**Equalities Impact Assessment for New Alternative Provision Free School with an Integrated Youth Offer**

**at the Roundwood Centre**

**Background**

In order to meet the needs of children at risk of permanent exclusion from school and vulnerable children who struggle to achieve in mainstream schools, the council is inviting proposals to establish an Alternative Provision Free School with an Integrated Youth Offer at the Roundwood Centre in Harlesden. The expectation is that an education provider, in partnership with the voluntary sector, will provide an integrated youth offer that will enhance the existing arrangements that are in place and increase the reach of the centre by enabling more use in the evenings, at weekends and school holidays.

The local need for the school was established through Brent’s place planning process and through discussion with local secondary schools and is identified in the School Place Planning Strategy 2019-23, agreed by Cabinet in November 2018.

Within Brent, there are on average 30 pupils of secondary school age placed in Alternative Provision settings each academic year. Many of these are placed in provision out of borough because there is insufficient local, high quality provision to meet their needs. Some of these pupils will have received fixed term exclusions and/or are at risk of permanent exclusion. The school will provide places for 30 – 40 young people and up to a maximum of 50, if there is sufficient local demand. Places will be open to boys and girls from year 7 (11 year-olds) to year 11 (16 year-olds).

**Impact on other schools and the local community**

In Brent, there are 15 secondary schools, 13 of which are academies and 2 are voluntary aided schools. In addition, there are 60 primary mainstream schools, 4 special schools, 4 maintained nurseries and 2 pupil referral units.

The new school will be an integral part of the education system in Brent. Pupils will come from all parts of Brent with places commissioned either by the local authority or by mainstream schools. Places will be commissioned for young people who are subject to or at risk of exclusion, or for those whose needs cannot be met in mainstream, either for short term provision (respite) or longer term at KS4. There may also be young people who are permanently excluded from Brent Secondary schools, and therefore in need of an alternative setting and who cannot be placed at Brent River College (Pupil Referral Unit) for reasons of risk relating to gang affiliation/peer issues.

As an alternative to mainstream education, the Alternative Provision School at the Roundwood Centre will offer a different approach for young people who may be disengaged with a formal school setting, allowing them to fulfil their potential in a different environment.

A key part of the proposal will be the integrated youth offer that will be open to all young people across Brent, as well as the young people attending the Alternative Provision school. The Roundwood Centre is currently used to provide youth services in the evenings, with the number of boys attending the centre out-numbering girls overall, despite the presence of an all girls’ group one night per week. In terms of ethnicities, Black Caribbean is the largest teen cohort and the majority of young people accessing activities at the centre come from the local Harlesden area. A variety of activities are delivered, including cookery, music production, table tennis, Wii sport, craft activities, cricket, a steel band and various voluntary sector services, as well as positive mentoring by youth workers. A Brent Council funded offer to provide advice and guidance to young people regarding their education, employment and training options uses the Roundwood site as one of its bases.

The proposed transformation of the Roundwood Centre will enhance and improve the current offer to a larger group of young people within Brent. Any potential for negative impact will be mitigated though a partnership approach between the school, the local authority and the voluntary sector that will be reflected in governance arrangements. The intention is that the local community is involved in ensuring services meet community need with local organisations running services from the site. It is envisaged that voluntary sector representation will be prominent within the governance of the school.

**Equalities Assessment**

The new Alternative Provision Free School, along with an integrated youth offer, will support greater equality for vulnerable children in Brent by providing local support and opportunities for pupils who are at risk of exclusion and low attainment. Establishing alternative provision within the local area will increase the number of young people in such provision who are educated closer to home, reducing travelling time and potential safeguarding risks. The school will help this group of young people to build resilience, and gain a range of qualifications, that will enable them to stay in education, employment or training, and support their transition into adulthood. The provision will connect vulnerable young people with support services, and improve access to community-led provision outside of traditional school hours. The school will contribute to Brent’s contextual safeguarding approach that considers family, school and neighbourhood/social contexts and, through a multi-agency response and earlier intervention, improves outcomes for young people and their families.

Overall, the new Alternative Provision Free School with an integrated youth offer will transform life chances by:

* Improving the educational outcomes of young people at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded from mainstream secondary school;
* Providing alternative, structured pathways into education, employment and training for the 16-19 age group, reducing the number of ‘NEET’ young people in borough;
* Scheduling an imaginative, up to date and comprehensive youth offer that will include positive diversionary activities for the universal cohort of Brent young people, but with targeted support for vulnerable groups, thereby contributing towards Brent’s two key priorities within the Borough Plan:
  + to give every child the opportunity to succeed;
  + to create a borough where all residents can feel safe, secure, happy and healthy.