

# Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir  
Y Rhadyr  
Brynbuga

Dydd Mawrth, 7 Ebrill 2026

Dear Cynghorwyr,

## CABINET

Gofynnir i chi fynychu cyfarfod **Cabinet** a gynhelir yn **Steve Greenslade Room, County Hall, Usk** ar **Dydd Mercher, 15fed Ebrill, 2026**, am **4.30 pm**.

## AGENDA

1. Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb
2. Datganiadau o Fuddiant
3. Pwyllgor Craffu Perfformiad a Throsolwg - Adborth i'r Cabinet o'r Cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 10 Mawrth 2026 1 - 4
4. STRATEGAETHAU BUDDSODDI A CHYLLID 2026/27 CRONFA YMDDIRIEDOLAETH YSGOL FFERM SIR FYNWY A CHRONFA YMDDIRIEDOLAETH EGLWYSI 5 - 48

Adran/Wardiau yr effeithir arnynt: Y cyfan.

Diben: Cyflwyno strategaeth Buddsoddi a Chronfa 2026/27 er cymeradwyaeth y Cabinet ar gyfer y Cronfeydd Ymddiriedolaeth y mae'r Awdurdod yn gweithredu fel unig ymddiriedolydd neu geidwad ar eu cyfer.

Cymeradwyo dyraniad grant 2026/27 i fuddiolwyr Awdurdodau Lleol Cronfa Eglwys Cymru.

Awduron: Dave Jarrett – Partner Busnes Cyllid – Cyfrifeg Corfforaethol  
Nicola Wellington – Plant a Phobl ifanc – Rheolwr Cyllid a Gwasanaethau Cymorth

Manylion Cyswllt: [davejarrett@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:davejarrett@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

5. CANLYNIAD YR YMGYNGHORIAD STATUDOL AR GYNIGION YN YMWNEUD Â'R FEITHRINF A YN YSGOL GYNRADD DURAND 49 - 100

Adran/Wardiau yr effeithir arnynt: ARDAL CIL-Y-COED

Diben: Diben yr adroddiad hwn yw rhoi diweddariad i'r Cabinet ar yr ymgynghoriad statudol diweddar yn ymwneud â'r cynigion i ddirwyn i ben y feithrinfa a gynhelir gan yr awdurdod lleol yn Ysgol Gynradd Durand.

Awdur: Sue Hall, Rheolwr Blynyddoedd Cynnar

Manylion Cyswllt: [susanhall@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:susanhall@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely,

**Paul Matthews**  
**Chief Executive**

**PORTFFOLIOS Y CABINET**

<b>Cynghorydd Sir</b>	<b>Maes Cyfrifoldeb</b>	<b>Ward</b>
Mary Ann Brocklesby	<p><b>Arweinydd</b> Swyddog Arweiniol – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse, Peter Davies, Will Mclean</p> <p>Strategaeth a Chyfeiriad Awdurdod Cyfan Adolygu a gwerthuso perfformiad awdurdod cyfan, gan gynnwys DDAT Perthynas â Llywodraeth Cymru, Llywodraeth y DU a chymdeithasau llywodraeth leol Perthnasoedd Rhanbarthol gan gynnwys Cydbwyllgorau Corfforedig, Byrddau Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus a Chynllunio Argyfwng trawsffiniol</p>	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	<p><b>Aelod Cabinet dros Gynllunio a Datblygu Economaidd a'r Dirprwy Arweinydd</b> Swyddog Arweiniol – Will McLean, Craig O'Connor</p> <p>Strategaeth Economaidd Cynllun datblygu lleol a chynllun datblygu strategol gan gynnwys safleoedd tai strategol Digartrefedd, darpariaeth dai fforddiadwy a thai sector preifat (cartrefi gwag, cynllun prydlesu, benthyciadau gwella cartrefi, grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl a thechnoleg addasol) Cefnogi Canol Trefi gan gynnwys parcio ceir a gorfodi Rheoli Datblygu a Rheoli Adeiladu Sgiliau a Chyflogaeth Cysylltedd band eang Meysydd parcio a gorfodaeth sifil safonau masnach, iechyd yr amgylchedd, iechyd y cyhoedd, trwyddedu</p>	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Ben Callard	<p><b>Aelod Cabinet dros Adnoddau</b> Swyddogion Arweiniol – Peter Davies, Matt Gatehouse</p> <p>Cyllid gan gynnwys y CATC a'r cylch cyllideb blynyddol Refeniw a Budd-daliadau Adnoddau Dynol, cyflogres, iechyd a diogelwch Tir ac adeiladau Cynnal a chadw a rheoli eiddo Caffael strategol</p>	Llanfoist & Govilon
Laura Wright	<p><b>Aelod Cabinet dros Addysg</b> Swyddogion Arweiniol – Will McLean, Deb Hill-Howells</p> <p>Addysg Blynyddoedd Cynnar</p>	Grofield

	<p>Addysg statudol pob oed  Anghenion dysgu ychwanegol/cynhwysiant  Addysg ôl-16 ac addysg oedolion  Safonau a gwelliant ysgolion  Dysgu cymunedol  Rhaglen cymunedau cynaliadwy ar gyfer dysgu  Gwasanaeth ieuenctid  Cludiant ysgol</p>	
Ian Chandler	<p><b>Aelod Cabinet dros Ofal Cymdeithasol, Diogelu a Gwasanaethau Iechyd Hygyrch</b>  Swyddog Arweiniol – Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Gwasanaethau plant  Maethu a mabwysiadu  Gwasanaeth Troseddau Ieuenctid  Gwasanaethau oedolion  Diogelu awdurdod cyfan (plant ac oedolion)  Anableddau  Iechyd meddwl  Lles  Perthynas â darparwyr iechyd a mynediad at ddarpariaeth iechyd</p>	Park
Catrin Maby	<p><b>Aelod Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a'r Amgylchedd</b>  Swyddogion Arweiniol – Deb Hill-Howells, Craig O'Connor,</p> <p>Datgarboneiddio  Cynllunio Trafnidiaeth gan gynnwys cludiant o'r cartref i'r ysgol  Priffyrdd a Fflyn Cyngor Sir Fynwy  Rheoli gwastraff, gofal strydoedd, sbwriel, manau cyhoeddus a pharciau  Palmentydd a lonydd cefn  Lliniaru Llifogydd  Isadeiledd Gwyrdd, Bioamrywiaeth ac Iechyd Afonydd</p>	Drybridge
Angela Sandles	<p><b>Aelod Cabinet dros Gydraddoldeb ac Ymgysylltu</b>  Swyddogion Arweiniol – Matthew Gatehouse, Paul Matthews, Jane Rodgers, James Williams</p> <p>Datblygu cymunedol, anghydraddoldeb a thlodi (iechyd, incwm, maeth, anfantais, gwahaniaethu, ynysu ac argyfwng costau byw)  Ymgysylltu â dinasyddion a hybu democratiaeth gan gynnwys gweithio gyda sefydliadau gwirfoddol  Profiad y dinesydd - hybiau cymunedol, canolfan gyswllt, gwasanaeth cwsmeriaid a chofrestryddion, cyfathrebu, cysylltiadau cyhoeddus a marchnata  Canolfannau hamdden, chwarae a chwaraeon  Cyfleusterau cyhoeddus  Gwasanaethau Etholiadol ac adolygiad o'r cyfansoddiad  Moeseg a safonau</p>	Y Dref

	<p>Iaith Gymraeg  Safonau Masnach, Iechyd yr Amgylchedd, Gwarchod y  Cyhoedd, a Thrwyddedu</p>	
Sara Burch	<p><b>Materion Gwledig, Tai a Thwristiaeth</b>  Swyddog Arweiniol – Craig O'Connor, Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Cynhyrchu a bwyta bwyd yn lleol, gan gynnwys amaeth-  goedwigaeth a garddwriaeth leol  Digartrefedd, Llety dros dro, tai sector preifat,  (cynlluniau prydlesu cartrefi gwag, benthyciadau gwella  cartrefi, grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl a thechnoleg  ymaddasol),  Dyrannu tai cymdeithasol  Cysylltedd band eang  Teithio Llesol  Mynediad i Gefn Gwlad a Hawliau Tramwy  Datblygu Twristiaeth a Gwasanaethau Diwylliannol</p>	Cantref

# Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

## Ein Pwrpas

- i ddod yn sir ddi-garbon, gan gefnogi lles, iechyd ac urddas i bawb ar bob cam o'u bywydau.

## Amcanion rydym yn gweithio tuag atynt

- Lle teg i fyw lle mae effeithiau anghydraddoldeb a thlodi wedi'u lleihau;
- Lle gwyrdd i fyw a gweithio gyda llai o allyriadau carbon a gwneud cyfraniad cadarnhaol at fynd i'r afael â'r argyfwng yn yr hinsawdd a natur;
- Lle ffyniannus ac uchelgeisiol, lle mae canol trefi bywiog a lle gall busnesau dyfu a datblygu;
- Lle diogel i fyw lle mae gan bobl gartref maen nhw'n teimlo'n ddiogel ynddo;
- Lle cysylltiedig lle mae pobl yn teimlo'n rhan o gymuned ac yn cael eu gwerthfawrogi;
- Lle dysgu lle mae pawb yn cael cyfle i gyrraedd eu potensial.

## Ein Gwerthoedd

**Bod yn agored.** Rydym yn agored ac yn onest. Mae pobl yn cael cyfle i gymryd rhan mewn penderfyniadau sy'n effeithio arnynt, dweud beth sy'n bwysig iddynt a gwneud pethau drostynt eu hunain/eu cymunedau. Os na allwn wneud rhywbeth i helpu, byddwn yn dweud hynny; os bydd yn cymryd peth amser i gael yr ateb, byddwn yn esbonio pam; os na allwn ateb yn syth, byddwn yn ceisio eich cysylltu gyda'r bobl a all helpu - mae adeiladu ymddiriedaeth ac ymgysylltu yn sylfaen allweddol.

**Tegwch.** Darparwn gyfleoedd teg, i helpu pobl a chymunedau i ffynnu. Os nad yw rhywbeth yn ymddangos yn deg, byddwn yn gwrandao ac yn esbonio pam. Byddwn bob amser yn ceisio trin pawb yn deg ac yn gyson. Ni allwn wneud pawb yn hapus bob amser, ond byddwn yn ymrwymo i wrando ac esbonio pam y gwnaethom weithredu fel y gwnaethom.

**Hyblygrwydd.** Byddwn yn parhau i newid a bod yn hyblyg i alluogi cyflwyno'r gwasanaethau mwyaf effeithlon ac effeithiol. Mae hyn yn golygu ymrwymiad gwirioneddol i weithio gyda phawb i groesawu ffyrdd newydd o weithio.

**Gwaith Tîm.** Byddwn yn gweithio gyda chi a'n partneriaid i gefnogi ac ysbrydoli pawb i gymryd rhan fel y gallwn gyflawni pethau gwych gyda'n gilydd. Nid ydym yn gweld ein hunain fel 'trefnwyr' neu ddatrys swyr problemau, ond gwnawn y gorau o syniadau, asedau ac adnoddau sydd ar gael i wneud yn siŵr ein bod yn gwneud y pethau sy'n cael yr effaith mwyaf cadarnhaol ar ein pobl a lleoedd.

**Caredigrwydd** – Byddwn yn dangos caredigrwydd i bawb yr ydym yn gweithio gyda nhw, gan roi pwysigrwydd perthnasoedd a'r cysylltiadau sydd gennym â'n gilydd wrth wraidd pob rhyngweithio.

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## *Monmouthshire Scrutiny*

### **Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

#### **Report Item 4: Estyn Report**

The Committee undertook thorough scrutiny of the report, highlighting the following important issues:

Members focused on how effectively elected Members are informed about school deficits and financial recovery, particularly when responding to concerns raised by residents. Questions explored whether current reporting clearly explains the causes of individual school overspends, the scale and growth of the overall schools deficit, and whether this represents isolated cases or system-wide pressure. Members also raised concerns about industrial action and financial recovery at King Henry VIII School, seeking clarity on recovery timescales and the balance between restoring financial stability and protecting learners.

Further questioning examined how the Council evaluates its own impact, including how Estyn's concerns about under-evaluation are being addressed. Members asked how scrutiny could move beyond snapshot reports to track improvement work over time, and whether a Task and Finish Group could help build shared understanding of complex issues such as school deficits and enable more informed recommendations. There was also challenge around the absence of a clear, outcome-focused performance framework, and how issues such as attendance, exclusions, ALN outcomes and intervention impact are consistently captured and reported.

#### **Chair's Conclusion:**

The Chair confirmed that the report and recommendations were agreed, noting that while scrutiny had rightly focused on the more challenging issues, there was also a great deal of strong and positive work in the report that should be acknowledged and fed back to the wider team. The Chair also confirmed that the committee agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to look more closely at some of the matters raised, such as school deficit recovery, with the detailed scope and timeframe to be picked up outside the meeting.

#### **Report Item 5: School Examination Results (Key Stage 4)**

The Committee undertook thorough scrutiny of the report, highlighting the following important issues:

## *Monmouthshire Scrutiny*

Members questioned how school performance data should be interpreted, including the meaning and usefulness of family rankings and whether variation between schools indicated systemic issues or school-specific challenges. Questions explored why some schools had improved while others continued to face difficulties, what learning could be shared from stronger-performing schools, and whether strong outcomes in some areas might be masking weaker performance elsewhere, particularly among lower-attaining learners.

Questions were raised about the real performance of our schools in the competitive environment of education – as there is no comparative information on educational outcomes in the UK. The only comparative information available to parents and learners is contained in the bi-annual PISA results that show Wales as a whole substantially below the OECD average, also with the lowest outcomes in the UK.

Additional lines of enquiry focused on equity and outcomes for vulnerable groups, including pupils eligible for free school meals and those leaving Key Stage 4 with no qualifications. Members asked about post-16 tracking arrangements, the appropriateness of qualification pathways for at-risk learners, and whether earlier identification could better guide pupils towards more suitable routes. Questions also examined the FSM attainment gap, how emerging trends align with the Council's inclusion objectives, and what targeted interventions are in place to improve outcomes for disadvantaged learners.

### **Chair's Conclusion:**

The Chair thanked the officers for the report and their responses to the committee's questions.

### **Report Item 6: School Attendance**

The Committee undertook thorough scrutiny of the report, highlighting the following important issues:

Members explored the drivers of non-attendance, particularly the gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils and the implications for long-term outcomes. Questions focused on how attendance is tracked and analysed, including breakdowns by year group, school, pupil group and authorised versus unauthorised absence. Members also asked how changes to Welsh Government definitions of persistent absence are being managed and how early identification is used to trigger proportionate intervention.

## *Monmouthshire Scrutiny*

Further discussion examined the support provided to pupils and families, including responses to persistent absence, reintegration following long absences, and the use of trauma-informed and preventative approaches. Members queried how attendance issues intersect with exclusions, mental health, behavioural needs and elective home education, and how services across the directorate work together to identify root causes and intervene early. The importance of early intervention, particularly in primary schools and at key transition points, was highlighted as a means of preventing entrenched disadvantage.

### **Chair's Conclusion:**

The Chair thanked the officers for the report and their responses to the committee's questions.

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**SUBJECT: 2026/27 MONMOUTHSHIRE FARM SCHOOL TRUST FUND AND WELSH CHURCH TRUST FUND INVESTMENT AND FUND STRATEGIES**

**MEETING: Cabinet**  
**DATE: 15th April 2026**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All Authority**

**1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet for approval the 2026/27 Investment and Fund strategy for Trust Funds for which the Authority acts as sole or custodian trustee.
- 1.2 To approve the 2026/27 grant allocation to Local Authority beneficiaries of the Welsh Church Fund.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 To approve the Investment and Fund Strategy for 2026/27 for the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Fund as set by the Trust be endorsed (**Appendix 1**).
- 2.2 To approve the Investment and Fund Strategy for 2026/27 for the Welsh Church Fund (**Appendix 3**).
- 2.3 To delegate responsibility for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions for these Trusts to the Deputy Chief Executive – Section 151 Officer (Chief Officer for Resources) who will act in accordance with the Investment and Funds Strategy.
- 2.4 To approve the 2026/27 grant allocation to Local Authority beneficiaries to the Monmouthshire Welsh Church Act Fund of £220,000, which is to be distributed in accordance with population data in the Final Local Government Settlement 2026/27.
- 2.5 To endorse the policy that Monmouthshire County Council (as the Welsh Church Fund Trustee) ensures that the constituent councils that benefit from grant distributions, ensure that grants allocated are in line with charitable objects of the fund and that this fact is advertised on their Authority's website.

- 2.6 To endorse the Welsh Church Fund Principles, Policy Considerations and Grant Allocation Criteria for 2026/27 (**Appendix 5**) as considered and endorsed by the Welsh Church Fund Committee.

