PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH SPECIALIST RESOURCED PROVISION IN A MAINTAINED SCHOOL DOWDALES SCHOOL, BARROW-IN-FURNESS

Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (prescribed alterations to maintained schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

1. Name of Proposing Body and the Affected Educational Establishment

The proposing body is Westmorland and Furness Council, School Organisation Team, Post Box 304, Kendal, LA9 4GY.

The affected educational establishment is Dowdales School, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA15 8AH. This is a community school.

2. Description of Alteration

Westmorland and Furness Council is proposing to establish Resourced Provision, with a designation of Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) with flexibility to accommodate children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) needs, to provide 15 places for Key Stage 3 & 4 pupils at Dowdales School.

It is proposed that the provision will be established with effect from 5 January 2027, for six places with a phased admissions approach for the nine additional places, to allow for completion of necessary capital works. It is intended that the resourced provision will be fully implemented by September 2028, subject to completion of necessary capital works.

3. Evidence of Demand

The council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) within the Local Authority. Demand for specialist provision for children and young people with SEND has increased substantially over recent years.

Westmorland and Furness Council has a strategy that aims to secure access to a high-quality continuum of provision for all children and young people, enabling the majority of children and young people with additional needs to access local provision, with appropriate capacity and resources to meet need. The continuum comprises of various elements, including the provision of specialist SEND units and resource provisions within mainstream schools.

Resource provision and SEND units are designated areas and facilities within a mainstream school that enables support to be provided to pupils with specific types of special educational needs and disabilities. Such provisions allow pupils

to access specialised support and resources tailored to their needs whilst also having access to mainstream resources and facilities as appropriate.

The Council proposes to enhance this continuum of provision by establishing and expanding specialist SEND Units and Resourced Provisions linked to mainstream schools.

Analysis of demand data has demonstrated the increasing and ongoing demand for specialist places to meet social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and autistic spectrum condition (ASC) need in the area.

This proposal is intended to ensure that Barrow-in-Furness has sufficient school places for local children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) needs.

4. Objectives of Proposal

The objectives of the proposal are to:

• Increase the number of resourced provision places for children and young people with SEMH and ASC needs in the Barrow-in-Furness area.

• Enable this cohort of children and young people to be educated alongside their peer group whilst receiving appropriate specialist support that.

5. Effect on nearby Educational Institutions

The Local Authority is confident that the proposal will not adversely impact on other local schools. All relevant and local stakeholders have been consulted in relation to the proposal. An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and updated following the consultation process.

6. Funding for the Proposal

The provision will be accommodated within the existing school building. A capital project will be completed to reconfigure and refurbish an existing space within the school. It is expected that the construction of the accommodation will be completed in the 2027/28 academic year.

Any capital funding to support the proposal will be funded from the Local Authority's High Needs Provision Capital Allocation grant which is to be used to invest in new places for pupils with SEND in mainstream schools.

The Local Authority's standard methodology for funding SEND places in Resourced Provision will provide the revenue funding for the operational aspects of the Resourced Provision.

7. Implementation and Any Proposed Stages for Implementation.

The implementation date for the new resource provision to be established at

Dowdales Secondary School in Barrow-in-Furness is 5 January 2027 for an initial six places with a phased admission for the additional nine places, subject to completion of necessary capital works. It is intended that the resourced provision will be fully implemented by September 2028.

8. Objections and Comments

Within four weeks of the date of publication of this notice any person wishing to raise objections or make comments on the proposal may do so in writing by 29 November 2026.

Westmorland and Furness Council, School Organisation Team, Post Box 304, Kendal, LA9 4GY. Email: school.organisation.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk