

SUBJECT:	SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY 2020/21 – SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREAS
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	3RD APRIL 2019

1. PURPOSE:

This report seeks to provide Members with an update on the recently concluded public consultation to review Monmouthshire's Secondary School catchment areas as part of the September 2020/21 School admission arrangements.

This report also seeks to provide members with a copy of the consultation report analysing the responses received from consultees towards proposed changes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Members review and agree the full content of this report, the attached consultation report (appendix 1) and the proposed School Admissions Policy 2020/21 (appendix 2).
- 2.2 On reviewing section 2.1, that Members agree to implement the following changes to determine the secondary catchment school for the affected areas as per the Council's school admission arrangements 2020/21:
- Review area 1 - Amend the catchment area for Monmouth Comprehensive School to align with the Primary catchment area for Usk Church in Wales Primary School (appendix 3)
 - Review area 2 - Amend the catchment area for King Henry VIII Comprehensive School to align with the Primary catchment area for Goytre Fawr Primary School (appendix 4)
 - Review area 3 - Amend the catchment area for Monmouth Comprehensive School to align with the catchment area for Trellech Primary School (appendix 5)
 - Review area 4 - Amend the catchment area for Monmouth Comprehensive School to align with the catchment area for Llandogo Primary School (appendix 6)

The Authority will implement the changes as part of the Council's determined School Admission arrangements for academic year commencing September 2020/21.

- 2.3 For Members to acknowledge that, in line with Newport City Council's admission arrangements, review areas 1 and 2 will remain within catchment for Caerleon School

until such time that proposals are brought forward to amend these arrangements. This will not form part of the admission arrangements for Monmouthshire County Council as per 3.12 and 3.13 of this report.

- 2.4 Members commission officers to undertake a review of the home to school transport policy to be concluded in such time to allow for implementation in line with the changes to the catchment areas as set out above i.e. the start of the academic year 2020. At this time, the policy review will not include transportation affecting faith or Welsh medium schools.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The majority of school catchment areas within Monmouthshire have existed in their current form since the reorganisation of Local Government in 1996, it is understood that they have been in place for many years prior to this.
- 3.2 School catchment areas were last reviewed in November 2014, where the local authority consulted on changes to secondary school catchment areas, as well as the formation of catchment areas for Welsh Medium provision within the County.
- 3.3 The findings of this consultation were presented to Cabinet in March 2015. At this meeting, Members elected to implement catchment areas for Welsh Medium Provision. However, they concluded at that time that the proposed changes to secondary school catchment areas within the county would not be implemented. Instead, it was determined that a further consultation exercise should be completed.
- 3.4 To reflect the above, the local authority's agreed corporate plan identifies 22 priorities to be completed by 2022. A review of the school admissions policy, including catchment areas, is a priority action.
- 3.5 The adopted corporate plan places a key theme behind Monmouthshire families having the opportunity to be educated within the County. The levels of transition between Monmouthshire Primary and Secondary Schools is significantly lower than comparable authorities. This is due to a high number of children accessing schools outside of the County. The current secondary school catchment arrangements contribute to this and reinforce the issues caused by three of the four secondary schools being placed at the corners of the County with nearby settlements also offering secondary education.
- 3.6 A Member panel of cross party representation was called to consider the feasibilities of taking forward some of identified anomalies that required consideration under this review, and agreed the principles and approach on how the proposals were to be taken forward.
- 3.7 On 5th December 2018, Cabinet gave approval for the local authority to engage in a public consultation process, seeking the views of key consultees on proposed amendments to Secondary School catchment areas determined in line with the Council's School Admission arrangements.

3.8 The proposals on which we consulted were:

- *To amend the catchment boundary for King Henry VIII Comprehensive School to align entirely with Goytre Fawr Primary School. The affected area currently falls within the catchment area for Caerleon Comprehensive School*
- *To amend the catchment boundary for Monmouth Comprehensive School to align entirely with Usk CIW Primary School. The affected area currently falls within the catchment area for Caerleon Comprehensive School*
- *To amend the catchment boundary for Monmouth Comprehensive School to align entirely with Trellech Primary School. The affected area currently falls within the catchment area for Chepstow School*
- *To amend the catchment boundary for Monmouth Comprehensive School to align entirely with Llandogo Primary School. The affected area currently falls within the catchment area for Chepstow School*

3.9 The Council engaged in an extensive consultation with all affected parties including schools, governing bodies, parents and other interested parties to seek views on amending the secondary school catchment boundaries for Monmouth and King Henry VIII Comprehensive Schools.

3.10 The consultation commenced on 18th January 2019 and lasted for a period of 6 weeks, concluding on 1st March 2019. A consultation document was produced and targeted towards those directly affected by the proposals.

3.11 During the consultation, the Authority held eleven public consultation sessions in venues throughout the County to allow consultees to ask any questions and raise any concerns on the proposals.

3.12 A response received from Newport City Council (the admission authority for Caerleon Comprehensive School) offers overwhelming support for the implementation of the proposals put forward during this consultation. However, their response confirms an intention to retain the existing catchment area for Caerleon Comprehensive School for September 2020/21, thus resulting in the Goytre and Usk areas remaining within catchment in line with Newport City Council's admission arrangements. Newport City Council have registered an intention to review these arrangements, with a view of consulting to remove the identified areas from the catchment area for implementation in September 2021/22.

3.13 Should recommendations outlined under 2.2 of this report be agreed, Monmouthshire's admission arrangements would determine the catchment schools for the affected areas to be King Henry VIII (Goytre) and Monmouth Comprehensive School (Usk). Free Home to School transport is available to either the catchment school or nearest suitable school as identified by the local authority.

- 3.14 On conclusion of the formal consultation, Officers produced consultation reports setting out all of the consultation methodology together with the consultation response on each of the individual proposals. These reports are available under appendices 1-6 of this report for Members perusal.
- 3.15 Members are asked to review the content of the consultation reports, acknowledging the key themes of support and concern towards each of the proposals. The consensus drawn from the consultation response on review areas 1 (Usk), 3 (Trellech) and 4 (Llandogo) offers sufficient support to justify the implementation of proposals in readiness for September 2020/21 admission arrangements.
- 3.16 The responses received to review area 2 (Goytre) suggests that the majority responding to the consultation were not in favour of proposals. However, the level of response to these proposals was low, with only 40 responses received against 140 parties identified as affected by proposals over the next 5 years.
- 3.17 The recommendation under 2.2 of this report to proceed with the Goytre proposals is formed on the basis of the feedback received during the public consultation session, the views of children and young people, as well as increasing levels of preferences for King Henry VIII Comprehensive School from families residing within the affected areas.
- 3.18 In addition to the above, it is concluded that the majority of concerns raised by the consultees falling within the Goytre and Usk proposals can be mitigated in light of section 3.12 of this report. It is further concluded that the majority of concerns raised to these proposals would be brought into fruition through any future decision taken by Newport City Council to remove the affected areas from Caerleon Catchment area, and not through the proposals brought forward by Monmouthshire County Council.
- 3.19 The themes of concern relating to the Trellech and Llandogo proposals at large relate to a concern that children from within the affected area would be unable to attend the current catchment school of Chepstow School. The consultation report offer reassurance that Chepstow School has sufficient capacity to accommodate requests from the affected area, and that transport would continue to be offered where it is identified to be the nearest suitable school.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The options considered are to implement the proposed changes as presented, or maintain the status quo. The results of the consultation suggest that the Council would be acting reasonably should proposals be implemented.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

This is included in appendix 7.

6. REASONS:

The consultation process was undertaken to allow the Council to receive a public view on the concerns received over recent years relating to Secondary School catchment areas in their current form.

The response received has enabled the council to consider an amendment to existing policy based on an informed consultation.

The recommendations put forward would achieve alignment between Primary and Secondary School catchment areas, and provide the Monmouthshire families residing in the affected areas with Secondary School catchment within the county.

Education in Wales is going through a period of unprecedented change, the Authority wants to maximise the opportunities that exist through working in a collective manner in Monmouthshire clusters; these changes support that ambition.

There was also feedback at the public consultation events that the alignment of accountability frameworks being reinforced by the changes. Some respondents valued the ability to scrutinise and hold to account 'their' elected members that they elected for the performance of their local school. The current arrangements would not allow this.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The Council's home to school transport policy offers free home to school transport to the catchment or nearest suitable school. These proposals will affect home to school transport costs if implemented.

At this moment in time, it is envisaged that the full, maximised annual pressure that could amount because of these changes has been modelled at circa. £150,000 per annum. However, the impact of these proposals during the 2019/20 financial year will be zero, for financial year 2020/21 the impact would be £87,500, and financial year 2021/22 will be £62,500 with a cumulative pressure of £150,000 expected to run until 2023/24.

This figure is at a moment in time and will be subject to future events. Moreover, if recommendation 2.4 is agreed there is the potential for this to change substantially. All financial considerations will be assessed through the process of reviewing the home to school transport policy which will be subject to public and member scrutiny.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

This is included in appendix 8.

9. CONSULTEES:

CYP DMT

Cabinet Member for Education
All parties directly affected by these proposals
Children and Young People's Select Committee

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

School Admissions Code Wales (July 2013)

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