### 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Authority acts as the sole trustee for the Welsh Church Fund and the custodian with responsibility for financial arrangements for the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Fund and is required annually to approve Investment and Fund Strategies for them. In addition, for the Welsh Church Fund the Authority is required to determine the grant allocation for the forthcoming year.
- 3.2 The contract for the position of Treasury Advisor to Monmouthshire County Council, the Welsh Church Act Fund and the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust was awarded to Arlingclose Ltd in March 2021 for 4 years with the option to extend for a further two years. All three bodies will therefore continue to receive ongoing advice and support on investments until at least the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027.
- 3.3 In acting in its capacity as either sole trustee or custodian, the Authority is required to have Investment policies in place for the Monmouthshire Farms Endowment Trust Fund and the Welsh Church Fund in order to comply with the [Trustee Act 2000](#). The policies ensure that monies are invested in the best interests of the Trusts.

The Annual Investment and Fund strategies for the Monmouthshire Welsh Church Act Fund and Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Fund set priorities are, in the order shown to:

- a) Maintain security of the invested capital,
- b) Maintain sufficient liquidity to allow grants to be distributed,
- c) Maintain an optimum yield which is commensurate with security and liquidity.

#### **Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Fund**

- 3.4 Following recommendations from Treasury Advisors Arlingclose, The Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust adopted a similar risk and investment strategy to that of the Welsh Church Fund. The Investment strategy (**Appendix 1**) will be presented to the trustees in their meeting in July 2026, following approval from Cabinet.
- 3.5 In the financial year 2024/25 (the last full year of account), the Mon Farms Trust received income of £38,157 from its direct investments in funds and £512 from the Roger Edwards Educational Trust Fund. These total investment returns were more than the grants and fees allocated from the Trust. The trustees have agreed to make £25,000 available for grant distribution in 2026/27.

3.6 In the 2024/25 financial year, the income received from the pooled funds invested in by the Trustees directly was offset by an unrealised net capital gain of £552. A movement in capital value is expected with these types of investments and not expected to impact the fund in the long term. For this reason, Arlingclose strongly recommend continuing to spread the investments over several asset classes, including equity, property, and bonds to reduce the risk of losses. It should be noted however that as the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust receives income from the Roger Edwards Trust and that this income is achieved by investing in Equity and Property based products; in order to diversify, the additional products selected for direct investment were weighted towards bond-based products.

3.7 **Appendix 1** outlines the Annual Investment and Fund Strategy 2026/27.

### **Risk Assessment of the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust**

3.8 The financial assistance provided by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust supports a very wide range of students, studying at agricultural orientated colleges in the UK. Applicants must live in the former Gwent area (excluding Newport) and preference is given to those under 25 years old. Annually, monies are distributed by way of educational grants and the key risk faced by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust is loss or reduction in the amount of monies available for distribution.

3.9 A risk assessment is undertaken to ensure that risks faced by the Trust are identified and mitigated through appropriate and robust controls put in place by the Authority, in its position as the Trustee with responsibility for financial arrangements. The risk assessment policy is attached for information at **Appendix 2**.

Page  
7

### **Welsh Church Fund**

3.10 The Monmouthshire Welsh Church Fund was established on 1st April 1996 from the former Gwent Fund and part of the former Mid Glamorgan Fund. The Fund covers the administrative areas of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Torfaen, and Monmouthshire, with Monmouthshire being designated as the lead Authority.

3.11 Since 1996 trustees have sought to obtain a satisfactory rate of return from the fund's investments thereby enabling grants to beneficiaries after meeting expenses, whilst maintaining the capital value of the fund in real terms.

### **Grant Allocation of the Welsh Church Fund**

3.12 The Trust's fund balance was £5,209,899 as at 31 March 2025 (£5,217,894 at 31 March 2024). It is recommended that the 2026/27 grant allocation be set at £220,000 (£225,000 in 2025/26). Pooled investment funds have continued to deliver stable distributions in line with the investment strategy, helping to offset fluctuations across asset classes. Forecast income for 2025/26 is approximately £220,000, broadly consistent with 2024/25, supporting a stable level of grant awards.

3.13 This will result in the following distribution being recommended:

<b>AUTHORITY</b>	<b>POPULATION (000) **</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE SPLIT</b>	<b>BUDGET*</b>
Blaenau Gwent CBC	67,880	0.113	24,819
Caerphilly CBC	176,865	0.294	64,667
Monmouthshire CC	94,940	0.158	34,713
Newport CBC	167,905	0.279	61,391
Torfaen CBC	94,115	0.156	34,411
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>601,705</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>220,000</b>

\*The above figures do not include any brought forward unspent grant allocations from previous financial years.

\*\*Source: 2026/27 Welsh Government Final Local Government Funding Settlement.

### The Investment & Fund Strategy for the Welsh Church Act Fund 2026/27

- 3.14 The Trust holds assets within pooled funds (Collective Investment Funds) such as to maximise the average annual income stream to the Trust over a 3 to 5 year' business cycle without a sustained loss of capital funds. Arlingclose as treasury advisors to the Welsh Church Fund have supported the Welsh Church fund in making these types of investments. The latest fund review was undertaken by Arlingclose in 2025, and these investments remain a risk balanced investment portfolio in line with the investment priorities.
- 3.15 Pooled investment funds are suited to bodies such as the Welsh Church Fund who are looking for a steady and/or higher average income streams and are able to leave the principal in place for a business cycle as they do not need to access the principal over the medium term. This enables the Trust to benefit from above average good years despite lower returns in infrequent poorer years.
- 3.16 There is a risk relating to the use of these funds in that the principal amount can go down as well as up in value. Again, this is suited to the Welsh Church Fund as the Trust can tolerate these movements over a longer business cycle. The movements are expected to be at least neutral over a business cycle and the earning power of these investments is not largely affected by the market value.
- 3.17 In the financial year 2024/25, the income received from the pooled funds was offset by an unrealised net capital loss of £18,454 (£83,718 gain in 2024/25) as a result of a slowing in the recovery of the economy and a rise in the unemployment rates, having an effect on the financial markets. A movement in capital value is expected with these types of investments in normal years as well as exceptional year's such as at the height of a pandemic and these movements are not expected to impact the fund in the longer term. For this reason, Arlingclose

strongly recommend continuing to spread the investments over several asset classes, equity, property, and bonds to reduce any substantial risk of losses. The trust will continue to review exit strategies from pooled funds if appropriate and in light of a rising interest rate environment where returns may be greater from other investment vehicles.

3.18 The 2026/27 Investment and Fund strategy for the Welsh Church Act Fund is contained in **Appendix 3**.

3.19 The strategy states that the balance of cash not invested directly by the Trust Funds can be managed on a pooled basis by Monmouthshire County Council to maximise investment returns and to minimise exposure to investment losses. This cash balance is required primarily to ensure sufficient cash is available to distribute grants during the financial year and reimburse other authorities within the Gwent area at the financial year-end.

### **Risk Assessment of the Welsh Church Fund**

3.20 The financial assistance provided by the Welsh Church Fund supports a very wide range of community activities, including voluntary and sporting organisations. Annually, monies are distributed by charitable grants and the key risk faced by the Welsh Church Fund is loss or reduction in the amount of funds available.

3.21 The risk assessment is undertaken to ensure that risks faced by the Trust are identified and mitigated through appropriate and robust controls put in place by the Authority in its position as sole and corporate Trustee. The existing risk assessment policy has been reviewed and is deemed to be adequate and sufficiently robust to continue during the 2026/27 financial year. The risk assessment is attached for information at **Appendix 4**.

## **4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

Options available are restricted by the nature of the governing documents and articles of the Welsh Church Act Fund and Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust.

## **5. REASONS:**

5.1 To produce an annual Investment and Fund Strategy in order that the Authority fulfils its responsibilities as corporate and sole trustee in compliance with the Trustee Act 2000.

5.2 To approve the 2026/27 grant allocation for the Welsh Church Fund, enabling constituent Local Authorities to make qualifying grant allocations under the Welsh Church Fund Trust Scheme.

**6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1 The grant allocation to beneficiaries of the Welsh Church Fund is set in the context of the fund balance being maintained over the long term. It is funded through net income generated through investment returns.
- 6.2 The appointment of a dedicated treasury advisor to the Welsh Church Fund will be an ongoing annual charge against the Fund. The fee negotiated is competitive and further efficiencies are generated from the Authority dealing with one advisor for its treasury advice.

**7. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

A Future Generations assessment, examining the implications in regard to equality, safeguarding, corporate parenting or sustainable developments, is contained in the attached **Appendix 6**.

Page 10

**CONSULTEES:**

Strategic Leadership Team  
Cabinet Members  
Head of Finance

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1 – Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust – Annual Investment and Fund Strategy 2026/27  
Appendix 2 – Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust – Risk Assessment Policy 2026/27  
Appendix 3 – Monmouthshire Welsh Church Fund – Investment and Fund Strategy 2026/27  
Appendix 4 – Monmouthshire Welsh Church Fund – Risk Assessment Policy 2026/27  
Appendix 5 -- Welsh Church Fund Principles, Policy Considerations and Grant Allocation Criteria for 2026/27  
Appendix 6 – Future Generations Evaluation Form

**11. AUTHORS:**

Dave Jarrett – Finance Business Partner – Corporate Accountancy  
Nicola Wellington – Children & Young People - Finance & Support Services Manager

**12. CONTACT DETAILS:**

E-mail: [davejarrett@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:davejarrett@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01633 644657

## 1. Background

- 1.1. The Trustees shall each year consider for approval an annual Investment Strategy. The Trustees may also request submission of a longer-term investment strategy for approval. Any proposed in-year modification to the Investment Strategy must be approved by the Trustees.
- 1.2. This investment strategy has been prepared with the assistance of Arlingclose, the current treasury advisor to both the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust and Monmouthshire County Council.
- 1.3. The Trustees have agreed to a continued relationship with a Treasury advisor to provide expert advice on the continued suitability of a variety of investment vehicles for inclusion in its portfolio. This will carry a small charge.

## 2. Interest Rate Forecast

- 2.1. The UK Bank Rate was held at 3.75% in February 2026 which is anticipated to be the peak in 2026 before the MPC cut rates in the medium term to stimulate the economy. Our Treasury Advisors expect rate cuts in the second quarter of 2026 to a low of 3.25% by mid - late 2026, although the timing and extent of rate cuts remains highly uncertain.
- 2.2. In light of reducing interest rates, reduced returns should be expected from short-term low risk instruments and higher returns from Property funds, Bonds and Equities. Longer term investments continue to offer higher rates when risk is at acceptable levels.
- 2.3. The Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust, by means of this Investment strategy is permitted to utilise suitable Collective Investment Schemes/Pooled Funds, which enable the Authority to diversify the assets and thereby reduce the underlying risk in the investment portfolio and at the same time providing the potential for enhanced returns.

## 3. Annual Investment and Fund Strategy

- 3.1. The Trustees shall invest Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust monies in an agreement with the board of the Trust for Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment.
- 3.2. Day to day activities required to implement this shall be delegated to the S151 Officer and the Treasury team of Monmouthshire County Council. This can include a change to investment vehicle providing it still lies within the scope of this Investment strategy and is approved by the current Treasury Management advisors.

- 3.3. In accordance with best practice, the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust prioritise the three objectives of security, liquidity, and yield in relation to the investment of its funds when making any investment. Maintaining a high level of security of investment ensures the long-term income generating capacity of the fund. The liquidity or accessibility of a portion of the investments ensures in the short-term expenses of the fund can be met.
- 3.4. The Overall Fund Strategy of the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust Fund is to generate investment returns which after meeting the expenses of managing the Fund, can be distributed to selected beneficiaries. The investment strategy is therefore to maximise returns commensurate with appropriate levels of security and liquidity. Investments in Collective Investment Funds are likely to result in fluctuations in principle. It is acceptable to allow this, if having taken appropriate advice; they are expected to be temporary in nature, to improve total returns over a 3 to 5 year' business cycle.
- 3.5. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust had £551,312 of pooled investments and £103,843 of cash.
- 3.6. Financial investments can be taken by the Fund without specific reference to the Treasury Advisors at the time providing they are sterling denominated investments with a maximum maturity of one year and meet the "high credit quality" criteria determined by the Trustees and set out in paragraph 3.9 and are not deemed capital expenditure investments under Statute.
- 3.7. Investments which do not meet the strict definition (detailed below) of high credit quality, and which have a longer-term Investment horizon, can be taken, but only after consulting with the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust Fund treasury advisors and the Section 151 Officer at Monmouthshire County Council.
- 3.8. The types of investment vehicles that can be utilised by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust are as follows:

**Table 2: Investments**

Investment	
Term deposits or Cash Deposits with banks and building societies	✓
Gilts, Treasury-bills, or the UK Debt Management Office	✓
Collective Investment Schemes	✓
Pooled funds with Monmouthshire County Council	✓

3.9. The Trustees and its advisors select countries and financial institutions after analysis and ongoing monitoring of:

- Published credit ratings for financial institutions (counterparties):
  - Investments are classed as having high credit quality if the lowest credit rating they have with Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poors' is A-, A3 and A- or higher.
  - And a country rating of AA+ or equivalent for non-UK sovereigns
- Credit Default Swaps (where quoted)
- Sovereign Support mechanisms
- Economic fundamentals (for example Net Debt as a percentage of GDP) and Economic trends
- Sovereign support mechanisms
- Share Prices
- Corporate developments, news, articles, markets sentiment and momentum
- Historical performance and expected future trends of Collective Investment Funds
- Subjective overlay – or, put more simply, common sense.

Any institution can be suspended or removed should any of the factors identified above give rise to concern. The Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust fund will not enter into any investment if it is outside the advice given by its Treasury advisors, which is updated monthly, weekly and daily according to the movements in the worldwide backdrop. This includes guidance on the maximum maturity of investments with approved counterparties.

3.10. New Investments made directly by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust Fund will be restricted in the following ways to ensure diversification and hence reduction of both credit risk and interest rate risk.

- A minimum of £40,000 (at the time of investment) needs to be held in investments which are sufficiently liquid such as cash or other investments less than one year so that grants can still be made if investment returns are low or to allow for the lead time for realising certain investments. The full remaining balance can be invested in Collective Investment funds to maximise returns if this is in line with the requirements of this strategy.
- The maximum monetary amount, which can be invested directly by the Monmouthshire Farms Endowment Trust Fund [MFETF] in any one Collective Investment Fund (at the time of the Investment), is 45% of the total MFETF investment balance.

- The amounts invested are spread across different investment asset classes such as Property, Bonds and Equity to diversify and reduce overall risk. This spread should be viewed collectively with the funds invested by the Roger Edwards Educational Trust [REET] and from which the MFETF benefits. As the REET Investments are weighted towards Equity, it is not possible to achieve an equal split across asset classes but a level of between 20% and 45% for at least three of the asset classes should be aimed for.
- Up to 100% of the total investment balance can be held with Monmouthshire County Council or Instruments issued by the UK Government, if required
- Up to 100% of the total investment balance can be invested as term deposits, CDs or call accounts with banks and building societies. The maximum amount that can be invested with any one financial institution is £100,000, if of high credit quality (approx. 15% of the total MFETF investment balance) or £50,000 if approved by the Treasury advisors although not considered high credit quality.
- The maximum duration of term deposits and CDs with banks and building societies shall be in line with the ongoing advice given by the Trust's treasury advisors, which varies with world economic factors.

1. At the end of each financial year, the Trustees shall consider the actual return on investments and the extent to which the investment objectives have been achieved.
2. The Trustees shall observe the following constraints in pursuing the investment objectives:
  - The restrictions on investments contained within Section 10 of the scheme made by Monmouthshire County Council.
  - A proportion of the funds held may be pooled with Monmouthshire County Council's overall investment portfolio, which is invested in line with the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy. Interest earned by the Authority and any investment losses incurred by the Authority will be apportioned proportionally between the Local Authority and Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust in line with the total investments held by each party.

*NB: Any investments that move outside of the above criteria with time will be reinvested within the above criteria on maturity.*

- 3.13. **Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) principles:** ESG considerations are increasingly a factor in global investment decision-making. However, in respect of the Trusts, the Council's approach does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at individual investment level. This reflects the structure of the Trusts' investments, which are held primarily through pooled funds and treasury-style instruments rather than direct equity holdings, and the inconsistency, limited coverage and lack of auditability of ESG

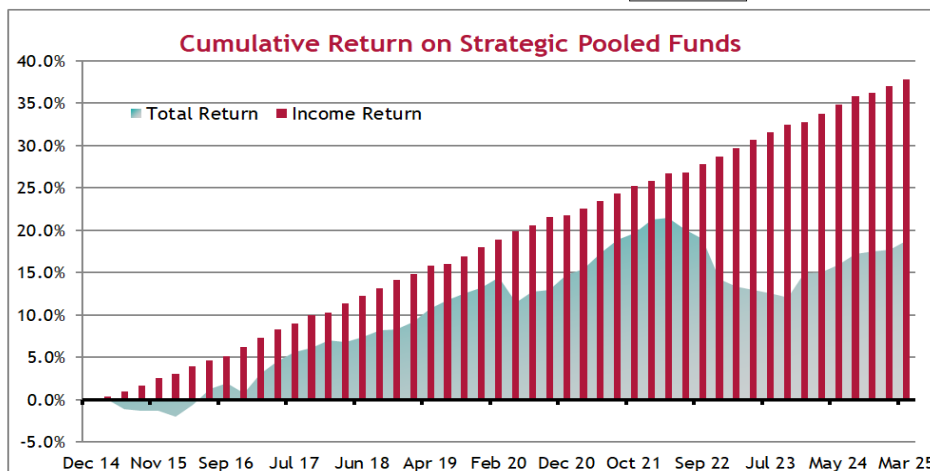
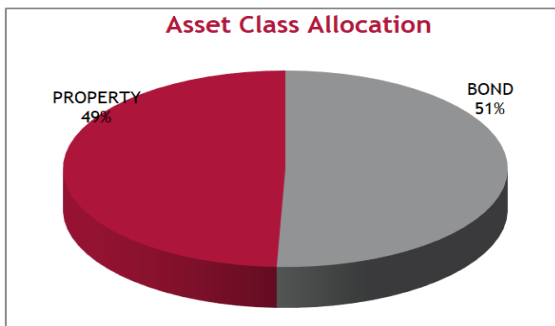
data across these asset classes. The Trustee has therefore adopted a cautious and evidence-based approach, seeking to avoid over-claiming the extent to which ESG factors can be measured or enforced at individual investment level.

