




A REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN LLANELLI,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide Carmarthenshire County Council and the Director of Education with an independent view on the possible options for delivering specialist provision in Llanelli.

The Council has a range of specialist provisions co-located on mainstream school sites to meet the needs of learners with significant additional learning needs (ALN) across the County, these are detailed in Table 1, page 7 below. It has one special school, Ysgol Heol Goffa, which is located in Llanelli.

Ysgol Heol Goffa was established in the early 1970s and since this time has developed and evolved into a very successful special school. The school was last inspected by Estyn in 2017, and at this time it was rated as Excellent for its performance, with Excellent prospects for improvement. [Estyn's inspection of Ysgol Heol Goffa](#) highlighted that teaching at the school was excellent and that all pupils made strong progress in relation to their individual needs and abilities.

The school is supported very well by the community of Llanelli, who are clearly very proud of the school. The school is highly regarded by parents/carers who praise the setting and staff for their supportive, caring and empathetic approach. Parents/carers have described the placement of their children at the school as 'life changing'.

There have been concerns about the standard of the accommodation at Ysgol Heol Goffa for many years. Despite the overwhelmingly positive Estyn Inspection in 2017, the report highlighted that the learning environment was 'adequate' and 'areas of the school building, limit significantly the range of learning opportunities that can take place on site'. The deficiencies in the school buildings were recognised by the Council Leader at the time, who announced shortly after the inspection that a new special school would be built to replace Ysgol Heol Goffa.

In September 2020 a statutory consultation was commenced in accordance with Welsh Government's School Organisation Code statutory document 011/2018 in relation to a proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and increase its capacity from 75 to 120. A decision was taken by the County Council in May 2021 to approve the proposal as outlined in the consultation document and statutory notice.

Following on from this decision, numerous workshops were held with stakeholders to ensure that all groups representing service users had an input into the design of the new school. As a result, the proposed new school was designed with the highest specification and quality in mind, and the proposed design was both architecturally and aesthetically very attractive.

The Council were seeking to secure funding for the scheme through the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. In accordance with this programme, and subject to the Council successfully progressing through Welsh Government's five case business model for approval, the intervention rates were 75% from Welsh Government funding with the Council funding the remaining 25%. The scheme was subsequently successfully progressed through the Welsh Government's five case business model, with only the Full Business Case submission to be provided for agreement by WG.

Prior to submitting the final business case, the Council undertook a tendering process to identify a suitable contractor to carry out the build of the new school. Unfortunately, only one tender was received, and the quoted construction costs were significantly higher than were expected. As a result, the Council announced in May 2024, that given the economic climate and unprecedented financial pressures facing the local authority, the proposal to build a new special school to replace Ysgol Heol Goffa was no longer financially viable.

This decision was a source of immense disappointment to all stakeholders and a commitment was made by the Council to explore alternative options for delivering high quality specialist provision for pupils with ALN in Llanelli. In pursuit of this aim, an independent report was commissioned by the Council to review possible options for senior officers and Cabinet's consideration.

## **2. Sources of information and stakeholder engagement**

The report is based on information gathered from a range of sources over a four-month period from September 2024 to December 2024. These include discussions with wide ranging stakeholders such as the following:

- Elected members of the Council, including the Leader of the Council
- Local Councillors representing Llanelli
- Local authority officers, including the Chief Executive, previous and current Director of Education and Children's Service, Head of Education and Inclusion, ALN Manager, ALN Assistant Manager, Schools' Transformation and Change Manager, School Development Project Officer
- Head teachers across a wide range of specialist settings and mainstream schools
- Trade Union representatives
- Health professionals
- Social Services
- Senior Leaders at Ysgol Heol Goffa
- The Governing Body at Ysgol Heol Goffa
- Staff at Ysgol Heol Goffa
- Pupils at Ysgol Heol Goffa

- Community Partners for Ysgol Heol Goffa

Visits to specialist provisions across Carmarthenshire have also taken place which has also involved discussions with staff and senior leaders at the provisions. These included:

- Ysgol Heol Goffa
- Myrddin Unit
- Canolfan yr Enfys
- Canolfan Elfed
- Canolfan Cothi
- Canolfan Amanwy
- Y Pwll, Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) Unit
- Canolfan y Bedol
- Canolfan y Felin
- Canolfan y Mor

Analysis of documentation and data held by the local authority has also been undertaken. This included:

- Carmarthenshire's ALN Strategy 2023
- Carmarthenshire's Local Offer for ALN
- Specialist Settings: Criteria for Entry and Exit: 2023
- Data on demand for, and capacity of specialist settings
- Health and Safety Report for Ysgol Heol Goffa (May 2024)
- Building Condition Surveys for Ysgol Heol Goffa (May 2024)
- New Heol Goffa Special School Tender Executive Statement (March 2024)

### **3. The Council's Approach to Meeting Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

In June 2023, the Council published the Additional Learning Needs Strategy which commits to "creating a fully inclusive education system where all children and young people are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs".

The Strategy emphasises a commitment to ensuring that wherever possible children and young people with ALN should have access to learning opportunities appropriate to their needs within their local community.

The strategy outlines a 4-phase model to meet the ALN within the County

Phase 1. Universal Learning Provision in all schools.

Phase 2. Access to expert advice from central support services. Targeted and/or Additional Learning Provision (ALP) support provided by the school.

Phase 3. Specialist Placements for pupils with intensive needs.

Phase 4. Bespoke EOTAS packages and residential specialist locations.

Carmarthenshire's ALN Strategy aligns with the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (2018). The vision of developing inclusive practice in all mainstream schools in Wales has been at the heart of the educational reform programme.

Developing inclusive practice needs to be a primary focus for schools and local authorities, this will ensure that as many children as possible can have their needs fully met at their local mainstream school of choice. If this is not successful then more and more pupils will require specialist placements to meet their needs.

It is evident that Wales is seeing unprecedented growth in the number of children and young people identified with ALN, and it is critical that our schools are supported to effectively meet the needs of these learners. It is well documented that this growth in need is placing increasing strain on local authority funding for education and schools.

[Estyn's thematic review into the ALN system](#) undertaken in December 2024, evaluates the progress of schools, settings and local authorities across Wales in supporting pupils with additional learning needs. The report highlighted that while schools have started this process, this is by no means well developed across schools in Wales.

