

Agenda



Delegated Decisions - Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Date: Wednesday, 24 July 2019

To: Councillor G Giles

Item

Wards Affected

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | <u>Newport City Council Accessibility Strategy for Schools</u> (Pages 3 - 46) |
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Contact: Governance Team
Tel: 01633 656656
E-mail: Cabinet@newport.gov.uk
Date of Issue: 16th July 2019

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Report

Cabinet Member for Education & Skills

Part 1

Date: 23 July 2019

Subject Newport City Council Accessibility Strategy for Schools

Purpose To seek adoption, following public consultation, of Newport City Council's accessibility strategy for schools.

Author Education Business Development Officer / Education Service Manager

Ward All

Summary Schedule 10 of the Equality Act, 2010, directs that "*A local authority in England and Wales must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare... an accessibility strategy*".

In March 2018, the Children's Commissioner wrote to Chief Executives of Local Authorities in Wales announcing the publication of a follow-up report to Full Lives: Equal Access, first published in 2014. The 2018 report made recommendations for the development and publication of Local Authority Accessibility Strategies and school accessibility plans, and directed that accessibility strategies should be developed through consultation and published online.

To date, Newport City Council's strategy has been reactive; addressing individual needs as they are identified, through reasonable adjustments. The draft Accessibility Strategy 2018-2023 was developed with stakeholders and public consultation on the draft strategy was undertaken between 11th February and 8th April 2019, and a consultation report is attached.

The strategy sets out the vision, values and roles and responsibilities of the Local Authority and schools in respect of planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils. The document also identifies some objectives and priorities for action to ensure improvement is achieved during the timespan of the strategy.

Following consultation some minor amendments have been made to the strategy which are summarised below:

- The physical inclusion theme and objectives have been changed to include the aim to improve provision for pupils with sensory impairments
- Reference to the Strategic Equality Plan, 2020 is included
- Reference added to an annual progress report being created and progress being subject monitoring and governance of the Strategic Equality Group.

Proposal To approve the adoption of the Newport City Council Accessibility Strategy for Schools

Action by Chief Education Officer

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Strategic Director - People
- Chief Education Officer
- Head of Finance
- Head of Law & Regulation
- Head of People & Business Change

Signed

Background

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act, 2010, directs that “A local authority in England and Wales must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare... an accessibility strategy”. It goes on to describe an accessibility strategy as a strategy which:

- Increases the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in a school’s curriculum (inclusion)
- Improves the physical environment/facilities (physical access)
- Improves equality of access to information

In March 2018, the Children’s Commissioner wrote to Chief Executives of Local Authorities in Wales announcing the publication of a follow-up report to *Full Lives: Equal Access*, first published in 2014. The 2018 report made recommendations for the development and publication of Local Authority Accessibility Strategies and School Accessibility Plans including that:

- Accessibility Strategies should be published on council websites and School Accessibility Plans should be available online.
- Staff should know about the strategy/plans (therefore they should be publicised)
- Children and young people should be consulted in the preparation of accessibility strategies and plans

To date, Newport City Council’s strategy has been reactive; addressing individual needs as they are identified through reasonable adjustments. An Accessibility Strategy for Schools has not been developed or published. .

The Council committed to the development of an accessibility strategy for schools in the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 under Equality Objective 3, Improving Access to Services (action 2). It will contribute to the delivery of Newport’s well-being objectives:

1. To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.
2. To promote economic growth and regeneration while protecting the environment.
3. To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient.
4. To build cohesive and sustainable communities.

Current Position

Newport City Council’s draft Accessibility Strategy for Schools, 2018-2023, was developed following a stakeholder workshop held at GAVO HQ on 25th June 2018. It was then subject to public consultation between 11th February and 8th April 2019. The draft strategy was revised to take account of the comments and feedback received during this consultation.

The strategy sets a definition of accessibility as being ‘the removal of barriers to learning, so that all children and young people are able to achieve their potential in a socially, physically and emotionally inclusive environment’.

The strategy sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Local Authority and schools in improving accessibility to the curriculum, our school buildings, and to information. The strategy sets objectives for improvement under three themes and provides an action plan to show how the council will deliver improvement over the next five years.

Consultation process and responses

The draft Accessibility Strategy for Schools was made available on the council’s website, together with a children’s version and a consultation response form.

An e-mail explaining how to access the relevant documents and take part in the consultation exercise was sent to all concerned stakeholders including:

- All Newport maintained schools and nursery schools
- Trustees of schools

- Newport Access Group
- Public Services Board
- Early Years and Childcare
- Aneurin Bevan Health Board
- Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
- Serennu Children's Centre
- Teaching Unions

The consultation remained live for eight weeks during which time members of the public were able to comment on the proposed strategy. 9 responses were received during the consultation period, 8 of which responded to the questions asked on the response form. Of these 8 responses, 7 supported the adoption of the strategy. 1 respondent stated that they did not support the adoption of the strategy, but agreed that the adoption of the strategy would improve the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums. Once the Accessibility Strategy for Schools is approved it will be formally published on the council's web pages and a link will be sent to all relevant stakeholders and staff.

Financial Implications

The Accessibility Strategy for Schools contains an action plan to deliver improvements to the accessibility of our school buildings. A number of the activities within the action plan will have a funding requirement, the actual cost of which is not currently known. The action plan is informed by a self-assessment survey completed by head teachers, which has allowed us to identify priority areas for improvement. In the first instance this information needs to be verified and potential solutions identified and costed.

Newport Norse has provided a cost proposal to cover site investigations and provision of a report detailing recommendations and associated costs for each of the school sites identified in the action plan. The total cost for this feasibility study is £38,440, covering 15 primary school sites and 4 secondary school sites.

This work would be funded through the Newport City Council feasibility fund and could be split over 3 phases as set out below:

Phase 1: 2019-2020	Phase 2: 2020-2021	Phase 3: 2021-2023
Feasibility study at 5 primary and 1 secondary school sites where Hall access is identified as an issue.	Feasibility study at 6 primary and 1 secondary sites where classroom access is identified as an issue.	Feasibility study at 4 primary and 2 secondary sites where classroom access is identified as an issue.
£11,570	£12,689	£14,181

Recommendations for each site will be addressed by way of a capital bid submitted on behalf of People Services Capital Programme Board on a case-by-case basis, through the established council channels.