- 3.14. In September 2022, the Council committed to consider how responsibly it invests its cash balances and to explore the development of a sustainable investment approach compatible with the Declaration of a Climate Emergency and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. While that commitment related to the Council's own investments, it provides relevant context when the Council acts in its separate capacity as trustee. In practice, ESG considerations are already partially embedded within the Trusts' investment arrangements through investment structure and manager selection. Over 50% of pooled fund investments held by the Trust are invested in CCLA-managed pooled funds, which demonstrate stronger alignment with responsible investment principles than other pooled options available to the Trust. This alignment is reflected through manager-level responsible investment policies, stewardship and engagement activity, and sector-level exclusions, rather than through real-time ESG scoring. This approach reflects both the nature of the Trusts' investments and the absence of direct holdings in individual companies.
- 3.15. When investing on behalf of the Trust, the Council will continue to prioritise banks and pooled funds operated by institutions that are signatories to recognised responsible investment and stewardship frameworks, including the UN Principles for Responsible Investment and the UK Stewardship Code. During 2026/27, the Council will continue to engage with their advisors, Arlingclose, to review existing investments and to assess whether further strengthening of ESG alignment is achievable in a way that remains proportionate, evidence-based and consistent with trustee duties.
- 3.16. There is now more than 60 months' history to Monmouthshire Farms Trust's pooled fund holding. In capital terms, it should be remembered that the emphasis of the investment in the selected funds is based on a long-term strategy of a five-year rolling basis.
- 3.17. The values and performance of the investments since the date of acquisition are reported in the latest available Arlingclose report. The income return on the pooled funds at the current time are close to or below the bank returns, the overall performance of the investments will be closely monitored, any exit strategy identified will ensure that due diligence will be followed. The latest available performance data is provided below.

### **Returns since inception Jan 2015 to March 2025**

Please note the UBS Multi Asset Income Fund closed in September 2024.

STRATEGIC POOLED FUND PORTFOLIO		MONMOUTHSHIRE FARM SCHOOL ENDOWMENT FUND				From:	31/12/2014	To:	31/03/2025	10.25 Years		
FUND NAME	ASSET CLASS	Current Value £	Capital Growth £	Dividends Earned £	Holding Period (yrs)	Capital Return	Income Return	Total Return	Volatility	Capital Return annualised	Income Return annualised	
CCLA - COIF PROPERTY FUND	PROPERTY	200,194	-28,806	109,067	9.3	-12.58%	47.63%	35.05%	4.7%	-1.44%	4.29%	
M&G CHARIBOND FUND	BOND	205,232	-44,768	70,518	9.7	-17.91%	28.21%	10.30%	3.3%	-2.01%	2.59%	
UBS MULTI ASSET INCOME FUND	MULTI ASSET	0	-55,469	77,121	9.6	-27.73%	38.56%	10.83%	5.1%	-3.31%	3.44%	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>405,426</b>	<b>-129,043</b>	<b>256,706</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>-19.00%</b>	<b>37.81%</b>	<b>18.80%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>-2.21%</b>	<b>3.40%</b>	
		Unrealised capital loss since purchase:		-73,574	Annualised income return:		3.40%					
					Average Bank Rate:		1.49%					

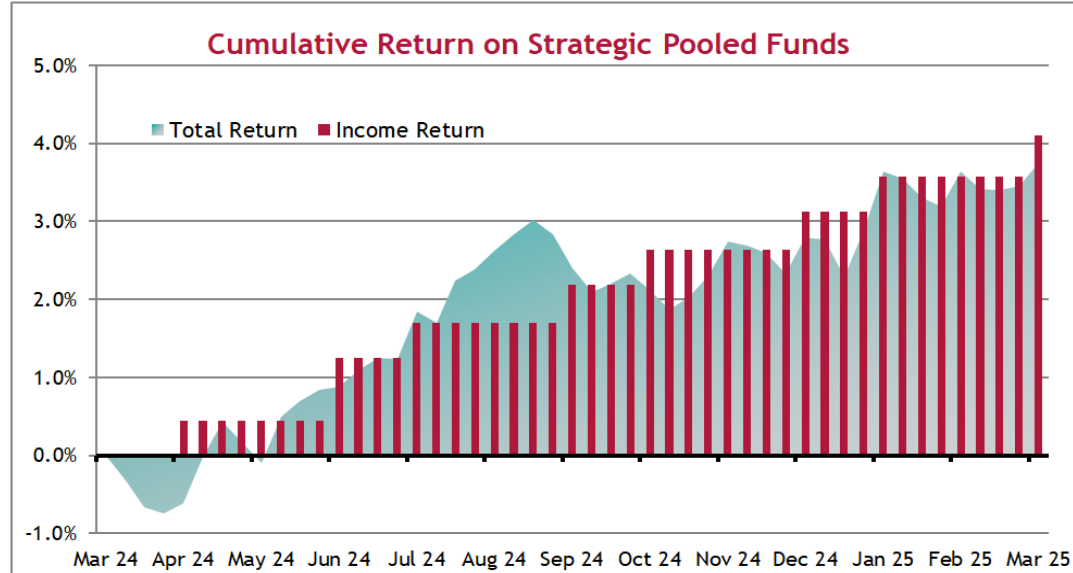
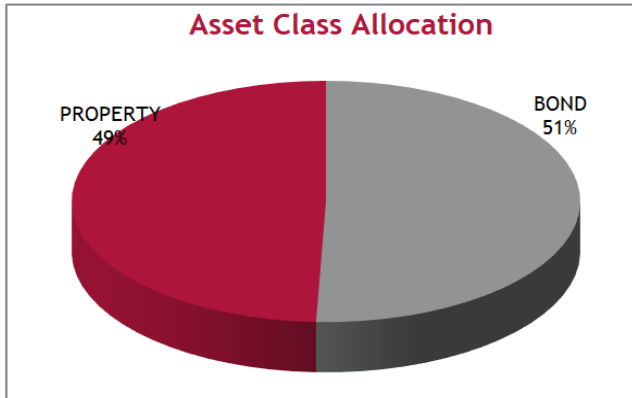


Please note the data above reflects the performance of the funds since inception as the funds were purchased on January 2015. The below charts the performance of the funds during the 2024/25 financial year.

**Returns 12 months to 31/3/2025**

FUND NAME	ASSET CLASS	Current Value £	Capital Growth £	Dividends Earned £	Holding Period (yrs)	Capital Return	Income Return	Total Return	Volatility
CCLA - COIF PROPERTY FUND	PROPERTY	200,194	-310	11,061	1.0	-0.15%	5.52%	5.36%	1.9%
M&G CHARIBOND FUND	BOND	205,232	-5,124	9,904	1.0	-2.44%	4.71%	2.27%	4.1%
UBS MULTI ASSET INCOME FUND	MULTI ASSET	0	3,476	1,700	0.5	2.46%	1.21%	3.67%	2.7%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>405,426</b>	<b>-1,957</b>	<b>22,665</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>-0.35%</b>	<b>4.11%</b>	<b>3.75%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>

Unrealised capital loss since purchase: -73,574      Annualised income return: 4.77%  
Average Bank Rate: 4.99%



**4. Training**

- 4.1. The Section 151 Officer will ensure all staff are suitable trained to assist with this process and will organise awareness training to Trustees, Cabinet and Audit Committee where appropriate.

**5. Investment Consultants/ Treasury Advisors**

- 5.1. The Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trustees use Arlingclose as their Treasury Management Consultants to provide information, advice and training relating to investments. Information relating to the investments is provided from publicly available data and is summarised to

assist with decision making within the Authority. The information and advice encompass the level of risk of investments and the variety of options available.

**Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust – Risk Assessment Policy 2026/27**

The financial assistance provided by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust is to support the advancement of education in agriculture and related subjects at college. Annually, monies are distributed to students and the key risk faced by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust is loss or reduction in the amount of monies available.

An assessment of the risks faced by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust has been undertaken and steps taken to:

- avoid risks through alternative strategies
- limit and reduce risks by improving controls
- insure against specified risks

On an annual basis, the risk assessment will be reviewed and updated to include any new risks identified.

The risks identified have been encompassed within four categories:

- governance & management
- operational risks
- financial risks
- compliance risk

Monmouthshire County Council as custodian and administrator of the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust manage the fund on the Trustees behalf through the Cabinet and make all risk and investment decisions in a unified risk policy.

The following paragraphs list the risks identified & the steps taken to mitigate or eliminate the risk.

**1. Governance & Management**

**(a) The fund lacks direction?**

The activities of the Fund are governed by the guidance in Section 4 of the Charity Act 2000.

The Cabinet has a clear purpose to maximise the return on its investments and this is contained within the investment policy.

**(b) There are conflicts of interest?**

Cabinet members are elected in accordance with the electoral cycle and are required to conduct themselves in-line with the Authority's Code of Conduct.

Members are required to declare any interests related to the activities of the Trust and may not vote on these decisions. These matters are recorded in the official minutes.

Members allowance and expense payments are not charged to the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Fund.

**(c) Funds are used in-inappropriately?**

The purpose for which funds can be used is contained within the objectives of the trust.

**(d) Key staff, leave the Council's employment?**

The actions of Officers of the Council are determined by Delegated Powers.

A number of senior Council staff support and advise the Trustees on legal & financial matters.

**(e) Inadequate information is provided to the Trustees?**

Annually, the Trustees consider the level of reserves and anticipated investment income before determining the level of grants to be made available.

Variances between the anticipated & actual investment income will be reflected in the following year's grants.

## **2. Operational Risks**

**(a) Unsuitable staff support and advise Cabinet?**

Monmouthshire County Council has a comprehensive recruitment process that is supported by a wide range of personnel policies.

The training & development needs of officers are identified through the Employee Review process.

A number of senior Council staff support and advise Cabinet on financial and legal matters.

**(b) Systems & procedures are not secure?**

Systems & procedures are documented & document retention policies are in place. IT systems have data back-up arrangements & disaster recovery plans. Periodic audits identify internal control improvement requirements. Insurance provides a means to recover from specified losses.

**(c) Stakeholders are not satisfied with the operation of the Fund?**

The Scheme made by the Trustees provides for the advancement of education in agriculture and related subjects at college.

The Trustees consider annual reports on the financial performance of the Trust.

The Trustees consider annually the level of funding available for grants.

**(d) The assets of the Fund are at risk?**

In accordance with the investment policy, a number of constraints are placed upon the way in which monies are used.

A risk minimization strategy has been adopted which limits the investment of funds to individual institutions meeting specified criteria.

**Unsatisfactory returns on investment are achieved?**

The reserves policy requires monies be invested in financial instruments which produce interest payments and there is no appreciation in the capital value of the investment.

The overall aim is to obtain a satisfactory rate of return enabling Trustees to distribute an amount based on the forecast return on investments during the current year, after meeting the expenses incurred in managing the fund.

Annually, the Trustees consider the actual return on investments and the extent to which the investment objectives have been achieved.

### **3. Financial Risks**

**(a) Budgetary control is inadequate?**

Annually, the Trustees consider the level of reserves and anticipated investment income before determining the level of grants to be made.

Variance between the anticipated and actual investment income will be reflected in the following year's grants.

**(b) Financial administration is unsatisfactory?**

Monmouthshire County Council personnel policies and procedures ensure Officers are appropriately qualified for the roles undertaken.

Internal control arrangements ensure there is division of duties amongst Officers. Periodic audits review the internal control arrangements.

**(c) Financial losses arise due to speculative investment?**

The investment policy prescribes a risk minimisation approach that can limit the investment of funds to institutions meeting specified criteria.

**(d) Financial losses arise from fraud or error?**

The internal control arrangements are based upon segregation of duties. Periodic audits review the internal control arrangements. Insurance provides a means to recover from specified losses.

**4. Compliance Risk**

**(a) Failure to comply with legislation / regulations?**

The activities of the Fund are specified within objects of the Trust. The nature and format of financial reporting is specified by the Charity Commission and an external audit of the accounts is mandatory. Senior Council staff support and advise Cabinet on legal and financial matters.

## The Investment & Fund Strategy for the Welsh Church Act Fund 2026/27

### 1. Background

- 1.1. The Cabinet shall each year consider for approval an annual Investment Strategy. The Cabinet may also request submission of a longer-term investment strategy for approval. The Cabinet before implementation must approve any proposed in-year modification to the Investment Strategy.
  - 1.2. This Welsh Church Fund Funds strategy shall be considered in conjunction with any review of the Trustees Investment Strategy.
  - 1.3. Local Authorities are required by the Welsh Government's Investment Guidance to produce an Annual Investment Strategy. The Trustees of the Welsh Church Fund have elected to use this Guidance where practicable and relevant. The guidance emphasises an appropriate approach to risk management, particularly in relation to the security and liquidity of invested funds.
- This investment strategy has been prepared with the assistance of Arlingclose, the current treasury advisor to both the Welsh Church Fund and Monmouthshire County Council (the sole Trustee of the Welsh Church Fund).

Page 24

### Interest Rate Forecast

- 2.1 The Welsh Church Fund, by means of this Investment strategy is permitted to utilise suitable Collective Investment Schemes/Pooled Funds, which enable the Authority to diversify the assets and thereby reduce the underlying risk in the investment portfolio and at the same time providing the potential for enhanced returns.
- 2.2 In light of reducing interest rates more substantial returns should now be available from long-term low risk instruments. This should allow a stable flow of returns without restricting grant allocations over the medium term. Longer term investments continue to offer higher rates when risk is at acceptable levels to compensate for reduce interest rates affecting short- term equity investments.
- 2.3 The Welsh Church Fund is permitted to utilise suitable Collective Investment Schemes/Pooled Funds, which enable the Authority to diversify the assets and underlying risk in the investment portfolio and at the same time providing the potential for enhanced returns.

### 3. Annual Investment and Fund Strategy

- 3.1. The Cabinet shall invest Welsh Church Fund monies in accordance with Section 15 of the Scheme made by the County Council of Monmouthshire under Section 19 of the Welsh Church Act 1914.
- 3.2. In accordance with best practice, the Welsh Church fund must consider the three objectives of security, liquidity, and yield in relation to the investment of its funds when making any investment. Maintaining a high level of security of investment ensures the long-term income generating capacity of the fund. The liquidity or accessibility of a portion of the investments ensures in the short-term expenses of the fund can be met in full.
- 3.3. The Overall Fund Strategy of the Welsh Church Trust Fund is to generate investment returns which after meeting the expenses of managing the Fund, can be distributed to selected beneficiaries. The investment strategy is therefore to maximise returns commensurate with appropriate levels of security and liquidity. Investments in Collective Investment Funds are likely to result in fluctuations in principal. It is acceptable to allow this, if having taken appropriate advice; they are expected to be temporary in nature, in order to improve total returns over a 3 to 5 year' business cycle.
- 3.4. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, the Welsh Church Fund had £5.039m of Fixed Asset and Pooled Fund investments (market value) and £287,249 of cash.
- 3.5. Financial Investments which do not meet the strict definition below of high credit quality and which have a longer-term Investment horizon can be made but only after consulting with the Fund's treasury advisors and the Deputy CEO / Chief Officer for Resources (S151 Officer) at Monmouthshire County Council, who represents the Trustees, to ensure the level of risk is in line with the Welsh Church Fund's other current investment options.
- 3.6. The types of investments vehicles that are permitted to be utilised by the WCF are as follows:

**Table 2: Investments**

Investment	Specified
Call accounts, term deposits or Cash Deposits with banks and building societies	✓
Gilts, Treasury-bills, or the UK Debt Management Office	✓
Collective Investment Schemes	✓
Pooled funds with Monmouthshire County Council	✓

3.7. Investments can be taken out by the Fund without specific consultation to the Treasury Advisors at the time providing they are sterling denominated investments with a maximum maturity of one year and that they meet the “high credit quality” criteria determined by the Trustee and set out in paragraph 3.8 and are not deemed capital expenditure investments under Statute.

