



monmouthshire
sir fynwy



CONSULTATION REPORT

To establish a New Welsh Medium Primary School
in Monmouth

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1. Introduction

Monmouthshire County Council has a statutory duty to secure sufficient and suitable school places for children within its County, and in doing so ensure that resources and facilities are efficiently utilised to deliver the education opportunities that our children deserve.

The Council has a responsibility under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 to consult with appropriate stakeholders when considering any significant school reorganisation proposals.

The Council recently engaged in a statutory consultation process relating to the establishment of a Welsh medium primary school in Monmouth.

The purpose of undertaking the statutory consultation was to seek the views of our community, key stakeholders and partners on the proposal.

This consultation report now represents the council's responsibilities in line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 to produce a report seeking to inform interested parties of the outcome to the consultation by means of:

- Summarising each of the issues raised by consultees.
- Responding to these by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal, or rejection to the concerns with supporting reasons.
- Setting out Estyn's view (as provided in its consultation response) of the overall merits of the proposal.

2. Distribution of the Consultation Report

This consultation report was published on the Monmouthshire County Council Website [School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire](#). We contacted the following consultees and interested parties directly to inform them of the publication of this document.

- Parents, carers/guardians and staff members of schools affected by the proposal.
- The governing body of any school affected by the proposal.
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal.
- Headteachers of schools affected by the proposal.
- Welsh Ministers
- Town and Community Councils in the Monmouth area
- Assembly Members representing the area served by the school.
- Members of Parliament representing the area served by the school.
- Directors of Education of all bordering LAs – Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Powys, Torfaen, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire
- GAVO
- Teaching trade unions
- Support Staff trade unions
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- ESTYN
- RHAG
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Church in Wales Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- South East Wales Education Achievement Service
- Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
- Early Years & Childcare Partnership
- Welsh in Education Forum

3. Background

Monmouthshire currently have two Welsh medium Primary Schools, Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni located in the north of the county in Abergavenny and Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin located in the south of the county in Caldicot.

We have provided additional Welsh medium places in the north of the County by increasing the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to 317. It is proposed that the school will also be relocated to a new site in September 2024, which will enable them to become a 420-place primary school.

We have completed the refurbishment and expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin to ensure it has the capacity to provide 210 pupil places, with a Cylch Meithrin within the grounds of the school.

Whilst these are important developments, we acknowledge that the northeast of Monmouthshire is currently without Welsh medium primary provision and in line with our agreed Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP), we plan to open a Welsh medium primary school in Monmouth.

Over the last three years, significant work has been carried out to identify a suitable location for a new Welsh medium primary school within the Monmouth area. However, despite our efforts, we have not been able to secure a suitable site within the town due to lack of available land and environmental restrictions.

Although we have looked further afield, any prospective sites were judged unsuitable and/or the distance to travel was too great.

4. A reminder of our proposal

The Local Authority consulted on the proposal to establish a 3-11 Welsh medium primary school via a seedling / growth model on the Overmonnow Primary School site from the 1st September 2024. This will be achieved by utilising existing accommodation at the school. There will also be a Local Authority nursery and childcare provision.

From September 2023 there will be a Welsh medium satellite class located on Overmonnow primary school site, this provision is under the leadership, management, and governance of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin. If the proposal is agreed, a new seedling Welsh medium primary school will be established. Therefore, the satellite class is not subject to this consultation process.

The school will open initially with pupils in nursery, reception, and year 1, pupils who are currently attending the satellite class will automatically transfer to the new school.

5. Consultation Arrangements

On 18th January 2023 the Council's Cabinet approved the proposals to commence statutory consultation thereby allowing the Council to engage with key stakeholders on establishing a new Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site.

In line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018, the Council produced a consultation document, published on 29th March 2023, which also represented the commencement of the statutory consultation period. The formal consultation period lasted 8 weeks (including 20 school days), concluding on 15th May 2023.

The consultation document was distributed / links sent to all statutory consultees as listed on page 4 of this document. The consultation document was also published on the Council's website at [School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire](#).

The Council raised awareness of the consultation through means of direct mailshots to all statutory consultees, including parents, staff, and governing bodies of schools affected by the proposal. A marketing campaign was also established, making use of the Council's social media networks throughout the consultation period to advertise the proposals and how consultees could contribute to this process.

Consultees were advised of the following opportunities to respond formally to the consultation proposals:

- Completing the online consultation questionnaire available via [School Reorganisation - Monmouthshire](#)
- Emailing strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk.

5.2 Consultation Meetings

The Council was keen to engage throughout the consultation period with all interested parties.

The school directly affected by the proposal is Overmonnow Primary School, therefore consultation sessions were held with staff, governors, and parents of the school. A further consultation session was held with a broader audience, allowing engagement with all other parties with an interest in these proposals.

These consultation sessions were held at Overmonnow Primary School on the following dates / times:

Consultee	Date	Time
Parents	25 th April 2023	2:15pm
Staff	25 th April 2023	3:15pm
Governors	25 th April 2023	4:15pm

Other interested Parties	25 th April 2023	5:30pm
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The following officers from the Council's Directorate for Children and Young People were in attendance at the consultation sessions, providing stakeholders with the opportunity to learn more about the proposals and ask any questions or raise any concerns.

- Cabinet Member for Education
- Chief Officer for Education
- Head of Attainment and Achievement
- Finance & Support Services Manager
- Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme Manager
- School Admissions & Planning Lead

Officers in attendance at the consultation meetings provided reassurance that any comments or concerns raised would be noted and fed into the consultation process. However, consultees were encouraged to continue to submit their formal responses to this consultation through any of the available methods.

Consultation session with parents

The first consultation session was held with parents of Overmonnow Primary School and 6 parents attended.

The stakeholders in attendance were keen to learn more about the proposal and had an interest in Welsh-medium provision for their children. A summary of the main points raised during the session and the Council's response is listed below:

Comment / Question	Council's Response
Will there be shared areas of Overmonnow or will the new school be just in the 3 classrooms?	Yes, there will be a need for some areas of the school to be shared such as the hall, play areas and canteen, this will be timetabled and managed collaboratively between the two schools
What is the long-term plan if the school is a success?	We want the school to be a success. The Authority is currently reviewing its educational provision across the County considering known data such as live birth rates, existing housing growth commitments and modelling potential future housing growth. The provision across Monmouth and its environs will fully consider the place of Welsh Medium education in that process.
Will it be the same as Y Fenni where English is not taught until Year 3?	Yes. This is the same for all Welsh medium primary schools.

Will the nursery be flexible in hours and days, will we have to attend 5 sessions?	Pupils accessing a Local Authority nursery have to attend 5 morning sessions per week.
Is one of the classrooms for Nursery?	Yes, there will be a classroom for the nursery in the morning and wraparound childcare will be provided in the afternoon.
How will it work with mixed year groups?	There will be a classroom for reception, year 1 and year 2 and as the school grows a classroom for Year 3,4,5 and 6.

Consultation session with staff

The second consultation session was held with staff of Overmonnow Primary School and 19 staff members attended.

The stakeholders in attendance were keen to learn more about the changes that will be made to the school building and what impact this would have on the school's structure and capacity. They were also concerned about access to the school site, as there are existing traffic management concerns which could be exacerbated by the proposal.

A summary of the main points raised during the session and the Council's response are listed below:

Comment / Question	Council's Response
If we are losing 3 classrooms, are we gaining 3 classrooms?	There will be two new classrooms built where the double demountable is currently located. This will provide the school with the capacity for 360 pupils, which we believe is sufficient based on projected pupil numbers.
Why isn't the Welsh School being placed in the new building?	We need to be able to split the site and ensure that the new Welsh-medium school has its own entrance, this would not be possible if they were in the demountable as it is situated at the back of the school.
Parking is already inadequate on site; will this be addressed before the new school opens?	We will be looking at the access issues as part of the build and considering options to address this.
Will the improvements include toilets as we currently only have 3 staff toilets, which is completely inadequate.	Once the initial designs have been completed, the Council will meet with the headteacher to share the plans with her, and the school will be fully involved throughout the process. We will ensure that toilet provision is in line with Building Bulletin guidelines.

How will this impact our budget, for example how will shared costs be split, such as cleaning, caretaker etc.	The funding for these services will continue to be delegated to Overmonnow Primary school and therefore Overmonnow will continue to pay for these costs. It will be the same staff providing these services to both schools.
Can pupils from Overmonnow nursery access the wrap around childcare provision?	The wrap around childcare can be accessed by pupils attending Overmonnow nursery but it will be Welsh-medium provision.

In addition to the questions listed above the following comments were also noted:

- Overmonnow Primary manages ALN children well and this is due to the fact they have access to areas such as the demountable, they are used as breakout areas. These areas need to be maintained; we have to fight for them.
- It feel like you are trying to squeeze too much onto this site, we have English Medium school, nursery and the SNRB already.
- Locals will be against any of the parkland being lost to parking

Consultation session with The Governing Body

The third consultation session was held with the governing body of Overmonnow Primary School and 7 members of the governing body attended.

The stakeholders in attendance had concerns around the build programme and whether all the work could be completed during the summer holidays. Again, one of the main concerns was around access to the school site and the parking issues, as there isn't enough parking for staff at the school.

A summary of the main points raised during the session and the Council's response is listed below:

Comment / Question	Council's Response
It is important we don't lose breakout spaces if we lose the demountables.	Once the initial designs have been completed, the Council will share these with the headteacher so they can also provide feedback and the designs will be developed together with the school
Will there be much disruption during the build, especially if it falls behind, this could be very unsettling for young children?	The majority of the work will be undertaken during holiday periods. Any work undertaken during term time will be with minimum disruption to the pupils
Will lunch time staff be shared, and will there be an expectation for them to speak Welsh?	There will not be an expectation for canteen staff to speak Welsh.

The governing body would like to have reassurances that there would be significant investment into the current access arrangements that would allow for both schools' pupils to be able to safely access the school. Without an immediate change to this we would have concerns that current families and future families may be deterred from staying or applying to OPS due to logistical concerns.	Improving access to the school site will be part of the redevelopment work being proposed. All designs will be in consultation with the Headteacher and Governing Body of Overmonnow Primary School
Time scales for the proposed work seems very tight, will the work be completed on time?	The programme of work will be phased and agreed with the Heateacher.

Consultation session with other interested parties

The fourth consultation session was held with the any other interested parties from the wider community and 13 stakeholders attended.

The stakeholders in attendance had concerns around the longer-term vision for Welsh-medium provision in Monmouth, if numbers grow beyond 60 then what are the Council's plans. Stakeholders were also concerned that Welsh-medium provision is not being promoted and parents are not aware of the satellite class from September 2023. They also wanted reassurance that the Cylch Meithrin would be re-established in Monmouth as early years provision is the key to growing Welsh-medium education.

A summary of the main points raised during the session and the Council's response is listed below:

Comment / Question	Council's Response
Why isn't the new school showing as my catchment school on the Website?	The catchment areas are being reviewed as part of this consultation process however cannot be changed until the decision has been made on whether to proceed with the proposal
We need to ensure that even though we are sharing a site there is total immersion	The school will be totally separate to Overmonnow and will have its own entrance, office accommodation, staff room, toilets etc. Any shared areas will be managed collaboratively by the headteachers of the two schools
I am concerned about the longer-term plan, people need to know what the long-term plan is before they enter into it, so what happens when the 3 classrooms are full?	We believe that he three classroom model that is being proposed will provide us adequate headroom for the near and medium term. The Authority recognises that there will

	potentially need to be adjustments to the educational provision in Monmouth and its environs. Consequently, the Authority is currently reviewing its educational provision across the County considering known data such as live birth rates, existing housing growth commitments and modelling potential future housing growth. The provision across Monmouth and its environs will fully consider the place of Welsh Medium education in that process.
What is the plan for these pupils when they reach secondary age, they need to be given the same opportunities as pupils in English-medium education with access to a local school without long travel times?	The pupil numbers in Monmouthshire are not high enough to support Monmouthshire having its own Welsh-medium secondary school. As Monmouthshire is a large rural county, location would be an issue, as wherever it is located pupils would have a distance to travel. The Council are also in discussion with neighbouring authorities Blaenau-Gwent, Powys and Merthyr regarding regional secondary provision
An early years provision is essential to growing a school, we need reassurance that this will be re-established. The Cylch Meithrin still has a treasurer and trustees, so we need to coordinate efforts with MCC to keep momentum going	It is our understanding that the reason the Cylch Meithrin closed was due to staffing; however, we will liaise with Mudiad Meithrin and provide any support we can to try and get Cylch Meithrin Trefynwy back up and running.
Is there a threshold that needs to be met for Cabinet to agree to this new school	No, we will work with all stakeholders to ensure that the provision is a success. We recognise that in the early years the numbers on roll may be low but we are committed to providing a bi-lingual offer in the Monmouth area.
Is there a way of us opening the nursery for full day sessions?	We may be able to look at other options for the first year to stimulate demand but this isn't something we would be able to offer on a permanent basis.

In addition to the questions listed above the following comments were also noted:

- MCC should be getting the message out that this isn't about taking from English medium education but about giving families a choice.
- We need to get the town of Monmouth on board, we need to raise awareness of the positive values of Welsh-medium education.
- Publicity needs to be local as well as on social media.
- Visuals of the new school need to be publicised.

5.3 Consultation with children and young people

The Council developed a “child friendly” version of the consultation document to ensure that children and young people on roll at the affected school could be fully engaged in the consultation process.

A consultation session took place on 11th May 2023 with children and young people from Overmonnow Primary school. The session was facilitated by both school staff and officers of the Local Authority, with the key aim being to obtain the views of children and young people on the proposal to establish a Welsh-medium primary school.

A representative group of pupils were allocated by the school to meet with Local Authority representatives to share their views on the proposal. The summary version of the consultation document was used to remind the young people of the proposal. The session was informal, with children and young people given the opportunity to speak freely and ask questions. There were, however, some questions put to young people to prompt discussion.

The following represents a summary of the questions / comments received from children and young people and the council’s response:

Question / Comment	Council’s Response
Will they participate in school events such as Christmas celebrations / Assemblies / school trips / non uniform days etc	The new school will be totally separate to your school however there may be opportunities for the two schools to come together for special events and you can learn from each other. This is something that the headteachers of both schools can discuss.
Will they be allowed to play with us at break times and lunch time? Will our yard be shared?	They will not have the same lunch and break times as you as the new school will be separate. They will share your school yard and will use it at different times.
Are they going to join PE with us?	No, they will have their own PE lessons
Will they contribute to our lessons?	No, the two schools will share the same grounds but they will have their own lessons which will be taught in Welsh.
Are you going to suggest any changes to the school and how will the changes affect us?	There will be changes to the school building, so you will have two new classrooms built where the demountables are at the moment. The three classrooms the other side of the canteen will be changed so that the new school can move into those classrooms so you will not use them anymore.
Will the new school start and end at the same time?	This is something that the two headteachers can discuss to see what works best

Will we have different teachers and how many teachers will there be?	You will have the same teachers and the new school will have their own teachers, there will be a teacher and a teaching assistant at the new school.
Will the new school have school uniform and a name?	Yes, they will wear a different school uniform to you, they will have a school name but this hasn't been decided yet.
Will all the children be in the same class, and will 3 classrooms be enough?	The classes will be split so the lower year groups in one class and the higher year groups in another. At the moment 3 classrooms are sufficient, if the numbers grow and we need more in the future then this is something the Council will review.
The classes that we will be moving out of have a nice outdoor area and we don't want to lose this.	Equivalent or improved areas will be provided.

The pupils also wanted to make sure that pupils attending the new school felt welcome. Some of the pupils already have friends who attend the Welsh school in Abergavenny, and they think it is important that they are able to go to a Welsh school closer to their home rather than having to go on a school bus.

6. Consultation Responses

6.1 Summary of consultation results

Overall the Council received a total of 145 responses during the consultation exercise. A profile of the respondents can be found in the table below:

Respondent category	Number of responses
Parent / Carer	3
Governor	4
Staff	7
Other schools / staff/parent/Gov	62
Community	57
Union	0
Town/Community Council	0
Other Organisations	12

Total

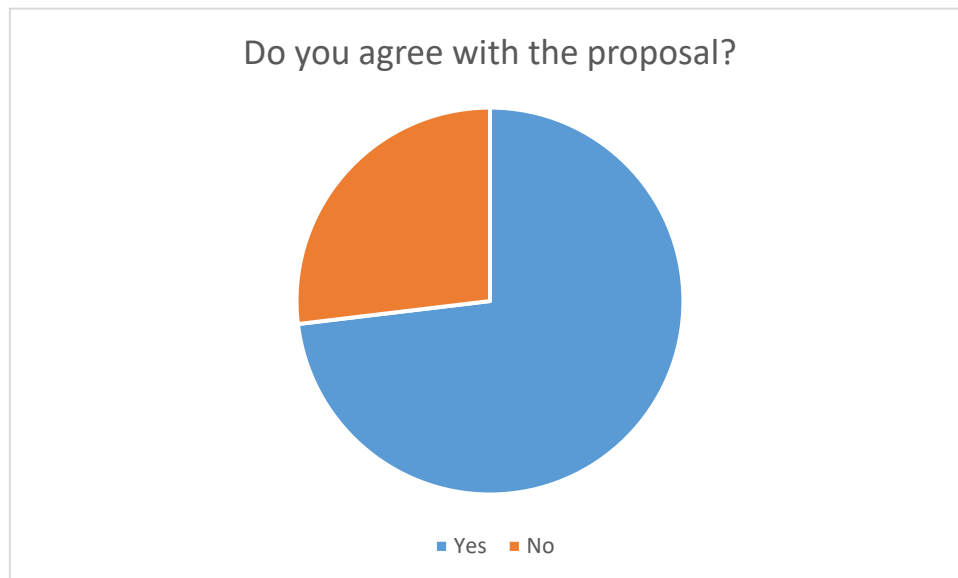
145

N.B. The above table reflects the number of formal responses received to this consultation, through means of either completing the consultation survey or by emailing strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk.

However, any informal feedback received from consultation engagement sessions is reflected within section 5.2 of this report.

Feedback to this consultation from ESTYN and the Education Achievement Service are published separately within this report.

Do you agree with the proposal to establish a Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site?



106 out of the 145 respondents (73%) supported the proposal with many of the respondents feeling that Welsh-medium education should be available for all children within their local community.

A summary of the positive comments and questions received from the 106 respondents that supported the proposal along with the Council's response is provided below:

Comment / Question	Council's Response
Monmouthshire is one of the weakest authorities in Wales in terms of supporting and promoting the Welsh language. Significant investment is needed, particularly in Monmouth, to	The Local Authority is committed to the Welsh Government's strategy Cymraeg 2050, which aims to increase the number of Welsh speakers to 1 million by 2050. The proposal supports the targets set out in the Council's Welsh Education

facilitate the development of the Welsh Language.	Strategic Plan (WESP), which is to establish a third Welsh-medium primary school in Monmouth.
I am pleased and very much supportive of these plans, and only wish they went further, to include construction of a Welsh medium secondary provision.	The Local Authority in collaboration with neighbouring authorities in Southeast Wales are looking at potential options for another secondary school for the region
Only with significant investment and support can the language continue to grow in the authority, and Monmouthshire should be liaising with Welsh government should they wish to receive more support /finances to achieve this.	Agreed Monmouthshire will continue to work with Welsh Government to promote the Welsh Language. The current capital investment required for this school is being funded by Welsh Government.
There needs to be access to high quality Welsh medium childcare (particularly 0-4 years) and education.	Access to Welsh-medium childcare is an integral part of our proposal because, it gives children the opportunity to engage with the Welsh language from a very early age and it will support the growth in the new Welsh medium primary school. The intention is to offer early education for 3 and 4 year olds in a nursery class managed by the school, this will be part-time provision. We also hope to establish a non-maintained Cylch Meithrin on site that will offer wrap around childcare for these children, as well as Flying Start childcare for 2 year olds.
The concept of starting with a seedling school seems to be an effective way to launch this school which will hopefully see demand grow as pupils in the area start to attend. However, it does have its drawbacks in that some parents with older siblings may decide that they do not wish to have them in separate schools. To what extent has this been considered?	This has been a consideration for us and one that we recognise may be a risk. Our hope is that in establishing the seedling school new families who may not have chosen to access our current Welsh Medium provision chose to do so in Monmouth and we can build a thriving school community.
It is always a challenge to recruit Welsh speaking teachers and support staff in the Monmouthshire area. What are the plans to attract teachers and support staff to allow the effective running of the school?	This will be an exciting opportunity for teachers and support staff to help shape the vision and ethos for the new school. It will also provide career progression for staff in the local area looking for leadership roles. We feel that this will encourage teachers and support staff to apply for positions. However, we recognise that there is a challenge to

	recruit Welsh language teachers and so the Local Authority will support and promote the recruitment process to ensure we attract enough teachers and support staff to work in the new school.
What are the reasons for locating the new school in Monmouth town, even though it is on the border of the catchment area? As opposed to Option 4 Raglan which is much more central to the catchment area?	Through discussions with our stakeholders, particularly those in the Council and on the Welsh Education Forum there was a clear sense that the school would benefit from being in a more populated area.
The proposal is to move the existing classes in the English medium school into new classrooms and give the old classrooms to the new Welsh school. If we want to make sure that Welsh medium education is attractive as possible, what is the reasoning for Overmonnow having the new classrooms and the Welsh medium old classrooms?	The Welsh-medium school and Overmonnow will be two separate schools sharing the same site. In order to facilitate this, the Welsh-medium school will need its own entrance. The two new classrooms are being built at the rear of the school so access would be more difficult. Also, the two new classrooms will adjoin the existing classrooms and provide additional toilet provision.

- Expanding and developing a Welsh language community and medium of education is vital in improving the general attitude and opinion of young people towards the language.
- By opening this facility, you would be providing families in Monmouth with equal access to Welsh education as others across Wales. (it would be great if a Welsh language stream can be opened for secondary too ond un cam am y tro!)
- Because, with the situation as it is in Monmouth, there is no good place apart from the Overmonnow site that is suitable. And it is vital that there is Welsh-medium provision in Monmouth that allows walking to school.
- It's important to offer choice of a Welsh-medium school in the town.
- It is vitally important for the children of Monmouth to be given the valuable opportunities of other Welsh towns and cities to learn Welsh from an early age. This will ensure that future generations will have the skills, enthusiasm and opportunities presented by being brought up bilingually as their contemporaries.
- I believe increasing the number of Welsh-medium schools in the area can only benefit the community. The competition to get into a Welsh-medium school is very high and it is clear there is an appetite, growing up in Monmouthshire and speaking to many of my peers, many of us regret our inability to speak Welsh and wish we had the opportunity to attend such a school.
- Our son will be sent to a Welsh medium school. The nearest school is currently Abergavenny. It is frankly outrageous that in order to speak the

native language of this country, and fully connect with his culture and heritage, our son would have to travel c.40 miles each day to school.

- We are in support of this proposal as it will give local children the opportunity to become bilingual which will increase the amount of Welsh speakers in our community and help keep the Welsh language alive.
- I think this should have happened in Monmouth many years ago. There are not many towns in Wales with a population of 10,000 where there is no Welsh medium school.
- I strongly agree with creating more Welsh language education provision within Monmouthshire, I hope someday it will lead to the first Welsh medium secondary school in the county.
- I support the development of the new school & hope that the council decides that this should be accelerated to ensure we can access Welsh learning in our own county, right the way to end of Secondary, as soon as possible. Beyond the wider benefits to Monmouth as Welsh town & it's residents, this will reduce pressure on Ysgol Y Fenni. It opens up a choice for parents & reduces the environmental impact of travelling a great distance to Abergavenny.

39 out of the 145 respondents (27%) did not support the proposal with many feeling that investment is needed in the English-medium schools within the area and that the demand for Welsh-medium education is not high enough to justify the amount of money being spent, especially during the current financial crisis.

A summary of the comments/questions received from the 39 respondents who did not support the proposal along with the Council's response is provided below:

Comment / Question	Councils Response
The costs involved in developing a third Welsh-medium primary school are too high especially when six local schools are catergorised as condition rating C. Will the condition of these schools be addressed?	The costs are in line with current market conditions and inflation. The condition of the schools within the Monmouth town area are categorised as A, B and C. In doing this project the backlog of maintenance will be addressed at Overmonnow Primary School.
All the schools listed are well under their maximum capacity (with the exception of Trellech), if there were a lack of spaces then that would be a different issue.	The Local Authority closely monitors the level of surplus places at all schools within Monmouthshire. The northeast is currently without Welsh-medium provision and as a result children who want to access Welsh education travel long distances to do so. The Council think it is important that all children have access to Welsh-medium education within their local community.
There are already 2 Welsh schools in Monmouthshire, the costs involved are too high in my opinion, especially	The capital funding for this school is being provided by Welsh Government. Monmouthshire

when six local schools are categorised as C for condition. Where will the money come from?	regularly reviews the condition of it's schools and allocates any capital funding appropriately.
I think that the amount of money involved does not seem like a good idea given the current financial crisis facing schools and councils. The project could be put on hold until the financial outlook looks brighter.	The funding for the running costs of the school have already been allocated via the budget planning process for Monmouthshire. Monmouthshire has made a clear commitment to Welsh Government to support Welsh Medium education.
How can you have 'a Welsh school' when the grounds etc. are shared with an English-speaking school? It seems like the proposal to build this school is based solely on meeting targets and not for the benefit of the community or indeed the children!	The Welsh-medium school will be totally separate to Overmonnow and will have its own entrance, office accommodation, staff room, toilets etc. any shared areas will be managed collaboratively by the headteacher of the two schools
The school itself has become rundown and class sizes are too large. Where are the extra resources coming from? Where will the catering requirements come from. The Hall is not very big at the school now. Extra "bunker classrooms" are already in use. Overmonnow is the main primary school in Monmouth. It should not be overstretched any more.	The capital funding to support the Welsh Medium school has been provided by Welsh Government. The condition of all Monmouthshire schools is reviewed regularly and any appropriate improvements that are the responsibility of the Local Authority are funded. The school also received a budget to maintain the school site. As mentioned above there will be areas of the school that will be shared by both schools such as the hall and play areas, however this will be timetabled and managed collaboratively by the headteachers of the two schools
Parking/Congestion at Overmonnow Primary School is horrendous. As a parent of an autistic child, being asked to park in the carpark opposite the school over a main road is ridiculous, especially while trying to unload a pushchair in the rain.	Improving access to the school site will be part of the redevelopment work being proposed. All designs will be in consultation with the Headteacher and Governing Body of Overmonnow Primary School
How will access to the existing Foundation Phase areas work for example the yard/hall if the new classrooms are at the other end of the building? How will we be able to use the hall for PE/assembly/tests with a further three classes also trying to use it?	Design development will be through a collaborative approach with the Headteacher and Governing Body.

- There is one Welsh medium primary in the north and south of the county. Parents in Monmouth travel to Abergavenny Welsh school, a new school would reduce their numbers. Like the south, parents in Chepstow have to send pupils to Caldicot. Y Ffin is a small school not fully utilised.
- At this time the money could be spent on so many more important things. For example, improved libraries in school, extra stem facilities, books etc. It seems strange that at a time when existing staff are worried about potential job losses due to cuts. I would like to add that I am very much a supporter of the Welsh language but improving existing provision should take priority.
- The recent Estyn report at Monmouth Comprehensive reported 0.96 children actually speak Welsh at home. The money could/would be better used to provide schools with other vital resources they require. The whole Welsh language cult is entirely politically motivated by Welsh Labour and nationalists. Forcing children to learn Welsh at the cost of learning another more useful subject is a nonsense.
- There is not enough interest from pupils and parents for Welsh-medium education.
- More money is needed to support the current schools in Monmouthshire.
- It seems like the proposal to build this school is based solely on meeting targets and not for the benefit of the community or indeed the children.
- There is not a strong Welsh speaking community in this part of the country. Funding needs to be provided to improve and develop the current schools in the county. This could include increased Welsh language teaching (and indeed other languages) across all schools, not just one new school. This would better aid the transition to secondary school otherwise the cohort of children will be too divided.

There were many respondents who supported the need for a new Welsh-medium school in Monmouth but felt strongly that the preferred option was not the most suitable. Below is a summary of the comments received in relation to this.

- The school should be a new school on its own site as sharing the site with an existing school could put people off. If the demand is that high, then create a new school that can have its own identity and stand apart from another school in Monmouth.
- Once again MCC is offering a substandard level of provision for Welsh medium education, second hand buildings in disrepair and shared sites, it just isn't good enough and certainly doesn't reflect the councils supposed support and commitment to Welsh medium education.
- Currently MCC are asking parents to choose a seedling school that has no physical school that they can visit. Furthermore, offering a seedling class for new pupils alongside a consultation for the longer-term option of a school creates uncertainty for parents and creates an atmosphere of doubt about the future of a school for those children.
- What are the plans when the school outgrows the three classrooms? They will have to move, most likely to Raglan in which case the school should begin there in the first place. I'm sure Monmouth residents can manage an 8 mile commute. Pupils all over the county already travel tremendous distances to reach their Welsh-medium education, particularly for secondary school.

- I'd like to see MCC showing their commitment and support by allowing the new school to at least have its own site and separate identity away from an English medium school.
- I feel strongly that a third Welsh-medium school is needed in the county, however I do not agree that a shared site at Overmonnow is the best provision choice. My preferred option is to base the third school at Raglan, which is only ten minutes from Monmouth.
- I think the old Raglan School looks the best option. The building is already there (empty) and it was previously a school.
- Co locating a Welsh medium provision with an existing English medium provision does not work. The evidence for this is clear.
- I note that the cost implications of MCC's preferred option at Overmonnow are roughly equivalent to siting the school in Raglan. I think the latter is a better option. I know that immersion in the language is key, particularly when most parents will not be Welsh speakers. Sharing a building with an English medium school will not provide immersion.

The Council has provided a response to these comments in section 9 below which provides reassessment of the options considered following the consultation.

6.1 Views of the Education Achievement Service (EAS)

The Council has commissioned the Education Achievement Service to deliver the School Improvement service to schools within our county. Their response to this consultation has been published below:

We support the growth of Welsh medium education in Monmouthshire. The proposal aims to target the Monmouth area and the Overmonnow option is the closest to achieving this.

However, the Overmonnow option will not provide pupils with a full immersion experience that ensures the most effective pathway to bilingualism. This should be considered as part of the remodelling of the current building, or the Raglan model reconsidered.

A response regarding the concerns raised by the EAS can be found in section 8 where the Council has carried out a reassessment of the options originally considered.

7. ESTYN Response

The full response from Estyn can be found at appendix 2 of this report. However, in summary the response states that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of provision in the area and provides the following positive comments:

The proposal is likely to result in improving provision for Welsh-medium education in the authority, as well as supporting the Welsh Governments national strategy Cymraeg 2050.

The strengths and weaknesses in each of the options considered are suitably detailed. The proposer has set out the likely impact of the proposal. Generally, the proposal considers project risks appropriately.

The proposal considers a range of alternatives in detail and provides rationale for the preferred outcome. The proposal seems to support the targets in the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The proposer considers the impact of the proposal on wellbeing and care appropriately. It makes a link between strengthening parental choice in the town and reducing travel time for those choosing Welsh medium education. The proposer suggests that shorter travel times are likely to improve the wellbeing of children in the seedling provision. However, the response goes on to say that the proposal does not identify how it will mitigate against potential traffic management issues.

In response the Council would advise that as part of this proposal the traffic management issues experienced on the site will be addressed. The Council will continue to work with both the school and community to promote further active travel and safe route to school solutions.

Estyn also identified within the response that the proposal does not adequately identify the disruption to learners whilst building work and refurbishment is underway. In response the Council can advise that most of the work will be undertaken during the school holidays thus minimising the disruption to pupils.

8. Assessment of the Proposal

In line with the School Organisation Code Wales (2018) the Council is required to carry out a further assessment on the proposal and alternative options, taking account of information received during the consultation process.

The Council consulted on a preferred option to establish a Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site via a seedling model. Following the responses received during the consultation period, the Council has reviewed the impact of proposals on the follow areas:

- Quality and Standards in Education
- The likely impact on the Community
- The likely impact on different travel arrangement

A further assessment of the alternative options that were considered prior to the consultation period has been undertaken and is provided below, the Council maintains the view that the proposal (option 5) is the preferred option to take forward.

Option 1 – Do nothing and maintain the status quo. This would mean there would be no change to existing provision. Following the consultation period there were only a small number of respondents that felt there was not a need to establish Welsh-medium provision in Monmouth. This was largely due to their belief that there is insufficient demand in the area and that the other schools required further investment. The Council has considered the responses and maintains the view that there is a need to have a third Welsh-medium school in Monmouth which supports the targets in our Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Option 2 – Build a new Welsh medium Community Primary school on a new site in the Monmouth area to include early years and childcare provision. There were some respondents that felt a new school in the town would be more beneficial, however there are still no suitable building sites available in Monmouth. In addition, planning permission would not be granted due to the lack of an identified strategic solution to the treatment of phosphates at the Monmouth Wastewater Treatment Works.

Option 3 – Utilise Osbaston CIW primary school site in Monmouth to create additional Welsh-medium primary provision and bilingual childcare. The Council maintains the view that this is not a viable option. The space on the site is limited, both internally and externally and may not be sufficient for two schools. The Osbaston Junior site has extremely limited parking space for staff, visitors, and home to school transport. Increasing the number of staff and pupils using this building would result in additional pressure being put on already insufficient space for pupils. There is a high likelihood that this increase will push into an already busy road. There would be legalities to consider with regards to the ownership and there is a high risk of flooding on the site.

Option 4 – Utilise the former Raglan junior school building to create Welsh-medium primary provision and build a new Welsh medium early years and childcare provision on the site. Many of the respondents felt this was the best option due to the fact the school would have its own site which would support full immersion. They also felt Raglan was a more suitable location as it is central for all pupils within the catchment area.

The Council maintains the view that utilising the former Raglan Junior school is not the preferred option and strongly believe that the new school should be in the town where there is a higher population. The former Raglan Junior School site was also discounted as the ownership of the site is part of on-going discussions with Monmouth Diocesan Trust. The building is in a poor state of repair and beyond refurbishment. Early discussions with the Welsh Education Forum ruled this option out as the demand is within the town area and pupils would not be able to walk to school but would require transport.

Option 5 – Utilise existing accommodation available on the Overmonnow Primary School site to establish a seedling Welsh-medium primary school and early years and childcare provision. As mentioned above the Council maintains the view that this is the preferred option it is important that Welsh-medium provision is available in the town of Monmouth where more pupils can access Welsh-medium education within walking distance to their homes.

8.1 Quality and Standards in Education

As part of the consultation process the Council assessed the impact of the proposal on the quality and standards of Education, a summary of which is provided below. Following the outcome of the consultation and taking into consideration the feedback that has been received this has not resulted in a change to the impact the proposal will have on the quality and standards of education.

The proposal will not affect the quality of learning in any of the English-medium schools in the Monmouth cluster or in either of our existing two Welsh medium schools affected. The new Welsh-medium primary school will receive the appropriate level of challenge and support to ensure that a high-quality learning is achieved. Monmouthshire has a good record of delivering quality primary education.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

The creation of a new seedling Welsh-medium primary school in Monmouth will increase parental choice in the town by providing Welsh medium education closer to home for children living in the north west of the county. As a result of shorter travel times, we expect the proposal to significantly improve the wellbeing of children in the seedling provision. Pupil wellbeing is a priority which is monitored and reported through school self-evaluation processes and improvement plans. The proposal will not impact wellbeing and attitudes towards learning at the other affected schools.

Teaching and learning experiences

Teaching and learning experiences in the new Welsh medium will follow Curriculum for Wales with Welsh as the language of teaching and learning. The proposal will not impact the teaching and learning experiences at the other affected schools.

Care support and guidance

The new Welsh medium primary school will be supported by the local authority and the Education Achievement Service to provide high quality care, support and guidance. There will be no change in care support and guidance at the other affected schools.

Leadership and management

There will be no change to the quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers at the other affected schools. At the new Welsh medium primary school, the school leadership team will receive support and guidance from the local authority and Education Achievement Service to ensure best practice in leadership and management are adopted.

8.2 Impact on the Community

During the consultation stage of this process, the Council completed and published to consultees an Integrated Impact Assessment which stated that Parents seeking

Welsh-medium education for their children in the Monmouth area will be able to access provision within their community as a result of the proposal. This will increase the opportunities for more learners to use the Welsh language outside of school in social settings and a range of authentic contexts.

Following the consultation and considering the feedback the consensus drawn from the reassessment is that there will be a positive impact on the community and Welsh Language as a result of the proposal.

The Integrated Impact assessment has been reconsidered following the consultation and can be found at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/school-reorganisation

8.2 Impact on Travel arrangements

The Council has undertaken an assessment on the impact of travel arrangements for affected pupils should proposals proceed to establish a new Welsh-medium primary school and considered the responses received during the consultation.

Currently families wanting to access Welsh-medium education in Monmouth have to travel long distances to Abergavenny. For some the proposal will mean that pupils will be able to access Welsh-medium education within walking distance or considerably shorter travel times which will be positive.

The consultation document confirmed that pupils currently receiving free home to school transport to existing provision who will be residing in the catchment area for the seedling school will not lose their entitlement to free home to school transport.

However following feedback from the consultation, the Council recognises that families who already have older siblings attending Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni may want both children to attend the same school and receive home to school transport for all children. This is something that the Council needs to consider further as part of the consultation process.

9. Recommendations

The consultation stage of this process has allowed the opportunity to significantly challenge and test our preferred option:

In line with the School Organisation Code (November 2018), the consultation report is able to make recommendations to the Council's Cabinet on how proposals should proceed. The options available are:

- 1) To publish the proposals as consulted on
- 2) To publish the proposals as consulted on with any appropriate modifications.
- 3) To abandon the proposals and maintain the status quo.
- 4) To significantly recast the proposals and reconsult

This report has evidenced that the Council has been able to provide sufficient mitigations against the concerns highlighted during this consultation process. It is therefore recommended that the preferred option is considered by the Council's Cabinet as part of the next stages in this statutory process:

- 1) To publish the proposal as consulted on - establish a new Welsh-medium primary school on the Overmonnow Primary School site via a seedling model.***

Appendix 1 - List of Consultees with whom we consulted

- Parents, carers/guardians and staff members of schools affected by the proposal.
- The governing body of any school affected by the proposal.
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal.
- Headteachers of schools affected by the proposal.
- Welsh Ministers
- Town and Community Councils in the Monmouth area
- Assembly Members representing the area served by the school.
- Members of Parliament representing the area served by the school.
- Directors of Education of all bordering LAs – Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Powys, Torfaen, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire
- GAVO
- Teaching trade unions
- Support Staff trade unions
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- ESTYN
- RHAG
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Church in Wales Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- South East Wales Education Achievement Service
- Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
- Early Years & Childcare Partnership
- Welsh in Education Forum

Appendix 2 - Response from Estyn

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 requires the Council to consult with ESTYN on statutory School Organisational matters. Below is the response received from ESTYN in relation to this consultation to establish a Welsh-medium Primary School on the Overmonnow Primary School site.

This report has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisations (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

Introduction

This consultation proposal is from Monmouthshire County Council. The proposal is to utilise existing accommodation available on the Overmonnow Primary School site to establish a seedling Welsh medium primary school and early years and childcare provision as of 1 September 2024.

Summary/Conclusion

Estyn considers that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of provision in the area.

Descriptions and benefits

Monmouthshire County Council has provided a useful rationale for the proposal. They clearly outline the benefits of creating a seedling school in the existing premises. The proposal is likely to result in improving provision for Welsh medium education in the authority, as well as supporting the Welsh Government's national strategy, Cymraeg 2050.

The proposer gives appropriate attention to the school's building suitability, outlining the funding necessary to resolve condition issues. It provides suitable information regarding funding the initial staffing structure of the new school. The proposer gives appropriate attention to the demand for places and the current capacity of English medium and Welsh medium schools in the area. It considers the impact of the provision on the admission number of the existing English medium school, and on the expected future demand for school places. The proposer also considers the effect on pupil numbers in other schools in the area and on transfer to secondary schools.

The County Council provide a clear description of the projected timetable for statutory procedures and for implementation of the proposals. The strengths and weaknesses in each of the options considered are suitably detailed. The proposer has set out the likely impact of the proposal. Generally, the proposal considers project risks appropriately.

The proposal considers a range of alternatives in detail and provides a rationale for the preferred outcome. The proposal seems to support the targets in the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). It references the shorter travel distances for families seeking Welsh medium education in the area. It indicates the possible impact on English medium schools in the area and Welsh medium schools in the authority. It considers transition arrangements and the plans to mitigate against long travelling times to the nearest Welsh medium secondary school. The proposal considers the impact of the inclusion of a maintained and a non-maintained nursery setting well. It pays due regard to employment protection.

The short-term financial costs of the proposal are identified suitably. The Council identifies the contribution to be made towards refurbishment and backlog maintenance by Welsh Government grant funding.

Educational aspects of the proposal

In considering the impact of the proposal on learning; wellbeing and attitudes to learning; teaching and learning experiences; care support and guidance and leadership and management, the Council has listed the most recent Estyn inspection outcomes for schools in the area. The proposal suggests the ways it will support the leadership team to shape the teaching and learning provision to support the delivery of the curriculum.

Monmouthshire County Council considers the impact of the proposal on wellbeing and care appropriately. It makes a link between strengthening parental choice in the town and reducing travel time for those choosing Welsh medium education. The proposer suggests that shorter travel times are likely to improve the wellbeing of children in the seedling provision. It does not identify how it will mitigate against potential traffic management issues.

An appropriate equality impact assessment has been carried out and found that there is no negative discriminatory impact anticipated on any group. The proposer indicates how it intends to mitigate against the possible negative impact of the proposal in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.

The proposal does not adequately identify the disruption to learners whilst building work and refurbishment is underway.