Estyn found that:

- Purposeful teaching and learning aimed at meeting the needs of all pupils are not effective enough
- Local Authorities guidance and support to schools to improve inclusive teaching and learning was at an early stage of development.

In Carmarthenshire, as in other local authorities in Wales, the process of developing inclusive practice in schools is ongoing. Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the 4-phase model outlined in the County's ALN strategy will provide the mechanism for this development going forward.

According to Estyn, the experience of many pupils and parents/carers of children with ALN in schools across Wales is one of unmet need, and that too often pupils with ALN in mainstream schools were not receiving appropriate support.

One of the key findings identified by Estyn was the lack of specialist provision available in many local authorities. Because of this, Estyn stated that "too many

pupils with complex needs remained in mainstream settings and did not receive the specialist support they required”.

Carmarthenshire’s ALN Strategy emphasises that if a child or young person’s needs cannot be met in their local mainstream school, they should be able to access a more specialist setting that meets their needs, and that this should be delivered within their community wherever possible.

The local authority has been largely successful in ensuring that children and young people in Carmarthenshire whose needs cannot be met in their local mainstream school are able to access appropriate provision in their locality. Education services in Carmarthenshire were inspected by Estyn in July 2023, the report stated that the authority maintained a suitable range of specialist provision in special units or schools, which meet the needs of pupils well. The report also stated that at a strategic level, senior officers plan specialist provision appropriately and had invested significantly in additional provision to support learners with ALN following an increase in the number of pupils with autistic spectrum conditions (ASC).

There is no doubt that the local authority has done a great deal to develop ALN provision in the County and has establishing an extensive footprint of specialist provision across all geographical areas. However, there are significant, ongoing pressures in the system. The most significant and growing pressure facing the Council at present is the high level of need in relation to children and young people with ASC. Not only those with a diagnosis but those with significant social communication difficulties who are under assessment but have yet to receive a diagnosis.

There has been an exponential rise in the number of children and young people with ASC over the last decade throughout Wales and beyond. All local authorities are facing huge challenges in respect of meeting the needs of this growing group of children and young people.

There has been an emphasis in all local authorities on developing the capacity of mainstream schools to meet this need, this is undoubtedly an area of work which will need to be progressed at pace throughout Wales. However, at present schools are unable to meet the needs of the growing number of children and young people with this condition. For this to happen, schools require further workforce development, increased support from outside agencies and the availability of sufficient funding at a school level to respond to the increasing demand.

It is also important to note the challenges all schools and local authorities are facing in relation to the increasing numbers of pupils displaying complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). However, the focus of this paper is to develop

options for delivering specialist provision in Llanelli following the decision not to go ahead with a new build to replace Ysgol Heol Goffa. This necessitates a focus on meeting the needs of children and young people with severe learning difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and ASC. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address the issue of provision for SEBD.

#### 4. Current Additional Learning Needs Provision and Pressures

The strategy of the local authority has been to focus on keeping learners in their communities by developing specialist settings to serve three localities within Carmarthenshire:

- Carmarthen and surrounding area
- Ammanford and surrounding area
- Llanelli and surrounding area

In addition, the local authority has also developed specialist settings across the County to serve pupils with ALN attending Welsh medium schools.

A key element of the strategy has been the development of more specialist provision based in mainstream schools. This provision is outlined below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Unit Provision, Observation and Assessment Classes and Specialist Settings attached to Mainstream Secondary Schools in Carmarthenshire (January 2025)**

Attached Units	Capacity	Number on roll	Language Category	Age Range
<b>Ammanford and surrounding area</b>				
Ysgol Bro Banw O & A Unit	10	10	English	N – Yr 2
Ysgol Bro Banw Foundation Phase Speech and Language Unit (SLCN)	10	3	English	N – Yr 2
Ysgol Bro Banw Canolfan yr Enfys ASC	20	20	English	N – Yr 6
Ysgol Bro Banw Canolfan yr Enfys SLD	10	10	English	N – Yr 6
Ysgol Bro Banw Canolfan yr Enfys PMLD	7	7	English	N – Yr 6
Ysgol Parcyrhun Unit for Pupils who are Deaf	12	3	English	N – Yr 6
Canolfan y Bedol for Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)	20	20	Welsh/Biling	N – Yr 6
Canolfan Amanwy for Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)	37	38	English	Y7 – Yr 11/13/14
Canolfan Cothi ASC	42	41	English	Yr 7 – Yr 11/13/14
Canolfan yr Eithin SLD/PMLD/ASC	22	17	Welsh	Yr 7 – Yr 11/13/14
<b>Llanelli and surrounding area</b>				
Canolfan y Felin SLCN	10	8	English	N – Yr 2



Canolfan y Felin O & A Unit	20	20	English	N – Yr 2
Canolfan y Goleudy – ASC	12	12	English	N – Yr 6
Pwll Autistic Unit	32	33	English	N – Yr 6
Canolfan y Felin SLD	10	11	English	N – Yr 6
Canolfan y Fesen ASC	8	9	Welsh/Biling	N – Yr 6
Canolfan yr Ynys – SLCN	12	11	English	Yr 3 – Yr 6
Canolfan y Môr ASC	30	26	English	Yr 7 – Yr 11/13/14
<b>Carmarthen and surrounding area</b>				
Richmond Park O & A Unit	10	10	English	N – Yr 2
Canolfan Nantgaredig	16	16	Welsh	N – Yr 6
Myrddin Autistic Unit	8	8	English	N – Yr 6
Myrddin Special Unit	21	21	English	N – Yr 6
Canolfan y Model ASC	10	10	English	N – Yr 6
Canolfan Elfed PMLD/SLD/ASC/SLCN/HI	93	93	English	Yr 7 – Yr 11/13/14

- **Unit Provision throughout the County**

Various terms are used across Wales to describe this type of provision. Examples include, Specialist Bases, Specialist Resource Bases, Units etc. The term used in Carmarthenshire is Unit provision.

Unit provision has been developed across Carmarthenshire to good effect to meet the needs of children and young people with a wide range of additional learning needs in both English and Welsh settings.