3.8. The Trustees and its advisors select countries and financial institutions after analysis and ongoing monitoring of;

- Published credit ratings for financial institutions (counterparties):
  - Investments are classed as having high credit quality if the lowest credit rating they have with Fitch, Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s’ is A-, A3 and A- or higher.
  - And a country rating of AA+ or equivalent for non-UK sovereigns
- Credit Default Swaps (where quoted)
- Sovereign Support mechanisms
- Economic fundamentals (for example Net Debt as a percentage of GDP) and economic trends
- Sovereign support mechanisms
- Share Prices
- Corporate developments, news, articles, markets sentiment and momentum
- Historical performance and expected future trends of Collective Investment Funds
- Subjective overlay – or, put more simply, common sense.

Any institution can be suspended or removed should any of the factors identified above give rise to concern. The Welsh Church fund will not enter into any investment if it is outside the advice given by its Treasury Advisors, which is updated monthly, weekly, and daily according to the movements in the worldwide backdrop. This includes guidance on the maximum maturity of investments with approved counterparties.

3.9. New Investments made directly by the Welsh Church Fund will be restricted in the following ways to ensure diversification and hence reduction of both credit risk and interest rate risk:

- A minimum of £300,000 needs to be held in investments which are of sufficient liquidity, these include cash or other investments with less than one year before maturity so that grants can still be made if investment returns are low or to allow for the lead time for realising certain investments.

- The maximum investment amount, which can be invested in any one Collective Investment Fund (at the time of investment) is 20% of the total investment balance. The amount invested should be spread across different asset classes such as Property, Bonds and Equity.
- Up to 100% of the total investment balance can be held with Monmouthshire County Council.
- Up to 100% of the total investment balance can be invested as term deposits or call accounts with banks and building societies. The maximum amount that can be invested with any one financial institution counterparty is 10% of the total investment balance.
- The maximum duration of term deposits with banks and building societies shall be in line with the advice given by the Trust's Treasury Advisors, which varies with world economic factors.

3.10. At the end of each financial year, the Trustees shall consider the actual return on investments and the extent to which the investment objectives have been achieved.

3.11. The Trustees will observe the following constraints in pursuing the investment objectives:

- The restrictions on investments contained within Section 15 of the scheme made by Monmouthshire County Council under section 19 of the Welsh Church Act 1914.
- A proportion of the funds held may be pooled with Monmouthshire County Council's overall investment portfolio, which is invested in line with the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy. Interest earned by the Authority and any investment losses incurred by the Authority will be apportioned proportionally between the Local Authority and Monmouthshire Welsh Church Act Fund in line with the total investments held by each party.

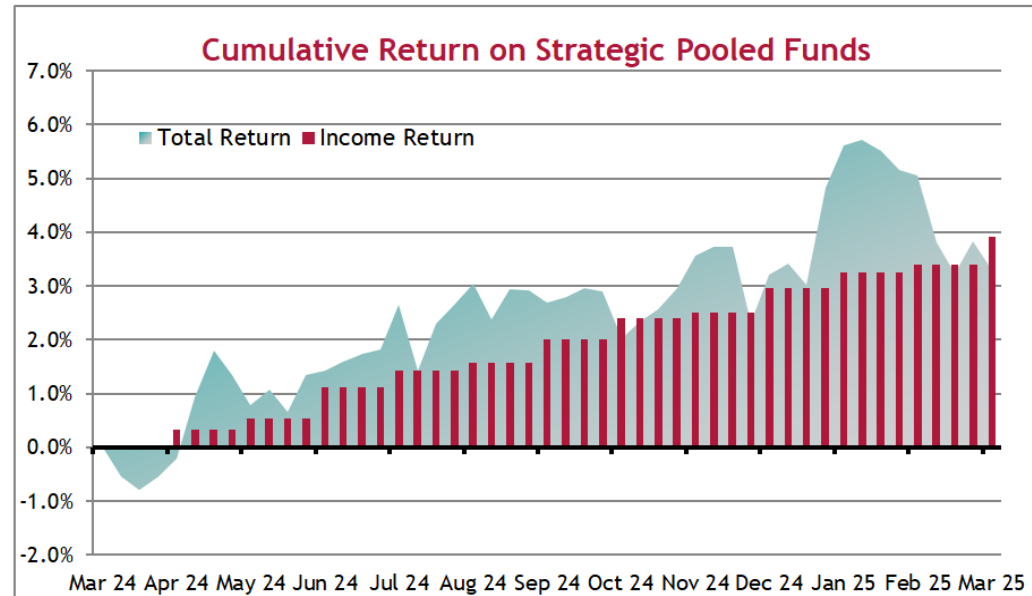
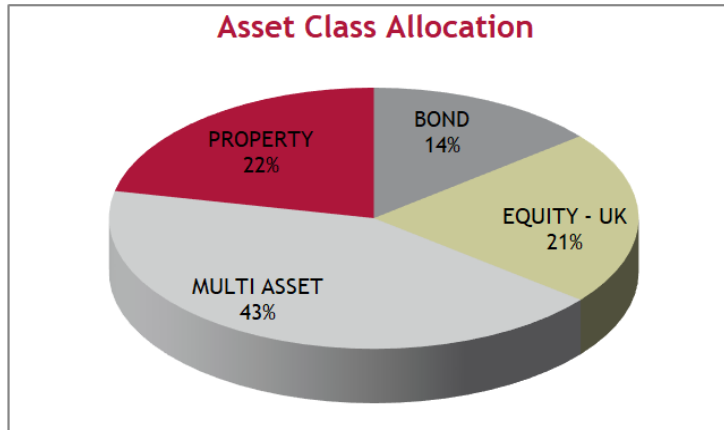
*NB: Any investments that move outside of the above criteria with time will be reinvested with the above criteria on maturity.*

3.12. **Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) principles:** ESG considerations are increasingly a factor in global investment decision-making. However, in respect of the Trusts, the Council's approach does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at individual investment level. This reflects the structure of the Trusts' investments, which are held primarily through pooled funds and treasury-style instruments rather than direct equity holdings, and the inconsistency, limited coverage and lack of auditability of ESG data across these asset classes. The Trustee has therefore adopted a cautious and evidence-based approach, seeking to avoid over-claiming the extent to which ESG factors can be measured or enforced at individual investment level.

- 3.13. In September 2022, the Council committed to consider how responsibly it invests its cash balances and to explore the development of a sustainable investment approach compatible with the Declaration of a Climate Emergency and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. While that commitment related to the Council's own investments, it provides relevant context when the Council acts in its separate capacity as trustee. In practice, ESG considerations are already partially embedded within the Trusts' investment arrangements through investment structure and manager selection. Over 50% of pooled fund investments held by the Trust are invested in CCLA-managed pooled funds, which demonstrate stronger alignment with responsible investment principles than other pooled options available to the Trust. This alignment is reflected through manager-level responsible investment policies, stewardship and engagement activity, and sector-level exclusions, rather than through real-time ESG scoring. This approach reflects both the nature of the Trusts' investments and the absence of direct holdings in individual companies.
- 3.14. When investing on behalf of the Trust, the Council will continue to prioritise banks and pooled funds operated by institutions that are signatories to recognised responsible investment and stewardship frameworks, including the UN Principles for Responsible Investment and the UK Stewardship Code. During 2026/27, the Council will continue to engage with their advisors, Arlingclose, to review existing investments and to assess whether further strengthening of ESG alignment is achievable in a way that remains proportionate, evidence-based and consistent with trustee duties.
- 3.15. Performances of the externally managed pooled funds of the Welsh Church Fund for the 12 months to March 2025 are set out below. These investment funds will be reviewed in 2026/27 to ensure that they are fulfilling the criteria of income generation and capital sustainability, especially in light of a higher interest rate environment.
- 3.16. The dividend income earned from this portfolio, shown by the maroon bars, was £188,469 for the 12 months until March 2025.

FUND NAME	ASSET CLASS	Current Value £	Capital Growth £	Dividends Earned £	Holding Period (yrs)	Capital Return	Income Return	Total Return	Volatility
AEGON (KAMES) DIVERSIFIED MONTHLY INCOME FUND	MULTI ASSET	491,252	-8,748	6,273	0.2	-1.75%	1.25%	-0.50%	2.6%
CCLA - COIF INVESTMENT FUND	MULTI ASSET	1,315,413	-64,283	37,746	1.0	-4.66%	2.74%	-1.92%	7.7%
CCLA - COIF PROPERTY FUND	PROPERTY	919,195	-1,423	50,785	1.0	-0.15%	5.52%	5.36%	1.9%
M&G CHARIBOND FUND	BOND	602,303	-15,037	29,067	1.0	-2.44%	4.71%	2.27%	4.1%
M&G CHARIFUND	EQUITY - UK	528,306	21,650	31,490	1.0	4.27%	6.22%	10.49%	9.4%
SCHRODER INCOME MAXIMISER FUND	EQUITY - UK	386,075	24,753	26,774	1.0	6.85%	7.41%	14.26%	12.2%
UBS MULTI ASSET INCOME FUND	MULTI ASSET	0	12,949	6,334	0.5	2.46%	1.21%	3.67%	2.7%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>4,242,545</b>	<b>-30,139</b>	<b>188,469</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>-0.63%</b>	<b>3.92%</b>	<b>3.29%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

Unrealised capital gain since purchase:	404,737	Annualised income return:	4.56%
		Average Bank Rate:	4.99%



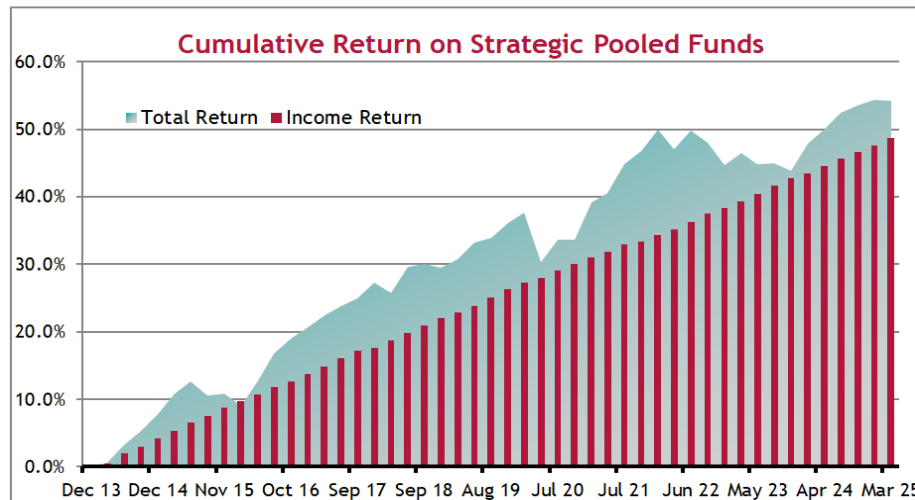
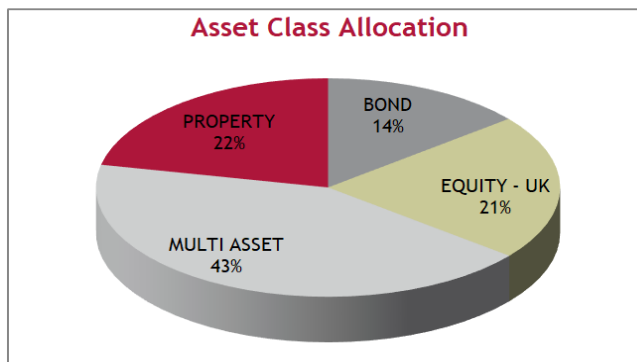
## Welsh Church Act Fund's Externally Managed Investments

### Returns since inception to 31/3/2025

Please note the UBS Multi Asset Income Fund closed in September 2024.

The table and graph below show the **cumulative and annualised returns** of the longer-dated pooled funds over period January 2014 to March 2025.

STRATEGIC POOLED FUND PORTFOLIO		MONMOUTHSHIRE WELSH CHURCH FUND				From:	31/12/2013	To:	31/03/2025	11.25 Years		
FUND NAME	ASSET CLASS	Current Value £	Capital Growth £	Dividends Earned £	Holding Period (yrs)	Capital Return	Income Return	Total Return	Volatility	Capital Return annualised	Income Return annualised	
AEGON (KAMES) DIVERSIFIED MONTHLY INCOME FUND	MULTI ASSET	491,252	-8,748	6,273	0.2	-1.75%	1.25%	-0.50%	0.1%	-1.75%	5.86%	
CCLA - COIF INVESTMENT FUND	MULTI ASSET	1,315,413	534,752	390,013	11.2	68.50%	49.96%	118.46%	7.3%	4.75%	3.67%	
CCLA - COIF PROPERTY FUND	PROPERTY	919,195	84,137	604,792	11.2	10.08%	72.43%	82.50%	5.2%	0.86%	4.96%	
M&G CHARIBOND FUND	BOND	602,303	-83,009	257,747	11.2	-12.11%	37.61%	25.50%	3.1%	-1.14%	2.88%	
M&G CHARIFUND	EQUITY - UK	528,306	27,537	298,114	11.2	5.50%	59.53%	65.03%	9.3%	0.48%	4.24%	
SCHRODER INCOME MAXIMISER FUND	EQUITY - UK	386,075	-113,925	327,512	9.6	-22.79%	65.50%	42.72%	7.8%	-2.65%	5.37%	
UBS MULTI ASSET INCOME FUND	MULTI ASSET	0	-189,026	318,375	10.7	-25.99%	43.77%	17.78%	4.7%	-2.77%	3.45%	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>4,242,545</b>	<b>251,718</b>	<b>2,202,826</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>5.56%</b>	<b>48.64%</b>	<b>54.19%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>0.21%</b>	<b>4.03%</b>	
		Unrealised capital gain since purchase:		404,737	Annualised income return:		4.03%					
					Average Bank Rate:		1.40%					



## **Welsh Church Fund's Bank Account**

3.17. The Welsh Church Fund holds cash with Barclays Bank. At the current time, it meets the minimum credit criteria.

### **4. Training**

4.1. The Council, acting as Trustee to the Welsh Church Fund, will ensure that suitable awareness training is provided to members of the Governance & Audit Committee and Cabinet to enable them to discharge their scrutiny function together with such wider training as may be required from time to time.

### **5. Investment Consultants/ Treasury Advisors**

5.1. The Welsh Church Fund use Arlingclose as their Treasury Management Consultants to provide information, advice and training relating to investments. Information relating to investments is provided from publicly available data and is summarised in order to assist with decision making within the Authority. The information and advice encapsulate the level of risk of investment and the variety of options available.

**Welsh Church Fund – Risk Assessment Policy 2026/27**

The financial assistance provided by the Welsh Church Fund supports a very wide range of community activities, including voluntary and sporting organisations. Annually, monies are distributed, and the key risk faced by the Welsh Church Fund is a loss or reduction in the amount of monies available.

An assessment of the risks faced by the Welsh Church Fund has been undertaken and steps taken to:

- avoid risks through alternative strategies
- transfer risks to others
- limit and reduce risks by improving controls
- insure against specified risks

On an annual basis, the risk assessment will be reviewed and updated to include any new risks identified.

The risks identified have been encompassed within four categories:

- governance & management
- operational risks
- financial risks
- compliance risk

The following paragraphs list the risks identified & the steps taken to mitigate or eliminate the risk.

**1. Governance & Management**

**(a) The fund lacks direction?**

The activities of the Fund are specified by the Scheme made by the County Council of Monmouthshire under section 19 of the Welsh Church Act 1914.

The Cabinet has a clear purpose to maximise the return on its investments and this is contained within the investment policy.

The Cabinet is accountable to the Councils within the Greater Gwent area.

**(b) There are conflicts of interest?**

Members of the Cabinet are elected every 4 years and are required to conduct themselves in-line with the Code of Conduct.

Members are required to declare any interests related to the activities of the Cabinet and may not vote. These matters are recorded.

Members allowance and expense payments are not charged to the Welsh Church Fund.

**(c) Funds are used inappropriately.**

The Charitable purposes for which funds can be used is contained within the Scheme made by Monmouthshire County Council, which is also implemented by the other constituent authorities within the Monmouthshire Welsh Church Fund Scheme. The Trust has set criteria to assist constituent authorities in making grant distributions and to ensure that there is transparency in decision-making and due process. The Trust will ensure that grant distributions have been made in accordance with the scheme in place and within the set criteria developed.

The investment and fund strategy prescribes a risk minimisation approach, with funds only placed with institutions meeting specified criteria.

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**Key staff leaving the Council's employment?**

The actions of Officers of the Council are determined by Delegated Powers.

A number of senior Council staff support and advise the Cabinet on legal & financial matters.

**(e) Inadequate information is provided to the Cabinet?**

Annually, the Cabinet considers the level of reserves and anticipated investment income before determining the level of grants to be made available to the constituent Councils.

Variances between the anticipated & actual investment income are taken into consideration in the following year's grant awards to the constituent Councils.

**2. Operational Risks**

**(a) Unsuitable staff support and advise the Cabinet?**

Monmouthshire County Council has a comprehensive recruitment process that is supported by a wide range of personnel policies.

The training & development needs of officers are identified through the Employee Review process.

A number of senior Council staff support and advise the Cabinet on financial and legal matters.

**(b) Systems & procedures are not secure?**

Systems & procedures are documented & document retention policies are in place. IT systems have data back-up arrangements & disaster recovery plans. Periodic audits identify internal control improvement requirements. Insurance provides a means to recover from specified losses.

**(c) Stakeholders are not satisfied with the operation of the Fund?**

The Scheme made by the County Council of Monmouthshire provides for financial assistance to be made available for a wide range of community activities.

The Authority's Audit Committee considers annual reports on the financial performance of the Fund.

The Constituent Councils also consider annually the level of funding available for community activities.

**(d) The assets of the Fund are at risk?**

In accordance with the investment policy, a number of constraints are placed upon the way in which monies are used. A risk minimisation strategy has been adopted which limits the investment of funds to individual institutions meeting specified criteria.

The proposed Investment and Fund Strategy for 2026/27 for the Welsh Church Fund includes scope for investment in pooled investment funds (Collective investment funds).

**(e) Unsatisfactory returns on investment are achieved?**

The fund strategy requires monies be invested in financial instruments which produce interest payments and where there is no long-term depreciation in the capital value of the investment.

The proposed Investment and Fund Strategy for 2026/27 allows for the continued use of pooled investment funds. This does increase the risk that the principal amounts held can go down as well as up in value. This is suited to the Welsh Church Fund as the Trust can tolerate these movements over a business cycle. The movements are expected to be neutral over a business cycle and the earning power of these investments is not largely affected by the market value.

The overall aim is to obtain a satisfactory rate of return enabling the Cabinet to distribute an amount based on the actual return on investments achieved during the preceding twelve-month period plus any accumulated capital receipts, after meeting the expenses incurred in managing the fund.

Annually, the Trustees consider the actual return on investments and the extent to which the investment objectives have been achieved. Benchmark information is available from the Authority's Treasury Management Advisors for jointly invested funds with the Council.

### **3. Financial Risks**

#### **(a) Budgetary control is inadequate?**

Annually, the Cabinet considers the level of reserves and anticipated investment income before determining the level of grants to be made available to the constituent Councils.

Variance between the anticipated and actual investment income will be reflected in the following year's grants to the constituent Councils.

#### **(b) Financial administration is unsatisfactory?**

Donmouthshire County Council personnel policies and procedures ensure officers are appropriately qualified for the roles undertaken.

Internal control arrangements ensure there is division of duties amongst officers.

Periodic audits review the internal control arrangements.

#### **(c) Financial losses arise due to speculative investment?**

The investment policy prescribes a risk minimisation approach that can limit the investment of funds to institutions meeting specified criteria.

#### **(d) Financial losses arise from fraud or error?**

The internal control arrangements are based upon segregation of duties.

Periodic audits review the internal control arrangements.

Insurance provides a means to recover from specified losses

### **4. Compliance Risk**

#### **(a) Failure to comply with legislation / regulations?**

The activities of the Fund are specified within the Scheme made by the County Council of Monmouthshire.

The nature and format of financial reporting is specified by the Charity Commission and an external audit of the accounts is mandatory.

A number of senior Council staff support and advise the Cabinet on legal and financial matters.

Ensure that the Welsh Church Fund is administered in line with the Charities Act 2011.

## WELSH CHURCH FUND PRINCIPLES, POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AND GRANT ALLOCATION CRITERIA – 2026/27 FUNDING YEAR

### Basic Principles of the Welsh Church Fund Trust

The basic principle is that the charity needs to be independent of the local authority. This means that decisions about the administration of the charity need to be taken solely in the interests of the charity to further its charitable purposes, and for no other purpose.

There are also a number of duties the trustee must consider when making this type of decision. If these duties are met, then the trustee can be confident that the decision about how to apply the charity's income is reasonable and defensible. Therefore, again, the trustee must act only in the charity's best interest and meet the duties to:

1. Act within the powers conferred upon them and the established rules and procedures for dealing with issues of the kind under consideration.
2. Adequately inform themselves in order to make the decision in question, where necessary making further enquiries and where appropriate considering legal or other professional advice.
3. Consider any factors which they should take into account.
4. Not take into consideration any factors which are not relevant.
5. Act in good faith (and this includes managing conflicts of interest).
6. Make a decision within the range of decisions which a reasonable body of trustees could have made.

The decision and the reasoning must also be clearly recorded in the charity's minutes.

### Policy Considerations for Charity Trustee

1. Make sure the trustee is clear about the objects of the charity as set out in its governing document as these dictate how any such asset may be used, in accordance with charity law.
2. Make sure that the Welsh Church Fund's assets, for which the council is the trustee, are managed independently in accordance with their charitable purpose and any restrictions in the governing document.
3. Recognise that the charity trustees have a duty to be prudent and to act solely in the best interests of the charity.

4. Ensure that there are in place clear procedural guidelines for the Officers and Councilors about their roles, responsibilities and decision making in the administration of the charitable fund.
5. Ensure we have a clear process for identifying and managing any conflicts of interest that arise where the local authority is the trustee of a charity.

## **Allocation Criteria for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group (Monmouthshire Only)**

(N.B. Caerphilly, Torfaen, Newport & Blaenau Gwent, have their own grant allocation criteria)

### **Groups and individuals that benefit from grant allocations**

**Churches and Religious Groups tend to be given higher awards as it is the Welsh Church Fund.**

**Church Parish's**

**Community Groups and Charities**

**Sports and Recreation Clubs**

**Environmental Groups**

**Individuals that have an identified and proven need of financial assistance**

**Other deemed charitable causes by the Working Group Committee**

### **Allocation Policy and Principles**

- Awards are only given on the existence of a proven financial need as identified by a sponsoring Councillor in the first instance and the Welsh Church Fund Working Group Committee in the main instance.
- Existing policy of no allocations to Community or Town Councils
- Existing policy of no allocations to Private Business's
- Existing policy of no allocations to other Public Bodies

- Existing policy of not supporting the day to day running expenses except in exceptional circumstances as clubs / organisations should be self-supporting and not rely on WCF money for their continued existence.
- Existing policy of only Churches being allowed to re-apply every year to be maintained, though, those applications will only be considered where the application is for a different and distinct purpose.
- Existing policy of restricted or no allocations for day trips or trips that will not benefit the County by an individual's subsequent personal actions
- The trust currently has a policy of dropping an application if deferred for further information at the first meeting, if then subsequently that information is not received by the next meeting date. This policy will continue. Emphasis on sponsoring Councillor to ensure sufficient evidence is presented along with application.
- Any assistance to schools or educational establishments that come under the general umbrella of MCC will ONLY be assessed in light of the merit and purpose of the application and in consideration and conjunction with any future Children and Young People's policy in relation to School Welfare and Support groups.
- Confirm a Policy that no undergraduates will be supported as they all have access to funding from Student Finance Wales.
- Confirm the Policy that the trust will continue to only pay grant awards by BACS payments in line with current MCC payment guidelines and to save the Trust from excessive and unnecessary administrative charges.
- Confirm the Policy that applications will only be accepted on the current application form as currently posted on the MCC Website (The Welsh Church Fund: Monmouthshire County Council) as this will contain all the currently required information.
- Confirm the Policy that the Councillor signing the application ensures that the application qualifies for funding under the Charitable Purposes of the Trust as posted on the MCC website.
- Confirm the Policy that when a Councillor signs an application to the Welsh Church Fund that they are fully aware of the purpose to the application and ensure that they have seen any supporting evidence or documentation required to support the application (i.e. Accounts, Bank Statements, letters of representation etc.) and ensure that it is submitted with the application in order that the Working Group Committee can make an informed and timely decision at the first meeting.
- Confirm the principle of restricted awards or no grant allocations to organisations that receive direct financial support from MCC or any other Local Authority for Administrative expenses.

- Support the principle that applicants should show effort and willing in raising funds themselves as well as expecting grant aid from the Welsh Church Fund.
- Principle that there is a defined financial pot that has to be shared equally between deserving applicants and throughout the financial year. Any remaining funds at the financial year end will be carried forward to the next financial year.
- Continuation of the policy that the budget for the next financial year is recommended by the Section 151 Officer of Monmouthshire County Council as they are in the best possible position to assess future financial performance and financial assets available for distribution in light of the Charity's policy to maintain the level of investments at a level that provides sufficient annual income to fund the Charity's charitable expenditure.
- For the financial year 2026/27 that there is no maximum grant award as available funding allows, imposed on all non-individual applications and that a maximum award of £500 is imposed upon applicants by individual applicants. This limit will be reviewed annually once a decision has been made on the grant distribution for the next financial year by the Trustee.
- The Working Group Committee has the right to set a Policy / Principle that is binding at any Committee meeting in the future if it is regarded to be in the best interest of the Trust even if a precedent may have been set by a past decision.
- The Working Group Committee will set out the Principles and Policies for each financial year at the last meeting of the previous financial year.
- No appeal procedure will be allowed against grant application decisions made by the Working Group Committee. If a sponsoring Councillor would like to resubmit an application for review on a decision that has been made by the Working Group Committee, then new material evidence that was not available at the previous meeting must be presented.
- A conflicts of interest procedure has been ratified. Councillor's that are associated with any application are asked too:
  - a) declare their interest,
  - b) may remain in the room and remain silent,
  - c) be allowed to present the case or relevant points if requested by the chair for clarification purposes only,
  - d) be part of any application re-consideration process only at the request of the chair for clarification purposes
- The Working Group Committee has the overall right to dismiss any application they feel is inappropriate for funding even though it may qualify under the Charitable Purposes to which the fund may be applied, as they feel it would not be in the best interests of the Charity.



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**Integrated Impact Assessment document**  
**(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)**

<p><b>Name of the Officer</b> D Jarrett <b>Phone no: 4657</b> <b>E-mail: davejarrett@monmouthshire.gov.uk</b></p>	<p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b> To assess the 2026/27 Investment &amp; Risk Management Strategies of the Welsh Church Fund and Mon Farm Education Trust</p>
<p><b>Name of Service</b> Finance</p>	<p><b>Date Future Generations Evaluation</b> 4th March 2026</p>

100941  
Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Positive impact as most community groups who apply support the elderly. Also, educational grants awarded to young people applying to the Trusts	None identified	
Disability	Positive impact as grants awarded to groups and individuals that either support the disabled or have a disability	None identified	
Gender reassignment		No restrictions on applicants	

<b>Protected Characteristics</b>	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b>	<b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
Marriage or civil partnership	No impact	No restrictions on applicants	
Pregnancy or maternity	No impact	No restrictions on applicants	
Race	No impact	No restrictions on applicants	
Religion or Belief	Encouraging religion through education at the point of delivery through the provision of enhanced facilities	No restrictions on applicants	
Sex	No impact	No restrictions on applicants	
Sexual Orientation	No Impact	No restrictions on applicants	

## 2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

Page 42

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.</b>	<b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
<b>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</b>	N/A	No Negative impact	

### 3. Policy making and the Welsh language.





How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
<b>Policy Making</b> Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language no less favourably	N/A	No Negative impact	
<b>Operational</b> Recruitment & Training of Workforce	N/A	No Negative impact	
<b>Service delivery</b> Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	N/A	No Negative impact	


**4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<b>A prosperous Wales</b> Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Grants are awarded to help with infrastructure projects on cultural and community assets that help sustain jobs in the community for skilled tradesmen and stimulate educational well being	No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs
<b>A resilient Wales</b> Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and	Environmental schemes can benefit from funding awards to assist in drainage, water course management and flood alleviation works	No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs

<b>Well Being Goal</b>	<b>Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.</b>	<b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)		
<b>A healthier Wales</b> People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Grants assist in providing facilities for groups / individuals that help residents participate in sporting / recreational clubs that have a positive mental impact both physically and in the environment that the clubs operate within.	No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs
<b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Community groups and individuals can apply for funding for projects that enhance their local community facilities and environment	No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs
<b>A globally responsible Wales</b> Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	Restrictions are imposed in regard to the nature and purpose that grants can be made to ensure that funding enhances or doesn't have any negative impact upon activities carried out in Monmouthshire that affect the global environment	No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs
<b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b> Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	Assists applicant organisations / individuals to promote recreational participation and organization of sports clubs and associations. Applicants can use the funds provided to enhance the heritage and culture of Monmouthshire through community projects and groups	No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs
<b>A more equal Wales</b> People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	Grants are generally only given to organisations / individuals can prove a basis of need due to their own personal circumstances or collective need for improvement to cultural or environmental infrastructure or help further community participation	No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>Schemes of a capital nature tend to draw more substantial awards which will ensure longevity of assets and project outcomes. The application process also ensures that those applicants that demonstrate a need for short term financing also have due consideration when funding is allocated</p>	<p>The trusts award allocation principles are reviewed and if required amended annually to ensure funding is matched to those that require support.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The Trusts assist applicants in achieving their objectives by providing part or full funding for implementation of their project goals.</p>	<p>Not Applicable to the Trusts</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The Committee seek to ensure that those directly involved with the applicants and decision makers are informed of all the necessary information to make informed beneficial decisions</p>	<p>The Trust report is distributed to interested parties for consultation and amendment before final confirmation at Cabinet</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Funding is provided for preventative as well as remedial schemes in regard to infrastructure and community assets and supporting community groups with social and cultural activities</p>	<p>The trusts have developed investment strategy policies in order to facilitate greater income returns in order to distribute to qualifying applicants</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Integration bodies</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other</p>	<p>Positive impacts are made on all successful applicants to the Trusts as funding is provided for economic, cultural, environmental, and educational needs as demonstrated by the applicants on their application forms</p>	<p>The trusts award allocation principles are reviewed and if required amended annually to ensure funding is matched to those that require support.</p>

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions have on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

Page 46	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	<p>Grants are awarded to organisations that assist children in need either through their health or social deprivation. Awards are also made to Community Children's Group's that assist in their integration in social patterns</p>	<p>No negative impact</p>	
Corporate Parenting	<p>Not applicable to the Trust</p>		

**7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?**

Monmouthshire County Council Capital & Treasury Strategy 2026/27.  
 Mon Farm Education Investment Strategy Review 2025.  
 The Final funding Settlement from Welsh Government 2026/27.  
 The Welsh Church Act Fund Audited Accounts 2024/25.  
 The Monmouthshire Farms School Endowment Trust Fund Accounts 2024/25.

**8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?**

The proposals that support the distribution of charitable grants from the trusts are positive in that they support individuals, community and environmental groups in their pursuit of enhancing the culture, environment and personal wellbeing of people covered by their demographic remits. The application of the Investment and Risk Strategies are designed to provide the maximum amount of investment returns to provide funds to support those applicants to the fund without substantially diminishing the Capital value of the Trust Funds.

Page 47

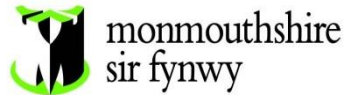
**9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.**

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Distribute Grants	Throughout the financial Year 2026-27	Welsh Church Fund Committee

**10. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision-making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.**

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Cabinet	4th March 2026	





<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>OUTCOME OF THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS CONCERNING THE NURSERY AT DURAND PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2026</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an update on the recent statutory consultation exercise concerning the proposals to discontinue the local authority maintained nursery at Durand Primary School.
- 1.2 This report presents the consultation report (appendix 1) to Cabinet and seeks their approval to proceed with the next stages of this statutory process, namely, to publish the required statutory notices.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 note the feedback from the consultation stage of this process, presented through means of the consultation report found under appendix 1.
- 2.2 agree to publish the required statutory notices in line with School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 which sets out intentions to amend the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 to 4-11, reflecting the closure of the local authority maintained nursery

Statutory notices will be published on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026 for a period of 28 days ending on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026.

- 2.3 note that funded early years education would be provided by an approved non maintained setting on the site of Durand Primary School, should proposals proceed to implementation

### **3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 The School Organisation Code (2018) places responsibility on local authorities in Wales for ensuring that there are sufficient and suitable school places across the County to educate its children and young people. The duty to ensure appropriate provision of school places is not limited to statutory school places.
- 3.2 The Council has a duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to ensure that families can access their entitlement to a minimum of 10 hours a week of early education from the term following their child's 3rd birthday until they are offered a full-time school place.
- 3.3 The Childcare Offer for Wales was first introduced in Monmouthshire in 2019 and was fully rolled out in September 2020; through this scheme working parents can access up to 30 hours a week of funded early education and childcare. As a result, we have seen a shift to parents choosing an approved non-maintained setting that is able to offer the full 30 hours a week, in preference to school nurseries that are only able to offer 12.5 hours a week.
- 3.4 Numbers attending Durand Nursery have reduced significantly since the introduction of the Childcare Offer. The school has a capacity of 60 part time places (30 morning and 30 afternoon), but they haven't been close to being full since 2018-19, and some years they have only required a morning session.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 At the Cabinet meeting on 21st January 2026, Cabinet gave their approval to engage with key stakeholders on proposals to change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 to 4-11. This proposal would mean that the current Local Authority maintained school nursery would close, and funded early education will be provided by an approved non-maintained setting operating from the school site.
- 3.7 In the build up to launching the statutory consultation process, officers held engagement sessions with staff and governors of Durand Primary School, who were supportive of proposals moving forward.

