

**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUNDERLAND**

**NOTIFICATION OF STATUTORY PROPOSAL TO ALTER EXISTING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) PROVISION AT USWORTH COLLIERY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Local Authority Proposal**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that it is the intention of Sunderland City Council, City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland, SR1 3AA to:

- Increase the capacity of the existing SEN provision at Usworth Colliery Primary School from 12 places to 26 places with effect from 11th January 2024.

Usworth Colliery Primary School is a maintained primary school maintained by Sunderland City Council.

The expanded provision will be developed on the current Usworth Colliery Primary School site with pupils attending the unit expected to access resources both in the resourced unit and within the wider mainstream school offer.

**Reason for the Further Development of a Special Educational Needs Unit at Usworth Colliery Primary School**

The number of children who require additional support due to a special educational need has increased in Sunderland. More children are now attending mainstream schools who require significant additional interventions to support them in their school place. This at times can exceed what a mainstream school has the resources to offer.

There is an identified need to increase the range and quantity of high-quality SEN provisions in local areas. This ensures children for whom a mainstream school place is appropriate to them can continue to access that within their own locality while also ensuring schools have the correct resources to meet increasing demand from pupils with additional SEN needs.

Usworth Colliery Primary School currently operates a 12 place Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) provision. This provision is accessed by pupils with Educational Health and Care Plans that name the school as a suitable setting to meet the SEN needs of those pupils. The provision has been oversubscribed in recent years with greater capacity now needed. The expansion of the existing provision will allow children who require a greater level of support from within the locality to access an appropriate school place with bespoke support.

The proposal will ensure additional facilities are available to meet educational, sensory and nurture needs, provide access to specialist equipment (where required) and, by creating a local SEN offer, will reduce the time children for whom the provision is suitable for are required to travel to access a special school place.

The proposal would secure the following outcomes:

**Increased Capacity Within the Local SEN Sector**

The proposal will add an additional 14 primary school places to Sunderland's current SEN offer. Given the proposal aims to ensure SEN places are available in localities in the first instance it is

anticipated that children accessing provision would be from Washington with children from other planning areas accessing places as appropriate.

### **Increase Appropriateness of SEN Placements**

The ongoing diversification of the range of SEN provision in Sunderland will ensure that there are multiple levels of placements for local children. The creation of additional resourced units provides greater opportunity for those children who can thrive in a mainstream environment but who need additional support to do so, while those who require a special school place are more likely to be accommodated quicker due to the increased local capacity across the wider SEN sector.

### **Increased Efficiencies in Commissioning**

A consequence of increasing local access to SEN provision is that pupils do not have to travel as far to access central citywide or out of area provisions. Being able to provide local facilities therefore reduces commissioning costs such as home to school transport costs and the costs associated with out of area placements.

### **Effect on other Schools, Academies and Educational Institutions in the Area**

The proposal is anticipated to have positive implications for other schools, academies and educational institutions in the area.

Increased local ASD capacity will ensure that pupils are placed appropriately and that children, for whom it has been identified that a mainstream place is not appropriate, will not be retained in that setting due to lack of capacity in the SEN sector. This will ensure schools and academies can allocate resources more effectively and that school rolls are reflective of the provision and support an individual mainstream school can offer.

### **Project Costs**

The capital costs associated with the expansion of the school's existing ASD provision are contained within a wider project budget. The current estimate for development works is £0.35m.

### **Pupil Numbers and Admissions**

The unit will have the capacity to provide 26 places for local pupils. This represents an increase of 14 places. All pupils will be in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan that names Usworth Colliery Primary School as a suitable setting to meet their educational needs. Places will be allocated by Together for Children's SEN placement panel.

### **Displaced Pupils**

The proposal will not result in displaced pupils. It will ensure pupils who would ordinarily access a place at the provision are more likely to receive one (because of the increased capacity) or ensure that pupils already accessing the provision but who are required to travel from localities to do so can be accommodated at a setting that is more appropriately located.

Pupils accessing the additional ASD places will be those who have been identified by an Education, Health and Care Plan Placement Panel as requiring that provision. Mainstream

school placements will have been considered unsuitable to meet the needs of pupils. On that basis there is no displacement associated with the delivery of a SEN unit at Usworth Colliery Primary School.

### **Impact on the Community**

Wider positive impacts will come from the development of locality provision. Specifically, the ability for young people from Washington to access a site for an ASD placement that enables them to continue to attend a school place near their home without excessive travel.

### **Balance of Denominational Provision**

There will be no impact on the balance of denominational provision as the school does not have a religious character.

### **Special Educational Needs Provision (SEND)**

The proposal will add to the existing 12 place ASD unit at the school to deliver an addition 14 SEN places at Usworth Colliery Primary School. This provision will be for primary aged children with the majority who will attend the unit living in the Washington area. It responds to the need for additional ASD places in the city, the ambition to ensure there is appropriate local provision for pupils and utilises the expertise of Usworth Colliery Primary School in providing for this cohort.

### **Travel**

There would be significant decrease in car use because of these proposals. The delivery of locality sites will enable pupils to access provision nearer to their homes. This will reduce both the period spent travelling to and from provision and the costs associated with that travel.

### **Consultation**

An informal (pre-publication) consultation upon the proposals took place during the following dates:

- 18th September 2023 – 3rd November 2023

Consultees recommended in the relevant statutory guidance were consulted via a Consultation Document that was made widely available on the Council's website and was circulated to relevant consultees.

The consultation received 33 responses. Of these:

- 84% of responses agreed to the question 'Do you agree with the proposal to establish a specialist unit at Usworth Colliery Primary School for children aged 4 to 11 with additional

social, emotional, and mental health support requirements?

- 84% of responses agreed to the question 'Do you agree with the proposal to increase the number of specialist school places at Usworth Colliery Primary School for children aged 4 - 11 with ASD and/or social, emotional and mental health requirements?'

Following completion of the pre-publication consultation process on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, the Council has amended the proposed outcomes initially proposed within that consultation. The School and Council recognise that there has been an increase in the complexity of needs that children attending the existing provision at Usworth Colliery Primary School are currently presenting and subsequently those children have required greater levels of educational support, physical capacity and resource than the cohorts from recent years. Given the increased complexities demonstrated by new admissions the Council has amended its proposal from an increase to 36 SEN places at the school to an increase to 26 with the focus of provision now specifically on ASD as opposed to ASD or Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

This change reflects comments submitted during the pre-publication consultation and dialogue with the school in the period following the commencement of this process. The revised proposal will facilitate the ability to delivery greater levels of personal support to pupils in smaller class sizes while still supporting the development of enhanced local provision for pupils with SEN.

### **Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposal**

A copy of this proposal can be viewed on the Sunderland City Council website at

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/13038/School-organisation-consultations>

It can also be requested via:

E-mail: [alan.rowan@togetherforchildren.org.uk](mailto:alan.rowan@togetherforchildren.org.uk)

Post: Sufficiency and Capital Lead, Together for Children,

Within four weeks of the Publication Date below, any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending their written representations:

*By e-mail to:-*

[schoolorganisation@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@sunderland.gov.uk)

*Or by post to:-*

*Alan Rowan*

*Sufficiency and Capital Lead*

*Together for Children,*

*City Hall,*

*Plater Way,*

*Sunderland*

*SR1 3AA*

Signed: Patrick Melia,

Chief Executive,

Sunderland City Council.

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