Units can be a very cost-effective way for local authorities to meet growing need by utilising spare capacity in schools where this exists, or by utilising the land on school sites to erect demountable classrooms. The Units established across Carmarthenshire have been very successful and there are examples of excellent practice. The support received by the units from local authority officers has been very well received and a strong partnership approach is evident.

Units are excellent provision for children and young people who struggle to access mainstream classes alongside their peers. Pupils benefit from the specialist input that units can provide and from the support they receive to access mainstream classes for a proportion of their school day.

As Units tend to be set up within spaces available in schools which have been adapted, they do not have the physical space or resources to meet the needs of very complex children and young people, alongside those with less complex needs, safely and effectively. Units are therefore most successful when they are part of a continuum of provision within local authorities, with more specialist provision available for those with greatest need.

- **Observation and Assessment Classes**

The local authority has also established observation and assessment classes in every area. These classes are for pupils aged 3-7 years old who have been identified as having significant developmental delay and require a period of observation and assessment to further identify ALN and inform future planning and provision. This is not designed to be long term provision, and the aim is to limit placements to two terms. In theory this will provide sufficient time for the needs of the child to be comprehensively assessed, and an appropriate permanent placement identified.

In addition to the Units and the observation and assessment classes, the local authority has invested heavily in the development of a range of bespoke Specialist Centres attached to mainstream schools.

- **Specialist Centres attached to mainstream schools**

The Specialist Centres are different in nature to Units, they are purpose built facilities, designed to meet the needs of the full spectrum of pupils with ALN, including the most complex. The settings are funded at a similar level to special schools, this is appropriate as the complexity of need in the Specialist Centres is comparable to the needs of pupils attending special school provision.

In Carmarthen, Canolfan Elfed is a purpose-built Specialist Centre attached to Queen Elizabeth High School. This Centre has been designed to meet the needs of young people with PMLD, SLD and ASC. The Centre also has provision for pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties and Hearing Impairment. The provision available at the Centre is of a very high standard and the pupils are making excellent progress.

Carmarthen also has a bespoke purpose-built facility for primary pupils with PMLD, SLD and ASC which is sited on the grounds of Myrddin Primary School. This Centre is a long standing and highly regarded specialist provision.

In Ammanford, Canolfan Amanwy is a purpose-built provision attached to Ysgol Dyffryn Aman School. This is a provision for young people with PMLD and SLD. Canolfan Amanwy has excellent facilities and delivers provision of a high standard for the pupils attending the Centre.

Canolfan Cothi, attached to Ysgol Bro Myrddin School, is a Specialist Centre for young people with complex ASC. This is a highly specialised setting which is

successfully meeting the needs of a range of young people with ASC, including the most complex.

There is no bespoke purpose build Specialist Centre for primary school pupils with ALN in Ammanford. The main specialist provision is Canolfan yr Enfys based at Ysgol Bro Banw Primary School. This is excellent primary provision for pupils with PMLD, SLD, ASD and Speech and Language difficulties. However, Canolfan Enfys, unlike the other Specialist Centres described, is not a purpose-built provision. The setting is currently able to meet need due to the expertise and commitment of the senior leadership team and staff, however, they are restricted by the physical environment, and this will need to be kept under review by local authority officers.

A Specialist Centre has also been established at Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth, Canolfan yr Eithin provides specialist education through the medium of Welsh to pupils across the County with SLD, PMLD and ASC. The school was inspected by Estyn in 2023 and the Centre was praised for providing opportunities that respond well to pupils' needs which enabled them to make good progress.

In Llanelli, the continuum of provision model has developed very differently to Carmarthen and Ammanford. There are Units in Llanelli but the majority of these are for pupils with ASC, the main specialist provision for primary aged children and young people of secondary age with SLD and PMLD is the Special School, Ysgol Heol Goffa. There are no Specialist Centres attached to mainstream schools in Llanelli as in other areas.

- **Pressures in Carmarthen and Ammanford Areas**

The continuum of provision developed by the local authority to serve the localities of Carmarthen and Ammanford has been largely successful in meeting the needs of children and young people with PMLD, SLD and ASC.

There are very small and manageable waiting lists for primary pupils who have been identified as requiring specialist provision due to SLD in both Carmarthen and Ammanford areas. This would suggest that provision is broadly in line with need.

There are no secondary aged pupils waiting to be placed in specialist provision for PMLD, SLD or ASC in either Carmarthen or Ammanford, this would indicate that currently there is sufficient capacity to meet need which is very positive. The existence of the Specialist Centres also makes them well placed to meet the needs of the pupils with the most complex needs within the locality.

However, due to the growing number of children and young people with complex ASC, the capacity of current specialist provision for primary aged pupils in both localities, particularly Ammanford, is under significant pressure.

In the Carmarthen locality, there are 6 children waiting to access places in the observation and assessment class and in the Ammanford locality, 9 pupils are waiting to access this provision.

The reason for this is that most pupils accessing the observation and assessment classes have significant social communication difficulties and are waiting to be assessed for ASC. These assessments are undertaken by the Local Health Board's Neuro- Developmental Team, there are currently long waiting lists for these assessments and as a result children attending the classes are not able to receive a formal diagnosis in a timely fashion. They are, therefore, unable to access places in specialist provision because they do not meet the entry criteria which requires a formal diagnosis. It is also the case that many children, even if they have received a diagnosis, cannot access a specialist placement because they are full.

As a consequence, many pupils in the observation and assessment classes remain there for a much longer period than the desired 2 terms. This in turn creates a logjam in classes and as a result very few places become available for children currently in mainstream schools requiring a placement.

There are currently 9 primary aged pupils on a waiting list for specialist ASC provision in Carmarthen and 8 in Ammanford. If these numbers are added to those on waiting lists for the observation and assessment classes, there are 15 children waiting for specialist placements in Carmarthen and 17 in Ammanford. Local authority officers have developed a thorough strategy to support, monitor and evaluate children in mainstream schools as they wait for specialist placements. There is no doubt that this is helpful, but additional specialist placements are required to ensure that children can access these in a more timely manner.

Analysis of data relating to current capacity indicates that places will become available in Carmarthen to meet this need, this is not the case in Ammanford where there is likely to be a shortfall of specialist placements for primary aged pupils with ASC. Local authority officers are aware of this and are exploring options to develop additional provision.