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
 Council Improvement Plan
 Strategic Equality Plan (Equality Objective 3.2)
 Education Service Plan

Options Available and Considered

Option 1. To approve adoption of the accessibility strategy for schools. This will enable the council to publish the strategy and progress the work outlined in the action plan within the strategy document.

Option 2. To undertake further consultation with stakeholders prior to adoption and publication of the strategy.

Preferred Option and Why

Option 1. The draft strategy has been subject to consultation through the engagement of key stakeholders and meets the requirement under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act, 2010.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The accessibility strategy includes a number of objectives which are likely to require capital expenditure to implement. The cost of these are currently unknown and feasibility studies are required to assess the requirements for each school, which will be carried out over 3 phases. There is an existing budget for feasibility studies, which these will be funded from.

Future capital expenditure will require capital bids which will be assessed on a priority basis alongside affordability of the overall capital programme.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report at the present time. The draft Accessibility Strategy for Schools has been prepared in accordance with the Council's statutory duty under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act, 2010. The proposed strategy has been the subject of extensive consultation, in accordance with Welsh Government statutory guidance, to ensure that the views of key stakeholders are properly taken into account before the final strategy is adopted. Minor amendments have been made to the original draft strategy, where appropriate, to reflect the consultation responses received. The Cabinet Member is now required to consider and approve the final strategy, in the light of the consultation responses and the proposed minor amendments. The strategy will provide a framework for meeting the Council duties under the Equality and Education Acts to ensure that the accessibility and inclusion needs of disabled pupils are being properly met.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

The proposed strategy sets out a programme for progressively increasing the accessibility of Newport schools to pupils with disabilities. In achieving this the key themes will be, physical inclusion, access to Information and Communication and Transparency. As well as being required under Equality legislation, the accessibility strategy demonstrates Newport City Council's commitment to removing barriers for all children in education, maximising their potential and embedding a culture where difference is both included, and valued. Consultation with a range of stakeholders has ensured that the views of children, parents and professionals who will be impacted by the strategy have helped to shape its priorities, and the new Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 will be well placed to ensure these are delivered.

There are no staffing implications arising from the report.

Scrutiny Committees

None

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Report writers need to indicate how they have considered the five things public bodies need to think about to show they have applied the sustainable development principle put into place by the Act. You will need to demonstrate you have considered the following:

- **Long term: the importance of balancing short- term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long – term needs** *The strategy promotes the implementation of policies, training and awareness that will positively change the outlook and culture of our schools. Physical changes made will be designed to deliver permanent improvements for pupils with various needs, to improve access to the school concerned.*
- **Prevention: How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help us meet our objectives** *The strategy promotes an inclusive education experience for all. The implementation and delivery of the strategy is expected to ensure an appropriate level of support is provided and have a positive effect on emotional wellbeing. The strategy promotes a pro-active and long term approach to improving access to services.*

- **Collaboration:** have you considered how acting in collaboration with any other person or any other part of our organisation could help meet our wellbeing objectives *The strategy sets out a commitment to working with children, young people, their families and carers when making decisions which are likely to affect the quality and equity of their education provision. The implementation of the strategy will be undertaken in partnership with our schools and occupational therapists, taking into account the needs and desires of the pupil and their family/carers.*
- **Involvement:** The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the City we serve *The stakeholders are the children and young people of Newport, their families and carers. Parents, professionals and support workers have been engaged through the workshop held at GAVO on June 25th. Engagement with young who have recently been through the education system in Newport was facilitated by Serennu Children's Centre and the views of these people informed the development of the draft accessibility strategy. The strategy was subject to a full public consultation which sought the views of all stakeholders between February and April 2019. The consultation was hosted on the council's website with a notification e-mail containing a link sent to all identified stakeholders. The consultation was also featured in the One Newport bulletin and publicised through the council's twitter feed.*

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Section 17(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes a duty on the Local Authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

Consultation

The draft strategy was subject to full public consultation as outlined in this report.

Background Papers

NCC Accessibility Strategy for School 2019-2024
Consultation Report
FEIA – NCC Accessibility Strategy

Dated: 23 2019

Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessment (FEIA)

Version 3.6 May 2017

The purpose of this assessment is to provide balanced information to support decision making and to promote better ways of working in line with equalities (Equalities Act 2010), Welsh language promotion (The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), sustainable development (Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015), and the four parameters of debate about fairness identified by the Newport Fairness Commission (NFC Full Report to Council 2013).

Completed by: Richard Sexty **Role:** Education Business Development Officer

Head of Service: Sarah Morgan

Date: 22/05/2019

I confirm that the above Head of Service has agreed the content of this assessment

Yes

When you complete this FEIA, it is your responsibility to submit it to
impact.assessment@newport.gov.uk

1. Name and description of the policy / proposal being assessed. Outline the policy's purpose.

Newport City Council Accessibility Strategy for Schools, 2019-2024.

The preparation of an Accessibility Strategy for Schools by the Local Authority is a requirement under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. It is also identified as an action within Equality Objective 3; Improving access to services, of the council's Strategic Equality Plan.

The children's commissioner has recently written to all Welsh local authorities advising that accessibility strategies should be developed through participation, published and publicised.

The accessibility strategy for schools sets out the roles, responsibilities and aims of the local authority in improving the degree to which all young people are able to achieve their potential through an inclusive education experience. It is intended to underpin and support the delivery of a range of measures to improve equality of opportunity to access an inclusive education which enables them to develop in accordance with their physical, social and emotional needs.

The strategy also sets out the expectations on schools in delivering this strategy, and how they will be supported by the local authority.

The aim of the strategy is to secure improved access to education across 3 themes:

- Physical inclusion

- Information provision
- Communication and transparency

2. Outline how you have/ will involve stakeholders who will be affected by the policy/proposal

The draft strategy was developed through the engagement of a range of stakeholders in a workshop held at GAVO HQ on 25th June 2018. Attendees included representatives from:

- GAVO
- Sparkle (Serennu Children's Centre)
- Newport Parent Groups
- Newport Access Group/Disability Wales
- NCC Preventative Services
- NCC Occupational Therapists
- NCC Children's Rights
- NCC Education Inclusion
- Primary and Secondary school representatives

Engagement with young who have recently been through the education system in Newport was facilitated by Serennu Children's Centre and the views of these people informed the development of the draft accessibility strategy. The strategy was subject to a full public consultation which sought the views of all stakeholders between February and April 2019. The consultation was hosted on the council's website with a notification e-mail containing a link sent to all identified stakeholders. The consultation was also featured in the One Newport bulletin and publicised through the council's twitter feed.

