

## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
<b>Report Subject</b>	Expansion of Specialist Education Provision
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks to inform Cabinet of the responses from the Statutory Objection period (“the Objection Report”), under section 49 of ‘The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, School Organisation Code’ for expansion of inhouse specialist education provision at Ysgol Pen Coch primary special school, Flint to include the management of the centre Canolfan Enfys which is currently under the management of the Pupil Referral Unit Plas Derwen.

Cabinet is requested to determine on the Statutory Proposals put forward for the expansion of inhouse specialist education provision at Ysgol Pen Coch primary special school, Flint, to include the management of the centre Canolfan Enfys.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet is requested to consider the responses from the Statutory Objection period for expansion of inhouse specialist education at Ysgol Pen Coch primary special school, Flint, to include the management of the centre Canolfan Enfys and make a final determination on the proposal.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>EXPLAINING THE EXPANSION OF SPECIALIST EDUCATION PROVISION</b>
1.01	The Council is experiencing challenges in meeting its statutory duties with regards to educational provision for children with additional learning needs due a lack of specialist placements both inhouse and externally. Since the pandemic, there has been a rise in the number of children for whom mainstream schools are unable to meet their presenting needs.
1.02	The Council has a range of specialist provision which includes county Resource Bases in mainstream schools which allows for those with a higher level of need to be co-educated in designated settings. These cater for needs such as social communication, hearing impairment and behaviour/social emotional difficulties. Apart from two secondary Resources for dyslexia and hearing impairment, our Resource provision is full or oversubscribed.
1.03	The Council also has two specialist schools namely Ysgol Pen Coch (primary) and Ysgol Maes Hyfryd (secondary) which cater for those children with more severe learning difficulties, along with the recently newly built Plas Derwen Pupil Referral Unit. Both specialist schools are at capacity resulting in the need to seek external placements known as out of county (OOC) provision.
1.04	A review of the presenting need indicates that investment in the primary specialist sector at Ysgol Pen Coch is a priority at this time pending any future decisions around further significant investment in the Council's specialist educational provision. The school is currently at capacity with 98 learners on roll. The number of places the school can accommodate is subject to need and dependent on the nature of the learners' needs and accommodation requirements, e.g., specialist equipment and staffing support requirements. The existing building cannot cater for any additional learners. This, alongside the lack of OOC provision has led to a waiting list for specialist placements.
1.05	Following the statutory inspection of Plas Derwen Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), Estyn questioned the suitability of the foundation phase centre Canolfan Enfys sitting under the registration and management of the portfolio PRU and tasked the Council with seeking alternative arrangements.
1.06	Canolfan Enfys caters for 30 children aged 3 to 7 with a range of complex needs, the majority of which transfer to Ysgol Pen Coch. Prior to 2012, the Centre had been an assessment facility under the management of Ysgol Pen Coch. However, operational challenges at the time resulted in the provision coming under the management of the Council. Having considered the options, the preference is to re-register the provision with Ysgol Pen Coch given the similarities in presenting needs and the Governing Body has been approached to consider this proposal.
1.07	On 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023 Cabinet approved to proceed to issue a statutory notice for an increase in pupil places at Ysgol Pen Coch, Flint. Expansion

	of places at this point will include for taking over management of Canolfyn Enfys, increasing the current capacity of Ysgol Pen Coch from 98 to 128 from 1 April 2025.
1.08	Statutory consultation commenced on 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 and ended on 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2024. 80 responses were received including a formal response from Estyn and school pupil council. 91% of responders supported the proposal.
1.09	The Cabinet Report and consultation responses for Ysgol Pen Coch were considered by Cabinet on 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2024. The consultation report was published on 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2024.
1.10	Cabinet determined that Statutory Notices be issued for the proposal. These were published on 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 and ran until 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2024.
1.11	Under the School Organisational Code the Statutory Proposals for Ysgol Pen Coch are to be determined by the Council's Cabinet, rather than Welsh Ministers.  Objections must be conscientiously considered alongside the arguments, provided by other stakeholders in respect of the proposals and in light of the following factors:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality and Standards in Education</li> <li>- Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools</li> <li>- Resourcing of education and other financial implications</li> <li>- Other general factors</li> </ul>
1.12	<b>Objection Period</b>  During the objection period the Council received no objections for the expansion of Ysgol Pen Coch.
1.13	Subject to Cabinet approval on determination for the proposal to enlarge Ysgol Pen Coch, a decision letter will be issued.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	A number of options for expanding the provision at Ysgol Pen Coch are still under consideration including the addition of building extensions and refurbishment of other facilities within the Education & Youth Portfolio. All options are being fully considered and further information will be provided to Cabinet as part of any future consultation process.

