



STATUTORY CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

New Additional Learning Provision – Ysgol Aberconwy

06.03.20 – 17.04.20



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Foreword

Conwy County Borough Council is responding to an increasing need for additional learning provision for children and young people in Conwy. A proposal to open new additional learning provision requires a period of statutory consultation in accordance with **Section 2.3** of the School Organisation Code, 2018.

At their meeting on 25th February 2020, the Cabinet resolved to carry out this consultation in respect of a proposal to open new additional learning provision at Ysgol Aberconwy.

The statutory consultation will take place between **6th March 2020** and **1.00 p.m. on 17th April 2020**, and is based on the proposal to open new additional learning provision for secondary age pupils across Conwy with autism and associated neurodevelopmental difficulties in Ysgol Aberconwy.

Conwy County Borough Council would like you to have the opportunity to put forward your views on the proposal and at the end of the consultation period we shall submit a report to the Cabinet of Conwy County Borough Council.

A copy of this document, and other background papers, are available on the Council's website: <http://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Resident/Education-and-Families/Education-Consultations/Education-Consultations.aspx>

PLEASE NOTE – any comments on this statutory consultation document should be sent to Education Services by 13:00 on 17th April 2020. Please see the relevant contact details later in this report.

We look forward to receiving your views.

Sincerely



Dr Lowri Brown

Head of Education Services

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Conwy has recently reviewed the profile of additional learning needs across Conwy, and the provision in place to meet this need, as part of the Local Authority's commitment to ensuring that there is adequate additional learning provision in place for Conwy learners.

This review highlighted that the area of additional need in which we have seen the most significant increase over the last 3 years is for learners with autism, and this is a priority for the Additional Learning Needs Service in terms of developing the continuum of support from school training and advisory support through to more specialist provision.

At present, there is some concern about the availability of appropriate educational opportunities, support and provision for this group of learners and the wider group of learners with complex neurodevelopmental difficulties associated with autism, including ADHD. While many children have access to successful and positive educational experiences, there are a growing number who are struggling to access mainstream provision as a result of their autism and related anxiety in the school setting.

Currently Conwy has resource provision for learners with autism in two Primary Schools, providing placements for 20-22 pupils, but there is no equivalent provision for secondary age learners.

We would like to be able to build on the existing provision available for learners aged 4-11 by developing secondary age provision. This resource provision will aim to provide enhanced support and provision for learners with autism and associated neurodevelopmental difficulties.

The School Organisation Code for Wales (2018) requires that when a Local Authority proposes to introduce new additional learning provision, statutory consultation is undertaken.

This is the case where the provision will be in a mainstream school but where the pupils who are admitted are in addition to the admission number of the school. The provision must also be recognised by the Local Authority as reserved for pupils with special educational needs/additional learning needs.

This document outlines the proposed changes and seeks the view of the community, potential users and other important stakeholders.

1.2 The proposal subject to this statutory consultation

That new additional learning provision is opened in Ysgol Aberconwy for secondary age learners across Conwy with autism and associated neurodevelopmental difficulties.

2. The Consultation

The consultation will be held between 6th March 2020 and 1.00 p.m. on 17th April 2020.

The consultation refers only to the proposal to open new additional learning provision for pupils with autism and associated neurodevelopmental difficulties.

2.1 Consultees

This Consultation Document will be distributed, in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, to the following consultees during the statutory consultation period:

Requirements of the Organisation Code 011/2018	Distributed to:
Parents (and where possible prospective parents), carers and guardians and staff members of schools affected by the proposals.	The Head Teacher of Ysgol Aberconwy for further distribution to parents, carers, guardians and members of staff. The Head Teachers of all other Conwy Secondary Schools, Ysgol Nant y Groes and Ysgol Ffordd Dyffryn for further distribution to parents, carers, and guardians
The maintaining or proposed maintaining authority for any school likely to be affected by the proposals.	Conwy County Borough Council is presenting the proposal
Any other local authority (including those in England, where appropriate) likely to be affected - including in the case of dedicated SEN provision any authority placing or likely to place pupils with SEN in it.	Denbighshire Council - modernisingeducation@denbighshire.gov.uk Gwynedd Council - ModerneiddioAddysg@gwynedd.llyw.cymru Ynys Mon Council - ysgolionmon@anglesey.gov.uk
The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any school likely to be affected is located.	Church in Wales St Asaph Diocesan Authority - rosalindwilliams@cinw.org.uk Bangor Diocesan Authority - anestgrayfrazer@churchinwales.org.uk Roman Catholic Diocese of Wrexham - communications@rcdwxm.org.uk
The governing body of any school which is the subject of the proposals	The Governing Body Ysgol Aberconwy
The Governing Body of any other schools which the proposer considers are likely to be affected by the proposals.	The Governing Bodies of all schools in Conwy
Welsh Ministers	Schoolsmanagementdivision3@gov.wales
Constituency and Regional Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals.	mandy.jones@assembly.wales Regional AM Mark.Isherwood@assembly.wales Regional AM Llyr.Gruffydd@assembly.wales Regional AM

	<p>Michelle.Brown@assembly.wales Regional AM</p> <p>Janet.Finch-Saunders@Assembly.Wales Constituency AM, Aberconwy</p> <p>Jack.Sargeant@assembly.wales Constituency AM, Alyn and Deeside</p> <p>Sian.Gwenllian@assembly.wales Constituency AM, Arfon</p> <p>Ken.Skates@assembly.wales Constituency AM, Clwyd South</p> <p>Darren.Millar@assembly.wales Constituency AM, Clwyd West</p> <p>Hannah.Blythyn@assembly.wales Constituency AM, Delyn</p> <p>Ann.Jones@assembly.wales Constituency AM, Vale of Clwyd</p> <p>Lesley.Griffiths@assembly.wales Constituency AM, Wrexham</p> <p>rhun.apiorwerth@assembly.wales Constituency AM, Ynys Môn</p> <p>robin.millar.mp@parliament.uk MP, Aberconwy Constituency</p> <p>david.jones.mp@parliament.uk MP, Clwyd West Constituency</p>
Estyn	<p>Meilyr Rowlands – Education and Training in Wales Chief Inspector</p> <p>ymholiadau@estyn.llyw.cymru</p>
Teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff at any school which is the subject of the proposals.	<p>Unions –</p> <p>National Education union - john.owen@neu.org.uk,</p> <p>NAHT - cymru@naht.org.uk</p> <p>NASUWT - rc-wales-cymru@mail.nasuwt.org.uk</p> <p>UCAC - ucac@ucac.cymru</p> <p>UNISON – branchsecretary@unisonconwy.co.uk</p> <p>GMB – mark.jones@gmb.org.uk</p>
Regional Education Consortium	<p>Arwyn Thomas – Chief Officer GwE</p> <p>arwynthomas@gwegogledd.cymru</p>
Police and Crime Commissioner	<p>Arfon Jones – North Wales Police Commissioner</p> <p>OPCC@nthwales.pnn.police.uk</p>
Any community or town council for the area served by the school which is the subject of this proposal.	<p>Conwy Town Council -</p> <p>towncouncil@conwy.gov.uk</p>
Local Communities First Partnership	<p>Marianne Jackson, Head of Community Development Service -</p> <p>marianne.jackson@conwy.gov.uk</p>
Relevant Health Bodies with an interest.	<p>Dr Hamilton Grantham – Consultant Community Paediatrician, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board - Hamilton.Grantham@wales.nhs.uk</p> <p>Sara Harvey, CAMHS - ASDinfo@WLGA.gov.uk</p> <p>Liz McKinney and Joy Rettie, Speech and Language Therapy Service</p>
Other	<p>All Social Care and Education staff</p>

The consultation document will be published on the Conwy County Borough Council website at: www.conwy.gov.uk/educationconsultations

2.2 Meetings

During the consultation period, Conwy ALN Officers will hold “drop-in” sessions to discuss the proposals with teaching and support staff, parents and carers, and members of the public.

Comments received during this statutory consultation period will be considered by the Cabinet before Conwy County Borough Council decide whether or not to continue with the proposal, and whether a Statutory Notice on the proposal should be published.

2.3 Consultation with children and young people

Arrangements will also be made to obtain the views of the children and young people attending Ysgol Aberconwy and pupils currently accessing other additional learning provision in Conwy/prospective pupils. This will be done through the school’s Council and designated session(s) to be arranged with the pupils at Ysgol Aberconwy/prospective pupils.

2.4 Comments: contact address and deadline

You can respond to this consultation by completing the response form (*Appendix A*) at the end of this document. Please address all responses to:

E-mail: School.Modernisation@conwy.gov.uk

Post: Education Services

PO Box 1

Conwy

LL30 9GN

Note – All responses, whether by post or by e-mail, must arrive at Education Services by no later than **13:00** on **17.04.20**

3. Background To The Proposal

3.1 Pupil number forecasts

As described above, the number of pupils with autism in Conwy has increased over the past 3 years.

	2017	2018	2019
Total Pupil Numbers	15870	15802	15803
Numbers of pupils with autism	327	380	454
Percentage of total population	2.1%	2.4%	2.9%
Welsh Average	1.5%	1.6%	1.8%

With this increase in overall numbers, there has been a simultaneous increase in pupils with autism or other complex neurodevelopmental difficulties who are experiencing difficulties in successfully accessing their mainstream education placements. Reasons for this need to be considered on an individual basis, but examples include anxiety associated with the physical school environment, social relationships within the school setting, difficulties in transitioning between home and school, and anxiety around academic demands and pressures.

3.2 Current Local Authority Provision

In response to the identified need for provision for this group of learners, the Local Authority has already established the following designated support and provision for children with autism:

- ASD Outreach Team

The ASD Outreach Service comprises of a team of Specialist Teaching Assistants who can provide support and advice to mainstream schools regarding autism. The Service provides support and advice for all teaching and support staff, helping to set appropriate targets/objectives and advising on appropriate environmental adjustments and specific interventions that will help learners to achieve these objectives.

- Foundation Phase ASD Resource Class

For children aged 4-7 who have difficulties associated with ASD which are impacting significantly on their access to a mainstream environment, there is a Specialist ASD Resource Class based at Ysgol Nant y Groes. This Class is designed to offer provision for a maximum of ten children. Pupils attend the Resource Class on a full time basis, but remain registered at their home, mainstream school.

- Key Stage 2 ASD Resource Class

Similarly, there is a Specialist Resource Class for children aged 7-11 situated at Ysgol Ffordd Dyffryn which caters for a maximum of twelve children, all of whom attend full time but remain registered at their home school. Children attending the Key Stage 2 Resource Class are offered as much supported inclusion in to mainstream lessons as is possible and appropriate for their individual needs.

We would now like to build on the existing provision with this proposal to open new provision in Ysgol Aberconwy High School. This will be the first stage in developing support and provision for this group of learners across the education continuum, from mainstream inclusion to specialist support/placements.

3.3 Pupil number forecasts and capacity at Ysgol Aberconwy

As part of the considerations when looking to establish the host school for this provision, it was considered whether Ysgol Aberconwy had the physical capacity to host this resource provision both now and in to the future. The capacity of the school in September 2019 was 1241 pupils, with actual pupil numbers being 826. This means that there are currently 415 unfilled pupil places in the school, leaving adequate capacity for the resource provision to be located in the school.

Current pupil forecasts for the next 5 years are as follows, and demonstrate ongoing capacity:

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
800	811	848	859	867

3.4 Current School Provision (Ysgol Aberconwy)

A further driver in considering Ysgol Aberconwy as the host school for the new provision, is that school has already set up an internal centre for pupils with autism, 'Pontio'. Information provided to families about the centre explains that their "aim is to ensure that every pupil feels supported and meets or exceeds their full potential." Staff working with pupils accessing the centre aim to raise their self-esteem and self-confidence and develop "effective personal management skills". Ultimately their goal is to use the centre as a nurturing environment which is integral to the school as a whole and an opportunity to support pupils in being able to access mainstream education successfully. This reflects the Local Authority's vision for inclusion and the motivation behind developing County wide provision, and therefore offers an opportunity to build on this existing good practice and provision.

Ysgol Aberconwy describe how their existing provision follows these six principles of nurture:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

As Pontio operates presently, a team of teachers are timetabled to teach specialist subjects. This enables pupils to maintain links with mainstream teachers and classroom environments, and teachers use the opportunity to build on relationships and to help to improve pupils' engagement with their education.

This is a model we would seek to continue and develop through the introduction of a Local Authority funded, county wide provision, with opportunities for inclusion in to mainstream classes wherever possible and appropriate, but with the additional opportunity for specialist teachers to visit the resource so that access to as full, wide and varied curriculum as possible is maintained.

Pontio is already set up to offer a separate registration period, providing a quieter small group transition in to school each morning, the opportunity to plan for the day ahead and to “discuss any major changes or concerns at the start of the day”. The centre is also able to provide break time and lunch club, offering a safe and familiar place for unstructured times which are known to be a time of particular difficulty for many learners with neurodevelopmental difficulties.

It is also already organised in to different learning zones, including a craft area and sensory room, which we plan to work with the school and specialist advisory services (e.g. Occupational Therapy) to further equip and resource.

The school has a wider, positive approach to inclusion and nurture, which extends beyond their internal provision. The most recent Estyn report (2018) states that: “Ysgol Aberconwy’s inclusive, supportive and nurturing ethos has a significant beneficial impact on pupils’ wellbeing and personal development”.

3.5 Quality & Standards in Education

There is felt to be a need to develop this provision, in order to ensure that all learners with autism/associated complex neurodevelopmental difficulties have access to high quality and appropriate education opportunities. At present, there is some very good practice evidenced in mainstream inclusion, and excellent provision for learners with autism and learning disability in Ysgol y Gogarth. However, the need has been identified for more specialist provision for learners with autism who do not have a learning disability, but who are experiencing significant difficulty accessing the mainstream curriculum in its entirety.

Currently, there are increasing numbers of pupils requiring bespoke packages of support and provision to try and enable them to access positive educational experiences. This includes home tuition, 1-1 teaching, and alternative education

placements. None of these options are felt to be sustainable or specifically tailored and responsive to the identified growing need, neither do they support the Local Authority's commitment to, and vision for, an inclusive education system.

The Local Authority believes that this proposal will be the first step in developing high quality, specialist provision across all key stages of education, with a clear remit for inclusion in to mainstream education wherever possible, and enabling pupils to have access to a full and varied curriculum. The provision will help support learners to develop the skills and confidence for transition out of school and on to further education opportunities in line with their aspirations and interests.

It will also help to ensure that Conwy learners are educated in Conwy, maintaining links to their communities and peer groups, and ensuring that they feel a valued part of the school community and by the County as a whole.

4. Details of the Proposal

4.1 The Resource Provision

In developing additional learning provision in collaboration with young people and their families, we aim to develop a clearer and more consistent continuum of provision from pre-school through to Key Stage 4, and from advisory support to specialist provision.

This proposal is part of wider aims to:

- Develop high quality, accredited provision for learners with autism and neurodevelopmental difficulties, which responds to increasing need.
- Provide appropriate settings/environment/resources to meet the need of this group of learners.
- Improve the confidence of families in provision for learners with autism, from mainstream inclusion through to specialist provision.
- Build on the skills and knowledge of existing staff across pre-school, mainstream and resource provision (drawing on research, recognised/ accredited training and current good practice).

The proposal to open new additional learning provision for around 16 pupils, will include the possible coordination of two groups within the provision:

- Group 1: Autism and neurodevelopmental difficulties – anxiety around mainstream presenting through more challenging behaviours; and
- Group 2: autism and neurodevelopmental difficulties – anxiety around mainstream presenting through school refusal/difficulties transitioning.

4.2 Transport arrangements

Pupils attending the resource will receive taxi/mini bus transport from the Local Authority to the school. Wherever possible, this will be shared transport, and it is estimated that no more than 4/5 taxis should be required if the provision was full to capacity. The impact on traffic to the site should therefore be minimal.

4.3 Staffing

It is proposed that the staffing for the provision will be as follows/equivalent to:

For every 8 pupils there will be one full time teacher, 1 Level 3/4 Teaching Assistant and 2 Level 1 Teaching Assistants.

4.4 Equality Impact Assessment

A full Equality Impact Assessment, including a Community Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of this statutory consultation period. The full assessment will be included within the consultation report which will follow this consultation period.

4.5 Benefits and disadvantages

There are no perceived disadvantages to developing this additional learning provision in response to identified increasing need.

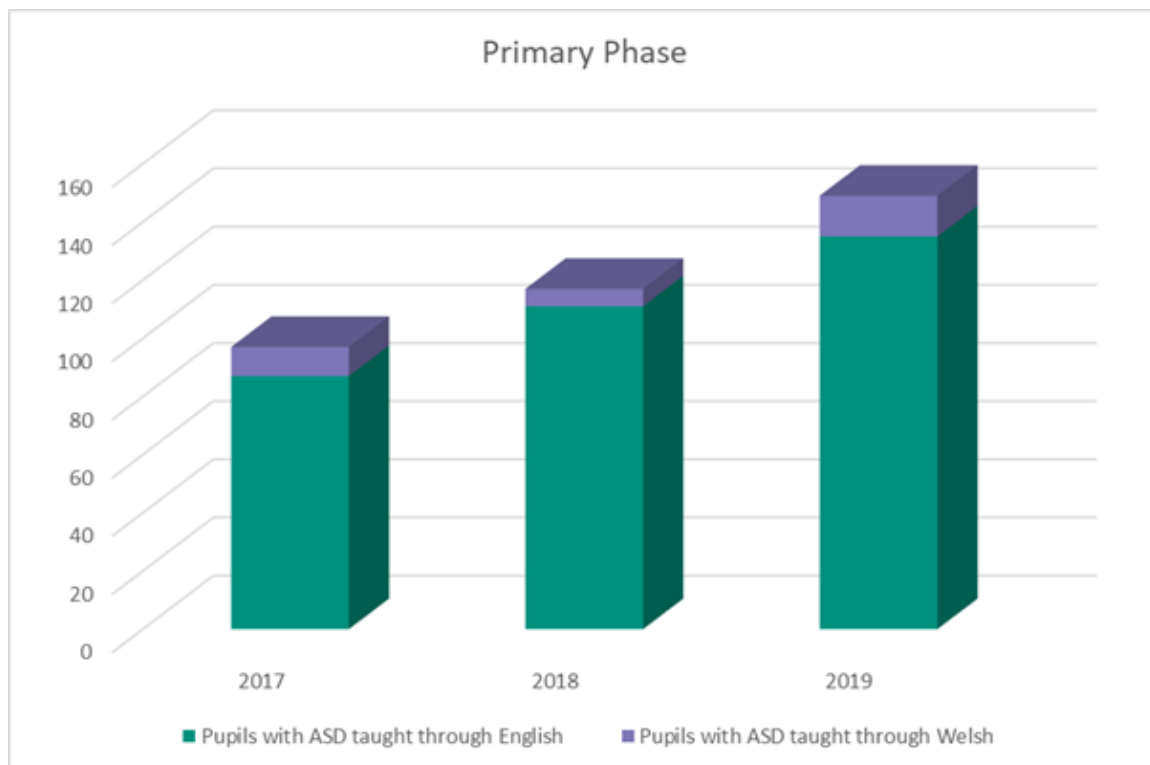
The perceived benefits are that learners in Conwy identified as requiring this enhanced/specialist provision will have access to it across both Primary and Secondary education.

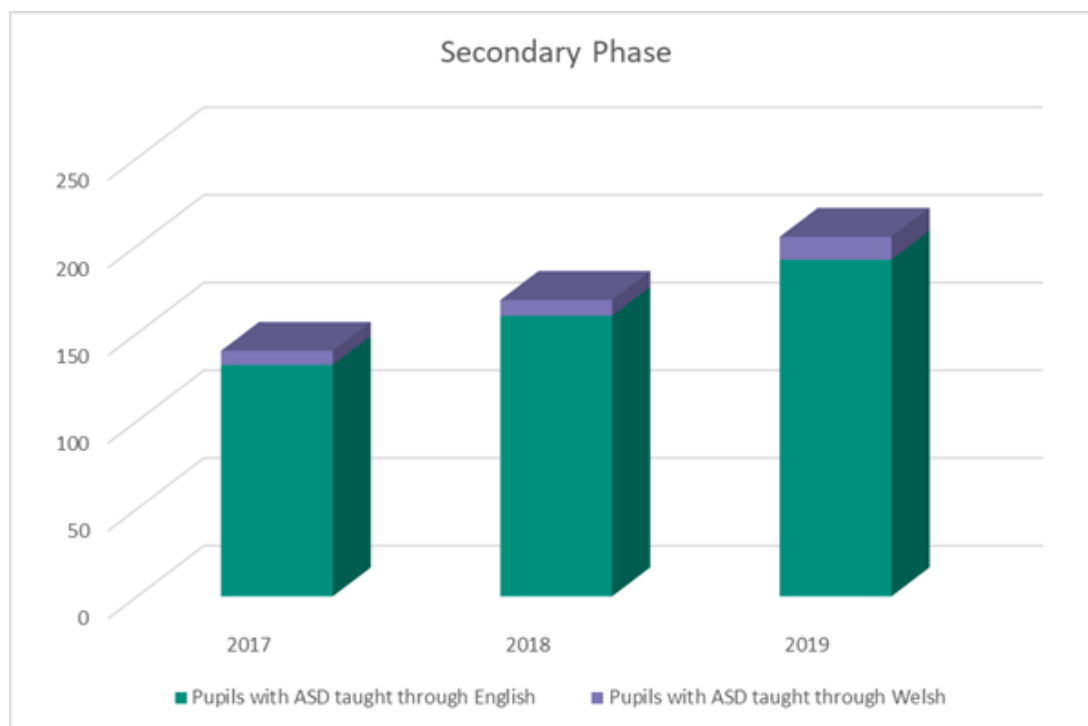
Developing provision within Conwy means that pupils will not potentially need to access out of county provision.

4.6 Welsh Medium Provision

In preparing for this proposal we have considered the need for provision through the medium of both English and Welsh. This proposal is the first stage of a longer term aim to develop and extend the provision available for Conwy learners, with each stage being based on need and ensuring that access to provision is equitable for all learners.

The breakdown of learners with autism currently attending Welsh or English medium schools is as follows:





While Ysgol Aberconwy is an English medium school, Estyn report that “There is a well co-ordinated approach to developing pupils’ knowledge and understanding of Welsh language and culture. Provision for Welsh second language is strong at key stage 3 and key stage 4. The school provides valuable opportunities for Welsh speaking pupils to maintain and develop their language skills through following a Welsh first language course in key stage 4. In technology lessons, a few Welsh speaking pupils use both Welsh and English when completing their project work and discussing their ideas”. We would seek to draw on this strength within the school for learners attending the provision in the first instance, while simultaneously developing proposals for the extension and development of Welsh medium provision.

5. What alternatives have been considered?

5.1 Alternative 1 – Do nothing

The concern around not developing secondary age provision to meet the increasing need in this area is that other available education opportunities may not be appropriate for this group of learners and desired outcomes for individual pupils not achieved. The Local Authority would not be responding to its duty to provide appropriate education for all learners.

5.2 Alternative 2 – Open new additional learning provision

The Local Authority will be able to safely meet its statutory duties in terms of the provision of appropriate education, ensure improved long term outcomes for learners, and maintain placements for Conwy children successfully and positively in Conwy schools.

Should any consultees wish to offer any other alternative proposal, they should do so using the form in Appendix A at the end of this document

6. Explanation of the Statutory Process

A period of pre-consultation has taken place with the Governing Body and Head Teacher of Ysgol Aberconwy, and information gathered from families about the current challenges to successful inclusion in mainstream education, prior to submission of a report requesting the permission of Cabinet to consult with key stakeholders in respect of the proposal to open new additional learning provision for learners with autism and associated neurodevelopmental difficulties.

This report was presented to Cabinet on 25th February, who supported the recommendation to hold a statutory consultation period, consulting on the above proposal and ensuring that the interests of all parties are considered and addressed.

This is the consultation document which details the background to the proposal to open new additional learning provision at Ysgol Aberconwy. The document will be published on **6th March 2020**, and responses can be received until **13:00 on 17th April 2020**. **At this stage, these responses will not be counted as objections, but comments.** If anyone wishes to object, they must do so following the publication of the statutory notice (should one be issued). During this consultation, responses may include comments or questions on any aspect of the proposal and suggest alternative options.

Following this statutory consultation period, a report will be submitted to the Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee and then Cabinet where a decision will be made whether to proceed with the proposal to open new additional learning provision in Ysgol Aberconwy. This consultation report will summarise the comments and

questions raised by consultees and will be published on the Council's website. All stakeholders, as listed above, will be informed that the consultation report is available.

If the Cabinet decides to proceed following consideration of the consultation report, the favoured option/proposal will have to be issued in the form of a statutory notice. The notice will be published on a school day and there will be an "objection period" of 28 days from when the proposal is published. Anyone can object to the proposals. The notice will be published on the Conwy Council website and in the main reception at Ysgol Aberconwy. Copies will also be sent to the schools to be distributed to pupils, parents, carers and guardians, staff and governors. Hard copies will also be available on request from Conwy Education Services.

After the objection period closes, the Council will publish a summary of the statutory objections and the Council's response to the objections in an "objection report". As above, all key stakeholders will be informed of the availability of this report and where it can be accessed.

The Council Cabinet will make the final decision about the objection report within 28 days of the end of the objection period. When the Cabinet has made its final decision, the decision will be put in writing along with reasons for the decision. The decision will be posted on the Council's website and all key stakeholders informed.

In some instances, following the Cabinet's final decision, it is possible for the following bodies to refer the proposal to the Welsh Ministers for their consideration:

- Another Local Authority affected by the proposal
- Appropriate religious body for any school affected
- Governing body of a voluntary or foundation school which is the subject of proposals
- Any Trust which holds land on behalf of a voluntary or foundation school which is the subject of proposal

The bodies which refer the proposal need to note the reason why they are of the opinion that the decision reached by the Local Authority is incorrect. The Welsh

Ministers will decide whether the proposals affect the bodies and whether they need to consider the proposals.