3. What information/evidence do you have on stakeholders? e.g. views, needs, service usage etc. Please include all the evidence you consider relevant.

The stakeholder workshop referenced above provided some insight to the range of needs and to the views of parents and support groups.

As the strategy relates to Newport schools, the stakeholders are children and young people aged between 3-19 years and their families, carers and support groups. As of January 2019, there were 25,976 pupils on roll in Newport schools, of whom 180 were attending a special school. (PLASC 2019) A further 201 primary age pupils and 74 secondary age pupils were placed within Learning Resource Base classes in mainstream schools.

Nationally we know that 6% of the child population under 16 years are registered disabled, while 10% of children under 15 are known to have a mental disorder. It

therefore follows that the strategy relates to the needs of between 6 and 10 percent of our school population – potentially more than 2,500 pupils.





It is noted that disabled adults are more than twice as likely to have no formal qualifications as non-disabled adults. The disability strategy will seek to remove the barriers to achievement.


4. Equalities and Welsh language impact

Protected characteristic	Impact:			Provide further details about the nature of the impact in the section below. Does it: 1. Promote equal opportunity 2. Promote community cohesion 3. Help eliminate unlawful discrimination/ harassment/ victimisation?
	Positive	Negative	Neither	
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The strategy aims to improve equality of opportunity in accessing a stimulating and inclusive education for children between 3 and 19 years. This will also have a positive impact on parents, families, carers and support groups.
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The strategy is intended to improve access to education services for people with disabilities so that they are not disadvantaged or excluded by our buildings, processes or practices.
Gender reassignment/ transgender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The strategy sets out the vision for improving equality of access for all pupils and responding to social and emotional needs as well as physical needs.
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy or maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> African <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black background

Protected characteristic	Impact:			Provide further details about the nature of the impact in the section below. Does it: 1. Promote equal opportunity 2. Promote community cohesion 3. Help eliminate unlawful discrimination/ harassment/ victimisation?
	Positive	Negative	Neither	
				E Other ethnic group <input type="checkbox"/> Arab <input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group
Religion or Belief or non-belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Sex/ Gender Identity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The strategy sets out the vision for improving equality of access for all pupils and responding to social and emotional needs as well as physical needs.
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Welsh Language	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The strategy extends to all of our schools and will ensure equality of access to welsh-medium education

5 How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable development principle in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term needs</p>	<p><i>The strategy promotes the implementation of policies, training and awareness that will positively change the outlook and culture of our schools. Physical changes made will be designed to deliver permanent improvements for pupils with various needs, to improve access to the school concerned.</i></p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together to deliver objectives</p>	<p><i>The strategy sets out a commitment to working with children, young people, their families and carers when making decisions which are likely to affect the quality and equity of their education provision. The implementation of the strategy will be undertaken in partnership with our schools and occupational therapists, taking into account the needs and desires of the pupil and their family/carers.</i></p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p><i>The stakeholders are the children and young people of Newport, their families and carers. Parents, professionals and support workers have been engaged through the workshop held at GAVO on June 25th. Engagement with young who have recently been through the education system in Newport was facilitated by Serennu Children's Centre and the views of these people informed the development of the draft accessibility strategy. The strategy was subject to a full public consultation which sought the views of all stakeholders between February and April 2019.</i></p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p><i>The strategy promotes an inclusive education experience for all. The implementation and delivery of the strategy is expected to ensure an appropriate level of support is provided and have a positive effect on emotional wellbeing. The strategy promotes a pro-active and long term approach to improving access to services.</i></p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p><i>The strategy sets out the vision for improving access to education in Newport. This will better enable pupils to achieve their potential and presents a positive contribution towards the realisation of national and local well-being goals -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• A prosperous Wales – school leavers better equipped to be engaged with the local economy.</i> <i>• A resilient Wales – more confident and independent people</i> <i>• A healthier Wales – through access to the full education curriculum</i> <i>• A more equal Wales – through improved equality of access</i> <i>• A Wales of more cohesive communities – through inclusion from the Foundation Phase to ‘A’ level</i> <i>• A Wales of vibrant culture an thriving Welsh Language – embracing diversity and engagement in schools from 3-19</i> <i>• A globally responsible Wales – collectively taking responsibility for our education environment and the wellbeing of pupils, staff and families.</i>

6. Will the proposal/policy have a disproportionate impact on a specific geographical area of Newport?

No, the strategy supports improvement across all education clusters.

6 How does the proposal/policy relate to the parameters of debate about Fairness identified by the Newport Fairness Commission

Parameter 1 – Equal treatment while recognising difference

The aim of the strategy is to improve accessibility to provide an inclusive education system, by removing barriers to learning. It is expected that all reasonable efforts should be made to realise this aim, although it is understood that individual pupils will have

specific needs, and a generic approach to accessibility will not eliminate the future requirement to respond to specific individual needs.

Parameter 2 – Mutual obligations between citizens and government

The authority acknowledges that the efforts of our schools and staff in implementing this strategy must be supported by parents, pupils, carers and support workers in order to be successful and have a significant impact

Parameter 3 – Interdependency and reciprocity within community relations

The aim of the strategy is to improve accessibility to provide an inclusive education system, by removing barriers to learning. It is expected that all reasonable efforts should be made to realise this aim, although it was noted in the stakeholder workshop that the response has to be proportionate and should not unduly disadvantage or adversely affect the experience of the peer group, as to do so would be counter-productive. This consideration needs to be reflected in advice and guidance provided by the LA and other professionals.

Parameter 4 – Transparency and accountability in decision making

The strategy acknowledges and embraces the need to consult with stakeholders in decision making and the need to communicate and provide information clearly.

7 Taking this assessment as a whole, what could be done to mitigate any negative impacts of your policy and better contribute to positive impacts?

The strategy is not expected to deliver any negative outputs

8 Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing

How and when will the impact of the proposal/ policy be monitored and reported on?

The Council's progress in implementing the strategy will be monitored by the accessibility steering group and reported to members through the Council's People Services Capital Programme Board/ Capital Strategic Asset Management Group.

9 **Involvement**

How will people be advised of the changes and of the FEIA?

