Westmorland & Furness Council

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PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH SPECIALIST RESOURCED PROVISION IN A MAINTAINED SCHOOL JOHN RUSKIN SCHOOL, CONISTON

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 John Ruskin Secondary School, Lake Road, Coniston, Cumbria LA21 8EW. This is a maintained school.

2. Description of Alteration

Westmorland and Furness Council is proposing to establish a SEND Unit with a designation of Cognition and Learning (C&L) to provide 12 places for Key Stage 3 & 4 pupils at John Ruskin Secondary School. The provision will be established with effect from 5 January 2027 for six places, with a phased admissions approach for the six additional places, to allow for the completion of necessary capital works. It is intended that the SEND Unit will be fully implemented by February 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 cognition and learning needs in the area.

This proposal is intended to ensure that Coniston has sufficient provision for local children and young people with cognition and learning 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 cognition and learning needs in the Coniston area.
- Enable this cohort of children and young people to be educated alongside their peer group whilst receiving any specialist support that is required.

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 initial phase of the proposal, for six places, will be accommodated within the existing school building. However, a capital project will be undertaken to develop two additional classrooms to ensure that the school can accommodate the intended twelve places. The construction work is expected to 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 and SEND Units will provide the revenue funding for the operational aspects of the SEND Unit.

7. Implementation and Any Proposed Stages for Implementation.

It is proposed that the provision will be established with effect from 5 January 2027, for an initial six places with a phased admissions approach for the additional six places, to allow for completion of necessary capital works.

It is intended that the provision will be fully implemented by February 2028, subject to completion of necessary capital works.

8. Objections and Comments

Within four weeks of the date publication of this notice any person wishing to raise objections or make comments on the proposal may do so in writing to the Westmorland and Furness Council, School Organisation Team, Post Box 304, Kendal, LA9 4GY or by emailing school.organisation.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk by 29 November 2026.