For the purposes of this report, the analysis of ALN provision across Carmarthenshire is important as it provides the necessary context to evaluate the provision in Llanelli. It is beyond the scope of this report to consider in detail the options for addressing the pressures facing specialist provision outside of Llanelli. However, there is clearly a need for the local authority to keep this under review.

- **Pressures in Llanelli and surrounding Area**

As stated previously, Ysgol Heol Goffa currently has 127 pupils on role and is well over capacity. In addition, 11 children and young people have been identified by the local authority as meeting the criteria for this provision but are not able to be admitted due to the lack of available places. There are an additional 5 pupils who have been referred to the LA panel for consideration for placement at Ysgol Heol Goffa for September 2025.

In addition to the specialist provision at Ysgol Heol Goffa, there is one Unit for primary aged children with SLD based at Ysgol y Felin in Llanelli. This provision is also at full capacity and has a small waiting list of 2 pupils.

In total there are 19 pupils who, either now, or by September 2025, require access to specialist provision for SLD which is already at full capacity.

It is important to emphasise that Ysgol Heol Goffa is not a provision for children and young people with ASC. As stated above, the most significant challenge facing the local authority at present is the rise in children and young people with complex ASC. When considering proposals for new ALN provision in the Llanelli, it is imperative that the opportunity to consider and expand the provision for pupils with ASC is part of any future proposals.

There are currently 3 Units for primary aged pupils with ASC in Llanelli, these have been developed by adapting spaces available in mainstream primary schools. These Units are delivering appropriate provision in English and Welsh to pupils with a varying complexity of need.

Canolfan y Fesen is a Welsh language provision that has a capacity of 8 places for pupils with ASC. This provision is currently over capacity and has 9 pupils attending.

Canolfan Goleudy has primary provision for 12 pupils and is currently full.

Y Pwll ASC Unit is a very large provision and has a capacity of 32 places. This provision is currently over capacity with 33 pupils attending.

All the Units are full and there is currently a waiting list of 17 pupils who require placements.

There are also 2 observation and assessment classes in Llanelli both are based at Ysgol y Felin, providing 20 places for 3-7 year olds. Both classes are full and there are currently 19 children waiting for places.

The numbers of young children waiting to access the observation and assessment classes are of significant concern. School leaders are reporting an increasing number of very young children who have very complex ALN but who cannot access specialist provision. As stated above, local authority officers do work with schools to support, monitor and evaluate children in mainstream schools as they wait for specialist placements, this makes a positive difference but cannot fully meet the needs of pupils with very complex ALN.

Given the inherent difficulties facing the observation and assessment classes, as outlined above, a review of the purpose and function of these classes would be helpful. It would also be helpful to review the practice of requiring a child or young person to have a formal diagnosis of ASC before they can access specialist provision. In Carmarthenshire, children and young people could be waiting up to 3 years to receive a diagnosis and under the current system would not qualify for a place in a specialist setting for this whole time.

The ALN Code emphasises that need should be met based on identifying barriers to learning rather than formal diagnosis and changing entry criteria for provision to reflect this would be a positive move forward. This is true of all specialist provision for ASC.

Alternative models of delivering the observation and assessment provision could also be explored. There are examples of Early Intervention Bases that could be developed which offer part time placements to children with social communication difficulties alongside a training function for staff.

Creating such a provision could develop the skills of mainstream school staff to increasingly meet need and could also provide placements for a greater number of pupils. It would also align with the County's ALN strategy by further developing inclusive practice in schools.

Given the population of Llanelli and the level of need the number of places available in Unit/ observation and assessment classes are relatively low, the demand for specialist places in primary specialist provisions in Llanelli exceeds the number of places available. This shortfall necessitates strategic action to ensure that the needs of all pupils with ASC are met effectively across a wider geographical area and through the medium of Welsh and English

As stated above, Units can be a very cost-effective way for local authorities to meet growing need, but they struggle to meet the needs of very complex children and young people alongside those with less complex needs safely and effectively. Units are therefore most successful when they are part of a continuum of provision within local authorities with more specialist provision available for those with greatest need.

Increasing the capacity in observation and assessment classes and Unit provision could successfully meet the needs of pupils who cannot access mainstream provision because of their ALN. However, pupils with highly complex needs require access to a specialist setting that is bespoke in nature and has the physical environment and range of therapeutic interventions required.

Specialist provision in Llanelli for pupils of secondary school age with ASC is delivered at Canolfan y Mor. This is a recently established provision and is currently based in demountable classrooms on the site of Glan y Mor mainstream school. This provision is only temporary and not a permanent solution to meeting the need for specialist ASC provision.

The current provision has the capacity to meet the needs of a maximum of 30 pupils. However, the physical space in this provision is limited and lacks the flexibility to provide therapeutic input for the young people and to meet the needs of the most complex pupils who may find it difficult to tolerate being taught alongside their peers.

While there is currently no waiting list for places in secondary provision, analysis of local authority data indicates that this provision will require an additional 8 places in 2025, 7 in 2026, 4 in 2027, 11 in 2028, 10 in 2029. This is a conservative estimate based on the numbers of pupils currently in primary specialist provision, it is highly likely that more pupils will be identified as requiring specialist provision over this time period. Based on current data the capacity of Canolfan y Mor would need to be increased to 65 by 2029 to have sufficient places to meet need. The development of provision to meet this increasing need is a priority as the demand for places will very quickly exceed those currently available.

In summary, even though the local authority has effectively developed a range of specialist provision to meet the needs of ALN pupils, due to the significant increase in the number of children and young people with ALN across Wales, Carmarthenshire, like all other local authorities, is facing a huge challenge in respect of meeting this ever-increasing need.

There is no doubt that the learning environment at Ysgol Heol Goffa is not currently fit for purpose and that this must be addressed. Ysgol Heol Goffa is a provision for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and ensuring that this group of pupils have an appropriate learning environment is essential. However, when considering how best to achieve this, the Council must also take into consideration that a very significant issue in Llanelli at present is a lack of sufficient specialist provision for children and young people with ASC.

In the current financial environment, meeting this unprecedented level of need is a huge challenge, however, the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 places a statutory duty on local authorities to review the sufficiency of ALN provision in its schools and its area. If the local authority considers that arrangements are insufficient it must take all reasonable steps to remedy this.

## **5. Options under consideration**

Following a robust analysis of all the information collated, it is considered that there are 6 potential options which senior officer and members of the Cabinet need to consider.

Option 1: Refurbishing the current school

Option 2: Review and revise current proposals to build a new special school with the same capacity (120 pupils) but with a more cost-effective design

Option 3: Review and revise current proposals to build a new special school with increased capacity (150 pupils)

Option 4: In addition to implementing Option 2 or Option 3 develop new proposals to build one primary and one secondary Specialist Centre for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) attached to mainstream schools

Option 5: Review and revise current proposal to build a new special school and design to include a provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) with increased capacity (250 pupils)

Option 6: Develop new proposals to build one primary and one secondary Specialist Centre for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound learning difficulties (PMLD) and Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)

## **6. Option 1: Refurbishment of the current school**

Given the financial constraints facing the Council, one option that needs to be considered is the refurbishment of the current school.

In May 2024, following the decision not to proceed with the planned new build school to replace the existing Ysgol Heol Goffa, a Health and Safety inspection of the school was undertaken.



The subsequent report, published on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2024, described the appearance and décor of the school as poor and identified significant defects and deficiencies which included the following:

- Rest rooms and welfare facilities for staff were poor
- Insufficient toilet and changing facilities for staff and pupils
- General lack of storage space which led to toilet/changing facilities doubling up as storage space
- Insufficient space to store basic equipment such as wheelchairs which were often stored in corridors resulting in congestion
- Corridors and doorways of insufficient width to allow the free movement of children in wheelchairs
- Outdoor play areas which were not adequately secure, in poor condition containing equipment of an unsatisfactory standard
- Insufficient parking and drop off facilities and traffic management issues particularly at the start and end of the school day.
- Due to the scale of Health and Safety defects and deficiencies identified in the report, it was recommended that the local authority undertake a comprehensive Building Condition Survey of the school as soon as possible to identify the full scope of works required to remedy issues identified.

Detailed Building Condition Surveys of the main school and the senior school were subsequently undertaken, and the condition of both buildings was rated as being “Poor with major defects”. The defects identified were numerous and largely mirrored those identified in the Health and Safety report referred to above.

The local authority moved quickly to address the most urgent concerns and to date has invested close to £500,000 on improvements to the school building. A 5-year programme of work to rectify all other defects identified has been put in place, from May 2024 to May 2029 the estimated costs of the work required to the main school site is £1.854 million, with an additional £2.358 million required to rectify the identified defects to the senior school. In total, the estimated cost of works required to make the current school site fit for purpose is estimated to be £4.212 million. It must also be noted that the Retail Price Index (RPI) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) have not been added to the estimate of costs and therefore these sums will almost certainly increase over time. Furthermore, the school building may well deteriorate in other regards during the 5-year period as a survey only provides an overview of the building condition at a specific point in time. In addition, it is important to note that the surveys undertaken were limited in scope and were purely based on an inspection of the visible condition of the buildings, no structural survey or inspection of concealed or otherwise hidden services or finishes was undertaken.

The main teaching block was built circa 1970, and various extensions and additional blocks have been added in the 1980s and 1990s. Given the age of the buildings,

further hidden structural issues cannot be discounted and it is indeed possible that further refurbishment costs could emerge.

The buildings in which the current school is based are not bespoke or designed with the needs of children and young people with complex ALN in mind. Originally the main school building was used as a Social Services Training Centre, and the senior school block was a former Social Activity Centre for Adults. While rectifying the extensive range of identified defects and deficiencies is a possible option, it is questionable whether this would deliver a school that would meet current standards and expectations for highly specialist and accessible ALN provision.

It is also questionable whether there is sufficient space within the current site to modify the building to create sufficient toilets, therapy rooms, storage space and classroom space that would be required to meet Welsh Government 21<sup>st</sup> Sustainable Communities for Learning standards. To meet these requirements, it may be necessary to add to the footprint of the buildings on site which would incur further costs. There are also real concerns that the current site does not have sufficient space for any further development. It would therefore be essential to carry out an in-depth feasibility study prior to commencing any major works on the school.

In summary, the cost of refurbishing the existing buildings is significant and estimated at a minimum of £4.212million. However, even with this investment, it is unlikely that the refurbishment of the current school will provide a learning environment which the children and young people attending the school require. Furthermore, refurbishing the existing building does not provide a future proof model to meet increasing demands for special school placements and potential growth unless the provision can be expanded.

## **7. Option 2: Review and revise current proposals to build a new special school with the same capacity (120 pupils) but with a more cost-effective design**

Option 2 relates to reviewing the planned scheme to build the new special school and a re-design to reduce costs. As stated above, the local authority has undertaken a very rigorous planning and consultation process which has resulted in the development of plans for a state-of-the-art special school.

There is no doubt that all involved in the planning of the new school were committed to creating the best possible provision for the children and young people. What is less clear is whether there was sufficient consideration of the potential costs of delivering such a provision within the funding envelope available. In mitigation, it is undeniable that building costs have increased exponentially in recent years and that these increases could not have been foreseen.

Given that a great deal of time, effort and money has been spent developing the scheme, and despite the decision taken in May 2024 that a new special school was financially unviable, it would be prudent to review the plans to identify whether a special school can be delivered in a more cost-effective manner with a reduced specification.

In 2024, the Council commissioned Blake Morgan Project and Cost Management Ltd to advise on matters relating to the scheme. Blake Morgan's findings were reported in the Council's Tender Executive Statement in March 2024. The report stated that there was an opportunity through value engineering to reduce the overall costs to under £30 million. However, it was emphasised that even if this was the case, it was unlikely that the gap between the available budget and the tendered costs would be bridged completely.

To realise further savings, the Blake Morgan report suggested developing a "new brief or project strategy and re-designing the school either a smaller size, possibly a 2-storey building, or architecturally less complex focusing more on practicality and the end-user rather than aesthetics."

Given the challenges facing the Council to meet the needs of a growing number of pupils with ALN in Llanelli, it is imperative that the funding available is used efficiently to ensure maximum impact. This is not suggesting that what is on offer at the re-designed school will be of a poorer quality, it is widely acknowledged that this group of children and young people require and deserve the best facilities possible. However, the possibility of developing a new and more cost-effective scheme is certainly worth exploring.

In the current scheme, the new school is a single storey building and as such is spread over a larger area of land and requires extensive groundworks. A single storey building does have some educational benefits, particularly relating to accessibility. However, there are many examples of two storey special schools which provide excellent provision for pupils with very complex additional learning needs. The issues that may present from having a two storey build, rather than a single storey, can be managed very effectively and should not impact negatively on the educational experience of the pupils.

In addition, there are two other key elements of the plan that should be reviewed. Firstly, the current design also includes a separate Respite Centre on the school grounds to provide residential accommodation for 5 young people. This is not educational provision, as such, and the Council could review the need for this provision at this time and consider whether there are any alternative options to meet this need within the County. It is estimated that savings of £2.4 million could be achieved by removing the Respite Centre from the scheme.

Secondly, the current plans include the creation of a hydrotherapy pool as part of the school. There is no doubt that such a provision is hugely beneficial to many children and young people with a range of complex needs. However, it is not essential that such provision is available on site so long as there is easy access to such provision. The Council in partnership with Hywel Dda Health Board have developed a state-of-the-art health and leisure facility called Pentre Awel. This facility is in the close proximity to the proposed site for the new school and has a hydrotherapy pool which would be available for use by the pupils of the new school. Given that this is the case, it would not be necessary or cost effective to duplicate this provision in the school. The estimated savings from taking the hydrotherapy pool out of the scheme is estimated to be in the region of £1million.

Blake Morgan also raised issues relating to the tendering process used for the contract to build the new school. In order to identify an appropriate contractor a tender was issued for mini competition via the South West Wales Regional Contracts Framework 2020. Expressions of interest to submit tenders were sought from 4 of the 5 contractors on the framework. This is a relatively small number and unfortunately only one contractor responded with a completed bid. In the Tender Report of 11 March 2024, Blake Morgan concluded that the tendered costs were higher than anticipated and that the lack of competition due to the single return was likely to have contributed to this.

If the decision was made to proceed with the new build proposals, it would be sensible to utilise an alternative form of procurement to create more market interest and drive competition into the process. By doing this it is possible, but not guaranteed, that the build costs could be reduced significantly.

If the decision is taken to review the current scheme, it would also be prudent to consider whether the current plan creates sufficient capacity in the system to meet identified need. The lack of capacity at Ysgol Heol Goffa has been well documented. The current school has 127 pupils attending and 19 pupils on a waiting list. The current plan for the new school only creates the capacity for 120 pupils. This is clearly problematic as it is significantly below what is required.

It is extremely important that this lack of capacity for Special School places is in the forefront of planning provision going forward so that the Council can meet its statutory duty in accordance with the ALNET Act 2018 to provide sufficiency of provision for pupils with ALN.

In summary, it is likely that re-designing the current scheme and a new tendering process could significantly reduce the cost of building the new school without significantly impacting on the quality of provision. However, if a decision is taken that

the capacity of the new school should remain at 120 places, this will not be sufficient to meet current identified need in Llanelli.

If this were the case, the approach to placements at Ysgol Heol Goffa would need to be reviewed to ensure that only pupils with the most complex needs were placed at the school. Not all pupils with complex ALN require the specialist environment and access to the interventions and equipment available in a specialist school. The entry criteria for the new school could be reviewed to ensure that places are matched to need.

The review of placements at Ysgol Heol Goffa would need to be part of a wider review of the continuum of provision in Llanelli. Limiting the places at Ysgol Heol Goffa to the most complex would require further development of Unit provision, this would provide appropriate specialist provision for pupils with less complex needs who did not meet the criteria for entry to Ysgol Heol Goffa.

### **8. Option 3: Review and revise current proposals to build a new special school with enhanced capacity (150 pupils)**

This proposed option entails reviewing the planned scheme to build a new special school and re-design to reduce costs but with an increased capacity for 150 places.

As stated in Option 2, it is likely that re-designing the proposed new school will reduce the costs of the build significantly. Although, it must be recognised that such a re-design would incur further costs to the Council without cast iron guarantees that savings would be realised, progressing this option should provide a much more cost-effective solution to meeting the needs of children and young people in Llanelli with SLD and PMLD.

However, as has been made clear, the proposed capacity of the new school is not sufficient to meet the demand for places which is already present. It would therefore be sensible to consider not only re-designing the building to reduce costs but also to explore the possibility of increasing the capacity of the school to a level which provides the number of places required.

Increasing the capacity of the school would require additional capital funding, however, it would ensure that children and young people who are currently unable to access appropriate education could do so, it would also provide the capacity to future-proof this provision ensuring that the Council could meet the needs pupils with PMLD and SLD for the immediate future. It would also provide some additional places across the County should the need arise, which increases flexibility within the system as a whole.

The most compelling argument for enhancing the provision is that this would enable the Council to meet its statutory duties in accordance with ALNET Act (2018).

**9. Option 4: In addition to implementing either Option 2 or Option 3, develop new proposals to build one primary and one secondary Specialist Centre for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) attached to mainstream schools.**

Option 4 needs to be considered in conjunction with Option 2 or Option 3

As stated previously, implementing Option 3 would ensure that children and young people with PMLD and SLD who are currently unable to access appropriate education could do so at the new re-designed Special School. It would provide the capacity to future-proof this provision ensuring that the Council could meet the needs of all young people in the area with these needs for the immediate future. It would also provide some additional places across the County should the need arise which increases flexibility within the system.

Implementing Option 2 would only ensure that the new Special School could meet the needs of pupils with the most complex needs, a strategy to expand Unit provision would need to sit alongside this to ensure that there was sufficient capacity in the system to meet the needs of pupils with less complex ALN.

However, while implementing either of these options could in theory meet the needs of pupils with SLD and PMLD, neither option would address the lack of capacity in the system to meet the needs of the increasing number of children of young people with ASC who require specialist provision.

Option 4 would look to create 2 new Specialist Centres attached to mainstream schools but unlike Option 6 they would have a much smaller capacity and would be solely designated to meet the needs of pupils with ASC. These 2 new Specialist Centres would be in addition to the new re-designed Ysgol Heol Goffa as set out in either Option 2 or 3.

The capacity of the Primary Specialist Centre for ASC would be 50 places, and the capacity of the Secondary Specialist Centre would be 65 places. The planning of these provisions could be based on the successful model used to establish Canolfan Cothi, an excellent bespoke provision for pupils with ASC in the Ammanford area.

No planning has currently taken place to develop the scheme for these two Centres. There are therefore no estimated costs available, these could only be provided following further feasibility studies and if detailed plans were progressed. However, there are examples of similar provision being developed recently in another local

authority at a cost in the region of £9 million. Based on this figure it is estimated that the build cost for both units could be in the region of £18 million. These costs would be in addition to the costs of delivering the re-designed new Ysgol Heol Goffa as per Option 2 or 3.

The funding required to support the scheme would have to be sought through the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. In accordance with this programme, and subject to the Council progressing through Welsh Government's five case business model for approval, Welsh Government would fund 75% of the cost of the scheme with the Council funding the remaining 25%.

The proposals would also need to be progressed in accordance with the Welsh Government legislative Guidance School Organisation Code and subject to public consultation.

#### **10. Option 5: Review and revise current proposal to build a new special school and re-design to include a provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) with enhanced capacity (250 pupils)**

Options 1, 2 and 3 focus on meeting the needs of children and young people with PMLD and SLD. Options 4 and 5 also consider how the local authority could respond to the very significant growing pressures in the system for specialist ASC provision.

One option to consider would be to change the designation of Ysgol Heol Goffa to include children and young people with autism in addition to those with SLD and PMLD. This would require re-designing the proposals for the new school to include the development of provision to meet this need.

The capacity for the new school would need to be increased significantly and with the additional capacity needed to meet the number of pupils with SLD and PMLD this would require the school to have a capacity of 250 places.

No planning has been undertaken to assess the feasibility and cost of a scheme to deliver this provision. An estimate of costs could only be provided following further feasibility studies and if detailed plans were progressed, however, even with efficiencies that may be found through re-designing the new school, the cost of building a special school of this size would be a minimum of £36 million.

The funding required to support the scheme would have to be sought through the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. In accordance with this programme, and subject to the Council progressing through Welsh Government's five case business model for approval, Welsh Government would fund 75% of the cost of the scheme with the Council funding the remaining 25%.

The proposals would also need to be progressed in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code and be subject to public consultation.

Special Schools such as Heol Goffa do have a range of advantages which the local authority need to consider when evaluating the options for delivering specialist ALN provision in Llanelli. These are summarised below

- Special Schools focus on individuals and ensure that they are valued in their own right and that their achievements are celebrated and recognised. Many of the young people in such provision struggle to achieve at a similar level if compared to mainstream peers and often their experience of mainstream education is one of dealing with failure, lack of understanding and isolation.
- Special Schools can offer personalised attention and curriculum designed specifically to meet individual need.
- Children with similar needs can form friendships with their peers which can help them feel less different and make friends more easily, boosting a child's confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing
- Special Schools are skilled in tracking and monitoring pupil progress based on the start point of that individual and can therefore tailor programmes and intervention to meet need.
- The relationships that Special Schools form with parents/carers cannot be underestimated. Due to the complex needs of their children, parents/carers often face huge challenges, and special schools are expert and highly skilled in providing the support required.
- Special Schools can focus on the future destinations of the pupil and ensure multi-agency planning is in place to identify future needs and work with local providers to support future job and career opportunities.
- Special Schools provide of supported opportunities outside of the classroom for the children and young people which are geared to widening the experiences of the pupil and developing individual skills and talents and this increasing the self-esteem and wellbeing and preparing for later life.
- Special Schools have staff who are well trained and access professional development which is specific to their needs. They can develop and support new staff effectively by utilising experienced staff to mentor and support their development. This makes special schools more resilient to staff absence or loss of staff and enables continuity of teaching and support which is essential.

There is an alternative school of thought which views Special Schools as detrimental to children and young people because they are excluded from mainstream provision and educated away from most of their peers. It is believed that segregated schooling perpetuates discrimination, devaluation, stigmatisation, stereotyping and isolation which are the very conditions which disabled adults identify as among the biggest barriers to respect, participation and a full life.



There is no doubt that young people on leaving special school face many challenges due to the attitude of many in wider society and the physical and attitudinal barriers they face. There is a huge amount of literature which explores the merits or otherwise of inclusive education, indeed the very definition of inclusion is the subject of significant debate which will not be dealt with in any detail in this paper.

The key is that provision can effectively cater for the individual and inclusion in this sense means that all children and young people have access to educational provision that meets their needs. The lived experience of a child or young person with ALN in a setting that does not meet their needs, is one of anxiety and loneliness and feelings of failure. The fundamental right which all children and young people have, is to education which meets their needs.

In summary, when considering this option, the Council will need to assess whether the further development of the Special School model is the strategic direction it wants to take or whether the preferred model is one of developing specialist provision attached to mainstream schools.

A further consideration would be whether the size of the school was felt to be problematic. This would be a large special school, however, there are examples of Special Schools in Wales that are of similar size and larger, which are very successful.

Another consideration would be the feasibility and potential cost of such a school, these would only be known following further feasibility studies and if detailed plans were progressed.

#### **11. Option 6: Develop new proposals to build one primary and one secondary Specialist Centre for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound learning difficulties (PMLD) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASC)**

An alternative to developing a large Special School to provide Llanelli with the capacity it requires to meet the needs of pupils with PMLD, SLD and ASC, would be to establish two new Specialist Centres, one attached to a mainstream primary school and one to a mainstream secondary school.

Such a model is already working effectively in other areas of Carmarthenshire and high level plans have been developed for the new Centres based on the previous experience of officers in developing Specialist Centres in other localities.

The Primary Specialist Centre would have a capacity of approximately 100 places at an estimated build cost of £17 million.

The Secondary Specialist Centre would have a capacity of approximately 150 places at an estimated build cost of £14 million.

The total cost estimate for both Centres is £31 million.

It must be emphasised that these are estimated costs. A more accurate figure could only be provided following further feasibility studies and if detailed plans were progressed.

The funding required to support the scheme would have to be sought through the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. In accordance with this programme, and subject to the Council progressing through Welsh Government's five case business model for approval, Welsh Government would fund 75% of the cost of the scheme with the Council funding the remaining 25%.

The proposals would also need to be progressed in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code and subject to public consultation.

As stated previously, in accordance with the ALN Strategy, the local authority has invested heavily in developing Units on mainstream school sites and Specialist Centres attached to mainstream schools.

In most local authorities, pupils whose needs cannot be met in Unit provision are placed in a Special School, this is the case in Llanelli for pupils with SLD and PMLD. Outside of Llanelli, the local authority has progressed an alternative model and has invested heavily in developing Specialist Centres for ALN attached to mainstream schools. This alternative model has been very successful, the Specialist Centres established have the facilities to meet the needs of pupils with very complex ALN and specialist staff are delivering high quality education.

Many of the pupils' needs are similar to the most complex pupils in any other specialist setting in the County, including Ysgol Heol Goffa. Not all pupils are expected to access mainstream classes, where the complexity of need is such that it would not be appropriate for pupils to do this, their needs are met solely within the Centres by highly skilled and supportive teams of staff. Where appropriate, pupils can access mainstream classes, and most pupils utilise the facilities within the mainstream schools on a regular basis.

Pupils follow individual education programmes based on very detailed planning and progress is tracked closely and individual development plans amended appropriately. Pupils are given access to a wide range of experiences and their achievements are celebrated fully. The Centres could be described as special schools on a much smaller scale. With effective leadership at a local authority and school level, these types of provisions can provide the benefits of a special school, as outlined on page

23, with the additional benefits that having access to the facilities of a mainstream school can bring.

It is evident that the Specialist Centres developed in Carmarthenshire are meeting the needs of their pupils who are thriving in these settings. The co-location of these provisions and the interaction between the mainstream school and the Specialist Centre is also supporting an inclusive ethos and reducing the stereotypical and ill-considered opinions that can result from a more segregated approach.

However, there are risks associated with this model and effective leadership is key to ensuring their success. School leaders and the Governing Body need to wholly embrace the specialist setting and celebrate the achievements and experiences of the pupils, valuing them equally to those of pupils in the mainstream.

School leaders are often mainstream specialists rather than ALN specialists, however, with the correct training and professional learning they can be upskilled to meet the needs of learners with wide ranging needs. It is vital that highly specialist settings attached to mainstream schools are led by ALN specialists who are also members of the school's senior leadership team. This is crucial to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met, and that the specialist setting is included in all aspects of school life. It also ensures that key decisions are taken in the interest of the whole school and not only the mainstream pupils.

Parents/carers of children and young people with ALN face many challenges and need to be supported and feel part of their child's education. It is essential that this is recognised, and parents are seen as partners in the education of their children. The Specialist Centres which have been developed in other areas of Carmarthenshire are effective in doing this and are held in high regard by pupils and parents/carers.

In summary, there is no reason why Specialist Centres could not be as effective in Llanelli as they have been elsewhere in Carmarthenshire given the same level of investment, planning and effective leadership, both at a local authority and school level. However, it is also important to recognise that Llanelli currently has a very successful Special School that is delivering high quality provision.

Ysgol Heol Goffa is held in very high esteem by parents/carers, many of whom have a very strong emotional attachment to the school and the staff. Staff are rightly proud of the work they do with the pupils and have a very strong affinity with the school. The whole community has been involved in planning the new school and were very excited about the prospect of moving to a bespoke building which they had helped to create.

The expectation of all those involved with Ysgol Heol Goffa since 2017 has been that a new Special School would be built and the announcement in May 2024 came as a huge disappointment. If a decision was taken to move away from the model of having a standalone Special School in Llanelli, a huge amount of work would need to be undertaken with Senior Leaders, Governors, parents/carers, and most importantly the children and young people, to ensure that the change is seen as positive and that a smooth transition is possible.

The provision available in the Specialist Centres is not well understood outside of those provisions and local authority officers. There is a concern held by parents/carers whose children attend special school currently that many of the benefits of a Special School would be lost if the provision was attached to a mainstream school. The concern is that provision would be watered down and that children would not get the same positive educational experience. These are understandable concerns which may be alleviated if more was known about the work of the Centres. Whatever the decision on the future of ALN provision in Llanelli, it will be crucial moving forward to ensure that the work of the Specialist Centres is shared more widely with parents/carers, pupils and all professionals working with children and young people in Carmarthenshire.

## **12. Conclusion**

This report was commissioned following the decision taken by the Council not to proceed with the proposal to build a new school to replace Ysgol Heol Goffa. There is no doubt that the learning environment at Ysgol Heol Goffa is not currently fit for purpose and that this must be addressed.

How best to achieve this is not straight forward and the Council must consider the wider pressures in the system, most notably the need to expand provision for ASC, when deciding how to progress. This is a huge challenge, particularly considering the significant financial pressures facing local authorities at this time. However, as stated on numerous occasions in this report, the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 places a statutory duty on local authorities to review the sufficiency of ALN provision in its schools and its area. If the local authority considers that arrangements are insufficient it must take all reasonable steps to remedy this.

The Options outlined in this report provide possible ways forward to address the insufficiency of provision identified. All the options will require further investment by the local authority and given the financial pressures, when considering the options, it is vital to ensure that funding is utilised in the most cost effective, sustainable manner to meet current and future demand.

The Estyn report of July 2023 praised the local authority for providing a suitable range of provision for pupils with ALN, and for investing significantly in the development of additional provision when required. Whatever decision is taken on the future delivery of ALN provision in Llanelli, it will be imperative to have an ongoing strategy to ensure that the needs of all pupils with ALN, particularly those with ASC are met effectively across Carmarthenshire, and through the medium of Welsh and English.

This strategic approach will need to explore all viable options for increasing capacity and enhancing the quality of support services for pupils with ALN and those with ASC in particular. This includes developing specialist provision but also investing in specialised training for teaching staff, developing tailored educational programmes, and ensuring that the physical infrastructure of schools is conducive to the learning and well-being of all pupils.