- 3.8 The statutory processes concerning these proposals commenced on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026, and ran for a period of 6 weeks (including 20 school days) concluding on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026.
- 3.9 The consultation report attached under appendix 1 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
- 3.10 During the 6 week consultation window, the Council received 14 formal responses to the proposals, with additional responses coming from ESTYN and the Local Authority School Improvement Service (LASIS).
- 3.11 Of the 14 formal responses, 11 (79%) were fully supportive of proposals put forward, with a further 2 responses (14%) supporting aspects of the proposals.
- 3.12 During the consultation process, the Council sought views from both ESTYN and the Local Authority School Improvement Service (LASIS) who appear to be fully supportive of the proposals put forward. Their full responses have been detailed within the consultation report.
- 3.13 The Council received just 1 response (7%) from a parent that was not supportive of the proposals, taking the view that the educational aspects of early years provision should be delivered by a qualified teacher / school as opposed to an approved non maintained setting. The Council has provided a full response to this concern within the consultation report, however, would like to offer reassurance that children accessing their 30 hours provision through non maintained settings across the county receive a high standard of provision. Members will also be pleased to hear that there will continue to be alternative local authority nurseries within the cluster to accommodate parents who have this preference.

3.14 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

The recommendation to Members is that option 1 "To publish the proposals as consulted on" is endorsed in light of the consultation responses received.

#### **4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)**

An integrated impact assessment associated with the proposals has been completed and can be found under appendix 1. This assessment was reviewed and updated to incorporate the feedback received during the consultation period. Additional information was provided in the Welsh language section to include more detail regarding the potential impact of the proposal on the Welsh language and mitigating actions that could be taken to better contribute to positive impacts.

The key points from the Integrated Impact Assessment are:

- The existing provision at Durand Nursery is limited to 2 ½ hours a day, which makes it difficult for the main carer to access work or training opportunities. A non-maintained setting would be able to offer up to 6 hours a day, providing more opportunity for parents/carers to return to work or training.
- There is currently Welsh medium early education available in Caldicot at Ysgol Y Ffin and there are currently spaces available. There is also a non-maintained setting on site, Cylch Meithrin Cil Y Coed, that offers childcare places for two year olds (including Flying Start childcare) and wrap around childcare for 3 and 4 year olds that attend the school Meithrin. Therefore, they will still be able to offer a greater range of childcare and early education than is being proposed at Durand Primary School, so there is no significant impact on the opportunities to use and promote the Welsh language
- The proposal provides an opportunity to support the growth and sustainability of a small business within the community.
- There are currently limited childcare options available in this community. Replacing the school nursery with a non-maintained

setting would increase the services available to the community and make it more attractive to working families.

- Families requiring childcare will be able to access it within their locality, so they will be able to walk rather than needing to travel. by car; hence, this will reduce their carbon footprint.

## 5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 The School Organisation Code Wales sets out the following requirement:

‘Following the consultation period, when the proposer is reviewing the proposal prior to publication the proposer is required to carry out a further assessment for the proposal and each of the alternatives that were set out in the proposal paper. This involves the same matters that the proposer was required to assess in formulating the proposal:

- (a) the likely impact on quality and standards in education,
- (b) the likely impact on the community and
- (c) the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.’ In its consultation report, the proposer is required to explain its assessment of the proposal and the reasonable alternatives identified, how this assessment differs from their earlier assessment (if at all) and its assessment of any further reasonable alternatives. Finally, the proposer is required to confirm whether it considers the implementation of the proposal, (wholly or partly) to be the most appropriate response to the reasons it identified for the proposal and give reasons for its conclusion.’

A further assessment of the alternative options that were considered prior to the consultation period has been undertaken and is provided below:

**Option 1** – Do nothing and maintain the status quo. This would mean that Durand Primary School would continue with its current age range of 3-11 years offering 30 part time nursery places (mornings only) and a non-maintained setting would offer wrap around childcare in the afternoons.

**Option 2** – Change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years and replace the school nursery with a non-maintained setting approved to provide funded early education and wrap around childcare.

**Option 3** – End the lease agreement with Little Gems to enable Durand Nursery to offer 60 part time places (morning and afternoon sessions), with no wrap around childcare available on site.

Whilst continuing with existing arrangements is considered to be an option, the large majority of respondents (79%) have voted in favour of proposals to close Durand nursery and extend the provision of the non maintained setting currently providing wrap around childcare. The staff and governing body of Durand Primary School are also supportive of proposals, and feedback received from ESTYN is also favourable.

In light of the above, our preferred option remains to be option 2 above. The feedback received during the consultation stage recognises the benefits of this proposal. It continues to be the view that this option is not only the most financially viable, but it also delivers excellent teaching and learning facilities, whilst offering greater flexibility for parents.

## **6. REASONS:**

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory duty as part of the School Organisation Code 2018 to follow this statutory process should it wish to make any significant school reorganisation proposals.
- 6.2 The proposed change will help to address the Council's commitment to provide children with the best possible start in life and to be ready for school.
- 6.3 The proposed change will offer more flexibility to families and enable parents/carers to remain in work or return to work or training.
- 6.4 The proposal is felt to be the most financially viable, delivers excellent teaching and learning facilities, whilst offering greater flexibility for parents.

## **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 7.1 The proposal would have no specific resource implications for the Council.
- 7.2 Offering nursery provision with significant surplus places has placed a strain on the budget of Durand Primary School; therefore, the proposal to change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years and replace the school nursery with a non-maintained setting approved to provide funded early education and wrap around childcare would have a positive financial impact for the school.
- 7.3 The non-maintained setting is privately owned, so they manage their own finances. The early education would be funded through the non-

maintained element of the Local Authority Education Grant and eligible parents would be able to access funding for the wrap around childcare directly from the Welsh Government through the Childcare Offer Scheme.

**8. CONSULTEES:**

Children, Learning, Skills & Economy (CLSE) DMT  
Cllr Laura Wright, Cabinet Member for Education

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Welsh Government School Organisation Code 2018  
Childcare Act 2006

**10. AUTHOR:**

Sue Hall, Early Years Manager

**11. CONTACT DETAILS:**

Tel: 01633 644461  
E-mail: [susanhall@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:susanhall@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

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monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

# CONSULTATION REPORT

Change the age range of Durand Primary School from  
3-11 years to 4-11 years

Monmouthshire County Council

## Contents

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1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. DISTRIBUTION OF THE CONSULTATION REPORT .....	3
3. BACKGROUND .....	5
4. OUR CURRENT PROVISION .....	5
5. A REMINDER OF THE JOURNEY SO FAR .....	6
6. A REMINDER OF THE PROPOSAL .....	6
7. WHY DID WE CONSULT ON THESE PROPOSALS? .....	7
8. CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS .....	9
Methodology.....	9
9. FORMAL RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS.....	9
9.1 Summary of consultation results .....	9
10. VIEWS OF DURAND PRIMARY SCHOOL .....	13
11. VIEWS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE .....	14
12. ESTYN RESPONSE .....	14
13. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL .....	17
14. IMPACT OF PROPOSALS .....	18
14.1 Quality and Standards in Education .....	19
14.2 Impact on the Community .....	20
14.3 Impact on Travel arrangements.....	20
14.4 Impact on existing learners .....	21
15. RECOMMENDATIONS .....	21
Appendix 1 - List of Consultees with whom we consulted .....	23

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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 has recently engaged in a statutory consultation process relating to the proposals to discontinue the Local Authority nursery provision at Durand Primary School, and instead provide early years provision for families through means on a non maintained setting.

The purpose of undertaking the statutory consultation process 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 has been published on the Monmouthshire County Council Website and is available [HERE](#). We have also directly informed the following consultees and interested parties of the publication of this document.

- Parents, carers/guardians and staff members of Durand Primary School
- The Governing body of Durand Primary School
- Parents, carers/guardians and staff members of schools and settings considered to be affected by the proposal
- The governing body of any schools considered to be affected by the proposal
- Headteachers of schools affected by the proposal
- Welsh Ministers
- Local Town and Community Councils
- All MCC Assembly Members representing the area served by the school
- All Members of Parliament representing MCC area
- Directors of Education of all bordering LAs – Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Powys, Torfaen, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire
- MCC Youth Service
- GAVO
- Monmouthshire Governors Association
- Teaching trade unions
- Support Staff trade unions
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- Welsh Ministers
- ESTYN
- RHAG
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Church in Wales Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- South East Wales Consortium
- South East Wales Education Achievement Service
- Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
- Early Years & Childcare Partnership

In addition to the above list, all parties responding to the consultation who requested notification of the report's publication have been informed accordingly

### 3. BACKGROUND

The Council is committed to improving the educational achievement and attainment for all children and young people in the county through the provision of an inclusive education system that places the learner at the centre.

The Council strives to provide children and young people with the best possible start in life. Investing in all our children's learning and development, ensuring they have the environments, skills and support to flourish and be prepared for the work of the future and meet the demands of a rapidly changing world environment.

Through our work with schools, settings, parents and key partners, we seek to:

- Secure equality of access to education for all children and young people
- Deliver a high quality and inclusive curriculum for all learners
- Educate our children and young people in their local communities whenever possible
- Support children and young people and their families to enable them to live a happy and fulfilling life
- Provide meaningful opportunities for learners to access support when they need it and return to their community school as soon as they are able
- Meet the needs of children and young people now and be suitably adaptable to meet changing needs in the future.

The aims above link directly to our Directorate core values, which aspire to ensure that all our children and young people will:

- **Be ready for school** - through engagement with our Early Years and Flying Start programmes.
- **Be in school** - supported by our Access and Education Welfare teams.
- **Be well behaved** - through support from our Behaviour and Inclusion teams.
- **Be well taught** - by the teachers and teaching assistants in our schools.

Over the last five years, we have made progress towards fulfilling this commitment for the majority of our children and young people. Education remains a top priority for the Council, and it is committed to delivering improved performance in educational provision in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government policy and objectives.

### 4. OUR CURRENT PROVISION

Monmouthshire County Council currently has 43 settings providing early education, made up as follows:

- 13 LA maintained nurseries within our primary schools
- 30 approved non-maintained settings

The majority of our LA nurseries are situated within one of the four main towns – Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth; whereas, in the smaller villages and rural areas, early education is mostly provided by non-maintained settings.

There are no catchment areas for early education, parents can choose the provision that best meets their needs.

## 5. A REMINDER OF THE JOURNEY SO FAR

The Childcare Offer for Wales was introduced in 2017 and was fully rolled out in September 2020. This is a Welsh Government initiative offering up to 30 hours a week of funded early education and childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds from eligible families. These 30 hours a week consist of at least 10 hours of early education and up to 20 hours of childcare.

To be eligible for the Childcare Offer, both parents must:

- Be employed and earn at least equivalent to 16 hours a week at National Minimum Wage but no more than £100,000 per annum; or
- Be on Statutory Pay and Leave (Sick, Maternity, Paternity, Parental, Bereavement or Adoption Leave); or
- Be enrolled on a further or higher education course that is at least 10 weeks in length.

Since the full rollout of the Childcare Offer, we have seen an upward trend towards parents choosing to access their early education in non-maintained settings rather than LA maintained school nurseries, as they can access early education and wrap around childcare at the same setting.

Overall, take up of early education in Monmouthshire is high and has been consistently more than 90% of the eligible population.

## 6. A REMINDER OF THE PROPOSAL

***The Council has entered into statutory consultation processes concerning proposals to change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years.***

This proposal would mean that the current Local Authority maintained school nursery would close, and funded early education will be provided by an approved non-maintained setting operating from the school site.

There is already a non-maintained setting on site of Durand Primary School offering wrap around childcare for children attending the school nursery. The proposed closure of the nursery at Durand Primary School will allow the existing non-maintained setting to extend their provision and offer early education places in the mornings and afternoons, in addition to wrap around childcare. This will provide more flexibility for families.

It will also result in financial savings for Durand Primary School and enable them to focus on pupils of statutory school age.

## 7. WHY DID WE CONSULT ON THESE PROPOSALS?

The Council entered into statutory process regarding these proposals with the following principles in mind:

### 1) Our Statutory duties

Monmouthshire County Council has a statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to ensure that all children aged 3 and 4 years can access their entitlement to a minimum of 10 hours a week of funded early education. There is also a duty on local authorities to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, provision of childcare that is sufficient to meet the requirements of working parents.

One of the ways to fulfil both statutory duties is to develop more non-maintained childcare settings that are also approved to offer early education. This facilitates parents accessing their full entitlement of 30 hours funded early education and childcare in one setting.

### 2) Responding to parental demand

Take up of early education is relatively high in Monmouthshire, with more than 90% of eligible children accessing their entitlement to early education in their pre-school year within a Monmouthshire setting.

Prior to the introduction of the Childcare Offer for Wales, take up of early education was shared equally between LA maintained school nurseries and approved non-maintained settings. Since the full rollout of the Childcare Offer for Wales in September 2020, we have seen a notable decline in the number of families accessing their early education in a LA maintained school nursery, compared with an increase in the number of families accessing their early education in an approved non-maintained setting.

The change in parental demand for early education across the two types of provision is illustrated in the following table:

Number of children accessing early education in the summer term						
	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025

LA maintained school nursery	587	481	476	470	469	445
Non-maintained approved setting	633	565	620	634	680	698
TOTAL	1220	1046	1096	1104	1149	1143

*\* There are no figures for 2020 due to Covid restrictions.*

In response to this demand, we need to increase the number of non-maintained settings approved to provide early education. We also need to consider the financial implications on schools who are operating with significant numbers of surplus places in their nursery class.

### 3) Quality teaching and learning environments

The Council has committed to ensuring that it offers excellent teaching and learning environments to our children and young people, so that they stand the best chance of achieving excellent outcomes that will set them up for their journey through life.

Approved non-maintained early education settings receive specialist support and training from the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and the Local Authority Early Years team. This has resulted in our non-maintained settings successfully implementing the Non-Maintained Curriculum for Wales and offering high quality provision. This can be evidenced in recent Estyn and CIW joint inspection reports, where our settings have received more than 25 judgements of excellent over the last 6 years and 7 settings have been asked to produce a best practice case study.

Due to financial constraints, many of our LA school nurseries have a HLTA rather than a teacher leading their nursery class. These individuals haven't necessarily received any formal training in child development, whereas childcare staff are required to have a level 2 or level 3 qualification in Childcare, Play and Learning Development (CCPLD), and the majority of our approved settings have a leader with a level 5 Childcare qualification.

Non-maintained settings are required to operate with a minimum ratio of one member of staff for every 8 children. The recommended ratio for school nurseries is one member of staff for every 10 children; however, this ratio isn't compulsory.

Taking all of this into account, the school has asked us to consider changing the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years and replace the school nursery with a non-maintained setting approved to provide funded early education and wrap around childcare.

## 8. CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### Methodology

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On 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026 the Council's Cabinet approved the proposals to commence statutory consultation thereby allowing the Council to engage with key stakeholders on proposals to close the local authority nursery at Durand Primary School

In line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018, the Council produced a consultation document, published on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026, which also represented the commencement of the statutory consultation period. The formal consultation period lasted 6 weeks (including 20 school days), concluding on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

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 available [HERE](#) .

The Council raised awareness of the consultation through means of direct mailshots to all statutory consultees, including parents, staff, and governing bodies of schools and settings 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 opportunity to respond formally to the consultation proposals by:

- Completing the online consultation questionnaire available via [HERE](#)
- Emailing [strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk).

## 9. FORMAL RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS

The formal consultation process was open for a period of 6 weeks (including 20 school days) between the period of 29<sup>th</sup> January and 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026. All relevant consultees were informed of this window and reminded of the opportunity to have their say, either through means of completing the online survey or by emailing the dedicated email address.

### 9.1 Summary of consultation results

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The Council received a total of 14 formal responses to the proposals outlined within this report. A profile of the respondents can be found in the table below:

<b>Respondent category</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Parent / Carer	11
Governor	
Staff	
Governor	
Parent / Carer	
Community / Member of Public	2
Town / County Councillor	
Other Organisations	1
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>14</b>

N.B. The above table reflects the number of formal responses received to this consultation, through means of a formal response to this consultation.

Feedback to this consultation from ESTYN and the Education Achievement Service are not included in the numbers above and are published separately within this report.

During the consultation window, the Council asked consultees via the published online survey whether they agreed with the proposals put forward as part of this statutory process. The responses to this question are shown in the table below:

<b>Consultee response</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Agree with proposals	11
Disagree with proposals	1
Agree with some aspects of the proposals	2
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>14</b>

11 out of the 14 respondents (79%) supported the proposal with a further 2 (14%) supporting aspects of the proposal. Only 1 respondent (7%) disagreed with the proposals.

They key themes taken from the feedback received from respondents who are fully supportive of the proposals are detailed below:

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Summary of consultee comment</b>
1	A view that the provision proposed within this consultation is necessary, with the non maintained setting able to offer more flexibility to support working families within the area
2	An overwhelming view that the current non maintained setting is excellent and can only benefit families if it were able to operate full time.
3	A view that the current provision offered by the non maintained setting is far superior to the provision currently on offer through the local authority nursery
4	A view that non maintained settings are able to access financial support (grants) that a local authority nursery cannot, which can only benefit the children

**Local Authority response**

The Council is pleased to receive these comments of support towards the proposals to discontinue the local authority nursery at Durand Primary School, allowing the current non maintained setting to deliver their provision on a full time basis.