The draft strategy has been subject to full public consultation. Once adopted it will be published on our website. Stakeholders will be alerted to its publication by e-mail. An annual report will be provided highlighting progress against the targets identified within the strategy.

10 **Summary of Impact (for inclusion in any report)**

Equality Act 2010 AND Welsh Language

This strategy is required under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and will improve equality of access to both English and Welsh language education.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The strategy aims to make long term improvements to the accessibility of our schools and the teaching and learning that takes place within them. The strategy is consistent with and supports all 5 sustainability principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.



Newport City Council: Education Services

21st Century Schools

Consultation Report

Accessibility Strategy for Schools 2018-2023

Formal Consultation Period: 11 February 2019 - 8 April 2019

This consultation report includes the following sections:

- The Consultation
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Everyday Summary Version – Children & Young People
- Consultation Responses
- Recommendations

The Consultation

Newport City Council's draft accessibility strategy for schools sets out how the council aims to improve the accessibility of schools to pupils with disabilities.

The draft strategy outlines our commitment to improve:

- the extent to which disabled pupils can **participate in the school curriculum**
- the **physical environment** of the schools
- **access to information** for pupils, carers and families
- **communication and transparency** by being open and honest about what can be expected or achieved

Stakeholder Engagement

An invitation to take part in the statutory consultation was issued to the stakeholders outlined below, with either a link to the consultation pack on the Council's website sent by e-mail, or alternatively by hard copies of the consultation material being issued:

- All Newport Schools
- Maintained Nursery Schools
- Aneurin Bevan Health Board
- Newport City Council Social Services
- NASUWT – The Teacher's Union
- NUT – National Union of Teachers
- Unison
- GMB Union
- The Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Newport Youth Council
- The Church in Wales, Diocese of Monmouth
- Roman Catholic Archdiocese
- Newport Families First
- Newport Family Information Service
- Newport Communities First
- Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- Sparkle
- Officers at Newport City Council
- Newport Access Group
- Parent Representatives
- Occupational Therapists
- The 'One Newport' Partnership

Everyday Summary Version – Children & Young People

An Everyday Summary Version of the main consultation document was also published and was targeted specifically at children and young people.

Consultation Responses

There were 9 responses to the consultation, 8 of which responded via the standard response pro-forma questions and 1 of which was an email from a school which provided details of a student discussion about accessibility issues in the school, but did not clearly answer the specific questions contained within the consultation questionnaire.

Of those who answered the standard questions, 7 (87.5%) of the responses supported the adoption of the draft Accessibility Strategy for Schools (question one).

Question 2 asked if respondents believed the adoption of this strategy would improve the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums to which all 9 (100%) of respondents agreed with one saying subject to being supported by sufficient funds by the LA.

7 (87.5%) out of 8 respondents believe the adoption of this strategy will improve the physical accessibility of our school buildings (1 commented subject to sufficient funds from the LA) and that the adoption of this strategy will improve the way the council and schools provide information and communicate with pupils, carers and parents concerning their education.

In addition to answering these questions, a number of comments were made. One Newport school council "believes that the review period of 3 years is too long. They think that a more regular review of what is working or not, means that any changes can be made much sooner. They think an annual review would be best. They feel that this is very important as it could be possible that a child may leave primary school and move to high school within the 3 year period and nothing may have been done to support that person." Another respondent believes funding will be required for many schools to increase accessibility, especially older buildings. Finally, an amendment suggestion for page 9 was to include "people with hearing limitations (hearing loops) and people with sight loss or limitations" as well as wheelchair users.

Recommendations

In light of the responses received, some minor amendments have been made to the strategy document set out below:

- The physical inclusion theme and objectives have been changed to include the aim to improve provision for pupils with sensory impairments
- Reference to the Strategic Equality Plan, 2020 included
- Reference to an annual progress report being created and progress being subject monitoring and governance of the Strategic Equality Group.

It is proposed that the Newport City Council Accessibility Strategy for Schools is implemented in its amended form.

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Newport City Council Education Service Accessibility Strategy for Schools

2019-2024

Version control.

Version	Author and date	Description
1	RS – July 2018	Initial Draft
2	RS – April 2019	Post consultation update

To receive a copy of this document in any other format please contact the Corporate Diversity and Policy Officer info@newport.gov.uk

Introduction	3
Legislative context	5
Definition	6
Vision and Values	6
Roles and Responsibilities	7
Objectives	9
Priorities for Action.....	11
Monitoring and Accountability.....	13

Introduction

Newport City Council's corporate plan 2017-2022 sets out the way in which the council will go about achieving the mission of 'Improving People's Lives' and building upon the commitments identified in the 2012 corporate plan, including the delivery of A Fairer City. This strategy is developed to support the delivery of Newport's well-being objectives:

1. To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.
2. To promote economic growth and regeneration while protecting the environment.
3. To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient.
4. To build cohesive and sustainable communities.

The development of this strategy has been undertaken in accordance with the commitment set in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020, specifically in relation to Equality Objective 3; Improving Access to Services.

This document sets out the Newport City Council's strategy for progressively increasing the accessibility of Newport schools to pupils with disabilities. It will be reviewed annually and updated at least every three years.

This strategy is for employees of Newport City Council, elected members, teachers and support staff, and for pupils, parents and support workers in the city of Newport. It sets out our vision for an inclusive and positive education experience for all, and identifies basic roles and responsibilities for the Authority and our schools.

This accessibility strategy is developed through a co-production approach incorporating the views of parents, education professionals and third sector support groups through a workshop held at GAVO HQ on 25th June 2018. Attendees included representatives from:

- GAVO
- Sparkle (Serennu Children's Centre)
- Newport Parent Groups
- Newport Access Group/Disability Wales
- NCC Preventative Services
- NCC Occupational Therapists
- NCC Children's Rights
- NCC Education Inclusion
- Primary and Secondary school representatives

The outputs of this stakeholder workshop have been captured and are included at appendix A. The views of young people with recent experience of the education system in Newport have also contributed to this strategy through an informal session facilitated by Sparkle at Serennu Children's centre.

The strategy is subject to public consultation with schools, parents, young people and relevant voluntary organisations across Newport.

Specific guidance for schools with regard to School Accessibility Plans has been provided and a template accessibility plan is attached to this document as appendix B.

A self -assessment survey of our schools has been completed. The results of this survey will be verified on a priority basis as part of this strategy.

We are grateful to GAVO and Sparkle at Serennu Children's Centre for their assistance in facilitating stakeholder engagement in the preparation of this draft strategy.

Legislative context

Schedule 10 of the [Equality Act 2010](#) directs that:

“A local authority in England and Wales must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare... an accessibility strategy”

The act describes an accessibility strategy as a strategy for, over a prescribed period-

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums;
- Improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services offered by the schools
- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled

The development of this strategy is also in accordance with:

- [The Social Services and Wellbeing Act, 2014](#)
- [The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, 2015](#)
- Recommendations of the Children's Commissioner's follow-up report; [‘Full Lives: Equal Access’](#), 2017
- [Newport City Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020](#), (objective 3.2)

Definition

A workshop of key stakeholders was held prior to the development of this strategy. Definitions of accessibility were considered and this activity has informed the adoption of the following definition for the purposes of this strategy:

“Accessibility is...The removal of barriers to learning, so that all children and young people are able to achieve their potential in a socially, physically and emotionally inclusive environment.”

This strategy sets out how Newport City Council will work to further remove the barriers to learning and improve inclusivity across the education estate.

Vision and Values

The **vision** for accessibility across Newport’s schools is:

“To provide every child/young person with the opportunity to access an inclusive and positive educational experience; recognising that every child is unique and supporting them to develop (in accordance with/regardless of) their physical, social, emotional and educational needs”

The strategy will support work which will seek to realise this vision, underpinned by the following **values**:

- Working collaboratively
- Listening to parents and pupils
- Participatory
- Child centred
- Transparent
- Flexible
- Universal (across school clusters)
- Equitable provision
- Inclusive
- Respectable
- Accountable

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Authority will:

- Involve and consult with young people, their families and carers in decisions which are likely to affect the quality and equity of their education provision.
- Provide staff and governor training to schools on issues related to improving access to the curriculum, information and the physical learning environment including the development of enhanced approaches to teaching and learning.
- Provide direct advice and consultation to schools in relation to planning for improvements to the physical environment.
- Provide advice and guidance to schools and families regarding their rights and responsibilities under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.
- Directly assist schools in the conversion of information into alternative formats.
- Continue to provide specialist advice and consultation from its support services including the Educational Psychology Team, Occupational Therapists, Teacher advisors and Special Education Needs team.
- Ensure that schools, and school staff, are aware of the range of specialist support services that can provide advice and consultation.
- Include accessibility in the design brief for all new build and school buildings improvement investment
- Review the schools estate audit and identify areas which require consideration for priority remedial action.
- Establish a steering group to monitor progress and report to Newport City Council's Corporate Strategic Asset Management Group.
- Seek commitment to improving accessibility in non-maintained early years settings through the development of accessibility plans.
- Undertake, as necessary, additional access audits with schools to identify all hazards and barriers to access; and to contribute to the provision of comprehensive information about school building stock.
- Review the need for and provision of advocacy services for young and vulnerable people in proceedings which will affect their education provision.
- Encourage schools to work together and collect and collate examples of good practice.

Schools will:

- Develop, publish and regularly review their School Accessibility Plans.
- Identify all pupils and known prospective pupils who face barriers to learning and full participation.
- Ensure an internal access audit has been completed and incorporate the outcome into school planning.
- Seek to include minor building works or developments to improve accessibility, identified by the school, or through the access audit, into the school development plan.
- Continue to develop approaches to the differentiation of the curriculum to enable increased access for pupils with disabilities.
- Audit staff training needs in relation to increasing participation in the Curriculum.
- Audit pupil, and prospective pupil, needs in relation to the wider provision of school, including after school clubs; leisure, sporting and cultural activities; and school trips.
- Review and audit regularly the school's approach to the provision of written information in general to establish if the format could be improved routinely and in general to improve accessibility.
- Consider, on a planned basis, how to improve accessibility through reorganising or rearranging aspects of the school environment without physical adaptation or building works.
- Seek to develop and share good practice in this area and access the opportunities provided by the Local Authority and other schools to facilitate this process.

Objectives

In order to progress towards the realisation of the vision, the Council has set objectives based around key themes.

The vision is:- “To provide every child/young person with the opportunity to access an inclusive and positive educational experience; recognising that every child is unique and supporting them to develop their physical, social, emotional and educational needs”

The key themes are:

Physical inclusion – The removal barriers created by the physical environment to allow pupils to engage alongside their peers, in all areas of school life to access the full curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Access to Information – To provide information in formats which are suited to the needs of pupils and families. This includes ensuring that school policies and procedures are easily available in alternative formats.

Communication and Transparency – Taking a participatory approach when formulating proposals concerning education provision and consulting with stakeholders when making decisions. This includes being open and honest about what can be expected or achieved.

These key themes have informed the objectives for this strategy.

Physical Inclusion

A self -assessment survey of our school sites* has identified that there are currently 5 primary schools and 1 secondary school with school halls which are not wheelchair accessible. This presents a barrier for some pupils to access community activities such as assembly, school meals and school events alongside their peers.

The survey also identified that there are 14 primary schools and 4 secondary schools where a number of classrooms are not wheelchair accessible. Newport City Council will work to increase the number of schools in which all classrooms are wheelchair accessible. Where it is not possible to make all classrooms wheelchair accessible we will work to ensure that the full curriculum can be delivered in accessible classrooms within the school site.

Additionally, the survey revealed that 27 primary schools and 5 secondary schools had insufficient measures in place to assist pupils with sight or hearing impairments. It is therefore an objective of this strategy to increase the provision of these measures across our schools.

* Note – the self-assessment survey collected information provided by school leadership teams and has not yet been independently verified

Objectives for this theme are:

- To increase the number of school halls which are accessible to people with mobility or sensory impairments.
- To increase the number of school classrooms which are accessible to people with mobility or sensory impairments.

Access to Information

Providing relevant information in accessible formats will help parents, pupils, families and carers to effectively engage with our schools.

Objectives for this theme are:

- To provide guidance and support to ensure all schools develop and publish effective accessibility plans
- To share good practice across the city in the provision of information in alternative formats

Communication and Transparency

Being open and honest with pupils, parents and families will help everybody to understand parameters and processes and to measure expectations accordingly. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act sets expectations in relation to our processes for identifying and delivering appropriate education support.

Objectives for this theme are:

- To provide clear guidance and training on the process to be followed for identifying pupils with additional learning needs and providing the appropriate support.
- Review progress made against the objectives set out in this strategy, and publish update reports each year.

Priorities for Action

The Council's Corporate Plan 2017-2022 sets the mission statement for the Council as 'Improving People's Lives' and the Council's Strategic Equality Plan identifies Improving access to services as our 3rd Equality Objective. This accessibility strategy fulfils action 2 of these objectives, and the actions set below further contribute to the delivery of the equality objective and our vision for accessibility in education. It is also anticipated that these actions will influence the Equality Objectives set within the authority's future Strategic Equality Plan in 2020.

Accessibility Theme	Objective	Action	Owner	Timescale
Physical Inclusion	To increase the number of school halls which are accessible to people with mobility or sensory impairments.	1. Verify information provided by schools on priority basis	Newport Norse	By September 2019
		2. Commission feasibility study and costings	NCC education	By January 2020
		3. Agree and commission remedial action	Accessibility Steering Group/ NCC education	By April 2020
	To increase the number of school classrooms which are accessible to people with mobility or sensory impairments.	4. Verify information provided by schools on priority basis	Newport Norse	Commence by By June 2020
		5. Commission feasibility study and costings	NCC education	By September 2020
		6. Agree and commission remedial action	Accessibility Steering Group/ NCC education	By January 2021
Access to Information	To provide guidance and support to ensure all schools develop and publish effective accessibility plans	7. Review and provide feedback to schools on accessibility plans	NCC education	By October 2021
	To share good practice across the city in the provision of information in alternative formats	8. Identify good practice through review of accessibility plans and share through Head teacher meetings	NCC education Inclusion	By October 2021

Communication and Transparency	To provide clear guidance and training on the process to be followed for identifying pupils with additional learning needs and providing the appropriate support.	9.Ensure the LA is prepared to comply with the statutory ALN Code	NCC Education Inclusion	By April 2021
		10.Provide updates and guidance to schools on Individual Development Plans and how to decide if one is required	NCC Education Inclusion	By April 2021
	Review progress made against the objectives set out in this strategy, and publish update reports each year	11.Establish an implementation, monitoring and steering group through CSAMG	NCC CSAMG	By September 2019
		12.Implementation monitoring and steering group to meet quarterly to agree key decisions, review progress and prepare reports to scrutiny group	NCC Accessibility Group	To meet by November 2019

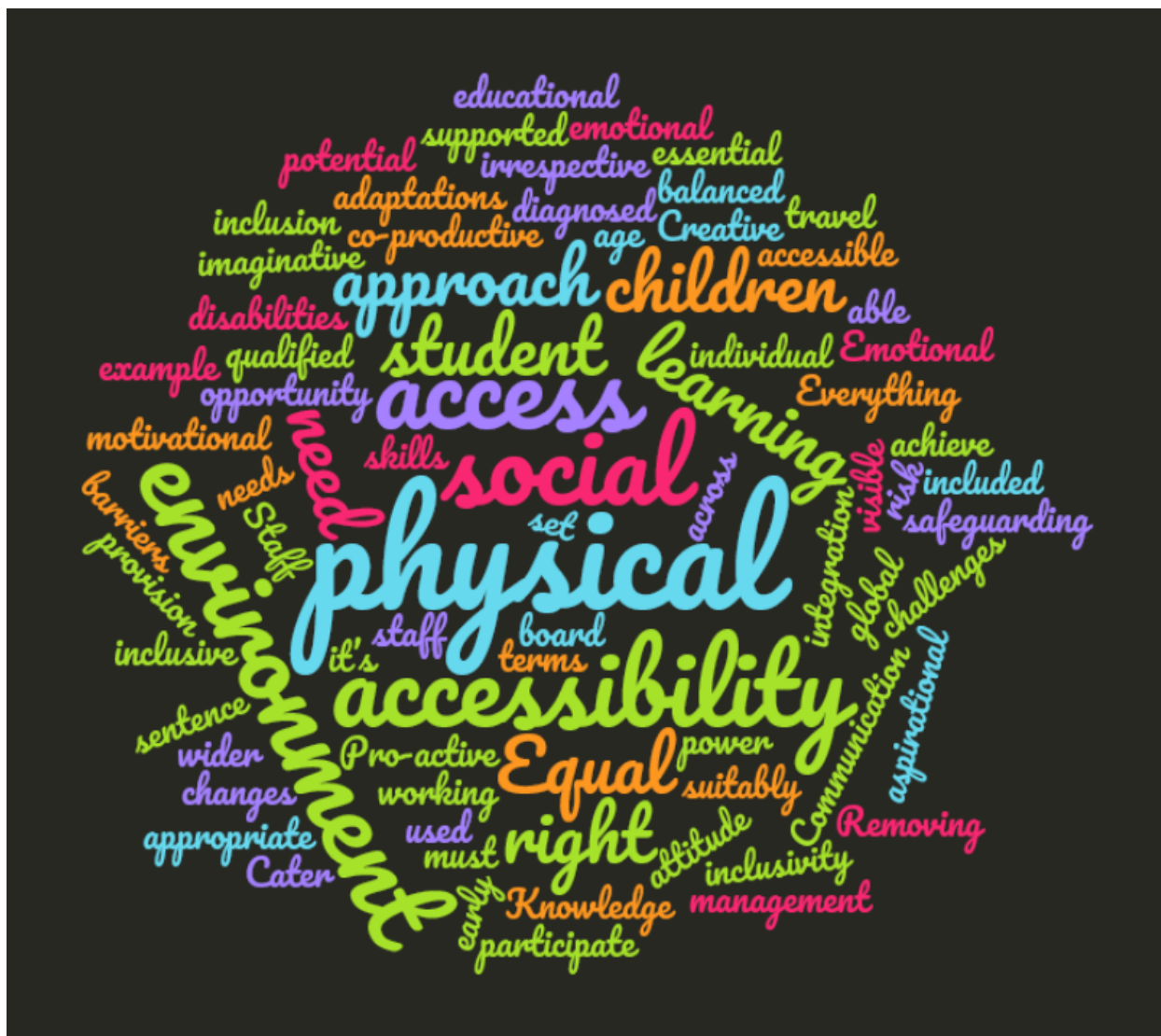
Monitoring and Accountability

Once approved, the recommendation will be that the implementation of this accessibility Strategy and the actions outlined within it will be managed by the NCC accessibility steering group and monitored by Newport City Council's Corporate Strategic Asset Management Group. An annual progress report will be provided to this group. Objectives included in the 2020 Strategic Equality Plan will also be subject to the governance of the Strategic Equality Group.

Appendix A.

NCC Accessibility Stakeholder Workshop;
Gavo HQ 25 June 2018

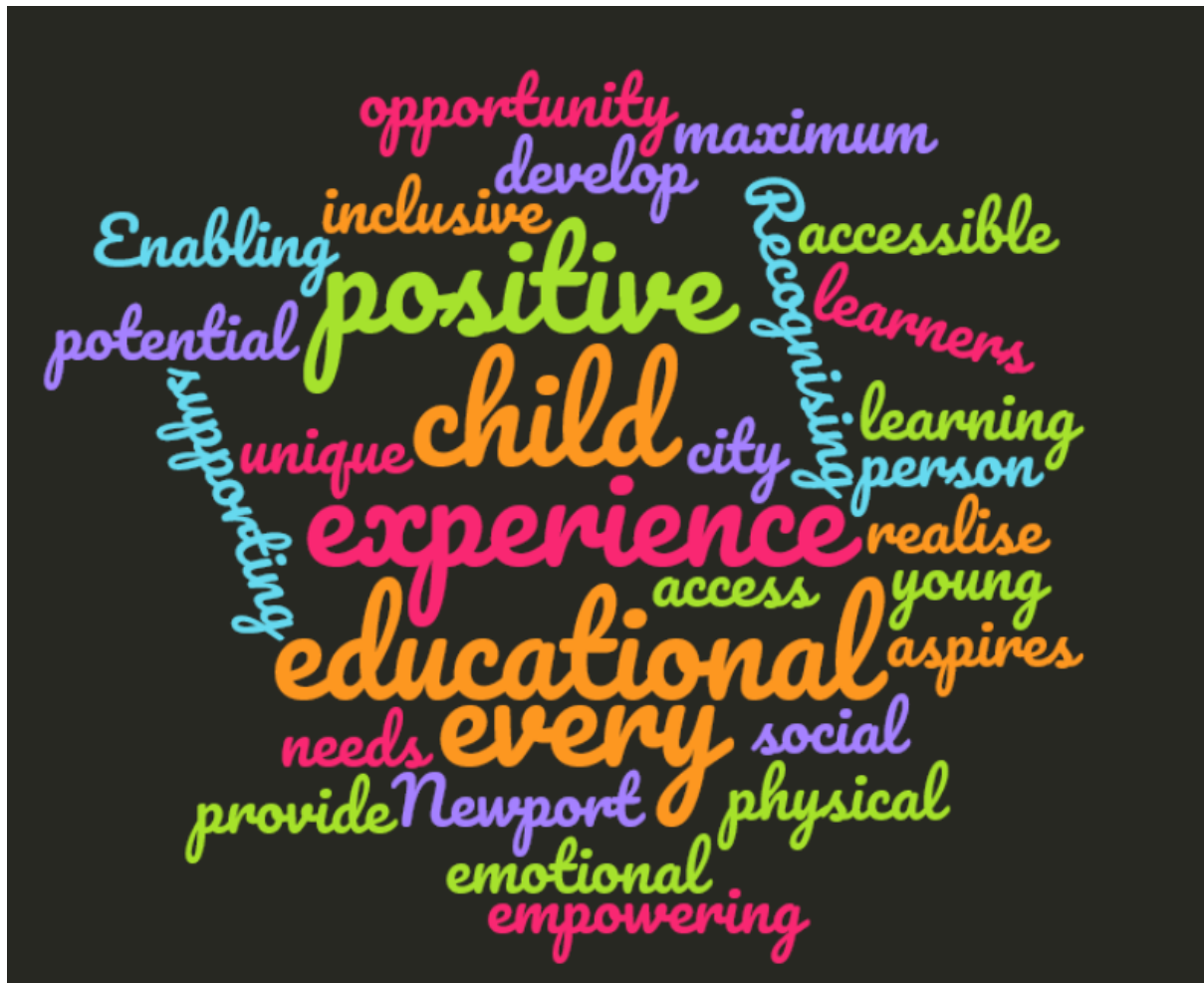
Activity 1: Definition



Activity 2: What's in a strategy?



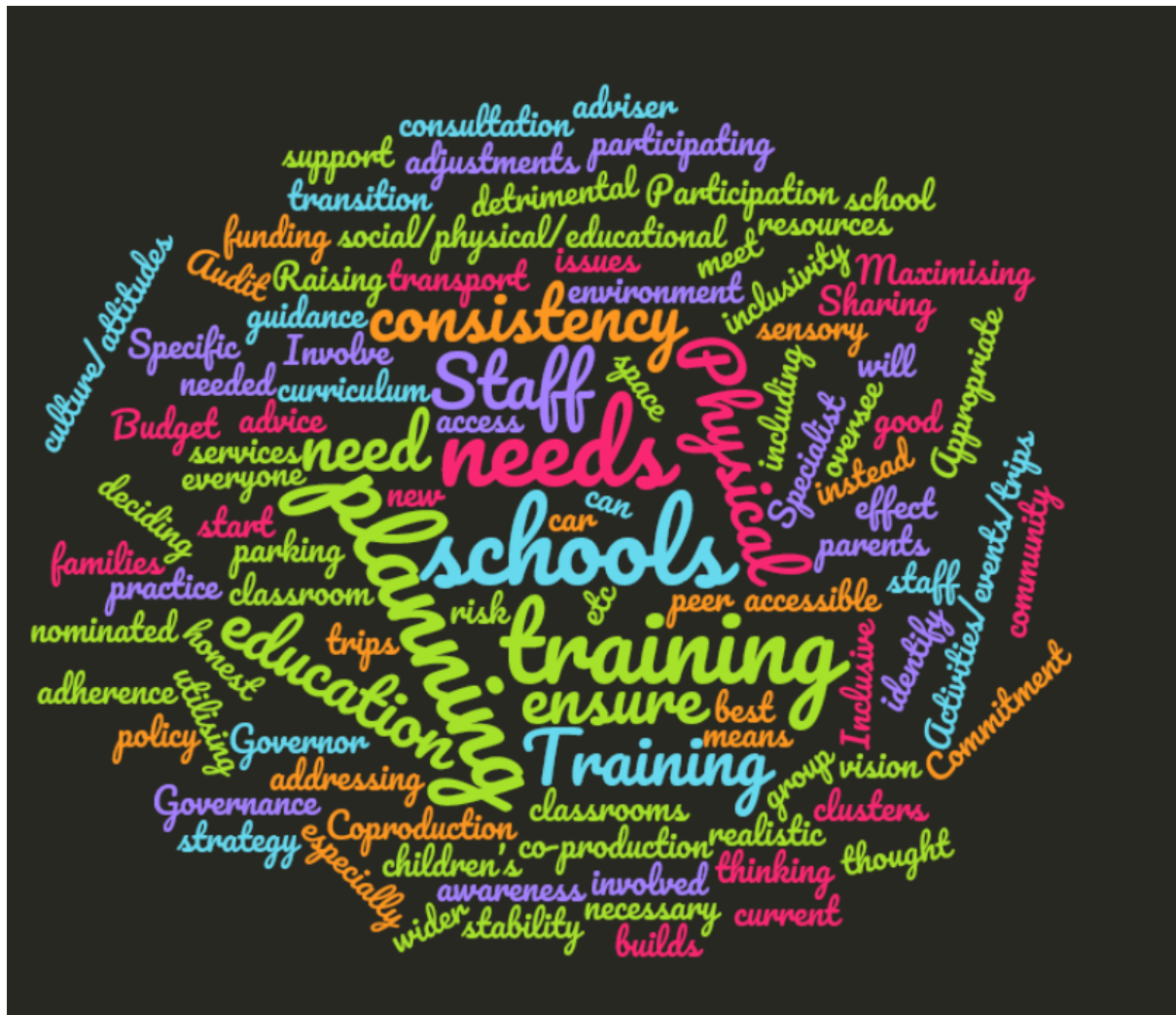
Activity 3.1: Vision



Activity 3.2: Values



Activity 4: Priorities



Appendix B – School accessibility plan template

Accessibility Plan

**INSERT
SCHOOL
LOGO**

School Name:	
Plan Date:	
Review Date:	
Approved by:	

Introduction/Aim of the Plan

This Accessibility Plan is drawn up in compliance with current legislation¹ and requirements. School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting of progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period. This Accessibility Plan is structured to complement and support the school's Equality Objectives, and will similarly be published on the school website².

Key Objective of the Plan

The purpose of the accessibility plan is to reduce and eliminate barriers to access the curriculum and to ensure full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors with a disability. The plan is developed around three planning duties: Improving Access to the Curriculum; Improving the Physical Environment and Improving Communications. The plan also takes account of the need to involve pupils in making decisions which are likely to affect them.

Equality Act 2010 Statement

It's against the law for a school or other education provider to treat disabled students unfavourably. This includes:

- direct discrimination, for example refusing admission to a student because of disability
- indirect discrimination, for example only providing application forms in one format that may not be accessible
- discrimination arising from a disability, for example a disabled pupil is prevented from going outside at break time because it takes too long to get there
- harassment, for example a teacher shouts at a disabled student for not paying attention when the student's disability stops them from easily concentrating
- victimisation, for example suspending a disabled student because they've complained about harassment

Reasonable adjustments

Schools and local authorities have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. This duty requires a school to take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school and enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services which the school provides. Guidance for the practical implementation of this in schools can be found on the Equality and Human Rights Commission web site.³

Definition of a disability

You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

¹ 2010 Equality Act – Schedule 10, Section 88

² [The Children's Commissioner for Wales](#) states School accessibility plans should also be made available online.

³ https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/what_equality_law_means_for_you_as_an_education_provider_in_wales_schools.pdf

General provision

INSERT A STATEMENT ABOUT YOUR CURRENT GENERAL PROVISION ARRANGEMENTS HERE

e.g. The school endeavours to ensure that all pupils, including those with disabilities, are able to take part in all school activities; children with disabilities are always included in activities such as school assembly when wheelchair space, specially adapted chairs, digital microphones or individual support is provided.

Classrooms are organised and set out in order to ensure that pupils can move easily about the room and so that class activities are fully inclusive.

Access to the curriculum

INSERT YOUR CURRENT CURRICULAR AND EXTRA CURRICULAR PROVISION ARRANGEMENTS HERE

Consider, for example -

- The school employs when required, additional Teaching Assistants for children with disabilities.
- Provision and use of tools in design technology or cooking lessons.
- Planning trips and visits; PE and lunchtime arrangements.
- Staff training review and provision – what training is provided to all staff and what to specific staff working closely with pupils with needs

Building Access

INSERT YOUR CURRENT BUILDING ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS HERE

Consider, for example –

Are doorways sufficient width for passage of wheelchairs; potential barriers identified and alternative routes adopted where appropriate? Any pathfinding aids.

Pay particular interest to communal areas; the hall and stage – are ramps required anywhere and if so are they provided? How are pupil needs taken into account for PE/ sports?

Communication and access to school information

INSERT CURRENT COMMUNICATION ARRANGEMENTS:

Consider, for example -

Provision of hearing loops to certain areas; provision of information, including newsletters in alternative formats, liaison with families and support workers prior to joining the school and before transition between year groups. Identification and notification of specific pupil

Pupil engagement and consultation

How does the school ensure that pupils are involved and consulted on matters and decisions which will affect them? E.g. school council and ballots.

Future Development and action plan

Curriculum and extra-curricular access

Strategy/Target	Timescale	Action	Who actions this?	Co-ordinator	Evaluation Review of Impact
Support for pupils	Termly	Review TA support.	Initial	Initial	
Trips and visits inclusion					

Building Access (Physical Environment)

Strategy/Target	Timescale	Action	Who actions this?	Co-ordinator	Evaluation Review of Impact
Improve access to the KS2 playground					
Improve layout/organisation of Y4 & Y5 classrooms					
Enable access to the stage					

Communication and access to school information

Strategy/Target	Timescale	Action	Who actions this?	Co-ordinator	Evaluation Review of Impact
School events/ newsletters		Ascertain the need among parents/carers whether information is required in alternative formats			
		Develop staff and pupil skills to ensure website contains relevant information and newsletters			
Annual report to parents		Ascertain the need among parents/carers whether information is required in alternative formats			
		Develop staff and pupil skills to ensure website contains relevant information and newsletters			
School notices		Teachers aware of which parents need verbal reminders Notices would be placed at wheelchair height where needed			

School map with accessibility points

**INSERT
SCHOOL
MAP**

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