduction of this provision requires compliance with the statutory school organisation process; this can be lengthy and requires Cabinet approval before it can be implemented.</p> <p>Some pupils with ALN can find change difficult. They may find moving to a new school unsettling.</p>

Benefits and Risks of the proposal

Benefits

Dowlais Primary School – Foundation Phase LRB

The LRB will provide pupils with a small class environment with a high adult to pupil ratio that provides a more flexible and responsive provision to meet their needs.

The LRB will provide pupils with opportunities for integration into mainstream classes as and when possible.

The quality of education in the LRB will be enhanced due to the expertise of the specialist staff working within the provision, which should improve outcomes for pupils through differentiation and modification of the curriculum.

Cyfarthfa High School – LRB

The LRB will provide pupils with a small class environment with a high adult to pupil ratio that provides a bespoke provision to meet their needs.

Whilst opportunities to integrate into mainstream will be available where appropriate, the LRB will provide a supportive environment where integration is not appropriate.

The quality of education in the LRB will be enhanced due to the expertise of the specialist staff working within the provision, which should improve outcomes for pupils through differentiation and modification of the curriculum.

Risks

The risks associated with this proposal, and mitigating factors are listed below:

Dowlais Primary School – Foundation Phase LRB

Risk	Mitigating factor
There is high demand for places	The LA will review demand and assess other opportunities to increase provision where appropriate.

Cyfarthfa High School - LRB

Risk	Mitigating factor
There is high demand for places	The LA will review demand and assess other opportunities to increase provision where appropriate.

Impact on ALN Provision

The overall aim of LRBs is to provide provision that meets the additional learning needs of the pupils attending within a wider context of a mainstream school. Where access to the mainstream environment is appropriate a LRB supports this due to its collocation.

The LRBs at Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School will be established within the mainstream provision at each school, providing an appropriate environment in which pupils can develop and thrive with access to the mainstream curriculum, where appropriate. This approach generates and maximises opportunities for inclusion within the mainstream, while meeting the individual learning, emotional and social needs of pupils placed. This will be achieved by:

- Individual and group support provided by specialist staff within the LRB;
- Where appropriate, supported opportunities to access the range of mainstream experiences;
- Opportunities to extend self-confidence and self-esteem;
- Opportunities to develop independence skills;
- Opportunities to improve social communication and social interaction skills and needs associated with an autistic spectrum condition;
- Access to appropriate specialist services from other agencies;
- Ensuring that all school staff have an understanding of, and skills relating to, the learning requirements of children with ALN, primarily through a programme of continuous professional development and, where appropriate, opportunities for accreditation with nationally recognised qualifications;
- Where possible, in conjunction with other specialist staff/teams, the LRB will provide consultancy, outreach support and a resource base for staff and parents.

The proposal will aim to provide learners with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, whilst also having their additional learning needs met in as inclusive a way as possible.

This proposal does not impact on other schools. Pupils who have ALN that cannot be accommodated within a mainstream school require specialist provision, and therefore placement in provision other than mainstream, albeit the provision may be sited in a mainstream setting.

Admissions and Catchment Area Arrangements

The catchment area and admission arrangements for the mainstream element of both schools will remain unchanged as a result of these proposals.

Admission arrangements for ASD and Complex ASD Classes

Whilst there are designated catchment areas for both Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School, places in the two LRBs will be available to pupils across Merthyr Tydfil. Pupils will not be able to apply for placement via the Council's usual admission arrangements. Instead, admission is based on individual need following a referral and assessment by the ALN Team, to assess appropriateness of placement.

Human Resources Implications

As part of establishing the pilot arrangements from September 2023 the following staffing arrangements were secured to support the new provisions.

The LRB at Dowlais Primary School operated with the recognised staffing levels of a primary LRB for pupils with ASD. This consisted of one teacher and two LSAs.

The LRB at Cyfarthfa High School, as a provision meeting the needs of pupils with complex ASD, had a staffing compliment of one teacher and three LSAs.

It is proposed that these arrangements remain in place as they are in line with the ratios shown to be effective during the pilot and are in line with other similar provisions where applicable.

Finance

The revenue funding required to run an LRB class was reviewed by the Schools Budget Forum in consultation with Headteachers of all LRBs across the LA. Following this review Council approved an increase to funding LRB classes from April 2024.