The feedback received from the majority of respondents reflects the key reasons for why the local authority has developed these proposals, including providing more flexibility for working parents as well as improved educational opportunities for our Early Years learners. Since the full rollout of the Childcare Offer for Wales in September 2020, there has been a notable decline in the number of families accessing their early education in a LA maintained school nursery, compared with an increase in the number of families accessing their early education in an approved non-maintained setting. This would suggest that the proposals being put forward as part of this consultation are reflective of the wider demands from families across the county.

2 out of the 14 respondents (14%) supported aspects of the proposal

A summary of the feedback received from respondents that supported aspects of the proposal along with the Councils response is provided below:

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Summary of consultee comment</b>
1	No strong objection towards the proposals being put forward, however, a view that the current provision offering wrap around care works very well and therefore reassurance needed that the full 30 hours provision will be available in the same setting.

**Council Response**

The current arrangements at Durand Primary School are that eligible children are able to access education provision at the nursery run by Durand Primary School. Parents / Carers are then able to access wrap around child care on the site of Durand Primary School delivered by the non maintained setting.

Proposals put forward as part of this consultation are that the nursery run by Durand Primary School would cease to exist, and that the non maintained setting would expand to offer eligible families with up to 30 hours provision, delivering both the educational and child care requirements.

Respondent	Summary of consultee comment
2	No strong objection towards the proposals put forward, but a concern that the local authority hasn't appropriately considered the impact that proposals would have on Welsh medium provision within the area, alongside appropriate mitigations

**Council Response**

The Council is committed to supporting the growth in Welsh medium education across the County In line with its agreed Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). We are very grateful to receive feedback during these consultation processes, particularly where there are potential concerns around impact on Welsh medium Education. The feedback received as part of this consultation has been used to update our integrated impact assessment (appendix 1).

Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin is the Welsh medium primary school responsible for providing Welsh medium provision to both School age and Early years learners in the South of the county. The School has received significant investment over recent years to extend and improve the provision that it is able to offer, and is now fully equipped to be able to provide early years education and wrap around child care through its Ty A Fi, School nursery and Clych Meithrin. This provision enables eligible families to receive their full 30 hours support funded via the Child care offer. It has been very pleasing to note the increasing number of families accessing this Welsh medium provision, and the impact that this has evidently had on those transitioning into statutory education at the school.

The proposals concerning Durand Primary are not considered to have a negative impact on Welsh medium education within the area. Families are currently able to access full day provision at Durand Primary school via the School nursery and wrap around child care provided by the non maintained setting on site. The proposals formed as part of this consultation are for the local authority nursery to close, and for the non maintained setting to deliver the educational aspects as well as the childcare. This provides the consistency and flexibility that the families require, and mirrors existing provision available at other schools within the cluster.

1 out of the 14 respondents (7%) did not support the proposal. A summary of the concerns raised have been included below alongside the Council's response:

Respondent	Summary of consultee comment
1	A view that whilst providing families with full day childcare is important, preference would be for the educational aspects to be delivered by a teacher / school rather than a non maintained setting
Council response	
<p>We understand the concerns raised by the respondent regarding the proposals for the educational aspects being delivered by the non maintained setting as opposed to the school themselves.</p> <p>The Council would like to offer reassurance that children accessing their 30 hours provision through non maintained settings across the county receive a high standard of provision. Approved non-maintained early education settings receive specialist support and training from the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and the Local Authority Early Years team. This has resulted in our non-maintained settings successfully implementing the Non-Maintained Curriculum for Wales and offering high quality provision. This can be evidenced in recent Estyn and CIW joint inspection reports, where our settings have received more than 25 judgements of excellent over the last 6 years and 7 settings have been asked to produce a best practice case study.</p> <p>We understand that parents will have a preference for which nursery / setting that they would like their child to attend. Within the Caldicot cluster, there will continue to be local authority maintained nurseries available for families to choose should this be their preference. Such nurseries include those at Dewstow, Magor and Undy Primary Schools, as well as Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin</p>	

## 10. VIEWS OF DURAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Council have held engagement sessions with staff and governors of Durand Primary School concerning proposals to discontinue the local authority maintained nursery.

The Council have received unanimous support from the Headteacher and governing body towards the proposals put forward, and they very much look forward to

continuing to work closely with the non maintained setting should proposals move to implementation.

## 11. VIEWS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

### LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE RESPONSE

The proposed closure of the nursery at Durand Primary School will allow the existing non maintained setting to extend their provision and offer early years education places in the morning and afternoons, in addition to the wrap around childcare. This will provide more flexibility for families. It will also result in financial savings for Durand Primary School and enable them to focus on pupils of statutory school age.

The non maintained settings in MCC have successfully implemented the Non Maintained Curriculum for Wales and offer high quality provision. Recent Estyn and CIW reports prove this.

We would be in favour of the proposal due to the above advantages of having a non-maintained setting as I believe it would be more beneficial for the community and provide improved provision for children in the early years.

### COUNCIL RESPONSE

The Council would like to thank the Local Authority School Improvement Service (LASIS) for responding to this consultation. The views of our partner School Improvement Service are hugely important to the Council when undertaking School Organisation proposals, and its pleasing to note the evident support of these proposals concerning Durand Primary School and the benefits that they will bring.

## 12. ESTYN RESPONSE

In line with the School Organisation Code Wales, the Council is required to consult with ESTYN on any school reorganisation proposals that requires statutory consultation process. The response received from Estyn to this consultation is published below, alongside the Councils response:

### ESTYN RESPONSE

#### Introduction

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

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (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.

### **Summary/ Conclusion**

It is Estyn's view that the proposals are likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

### **Description and benefits**

The local authority has outlined a clear rationale for the proposal, citing a shift in parent and carer preference in favour of non-maintained nursery education providers who can offer wraparound childcare on the same site. The proposal includes data that reflects this trend across the authority. The data provided also reflects that pupil numbers in Durand Primary School's nursery class have been relatively stable for the last four years, however surplus places have remained significantly high over recent years and therefore, the proposer's reference to school financial pressure associated with surplus places appears to be reasonable and proportionate.

The local authority includes a suitably detailed description of the proposal along with the projected timetable for statutory procedures and implementation. The local authority proposes to close its nursery class and to allow funded early education by an approved non-maintained setting to operate on the school site. The non-maintained provider currently offers wraparound provision on site. The proposal does not consider a need for any interim arrangements should the proposal go ahead and that there will be limited disruption to pupils. This appears to be reasonable.

The local authority sets out the expected benefits and disadvantages of the proposal when compared with the status quo, highlighting improved flexibility for working families along with access to more specialist early years support from regional partners and opportunities to widen provision in the future. This appears to be reasonable.

The local authority has considered suitable alternatives and given good reasons as to why these have been discounted. Associated risks have been highlighted however these appear to be minimal.

The proposal acknowledges that the local authority does not provide transport for nursery age pupils and as such, there will be no impact on existing travel arrangements or accessibility of provision.

The local authority provides sufficient detail to suggest that surplus places will be reduced should the proposal go ahead. Although the proposal doesn't outline specific financial detail regarding savings by the school or costs to the non-maintained provider in hiring the premises, the proposal does anticipate a positive impact on the school's financial position and this appears to be appropriate.

The proposal does not anticipate any negative impact on Welsh medium provision as a result of this proposal and this appears to be reasonable. The local authority has not provided a Welsh Language Impact Assessment as part of this proposal.

The local authority describes the purpose of Community Impact Assessments in section 14.1 but has not provided a Community Impact Assessment as part of this proposal.

### **Educational aspects of the proposal**

The local authority considers the impact of the proposals on the quality and standards of education appropriately and has included relevant information from the most recent Estyn report for the school. The local authority perceives that there will be a positive impact on the standards and the quality of teaching for pupils attending the non-maintained setting due to statutory requirements for higher adult to pupil ratios, early years qualifications for staff and the delivery of the non-maintained curriculum for Wales. The proposer anticipates there will be no impact on the school's curriculum for 4–11 year-olds. These appear to be reasonable statements.

The proposer considers that the wellbeing of pupils will be improved as a result of fewer transitions for younger pupils between nursery provision and wraparound care. The proposal states that the school and non-maintained provider will continue to be supported by the local authority and regional partners to provide high quality care, support, and guidance for vulnerable pupils and pupils with Additional Learning Needs as well as support to ensure continued effective leadership in both settings. This appears to be reasonable.

### **COUNCIL RESPONSE**

The Council would like to thank ESTYN for their very much supportive response towards our proposals to close the local authority maintained nursery at Durand Primary school.

The proposals that the Council has put forward for the non maintained setting to deliver the full day provision are highlighted to be reasonable proposals, alongside the benefits that this will bring to families within the area

The Council has taken the view that the proposals put forward as part of this consultation are unlikely to have a negative impact on Welsh medium education, and this is considered to be a reasonable view by ESTYN. However, we acknowledge the concern that a Welsh Language Impact Assessment / Community Impact Assessment has not been provided. The Council can confirm that a Community Impact Assessment was completed and published alongside the consultation document on the launch of this consultation. This Community Impact included a section that considered possible impact on Welsh language.

The Community Impact assessment has been updated following feedback received during this consultation, and an updated version available under appendix 1 of this report.

### 13. 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 close the school nursery at Durand Primary School and enable funded early education to be provided by an approved non-maintained setting operating from the school site.

A reminder of the options considered and are provided below:

**Option 1 – Do nothing and maintain the status quo. This would mean that Durand Primary School would continue with its current age range of 3-11 years offering 30 part time nursery places (mornings only) and a non-maintained setting would offer wrap around childcare in the afternoons.**

Strengths	Weaknesses
Consistency for children and families	The school nursery would be unable to offer early education for rising 3s once their morning session was full
Nursery children are on the school roll	Sustainability of non-maintained setting is at risk if they can only offer part time places
Early education and childcare can be accessed on the same site	School nursery and non-maintained setting would have to share the same space with no break between sessions
	Different staff would be offering the early education from the wrap around childcare, resulting in more daily transitions for young children

**Option 2 – Change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years and replace the school nursery with a non-maintained setting approved to provide funded early education and wrap around childcare.**

Strengths	Weaknesses
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More flexibility for working families, as they can access early education and childcare in one setting	Children will not join the school roll until their Reception year
Children will receive their early education in a setting with a higher level of support from the EAS and the LA	Families looking for a school nursery place may choose to send them to one of the other schools in the locality
There is the option for the setting to expand this provision to include after school care, holiday provision and Flying Start childcare	

**Option 3 – End the lease agreement with Little Gems to enable Durand Nursery to offer 60 part time places (morning and afternoon sessions), with no wrap around childcare available on site.**

Strengths	Weaknesses
There would be sufficient places in the school nursery to accommodate rising 3s	Financial implications on school budget to run with significant surplus places
Nursery children are on the school roll	Limited options for working families who require wrap around childcare
	More daily transitions for young children who require wrap around childcare and have to be transported to a different setting to access this provision

Whilst continuing with existing arrangements is considered to be an option, the large majority of respondents (79%) have voted in favour of proposals to close Durand nursery and extend the provision of the non maintained setting currently providing wrap around child care.

The staff and governing body of Durand Primary School are also supportive of proposals, and feedback received from ESTYN is also favourable.

In light of the above, our preferred option remains to be option 2 above. The feedback received during the consultation stage recognises the benefits of this proposals, including increased flexibility to support working families as well as improvements in the quality of provision that the children are likely to receive.

## 14. IMPACT OF PROPOSALS

## 14.1 Quality and Standards in Education

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As part of the consultation process the Council assessed the impact of the proposal on the quality and standards of Education. Following the outcome of the consultation and taking into consideration the feedback that has been received, we remain confident that there will be an overall positive impact on the quality and standards of education.

All approved non-maintained settings receive support from both the Local Authority and the regional consortia the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to help ensure they operate effective management and teaching practices. Monmouthshire has a good track record of delivering quality early education.

Consideration of the potential impact of the proposal on quality and standards is aligned with the Estyn Inspection framework:

### Learning

The proposal will not affect the quality of learning in any of the schools or non-maintained settings in the Caldicot cluster. The approved non-maintained setting that is proposed to replace Durand Nursery will receive the appropriate level of challenge and support to ensure that high-quality learning is achieved.

### Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Children's wellbeing is paramount and will impact on their attitude to learning. Consistency of staff, learning environments, session structure and expectations are all factors that can affect a child's wellbeing. Reducing the number of transitions for a child is likely to have a positive impact on their wellbeing.

The proposal should not impact negatively on wellbeing and attitudes towards learning at any of the affected schools or non-maintained settings.

### Teaching and learning experiences

Teaching and learning at approved non-maintained settings will follow the Welsh Government 'Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings'. *This curriculum aspires to create in children positive dispositions towards learning which, if nurtured, will last a lifetime and provide the firm foundation which all our children need to support them in realising the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales (Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings, 2022, p.3).*

For those children currently attending Durand Primary School Nursery, the proposals are likely to have a hugely positive impact on their teaching and learning

experiences, as the Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings has been designed by professionals specifically to meet the needs of pre-school children.

The proposal will not impact the teaching and learning experiences at the other affected schools or non-maintained settings.

#### Care support and guidance

Durand Primary School will continue to be supported by the local authority and the Education Achievement Service to provide high quality care, support, and guidance, as will the proposed non-maintained setting.

There will be no change in care support and guidance at the other affected schools or non-maintained settings.

#### Leadership and management

The leadership and management teams of Durand Primary School and the proposed non-maintained setting will continue to receive support and guidance from the local authority and Education Achievement Service to ensure best practice in leadership and management is maintained.

There will be no change to the quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers at the other affected schools and non-maintained settings.

### 14.2 Impact on the Community

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During the consultation stage of this process, the Council completed and published to consultees an Integrated Impact Assessment.

Following the consultation stage of this process and considering the feedback received, this Integrated Impact Assessment has been updated and is available under appendix 1 of this document. The consensus drawn from the reassessment is that there will be a positive impact on the community and that there are appropriate measures in place to mitigate any possible impact on Welsh medium education.

### 14.3 Impact on Travel arrangements

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The proposals put forward by the Council are relevant for children that are below statutory school age. As home to school transport is not provided for children that are below statutory school age, there will be no impact on travel arrangements.

#### 14.4 Impact on existing learners

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Should proposals proceed to implementation, the local authority maintained nursery at Durand Primary School would cease to operate from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026, with the non maintained setting providing full day provision from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026.

Children who are expected to start Durand Nursery in September 2026 will be given the opportunity to transfer across into the provision provided by the non maintained setting, so that they are able to continue to receive provision on the same site. Alternatively, parents / carers will have the opportunity to apply for alternative local authority nurseries within the cluster.

### 15. 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

The consultation responses have evidenced that the majority of respondents are supportive of the proposals to close the local authority nursery at Durand Primary School. The consultation saw 2 respondents (14%) agreeing with aspects of the proposals, and 1 respondent (7%) disagreeing with proposals. However, this report has evidenced that the Council has been able to provide sufficient mitigations against any 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 – change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years.** The school nursery will close and funded early education will be provided by an approved non-maintained setting operating from the school site.



## Appendix 1 - List of Consultees with whom we consulted

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- Parents, carers/guardians and staff members of Durand Primary School
- The Governing body of Durand Primary School
- Parents, carers/guardians and staff members of schools and settings considered to be affected by the proposal
- The governing body of any schools considered to be affected by the proposal
- Headteachers of schools affected by the proposal
- Welsh Ministers
- Local Town and Community Councils
- All MCC Assembly Members representing the area served by the school
- All Members of Parliament representing MCC area
- Directors of Education of all bordering LAs – Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Powys, Torfaen, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire
- MCC Youth Service
- GAVO
- Monmouthshire Governors Association
- Teaching trade unions
- Support Staff trade unions
- Welsh Language Commissioner
- Welsh Ministers
- ESTYN
- RHAG
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Church in Wales Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, Director of Education
- South East Wales Consortium
- South East Wales Education Achievement Service
- Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
- Early Years & Childcare Partnership



**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNTY HALL, RHADYR, USK, MONMOUTHSHIRE NP15 1GA**

**SCHOOL STANDARDS AND ORGANISATION (WALES) ACT 2013**

NOTICE IS GIVEN in accordance with Section 41 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018 that Monmouthshire County Council, having consulted such persons as required, propose to implement the following:

- 1) To cease to maintain the local authority maintained nursery at Durand Primary School, meaning that the age range of Durand Primary School will change from 3-11 to 4-11

As a result of the above proposal, the provision of funded early years education and childcare will be delivered by an approved non maintained setting operating from the school site.

Monmouthshire County Council will implement the above changes with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026.

Monmouthshire County Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and Estyn's full response has been published to all statutory consultees and is available via [Consultation Report](#).

Durand Primary School will continue to be a community English medium primary school serving children from ages 4-11, and Monmouthshire County Council will continue to be the admission authority. Applications for places at the school will be managed and determined in line with the Council's agreed School Admissions Policy. Applications for Early years places will be managed directly by the approved non maintained setting.

The admission number for pupils aged 4-11 at Durand Primary School will continue to be 30 with the overall pupil capacity for 210 places for this age range.

Durand Primary School will no longer be responsible for providing nursery provision to those children below statutory school age. This responsibility will be transferred to the approved non-maintained setting to ensure that early year provision continues to be available for the community.

It is the intention of the Council that transport shall be provided free of charge for pupils of statutory school age who attend Durand Primary School in accordance with the Council agreed policy at that time. The current policy is that pupils are eligible for free home to school transport if they meet the following criteria:

- a) They attend their nearest or catchment area Welsh medium school and
- b) They live more than two miles from the school for primary or
- c) They live more than three miles from the school for secondary.
- d) The route between home and the nearest or catchment school is deemed to be unsafe for walking.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published, that is to say by **22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026**, any person may object to the proposals outlined within this notice.

Objections should be sent to the School & Student Access Unit, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA or email to [strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:strategicreview@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

Signed



Date: **23rd April 2026**

Paul Matthews  
Chief Executive  
For Monmouthshire County Council

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

***(This explanatory note does not form part of the notice but is offered by way of explanation)***

Durand Primary School currently provides 210 school places for children in Reception to Year 6. There is also a local authority nursery on site providing 30 part time places for three and four year olds who are not yet of statutory school age.

As a result of these proposals, the age range for the school will change from 3-11 to 4-11, reflecting that the local authority will cease to maintain the school nursery. The provision of funded early years education and child care will instead be delivered on the site of Durand Primary School by an approved non maintained setting, offering improved flexibility for parents / carers within excellent teaching and learning facilities.

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# Integrated Impact Assessment Template

(incorporating Equalities, Socio-economic Duty, Future Generations, Welsh Language Measures, Corporate Parenting)

<p><b>Name of the Officer</b> Sue Hall</p> <p><b>Phone no:</b> 01633 644461 <b>E-mail:</b> susanhall@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b></p> <p>To consult on the proposal to change the age range of Durand Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years and replace the school nursery with a non-maintained setting approved to provide early education.</p>
<p><b>Name of Service area</b></p> <p>Early Years Section, CLSE Directorate</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p> <p>December 2025</p>

**1. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

<p><b>Protected Characteristics</b></p>	<p><b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>Age</b></p> <p><i>Consider the impact on our community in relation to age, e.g. how do we engage with older and younger people about our services, access issues etc. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p>	<p>Currently there are only 30 nursery / early education places available at Durand Primary School for 3 and 4 year olds; hence, there are insufficient places to accommodate rising 3s. This proposal would increase the number of early education places to 56.</p>	<p>Nursery aged children wouldn't be included on the school roll, instead they wouldn't be admitted until the term following children's 4<sup>th</sup> birthday.</p>	<p>Approved non-maintained settings have more flexibility than school nurseries as they can cater for a larger age range and offer longer hours.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b>	<b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
<b>Disability</b> <i>Consider the impact and what issues there are around each of the disability needs groups e.g. access to buildings/services, how we provide services and the way we do this; producing information in alternative formats, employment issues etc.</i>	The non-maintained setting would be based on the school site in the existing nursery building, which meets current guidelines around disabled access.	No impact identified at this stage.	None identified at this time.
<b>Gender reassignment</b> <i>Consider the provision of inclusive services for transgender people and groups. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i>	No impact identified at this stage.	No impact identified at this stage.	None identified at this time.
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> <i>Same-sex couples registered as civil partners have the same rights as married couples and must be provided with the same benefits, such as survivor pensions, flexible working, maternity/paternity pay and healthcare insurance. Consider the impact of your proposal on these rights.</i>	No impact identified at this stage.	No impact identified at this stage.	None identified at this time.

<p><u>Protected Characteristics</u></p>	<p><b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>Pregnancy or maternity</b>  <i>A woman is protected from discrimination during her pregnancy, maternity leave and 26 weeks from the day she gives birth. Including the provision of services, goods and facilities and recreational or training facilities. Consider the impact of your proposal on these protections.</i></p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>
<p><b>Race</b>  <i>What will the proposal do to promote race equality with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between different racial groups. Think about the potential to affect racial groups differently. Possible issues include providing translation/interpreting services, cultural issues and customs, access to services, issues relating to Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Gypsy &amp; Traveler, migrant communities and recording of racist incidents etc.</i></p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>
<p><b>Religion or Belief</b>  <i>Consider the impact e.g. dietary issues, religious holidays or days associated with religious observance, cultural issues and customs. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p><b>Sex</b></p> <p><i>Consider what issues there are for men and women. Will this impact disproportionately on one group more than another e.g. equal pay, responsibilities for dependents, issues for carers, access to training, employment issues.</i></p>	<p>Changing from a maintained nursery to a non-maintained setting will offer more flexibility to families and will enable parents/carers to return to work or training.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>
<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b></p> <p><i>Consider the provision of inclusive services for e.g. older and younger people from the Lesbia, Gay and Bi-sexual communities. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>

## 2. The Socio-economic Duty

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions.

*Socio-economic disadvantage can be defined as living in less favorable social and economic circumstances than others in society. It also includes social justice, which is about reducing inequalities by working towards more equal distribution of wealth and opportunities so everyone can achieve their full potential.*

**Consider how the proposal could affect the following vulnerable groups:**

*Armed Forces Community (including veterans)*

*Single parents*

*Vulnerable families*

*Single adult households*

*Carers*

*Students*

*People living in the most deprived areas*

*Pensioners*

*Homeless People*

*People misusing substances*

*People who have experienced the asylum system*

*People involved in the criminal justice system*

<u>Socio-economic Duty</u>	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering from socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts in relation to the Socio-economic disadvantage?
<p><i>Think of what evidence you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to this proposal. Will it impact disproportionately on certain groups? Can the proposals be improved to reduce inequalities of outcome?</i></p>	<p>The existing provision at Durand Nursery is limited to 2 ½ hours a day, which makes it difficult for the main carer to access work or training opportunities. A non-maintained setting would be able to offer up to 6 hours a day, providing more opportunity for parents/carers to return to work or training.</p>	<p>School nurseries usually offer 12 hours a week, whereas early education funding is only available for 10 hours a week.</p>	<p>Working families are eligible for the Childcare Offer, which provides funding for wrap around childcare, so eligible families can access a total of up to 30 hours a week of funded early education and childcare.</p>

### 30 Policy making and the Welsh language

*What are the effects that the proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated? Explain how you believe the proposals could be improved so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.*

<p><b>How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the <a href="#">Council's Welsh Language Standards</a>:</b></p>	<p><b>Describe the positive impacts of this proposal</b></p>	<p><b>Describe the negative impacts of this proposal</b></p>	<p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts</b></p>
<p><b>Policy Making:</b>  <i>Consider what impact this policy decision will have on the Welsh Language. This includes opportunities for people to use the language, opportunities to promote the language and treating the language no less favourably than the English language. Include any data and evidence e.g. WESP, Census Data, Cymraeg 2050, Welsh Language Strategy.</i></p> <p>Page 90</p>	<p>The existing provision at Durand primary school is English medium and we are proposing to replace it with a non-maintained setting that is English medium with some bilingual elements. The setting don't initially intend to offer places for two year olds and they aren't currently approved for Flying Start childcare.</p> <p>There is currently Welsh medium early education available in Caldicot at Ysgol Y Ffin and there are currently spaces available. There is also a non-maintained setting on site, Cylch Meithrin Cil Y Coed, that offers childcare places for two year olds (including Flying Start childcare) and wrap around childcare for 3 and 4 year olds that attend the school Meithrin. Therefore, they will still be able to offer a greater range of childcare and early education than is being proposed at Durand Primary School.</p>	<p>There is a possibility that some families will opt for the provision at Durand Primary School rather than Ysgol Y Ffin, as they are able to access early education and wrap around childcare with one provider, so there will be less transitions for the children.</p>	<p>Support will be provided to Cylch Meithrin Cil Y Coed to improve their transition arrangements to ensure this is a smooth process for children.</p> <p>Ysgol Y Ffin currently offers a morning Meithrin session only. If numbers continue to grow and there is a need for more places, there is the option to increase the offer to 60 places and offer morning and afternoon places.</p> <p>Capital funding was awarded to Cylch Meithrin Cil Y Coed in 2025/26 to enable them to make improvements to their outdoor area. There is a further pot of funding available for small capital grants in 2026/27, which Cylch Meithrin Cil Y Coed will be encouraged to apply for to enhance their existing provision and make it more appealing to families who are considering their options.</p>

<p><b>Operational:</b>  <b>Recruitment &amp; Training of workforce</b>  <i>Carefully consider whether vacant posts require Welsh language skills as a desirable or essential skill. This is especially pertinent with front line roles as more than 10 % of the population of Monmouthshire speak Welsh. Also, when assessing the need for Welsh language skills keep in mind the existing Welsh language skills within the workforce. In service areas where there is a current lack of Welsh language skills, posts should be advertised as Welsh language essential. Additionally, consider where further training may be needed to increase the number of staff who can speak Welsh and to enhance the skills of current Welsh speakers.</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>As the proposal is to replace an LA nursery with a non-maintained provision, this will be a private provider, so the local authority will have no influence over recruitment and whether vacant posts require Welsh language skills as desirable or essential.</p>	<p>The provider will be reminded of the requirement for them to work towards the Welsh Promise and for the Welsh language to be an integral part of their curriculum. They will be offered training opportunities and support in relation to the Welsh language and Welsh culture.</p>
<p><b>Service Delivery:</b>  <b>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</b>  <i>When advertising our services you must promote the fact that people can deal with the council in Welsh by phone, email, twitter, Facebook, letters, forms, website transactions etc.</i></p>	<p>All consultation documents and social media posts will be available in Welsh and English. Consultees can choose to respond in Welsh or English.</p> <p>The admissions portal promotes the options for Welsh medium education.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>We will continue to promote the options for Welsh medium education and the benefits of being bilingual. A video has recently been produced to promote Welsh language immersion classes in our Welsh medium primary schools, including Ysgol Y Ffin that is located close to Durand Primary School. This video will be added to the MCC website and promoted through social media. Residents will be actively encouraged to consider the option of Welsh medium education.</p>




**4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

<u>Well Being Goals</u>	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b>  <i>An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises global limits and uses resources efficiently (including acting on climate change); a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides jobs.</i></p>	<p>The proposal will increase the length of sessions families can access, hence enabling parents to return to work or training.</p> <p>It also provides an opportunity to support the growth and sustainability of a small business within the community.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b>  <i>Maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</i></p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>
<p><b>A healthier Wales</b>  <i>People's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</i></p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>
<p><b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b>  <i>Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</i></p>	<p>There are currently limited childcare options available in this community. Replacing the school nursery with a non-maintained setting would increase the services available to the community and make it more attractive to working families.</p>	<p>There are less options within the community for those families that are specifically looking for a LA maintained school nursery</p>	<p>Information can be provided to parents to explain that approved non-maintained providers are required to follow the Curriculum for Wales in the same way as school nurseries.</p>
<p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b>  <i>Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</i></p>	<p>Families requiring childcare will be able to access it within their locality, so they will be able to walk rather than needing to travel.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>

<u>Well Being Goals</u>	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	by car; hence, this will reduce their carbon footprint.		
<b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b> <i>Promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and participation in the arts, and sports and recreation</i>	No impact identified at this stage.	No impact identified at this stage.	None identified at this time.
<b>A more equal Wales</b> <i>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. (This includes the protected characteristics listed in section 1 above. You can add more detail there. Don't forget to think about the impacts on poverty)</i>	Providing wrap around childcare will enable parents/carers to return to work, hence giving them the opportunity to become more financially secure and prevent them from living in poverty	No impact identified at this stage.	None identified at this time.

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

<p><b><u>Sustainable Development Principles</u></b></p>	<p><b>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</b></p>	<p><b>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<div data-bbox="91 263 293 464" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="129 475 264 507"><b>Long Term</b></p> <p data-bbox="315 256 600 403">Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p data-bbox="107 437 600 683"><i>We are required to look beyond the usual short term timescales for financial planning and political cycles and instead plan with the longer term in mind (guidance says at least 10 years, but preferably 25)</i></p>	<p data-bbox="633 256 1317 357">We have seen an upward trend towards parents choosing non-maintained settings over school nurseries to access their early education.</p> <p data-bbox="633 389 1294 489">The demand for childcare from a younger age is also increasing and a non-maintained setting is more flexible and is able to provide for a wider age range.</p>	<p data-bbox="1352 256 1675 284">None identified at this time.</p>
<div data-bbox="91 703 136 863" data-label="Page-Header" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"> <p>Page 94</p> </div> <div data-bbox="91 847 293 1038" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="107 1050 277 1082"><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p data-bbox="315 842 600 951">Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p data-bbox="633 719 1317 922">The success of this proposal is dependent on a strong collaboration between the Local Authority, the school and the non-maintained setting. There is already an established relationship in place, and all parties are committed to working together to achieve a positive outcome for the children and their families.</p>	<p data-bbox="1352 719 2092 778">Non-maintained setting will be invited to school events and will be seen as an extension to the school community.</p>

<p><b><u>Sustainable Development Principles</u></b></p>	<p><b>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</b></p>	<p><b>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
 <p><b>Involvement</b></p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p><i>Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by your proposal? Have they been involved? Do those people reflect the diversity of the area which is served?</i></p>	<p>The school governing body are aware of this proposal and have had an opportunity to ask questions and they are in support.</p>	<p>Other stakeholders include parents/carers, school staff, other schools and non-maintained settings. They will all be informed of the consultation process and will have an opportunity to respond with their views.</p>
 <p><b>Prevention</b></p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Estyn have recently inspected Durand Primary School and praised the quality of teaching and learning in most classes, however they did report that the classes for their youngest learners was an area for development. The non-maintained setting would receive specialist Early Years support from the EAS.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>
 <p><b>Integration</b></p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p><i>Focus here on how you will better integrate the Wellbeing Goals impacts on people, economy and environment described above and balance any competing impacts. Think about impacts the proposal may have on other organisations</i></p>	<p>There is a possibility that this may have a negative impact on schools in the nearby area that don't have wrap around provision on site. It could also impact other childcare providers in the area.</p>	<p>We will continue to work with schools and providers to develop wrap around provision on site or to arrange with nearby settings or childminders to collect from the school.</p>

**6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting, Care Leavers, Care Experienced People and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?**

	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has</b>	<b>What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
<p><b><u>Safeguarding</u></b>  <i>Safeguarding in this context applies to children (not yet reached 18th birthday) and adult at risk (identified as a person over the age of 18 and who (a) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, (b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.) Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and adults at risk, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect.</i></p>	<p>The non-maintained setting is required to comply with the MCC Safeguarding Policy. All staff have received safeguarding training at a level that is relevant to their role and they have a named Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and Deputy DSO.</p>	<p>The setting is based on the school site and will operate during school hours, so this could impact on existing safeguarding arrangements.</p>	<p>The Headteacher has had sight of DBS checks for staff in the non-maintained setting and they have arrangements in place to safeguard both pupils in the school and children in the setting. The Headteacher will have regular meetings with the setting to discuss any concerns or issues.</p> <p>The setting will also receive monitoring visits from Local Authority Officers and safeguarding will be discussed as part of these visits. They will also be required to complete a safeguarding audit (SAFE) every two years.</p>

<p><b><u>Corporate Parenting, Care Leavers and Care Experienced People</u></b></p> <p><i>This relates to those children who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority either through voluntary arrangements with their parents or through a Court Order. The Council has a corporate duty to consider 'children who are looked after especially and to promote their welfare (in a way, as though those children were their own). It also relates to care experienced people (people who have spent time in care when they were under 18 years old). The Council must consider how to help overcome the disadvantages and discrimination they experience.</i></p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>None identified at this time.</p>
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**7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?**

*This will include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the recommendation you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation have had a positive or negative effect. Key strategies and documents that may help you include: Community and Corporate Plan, Asset Management Strategy, Digital and Data Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, People Strategy, Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy: [Enabling Strategies](#) See Guidance for more examples.*

The development of this proposal has been based mainly on parental demand, which is measured through data around take up of places and enquiries received. It incorporates the council's core values, particularly in relation to flexibility and elements of the Community and Corporate Plan in terms of Monmouthshire being a Learning Place and a Thriving and Ambitious Place to live and work.

**8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?**

*This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee Report Template*

The main positive impacts of this proposal is that families will be able to access early education and wrap around childcare in one setting. This will enable parents/carers to return to work or training, whilst providing continuity of care for the children, giving them the best possible start in life.

There are very few negative impacts of this proposal and mitigating actions have been put in place for any that have been identified.

**9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.**

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?

Page 98

**10. VERSION CONTROL: The Integrated Impact Assessment should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision-making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.**

Version No.	Decision making stage <i>e.g. budget mandate, DMT, SLT, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc</i>	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	<i>Cabinet</i>	21.01.2026	Additional information added around the impact on the Welsh language.
2	Consultation	25.03.2026	The Welsh language section has been expanded to provide more detail on potential impact and mitigating actions have been included.

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