2.02	<p>There are associated revenue costs attached to the proposal and these are outlined below. These have been captured within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS):</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="323 271 1372 483"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="323 271 676 376">Revenue Pressure</th> <th data-bbox="676 271 1029 376">Estimated full year cost</th> <th data-bbox="1029 271 1372 376">Implementation date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="323 376 676 483">Canolfan Enfys reregistration</td> <td data-bbox="676 376 1029 483">£0.194m</td> <td data-bbox="1029 376 1372 483">Summer Term 2025</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Revenue Pressure	Estimated full year cost	Implementation date	Canolfan Enfys reregistration	£0.194m	Summer Term 2025
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2.03	<p>An additional financial consideration is that of transport costs. The Council provides transport for children who are deemed to required specialist provision. Pupils accessing Canolfan Enfys already access transport and this arrangement will not change under this proposal. Any additional pupils moving from mainstream provision will be entitled to transport.</p>						

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>												
3.01	<p>All projects and consultations within the school modernisation programme are managed using a risk register. Risks are managed accordingly, and financial risks are managed through a programme contingency. Any high-level risk which cannot be managed with the projects/programme will be incorporated into the risk register for the Education and Youth Portfolio.</p>												
3.02	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="323 1155 1372 1962"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="323 1155 762 1211">Ways of Working Principle</th> <th data-bbox="762 1155 1372 1211">Impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="323 1211 762 1379">Long-term</td> <td data-bbox="762 1211 1372 1379">Positive - Ensures that high quality specialist education places are available to communities to meet demand of specialist educational</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="323 1379 762 1525">Prevention</td> <td data-bbox="762 1379 1372 1525">Positive - preventing inappropriate placements for the most vulnerable learners.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="323 1525 762 1671">Integration</td> <td data-bbox="762 1525 1372 1671">Positive – the additional specialist education places will integrate children from varying backgrounds.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="323 1671 762 1816">Collaboration</td> <td data-bbox="762 1671 1372 1816">Positive – partnership arrangements inhouse and with external parties including school governing bodies.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="323 1816 762 1962">Involvement</td> <td data-bbox="762 1816 1372 1962">Positive - The proposed projects involves a range of stakeholders to enable its delivery.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ways of Working Principle	Impact	Long-term	Positive - Ensures that high quality specialist education places are available to communities to meet demand of specialist educational	Prevention	Positive - preventing inappropriate placements for the most vulnerable learners.	Integration	Positive – the additional specialist education places will integrate children from varying backgrounds.	Collaboration	Positive – partnership arrangements inhouse and with external parties including school governing bodies.	Involvement	Positive - The proposed projects involves a range of stakeholders to enable its delivery.
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3.03	<p>Well-being Principle Impacts</p> <p>Against the seven well-being goals of the Act, the potential impact of the</p>												

report and its recommendations would be evaluated as follows:-

Well-being Principle	Impact
Prosperous Wales	Positive - Ensuring our schools are in the right place and of the right type.
Resilient Wales	Positive - Use of sustainable and recycled materials during construction, more energy efficient, potential reduction in carbon
Healthier Wales	Positive - Improved physical infrastructure, facilities and services which positively impact on the wellbeing of the school and its community.
More Equal Wales	Positive - Assessments are already embedded in school culture. Opening up more specialist education places to those who need them.
Cohesive Wales	Positive - School network widens its number of places for specialist provision through delivery of facilities of the right type in the right place and services are appropriately aligned.
Vibrant Wales	Positive - Enables facilities and services to work together to improve, both curricular, extra-curricular and community use of school buildings.
Globally Responsible Wales	Positive - Delivers more sustainable services and added benefits for the community.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	Determination on statutory proposals is the responsibility of Cabinet.
4.02	Subject to Cabinet determination, no further consultations are required through the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, School Organisation Code by the School Modernisation Team. The Council must publish the Objection Report at the same time that the decision is issued.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Objection Report summarising the process and responses from the objection exercise.

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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>School Organisation Code – The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018</p> <p><a href="https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/schoolorganisation-code-second-edition.pdf">https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/schoolorganisation-code-second-edition.pdf</a></p>
6.02	<p>All documents related to the Statutory proposals including the Consultation Document, the Consultation report and the published Statutory Notices are available at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Schools/School-ModernisationRelated/Home.aspx">https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Schools/School-ModernisationRelated/Home.aspx</a></p>
6.03	<p>Canolfan Enfys Consultation Report</p> <p><a href="https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Schools/School-Modernisation-Related/Canolfan-Enfys.aspx">https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Schools/School-Modernisation-Related/Canolfan-Enfys.aspx</a></p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Jennie Williams, Senior Manager Planning and Provision</p> <p><b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704015</p> <p><b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:jennie.williams@flintshire.gov.uk">jennie.williams@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p><b>School Organisation Code</b> – The new School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 makes Local Authorities responsible (rather than the Welsh Ministers prior to October 2018) for the determination of most statutory school organisation proposals that receive objections.</p>