Funding will be provided for the following staff:

Dowlais Primary Foundation Phase ASD LRB

1 Teacher and 2 LSAs including 10% HLTA allowance for Teacher's PPA cover (Up to 8 pupils)

An additional LSA will be funded (for 9 or 10 pupils)

Cyfarthfa High KS 3 /4 ASD LRB

1 Teacher and 2 LSAs including 10% HLTA allowance for Teacher's PPA cover (Up to 6 pupils)

An additional LSA will be funded (for 7 or 8 pupils)

The funding model for both classes also includes allowances for staff cover for training, PPA backfill for LSA/HLTA, SLT / ALNCo time, DRA cover, and classroom equipment/supplies. Staff sickness cover and R&M claims are managed centrally by the local authority.

The required budget to fund the LRB classes has been secured within the Council's revenue budget

Capital Project

Dowlais Primary School received alteration, and refurbishment, works to form a two classroom LRB wing with access to its own WC areas. As well as the refurbishment of two classrooms, two sensory rooms were created. New external doors were created giving direct access to a safe courtyard area for outdoor play. The outdoor play area was made level and received artificial grass ground cover for safety. These works were funded by the LA.

Cyfarthfa High School underwent internal alterations to create a dedicated LRB wing within the existing school footprint. The LRB wing was reconfigured so that it would have direct access to their own WC facilities, fobbed double doors to create a safe space for pupils. There was also work undertaken in the main building to accommodate those pupils/teachers that had been displaced from the newly established LRB wing. These works were funded by the LA.

Learner Travel Arrangements

Under these proposals there are no plans to change the Council's policy on the transport of children to and from schools.

Pupils with ALN, disability and/or a diagnosed medical condition who are unable to walk to their nearest suitable school due to their ALN, disability and/or medical condition may be entitled to transport subject to an individual needs assessment which will be undertaken by the LA in liaison with other appropriate agencies, including Health.

All transport for pupils with ALN, a disability and/or a diagnosed medical condition will be subject to regular review, and the specific period of review will be determined in each case by the LA and will be at least annually.

It is the responsibility of the pupil's parent/carer to inform the local authority of any changes to the pupil's needs and/or medical condition so that the ongoing requirement for transport can be reviewed.

School Transport

Home to school transport will be provided for children who are allocated a place in the ASD LRBs by the ALN Panel if either:

- i. The distance from home to school is at least 2 or 3 miles, or
- ii. The distance from home to school is less than 2 or 3 miles but the pupil has been assessed by ALN panel as being unable to walk to school due to their ALN, disability and/or medical condition.

Integrated Impact Assessment

An initial Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been carried out as part of this consultation and is available upon request. The IIA will be updated during the consultation in response to feedback received and will be published as part of the consultation report.

Key Dates

The feedback from this consultation will be collated and summarised and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet. The consultation report will be available for everybody to view on the Council website. Copies can also be obtained on request by using the contact details within this document.

There are a number of further stages that the Council have to go through before a final decision is made. These stages are set out below:

Timescale	Statutory Process
11 th November 2024	Consultation Document published
22 nd December 2024	Consultation closing date for receipt of comments / points of view on the proposal
23 rd January 2025	Publication of Consultation Report
05 th February 2025	
07 th February 2025	Publish Statutory Notice <i>If approved, the statutory notice will be published on the Council's website and posted in the named school. Copies of the notice will be made available to the relevant school to distribute to pupils, parents/carers and members of staff</i>
07 th February 2025 – 06 th March 2025	28-day Objection Period
02 nd April 2025	Cabinet Decision to determine statutory proposal
03 rd April 2025	Publication of Cabinet Decision
28 th April 2025	Formally establish ASD LRB classes

Please note that the above proposed timetable may be subject to change.

Consultation period

The consultation period for this proposal starts on **Monday 11th November 2024** and ends on **Sunday 22nd December 2024**.

Following the consultation period, a full report will be published on the Council's website. Hard copies of the report will also be available on request. The report will summarise the response provided by consultees during the consultation period and provide the Council's response to these responses.

The Council's Cabinet will consider the consultation report and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposals.

If the Cabinet decides to continue with the proposals, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council must publish a statutory notice.

Statutory Notice

The statutory notice would be published on Merthyr Tydfil Council's website and posted at or near the main entrance of the school named as part of the consultation process. Copies of the notice would be made available to Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School to distribute to pupils, parents/carers, and staff members (the school may also distribute the notice by email). The notice will set out the details of the proposals and invite anyone who wishes to object to do so in writing within the period specified.

Determination of the proposals

The Cabinet will determine the proposals. Cabinet may decide to approve, reject or approve the proposals with modifications. In doing so, Cabinet will take into account any statutory objections that it has received.

Decision Notification

Following determination of proposals all interested parties will be informed of the decision which will be published electronically on Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's website.

Establishment of a Foundation Phase Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Learning Resource Base (LRB) at Dowlais Primary School and a Key Stage 3/4 Complex ASD LRB at Cyfarthfa High School.

Your views matter, please tell us what you think about the proposals by:

- completing the online response form at MTCBC Consultation Page
- answering the consultation questions and adding your points of view on this form.
- please return the form to the free post address at the bottom of the form.

Please note that all comments must contain the full name and full postal address of the person making the comments.

The closing date for responses to this consultation is 22nd December 2024.

Unfortunately no responses received after this date can be considered by the Council.

Consultation responses will not be counted as objections to the proposals, although considered by Cabinet when making its decision.

Objections can only be registered following publication of a **statutory notice**.

Please tell us whether you are responding as:

		✓	Name of School
1.	Parent		
2.	Pupil		
3.	Governor		
4.	Member of staff		
5.	Local resident		
6.	Other (please specify)		

Questions

1. Do you support the formal establishment of a Foundation Phase Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Learning Resource Base (LRB) at Dowlais Primary School?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you support or do not support the proposal, then please explain why.

2. Do you have any other comments?

3. Do you support the formal establishment of a Key Stage 3/4 Complex Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Learning Resource Base (LRB) at Cyfarthfa High School?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you support or do not support the proposal, then please explain why.

4. Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for your comments.

Please tick the box below if you wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report.

If you wish to be notified of the publication of the consultation report, please supply your contact details:

Your Name:.....

Address:
.....

Postcode:

Email Address:

Date:

Any responses received can be requested under the Freedom of Information Act and may have to be made public. However, any information that would identify an individual such as name, email address and postal address would be removed.

ASD LRB Consultations
Director of Education
Learning Department
Civic Centre
Castle Street
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8AN

**Please return this form to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough
Council no later than Sunday 22nd December 2024**

Notes on Consultation Document

About You

In order to ensure we capture the views and lived experiences of all protected characteristic groups, it would be really helpful if you could answer the following questions about yourself. These questions are optional.

All answers remain totally anonymous and are purely for data collection purposes. By completing all/some of the questions it gives us a better understanding of who has completed the questionnaire as we want to hear from different people.

15. WHICH WARD DO YOU LIVE IN?

- ☐ Aberfan/Merthyr Vale
- ☐ Bedlinog/Trelewis
- ☐ Cyfarthfa
- ☐ Dowlais/Pant
- ☐ Gurnos
- ☐ Park
- ☐ Penydarren
- ☐ Plymouth
- ☐ Town
- ☐ Treharris
- ☐ Vaynor
- ☐ I don't live in Merthyr Tydfil

16. I AM

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe Please describe:

17. WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR GENDER?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Prefer to self-describe. Please describe:

18. AGE

☐ 16-25

☐ 26-39

☐ 40-49

☐ 50-65

☐ 66-75

☐ 76-85

☐ 86-95

☐ 96+

☐ Prefer not to say

19. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

☐ Asexual

☐ Bisexual

☐ Gay or Lesbian

☐ Heterosexual

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Please describe:

20. MARITAL STATUS

☐ Civil Partnership or Married

☐ Living with a Partner

☐ Single

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Separated

☐ Divorced

☐ Widowed

☐ Please describe:

21. DISABILITY

- ☐ I am not disabled
- ☐ Hearing Impaired
- ☐ Learning Difficulties
- ☐ Physical/Mobility Impaired
- ☐ Speech Impaired
- ☐ Visually Impaired
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Please describe:

22. MAIN LANGUAGE

- ☐ English
- ☐ Welsh
- ☐ British Sign Language (BSL)
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Please describe

23. PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

- ☐ Pregnant
- ☐ Maternity
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Prefer not to say

24. WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC GROUP:

- ☐ WHITE - Welsh
- ☐ WHITE - English
- ☐ WHITE - Scottish
- ☐ WHITE - Northern Irish
- ☐ WHITE - British
- ☐ WHITE - Irish
- ☐ WHITE - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ☐ WHITE - Other background

- ☐ MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS - White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS - White and Black African
- ☐ MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS - White and Asian
- ☐ MIXED/MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS - Other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background
- ☐ ASIAN/ASIAN BRITISH - Indian
- ☐ ASIAN/ASIAN BRITISH - Pakistani
- ☐ ASIAN/ASIAN BRITISH - Other Asian background
- ☐ BLACK /AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN/BLACK BRITISH - African
- ☐ BLACK /AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN/BLACK BRITISH - Caribbean
- ☐ BLACK /AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN/BLACK BRITISH - Other background
- ☐ OTHER ETHNIC GROUP - Arab
- ☐ OTHER ETHNIC GROUP - Other ethnic background
- ☐ If you answered 'Other', please describe:

25. RELIGION OR BELIEF

- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Humanist
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ No Religion
- ☐ Please describe: